

Famas induction a huge success



The Honorable Jose Brillantes, Philippine Ambassador to Canada, presided over the induction of the new members of the Famas executive board on Saturday, September 22, 2007 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

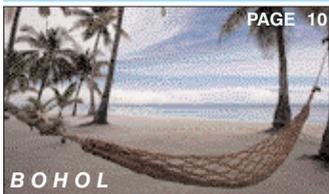
Montreal, September 22, 2007

The Filipino-Canadian community in Montreal celebrated a new era in local politics by attending in large numbers the induction party held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Montreal. Mr. Thomas Mulcair, the winning candidate of the NDP in Outremont was a special guest. Honorable Jose Brillantes was the guest speaker while Fr. Francisco Alvarez delivered an inspirational message.

For the first time in many years, the newly inducted members of the Executive Board of FAMAS came from one party, the Samahang Makabayan. The Philippine community considers this as a good sign that we have a really united team that will most likely succeed in getting things done.

Hon. Thomas Mulcair, only the second NDP member of Parliament elected in Quebec caused an upset of

See page 4 INDUCTION



PAGE 10

BOHOL

Contents

- Community News p. 6
- Classified Ads p. 9
- Philippine Cuisine p. 9
- Filstar Photo Gallery..... p. 10
- Tourism p. 12
- Showbiz Gossip p. 14
- Global Perspectives p. 17
- Neighborhood Business . . . p. 18

The Filipino Star in its 25th year

By Zenaida Kharroubi



From the left, The Filipino Star's last edition under the original publisher, Bert Abierra in November 1977 with the photo of President Fidel Ramos who visited Montreal during this time, second photo shows the first edition of the newspaper in April 1998 when it resumed publication under new management headed by Zenaida Kharroubi, the third photo shows a different logo designed by Regs Villamor which was used until it was changed by Michael Davantes to give the paper its fresh new look which appeared in the January 2003 for the first time.

This will just be the second time we will indulge in writing about the historical background of a community newspaper, the first time having been done by the first publisher, Bert Abiera

when he celebrated the 10th anniversary of the newspaper on November 21, 1992 at St. Antonin Church. The Filipino Star story was told on the pages of the November-

December 1992 edition. From this issue, I learned that the original name of the Star was Bulalakaw, then became Tamaraw Times but not for

See Page 4 Filipino Star

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EDITORIAL

Will the new FAMAS executive board meet our expectations?

The new executive board of Famás is now officially installed. As observers of local politics, we have taken note of the ambiance during the evening and we seem to gather an impression that there are many positive signs that this new administration can deliver their promises. But in order to keep track of things to come, we would like to begin by citing some of the current issues in the community. For example, we have always had the problem of unity and apathy because our community leaders, in particular, those who have been running Famás and Federation, have been the subject of controversies. People are just fed up with partisan politics, and empty promises. The big question is: Will there be a better atmosphere with the election of a new executive board of FAMAS?

During the campaign, Mr. Claro Bermudez indicated that there is a need for the community to trust Famás again. He implies that because of unresolved conflicts among some community leaders, as exemplified in the existence of two Federations, people have become disenchanted with our local politics. But he believes that by instituting changes like making Famás open to everyone, and letting people know what he and his executive board are doing, people will be willing to participate and share the responsibility of working for the improvement of our community. But will he succeed in making FAMAS to be recognized as the legitimate representative of our community? Will the different government officials of the municipal, provincial and federal levels be aware that FAMAS should be given the proper funding in order to do its job better?

It is of common knowledge that FAMAS is the oldest and largest organization of civic minded people in Montreal. By its name alone, it seems quite a legitimate representative of the Filipino community in Montreal and suburbs. In spite of this, the Federation of Filipino Canadian Associations of Quebec was founded to be an umbrella organization of Filipinos but over the past nine years, its former function seems to have changed or eroded by the fact that its president has remained in office too long, yet, he is the one who seems to be supported by the local government. Because of the impasse between two Federations, our

community does not seem to have the necessary support of the government except for the cultural funding provided during summer festivals. We have heard that government funds have been frozen until the impasse is resolved. For this reason, we are anxious to see some changes to our local political arena. Community leaders should be more accountable to the people, and not to their members only. They should work for the benefit of everyone, not only for a selected few. Perhaps, with a different leader of a big organization like FAMAS, we are hopeful that real changes will occur if the promises during elections are fulfilled.

Father Frank Alvarez, in his inspirational message during the induction party, made reference to the beautiful opportunity that the FAMAS executive board has in making sure that they work for the community. If they remember how important it is to show their commitment to the task at hand, they will become models for the future leaders of this organization. If they learn how to use the power entrusted to them, they will surely make headway into the development of projects that will not only be good for the young but also for all seniors, families, and other hardworking people who strive to earn a living or manage a small business. In fact, if FAMAS will take the lead, there will be more coherence and efficiency in developing common projects for the whole community. As government officials tend to recognize ethnic communities in terms of community groups or associations, FAMAS is in the right position to make proposals that will surely be given positive consideration.

Two years is not too long and by the time it is over, our newly elected officers should be able to show their accomplishments. Being of one party, they have no excuse not to work together and share the responsibility of governance. Each one of them has something to offer for they seem to have a good education and extensive experience in their chosen field. They have the skills and knowledge to accept any task that is delegated to each one of them.

We wish them well and hope that that our trust has not been misplaced.

Zenaida Ferry Kharroubi

The Advantages of Alternative Schooling

By Malkin Dare, President, Society for Quality Education
www.societyforqualityeducation.org

Most people accept that private schools are on average better than public schools, and the accuracy of their belief is borne out by the research. Even when researchers take into consideration the generally higher socio-economic status of private school students, they do better than their counterparts in conventional public schools.

The same thing goes for charter schools – unconventional public schools which, while free and open to all eligible students, are able to specialize and offer a superior service because they are not under the supervision of a school board. This principle holds true even for home-schoolers, whose children typically achieve at about the 85th percentile when compared to students at conventional public schools.

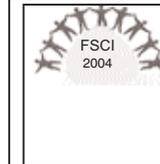
Some Canadian provinces have capitalized on this phenomenon, embracing a wide variety of alternative schools and encouraging parents to

choose among them. Five Canadian provinces, for example, partially subsidize tuition at private schools – BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Quebec.

Alberta is the province with the most school choice. Not only does it subsidize private school tuition and home-schoolers, it also is the only province which allows charter schools. As a result of the competition from all of these options, the public school boards also embrace alternatives, funding dozens of specialized schools – like Montessori schools, religious schools, all-girls schools, science schools, and on and on.

Competition turns out to be good for more than just the lucky students who are able to access the alternative schooling. Galvanized by the competition, the public schools also improve their service, leading to improvements in the alternative

See Page 19 Alternative Schooling



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Abalos resigns - Chairman says he's innocent, will file P20-M perjury case

October 2, 2007

Five months remained before retirement, but Chairman Benjamin Abalos of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) resigned Monday amid the raging controversy surrounding the national broadband deal.



Chairman Abalos (center) cried as he resigned. By him are his wife, Cora (left), and son, Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos (right).

An emotional chairman, surrounded by his family and thousands of supporters, said he decided to resign to spare the Comelec from being dragged into the controversy. There were allegations

that he brokered the \$330-million National Broadband Network project and offered bribes to a Cabinet member and the son of the House Speaker.

The decision, Abalos said, was made after days of reflection and consultation with family and friends.

"I have come to the painful determination that the time has come to separate my person from the office I now occupy, and the institution I head," he said. "I am resigning the chairmanship of the Comelec effective immediately," Abalos said, his voice cracking, head bowed and crying.

With the coming barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) elections on October 29, Abalos said "it is my intention that with my resignation today I shall have detached the Comelec from the controversy in which my person is currently embroiled."

Not guilty

Abalos repeatedly said his resignation was not admission of guilt, and he won't stop until his name is cleared. He accused the Senate blue-ribbon committee for being "unfair" in its investigation of the broadband scandal.

"Let not my detractors feast on this declaration," he said. "I am not admitting guilt for any wrongdoing. Neither am I giving up on my crusade to clear my name and reputation."

Abalos said he had not discussed

his decision with President Gloria Arroyo and said his resignation would "negate the accusation that this administration is out to protect me and my incumbency."

Arroyo suspended the project on September 22 as the controversy threatened to implicate her husband in the deal.

Abalos also said he wants to dispel insinuations that he did favors for congressmen during past elections, and that those grateful officials will now block the impeachment case recently filed against him.

"Forty years ago, I entered public service fired [up] with the ideals of promoting the welfare of our people and placing public interest above mine at all times," Abalos said.

Abalos added, "As I bow out of public service, I find comfort in the thought that at the end of even the longest of nights, the dawn will break. With the grace of the Almighty, I am confident that I shall see you once again, head unbowed at daybreak."

Mrs. Abalos comments

Abalos' wife, Corazon, said their whole family persuaded her husband to resign two days ago. She said her husband doesn't deserve the accusations, which are "malicious and very vicious."

"He doesn't like to resign because he said that it is an act of cowardice and admission of guilt," said Mrs. Abalos, who was also close to tears. "But we told him that he doesn't

deserve this. They have no right to destroy your person."

She added, "To those who have maligned my husband, they should look at themselves first on the mirror before they judge somebody. I leave their fate to the Almighty."

Case to be filed

Iloilo Vice-Governor Rolex Suplico, who filed the impeachment case against Abalos, said he intends to pursue a criminal case against him. The resignation makes the impeachment complaint moot.

Abalos said he is ready for the court battle, though.

"My resignation opens the door for anybody to file cases against me," he added. "I welcome that so that I can clear my name."

Abalos to file cases

Abalos' lawyer, Gabby Villareal, said they are filing a P20-million perjury case against Jose "Joey" de Venecia 3rd and former socioeconomic planning chief Romulo Neri for lying under oath.

"We identified that Joey de Venecia and Romulo Neri are the source of lies against Chairman Abalos," Villareal said. "Jarius Bondoc

See Page 8 ABALOS

Whistle blower complains of death threats

September 25, 2007

A businessman who alleged corruption around a controversial Philippine government telecom project awarded to a state-owned Chinese firm said Tuesday he had received death threats.

Joey de Venecia's claims about the project led to the suspension of the 330-million-dollar deal for China's ZTE Corp. to set up a broadband network for the Philippine government.

Analysts have said the deal was overpriced, and De Venecia's allegations suggested opaque government decision-making over the project. His claims also led to fears ties with China and confidence in the Philippines could be hit.

"I got one yesterday. A death threat to me and my family," De Venecia said, adding that he had hired retired military personnel as bodyguards.

"I'm tired of corruption in government, I'm tired of business as usual," he told reporters.

"The past days I've seen how difficult it is to go against the powerful in government," he said, adding that he had received text messages containing death threats.

He would not say who he suspected was behind them. But he said he had implicated powerful people with links to Philippine President Gloria Arroyo in the corruption controversy.

De Venecia told a Senate inquiry last week that an Arroyo ally, elections chief Benjamin Abalos, tried to bribe

him with 10 million dollars to drop his company's bid for the broadband project eventually won by ZTE.



Businessman Joey De Venecia

He said Arroyo's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, also bullied him to "back off."

Abalos has admitted he was given "golf holidays" in China by ZTE but denied he was offered the services of prostitutes. However, it remains unclear why he was involved in the deal in the first place.

De Venecia's father is the current House of Representatives Speaker Jose de Venecia, a long-time political ally of Arroyo but whose relationship with her has been strained by the deal.

Arroyo said Tuesday the corruption allegations had been investigated by her officials, who had described them as "uncorroborated."

She said she had suspended the deal because of "political criticism," adding her government was committed to doing business with China, a key trading partner. ■

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From Page 2

INDUCTION

the Liberals stronghold in Outremont promised to work closely with the Philippine community in achieving its goals. Hon. Jose Brilliantes referred to him as an advocate of multiculturalism as could be gleaned from his name "Mulcair". This was, of course, said in jest which made the audience laugh.

Fr. Frank Alvarez delivered an inspirational message which most people considered very relevant to our current state of affairs. He outlined the different kinds of leadership, and emphasized the meaning of true leadership. He urged the community to follow a leader who has an unselfish motivation to serve without expecting any personal gain. He said that the new leaders of FAMAS has this beautiful opportunity to serve not only their own members but also the whole community. FAMAS, being the largest and the oldest organization is founded on civic-minded objectives. For this reason, it is in a position to provide an example of true leadership.

Mr. Claro Bermudez, the newly inducted FAMAS president, summed up the evening's theme by his emphatic delivery of a few chosen words. He spoke of his commitment to serve and to unite the community in order to reach our common goals. He expressed faith in his team that they would support projects for the benefit of the whole community without any reservation nor exception.

The induction also saw the coronation of Miss Yashica Nabor as the new Bb. Pilipinas of Montreal 2007 who was the first runner up during last year's beauty pageant as the title holder, Miss Eva Rose Marpuri, moved to Alberta. Ambassador Jose Brilliantes and Mrs. Elvie Maximo presided over the crowning ceremony.

The evening went smoothly from one number to the next without a hitch by the masterful emceeing of Ms. Elenita Belgica and Ed Vasquez.

Guests numbering around 420 were well entertained by the beautiful folk dances performed by the Kalinangan Dance Troupe, and vocal solos by Filcan Idol Jonathan Pantaleon. Laging Handa Scout Group 0592, the first Filipino Canadian Scout group in Canada, participated in the parade of colors during the opening ceremony. Live dance music was provided by the Blacksmith Band led by Ramon Vicente. Judging from the enthusiastic crowd who danced till the wee hours of the morning, the party was indeed a huge success.

From Page 1

Filipino Star

long as Bert and his editorial board decided to use The Filipino Star which has remained until now. When I took over in April 1998, there was a need to distinguish the new from the old, hence, we added the name "North American" which in itself means that the intention is to cover not only Montreal community events but also any other Filipino news in North America.

Without sounding presumptuous, my long term goal is really to get other Filipinos everywhere to share their experiences and develop



Bert Abiera, former publisher

a sense of kinship with others.

Looking back over the past allows us to reflect on our experience and see how we can improve. It also allows us to recognize people who in one way or another have helped the newspaper for what it is today.

The change of ownership of the newspaper happened probably by fate. Bert Abiera unintentionally gave me the opportunity to be a publisher and editor when he asked me to help him incorporate. At first I thought I would rather not be involved and would just help him revive the paper after announcing its demise at one of the meetings of the La Liga Rizalista in December 1997. In turn, I also asked other community leaders to be involved. Some important members of the community told me they would help but I after waiting for a few weeks without any sign of their commitment, I took things into my own hands and proceeded to recruit other people. At first they were all enthusiastic in agreeing to the idea of investing in the Filipino Star. I was able to recruit around 15 people who pledged to purchase shares in the new company to be incorporated. It was agreed during our meetings that each shareholder would solicit one page of advertisement to support the cost of publishing the paper. However, after



A candid shot of Hilda Veloso while she was busy doing paste up work for the Star.

two months, there was no one who was able to solicit a single page of ad. Within a short time I realized that it would not be easy to have too many people around who did not have the ability nor experience to publish a newspaper. The rest is history as those who were not happy with my proposal that they become silent partners asked for a refund of their

Notwithstanding the hardships of producing a small newspaper almost singlehandedly, I was quite happy doing it for it gives me the satisfaction of writing my ideas and feelings about issues more readily than if I did not have an outlet. It seemed as if I had found a good combination - running a private school and publishing a community newspaper. This proved to



Alvin Veloso caught unaware by the roving photographer (Zenaida) while he was closely reading the article he wrote for the Filipino Star.

\$500 contribution. I refunded every one except for a few people who were given back their shares later.

For the first seven months, Bert Abiera produced the paper and I acted as the editor. When he left for a holiday in the Philippines in November 1999, I had to produce the paper alone for the first time. Although I had the help of Alvin and Hilda Veloso from time to time, it was not enough for some times, they also had to leave me alone when they needed to attend to their own obligations with the Philippine Folk Art Society and other organizations that need their help.

When I started doing the newspaper, it was a real struggle for not only was it taking a lot of time doing the work by hand but also relying on volunteers to help me meet the deadlines was not always possible.

be very useful and a privilege. Because of the newspaper, I have enjoyed meeting VIPs and attending many events organized by the different levels of government. One particular press event that I could not forget was when Mrs. Sheila Copps invited the ethnic media to participate in the Diversity Forum in Ottawa. I was able to enjoy a first class accommodation on Via Rail and stayed in a five-star hotel for three days without spending a penny. To top it off, I was even given some funds for dinner expenses.

It has been more than 9 years now that I have been publishing the paper monthly. At the beginning I started with 9 or 10 issues a year but eventually managed to publish 12 issues regularly since 2003. I have spent many sleepless nights in producing the paper virtually alone. It



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is only lately that I have some assistance in gathering the news to fill up some of the pages of the paper. With the computerization of the newspaper, my son helped me in putting it on the website of Gilmore College in December 2005. By January 2006, the North American Filipino Star has its own website, filipinostar.org.

As the Filipino Star is completing its 25th year of publication, it is about time that I look at what I have to do in order to make it better and bigger. Until now, the paper is like a non-profit organization as the money derived from advertising is just sufficient to pay for the overhead costs of an office, website hosting and equipment used in its production. If the paper is to survive and continue to serve the community, some steps need to be taken to make it more profitable so that people can be hired to do the production, editing, soliciting of ads, account collection, invoicing and many other things that are done in a business enterprise.

It has always been my intention to be able to publish the paper twice a month but I kept on postponing it until this month when I happen to publish earlier than usual because of the by elections on September 17. I committed myself to publish before this date as I accepted the advertisement of Mr. Thomas Mulcair, the NDP candidate in the Outremont riding. Fortunately, he won the election and I was glad that I may have helped him communicate his message to the voters.

As it is not possible to keep on losing sleep to produce the paper without enough help, I decided that I should advise the whole community what it takes to continue publishing a community newspaper. Bert Abiera published the paper for 15 years but did not make it profitable enough to continue and finally gave it up. He turned it over to me and it is now my responsibility to find ways of making sure that the paper will continue to serve the Filipino-Canadian community in Montreal and elsewhere for a long time.

I am optimistic about the future of the Filipino Star because of many compliments I have been receiving. I hope that my advertisers will also agree that a community newspaper is an important resource that benefits everyone. However, I also need to let them know that I cannot operate the newspaper like a non-profit organization and I have to ask them to share the burden of the costs. I have to make it a business that is profitable enough to hire its own personnel. Hence, I am appealing to all advertisers to support the North American Filipino Star by making them agree to the following proposal.

If advertisers agree to have their ads twice a month, they will pay the same rate for the first issue, and will receive a 10% discount on the second issue of the month if they have been advertising for at least two years. If they do not publish twice a month, their old rate will be subject to a 25% increase as the rates have not been updated for the past three years although costs have been constantly increasing every six months. For some

advertisers who have been paying the same rate for over five years without an increase, their rates will still be the same if they agree to advertise twice a month, but they should also expect a slight increase periodically to make the transition fair to everyone. A message will be attached to their invoices to explain this new policy as clearly as possible.

It is also planned to introduce internet advertising as soon as proper equipment and computer programs are purchased to improve the Star's website. At present, all advertisers get free internet advertising, and they are seen by anyone around the world. A modest rate structure will be

established for internet advertising in the near future.

Before concluding this article, I wish to thank the people who have contributed to the progress of the North American Filipino Star, specially those who have been advertising since 1998 for without their support, the paper cannot continue to exist. Furthermore, without volunteer writers, the paper will not be interesting to read. I therefore owe a lot to the following people: Dr. Victor Gavino, Ester Stansfield, Prof. Isaac Goodine, Atty. Lito Domingo, Ms. Rachel Reyes, Al Abdon, Michael Davantes, Alvin Veloso, Hilda Veloso, Julie Parado who wrote a column for a few months called

the "Eye Opener," Riza Esmeralda, Joselito Sarto, Mary Joy Lizarondo, Anna May Tappan who occasionally writes in Tagalog and Nida Butaran who has helped the Star in many ways. I also wish to thank Bert Abiera for having given me the opportunity to be the publisher and editor of the Filipino Star.

In commemoration of the silver anniversary of the Filipino Star, prestige awards will be given to community volunteers who have not been recognized at all as they do not belong to any particular organization. More details will be announced later as the actual anniversary month is November.



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COMMUNITY NEWS



Interactive Seminar, September 23, given by Mr. Philippe Bernier, Information Officer of Service Canada regarding the improved access to CPP and Old Age Security benefits, under the auspices of CFFQ officers with Joe Calugay as adviser-coordinator and Regie Villamor, the organizer.



Reggie Villamor, seminar organizer, presents Plaque of Appreciation to Philippe Bernier of Human Resources and Social Development Canada.

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tie champion team, 15 under pose with their coaches and supporters

The Philippine Basketball Association of Montreal (PBAM), the association where the finest Montreal-Filipino basketball players compete and congregate, played in Flushing, Queens, New York City, September 1-2 and came back with the Midget Championship title of the 31st PIBNA (Philippine Inter-City Basketball of Northern America).

The champions were one of four PBAM teams that made it to the Finals; the 13-under coached by Juanito Ortaleza lost to a tall Toronto team, 75-52; the SuperMasters, coached by Peter Sanchez, were outmuscled by Morrision in a bruising, physical game, 61-40 and the Women were stunned in a hard fought controversial title game to NewYork, 51-45.

The 11 under coached by Dennis Ortizo and Celso Atas and managed by Debbie Alquisada, had a disappointing baptism of fire in big league competition, losing 2 consecutive games; the decimated 5'10" defending champions could not get untracked, losing to eventual champion New York and Chicago, in the higher bracket; the 5'10" REBS lost to Chicago B but rebounded to beat Gainsville in the low bracket. Ed Cayanong's 18 under upended defending champion New York, 56-51 to avenge last year's loss in the finals, bowed to Central Jersey by 10 in the second game then kow-towed, despite Keith Cayanong's heroics, to

See Page 19

Basketball



Gilmore International College and the Academy of Letters



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Gilmore College
Editor & Publisher,
North American Filipino Star
Group Commissioner, Scouts Canada, Quebec Council



The Laging Handa Scouts participating in the parade of colors at the opening of the induction of FAMAS, Saturday, September 22, 2007



Posing for souvenir, Cubs and Scouts with volunteer leaders Romy Valenzuela, Richard San Miguel, and prospective Scout leader, Ernelito Lebario and Maryjoy Lizarondo



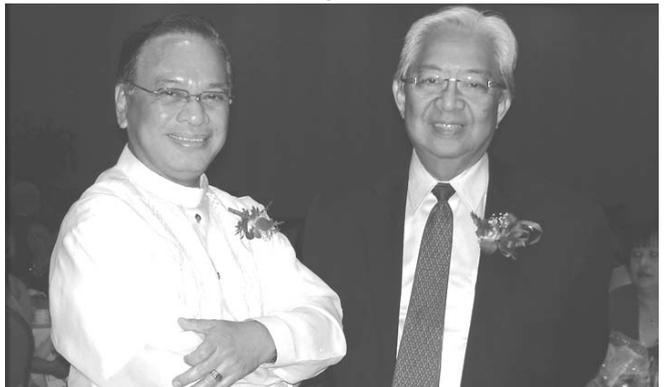
Hon. Jose Brillantes and the newly elected MP for Outremont, Mr. Thomas Mulcair and his wife, pose with the executive board of FAMAS.



The Filipino Solidarity Cooperative executive board members pose with members and prospective investors. From left: Alex Robes, Vice-President, Hermie Arguilles, member, Zenaida Kharroubi, Secretary-Treasurer, Ben Bade, President, Dr. Jesus Pelausa, member, Claro Bermudez, FAMAS president and prospective investor, and Riza Esmeralda, FAMAS director and coop member.



Laging Handa Scouts and their friends pose for souvenir during the Induction Party at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, September 30, 2007



A candid shot of Father Frank Alvarez and Ambassador Jose Brillantes while they relax at the Induction Party, Sept. 22, 2007



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Guests at the Induction Party pose with the Ambassador Jose Brillantes

Mike Arroyo: I never said 'Back off'

October 3, 2007

Immediately on the defensive upon returning home from a foreign trip, the man in the eye of the latest political storm to hit the Arroyo presidency Tuesday denied ever uttering the now infamous words: "Back off."

"I just want to clarify, I never said 'back off.' That is not even in my vocabulary," the husband of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said upon his arrival, even before the media could fire off any questions.

"And I never pointed a finger at Joey de Venecia," Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo said at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).



Presidential spouse Mike Arroyo

Businessman Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, son of Speaker Jose de Venecia, set off a major controversy two weeks ago when he testified at a Senate inquiry into the National Broadband Network (NBN) project and recounted how Arroyo supposedly tried to browbeat him into backing out of the project.

De Venecia said that at a meeting at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong City, Ms Arroyo's husband pointed a finger inches from his face and told him: "Back off."

"How can I point a finger and say 'back off' to someone I don't even know?" Arroyo said in a minute-long talk with the media.

"Put yourself in my position. Can you tell someone off right away na first time 'nyo mag-meet and say 'back off, back off'? You do not say that."

He arrives, she leaves

Arroyo said his piece upon arriving from Hong Kong at 4:48 p.m., 15 days after leaving the country on his second foreign trip since his critical heart operation in April. He accompanied the President to the APEC summit last month.

Arroyo quietly left the country on Sept. 17 on the eve of the younger De Venecia's explosive Senate testimony naming Arroyo as the "mystery man" who tried to intimidate him.

De Venecia's firm, Amsterdam Holdings Inc., had contested the NBN project, which was later awarded to telecommunications giant ZTE Corp. of China.

Bribery claims

The controversy burgeoned into a full-blown scandal following De Venecia's claim that resigned Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. had offered him \$10 million for AHL to stay away from the project, and an allegation by former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri that Abalos had also offered him what he understood to be a P200-million bribe.

Arroyo arrived on board a Cathay Pacific flight at the NAIA almost 12 hours after Ms Arroyo flew out to China on the first leg of a two-nation Asian swing.

Speaking briefly about his trip, Arroyo said: "It was a vacation, thank you very much ... I'm well-rested now."

It still wasn't clear though whether Arroyo spent all of his two weeks in Hong Kong or whether he took a forward flight from there to an undisclosed destination. Unconfirmed reports said he flew to Europe.

Only a reminder

Arroyo admitted meeting De Venecia at Wack Wack but said: "That's why it was a chance meeting, only at Wack Wack."

During the encounter -- the first time they met, based on Arroyo's brief account -- Ms Arroyo's husband said

he cautioned the Speaker's son about getting his hands on the project.

"What I did was I reminded him, I reminded that he might be liable under the anti-graft law because he's the son of the Speaker. He cannot deal with government contracts," said Arroyo, a lawyer.

Chance encounter

He did not elaborate on what else, if anything, transpired during the meeting and did not say when it happened.

Abalos had also admitted meeting De Venecia at Wack Wack but told last week's Senate hearing that it was a chance encounter.

Asked if he would file charges against De Venecia -- as Abalos had threatened -- Arroyo replied: "I don't know. That's up to my lawyers."

Flanked by guards from the Presidential Security Group and airport officials, Arroyo immediately left the old terminal via the exclusive Dignitaries Lounge, where the media were barred.

President Arroyo cancels telecoms deal with China

October 3, 2007

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has told Chinese President Hu Jintao that her government had cancelled a \$330-million telecoms deal with a Chinese firm because of a corruption scandal, a government spokesman said.

Presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye said Arroyo discussed the cancellation of the deal with Chinese telecom firm ZTE Corp in a bilateral meeting with Hu in Shanghai on Tuesday, where Arroyo was a guest at the opening of the 2007 Special Olympics.

The Philippines' election chief, a key ally of Arroyo, resigned on Monday following allegations he offered bribes to secure a contract for ZTE to set up a broadband network linking Philippine government agencies across the archipelago.

The poll chief's resignation, which came just before he was to face impeachment proceedings in Congress, was widely viewed as an attempt to protect Arroyo.

"The president explained the difficult decision not to continue with the NBN (national broadband network) contract and the president counted on the good relations between our two countries for understanding," Bunye said in a statement.

"We are gratified that President Hu offered understanding when he said that our relationship is in very good shape and the Philippines has been a great ally," he added.

The telecoms contract that ZTE bagged was tied to concessional loans the Chinese government would provide the Philippines to bankroll the project.

continued from page 3 ABALOS

was just used as an instrument to spread said lies."

He said that if they win, the P20 million proceeds would be donated to the various charities, including Ciara Marie Foundation, which was founded in honor of Abalos' late granddaughter, and the Wack Wack Caddies Association.

With his resignation, Abalos said Senior Commissioner Resurreccion Borra would act as officer in charge pending the President's appointment of a permanent replacement.

He said he plans to attend Tuesday's Comelec's en banc session but not as a chairman. He said he just wants to share his thoughts about the coming October 29 polls. Abalos added that he just wants to ensure a smooth turnover. ■

Abalos' allies continue to stand by him

October 3, 2007

Resigned Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. can still count on a few rare allies who continue to stand by him amid bribery allegations in the ZTE-national broadband network deal.

Sen. Benigno Aquino III said that he and his family, his mother former President Corazon Aquino, continue to recognize a debt of gratitude for Abalos' past deeds.

"He (Abalos) stood up against all coups against my mother during her term, and my mother acknowledges that up to this day," said Aquino noting that Mandaluyong, where Abalos used to be city mayor, was among the critical areas during the mutinous days of post-EDSA People Power revolution.

Aquino said that his mother went to Abalos after the latter's press conference where he announced his resignation to personally "commiserate" with him.

"It's not about ZTE, in fact she does not want to comment on that, she was there because she feels it unfair that Abalos' family had been dragged into the controversy when only the chairman and his son (Mandaluyong City Mayor Ben Hur Abalos) are in politics," said Aquino.

Aquino said that Abalos' move was commendable because he could have used the last few months in his office to fight his personal battle. Instead, Aquino said Abalos chose to keep the Comelec away from his crisis.

Former Sen. Vicente "Tito" Sotto III, a golfing buddy of Abalos, decried what he described as the hypocrisy in the public crucifixion of Abalos.

"A number of these elected officials who cry for Chairman Abalos' head and blood must have, at one time or another, been a beneficiary of his easy manners and accessibility. But now that he is being crucified, there is no more need for his attention and understanding," said Sotto.

Sotto said it was unfortunate that Abalos' "long and distinguished career in public service had to end this way."

"There is a basic lack of fairness here," said Sotto. ■

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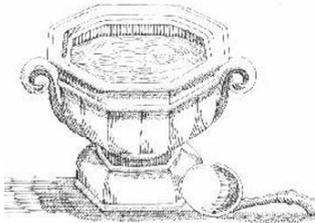
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Philippine Cuisine

Fish Tinola



- 1/2 kilo fresh fish
- 5 cups water
- 1 small piece crushed ginger
- 2 ripe tomatoes, sliced
- 3 long green peppers
- 3 green onions, cut-up
- salt to taste

Clean fish. Wash and slice into serving pieces. OR get "chowder pieces.". Place in a pot and add water, ginger and tomatoes. Cover and boil over high heat for 10-12 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and cook for 5 minutes. Serve hot with steamed rice.



Chicken Adobo Aloha



Ingredients:

- 3/4 k chicken, cut into serving portions
- 1 can (234 g) DEL MONTE Fresh Cut Pineapple Chunks, drained (reserve syrup)
- 12 cloves garlic, crushed and fried
- 1/2 cup oil
- MARINADE 6 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1/4 cup DEL MONTE Red Cane Vinegar
- 1 Tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp iodized fine salt (or 1 Tbsp iodized rock salt)
- 1/2 tsp peppercorns, crushed
- reserved pineapple syrup

Procedures:

- 1 MARINATE chicken for 30 minutes. Drain and reserve marinade.
- 2 FRY chicken in oil until golden brown. Combine chicken with marinade, then simmer until tender.
- 3 ADD DEL MONTE Fresh Cut Pineapple Chunks. Top with fried garlic.

EARTH TALK

Questions & Answers
About Our Environment

EARTH TALK

From the Editors of E/The Environmental Magazine
Dear EarthTalk: Is removing the salt from ocean water (desalination) a feasible fix for the world's shortage of fresh water?
- Nora Jones, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Fresh water scarcity is already posing major problems for more than a billion people around the world, mostly in arid developing countries. The World Health Organization predicts that by mid-century, four billion of us—nearly two-thirds of the world's present population—will face severe fresh water shortages.

With human population expected to balloon another 50 percent by 2050, resource managers are increasingly looking to alternative scenarios for quenching the world's growing thirst. Desalination—a process whereby highly pressurized ocean water is pushed through tiny membrane filters and distilled into drinking water—is being held forth by some as one of the most promising solutions to the problem. But critics point out it doesn't come without its economic and environmental costs.

According to the non-profit Food & Water Watch, desalinated ocean water is the most expensive form of fresh water out there, given the infrastructure costs of collecting, distilling and distributing it. The group reports that, in the U.S., desalinated water costs at least five times as much to harvest as other sources of fresh water. Similar high costs are a big hurdle to desalination efforts in poor countries as well, where limited funds

are already stretched too thin. On the environmental front, widespread desalination could take a heavy toll on ocean biodiversity. "Ocean water is filled with living creatures, and most of them are lost in the process of desalination," says Sylvia Earle, one of the world's foremost marine biologists and a National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence. "Most are microbial, but



Will the world need to turn increasingly to desalinating ocean water for drinking water as global population balloons into the middle of the 21st century? (Getty Images)

intake pipes to desalination plants also take up the larvae of a cross section of life in the sea, as well as some fairly large organisms...part of the hidden cost of doing business," she says.

Earle also points out that the very salty residue left over from desalination must be disposed of properly, not just dumped back into the sea. Food & Water Watch concurs, warning that coastal areas already battered by urban and agricultural runoff can ill afford to absorb tons of concentrated saltwater sludge.

Food & Water Watch advocates instead for better fresh water management practices. "Ocean desalination hides the growing water supply problem instead of focusing on water management and lowering water usage," the group reports, citing a

See Page 19 Earth Talk

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The North American Filipino Star Photo Gallery



Elvie Maximo and Ambassador Jose Brillantes put the crown on the new Bb. Pilipinas 2007, Yashica Nabor. Also in the picture is the Munting Binibini Heather Liza Mondoux who served as crown bearer.



Apple pickers relax among pumpkins galore during their picnic organized by Gilmore International College, September 30, 2007.



Gilmore College International Students and their friends went apple picking, September 30, 2007 at Denis Charbonneau orchards.



Souvenir photo of: Ambassador Jose Brillantes, Zenaida Kharroubi, Hon. Thomas Mulcair and his wife, Claro Bermudez, Riza Esmeralda, Nilo Parial and Eric Montilla.



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TFC on Demand

TOURISM

BOHOL

Splendor underwater and over hills

Another gem of the Visayas, Bohol's historical significance extends way back to the blood compact between Boholano Chieftain Sikatuna and the Spanish conquistador, Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, in 1565.

Scenic Bohol casts an enigmatic charm drawn from the many archaic mementos spread throughout the oval-shaped island: from the Chocolate Hills and the tarsier to 16th century watchtowers and Jesuit Baroque mission churches.

The Chocolate Hills, all of 1,268 perfectly cone-shaped hills, are undoubtedly the most famous tourist attraction in the province. Among these hills that abound in Central Bohol, two have been developed into top-class resorts.

One of the rare faunas found in the Philippine archipelago, **the Tarsier** is the smallest primate in the world. It is a nocturnal primate measuring from four to five inches, with a tail that is longer than its body. Those interested in tarsier watching are always welcomed by the Boholanos to see the famous primate in its natural abode up the hills in the town of **Corella**.

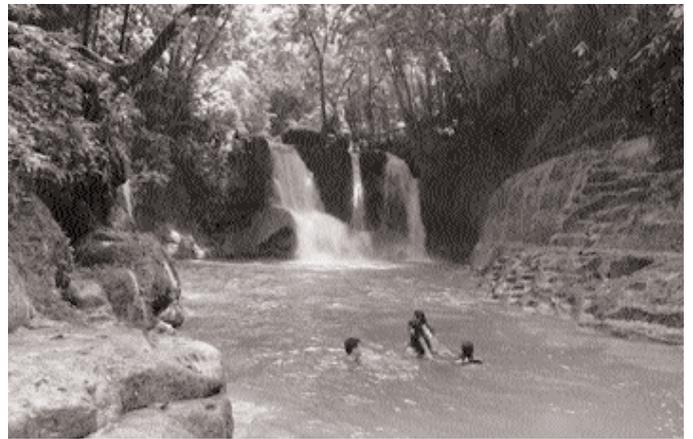
A tropical haven of natural beauty,



the coastline of the province is skimmed by gentle coves and white sand beaches. You can find some of the country's great dive sights here. **Balicasag** in Bohol is one of the very best and most popular dives in the Visayas. A black coral forest is among its main attractions but virtually anywhere you drop in is sure to be rewarding. Another major attraction, **Cabilao** is renowned for the hammerhead sharks that shoal around the clear waters. Large pelagics are very common here, and if you are really lucky, you can find yourself swimming with a passing school of dolphins. **Panglao Island** boasts of its white sand beaches equal to those in Boracay and is also popular for its dive spots. Another famous dive site worth mentioning is the neighboring island of Pamilacan, which is also recognized as a prime site for whale watching.

Bohol island lies about 700 kilometers directly south of Manila and is surrounded by Cebu to the east, the Camotes Sea to the north, and the Mindanao Sea to the south. It is the hometown of Carlos P. Garcia, Philippines' 4th President.

The natives, who are called



Mag-Aso falls is located at the heart of Antequera, Bohol. It stands about 25 feet tall with verdant green forest as a fitting background for the placid waters. A very beautiful bathing resort with its cool cascading water and a scenic surroundings.



Panglao Island is famous for its long stretches of white sand beaches. The deep sea of Doljo around it has clear and clean water which remains undisturbed by strong waves.



Topping Bohol's natural tourism assets are the wondrous Chocolate Hills which have drawn thousands of foreign and domestic tourists. These perfectly cone-shaped hills that abound in Central Bohol are the only ones of their kind in the world. They get their chocolate color during the dry season from March to May.

Boholanos, indulge themselves in hunting whales, dolphins, sharks and mantas around the area near Northern Mindanao. They are also known for their weaving skills and their products are very popular all over the country. Their handicrafts include antequera baskets, buntal hats, and mats and sacks made from saguran fibers.

The majority of Boholanos speak the native dialect, which is, what else, distinctively Boholano. Cebuano, Tagalog, and English are widely spoken and understood as well.

Bohol is essentially an agricultural province. Its main products are rice, coconut, and corn. Still, the province is fast becoming a tourist destination. It is graciously endowed with natural and historical attractions, such as **Baclayon Church**, the oldest stone church in the Philippines, located in the town of Baclayon, six kilometers from Tagbilaran City. **Bohol Museum** located in Tagbilaran City proper, is also worth a visit. Once the home of former **President Carlos P. Garcia**, the fourth President of the Philippine Republic and the greatest statesman Bohol has ever produced, and his family. The museum gives the visitors a feel of what Bohol was, is, and will be. On display are the late President and family's memorabilia, old relics plus a collection of shells found on Bohol's shores.

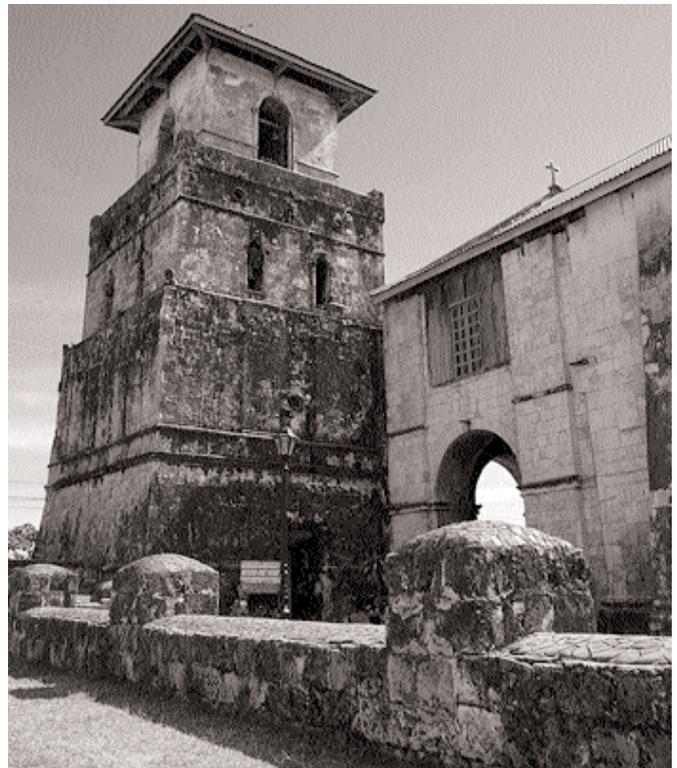
As far as additional 'worth-the-trip' sites, there are:

- **Hinagdanan Cave**, 6 km from Dauis. To get inside you have to pass a small hole in the ground where a steep stair is placed (hence, the name). At the bottom of the cave you will find a functioning pool.

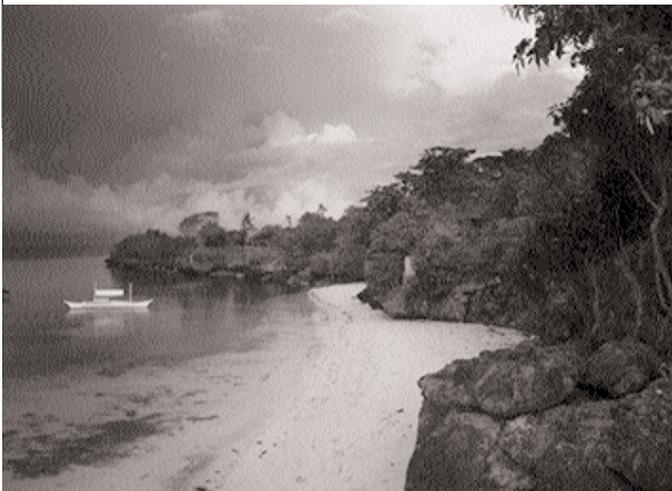
- **Laya Beach** - This is the most famous tourist attraction in Bohol. Among the thousands of perfectly cone-shaped hills, which abound in Central Bohol, two of the hills have become developed into a resort. On top of the hill are two youth hostels with a conference room, cozy cottages with private rooms and accommodation, a swimming pool and a tennis court.

- **Sta. Fe Beach** - One of the favorite beaches covered by white sand. Fronting the open sea of Mindanao. This beach is visited by big numbers of picnickers during holidays. It is located in about one and one half kilometers from the poblacion of Alburquerque.

Bohol may be reached by plane or by sea. Domestic airlines have direct flights from Manila to Bohol. You may also choose to fly Manila to Cebu and from Cebu a 90-minute craft boat will take you to Tagbilaran City. Several seaports in the city service shipping lines that travel to Visayas, Mindanao and Manila at least twice a week.



Baclayon Church, Baclayon - Known as the oldest stone church in the Philippines. Built in 1595 by the Jesuits, it still contains various interesting relics and artifacts dating back to the early 16th century.



Alona Beach, Panglao. Located in a cover of white sandy beach facing the Mindanao sea. The waters are deep, making the beach ideal for scuba diving. The beautiful and big coral rocks are the habitat of small and big colored fish.



Hinagdanan Cave - It has clean, fresh water gushing from rocky sides. An eerie underworld of stalactites and stalagmites. Underneath is a bathing pool, which always surprises casual tourists, but which locals thoroughly enjoy.



Bohol is also the home of the Philippine Tarsier, the smallest monkey in the world measuring only four or five inches with its tail longer than its body.

FILIPINO STAR SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

Filipinos irked with "Desperate Housewives" racial slur



Popular primetime TV show *Desperate Housewives* raised a lot of eyebrows in the Filipino community with the show's September 30 episode in the U.S.

In one scene of the said episode, a doctor confronts Susan Mayer (played by actress Teri Hatcher) with the news about Susan experiencing menopause. During the doctor's explanation, the uptight Susan cuts him short with an apparent racist slur against Filipino medical schools.

The following is an excerpt from the controversial episode:

Dr. Mayfair: "I know for a lot of women, the word 'menopause' has negative connotations. The heart ageing, brittle bones, loss of sexual desire...."

Susan Meyer: "Before we go any further, can I check those diplomas? 'Coz I would just like to make sure that they're not from some med school in the Philippines."

That dialogue proved too much for a lot of people as they criticized the show's creators and the actress through blogging and online forums. One Filipino in particular, Dr. Siegfried Perez from Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia, emailed his sentiments to GMANews.TV.

"I have communicated with fellow

members of the health care profession, both Filipinos and other nationalities alike. We have all come to the conclusion that this kind of racial slur is a very irresponsible act ...[which] should NEVER be tolerated in any society, whether in a first world or a third world country," said Dr. Siegfried Perez. The Filipino doctor added that they would demand the immediate public apology of the show's producers, writers and actors.

As most people blame the show's writers, others have turned their eye on actress Teri Hatcher.

"The actress, Teri Hatcher, should insist not to deliver such dialogs as she just became the face of this insult to a country that was once a territory of the US," posted by an online user from the blogsite, Coffee With Aimee.

Teri Hatcher is best remembered as Lois Lane in the now defunct TV series *Lois and Clark*.

Desperate Housewives is a multi-award winning comedy series which premiered in October 2003 and is aired weekly in the U.S. by ABC Network. It is locally shown on Studio 23. It follows the story of five sexually "desperate" sub-urban housewives living along Wisteria Lane in the fictional American town of Fairview. ■

Pops still hurting



It is obvious from the way Pops Fernandez finally revealed the real reason for the break-up of her marriage to Martin Nievera that she is still hurting. But this time, there's no denying that there is now also deep hatred in her heart for the man she used to love and whom she thought loved her in return.

For a time, before their marriage, Pops and Martin were the most popular singing tandem. Their team-up in the TV show, "Penthouse Live," won for them millions of followers.

In the Yes! story, she recalled one of the most humiliating memories she had was when she asked Martin to please tell Katrina (Ojeda) to refrain from telling Pops' friends that he only married Pops because Pops was pregnant. And that it was his brother, Luigi, who forced him to marry her, "because the whole Philippines will be upset if he didn't marry her."

Pops clearly remembered what Martin told her: "But it's true."

At that very moment, according to Pops, she wanted to die.

This conversation happened while they were in an airplane on their way home to the Philippines from Guam.

Katrina is the woman whom Pops points to as the cause of the break-up of her marriage to Martin and is the mother of Martin's son, Santino, who'll turn one year-old on Oct. 26.

When the issue of the said magazine came out, Pops had just left for the US for a series of concerts with Kuh Ledesma. There was no way for movie writers to ask her why she had to reveal everything now.

But Pops had a press conference for her Dec. 8 Araneta Coliseum concert before she left for the US. That time, she was in her element.

Thus, when she was asked why Martin was not included in her list of special guests, which included Sharon Cuneta, Billy Crawford, Jay-R and Gary Valenciano, she honestly answered that she's not sure whether she would invite him to participate at all. She revealed she was still mad at Martin for the "monkey issue" which involved her sons, Robin and Ram, and Katrina.

To recall, she said, a friend told her that Katrina, at one time, had called her sons "monkeys."

In any case, this is Martin's explanation on the issue: He said the incident happened nine years ago, when he and Pops were newly separated. After he left their house in Ayala, Alabang, he holed up in a one-room apartment. When one time the two boys visited him, they kept jumping up and down in his bed, which was given to him by a relative of Katrina.

The bed broke in two. And he mentioned this to Katrina (remember, it was a relative of Katrina who gave him the bed), who, in turn, must have mentioned it to friends. But the word "monkeys" was used, according to Martin, in this context: "Martin's son kept jumping on Martin's bed like monkeys kaya, the bed broke." ■

An eye-opener for Heart



"There's always a right time, if not a perfect time, for everything.

Heart Evangelista can attest to this, as she recently reunited with her dad after three years of no talk and cold treatment. The "cold war" at home is finally over.

"One day I woke up and realized I have to do my job as a daughter," recalls Heart. "I passed by the house. My dad was there. He checked on me and I said I had a taping. He said, 'Sayang i-sho-shopping pa naman kita.' That was it. It was the first time I didn't cry. It will be a wonderful Christmas for all."

It was her second attempt to reach out to her dad. And she says it's one of the reasons she is glowing and feeling complete these days.

It's time to move on, as Heart puts it, and to let bygones be bygones. The reunion, she adds, is an early Christmas gift from the real Santa above.

Does that long-overdue renewal of ties mean another reunion for her dad, this time with boyfriend Jericho Rosales?

"I will wait for His perfect time," is Heart's quick reply.

Christmas has indeed come early for this young actress, last seen on the hit TV series *Hiram na Mukha*, as new projects are being lined up to her.

On top of the list is her entry to ABS-CBN's *Pangarap na Bituin* as Cassie Salcedo. "My character seems to be a kontravida, but she is not that kind of person at all," says Heart of

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"My character seems to be a kontrabida, but she is not that kind of person at all," says Heart of Cassie, the bag designer and former girlfriend of Terrence Rodriguez (played by Jericho).

"She is loving. Her presence will be the reason why Terrence and Emerald Mendoza (Sarah Geronimo) will realize what they really are to each other. A lot of things will happen. I will appear for a couple of weeks. My appearance is fast. Cassie will give a little twist to the story."

In real life, however, Heart doesn't have to compete with anyone for Jericho's attention. She is secure in the thought that she is the only one in his heart. This is one of the many things Heart is thankful for these days.

Not to mention the solo-starrer soap to be released next year, a follow-up to Hiram na Mukha. Two movies, one with Regal Films and another with Star Cinema, are in the works.

Most awaited is the album where Heart can show again her singing chops. It's a collection of her favorite songs from different musical genres which she is producing herself.

Heart will also guest on Kapamilya shows like Love Spell.

"It's really time for me to move on," says Heart of her exit to MYX as a pioneering VJ. "I'm happy there are new and refreshing faces. I think it's time for others to shine."

O"(With what I have gone through in life), I'm happier than I was before," says Heart. "I do appreciate everything now." ■

Cherie, Dawn get husband's nod to return to showbiz



Dawn Zulueta

Now that they are older, re-nowned actresses Cherie Gil and Dawn Zulueta, co-stars in ABS-CBN's new series "Lastikman," share a number of things in common.

When Cherie, 44, married international violinist Roni Regoff 20 years ago, she decided to leave the limelight and become a housewife and mother to their three children, Ja'me, now 20 years old, Bianca, 12 and Ralph, 11. Cherie and the kids went with Roni anywhere he had a performance or they would stay in a

country where it would be convenient for Roni to join them. For a while, they lived in New York. They were in Venice before Cherie decided that they settle down in the Philippines.

By then, the children were all grown up and needed to attend regular schools. Ja'me is currently taking up a course in business at the Ateneo University. The two younger children are enrolled in a British school.

"My decision to resume my showbiz career has the blessing of Roni," said Cherie. "And he's happy that I'm busy. At least naman kasi dito, I'm able to get people to help me not just to take care of the kids but to run the household."

Cherie's role in "Lastikman" is something she has not portrayed before. She is the "Ice Queen" who has the power to turn anything, be it a living or not, into ice. She is one of the enemies of Lastikman.

But she is also the mother of Iya Villania and Danilo Barrios. Because of her ambition and her power, which her children are not aware of, she has become distant to her kids. Deep inside though, she loves her kids very much.

"Kaya kahit kontrabida ang role ko, may puso," she said with a smile. ■

What Snooky Serna needs now



Apparently, not another interview—on TV, radio or print.

Her latest conflict started on DJ Mo's radio show. Asked by the shock jock how she lost her virginity, she said she was only 14... and then the shocker... she had been "raped."

GMA 7's "Showbiz Central" immediately booked the ex-child star for a tell-all Q&A.

But Snooky refused to go into "graphic details," on account of her two daughters. So why grant the interview at all?

Host John Lapus insisted it was to help other victims. Then why was he persistent about revealing the identity of the supposed assailant?

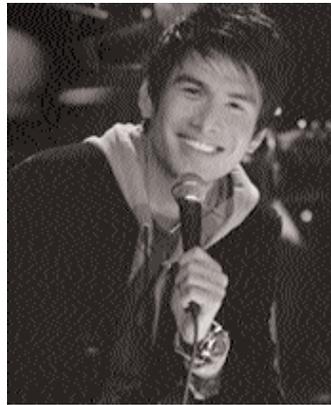
"Was he a leading man or an actor who played your father?" "Where did it happen?"

Snooky threatened to walk out. That line of questioning wasn't part of the deal, she exclaimed on air. Later she answered one of the supposedly offensive questions just the same.

Alas, the alleged crime happened "sa bahay," Snooky said. In the end, she warned other young women: "Just because a man is handsome or looks gentle, doesn't mean he's not [capable of] rape."

Another can of worms? ■

Christian Bautista sorry for skipping lyrics of national anthem



Singer Christian Bautista's vocal prowess might have catapulted him to the top of the pop charts but he still makes mistakes on stage.

Last Sunday, Bautista missed a few lines while singing the Philippine national anthem at an exhibition match between reigning world bantamweight champion Gerry Penalosa and NABF bantamweight champion Bernabe Concepcion at Metropolis Mall in Alabang.

Near the end of "Lupang Hinirang" (Chosen Land), Bautista sang the lines "Ang bituin at araw na kailanpama'y di magdidilim. Lupa ng araw ng luwalhati't pagsinta." He missed two lines and then finished the song with the final line "Ang mamatay ng dahil sa 'yo!'"

The correct lyrics, according to National Commission for Culture and the Arts, are:

Lupa ng araw, ng luwalhati't pagsinta (Beautiful land of love, O land of light)

Buhay ay langit sa piling mo (In thine embrace 'tis rapture to lie)

Aming ligaya, na pag may mang-aapi (But it is glory ever, when thou art wronged)

Ang mamatay nang dahil sa iyo. (For us, thy sons, to suffer and die).

The song was met with both applause and some jeers. Bautista later apologized for the error, saying that he had a momentary lapse while singing the anthem.

"I apologize to the Filipino people for the unforgivable lapse of memory that occurred yesterday during my rendition of the national anthem. I was recovering from a cold and the adrenalin and excitement of the moment got me through it. Unfortunately, it was the cost of a momentary lapse on my part," he said in a statement.

"I promise that my next rendition of our national anthem will be faultless," he added.

The music of "Lupang Hinirang" was composed in 1898 by Julian Felipe, with lyrics adapted from the Spanish poem "Filipinas" by Jose Palma in 1899. The lyrics were translated into Filipino by Julian Cruz Balmaceda, Ildefonso Santos, and Francisco Caballo with minor revisions

made in 1962.

Bautista is a regular host of ABS-CBN's weekly variety show ASAP '07. He is busy preparing for his first major solo concert at the Cuneta Astrodome in Pasay City on October 6. ■

KC Concepcion scores another endorsement



The top brass of Sony BMG Records was in full force at the launching of KC Concepcion as the newest endorser of Bayo's clothing line. Their presence triggered speculations that KC might come out with her debut album for Sony BMG. After all, it's the recording outfit of her mom, Megastar Sharon Cuneta. The recording executives did not give a definite answer.

Shifting to another topic, KC said she bears no grudge against Billy Crawford, who had remarked in a radio show that she was a good kisser. But KC added that she won't be able to watch Billy's concert at the Araneta Coliseum because of her hectic schedule. Hmm, good excuse. She said Billy might not have the chance to apologize to her, even if he wanted to, because she'd changed her phone number.

Bayo considers itself lucky to have landed KC as an endorser, considering that other fashion houses were after her. "The prospect of her as our endorser fell on our laps when a friend informed us that we might be able to get KC as endorser this year. Of course we were all excited but scared at the same time because we wanted her so much that the thought of losing her out to some other brand was daunting. Though it was highly probable, there was no way that we can lose her. A lot of other big local brands were clamoring for her endorsement because who wouldn't be anyway. At the age of 22, KC is at her peak," one Bayo exec told us.

KC is equally thrilled at working for Bayo. "This is the most exciting thing that has happened to me. More exciting than my four-year stay in Paris," she said. "It's a dream come true for me because Bayo is a Filipino brand that caters to Filipinos."

KC said her cousins have long been wearing Bayo. And even before she accepted the offer, she was wearing Bayo creations while she was in Paris. "I'm proud to wear them." ■

Rachelle Ann Not Christian's Priority



Rachelle Ann Go's relationship with fellow singer Christian Bautista is going strong.

As a matter of fact, they will embark on a US tour sometime in October.

She will also guest in Mark Bautista's concert "Simply Irresistible" on October 13 at Aliw theater.

In the beginning, she was not so keen in having Christian as her boyfriend. She said she found him a little mayabang. What changed her mind?

"Hindi ako tinantanan. He just won't give up or accept defeat. Bihirang lalaki ang ganyan until I realized that his intentions are sincere. Another thing pa na ikinagusto ko ay ang pagiging family oriented ni Christian and his deep faith in God."

Hasn't he asked her hand in marriage yet?

"Hindi pa naman dahil sa tingin ko ay wala pa siyang balak. I always hear him tell his friends na at age 30 siya magi-settle down. Okay lang sa akin because I have other plans na gusto ko ring matupad."

What other plans? "I want to build my dream house for me and my family. I want to try the movies kung bibigyan ng chance. I want to be an international recording artist tulad ni Christian who is popular in Indonesia. I also want to finish college."

Rachelle is currently pursuing an Associate in Arts Degree at the University of the Philippines Open U (UPOU). This semester, she enrolled in two classes: Communication Skills 1 and Math 1 or Fundamental Concepts and Applications of Mathematics. ■

Pokwang's beauty a hit with the Chinese



Because of hard work, comedienne Pokwang was able to build a four-bedroom house in Antipolo.

"I had one room made for my 11-year old daughter, pero ayaw gamitin at sa akin pa rin tumatabi sa pagtulog," she says. "Hinahaya ko na lang kasi na-miss naman niya ako talaga dahil when she was a child, madalas na nasa Japan ako nagtatrabaho as a dancer."

She admits some people mistake her for a gay in drag. "Pero sa Hong Kong, where we shot 'Apat Dapat, Dapat Apat' with Rufa Mae Quinto, Candy Pangilinan and Eugene Domingo, hindi kayo maniniwala pero ang alindog ko ang hit sa mga Chinese. Pati 'yung driver-tour guide naming Chinese, si Benet, tuwangu-tuwa kapag ginagaya ko si Lucy Liu. Kamukha ko raw talaga. Mas marami nga lang siyang freckles kaysa sa'kin."

What if Benet later on claims that they had a one-night stand, just like that guy in Barcelona who announced to one and all that they had an affair? "Sa edad kong ito, ayoko na ng one-

night stand. Respeto na lang sa anak ko. Gusto ko, dun na lang ako sa lalaking for life ko makakasama makipag-sex. At 'yung si Benet, may asawa na 'yun, 'no'?"

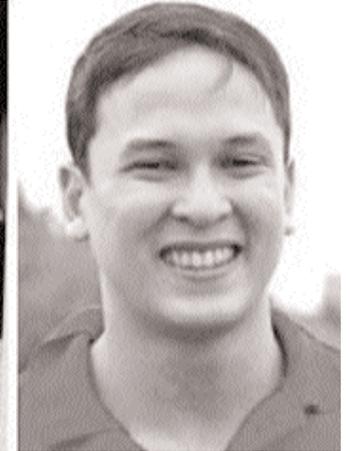
Didn't Benet mistake her for a gay?

"Aba, pag nagbibihis nga kami sa van for change of costume, itong Benet, hindi bumababa so itinatoboy namin, 'Benet, go out, we change clothes.' 'Yun pala gusto niyang siguruhin kung

babae nga talaga ako."

Some people say she's now the number one comedienne at the ABS-CBN camp since she's busier than Ai Ai de las Alas who's had no show for nine months. "Ay, hindi po totoo 'yan. Huwag n'yo kaming intrigahin. Magiging malaking honor for me na makatrabaho siya dahil noon ko pa siya hinahangaan." ■

Aiko Melendez & Martin Jickain call it quits



Kumpirmadong hiniwalyan na ng actress turned politician na si Aiko Melendez ang kanyang pangalawang asawa na si Martin Jickain. Ang kaibigan at publicist mismo ni Aiko na si Ogie Diaz ang nagkumpirma ng balitang ito sa radio program niya na Wow...Ang Showbiz! sa dzXL kaninang umaga, September 13.

Ayon sa nakalap na balita ng PEP (Philippine Entertainment Portal), kinausap diumano ni Aiko ang ilan niyang malalapit na kaibigan na hindi na niya kayang makisama pa kay Martin.

"Suko na ako," ang sinabi raw ni Aiko sa kanyang mga kaibigan. Hindi niya na raw kaya diumano ang pambabae ni Martin, na isang model.

Hindi lang daw isang beses na may nagparating kay Aiko na nakita nila na may ka-date na iba si Martin. Madalas daw makita ang mister ng konsehala ng Quezon City sa Embassy Bar na may kasamang ibang babae.

Pero ang pinakamalala raw ay nang makita diumano si Martin na may kasamang ibang babae sa Boracay.

Matatandaang ikinasal sina Aiko at Martin noong February 16, 2006 sa Fernwood Gardens sa Quezon City. May isa silang anak, si Marthena, na nagdiwang ng kanyang unang birthday noong July 28.

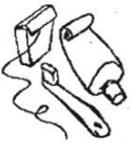
Marami noon ang nagpayo kay Aiko na huwag magpadalus-dalos sa desisyon na magpakasal agad kay Martin dahil ilang buwan pa lang silang nagkakilala ng dating modelo. Bukod doon, kabababa pa lang ng desisyon ng korte sa pagpapawalang-bisa ng kanyang unang kasal sa aktor na si Jomari Yllana, kung saan may isa rin siyang anak—si Andrei.

Pero wala na raw nagawa si Aiko dahil buntis na siya noon kay Marthena. Makakasira raw kasi sa political career ni Aiko kung makikipag-live in lang siya kay Martin habang pinagbubuntis niya sa Marthena. ■

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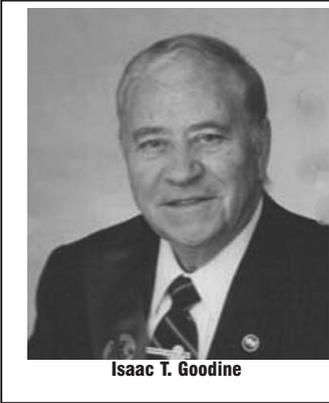
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DUMANDAN ENTERPRISES



Isaac T. Goodine

Global Perspectives



On reinventing one's self

A large and growing number of people are now in a state of "retro-retirement"; meaning they still work occasionally. I am one such person and know many others, particularly in the arena of international development where I have worked for many years. During those years the economy has become global and, belatedly, education and training have only started to be internationalized, so that cultural considerations become better known. Over the last few years there have been worrisome developments in several countries that have an ageing population and declining rate of productivity and now Canada has reached a critical stage because of severe shortages of workers in a wide range of job categories and a steady decline in productivity. While Canada is still able to attract foreign workers with the appropriate professional and technical competence to fill job requirements there is an abominable record of misuse of talent.

On the surface, the reasons given for a ridiculously slow process of integration of newcomers include lack of acceptance of foreign credentials, lack of Canadian experience, and language barriers. Below the surface, there is ignorance about foreign credentials because Canadians have lived in solitude too long and fail to notice that other countries have also advanced; lack of recognition for experience gained in the country of origin, as well as any other country where the newcomer has worked, implies that the evaluating authority does not off-set any part as equivalent to Canadian experience; and language barriers can be more readily overcome by education and training focused on cross-cultural communications, and provided that racial prejudice and stereotyping of cultural differences does not form the main strength of the barrier. The establishment of offices in India, China, and the Philippines under the Canadian Immigration Integration Project has been a most encouraging development and is helping to improve the situation.

It is in the same spirit of helping to improve the situation that I am working with my friend in Manila. Mrs. Violeta A. Laraya is the author of

Working in a Cross-cultural Environment and is also Editor of my book *Leaders Leading Leaders*. We have signed a legal agreement on working together to help employers in Canada secure reliable employees from the Philippines. The recruitment and contracting procedures would meet the terms and conditions of the Philippines Overseas Employment Agency for contract-workers and meet all the Canadian Immigration requirements for work permits.

Apart from the bureaucratic procedures that ensure a smooth operation we believe that it is necessary for the employers and employees to become more sensitive to the fact that the global workforce consists of teams that are multi-disciplined in skills and whose members transcend national boundaries. Building and leading these teams is always a difficult task and involves the challenge for each person to learn, and when necessary relearn, lessons on how to work effectively in a cross-cultural environment.

There are more than 80 million trans-national workers in the world now. Changing countries, employers, teams and projects require intercultural and interpersonal skills as well as the basic technical requirements of the job. Like other skills, both theory and practice are necessary for reinvention one's self, and this leads to the conclusion that there are some dimensions of leadership that are universal and must be promoted in the international labour market world wide.

- **Professional Ethics:** Maintaining ethical, moral and professional standards and values; accepting and acknowledging full responsibility for one's own actions.

- **Influence on Others:** The art of using appropriate interpersonal styles and methods in guiding individuals or groups to accomplish the task on hand, including resolution of conflicts and disagreements, and actively attempting to influence events necessary to achieve goals.

- **Duty Motivation:** Commitment to doing what ought to be done based on expectations of one's assigned duty position; commitment to placing requirements of the mission before

personal interests; actions that indicate persistence in the efforts to achieve high standards of performance from one's self, subordinates and associates.

- **Training and Development of Subordinates:** The art of developing the competence and self-confidence of subordinates through role modeling and or training and development activities related to current and future activities.

- **Decision Making:** The ability to reach sound, logical conclusions based on analysis of factual information and the readiness to take on action based on those conclusions.

- **Oral and Written Communication Skills:** The ability to express oneself effectively in individual or group situations, orally or in writing; includes good grammatical form, gestures, 'body-language' and other non-verbal means of communication.

- **Department and Bearing:** Maintaining appropriate standards of dress, appearance, manner and courtesy, showing respect for oneself and the organization one represents.

- **Teamwork:** Those actions that indicate commitment to achieve group or organizational goals; timely and effective discharge of operational and organizational duties and obligations; working effectively with others; compliance with and active support of organizational goals and policies.

- **Consideration for Others:** Those actions that show empathy and indicate a sensitivity to and regard for the feelings and needs of others and an awareness of the impact of one's own behavior on them; being supportive and fair with others — subordinates, peers and superiors — and with all members of society.

- **Planning and Organization:** The ability to establish a course of action for oneself and others to accomplish specific goals; establishing priorities and planning appropriate allocation of resources — human, physical, informational and financial; utilizing time as a resource.

- **Delegating:** Involves the ability and inclination to effectively delegate responsibility and authority to subordinates; the delegation of decision-making and other responsibilities to the appropriate subordinates.

- **Supervising:** Requires the ability and inclination to establish procedures for monitoring and regulating processes and tasks or activities and that provide constructive evaluation of subordinates and one's own activities and responsibilities; take corrective actions necessary to regularly improve performance.

ISAAC T. GOODINE is the Author of *Leaders Leading Leaders: International Dimensions of Distinguished Leadership*. Email: itgoodine20@hotmail.com

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Big demand for work permits for Filipino workers

There was good news this February when the federal government recognized the acute labour shortage and extended work permits from one to two years for some positions. This will allow employers to amortize costs associated with hiring foreign workers, such as return airfare, recruitment and visa fees, over a longer period. But since then, The Wickaninnish Inn's application to bring 10 Filipino staff has been turned down at the first step: getting approval from Service Canada, a federal department that issues 'Labour Market Opinions' or LMOs, basically the green light needed for hiring a foreign worker. The Wickaninnish has provided more information at each request, but it is still waiting.

"I am positive, but I have been positive before," said Charles McDiarmid, managing director of the inn.

The snag is one that other B.C. hotels are also facing and it comes as the hospitality industry struggles to understand how it can bring workers here as quickly as possible ahead of the busy summer season.

Service Canada declined to comment specifically on The Wickaninnish case, but since the rule change in February, it has been inundated with more interest than ever. "The number of applications is going up so high that even with streamlining, we just can't keep ahead," said Lucia Maclean, regional manager at Service Canada, in an interview.

Maclean said that she has just hired 14 new staff to speed up the process. She added, however, that issuing these LMOs requires looking at working wages, the environment, whether an employer has made an effort to hire and train Canadians, and "making sure that the foreign worker would not be negative to the labour market. . . . It is a complex process."

And that is just the beginning. Once an application is okayed by Service Canada, it gets passed to Nicholas Ooserveen, who oversees the Immigration department at the Canadian embassy in Manila. He told a recent trade luncheon in Vancouver that last year his office could process temporary work visas in three weeks. Now, there is such a deluge that it is taking 14 weeks. He has also hired new staff — four people who will focus solely on clearing up this backlog.

"The volume is staggering and demand is going to increase," said Ooserveen. He said that executives from Tim Hortons have been to the Philippines three times and are looking for about 1,000 employees.

The total time, from submitting an application to Service Canada to an employee arriving in Canada, has stretched from four months last year to between six and eight months now, according to Christine Stoneman of Victoria-based Chemistry Consulting, which is working on behalf of the B.C. and Yukon Hotels Association, See Page Work Permits

Business in the neighborhood



Filipino grocery store caters to a multi-cultural clientele

By Zenaida F. Kharroubi

Pat Loung has now reached an important milestone – it completed its third year of operation, having opened its doors on August 23, 2004. It serves not only Filipino-Canadians but also other ethnic communities. Elisa Sanchez and her sister, Mary Joy Manlapig both own the store. Elisa arrived in Canada in 1987, while Mary Joy came in 2000. Their parents used

view their products neatly and logically arranged on open shelves, and freezers with glass doors. Everything seems to be well-planned. One can feel that there was a lot of thought given to every detail. The result is a beautiful and attractive place where customers of all races come to enjoy their shopping. They also have a place to sit down and have their favorite



An inside view of the store, showing the clean floors and neat array of shelves

to operate a retail store in Valenzuela, Bulacan, Philippines where they grew up. This made them want to do the same thing when they arrived in Canada. Their store is thriving, being patronized by all kinds of people from different communities in NDG, and Snowdon districts.

Mary Joy explained why they use the name "Pat Loung". In Chinese tradition, "Pat Loung": signifies good luck as it means "8 dragons." Perhaps, this really has a positive effect for the store seems to attract people to come and buy groceries, fresh meat and vegetables, home cooked food such as spring rolls, turon, empanada, siu-may, dumplings ube cake, etc. The store is also a distributor of Pi water, reputed to have medicinal value and good for one's health.

The store is very clean and well-organized. The owners did a very good job of buying the proper equipment for the different products they sell. The floor space, although long and narrow, has been well-designed. It allows any customer to

snack in front of the store as there is a patio lined up with flowers and furnished with tables and chairs.

According to Mary Joy, they try to stock their store with items that customers ask. They also prepare food according to customers' order. Being good cooks, she and her sister are able to satisfy the discriminating tastes of different kinds of people from all walks of life.

"Pat Loung" is a complete service type of store as it has not only dry goods but also fresh meat and vegetables. The store has even stocked "Halal meat" probably because a customer must have requested it to be included in its ever-increasing list of groceries. It demonstrates how closely it monitors the needs of its customers. No wonder, it is steadily making its own niche in this corner of town.

Pat Loung is located on 5328 Queen Mary near Decarie Boulevard, Telephone: 514- 485-3689

Filipino Achievers in

Filipino Achievers in the USA & Canada - Profiles in Excellence

By Isabelo T. Crisostomo

the USA & Canada: Profiles in Excellence by Isabelo T. Crisostomo is a book about the odyssey of Filipinos in North America. Odyssey is defined by the dictionary as "a long series of wanderings or adventures, esp. when filled with notable experiences, hardships, etc."

The odyssey of workers and other Filipino immigrants who came to the United States and Canada is a story of hope, sorrow, bitterness, adventure, prejudice, discrimination, failures, and triumphs.

Although not yet recognized by American historians and the general public, the story of Filipinos in North America began in 1763, when Filipino sailors jumped ships during the Spanish galleon trade and settled in the bayous of New Orleans, Louisiana. Such evidence that Manilamen existed and lived in Louisiana was documented by Lafcadio Hearn, who made an observation of the life of the Filipino swamp dwellers. Hearn's article was published in the Harper's Weekly issue of March 31, 1883, and reprinted in this book.

According to Filipino historians, Filipinos signed up with the famed French buccaneer Jean Baptiste Lafitte and took part in the Battle of New Orleans during the American Revolution against Britain. Yet this fact has never been recognized by American historians. Or maybe Filipinos and their historians were not able to provide enough proof that Filipinos fought side by side with Americans in their war against Britain.

After the 1924 Exclusion Act, Hawaiian plantation owners started recruiting Asian laborers to work on their expanding farms. Then Filipino workers and students provided labor on plantation and vegetable farms in Hawaii and on the mainland. Others worked as seasonal workers in Alaskan canneries. Communities grew around these plantations and vegetable farms, where new houses, dance halls, stores, restaurants, prostitution centers, and gambling joints were established by enterprising entrepreneurs.

Through sacrifice, perseve-rance, and determination, Filipinos,

particularly the pioneering ones, blazed the trail for succeeding immigrants and the forthcoming generations of Filipinos.

Descendants of the first-generation immigrants and some of the immigrants in the United States and Canada after the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965, when the number of Filipino immigrants increased, have transcended ethnicity and met their destiny. A great number of Filipinos have made history through their impressive accomplishments in every field of human endeavor, including the arts, business and finance, literature and journalism, politics and public affairs, science and technology.

The life stories of these achievers who are role models grace the pages of this book. Their fascinating and inspiring stories serve as an inspiration to Filipinos and other ethnic immigrants.

For instance, there's the story of a woman who since childhood has loved to sing; she became the toast of the entertainment world. There's a young man of 18, who jumped ship off Guam 50 years ago, and then he became one of the island's richest men. There's also the story of a world-traveled, newly married woman who came here 23 years ago from her native land to return to the Philippines in November 1994 with President Clinton, having been appointed as the highest-ranking Filipino American official in the present U.S. administration.

There's the story of the son of an illegal alien whose original family name was Marcos who became the first governor of Filipino descent of a state in the U.S.

A medical doctor, a native of Cavite Province, Philippines, came to Canada to practice his profession. Yet, when he found out that there was a need for Filipinos to participate in the affairs of the government, he came out in the open and became a candidate for a political office. He is the first Filipino to become a member of the Canadian Parliament.

These Filipinos, while venturing in different fields of endeavor, were ordinary citizens who dared to dream, set goals, and pushed on to make their own destiny. One thing is clear: The Filipinos, if they make their own "break"



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or are given the chance to be of service to humanity, can prosper and become outstanding achievers.

A book of this kind should have been written and published a long time ago. But no one dared to do an extensive research of the Filipino history and lives of outstanding Filipinos in this part of the world—until a professor, journalist, historian, and presidential biographer by the name of Isabelo T. Crisostomo launched this project of great magnitude. Some doubters said it could not be done; they were wrong! Such inspirational stories could be written only by this former award-winning fiction writer, who started his writing career as a poet.

He shared his dream with another ambitious Filipino, Veltisezar B. Bautista, who is the publisher and owner of Bookhaus Publishers, a small but progressive publishing company. This publisher, who is also the author of five nonfiction books sold in bookstores throughout the United States, is the first Asian American to win seven national book publishing awards, including two Benjamin Franklin Awards, the most prestigious book awards in independent publishing in the United States.

To produce a high-quality book, this publisher saw to it that a comprehensive history of Filipino Americans and Filipino Canadians be included in this book. For this reason, he even incorporated his own research work in Part I: The Filipino Odyssey in North America. At the time that Crisostomo's manuscript was in his hands, he still accepted some nominations to be sure that every Filipino worthy of being included in this showcase of Filipino achievers was featured in this book. To be sure about the accuracy of facts, the publisher sent proofs for review to all achievers, except to a few who moved and could not be located.

The writing and publishing of history—particularly the Filipino history in North America—is and should be a continuing process. We hope that this is just the beginning!

It is the hope of the publisher that the reader, after examining this work, may have a better grasp of the history, culture, and way of life of Filipinos—one of North America's fast-growing ethnic groups.

To the non-Filipino reader, may this book inspire you to read more about Filipinos.

To the Filipino, may we refer you to what Delegate David M. Valderrama, House of Delegates, Maryland, once said, "I hope this book inspires your readership to move on to greater heights."

If this book can serve as an inspiration and enlightenment to the reader, then the efforts of the writer, the publisher, and those who participated in the book's production will not have been in vain.

Veltisezar B. Bautista
Publisher

From Page 17 Work Permits

including The Wickaninnish, to source workers from the Philippines.

Meanwhile, this boom is encouraging a few small, Alberta-based recruiters to set up shop in B.C. They already specialize in sourcing Filipino workers and are often run by immigrant entrepreneurs with contacts and relatives in Manila. So far, they have been based in places like Red Deer, Alta., so that they can serve the labour pinch in Edmonton and Calgary. Now, as the squeeze moves West, they are following the trail.

Ulysees Maribojoc of Red Deer-based Smart Staffing Services Inc. has placed nearly 200 welders, cooks and electricians in restaurant chains, warehouses and processing plants in Alberta. Recently, Boston Pizza franchise owners in Kelowna, Salmon Arm and Cranbrook have contracted him for help in bringing staff from the Philippines.

Felix Lacsama, a Whistler-based businessman with partial ownership in a gas station, a lodge and fast-food outlets at Whistler and in Pemberton, has some 40 applications in the chute with Smart Staffing. "The bottom line is we need people," said Lacsama. Mabel Dela Cruz, vice-president of Reliable Personnel, has provided fast-food workers for Taco Time and A&W in Red Deer. Her partner's brother runs an office for the company in Manila. Now, she is trawling for business in B.C. because "we heard they are looking for workers too," said Dela Cruz.

Instead of approaching company headquarters, these recruiters are signing up clients one franchise at a time. Despite a widely established need for staff, "the problem with corporations is that they take time to decide," said Dela Cruz.

Companies with heftier backing are homing in on the demand here too. One large, Manila-based company with prominent maritime business interests has launched a recruiting service in Vancouver. For over 20 years, Fairmont Shipping (Canada) has had offices in Vancouver. Now, its affiliate, Magsaysay Global Services, is hoping to help B.C. companies source and train hospitality staff, but also engineers and animators from the Philippines.

In case there are any grumbles about hiring foreign workers, "I want you to know that we are not promoting immigration. We don't want that. There is a misunderstanding about this," said CEO Doris Magsaysay-Ho in an interview from Manila. "We are used to having workers on ships that go for two-year postings.

"When they finish, they return home for a few months before going again on another assignment. This will be something like that." Ho went to high school in Vancouver, before going on to further studies in Montreal and the U.S. and then returning to run the family firm in Manila.

"In the past, there were questionable requests for foreign workers and people were jaded. Now,

they are not only bona fide, but they are based on real, critical staffing emergencies like a hotel having to turn guests away because rooms are dirty," said Tom Steele, who retired from Service Canada last year and now helps companies to fine-tune their applications.

As the Wickaninnish perseveres with its application, the B.C. government is trying to keep up with other jurisdictions in the competition for workers from the Philippines.

Last fall, Saskatchewan signed a memorandum of understanding with Manila. It aims to bring an ambitious 5,000 Filipino workers per year to Saskatchewan by 2008. B.C. is now lining up with Alberta and Manitoba to snag a similar framework, said Ooserveen. The B.C. Ministry of Economic Development would only say that it is considering many different options for tackling current labour shortages, but, privately, industry sources say that it is actively pursuing such an agreement and that officials are heading to Manila mid-June. jlee-young@png.canwest.com

From Page 6 Basketball

the same Central Jersey team which overhauled a 17-2 early PBAM lead. The Open team, spark plugged by Gil Manon-og, Jon Bustamante, Rowell Solmerano with a good supporting cast of Chris Aguba, Jex Mendiola and Dennis Lacsamana, proved their mastery over Michigan but lost a cliff hanger, 2 points, to a New York team beefed up by wizened but dirty PBA Philippine professionals Villamin and Marata.

The Champion team, 15 under, superbly coached by a relentless Rene Bernil, displayed too much team play and talent for the competition to handle, finishing with a 5-0 record. They manhandled Central New Jersey and New York "C" for openers, then toyed with Central Jersey again and Hamilton to barge in to the Finals. Sticking to Coach Bernil's coaching precepts, they employed a suffocating defense and awesome firepower to embarrass a grandstanding New York in their hometown, 63-48.

Named MVP was Jonathan Bermillo, Best Center Kevin Tulud; Best Forward John Cayanong and Best Guard Mikey Dosado. But for all intents and purposes, the entire team were MVPs, for without supporting cast of Kevin Alcalde, Jeremy Bernil, Kevin Villarmino, Kurt Caro, Kristian Javillonar, Michael Soriano and Samuel Sumayo, the Championship would not have been possible.

ON A GOOD NOTE:

The prestigious 16-city PIBNA elected PBA-Montreal's Jake Maguigad over Central Jersey's Tom Aguirre as Commissioner for 2007-2009. He will oversee PIBNA 32 in Ottawa 2008 and Jacksonville 33 in 2009.

Jake Maguigad is the second Montreal Director to be voted in as Commissioner; the first was Robert de Guzman, 1997-1999. Mr. Maguigad's election affirms the respectability and

trust of the PIBNA Directorship for the PBAM.

For the record, PBAM-PIBNA Directors are: Robert de Guzman, Frank Baluyot and Mike Castro.

From Page 2 Alternative Schooling

schools, and so forth.

There is an almost exact correlation between the amount of school choice a province offers and how well its students do academically. Alberta students outperform the rest of Canada by a wide margin, while the students in Atlantic Canada, with the least amount of school choice, do the worst. Ontario students place in about the middle in both categories.

This year, the academic achievement of Ontario students, as measured by provincial tests, stopped its glacial improvement. Student achievement in Ontario is now officially frozen at the same, very mediocre, level as last year. With only 64% of the province's grade 6 students passing their reading test, an average class of 25 students would yield only 16 students who can read well enough for the work of the next grade. The results are even worse in math, with only 59% of students passing – down 2% from last year. With the provincial tests frozen at unacceptable levels, it's time to bring more school choice to Ontario.

From Page

recent study which found that California can meet its water needs for the next 30 years by implementing cost-effective urban water conservation. Desalination is "an expensive, speculative supply option that will drain resources away from more practical solutions," the group says.

Despite such arguments, the practice is becoming more common. Ted Levin of the Natural Resources Defense Council says that more than 12,000 desalination plants already supply fresh water in 120 nations, mostly in the Middle East and Caribbean. And analysts expect the worldwide market for desalinated water to grow significantly over the coming decades. Environmental advocates may just have to settle for pushing to "green" the practice as much as possible in lieu of eliminating it altogether.

CONTACTS: Food & Water Watch, www.foodandwaterwatch.org; Natural Resources Defense Council, "Turning Oceans into Tapwater," www.nrdc.org/onearth/04sum/saline1.asp.

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