

# MANILA UP!

CONNECT TO YOUR CULTURE

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

January 2017 Issue

FIRST  
ANNIVERSARY

FAAABVLOUS  
THE SEVENTH

GAWAD  
AMERIKA

CONSULAR  
BALL

Joy Rustia



DUBAI LONDON MANILA LOS ANGELES NEW YORK LAS VEGAS WASHINGTON DC HAWAII FLORIDA THAILAND



# HEART LIKE NO OTHER

For 75 years, Philippine Airlines has been part of your journeys and milestones. From our wholehearted service to our heartfelt smiles, every journey celebrates the *Heart of the Filipino*.

# F A A A B V L O U S VII



*Photo credit: Rupert Jacinto*

# Failure is Not an Option

*"A happy family is the key to success. My partnership with my husband goes beyond business. We both try to nurture and strengthen our relationship. With our three daughters, there's constant mentoring to teach them the courage, inspiration, passion, humility and love for others."*



## A Strong Foundation

“The eldest of three children, **Joy Wambangco Rustia** grew up with two brothers, who now work for her and her husband’s company, helping with the expansion of their business. With a father, an engineer who runs his own corporation, and a stay-at-home mother, her business acumen, and love for her children are evident in how she juggles being a mother and a business woman. Her parents are her guide, strength, and inspiration, and they were instrumental in who, and where she is in life right now.

After graduating from Assumption

College, where she majored in Business Management, she left for New York to explore and experience how it is to be independent. She took on a job and learned how it was to earn a living. She married Joel Rustia in 1993. The couple went back to the Philippines where they started a small catalog shopping business at her parent’s house in Pasig, in 1994.

## Challenges

Little did they know that catalog retail concept was not accepted in the Philippines. People were not receptive of buying products from catalogs. Orders came in but not enough to cover the costs, which included the printing of the catalogs, mailing to target clientele, which included homes and corporate offices, importation, and running even just a small team. They tried several ways of selling and disposing of the unsold products, through bazaars, individual sales, and referrals.

Amidst the many challenges encountered when starting and growing a business, the couple persevered. “Not everyone will be happy with your success, and it wasn’t easy. We did not make it on the first venture, but you continue to believe and work harder the second time around,” according to Joy. “Failure is also a key to success. You learn from your mistakes and do better the second time around. As you expand your business, there will be hurdles that you might also consider a failure, but somehow your passion for making it work will eventually lead to success.”

“The competition will always be

present, and many will try to copy your products and your business. We just have to find ways to be ahead of our competitors and be aggressive enough to be the best in the industry. There’s no shortcut, and I believe in working hard.”

## The Breakthrough

A major retail outfit from the US opened in Manila, and they were invited to supply them the same products that they carried from their catalog business, and later on developed other items for several retail stores nationwide. They then branched out providing major multinational corporations with premium items and other volume products that they specifically designed and conceptualized. The company expanded to Asia-Pacific, exporting to other countries in the region. They eventually expanded to real estate, developing buildings, houses, and their most recent venture is Madison Galleries, a lifestyle mall in Alabang.

Madison Galleries came about because several subdivisions, surrounding the mall, as well as neighboring residential condominium, and corporate offices lack a major commercial establishment where they can dine and shop. The nearest one will be a half an hour away, considering the traffic around the area. Many people in the neighborhood have been clamoring for a lifestyle mall just a few minutes away from where they live, which can meet their needs - from grocery shopping, salons, unique restaurants, drugstore, pet store, and much more. ▶





“You will also notice that the customers that frequent the mall now will always say that Madison has become their second home. And that makes me proud. Everyone is excited for the opening of our food hall called The South District which will be a great addition, hangout, and destination for many young and not so young crowd in the south, and those who want to experience a hip concept that it will bring.”

The couple’s focus for now is to complete the tenant mix, make this project the best boutique mall in the metro area, and then plan for succeeding projects, and maybe more malls. Given the opportunity, as my mentor says, **“There are so many opportunities out there, we just need to open our eyes and explore.”**

### *Inspiration*

Joy remembers reading an article where Henry Sy was quoted, saying, **“We are all given an equal number of hours a day, and it’s up to us how we will spend the 24 hours.”** This saying is posted on her office wall to inspire her to do better each passing day. “I admire and believe in his dedication, focus, and hard work.”



Her experiences and exposure in the US became her stepping-stone, which led her to strive harder and fulfill her dreams.

Joy believes in dreaming big, especially when they started having children. They were blessed with three lovely daughters, Tara, Keana and Gilly, ages 21, 19 and 17, respectively, who have given them so much joy and happiness. The girls are considered by the couple as their most prized possessions.

### *The Role of Positivity*

“The pace is faster than expected running four corporations. There are times when you wonder if you can pause to breathe, but with this fast-paced business and competition, you can’t stay out of focus. Stress is part of my everyday living. I wake up in the morning reading emails, messages, and resolving issues. But I tell myself that there’s always a solution to every problem. I often close my eyes and pray, chat with friends and mentors. It makes you forget the troubles and make you think better after taking a pause from work.”

Joy goes to the gym almost every day for a regular workout, or at Elorde in Madison to do Muay Thai unless

she’s out of the country, or on an early client meetings. Those are also her stress reliever before she starts the day. She also believes in eating healthy and keeping herself fit, which makes her think better and move faster. Most of her time is dedicated to the business and to her family. Once in a while, she will attend social functions, do charity work, as a way of giving back to the community. These activities also keep her sane, happy, and lets her forget the stress and pressure from work.

### *A Legacy*

“Right now, my children have been in constant training in the business as early as their high school years. I cannot say that we have made it until my daughters can take on the same passion and strength to run the business.”

*“My family, my friends, and the people that surround me are what motivate me in this life. This may be a cliché, but yes, I draw my strength from God and the love for my family. As our business expands, my employees who have been with us for years are also my strength, and they inspire us to do better so we can provide more jobs to many, and also give a better life to their families.”* ■



**Sonia Dionela Bermejo**  
 Publisher/Executive Editor

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## *Publisher's Note*

Amidst many challenges in the year 2016, we are standing strong, full of determination and drive to face the coming year with the vision to inspire, connect and uplift. We are grateful for the past year first to our Almighty Creator and to all of you who stand by with us. Though we hurdled some challenges and bumps in our journey, they gave us more knowledge and wisdom. We learned a lot more. As we recall the events that happened in 2016, despite the hurdles, we remain amazed that we were able to launch into new adventures. This was not of our own doing, but through God's grace. Blessings were just pouring, astonished at God's plan, we will stay humble and grounded, we cannot boast, it was given from above.

As for 2017, we will deliver a better and edgy reading material for your enjoyment, to inspire us all with unique stories, and fresh perspective from around the world. Together we will explore the beauty of the Filipino globally and their successes, and how they keep connected to their cultural roots; these, and more usher in for 2017 an excitement for adventures yet to be unfolded.

As we welcome the new year, we would like to welcome a new addition to our family, GRACE SIODORA MAGNO, our Editor!!!

*Sonia*

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# MANILA UP!

## International Magazine

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## Editor's Note

■ Grace Siodora-Magno | Editor

### WELCOME TO THE NEW YEAR'S 2017 ISSUE OF MANILA UP! INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE FRESH OFF THE PRESS!

**H**ighlighting 2016 is the FIRST YEAR Celebration of Manila UP! Magazine in California, USA. HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Manila UP! with Publisher Sonia Dionela-Bermejo and staff garnered the plum Gawad America Awards on November 19, 2016 in grand ceremonies at Celebrity Centre Hollywood.

Manila UP Birthday celebrations was held at Pasadena California's posh watering hole Bar Celona. "Birthing pains" over, and in 2017, here comes "growing pains"! ManilaUP! seeks to stand out among hundreds of publications saturating the global readership market. A niche has been created. We're in for the long haul. And so will you.

"Happy New Year!" was heard amidst the thunderous fireworks shows around the world, meaning, "May You Be Always Happy this 2017!" But alas, for many, the pursuit of happiness is not a happy journey at all. Some brave countrymen leave their families just to eke out a living in foreign lands. Some Filipinos uproot themselves completely from their comfort zones and become bonafide nomads seeking to start afresh in life to uplift themselves and their loved ones from poverty. And happiness, sadly, is a moving target. No

one can seem to be fully happy. The grass seems greener on the other side of the world.

And that's where this magazine seeks to serve a need... Connectivity! Inspiration! Celebration!

Manila UP! International Magazine is a platform where people can connect, share their challenges and hurdles, their entrepreneurial wiz. It's a venue where we celebrate small personal victories for the purpose of inspiring life's travelers and Filipinos worldwide. So share if you must, and we shall welcome your input.

Manila UP! International Magazine reflects the brevity of the heart of Manila, a melting-pot of cultures flocking from around the world, and a place for convergence of ideas, a refuge place to many. In a microcosm, the world is a stage and Filipinos shine on that stage wherever life takes them. The darker the night, the glimmer of light in them shines the brighter. Our religiosity, our ability to adapt as a people in different contexts and countries, our facility to learn skills and languages easily, and function creatively with our exceptionally commendable work ethic render us pliable and highly valuable asset in the global workforce. Thus we at the magazine celebrate Awards and Events with you,

to memorialize your success. Keep em' coming!

This month we featured Cory Quirino, enigmatic lady as she is, yet she has transformed herself from being a "kidnap victim" to an Advocate of Crime Prevention. The article on Joy Rustia's business' turnaround from failure is inspiring too. How, upon the loss of his wife, Dr. Sal opened his heart to the healing wonders of travel around the world. All these teach us how to use our painful circumstance to make us better, not bitter.

New Year 2017 ushers in a promise of a fresh start, a clean slate. Stop taking selfies and start looking beyond your pretty little Self. Connect and engage. Take time to make memories. Laugh. Don't take yourself too seriously. Forgive yourself. Only then can you forgive others. Treat a friend to a Manila UP! Magazine subscription. Write a novel. Follow your heart. Take the "road less traveled" in life. (Frost).

And let's count our blessings. Start afresh into the new year! "People who wonder if the glass is half-empty or half-full miss the point. The glass is refillable!"

Carpe diem!

*Grace Siodora Magno*

# Inside



## 3 JOY WAMBANGCO RUSTIA

“Failure is also a key to success. You learn from your mistakes and do better the second time around.

## 12 FIRST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

Manila Up! International held its FIRST ANNIVERSARY BASH on December 9, 2016 at the famous Bar Celona in Pasadena, California. A media wall erected at the entrance of the said venue, with pictures of our featured cover persons greeted the guests as they arrive for the BIG party.

## 16 PAL'S PROSPECT FOR 2017

Gauging from last year's number of new routes opened, new airplanes acquired and new service innovations, Philippine Airlines (PAL) is raising the level of excitement for 2017.

## 19 SWAROVSKI OPENING

This event was a great collaboration between two luxury brands that made this event truly

unique. It was a red carpet extravaganza with the fashion world in attendance.

## 22 CONSULAR BALL

The Ball was attended by numerous dignitaries from the diplomatic community, including some ambassadors, and eminent personalities.

## 38 “SANTA TOY’S FOR TOT’S” DRIVE WAS A “TOUR DE FORCE”

Founded in 1947 by reservist Major Bill Hendricks, the US Marine Corps “Toys for Tots” program distributes toys to children whose parents cannot afford to buy them Christmas gifts.

## 40 THE FAAABVLOUS SEVENTH

Rupert Jacinto, who has been called “Photographer to the Faaabvlous,” in a seven column front page interview by Stephanie Mansfield of WASHINGTON POST, has photographed the likes of Ivana Trump, Countess Camille Chandon and many more.

## 46 ANOTHER CELEBRATION OF VINA NACIONALES 70TH BIRTHDAY

Vina Lelim Nacionales celebrated for the 2nd time her 70th birthday in Shangrila, Makati last December 3, 2016.

## 48 BLUER THAN BLUE

Blues should be differentiated from what physicians call a clinical depression. This is not the usual type of sadness that we experience in response to usual chores of daily living

## 50 CORY QUIRINO

As a prominent society figure, put it, “Everytime I see Cory on TV, I am left wondering where she gets her energy”. are endless, so redefine yourself at will”.

## 55 GAWAD AMERIKA AWARDS

The Gawad Amerika, founded in 1996 by Mr. Charles Simbulan, guided by the vision of helping deserving Filipino-American achievers who lack the necessary resources, and are struggling to follow their dreams.



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# MANILA UP!

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## MANILA UP! CELEBRATES IT'S FIRST ANNIVERSARY!

By Antonette B. Ang

**M**anila Up! International held its **FIRST ANNIVERSARY BASH** on December 9, 2016 at the famous Bar Celona in Pasadena, California. A media wall erected at the entrance of the said venue, with pictures of

our featured cover persons greeted the guests as they arrive for the BIG party. Guests mingled, and danced the night away, while a video of some of the highlights from the previous issues was being shown.

Philippine Consul General Adelio Angelito Cruz, accompanied by his lovely wife, Catherine, graced the occasion. The outpouring

attendance was overwhelming. Filipino American Press Club of California, led by Andy Edralin and Isidric Panganiban, presented the publisher, Ms Sonia Dionela Bermejo with a Plaque of Recognition. Anjanette Abayari emceed the presentation.

Contributing writer Esmeralda Padilla-Gould of the famous

Padilla clan drove all the way from Las Vegas, Nevada with veteran journalist Zen Laluna, Dr. Romulo Aromin Jr. flew in from New York, photographer Jophel Huffman came all the way from San Diego, and yours truly, flew in from Virginia as well. Contributing writer Edith Pendleton, and staff members, Celia Sabino and Grace Aguilar, Philip Ner, Benny Uy, Joe Cobilla, Richard Dizon, Rudy Autor, Willie Cheng, Auspicio Yan Beltran, Duenas Aris, and Tony Garcia, attended the party, and greetings from the Manila Up! International staff that couldn't be there sent their warmest greetings for the success of the magazine. ■



■ Elna Villaflor, Maryann Samadi, Winwin Winters, Camille Agbayani, Sonia Bermejo, Maryann Scheifert, Joy Alegre



■ David Petersen, Grace Aguilar, Manuel Ferrer, and guest



■ Scott Kurachi and Cleopatra Jones

*Photo credits to:*

Celia Abuel  
 Rudy Autor  
 Willie Cheng  
 Joe Cobilla  
 Richard Dizon  
 Louie Garcia  
 Tony Garcia  
 Jophel Huffman  
 Phillip Ner  
 Benny Uy  
 Auspicio Yan



■ Rebecca Burman, Sonia Bermejo, Antonette Ang



■ Model Cleopatra Jones, Cherry Ordenez, Ms. Southern Teen California, & September cover, Katiana Borja



■ FilAm Press Club of CA awarded Sonia D Bermejo for her Magazine's contribution to the community



■ Rosalie Belisario, Sonia Bermejo, Lola Catanese



■ Lionel and Natalia Dionela, Sonia D Bermejo, Isidric Panganiban and Weng Yap



■ Esmeralda Padilla-Gould, Sonia Bermejo, actress Anjanette Abayari



■ Designer Carl Andrada, Jing Kpallares, Jenny Ramos, actor Scott Kurachi, Weng Yap



■ Angel Tecson, Cherry Ordonez, Andy Edralin, Anjanette Abayari, Thelma Obaldo



■ Joe Cobilla, Ellen Samson, Robert Alba, Sonia, Jack Huang, Din Lipana, Kim & Ronald Cabal, Becky Burman



■ Ging Ragasa, Elna Villaflor, Celia Abuel, Publisher, Ms. Southern Teen California, Katiana Borja, Catherine wife of Con-Gen Adelito Cruz, Mutch Carino and Grace Aguilar



■ Dean Arcillas of FAN TV from San Francisco, Social Media Celia Abuel, Grace Aguilar, Esmeralda Gould from Las Vegas, Jophel Huffman from San Diego



■ Publisher with Consul General Adelio Angelito Cruz and his wife, Catherine



■ Press photographers, Louie Chen, Benny Uy, Sonia Bermejo, Rudy Autor



■ Raffle winner Din Lipana, with our sponsor Ella Samson



# PAL's Prospects for 2017

By Jonathan P. Gesmundo

**G**auging from last year's number of new routes opened, new airplanes acquired and new service innovations, Philippine Airlines (PAL) is raising the level of excitement for 2017.

The flag carrier will gradually unwrap detail of these expansion plans - under the over-all thrust of becoming a five-star airline - so as to generate suspense among its loyal passengers.

Those who keep tabs on PAL expect the opening of new European and US destinations, as announced in the past by PAL President Jaime J. Bautista.

PAL is riding the crest of favorable industry forces such as stable fuel prices and the strong travel demand within the region.

PAL succeeded in tapping the region's growth when it registered a nearly 600% increase in net income in 2015 over the previous year.

Barring any global interference to this travel boom in the region, the airline company expects only minor fine-tuning to its strategy of route and fleet expansion as well as exciting service enhancements.

In 2016, PAL flew to four new destinations (Kuwait, Jeddah, Doha,

Saipan) while opening the same number of new routes (Cebu-Los Angeles, Taipei-Osaka, Abu Dhabi-Doha, Cebu-Singapore) and three new domestic links (Cebu-Caticlan, Caticlan-Clark, Cebu-Kalibo).

PAL started the year with the launch of another new route - Clark-Incheon.

The airline further increased frequencies to Los Angeles (twice daily), Toronto (from three to four times weekly), Beijing (four to six times weekly) and Vancouver (seven to 10 times weekly).

For 2017, initial plans include expansion of China operations with direct flights to Boracay and Cebu. Chengdu will be added again to the China network. The Clark hub was operationalized initially with domestic flights - Clark-Cebu, Clark-Davao and Clark-Puerto Princesa. Likewise, the Cebu hub will see an increase in domestic routes.

PAL added seven new aircraft to the fleet in 2016 (Boeing 777-300ER and Airbus A321-231), bringing to 81 the total number of airplanes.

The Airbus A330s are being retrofitted with lie-flat Business Class seats, while reducing the number of seats to create space for more leg

room. These aircraft will have a full-service Premium Economy and more spacious Regular Economy seats. These refurbished A330s will be deployed on routes to Australia, Hawaii, Japan and other premium Asian cities.

New generation Bombardier Q400 turboprop aircraft are scheduled for delivery in 2017. The new 86-seater Q400s (10 seats more than those already in the fleet) are fitted with Premium Economy section. PAL bought five Q400s, with option for seven more. The fleet of Q400 and Q300 turboprops is utilized on short inter-island routes, especially in airports with short runways.

The in-flight entertainment system was upgraded while providing wireless connectivity (myPAL eSuite, myPAL Mobile, myPAL Player and myPAL Wifi) so passengers stay connected up while flying.

There is much anticipation where PAL will fly next, although the company is not yet done with regional expansion due to the onset of Open Skies in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations).

The excitement will also build up for the delivery of the first Airbus A350-900, an ultra-modern jet that will redefine the standards in passenger comfort on long-haul flights. ■



■ Pal opened their flights in JEDDAH, January 19, 2016.



■ **1st PAL DOHA-MANILA FLIGHT.** Philippine Airlines' inaugural flight to Doha (via Abu Dhabi) last March 28, 2016 had a simple send off ceremony at the NAIA Terminal 2 with the traditional ceremonial ribbon cut by, from left, Qatar Embassy Second Secretary Hamad Yousef Admed Al-Malki; PAL SVP-Commercial Group David Lim; Qatar Ambassador Ali Ibrahim Ahmad Al-Malki; PAL SVP-Airline Operations Ismael Gozon and NAIA Terminal 2 Manager Rico Gonzale. Joining them are Amb. Shirley Ho-Vicario, PAL consultant-Corporate Communications; PAL VP-Security Gen. Caesar Ronnie Ordoyo; SAVP-Domestic Sales Harry Inoferio; and SVP-International Sales Ryan Uy.



■ **DOHA-MANILA INAUGURAL FLIGHT.** March 28, 2016



■ **CLARK-CATICLAN INAUGURAL FLIGHT.** Philippine Airlines launched today (Dec. 16, 2016) its first flight out of Clark with 65 passengers flying direct to Caticlan. Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade, Undersecretary Roberto Lim, PAL Express Pres. Bonifacio Sam and Tourism Undersecretary Benito Bengzon were joined by Clark International Airport Corp. Pres. Alexander Cauguiran at the send-off ceremony. Photo shows Tugade and Sam welcoming passengers who arrived from Caticlan.



■ **CEBU-SINGAPORE INAUGURAL.** December 16, 2016



■ Water canon welcome at Caticlan for Q400 coming from Cebu



■ **CEBU-CATICLAN INAUGURAL FLIGHT.** A special cake was cut today (Dec. 16, 2016) at Mactan-Cebu International Airport to mark Philippine Airlines' inaugural Cebu-Caticlan flight. The daily service using the 76-seater Q400 aircraft proceeds from Caticlan to Clark. Photo shows PAL executives with guests sharing the cake. They are, from left, PAL Visayas area head Reyani Romano, GMR-Megawide Cebu Airport Corp. Chief Executive Adviser Andrew Acquah Harrison, PAL SVP Nicky Gozon, PAL President Jaime J. Bautista, Capt. Dodgie Monteza, Tourism Secretary Wanda Corazon Teo, First Officer Stephen Toring and PAL SAVP Harry Inoferio.



## *Swarovski opens at Victoria Gardens with a glamorous Black Tie Gala Event*

**R**ancho Cucamonga, CA - On Friday, November 11th, SWAROVSKI at Victoria Gardens hosted its Invitation Only Black Tie Gala Opening to introduce the finest crystal jewelry and home decor to residents of Rancho Cucamonga and surrounding cities.

“Swarovski, first opened in Rancho Cucamonga in October, 2009 and although we departed for a brief period, we are proud to become reacquainted with the city and center we first met several years ago.” said Hiral Patadia, Swarovski’s General Manager. “Our Team is thrilled to reward loyal customers and surprise new shoppers with sparkling offers

with an all new Swarovski Crystal Forest store experience, featuring unparalleled and excellent customer service.”

This event was a great collaboration between two luxury brands that made this event truly unique. It was a red carpet extravaganza with the fashion world in attendance. Exquisite Swarovski jewelry enhanced models, that were wearing stunning designs by Charmaine Joie Couture. Guests were treated to a live fashion show, raffle prizes, special Swag bags, hors d’oeuvres and an evening where everyone was made to feel glamorous.

The operators of this luxury boutique are very community minded and have pledged to donate 10% of sale proceeds made during this blacktie event and on Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th to a local charity, Children’s Fund. This charity was founded in 1986 and their mission is to give our vulnerable children support, opportunity and hope by breaking destructive cycles through community partnerships.

Paying it forward is an integral part of this boutique’s mission statement. This event was the first of many where we teamed up with a worthy cause that benefits those in need, in and around Rancho Cucamonga. ▶

## 20 MANILA UP!

Swarovski Victoria Gardens Black Tie Gala Opening in 7869 Kew Avenue, Unit 5739, Rancho Cucamonga, California last November 11, 2016, was a fabulous success!

Great appreciation to the following;

- Swarovski Regional & District Managers
- Public Relations & Marketing

Director: Rosalind Girard; Handled the promotion of this event with the Childrens Fund, various newspapers, social media and magazines.

- Designer: Charmaine Joie Couture
- Models: Kelly Lenahan, Kat Sheridan, Mida Romero, Arianna Folsom

- MUA: Makeup By Nad(Nadine Elzein) & Capture Your Beauty (Crystal Leal)
- Hair: Michael Bui & MyWigStudio (Jasmin Barnes)
- Photographers: Patrizaha Vara (Fashion), James Giovanni Pan, Edgar Clemente, Richard Dizon, Auspicio Beltran Yan ■

■ PHOTO CREDIT TO: CELIA ABUEL



# SWAROVSKI

# 2016 Best Moments and Bucket Wish List for 2017



**ELAINE TEH**  
Singapore

2016 - Started planning to set up sewing centre in Beladin (remote area 3.5 hours away from KUCHING capital of Sarawak) to help needy single mother and to teach them skills and give them business to earn a living. Built toilets in school and donated 700 bicycles to needy students under Rotary Club of Sentosa Singapore in Pursat Cambodia (remote area away from Phnom Penh). Nominated outstanding Alumni award from secondary school in Ipoh, Perak.

2017 - Will be hosting International Women's Federation of commerce & industry women summit in Malaysia Continue to build and set up the sewing centre in Beladin and open ceremony to start training needy single mothers. Continue to donate bicycles to Pursat Cambodia



**BENITO "Nitoy" CHAN, JR.**  
Perth, Australia

2016, I received Leadership Award from the Filipino Community Council of Australia and had written and directed 2 original plays; "Life with Mamay-The Dementia Carer Chronicles" And "It's Time To Go- Pinoy Migrants Stories WA"

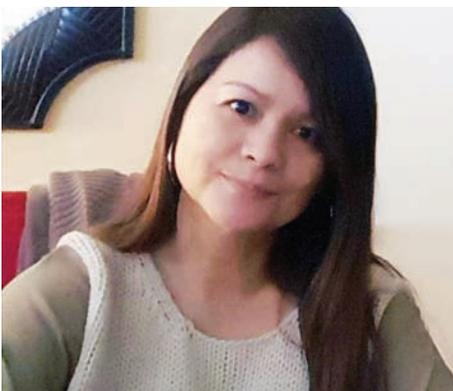
As current Vice President Internal of the State Umbrella Body- FCCWA ( Filipino Community Council of Western Australia) and the founding Artistic Director of PETAWA (Philippine Educational Theatre Artists of WA Incorporated, my vision and plan is simply to do more for the betterment of the Filipinos in Western Australia where I currently reside and has been involved since I moved here almost 11 years ago.



**AGNES SCHANOWSKI**  
Wurzburg, Germany

Our group of Filipina community here, known as "Philippinische Frauenkreis Würzburg" or Filipinas Ladies Circle in Würzburg used to celebrate Christmas with a big party every year.

This year, four days before the celebration, no less than our founder had to undergo an emergency operation, so we had to postpone. We did celebrate it last Jan. 6, even if there were only a few of us who made it... Merry Christmas & a happy, Healthy, New Year to all! "Frohe Weihnachten und ein gutes und gesundes neues Jahr!"



**ELENA AZUCENAS**  
Artesia, California

2016 I had a great year! The business was picking each year.

I'm looking forward to the year 2017, possible expansion of our business and to help more client for the affordable insurance that may need in the future.



**MONET LU**  
Canoga Park, California

I am so blessed to be in good health and given a chance to travel and see some part of the world. I will do the same and explore in 2017. My bucket list is to skydive, bungee jump and the list goes on and on!



**IN OTHER WORLD**

By *Becky Garcia*

**T**he 41ST Annual Consular Ball was successfully held recently at the Rizal Ballroom of Makati Shangri-La Hotel. According to event chair Consul Agnes Huibonhoa, Gambia Honorary Consul, and Co-chair Consul Betty Chua, Tanzania Honorary Consul, the ball lived up to its longtime tradition of being the annual highlight of the Philippine international community’s diplomatic-consular calendar.

The ball was successful in terms of attendance, amenities, program highlights, and number of raffle prizes. More than 550 guests filled the beautifully decorated Rizal Ballroom. The program proper, emceed by celebrity host Johnny Litton, was appropriately short to give way to more exciting sidelights.

Consular Corps DEAN, Monaco Consul General Fortune Ledesma, delivered her valedictory remarks thanking the Executive and Advisory Boards, all Committee Chairmen and Members for their support in Corps activities during the year. Vice Dean Guillermo Devoto, Argentina Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission, in turn, gave his acceptance remarks as incoming Dean of the Corps in 2017 and presented Dean Ledesma with an Award of Merit for leadership of the Corps in 2016.

As a highlight of the event, eight pairs from the Consular and Diplomatic Corps presented a

# CONSULAR BALL MARKS 41 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC FELLOWSHIP



■ *Dance Number by Dean Fortune Ledesma & Chairwoman Agnes Huibonhoa*



■ *Agnes Huibonhoa, Cecile & DFA Sec. Perfecto Yasay, Fortune Ledesma, Betty Chua*

special waltz number.

The Ball was attended by numerous dignitaries from the diplomatic community, including some ambassadors, eminent personalities of Philippine society and some media friends. Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr. and his wife, Cecile, led the guests of honor at the Dean’s table.

To spice up and make the evening more exciting and memorable, a fantastic array of valuable prizes that included airline tickets, cruise ship

accommodations, gift certificates to resorts, and various products and services were raffled off.

Among the Ball’s major donors were Mercedes Benz by Auto Nation (Diamond Sponsor), BA Securities, Inc. (Gold Sponsor), Major raffle sponsors included Etihad Airways, Philippine Airlines. Members and guests enjoyed a special and delectable set menu and a superb selection of wine and liquor. Dance music was provided until way past midnight by two fabulous ballroom bands: Marcy David and Highway 54. ■



■ Amb. Harald & Susan Fries (Sweden)



■ Archie & Judith Tan



■ Comm. Baby Ortiz, Budjing Danao



■ George Sarakinis, Becky Garcia



■ Dr. Fortune Ledesma, Min. Deputy Chief of mission Argentina Guillermo Devoto



■ Marissa Fenton, Enrique & Flora Chua, Helen Ong, Flora, Ruby & Sheree Chua, Tiffany Copok



■ Francis & Betty Chua, Justice Conchita & Atty. Denny Morales



■ Becky Garcia, Dr. George Sarakinis, Joanne Matschuck, Mariissa Fenton, Jemelle Gonzales, Len Olbes



■ Elton & Caroline Tan, Buena & Kennedy Sarmienrto



■ Atty. Sal Panelo, Babes Romualdez, Felix Ang

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# Optimism and Hope

**2017** is here. The New Year ushers in the perseverance to look for a better future. Resolutions are promised with the hope that many of us will work to be patient and kind to our neighbors, families, and friends.

It would be great if humankind will act to fight climate change. Specifically, the Native Americans in Standing Rock Dakota are in the midst of stopping the Dakota Access Pipeline, which will harm the Missouri River where their water comes from. Sadly, various banks like Wells Fargo, Bank of America, and Chase Bank support the DAPL. Last Dec. 21, even famous activist actress Jane Fonda celebrated her birthday by withdrawing her bank account from Wells Fargo in an effort to tell the bank

that business has a responsibility to the indigenous tribes in Dakota. There are now hundreds of Native American tribes camped in Dakota to monitor the plan to dig the soil, which by the way is sacred land. We need to work for cleaner air and water.

A new administration is expected to replace President Obama. Donald Trump is not expected to be positive towards immigration reform and the situation of women. Neither is this president supportive of environment protection. Times will be very tough. But, we renewed hope; we know that the pendulum will swing towards a positive 2017.

For the Winter Olympic athletes, they have only one year to train and practice for the 2018 games in North Korea.



**ON THE BEAT**

By *Fe P. Koons*

In the Philippines, we pray that the Filipino people will be very resilient and continue to use social media as a tool to help each other...that more jobs will be created, so the families will not be separated.

We need to dust off the bad things that happened to us in 2016. Open our doors to those in need and lend them a helping hand. Appreciate the small positive things that we can do to make the Filipino American community better. We have to smile more and whisper to ourselves that each day is a new beginning! Happy 2017 to all! ■

# HOLLYWOOD GLAM by M

www.mthemovement.com



**MU: Please tell us about yourself?**

FM: My name is Fab Morvan, I was born in Paris, France. Music has always played a very important role in my life, as well as Art and Fashion. I'm a singer-songwriter, I find inspiration in every aspect of my daily life, most of my lyrics come from personal experiences. Painting has allowed me to place my emotions on a canvas and helped me survive and heal through some of my most challenging moments in life. My interest in Fashion developed as a young boy growing up in Paris watching Haute couture fashion shows on French TV, leaving an indelible mark on my subconscious mind.

**MU: How did your journey begin with your career?**

FM: My musical journey in the music business started as one-half of the multi-platinum duo Milli Vanilli, with my late partner Rob Pilatus. We got involved in one of the most notorious controversies, winning a Grammy and giving it back for not singing on the record. Since that experience, I've worked hard to rebuild my career as a performer, singer-songwriter, and a deejay while singing and MC, playing at corporate events, clubs, and private parties. It's been full of ups and downs but "that's life" though, at the end of the day my love for music is what has always kept me going... It has saved my life. When you enter the music industry, you have no idea, that it should be treated as a business. Because you are an artist, music is your main focus; that's where many who came before and after me, made their biggest mistakes.

**MU: How did you meet "M"?**

FM: M and I met for the first time, at Kark Kani's headquarter offices, when he was working as the head designer many moons ago, our meeting was brief, but we connected. He was part of this new Urban street wear movement. I acknowledged his talent right away. A few years later, we met again, and that's when our friendship got the chance to grow, we've remained friends to this day.

**MU: Which project are you most proud of?**

FM: The project I'm most of proud of lol "myself," I've been able to travel through decades healthy and strong after I had sustained major blows in the public eye, my partner unfortunately never came back from it. I'm happy to be alive and glad my passion for music is as strong as it's ever been, in the process, I reinvented myself, I have yet to show all those new facets...timing is everything.

**MU: Are there any other Artists you would like to work with and why?**

FM: Rihanna...why? She grew up loving all kinds of music just like me, making her very versatile...no boundaries. Usher, I like the way he's handled himself through the years, writing a song with Bruno Mars would be awesome. Kendrick Lamar, he inspires the new generations in a positive way.



**MU: Discuss an event in your life that was life changing, or when you've experienced an epiphany.**

FM: That very moment took place on stage while performing my new solo project "Love Revolution" in 2003. That night was my first performance in LA, with just a guitar, I played my songs in their acoustic form in front of a small crowd, I was nervous. During those 30 minutes, I gained an immense amount of confidence, which I was missing at the time. The people clapped their hands and wanted more...It was all clear to me, I couldn't live without music, this is what I was born to do.

**MU: What advice can you give to upcoming artists?**

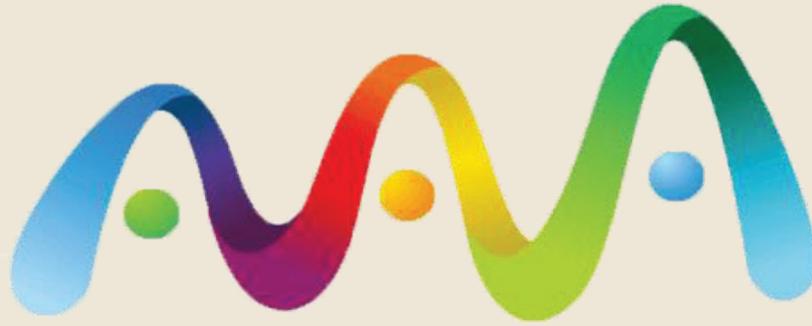
FM: My advice to any upcoming artists would be, to work on their craft as much as possible, surround themselves with people who elevate them in every way. When it comes to signing any type of legal papers, get your attorney to look over it, don't ever sign your publishing rights away...don't just trust what people say. Learn how to write your own songs, if you can try to get into music production and play an instrument.

**MU: What projects are you working on currently?**

FM: I'm currently working with various productions, DJ-producer teams in Holland for 2017 releases. FaceMeetVoice in Germany, Indonesia DJRockyrock, and more are in the works. You can find me on social media so stay tuned, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter.

**MU: Have you ever been to the Philippines?**

FM: No, I've never been. I would love to experience the culture and the people. Music has taken me to many places, I hope it'll be the case soon with the Philippines.



## Asia Amusement & Attractions Expo(AAA2017)

**Former name:**

Guangzhou Int'l Game & Amusement Exhibition(CIAE2017)  
Theme Parks & Attractions Industry Exhibition(TPAE2017)

*March 8th-11th*

*China Import & Export Fair Complex (Area A)*





Becky Garcia, John Gaddi, Yoli Ayson, Joseph Calata, Joy Fong



Franco, Abby, Jojo & Bobby Laurel

# FCCP Holds Magical Music Ball

**METRO SCENE**  
By Joy Fong

An enchanting night of magical music, revelry and warm fellowship were all enjoyed by the attendees of the 37th Anniversary Ball of the Friends for Cultural Concerns of the Philippines (FCCP) recently at the Shangri-la Makati hotel.

The executive committee—headed by president Rose Lazaro, director-in-charge, Yoli Ayson, and co-chairpersons Mabel Abano, Nonie Basilio and Sol Tan Gatue—pulled all the stops in ensuring that the ball

would live up to its theme.

The much-applauded entertainment portion of the program was top billed by Christine Allado, the Filipina chanteuse based in London who shared the stage with Andrea Bocelli during his recent concert in Manila.

Supporting her was “Opus One,” an interesting group of three tenors of three different nationalities—Filipino Christian Nagano, Nigerian Michael

Odoemene and German Jonathan Wagner. A special dance medley inspired by the Broadway plays, *Evita*, *Phantom of the Opera*, and *La Cage Aux Folles* ably performed by FCCP members further mesmerized the audience.

Ballroom dancing that lasted till the wee hours capped the magical night that was the FCCP Ball.

Email [joyfong@rocketmail.com](mailto:joyfong@rocketmail.com)  
Photos Lorna Llanes ■



Gilda Salonga, Aida Cobanikat, Deth Tsn



Jemelle Gonzales, Gina Mohnani, Lhen Olbes



Jo Acebedo, Lita Gono, Gov. Baby Ortiz



Gela Cornelissen, Tina & Rupert Jacinto,

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# NIKKI TANG, APEA AWARDEE



**EARNEST SNOOPS**

By Ernest L. Gonzaga



*Nikki Tang received her APEA award*



*Nikki Tang with other awardees*



*Connie Haw, Nikki Tang and Agile Zamora*



*Nikki Tang with Len Olbes and Mayenne Carmona*



*APEA awardees*

A regional award for outstanding entrepreneurship, the APEA is built on the idea that for entrepreneurs to continue innovating and sustaining their leadership, there must be three elements in place.

The APEA provides a real platform for companies and governments to recognize and be recognized for entrepreneurial excellence, hence spurring greater innovation, fair practices and growth in entrepreneurship. As a regional award, the APEA will be able to group together leading entrepreneurs across the region, as a powerful voice for entrepreneurs with the crème-de-la-crème networking opportunity. The prestigious Asia Pacific Entrepreneurship Awards are a world-class award recognizing and honoring business leaders who have shown outstanding performance and tenacity in developing successful businesses within the region.

Organized by Enterprise Asia and supported by local governments and businesses, the awards aim to band leading entrepreneurs across the region to spur greater innovation, fair practices and growth in entrepreneurship. It hopes to be

a platform to encourage continued leadership towards sustainable economic development for the region.

Over 1200 top business leaders and entrepreneurs have been awarded the prestigious Asia Pacific Entrepreneurship Awards since 2007 in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore, Hong Kong, India and China.

This year's winners were chosen not only by the measuring the growth of the business under the recipient's guidance, but by the entrepreneur's investment in people; Belief and action in supporting responsible entrepreneurship; Leadership qualities, vision, direction and 'story' and Peer and industry recognition

The Asia Pacific Entrepreneurship Awards night was held recently at the Dusit Thani Hotel Manila.

One of the top awardees, Nikki Tang received recognition for her outstanding Beautypreneurship as the CEO of DMark Beauty and DermAsia PH.

To Nikki Tang and the other awardees, our congratulations. ■

# 2016 Best Moments and Bucket Wish List for 2017



**GRACE AGUILAR, Social Media/Correspondent**

2016 has been a great year for me!.... At the start of the year I was able to make a fresh new start. It was the beginning of new things with family, friends and work. April came when I was offered a job as a Food/Event Blogger/Correspondent of Manila Up International Magazine. Thanks to Sonia our Publisher and Executive Editor for believing in me. It brought me to realize that this was part of the niche I was looking for, which got me involved in my passion for fashion, events, networking, food and travel. There were a lot of things that I got to achieve while working for the magazine that I marked off in my bucket list. It was a privilege for me to meet a lot of distinguished people in the industry of fashion, film, sports, politics, etc... But in my bucket list of dreams was traveling to Hawaii to attend the Ladies of the 80's concert, meeting my favorite Model/Actor Nick Bateman, wearing a gown of my favorite fairy tale princess Cinderella designed by talented Designer Daddy, attending an amazing birthday of a Entrepreneur Victorino Noval which felt like attending a ball and the list goes on.

I'm looking forward to more great experiences and adventures in 2017!



**DR. SALVADOR L. ABIERA, B.S.P.T., D.P.T., M.D.**

2016 was both sad and exciting. I had lost my wife after her battle with cancer 1 day before our 29th year anniversary Jan. 4, 2016. After her death I traveled to Europe, Asia and a little of Latin America to be able to heal my pain. I got to swim with the biggest fish in the world, "Budanding" a whale shark at Oslob, Cebu, I got to see the chocolate hills of Bohol and the smallest monkey in the world called "Tarcier" in their own habitat. I did get to stay at the Palace of the Golden Horses at Kuala Lumpur, where Royalty and Dignitaries who visit Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia stay. I did have the chance to visit Our Lady of Fatima at Lourdes, Portugal, got my wallet stolen at Madrid, Spain, amazed by the gigantic architectural feat of Barcelona esp. the Sagrado de Familia Church which has been in construction for more than a hundred years. I had the chance to participate in several Medical Missions in Payatas, QC where mountains of trash is a fixture, Home for Girls where children as young as 4 yrs olds who are victims of rape and abuse at Palayan, Cabanatuan City and Medical & Surgical Mission at the St. Martin de Tours at Taal, Batangas, the biggest church in southeast Asia. I also received several awards for community service throughout the year, and 2016 The Outstanding Thomasian Alumni Award, the highest award given to an alumni of the Royal & Pontifical University of the University of Santo Tomas in the Philippines. I had also the chance to put up 2 more companies this year.

2017 offers a breath of fresh air for a new life, a new relationship and new friends. My bucket lists include more exotic places to visit and perhaps a chance to find someone to travel the world with me.



**ELLEN SAMSON, Los Angeles, California**

2016 was a significant year for Ellen for this was the year she established the Filipino American Caregivers Association. The goal is to uplift the skills and performance standards of the Filipino Caregivers making them the caregiver of choice in the US. She advocates the protection and well being of Filipino caregivers making sure their jobs are respected with dignity and given proper recognition in the home care industry. This was also the year that Ellen expanded her network and influence by being actively involved in the local and national Filipino American Chambers of Commerce. 2017 is expected to even be a greater year for Ellen as she expands her group of companies to a wider reach of service by establishing Business Development Partnerships all over California.



## PROVERBS 31 WOMEN

By Jhoanna de Guzman

**I**t's the year 2017, New Year, New Plans. People are busy creating visions for the whole year. What to achieve, where to go, and what paths to take. New Year gives us the license to start again and plan ahead. Nevertheless, it's good to plan, but it's better if we lay the plan to Him.

According to Psalm 119:105, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."

Make God your guide because He has already prepared that beforehand.

It's good to cross out that list that you have been making one by one, but it is also good to remember that, it doesn't have to make sense all the time.

What happens when we become consumed about planning and forgot to converse with God?

We become busy thinking about what we can do to live a better life, but we find ourselves following the world. Perhaps, we look forward to a satisfying life, but we just wait and do nothing at all. Maybe, we always plan, but in a few months' time, we get disappointed as we see it not happening. Then, we often end up

saying, 'it's just not my year.'

Sometimes, when we try to figure it all out, it is also the time when we can't fathom everything.

This year, involve Him in your plans. This new year, never stop dreaming, never stop believing in something greater, never stop asking God to deposit visions in your heart, and never stop asking God to show you a glimpse of the future. Because, the way God works is like a piece of a puzzle, He will not show you the entire picture, because if He did, you won't need to trust in Him.

We don't want to hurry God; we want to go through the process because a process is very important. Like a woman giving birth, we don't rush a woman to give birth because we don't want an immature baby.

Respect the process. That's where you will learn to trust God.

He will bring things to you and for you.

Plan, involve Him, and trust the process.

Happy New Year! ■

# Plan then Trust the Process





# Welcome to the New Year!



## LIFE'S JOURNEY

By Melody Garcia

## Are you READY for the New You?

What does the New Year bring us? 365 days of new opportunities. It's been a whole year since I wrote the first article in this column and so much has transpired since then. Once again, many resolutions have been made, the gymnasiums are packed with avid wishers and go-getters to get their fitness and body regimen on, new journals are selling like hotcakes, and investments into self-development and growth are the buzz words

So how do you face this New Year and get your "new you" going? Here are some of the values and life wisdoms I have put into practice and learned from the best of the best and most successful people I have been blessed to have met in my life journey last year.

### 1) Gratitude and Appreciation

We live in a world where "demands

and expectations" becomes the standard norm. In the midst of life's storms, the reaction to blaming situations and others is the common emotional response. Instead, I encourage you to take a pause and start your day or end your evening with reflections of what you can be grateful for the moment? Come up with a list of 5, then 10, then 20. You get the gist. And in the middle of whatever challenging situation you may be facing, what can you appreciate? I had to learn and re-learn my mindset through my journey. I learned to appreciate that if certain storms didn't take place, it would not have brought better quality circle, authentic friends and doors of beautiful opportunities my way. I learned to be thankful for things we often take for granted. Gratitude and Appreciation for the little things in your life ends up opening and

attracting more and more of what you are grateful for in bigger scales.

### 2) Focus and Enjoy the Journey and not the Destination

Life wisdoms, and the golden nuggets are found along the way. There are times in life which calls you to take the road less traveled... do it! The beauty of discovery is found in the path others don't take and often times it becomes woven in the beautiful story your destination holds. Be present in mind and soul as you make decisions.

### 3) You are the average of the 5 people you surround yourself with, so choose wisely.

If your goals include achieving a certain level of success, lifestyle, contribution to society, gained wisdom

and intellect, then I urge to you take a look at your influencers and their lifestyles. Do they reflect where you are trying to go? Do their existence in your life add value and motivate you to get to the next level? Are your conversations and engagements filled with wisdoms or meaningless gossips? Listen to those with proven results not just certificates or titles. Look at their accomplishments, their scope of influence, and most of all the significant impact they have in other lives. Remember, **MENTORS DO NOT CHASE YOU** with a bill, the best of the best, you have to seek earnestly, form a relationship and they will know your authenticity. They have been where you are at and will be willing to help you out if you show you are genuine and willing to put in the work.

#### 4) **Have clearly defined goals and priorities.**

There are 2 things you cannot control, other people and time. So choose how you spend your time wisely and who you spend it with. You have a vision and a dream. Does your passion equal your vision? Are you trying to figure out what your purpose is? My friends, it's tied to the God given Gifts you've been blessed with. What makes you happy? What significant contributions have you made to the world? Dig deep, the answer lies in your heart.

#### 5) **Get out of your head and focus on your heart.**

You create problems, stories, meanings when you work from the essence of the stories and noise in your head. Now, listen to your heart for that is where the truth lies. Your head will often shout out scenarios of challenges, impossibilities, a replay of past situations and conditions that you dangerously tie in to current situations that have nothing to do with the past and you end up setting limitations

and putting up barriers that should not be there. Remember, each person brought to your life is different, each situation may feel familiar but again, different. Use the past as a learning base but never as the reason to set limiting beliefs about what is in your present. Remove limiting beliefs, there are no such things as coincidence especially when there is too much alignment or commonality. Accept this as divinely guided destinies or appointments and trust in its timing.

#### 6) **Faith**

Faith in God and faith in yourself are the very foundation of it all and probably the hardest discipline you have to master. Learn to see yourself as God sees you. You are beautifully, wholesomely made. In your weakness, His strength is made perfect. Put Him first and He will direct your paths.

#### 7) **Choose Happiness**

See the good in all things my friends. Do something small daily for yourself, whether its meditation or

having an ice cream at 3 am or just singing and if you've been through a rough 2016, remember to say goodbye to where you have been and hello to the word "beginning". It's all about right now, get back up and take that first step. Your journey has just begun filled with exciting doors to be discovered, people to meet, places to see. Surround yourself with love and it starts with loving you. Yes you. Don't lower your standards to please everyone else. Don't dilute your existence with meaningless encounters. Choose quality over quantity. Remember, who you belong to and your life is a story of significant impact to others.

As I close this article, I am excited to share with you some of the world's global names have lined up to February and March articles. I am talking they have broken barriers of having more than a million followers and their contributions to the world in their own talents are beyond impressive. I have the exclusives and how that came about is all part of my own personal beautiful journey.... Stay tuned! ■



**eZWay's Corner**

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Top 10 Influential on Social Media by Weekly Billboard Magazine

# “eZWay Cares” Community “Santa Toy’s For Tot’s” Drive Was A ‘Tour De Force’

**By Dante Obligacion**

The Tree House Lounge was a perfect location for this year’s “Toys For Tots” Christmas giveaway, where Eric “EZ” Zuley and the US Marine Corp collected toys for underprivileged kids. Sunday night invitees were required to bring a toy and were treated to one surprise after another.

Rated in the top ten most influential on Twitter Zuley’s eZWay Team member: Allison Larsen had the Bilt-Well Roofing Company foster efforts by delivering a truckload of extra toys. When you get more than you expect from an exclusive event you are doing it the eZWay! This festive and elegant holiday extravaganza exceeded all expectations.

The event spotlighted celebrities, live musical performances, dancing, a raffle, multiple red carpets and media walls, with extensive coverage by major media outlets including the ever-popular EXTRA & GETTY IMAGES. To top it off, the after party went well into the early morning hours branding the Tree House Lounge as a new hotspot.

Founded in 1947 by reservist Major Bill Hendricks, the US Marine

Corps “Toys for Tots” program distributes toys to children whose parents cannot afford to buy them Christmas gifts. In 1948 the program was launched as a national campaign, and Sunday night Zuley; “Influencer for the Influencers” took it to a whole new level.

What an amazing evening for people to come together and celebrate the gift of giving with Toys for Tots. CPG Catering and Events served up a tantalizing exquisite delicacy of Italian Cuisine with their One of a kind Celebrity Gourmet Pizzas, and Pasta Dishes created by the one and only Celebrity Master Pizza Chef Nick Reuben A.k.a. Celebrity Pizza Guy. CPG Catering and Events will cater your event for any occasion and create

a pizza with your very own celebrity. Contact them to cater your special events at [celebritypizzaguy.com](http://celebritypizzaguy.com) or call them at [888-608-9598](tel:888-608-9598)

This classy and dazzling occasion went off without a hitch. Celebrities enjoyed the ambience; the media got its intended footage and DJ Juan Garcia’ kept music flowing throughout the evening. A one-of-a-kind holiday experience, which included an appearance by none other than; members of the original Soul Train Dancers!

Tis’ the season for philanthropy and giving is the biggest part. eZWay Cares maintains its commitment to unite the Hollywood and Corporate world for positive global causes.



Alexis Romero, Edie Hand Linc Hand, Dante Sears, Summer Helene, MMA Fighter



Steve Jennings, Eric Zuley, Steve Radenbaugh, US Marine Corp



Truck provided by Bilt-Well Roofing

Everyone's heart was touched. Charity only hits, no misses.

**Special performances by:** Shevyn Roberts, Carmelita Pittman Victoria Plummer and Magician Stoil Stoilov. With featured artist: Jayme Claire.

**Honorees:** Steve Radenbaugh CEO of Bilt-Well Roofing, Dante Sears Talk Show Host/Healer

**Media coverage:** EXTRA, Getty Images, Wire Image, Actors Reporter, Delicious TV, Auspicio Productions, EZWAYTV/Mag, Mollywood Photography, Manila Up Magazine, and Max It Magazine, Real Legit Magazine

**Special appearance's by:** Kate Linder, Lester P. Speight, Eugenia Kuzmina, Rodney Allen Rippy, Reatha Grey, @Al Boogie, Emeree Patterson Pastor, Eric King, Paul Pratt, Donna Spangler, Katherin Kovin Pacino, Celebrity Real Estate Power Couple, Linc Hand, Celebrity Pizza Guy Recipes and Events, @ Summer Heleen, Aaron Thomas, Edie Hand, FaithyJ YouTube sensation: Cholos Try, Carlos Ayala, Latricia Renee, eZWay Care Bear, Norky Rick Ronquillo, Isaac on the Keys, Andy McPhee, Kevin Young, Gary Miller, Lynn Rose, Steve Jennings, Vincent Ve

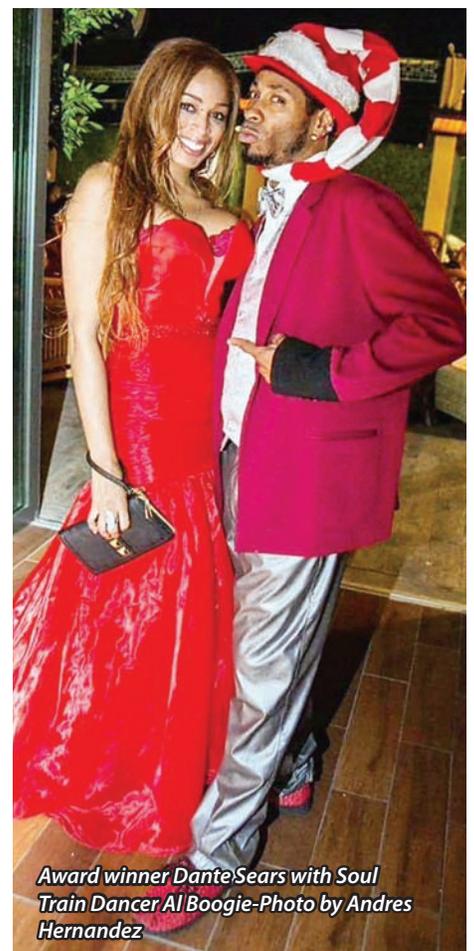
Paul, Ewart Chin, Scott Brown, Dante, Reporter and the US Marine Corp.

**Special thanks to the sponsors:** WPS Events, CPG Catering & Events (Celebrity Pizza Guy), Bilt-Well Roofing, Cocorilla, Provincial Vodka, A Pa Tacos Estrella, Bears for Humanity, UrWay Apparel, BrainTap Technologies, Walter Viteri, World Prosperity Network, Lamborghini Gold Champagne The Indie Vision Project and Team eZWay.

**Listen to our national and international radio show on the #VoiceAmerica Network EZ TALK LIVE show. First Sergeant Quavis L. Shuler I&I First Sergeant, H&S Co, 2D Bn 23D Marines gives a amazing testimonial on what eZWay Cares was able to do for Toys For Tots <https://www.voiceamerica.com/show/2614/eZ-talk-live>**

VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE EZWAY TEAM Sj Jones Danté Sears Sophia Alvarez Allison Hildebrandt Larsen Jose Beltran Scott C. Brown Juan Garcia All eZWay Angels, Penny Latham Auspicio Beltran Yan David Andrews James Zuley

Photo credits: eZWay Broadcasting Auspicio Beltran Yan ■



Award winner Dante Sears with Soul Train Dancer Al Boogie-Photo by Andres Hernandez



Allison Hildebrandt Larsen, Lynn Rose (In background) Penny Latham, Celebrity Pizza Guy



## WALK MY WAY

By Mayenne Carmona

**R**upert Jacinto, who has been called “Photographer to the Faaabvlous,” in a seven column front page interview by Stephanie Mansfield of WASHINGTON POST, has photographed the likes of Ivana Trump, Countess Camille Chandon of Moët & Chandon, Kimberly Rockefeller, Virginia Vanderbilt Burke, Karen Lefrak of Lefrak City, New York high society’s Nan Kempner, Caroll Petrie, Dina Merrill, Anne Slater, and royalties – H.R.H The Duchess of Calabria, H.R.H. Princess Chantal of France, Baroness Garnet Stackelberg, Viscountess Harriet de Rosiere, Princess Elizabeth of Yugoslavia, and many other high profile international celebrities.

The artist-photographer always manages to introduce something new in his yearly Faaabvlous Exhibits. Faaabvlous Seventh saw the Dazzling Diadems, with portraits of philanthropists Mariquita Yeung, Titania Wines founder, Tita Trillo, the book’s editor Mayenne Carmona, Bulletin Editor Arnel Patawaran and some more noteworthy personae of Philippine society. Two years ago, he introduced the Warhol-Kazumi inspired works... Aside from his own ideas, the artist gets inspiration from his travels abroad, visiting museums, art galleries, and art installations.

With his “Faaabvlous Faces,

*Rupert Jacinto: the Consummate Artist*

## RUPERT JACINTO’S “FAAABVLOUS THE SEVENTH”



■ Consul Helen Ong (white gown), Ambassador Rodrigo Amaral Souza and wife Lais

Dazzling Diadems” series, Rupert says: “Although beauty of face may stand on its own, the diadems or headpieces are elegant extensions which transform that beauty into a timeless and original work of art.”

Rupert is proud of the fact that FAAABVLOUS is the only yearly photo exhibit that is simultaneously presented with an award-winning coffee table book; where the huge portraits grace the long stretch of The Peninsula Manila’s 3rd floor Gallery, and with a glitzy Black & White Faaabvlous Charity Ball, attended by the country’s crème de la crème, dressed in black tie and red carpet gowns held at the Rigodon Ballroom.

The event is in support of the Love-a-Parish Program of Sto. Nino de Paz Chapel in Greenbelt 5, under

Rev. Fr. Jun Sescon. The project assists more than 400 churches across the country.

The Peninsula Manila has supported and sponsored the Jacinto events for more than three decades. And is presented in partnership with the Advertising Foundation of the Philippines.

Subjects of the book get their 40x60 portraits after the exhibit at the Peninsula Hotel Gallery, which run for two weeks. The portraits are on canvas and just like works of art; they endure the test of time.

Interested parties for the forthcoming Faaabvlous 8 may contact publisher Sonia Bermejo or email the writer at mayennecarmona@gmail.com. ■



■ Founder of Titania Wines, CEO Tita Trillo's Diadem portrait is a fitting tribute to her business



■ Philanthropist Mariquita S. Yeung is one of the Diadem Ladies



■ Faaabvulous series book Editor, Mayenne Carmona



■ Restaurateur Joel del Prado, Faaabvulous Men of Faaabvulous Seven



■ Virginia G. Lane, Merci Poblador Padolina, Joy Wambangco Rustia, Mhel Pechera and Rupert Jacinto



■ Virginia Lane Cover Lady of Faaabvulous VII



■ 5 OF THE 15 FAAABVLOUS WOMEN — with Gela Cornelissen, Cathy Binag and Yoli Ayson



■ Elaine Rojas Villar, Agile Abastillas-Zamora, Carminia Pavia and Luis Romero Ablaza III



## MAUI MANIA

By Edith Pendleton



# DREAM IMUA

## DREAM IMUA

Began in 1990 as A Keiki's Dream, Dream Imua supports Maui County's children at a time when they need it most. When children are in a crisis of any kind, they can lose hope. Sometimes their sense of stability is shattered, their faith in the future and themselves is gone. By granting them a day of their dreams, this program empowers them to believe that they are special and there is hope.

Modeled after national wish-fulfilling programs for children, Dream Imua provides a dream day to children between the ages of 4 and 16 who face a crisis of any nature; abuse, neglect, homelessness, medical or psychological issues, personal loss or family difficulties. Qualified social services programs and professionals refer eligible children to Dream Imua.

Children who come to Dream Imua, choose, create and experience their own special dream day on Maui. This child-directed approach not only offers a reprieve from suffering but validates the child's self-worth, sending positive messages of support and encouragement.

Dream Imua now serves more than 75 children each year and has facilitated more than 1,400 dreams day since it began.

## Dream Imua Guidelines

In order to participate, a professional social service and family provider, who refer children in crisis, must refer children consistent with these guidelines:

- All children must be full-time residents of Maui County
- Children served must be 4–16 years old
- The child must be referred to the Program by a valid referral agent using our Dream Imua Referral Form and include our Dream Imua Consent Form signed by a legal guardian
- The child may not have participated in a Dream Imua day in the past unless there is a new cause for referral
- The child will need an adult in his or her life who can participate in the dream day and focus on the child while ensuring his or her safety
- The reason for the referral must consist of a "crisis" rather than a long-term chronic issue (e.g. disability)
- The child will need to physically participate in a dream day activity and be able to make their own choice in identifying their dream day option

## Early Childhood Development

- Our Early Childhood Development Program provides services to children three to six years old who do not meet the meet age appropriate developmental

milestones and fall outside the scope of the Department of Education & Special Education Services.

- Early Intervention enriches the lives of both child and parent by promoting positive development. It provides successful strategies for parents, caregivers, teachers and daycare providers and enhances home and school environments. Ultimately, early Intervention leads to stronger more productive children and families.
- The needs of each child are met through professional therapeutic services designed for the child to help them thrive in their home, preschool, and community. Our goal is to better prepare the child for kindergarten and beyond.

## Infant and Child Development

Our Infant and Child Development Program serves more than 400 children and their families each year with Imua staff seeing many of these children multiple times depending on their needs. This early intervention serves children from birth to age three who have development concerns and focuses on improving the development of physical, cognitive, communicative, adaptive, social, and emotional skills.

In addition, the program helps families by providing information, demonstrations, and support to caregivers that help them better understand their children's

developmental needs and how to meet them. Care coordination is available to help families utilize resources at home and in the community. Support Plans are developed in partnership with the family and service team that build on strengths and priorities of the family.

Imua Family Services provides evaluations & services utilizing a specialized team of:

- Special Education Teachers
- Speech-Language Pathologists
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- Care Coordinators

### Imua Autism Services

Our Autism Program philosophy is that all children with autism can learn and grow and improve their current and future lives and the lives of their families. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex neurobiological disorder that typically lasts throughout a person's life. Diagnoses are now differentiated by the severity of the disorder, which can range from very mild to very severe.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, today approximately 1 in 68 children are diagnosed with autism. The disorder occurs in all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups, and is almost five times more likely to occur in boys than girls. Currently, there are over 3 million individuals in the U.S. with this diagnosis.

Children and adults with ASD often have problems with social, emotional and communication skills. They may avoid eye contact, prefer to be alone, not look at an object when another person points to it, have difficulty relating to and socializing with others, repeat actions over and over, have trouble adapting to a change in routine, or lose skills they once had.

### Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Treatment for Autism

ABA is a scientific discipline that focuses on the meaningful changes in human behavior. ABA is used to help those diagnosed with autism make socially significant changes in their behavior and gain needed skills. Imua has responded to the increase in individuals diagnosed with ASD by increasing our specialized programs, and the services we offer to the Maui County community.

### Newborn Hearing Screening

Our Newborn Hearing Screening Program has reduced the average age of hearing loss identification from three years of age to six months.

Early identification and intervention for all newborns with hearing loss are critical as it accelerates treatment and prevents unnecessary developmental delays. Imua staff provides outpatient testing for infants regardless if they are born on Maui, at home or in a hospital. We also provide re-testing and audio logic follow-up evaluations and referrals when needed.

### ABOUT IMUA

#### Aloha and E komo mai!

Welcome to Imua Family Services! The word Imua in Hawaiian means to "move forward." We are a non-profit, community-based organization serving Maui, Molokai, and Lana`i. This website is a place for our island families who are facing challenges and concerns with their child's development, behavior or disability. We provide family-centered, therapeutic services for infants, toddlers, and preschool children, from birth to age six and their families.

Since 1947, we have been fulfilling our mission to "Empower families and their children to reach their full potential." Imua Family Services programs include

our Infant Child Development Program, serving children birth to age three and our Early Childhood Development Program, serving children three through six years old. Our other programs include Imua Autism Services, Newborn Hearing Screening, Imua Inclusion Preschool, Dream Imua and Camp Imua.

Camp Imua provides a unique week-long, overnight recreational camp experience for 60 school age children with special needs supported by a trained volunteer care team. Dream Imua helps Maui County's neediest children, by granting them the ability to choose a dream day of activities empowering them to believe that they are special and there is hope.

Mahalo for visiting our site, we hope you can find the resources you are looking for. Please contact us for additional information, or with any questions about how we may help you and your child move forward.

If you would like to help support our work with Maui County families with special needs children, click on our Donate Today button. You can also visit our Ways to Give page for additional options such as Amazon Smile, which donates a portion of your shopping to support our services. We rely on the support of our community to fund our programs to meet the needs of our island keiki.

We would like to say mahalo to those who have donated so kindly to Imua Family Services.

**Dean Wong**  
**Executive Director**

*He lei poina`ole ke keiki.*  
A lei never forgotten is the beloved child!

Credit to the website [imuafamilyservices.org](http://imuafamilyservices.org) ■



## VEGAS VIBES

By *Esmeralda Padilla-Gould*

# Goals and dreams for the new year

**A**s we welcome the new year 2017, many of us often reminisce on the past year, finding this a great way to reflect on any milestones or achievements we've accomplished this past dozen months.

I'd like to share a few magical moments I've been fortunate enough to have experienced in 2016. I have so much to be thankful for, but the previous year was very special to me. I have done certain things that I never knew I could have achieved. I've been involved in different non-profit organizations whose goal is to

motivate and inspire school children in the Philippines to do better in school by giving them awards and recognition every graduation day. Another organization I participated in is the children's feeding program for the Balud Elementary School in Cebu City, Philippines.

Before the year ends, another unexpected was given to me as the "Best Voice Female at the Rumi World Music Awards 2016.

These momentous occasions in my life have all been very special to me, further defining who I am and

perhaps structuring a lattice to climb higher so I can continue to dream, explore and discover.

"Identify what is important for you to accomplish in your life. Do not allow anything to stop you from pursuing your dreams. Surround yourself with people who will bring out the best in you. And of course, enjoy your journey and always be grateful."

- *Esmeralda Padilla-Gould*

*Wishing everyone a  
Happy New Year!*



# VINA NACIONALES

Fifteen FAAABVLOUS Women 2016



ANOTHER CELEBRATION  
IN MANILA FOR

*Vina's  
70th Birthday!*



*L-R: Vina Nacionales, Vina Morales, Ricky Davao, Ramona Serevilla*

## Vina Lelim Nacionales

celebrated for the 2nd time her 70th birthday in Shangrila, Makati last December 3, 2016. The impromptu bash was organized by Becky Garcia at a last minute notice. Given a task that was impossible, Becky Garcia pulled it together a memorable, enjoyable and lively party with some celebrities that graced the event. Happy birthday Vina!





L-R: Ricky Davao, John Gaddi, Becky Garcia

L-R: Rye Baile, Vina Mortales, Mel Martinez, Ricky Davao



Marisa Fenton and Vina Nacionales



L-R: Mel Hubahib Martinez, Vina Nacionales, Ovette Ricalde, Babylyn Newfield, Riza Asa



L-R: Prency Yulo, Jessica Maloles, Riza Asa, Vina Nacionales, Mel Hubahib Martinez, Dr. Risa Caldoza



L-R: Isabelita Figgins, Malaysian Singer, Andy Edralin, Prency Yulo, Jessica Maloles, Vina Nacionales, Lady Datin Lourdes Stutely, Jonathan Badon



**T**he holiday season can bring forth warm memories of everyone gathering together and of relatives coming from far and near to again bond and find that common place that is the fabric of family life. I attended last night the penultimate **Simbang Gabi sa Konsulado** on 5th Ave and 46th St, (the Philippine Consulate). This was, in fact, my first simbang gabi with fellow kababayans after more than two decades of spending time in this great city. It was a communing of sorts, an attempt at recreating a tradition that we have lived and known and transporting this to what we know our home.

While the next coming weeks can be festive, this can also bring sadness and isolation to some. It is not unlikely that holidays can force someone to be confronted of his isolation, and for those who have recently started and kasasalta lang, with seeming endless sense of trials, “*Makakaya ko kaya ang homesickness?*”

Blues should be differentiated from what physicians call a clinical depression. This is not the usual

type of sadness that we experience in response to usual chores of daily living. Instead, it is a type of depression that is deeper and lingers longer. It is being sad even upon waking up, with the feeling of having to drag one’s self to start the day. Motivation is so limited. Individuals tend to isolate or withdraw, lack their usual excitement or pleasure to even do things they used to enjoy. They can present with loss of appetite, energy level and concentration. In severe cases, they can even experience thoughts of being dead to being actively suicidal or feeling paranoid or unreal (psychosis). This panoply of symptoms has to be at least for two weeks. Untreated, they can cause continuing subjective distress and difficulties, loss of work hours, strains in interpersonal relationships and even death from suicide. Nevertheless, contrary to popular belief, while December is replete with holiday festivities, the highest suicide rate is in the spring and fall. If an individual has medical problems, depression can get into the way of getting the care they need, and they are likely to recover less or slowly from the illnesses.



**ON CALL**

By **Romulo Aromin, Jr. MD, FAPA**

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual V (DSM V) is the bible of how depression or psychiatric disorders in general are diagnosed by mental health professionals (psychiatrist, primary care, nurse practitioner, social workers, and psychologists). Holidays encourage the use of mood altering agents like alcohol and even drugs. With depression, use of these can even be magnified. Clinical depression should not be solely attributed to medical problems, concurrent drug use or other psychiatric conditions. This depression should be differentiated from Bipolar Disorder where there are depressive episodes (usually how it presents) punctuated by high episodes with elevated mood, high energy, decreased need for sleep, among others. When it is Bipolar Disorder, treatment is different with the use of mood stabilizers (lithium or Depakote and medications like Risperdal (Risperidone), Zyprexa (Olanzapine), Abilify (Aripiprazole), used to treat disordered thinking (psychosis).

Major Depression is a biological condition just like having high blood pressure (HTN) or diabetes (DM). Unfortunately, even in our culture, it continues to be viewed as a taboo, not only to talk about it but to even encourage the help that individuals need. Though not to be seen as a defect or weakness of character, sadly this is still viewed as such.

## WHAT CAUSES IT?

Although the exact cause of depression is not known, it is felt that chemical imbalance involving nerve messengers (neurotransmitters, the means with which nerves interact with each or among them). There are low levels of serotonin or norepinephrine, or dopamine. Medications and therapy aim to increase these chemical messengers.

## HOW IS IT TREATED?

### Therapy

Very optimistically, there are treatments that work. For mild to moderate depression, proven therapy techniques have been helpful. Interpersonal Therapy (IPT) looks at how the person's interactions have contributed to depression and in a time limited fashion, addresses these difficulties with some skill building. It is also known that there are certain ways of thinking that encourages depression (depressogenic thoughts) and that correcting these faulting thinking (cognitive distortions) can result in changes in the way we feel which in turn can result in positive changes in the way we do things. The relation among this thoughts/feelings and action (in a cognitive triad) is one of the core model of Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT).

### Medication

For severe depression, medication should be recommended and usually is offered together with therapy. The first antidepressants (tricyclic antidepressants) were introduced in the 1950s. This type of medication has a number of side effects (sedation, drowsiness, troublesome interaction with other medications) and can be lethal when taken even in smaller amounts (causing heart rhythm problems). The breakthrough introduction almost three decades later of Prozac (Fluoxetine) in 1987 has revolutionized treatment of depression through medication. Since

then there has been a number of medications approved for depression. Newer medications included Lexapro (escitalopram), Celera (Citalopram), Effexor (venlafaxine), and Viibryd (Vilazodone). Usual side effects include stomach upset (has to be taken with food), restlessness (may be given medication to counter the side effects), and sedation (may have to take it at night). Individuals also have to be monitored on the presence of suicidal ideation.



About 1 out of 4 individuals on antidepressants have developed thoughts (not attempts) seen more in younger and older patients. This blackbox warning at least allows for safety monitoring of patients. Nevertheless, ten years since the advisory was introduced by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), a study showed a significant decrease in the prescription of antidepressants with a concomitant increase in the incidence of completed suicides. When followed over time.

A good trial of medication, barring any intolerable side effects, means the right dose for an adequate period of time (6-8 weeks). Improvements can be noted as early as 1-2 weeks but full response will be felt as treatment progresses.

## HOW DO I CONTINUE WITH CARE?

The goal of treating depression is to be depression free (in remission)

and regain functioning. This is the acute phase of treatment. Medication has to be tried thereafter for about 16 to 20 weeks (continuation phase) and can be tried to be lowered and discontinued for first episodes of depression. There is an increased risk of developing depression again in about half of patients with a prior episode when medication is stopped. This relapse increases to 70% for those with 2 prior episodes. This will exponentially go up to 90% for individuals with 3 prior episodes of depression. Medication does not offer full protection but affords protection and attenuation of symptoms, if they do recur. Just like taking medications for chronic illness as mentioned, medication for recurrent depression is recommended for years.

Even for first episode depression with multiple adverse social conditions (drug use, homelessness, lack of social support, financial difficulties, unemployment), it is recommended that medication is continued until some of these conditions remit or have improved.

*"Makakaya ko kaya ang homesickness?" Kakayanin mo yan! with support of your friends, community, and your medical / mental health provider.*

### Resources:

ParentsMedGuide.org  
NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness | NAMI: The National ...  
[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)  
NIMH » Depression  
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression>

The above is informational only. Medical care is best left to your physician.

Dr. Aromin is a board certified psychiatrist and works in Manhattan. ■



**CORY QUIRINO**

# MORE THAN JUST HER NAME

*I*f a name says it all, then Cory Quirino is everything that she represents. But upon knowing her better, a dimension beyond her own name emerges.

Everyone is familiar with her persona, the presidential granddaughter and celebrity who has popularized the word “wellness” as her chosen advocacy, the ANC/TFC lifestyle program TV host, the DZMM/ABS-CBN teleradyo national advocate of health and beauty, motivational speaker, popular newspaper columnist on “wellness” for the Philippine Daily Inquirer, and the best-selling book author of “Forever Young” and “Super Mind, Super Body”. This is the highly visible side of Ms. Cory Quirino.

Take a closer look and what do you see? Like engaging in an archaeological dig, every layer exposed reveal a side of her that possibly most people are not aware of.

Yes, she seems to be everywhere. It is clear that her passion is for national transformation which is founded on self-empowerment. You get the picture after conversing with her for ten minutes. And this very passion is strengthened by her sheer love for God and for life - that zest for living which only comes from an Eternal Source.

Thus, it is no wonder then when you hear or see Cory on radio and TV, read about her in the papers or see

on stage in one of her national mall-based wellness events dubbed “You’ve Got the Power” that her energy seems limitless.

Add a national franchise for the iconic international beauty pageant - Miss World and rest assured that she is now in the consciousness of every Filipina mother who aspires only a crown and fame for her daughter.

As a prominent society figure, put it, “Everytime I see Cory on TV, I am left wondering where she gets her energy”. You know the answer to the one through one of her often-expressed beliefs - “your possibilities are endless, so redefine yourself at will”. This, plus gifted with a love for the poor and the abandoned, there is a strong sense of civic-spirited in her - what with her involvement in Rotary Int’l. Red Cross Muntinlupa Chapter.

This lady is comfortable rubbing elbows with dignitaries as she is with embracing street children. She has a penchant for grabbing the headlines.

Having been a kidnap victim in 1995, while silently on a TV Taping in Lake Caliraya, Laguna, Cory transformed from a “kidnap victim” to “crime fighter” when she joined the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) as VP. Today, she heads the movement “IKAW”, the acronym for - Ihinto Krimen Against Women.

In 2013, again, she made the news when her candidates MWP 2013 Megan Young won the Miss World - the First Filipina to win - in the 63 year history of the prestigious pageant. Beauty pageant aficionados called it the Megan victory with a touch of the “Cory Magic”.

In a country where beauty pageants receive a cult-following, Cory is now most respected and admired, fondly called “Madam Cory”. But if you could see into her very heart, she prefers to be called “Ate Cory” (Big Sis Cory). This lady is a proud grandmother to her 2 grandsons, Sage and Alejandro, by her daughter Tamila.

And believe it or not, she is a good cook who is loved by her family as the matriarch whose happiness is to keep the family together.

“Family comes first.” she says, a legacy handed down by her parents - Tomas Quirino and Nena Rastrollo. And with a presidential name like Quirino, inherited from her grandfather, the late President Elpidio Quirino. Her aura clearly bears that respectable provenance.

Expect this enigmatic and dignified woman to surprise us all. Who knows what other dream she will pursue. Whatever they may be - one thing is certain - she will make the news once again. ■

# H-1B WORK VISA SEASON STARTS NOW



## IMMIGRATION PROFESSOR'S CORNER

By Robert Perkins, Esq.

The most sought after visa for working in the United States is the H-1B visa for professional workers. However, H-1B visas are limited to 65,000 visas per year, with an extra 20,000 available for people with a US Master's degree. Over the past several years the immigration service has received 250,000 – 300,000 applications for H-1B visas, so they have had to conduct a visa lottery to randomly select the applications they will process. From now until the first week of April, immigration attorneys will be preparing to file H-1B applications which must be filed in the first week of April to have a chance at being selected in the H-1B visa lottery.

To get an H-1B visa, an applicant

must have an offer to work for a United States Employer. Based on this offer, the employer may then file a petition with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services ("USCIS"). There are three main requirements for an H-1B visa to be approved by USCIS. First, the employer must offer the employee work in a professional job in the United States, a professional job is defined as one where US employees typically require at least a bachelor's degree, i.e., a computer programmer, an engineer, a teacher, a nurse, etc.

Second, the employee –called the beneficiary, must have a bachelor's degree or its equivalent. In the United States, one goes to college or

University at age 18 after graduating from high school. In the United States, a Bachelor's degree usually takes four years to obtain. Extensive work experience may be equivalent to a bachelor's degree.

The final requirement is that the employer must pay the prevailing average wage for the job.

An H-1B visa last for 3 years and can be extended for another 3 years for a total of six years. H-1B visas can be for either full time for part time work. An employer may also sponsor an H-1B visa holder for a green card, although this is a separate process. To learn more about the H-1B visa, please call our offices nationwide at 888-439-4560. ■





**UK NA UK**

By *Ela Hidalgo*

## *“Himig ng Paskong Pinoy Concert” :* A Fundraising Event

What is the real essence of Christmas? Christmas is not all about the gifts that we receive, or merry-making. It is all about what we can give and how to make the people around us merry in this season. This special season is about joy, peace and the love that we can give to others. It is a season to commemorate the love that God had given us when he sent his son, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of mankind.

Almost every weekend in December, different Filipino groups and communities around the United Kingdom had their own Christmas parties and events. But for one person, Christmas is a season for him to share his blessings and love that he is receiving. Jun Degamon organized a Christmas and Disco Party last December 11, 2016, at St. Michael’s Catholic Grammar School in Finchley, London for the benefit of a cancer patient from Davao

City Philippines. Degamon is a well-known singer here in London. He is also a businessman and a teacher. This Christmas season, he decided to make a difference in the life of his former co-teacher in the Philippines, who is now suffering from breast cancer, Mrs. Eucelyn Fuego Ortiz. Degamon was able to raise funds for the chemotherapy treatment of Mrs. Ortiz, hoping that she will receive the healing grace from above as her Christmas gift.

The alluring and gorgeous, Neneth Ortega-Lyons, X-Factor UK Contender in 2015, was the special guest, who also shared her talent and breathtaking performances to raise funds that night. The said show was supported by different Filipino Communities/Groups in London, as well as sponsors. I was also glad to be a part of this fundraising concert as the event host. It was a night filled with fun for a very good cause. ■



*Neneth Ortega-Lyons,  
X-Factor UK Contender in 2015*



## REFLECTIONS OF HOPE

By Rev. R.D. Quema

**M**ost of us will look back at 2016 with a lot of bewilderment and a certain sense of shock. A lot of things happened that were quite unexpected and surprising. In the political arena, governments changed political axis; Brexit, Duterte and Trump to name a few. Terror took center stage all over the world. The world lost some notable personalities recently, George Michael and Carrie Fisher come to mind. At our home, I went through a life-changing accident in the beginning of the year that developed into what was almost a fatal condition of a pulmonary embolism. Despite all these though, we pulled through and it looks like people are ready to hope for the best in 2017.

The events of 2016 are a good reminder to us that we ultimately do not control our fate. As much as we would like to plan and prepare for contingencies, we are all subject to the fate of the times in which we live. The Bible reminds us:

**James 4:13–14 (ESV)**

**13** Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— **14** yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

While we may be subject to circumstances beyond our control and we may plan to only a certain

# Living a Better Story

degree, yet the Bible tells us that our lives have been carefully planned and guided by Him.

**Jeremiah 29:10–11 (ESV)**

**10** “For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. **11** For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

I believe that God has a better story for you and I in 2017. When you let Him plan it out for you and you commit your way to investing in the building of your relationship with Him, you can experience a better life for 2017.

Here is a scripture to claim and meditate upon as you prepare for a better Story:

**Psalms 37:5–9 (ESV)**

**5** Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act. **6** He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. **7** Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! **8** Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. **9** For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.

1. Make Jesus the Center of your Story. Commit your way to the Lord. Remember that He has a better plan. What does this mean? Get off the throne of your life and let Him rule.
2. Be Still. Learn to wait for His Time. This means investing in emptying yourself of your will

and desire. From January 9 – 29, our church will be doing 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting. I would consider accepting this challenge to center your soul on the things of God. To find out more about this, download our NewHopeNaz App on the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. Follow along with us and watch God transform your heart to be more sensitive to His will. This will put you in a place of blessing for 2017.

3. Forgive, forgive and forgive! One of the biggest hindrances to your best story is carrying the old baggage of unforgiveness. It will keep you from God's best. Bitterness is a poison pill you drink while expecting the person you hate to die. It doesn't work! Forgive as the Lord forgave you.
4. Don't Worry! I know, easier said than done, right? Worrying is the act of contemplating without purpose. Turn your worries into prayers. Contemplate towards an Almighty God expecting a great result!

This 2017, let us believe God for a better story! Let us put all our trust in Him by investing in the things that do not fade away. Jesus has promised us a better story!

May you experience this better story in 2017! Happy New Year!

**John 14:12 (ESV)**

**12** “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

*Rev. Rodrigo D. Quema*  
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# GAWAD AMERIKA AWARDS 2016



■ Awardees *Fernandico Gonong, Mylah de Leon, Rosemarie Mejia, Antonette Ang, Melody Garcia, Lilia Lao, Sonia D Bermejo, Myla Tsutaichi, Jess Espanola, Mark Villamc Ho*

We at Manila Up! International, would like to feature some pictures of one of the highlights which happened during the previous year, one of which is on November 19, 2016, the Gawad Amerika Awards Night held at the International Celebrity Center in Hollywood, California.

During the awards ceremony, our magazine was given the honor of being named “International Magazine of the Year 2016,” and our Publisher, Ms Sonia Dionela Bermejo, was named “Promising International Publisher of the Year 2016.” The awards given were readily accepted, having been recognized by such reputable award body was really an honor and a blessing. ▶



■ *Andy Edralin, Nancy McMillan, Kenneth Barlis, Ging Ragasa, Jennifer Weigel, Charmaine Rodriguez*

The Gawad Amerika, formerly known as the Gawad Amerika Foundation, founded in 1996 by Mr. Charles Simbulan, guided by the vision of helping deserving Filipino-American achievers who lack the necessary resources, and are struggling to follow their dreams. It then evolved into honoring and recognizing the talents of not only these young achievers, but those of exemplary citizens who have made an impact in their chosen careers, and a difference in their respective communities.

The honor doesn't stop there. Three of our staffs, Celia Sabino Abuel, was awarded "Outstanding Social Media Photographer of the Year 2016," Melody Garcia garnered the "Inspiring Powerful Writer and Thought Leader of the Year," as well as the "Most Outstanding Producer - TV Talk Show," and Antonette B. Ang took home the "Outstanding Poet/Writer" award. ■



■ *Rc Caylan, Ann Ong, Jennifer Helen Weigel, Sonia Bermejo*



■ *Manila Up Staff - Grace Aguilar, Sonia Bermejo, Andy Edralin, Ging Ragasa, Paul Mirador, Melody Garcia, and Esmeralda Padilla-Gould*



■ Joy Macainan, Celia Abuel, Antonette Ang, Frank Paras, Melody Garcia, Sonia Bermejo, Grace Aguilar, Andy Edralin



■ Vina Nacionales, Antonette Ang, Rc Caylan, Jennifer Helen Weigel, Riza Asa, Esmeralda Padilla-Gould



■ Nancy McMillan, Charmaine Rodriguez, Celia Abuel, Grace Aguilar, Edmund Sabino, Fernandico Gonong



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■ Sonia Bermejo with our sponsor Mrs. Ha of Mayflower Seafood Restaurant

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