NATION: ONE FOR BELIEVE IT OR NOT: BLACK EYE FOR RP COPS • FICTION: JONAT'S LUCK

P75 IN METRO MANILA

Philippines GRAPHIC

OCTOBER 27, 2008

VOL. 19 · NO. 21

NATION
The blind leading the blind

Mindanao braces for MOA fallout in the wake of SC ruling

ARTS
Cory, the Musical: **The People's Gift**



Quezon City Mayor Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte Jr.

Investing in the future

9 771192 0600041
ISSN 119-206X



"The Best Musical Show in Asia!"

"A must see show for the whole family..."

At the PAGCOR Grand Theater
Parañaque City, Metro Manila

For inquiries contact tel. nos.
(632) 852-7758/54 • 851-7690
852-7752 • 852-7760
www.pagcor.ph

Presented by:

PAGCOR

WANDERS souvenir items & tickets are available at the LE CIRQUE Boutique located at the ground floor of the PAGCOR - Parañaque

Tickets are available at:

TICKETWORLD
891-9999 www.ticketworld.com.ph

and all PAGCOR branches in Metro Manila

Philippines
GRAPHIC
OCTOBER 27, 2008 VOL.19 • NO. 21



Investing in the future

By Fil V. Elefante

Years ago, Mayor Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte Jr. of Quezon City said, "I did not aspire to be a mayor simply to look good while in office. I have heard a man say that the first task of a leader is to keep hope alive. I want to go beyond that. I am working to make hope happen. I want the ensuing reality to endure for many years to come by investing in the future."

Page 26

Cover design by JIMBO ALBANO
Cover photo by BIBO VENIDA



20 NATION
The blind leading the blind
By Roy G. Acosta

6 WORLD
Former Malaysian leader Mahathir may return to political center stage
By Baradan Kuppusamy





Digital Photo Manipulation - GUILLERMO ALTRE JR.

40 FICTION
Jonat's luck
By Mirava M. Yuson

COVER 28
P4.2 billion income for UP eyed in 25-year land lease

WORLD 8
Nothing Confucian about toxic milk in China
By Antoaneta Bezlova

NATION 12
Davao City gov't, farmers push ban on aerial pesticide spraying
By Yasmin D. Arquiza *VERA Files*

One for Believe It or Not 18
Black eye for RP cops
By Inday Espina-Varona

Mindanao braces for MOA fallout in the wake of SC ruling 24
By Inday Espina-Varona

SPECIAL FEATURE 32
ISUZU GENCARS@30: Geared up for expansion

ARTS 36
Cory, the Musical: **The People's Gift**
By Joel Pablo Salud

POETRY 44
Pai Gow Poker, How to write horror, Body of evidence
By Karen Manalastas

REGULAR
EDITOR'S NOTE 2
Different folk
By Inday Espina-Varona

MY VIEW 4
Capturing memory
By Nelson Navarro

DEJA VOODOO 46
Ninong a la Pinoy
By Krip Yuson

QUOTES IN QUIZ 47
By Maia D. Orlanes

CROSSWORD 48
By Rene E. Sebastian

Entered as Second Class Mail at the Makati Central Post Office under Permit No. 284 dated September 27, 1990

Philippines
GRAPHIC

T. ANTHONY C. CABANGON
Publisher

ROSAURO G. ACOSTA
Special Assistant to the Publisher

BUTCH DEL CASTILLO
Editorial Board Chairman

INDAY ESPINA-VARONA
Editor-in-Chief

AHMED TOLEDO
FIL V. ELEFANTE
Associate Editors

MARRA PL. LANOT
Literary Editor

WILLIE BAUN
Contributing Editor

RAUL VALINO
KRIP YUSON
NELSON A. NAVARRO
EMIL JURADO
Columnists

GUILLERMO G. ALTRE JR.
MARILOU DIZON-FRANCISCO
Artists

BIBO VENIDA
Photographer

SUSANA M. BERMAS
Senior Editorial Assistant

KARLENE-INA N. MEDENILLA
Editorial Assistant

MARLON A. ALDENESE
Webmaster

PHILIP NAVARRO
Information Technology / Administrator

Judge PEDRO T. SANTIAGO (Ret.)
Chairman of the Board

BENJAMIN V. RAMOS
President

FREDERICK M. ALEGRE
EVP-Chief Operating Officer

SANTIAGO G. CABANGON
VP-Finance & Administration

RONALD ALLAN S. CALLAO
Circulation Manager

DOMINGO LLAGAS
Advertising Manager

JUPITER ARELLANO
THONEY PASCUAL
ROLYN SANTOS
ELENA 'CAMIE' CAMEÑA
Account Managers

PHILIPPINES GRAPHIC is published by the Philippines Graphic Publications Inc., with editorial, advertising and business offices at Dominga Building, 2113 Chino Roces Ave. (Pasong Tamo St.) corner de la Rosa St., Makati City, Metro Manila. Trunklines (connecting all departments) 814-0134 to 37; **Office of the President and Publisher**: 819-1216; **Editorial Dept.**: 814-0134 loc.105; Telefax 819-1217; **Advertising Dept.**: 812-9143; **Circulation Dept.**: 867-1138; **Circulation Manager**: 893-1662; **Accounting Dept.** 893-1664
Fax: 867-1138

E-mail: editorial@philippinegraphic.com.ph

Website: www.philippinegraphic.com.ph

P.O. Box 2797, MCPO, Makati City.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: P2,500 for one year (Metro Manila); P3,750 (Provincial)

Printed by Brown Madonna Press, Inc.
Km. 15 SS Highway, Sun Valley Drive, Parañaque City, Metro Manila

Member: **Publishers Association of the Philippines, Inc.,**

Different folk



Every time officials opened their mouths, to explain why a newly-retired comptroller of the Philippine National Police (PNP) was arrested by Moscow customs officers—for carrying cash way above the legal limit, the waters of this scandal just got murkier.

One can understand why retired Director Eliseo de la Paz remained part of the official Philippine delegation even if his retirement took effect on Oct. 9, a day before the closing of the Interpol 77th general assembly in St. Petersburg. He would have enough knowledge and experience to bring to, say, workshops and consultations. On the other hand, his successor should have been around, too.

But other facts in this muddled tale raise serious questions about just how serious our law enforcers are about defending the law.

The government says the money came from the Philippines. How did it pass through our Customs bureau? The government says the funds were official. If they were, why didn't de la Paz declare them to Russian Customs? He is comptroller; he can hardly be forgetful of the cash he was entrusted with.

Any ordinary traveller understands this; there are warnings galore in all airports worldwide about the carrying of cash beyond legal limits. What made the official delegates of the country to an Interpol summit believe they were beyond the law's reach?

Puno only adds to the outrage when he cavalierly points out that there was nothing wrong with the money de la Paz was carrying—since he was not stopped leaving the Philippines and not stopped on entering Russia.

Puno makes out like it was a puzzle that de la Paz was stopped on the way out of the host country?

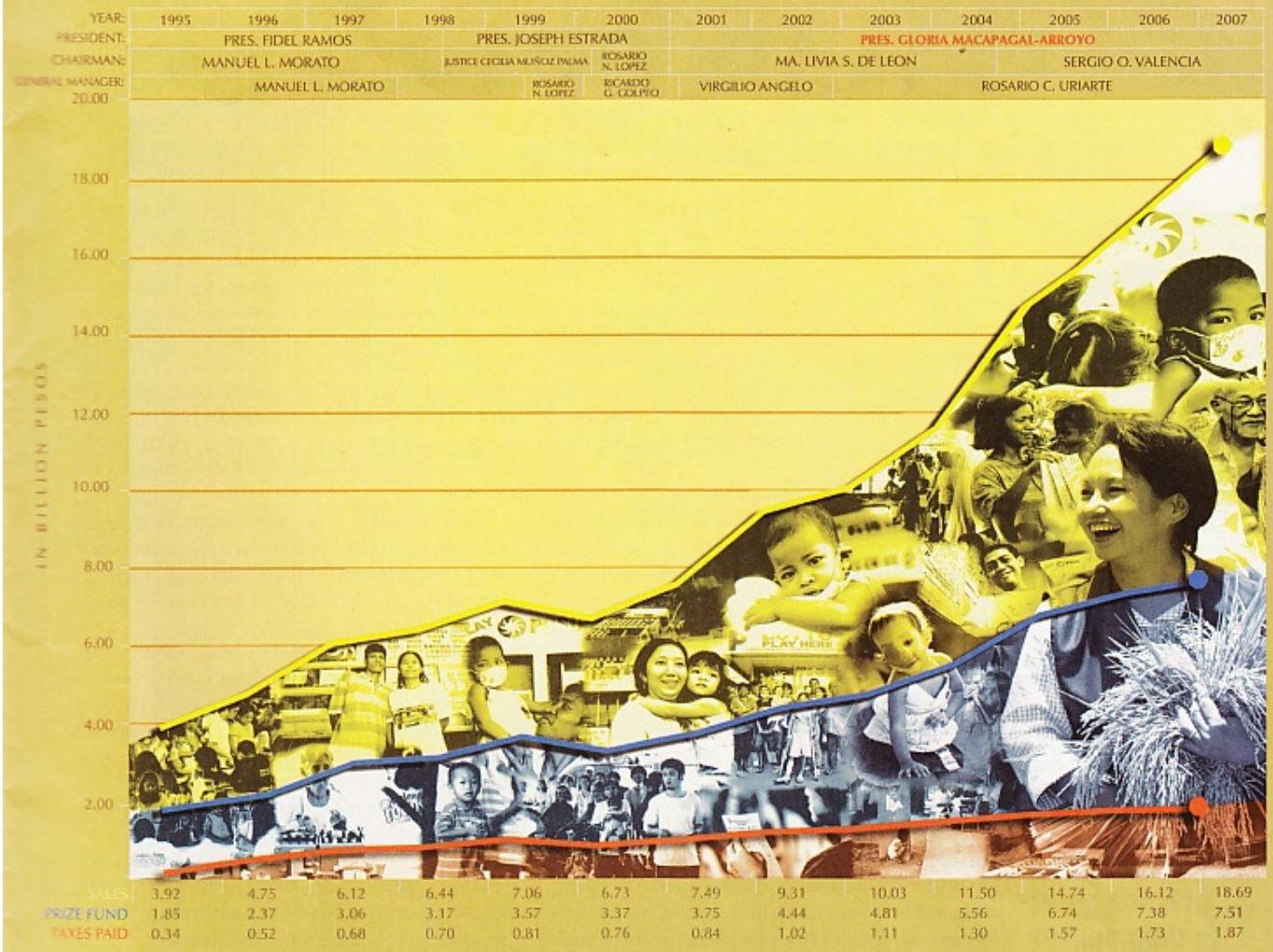
What does this tell us about the man who wields power over our country's law enforcers? It tells us that Puno believes a crime is not a crime when it remains undetected, and that the fact that previous crimes went undetected or unpunished, provides legitimacy to subsequent violations of the law.

Those in power are really different from you and me. In high school, we are taught that much is expected of those who rule the country, and those who exercise authority over citizens, because responsibility holds them to higher standards. But Puno and PNP officials seem to believe that the tag "official" virtually exculpates anyone from criminal charges.

One is tempted to say, with cops like this, who needs criminals?

But the incident, no matter how shameful, doesn't really come as a surprise. The administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has expended much time and energy to convince the public that any attempt at reviewing official action is tantamount to obstructionism. It has plotted over and over again to craft a legal shield—one that rests on the premise that executive privilege seems to be encompassing, a gift granted to whomever the President touches with her magic wand. This is a government that believes the truth is subsidiary to officials' right to keep secrets from those of us not in power.

The last few years seem to have upended the meaning of democracy here and abroad (where US President George W. Bush led the charge). In its current form, with so much erosion of check and balance procedures, a blithe dismissal of civil liberties and other rights, democracy pretty much overlaps into the territory of a dictatorship. Tyranny's survival always depends on authorities' ruthless exercise of the maxim that might always means right. G



GIVING HOPE TO MILLIONS

CARING FOR COUNTLESS FILIPINOS FAR AND WIDE

It's all on record. Our sales increased from 3.9 billion pesos in 1995 to 18.69 billion pesos in 2007.

Since the beginning of the lotto games in 1995, we were able to give 57.5 billion pesos worth of prizes, produce 300 new millionaires, and provide 31.4 billion pesos worth of charity to more than one million kababayans in need of medical assistance nationwide.

With only 1,500 outlets all over the country and our small army of sweepstakes ticket sellers, we surely know how to make things work: playing lotto, sweepstakes and STL (Small Town Lottery) is giving to charity.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

PHILIPPINE CHARITY SWEEPSTAKES OFFICE

WALANG KUPAS.

Capturing memory

My View



NELSON A. NAVARRO

As a journalist, I am attracted to those in my profession who bother to write, at some point in their sunset years, about what really happened behind the news, what it was like behind the headlines and the on-the-spot coverage

Legacy and memory are exaggerated concepts that we use when we wish to immortalize somebody's life, including our own.

What somebody has accomplished or not accomplished is a matter of perception. Some are heroes to others, but total nobodies or even plain scoundrels to everybody else. Memory is capricious and personal. We choose to recall what make us feel good and blithely ignore or disparage that which we dread or disapprove of.

What we commit to memory about ourselves we call autobiography or memoirs; what we write about others we call biography. The person who looks back on his life cannot but edit the past to his or her satisfaction. It's one's chance to explain his side of the story, impugn detractors, reward friends and supporters, and define how he wishes posterity to remember him by.

Those who commission biographies bare their cards by choosing the writer and laying out the terms of reference. The choice is hagiography or hatchet job, or something in between. In rare cases, the objective may be to come out with the simple truth, nothing more or less, and to let the pieces fall where they may. Not all heirs or supporters are conniving liars or sneaky types; some may turn out to be wise in the ways of the world and gifted with the wisdom to seek truth, honesty and transparency in their lives as well as in their loved ones.

My own autobiography, to be sure, is many years into the future, perhaps sometime in the late autumn of a long and productive life I expect to live. Like all long-term optimists (but short-term pessimists), I have kept my mind on indefinite springtime or summer mode. There will be scores to settle, but much later and not until the Fat Lady sings, so to speak.

There are autobiographies and there are autobiographies. From childhood I must have devoured hundreds written by the who's who of the ages-royalty, conquerors, presidents, prime ministers, military commanders, prophets, painters and sculptors, opera stars, cinema greats, business tycoons, even couturiers, and, of course, the glitterati of today.

I have not limited myself to the "I, Me and Myself" accounts. For every personal memoir or apologia about one's life, there are any number of biographies written by others interested and disinterested, negative and positive-historians, rivals, envious relatives, busybodies with lots of time and malice on their hands, etc.

The good thing about the English compulsion for keeping diaries is the sheer volume, nay, mountains of information available about anybody mildly famous within the Anglo-Saxon world. This is the one guarantee that nobody can get away with murder or the more blatant lies people tend to tell about themselves and others. For as long as it takes, some record or another will somehow surface to refute whatever may be the established version or recognized truth of anything and anybody.

As a journalist, I am attracted to those in my profession who bother to write, at some point in their sunset years, about what really happened behind the news, what it was like behind the headlines and the on-the-spot coverage.

Journalists tend to write about other people; there's a general squeamishness about writing about themselves or each other. This kind of vanity thing cannot but seem a bit gross and self-serving. But those who have acquired some stature are often pressed to get over this ego barrier, if only to provide some deeper insight into the making of news or, more importantly, how history actually unfolded from the insider's point of view.

Hence, the compelling memoirs of such journalists as Walter Lippmann, Mark Twain, Turner Cutledge, James Reston, Ben Bradlee, Tom Brokaw, Walter Cronkite, Barbara Walters, and Dan Rather.

My favorite is William Shirer, who came out with three meaty volumes in the 1970s and 1980s. Born in the Midwest, this American journalist is best known for his first-person coverage of Hitler's Germany. His *"Berlin Diary"* and *"The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich"* were top bestsellers I read with absolute fascination during my college years.

But Shirer wasn't just lucky in being in the right place at the right time He was a man of intelligence and curiosity who met everybody who was anybody in the 20th century. His account of Charles Lindbergh arriving in Paris after the first solo Atlantic flight cannot but give you goose pimples. So was his poignant take of Isadora Duncan learning of her two adored children drowning in the Seine in a car accident just after three of them had a reunion with the estranged father. Later, Isadora would die in another freak accident in the Cote D'Azur, strangulated by her scarf that got caught in the spokes of a speeding sports car driven by a new lover. G

eCard PLUS...

One Card For All Your GSIS Transactions!

- MEMBERSHIP ID CARD
- TRANSACTIONAL CARD
- LOAN DISBURSEMENT CARD
- ATM CARD
- AND SO MUCH MORE



Ang GSIS eCard Plus.

Bukod sa pagiging official GSIS membership identification card, pwede ring gamitin ang GSIS eCard Plus bilang:

GSIS Transaction Card, kung saan pwede kang mag-check ng records o mag-apply ng GSIS loans—gaya ng Consoloan, Cash Advance, at Policy Loan—sa pinakamalapit sa G-W@PS Kiosk;

GSIS Disbursement Card, kung saan maaari mong i-withdraw ang proceeds ng GSIS loans at benefits mo sa alinman sa 6,500 ATMs sa buong bansa - *wala nang tseke-tseke*;

Visa Debit Card sa lahat ng malls, restaurants, shops, gasoline stations, at maraming pang establishments na tumatanggap ng VISA card.

Bilang lifetime member ng GSIS, ito ang membership card na para sa iyo – ang GSIS eCard Plus. Isa lang sa mga privileges ng pagiging member ng GSIS ... *forever*.

Personal ATM Savings Account sa Union Bank na hindi na nangangailangan ng madaming requirements at wala pang maintaining balance;

Member Forever GSIS

www.gsis.gov.ph

Former Malaysian leader Mahathir may return to political center stage

BY BARADAN KUPPUSAMY

KUALA LUMPUR—Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi's planned stepping down in March 2009 may well see a return to the authoritarian rule familiar to Malaysians during the 22-year iron rule of his predecessor Dr. Mahathir Mohamad.

For one thing Abdullah will be handing over power to his deputy Najib Razak who has been waiting in the wings ever since Mahathir retired in November 2003.

"Mr. Najib is a carbon copy of Dr. Mahathir and we fear in his rise to power a possible return of iron-fisted rule and intolerance for dissent and curbs on the political opposition," said a diplomat with a European mission, on condition of anonymity.

Najib, an economist by training, has vast experience in government and politics but has always been in the shadow of Mahathir and Abdullah.

His views and policies on dissent, human rights and the political opposition are relatively unknown.

Critics said Najib's rise to power would also see the return of Mahathir to political center stage, probably as a tenured adviser to the government.

"I welcome the departure of Abdullah and am ready to give advice to the new government," Mahathir told local reporters after confirming that Abdullah was leaving.

Abdullah, who failed to carry out the major reforms he had promised in 2004, has promised to implement at least three reforms before he leaves in March but civil society activists are not excited by his promise.

Abdullah said he would not abolish the draconian internal security act, which allows for detention without trial, but will see to the setting up of an independent commission to select judges, an independent oversight commission to curb police corruption and abuse and place the Anti-Corruption Agency under an independent commission and give it more bite.

"He should carry out these reforms in the short time he has," veteran opposition lawmaker Lim Kit Siang told *IPS*. "If he is serious and if he gets cracking we will cooperate with him and he would be assured of a permanent legacy and will be remembered well."

Although Abdullah failed to carry out the promised reforms, he remained a well-liked figure among the people who understood that he could not act because he was under siege from within and outside.



Dr. Mahathir Mohamad

"While most Malaysians welcome Najib, they also feel sad that Abdullah is leaving," said Ramon Navaratnam, a former senior finance ministry official who is now the president of Transparency International, Malaysia.

"He was a most likable and affable leader but he was rather unhurried about his job. He delayed reforms and was indecisive and that got him into trouble with the people," he told *IPS*. Although Abdullah's decision to leave has settled the succession battle in his ruling United Malay National Organization (UMNO) party it is unlikely to end the larger political battle between a resurgent opposition led by former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim and a considerably weakened Barisan Nasional ruling coalition.

Political analysts say the tussle would worsen because Abdullah's choice, Najib Razak, and the iconic opposition leader, Anwar Ibrahim, are arch-rivals for political power.

Abdullah rose up the ranks of UMNO but was well liked and in the shadows during the 22 years when Dr. Mahathir held sway. Dr. Mahathir had said last year he picked Abdullah as a "temporary substitute" to hold the seat for Najib.

"Abdullah would be remembered as a pleasant man who simply did not have the skills or the gumption to rule," said a Chinese newspaper editor who declined to be identified. "He tried to please everybody and in the end failed to please anybody."

Najib was only 22 when he entered politics after the death of his father, revered second prime minister Abdul Razak, in 1976. He became the country's youngest minister two years later.

But his standing has been damaged by links to the 2006 murder of a Mongolian woman with whom he allegedly had an affair. Anwar also accused him of receiving kickbacks on defense deals he had handled.

Najib denied the allegations and swore on the Quran that he had never met Altantuya Shaariibuu, a former model who was blown up with C4 explosives.

Reacting to the developments Anwar said it would be an "unmitigated disaster" for Malaysia if Najib became prime minister. "Najib has given no indication of his commitment to judicial reform and corruption. These are issues that the Malaysian people expressed deep concerns over," he said. *IPS*

Friday Social

PARISIAN PEEL

FACE - STRETCH MARK - BACK

MESOTHERAPY

FACE LIFT - BUST LIFT
BUTT LIFT - THIGH LIFT

FOR ONLY **P 1,199.99**

Monday MADNESS

MASSAGE SERVICES

CRANIUM (HEAD)
SWEDISH, SHIATSU, LYMPHATIC
FOOT REFLEX / FOOT MASSAGE
HERBAL PAD MASSAGE

FACIAL TREATMENT

REFRESHING FACIAL
NOURISHING FACIAL
AGE DEFYING

299.99 *pesos only*

4th & 5th Flr. Hollywood Square Bldg., # 33 West Ave., Quezon City
Tel. No.: 410-3866 Fax No.: 373-2800
web: www.body-worx.com | email: fitness@body-worx.com

BODY WORX
Spa and Fitness Club



In this July 3, 2007 file photo, a worker checks dairy products at Wahaha's factory in Hangzhou, China. Chinese beverage maker Hangzhou Wahaha Group is considering buying dairy assets from Sanlu Group, the milk maker at the heart of a scandal over milk tainted with an industrial chemical, reports said. Wahaha spokesman Shan Qining said he could not confirm the reports citing the company's chairman, Zong Qinghou, as saying he wants to buy a milk powder production line from Sanlu.

AP photo/EUGENE HOSHIKO, file

Nothing Confucian about toxic milk in China

BY ANTOANETA BEZLOVA

BEIJING—For a country with an enduring tradition of Confucian ethics, the poisoned milk scandal—possibly the worst crisis of its type in Chinese modern history—has had a devastating blow on the public's trust in its government's benevolence.

Generations of Chinese have been brought up to believe in the Confucian credo that real governments exist to promote the welfare of people.

But in the case of the tainted milk scandal, which was the result not of poor product safety but of deliberate adulteration of milk with harmful chemicals to maximize profits, people felt more than let down. Many felt cheated.

"This is not a question of mere corruption," says travel agent Zhu Ling, mother of a four-year-old girl. "It is a question of morality. As a parent, it is hard to understand how anyone would contemplate making a profit at the expense of our children's health. Why was this covered up for so long? Where were the officials in charge?"

Milk powder doctored with the chemical melamine supplied by 22 different Chinese companies has sickened at least 54,000 babies and hospitalized 13,000.

So far, four babies have died in a snowballing scandal that has now crossed China's borders, affecting children across Asia and forcing well-known Western brands like Cadburys, Unilever and Kraft to pull their China-made products off store shelves in more than a dozen countries.

What amplifies the seriousness of the scandal is the fact that the company at the center of the poisoned milk scandal—Sanlu Group—began to receive complaints as far back as March. Sick children were turning up in hospitals with kidney stones and two of the infant deaths occurred in May and June.

But the scandal did not come to light in the media until September, after China celebrated the successful conclusion of the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Communist Party's flagship, *The People's Daily*, reported that city authorities in Shijiazhuang of Hebei province, where Sanlu is based, covered up the scandal for more than a month from Aug. 2.

Government officials, who turned a blind eye to the problem fearing it might endanger their carriers, prevented Fonterra, the New Zealand company that holds a 43% share in Sanlu, from going public with the scandal.

It was not until the New Zealand ambassador in Beijing took up the issue with the central Chinese government that the milk-adulteration scheme was exposed and the public alerted to the dangers.

The Chinese press has reported little on the intervention of the New Zealand government in the exposure of the scandal. But even without this fact the public's trust in its leaders has been badly shaken.

"There has been all this talk about reviving Confucian moral principles in society. They (the leaders) say they want to build a harmonious society where people care about each other. But what example is there in the milk scare for everyone?" wondered Xiao Zhang, a kindergarten teacher.

Government investigators have blamed the contamination on milk-collecting stations across the country, which buy milk from individual farmers and sell it to larger producers with little supervision in the process.

Li Changjiang, the head of the agency that monitors food and product safety, was forced to resign just a year after promising to overhaul China's food supervision system. Agriculture minister Sun Zhengcai admitted that the country's milk-gathering system was "out of control" and "chaotic".

Premier Wen Jiabao has apologized for the scandal and made a personal pledge to overhaul the system. "We will make the entire 'made in China' brand worry-free and reputable for both the Chinese and the people across the world," Wen said at a recent meeting of the World Economic Forum in China.

But the government has also imposed restrictions on media coverage of the scandal and in recent days put pressure on lawyers acting on behalf of people affected by the crisis to drop their cases. At least 14 lawyers from Henan province trying to aid milk victims were told by provincial officials to cease representing their clients, *The Associated Press* reported citing one of the lawyers.

The gagging of dissent mirrors the aftermath of the devastating Sichuan earthquake in May when parents alleging their children were killed by shoddy school buildings were told to leave the investigation into deaths and pursuit of justice to the government.

True to the Confucian tradition of leaders patronizing their subjects, government officials claimed they were the only ones vested with wisdom in handling the allegations. *IPS*

Our 8th park is now rising in Santa Rosa City, Laguna



Whether for securing future needs or investment, now is the best time to buy!

Call us today at (049) 576-8137 to 38

BAESA . DAGUPAN . BIÑAN . BATANGAS . LIPA . NAGA . CABANATUAN . SANTA ROSA, LAGUNA

ETERNAL GARDENS
MEMORIAL PARK - SANTA ROSA

A glimpse of heaven on a patch of earth

HLURB Certificate of Registration No. 19081 and License to Sell No. 20990

Activists reveal Japan's Death Row to the world

BY CATHERINE MAKINO

TOKYO—Japan's Death Row inmates revealed to the world their personal stories of isolation and suffering, uninformed until the last minute when they will be taken to the gallows.

They were participating in this year's World Day Against the Death Penalty, answering 14 questions in a survey conducted by Forum 90, a civil organization opposed to capital punishment.

The questions were sent to the inmates late July and returned to Forum 90 through their families and lawyers. The World Day is focusing its attention on Asia this year, calling for an end to executions in 14 countries of the region.

Japan's Death Row inmates wrote of their suffering in solitary confinement, Akiko Takada, an administrative solicitor and member of Forum 90, told *IPS*.

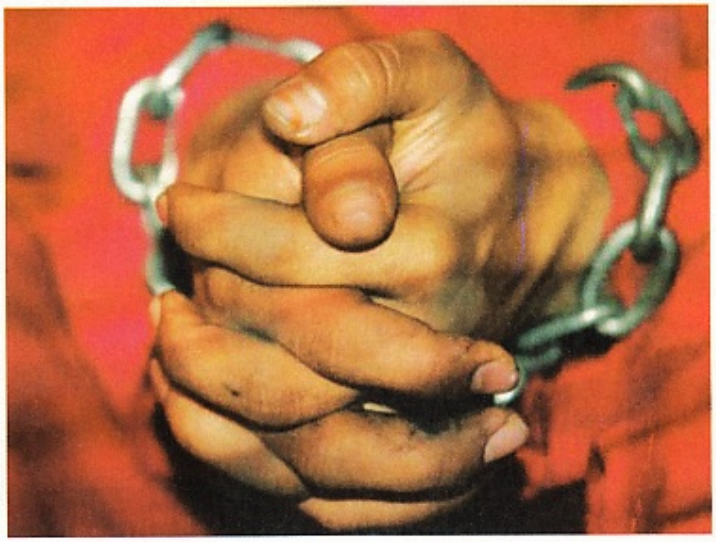
"From seven in the morning until seven at night they have to sit still in a small space. If they move, fall over or lie down, the guards immediately force them to sit up again. They only exercise twice a week, for 30 minutes," Takada said.

"Cameras watch them 24 hours a day—while they eat, use the toilet, do anything."

Many said they were falsely charged and sentenced by an unfair justice system.

"Their defense lawyers told them during their trials to apologize, so they could receive lighter sentences, even if they were not guilty," Takada said. "They asked, 'Why did we have to say we were sorry when we were innocent?'

"Their lawyers give up because 99% are found guilty in the current legal system," she said.



Many said they needed regular medical attention and were taking medication. Nearly half said they were seeking help from prison chaplains.

Seventy-six Death Row inmates filled out the questionnaires. Their ages ranged from around 20 to over 80. Two of those who participated were executed on Sept. 11.

According to the justice ministry, there are now 102 people on Death Row.

Takada said Forum 90 faced strong public opposition to its work on behalf of death row inmates.

Everyday members received abusive calls for "trying to save murderers while not helping the families of the victims". Forum 90 had also seen its membership drop from 5,500 to 4,000.

Japanese were unlikely to change their minds about the death penalty because of outside pressure, Takada said. "There was a time when I thought international pressure would help, but the death penalty is part of Japanese culture."

Former Justice Minister Okihara Yasuoka agreed, adding: "Japan has a culture of shame. There is recognition that death is the only way to atone for some crimes."

Anti-death penalty activists are hoping that this might change when Japan introduces a long-debated "citizen justice system" for criminal trials in May next year. ***IPS***

Environment crises likely to spur mass migrations

UNITED NATIONS—As climate changes, sea-level rises, earthquakes and floods threaten countries such as Bangladesh, Tuvalu, Vietnam and Tajikistan, the Tokyo-based United Nations University (UNU) warns that by 2050, some 200 million people will be displaced by environmental problems.

This estimated figure is roughly equal to two-thirds of the current population in the U.S. or the combined population of Britain, France, Italy and the Netherlands.

"All indicators show that we are dealing with a major emerging global problem," says Janos Bogardi, director of UNU's Institute on the Environment and Human Security.

The issue of migration, he points out, represents the most profound expression of the inter-linkage between the environment and human security.

Unlike the traditional economically motivated migrants of today, the environmentally motivated migration is expected to feature poorer people, more women, children and elderly, from more desperate environmental situations, and possibly less able to move far.

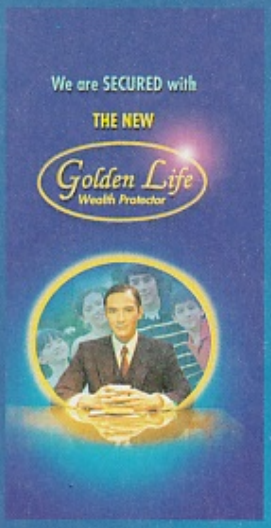
A group of experts who did a two-year research study points out that existing human-trafficking networks would gain strength and new ones could emerge as environmental deterioration, climate change and disaster uproot millions of people.

In Bangladesh, women with children, whose husbands died at sea during cyclone Sidr or are away as temporary labor migrants, are easy prey for traffickers and end up in prostitution networks or in forced labor in India.

Bangladesh is also often considered "the country that could be most affected by climate change" due to projected sea-level rise and flooding from melting Himalayan glaciers. It is also heavily affected by sudden disasters, such as cyclones.

According to preliminary findings, Bangladesh may lose up to one-fifth of its surface area due to rising sea level. And this scenario is likely to occur, if the sea level rises by one meter and no dike-enforcement measures are taken. *(Thalif Deen)* ***IPS***

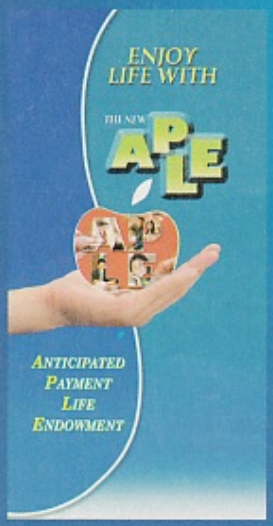
OUR PRODUCTS

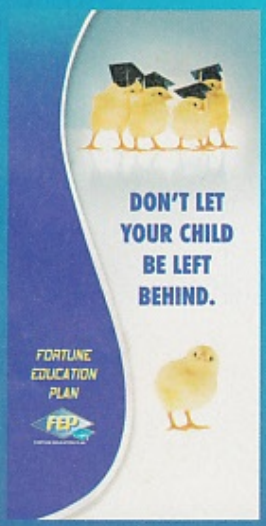




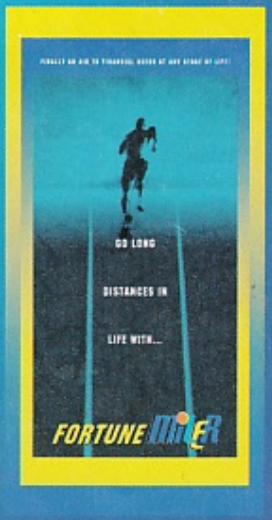












Fortune LIFE

Securing your tomorrow today

Fortune Life Building 162 Legazpi Street, Legazpi Village, 1229 Makati City Philippines Tel. Nos. (632) 892-9841 to 49 (connecting all departments)
Direct Line: (632) 893-7966 Fax (632) 892-3297 Email Address: fortlife@fortunelife.com URL: http://www.fortunelife.com

Photos by YASMIN ARQUIZA

Davao on



Kalagan elder Salvador Sabanda, 75, developed rashes on his legs after walking through a clump of grass with pesticide residue in a Davao del Sur banana plantation.



One of the anti-aerial spraying posters in a Davao City rally.

courtesy of INTERFACE DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

City gov't, farmers push ban aerial pesticide spraying

BY YASMIN D. ARQUIZA

VERA Files



Close up of lanzones leaf being eaten by tiny white insects from banana plantation.

DAVAO CITY-ONCE A WEEK, THE DRONE OF AIRPLANES shatters the early morning calm in Calinan, a cluster of small farmlands in the hilly terrain around Mount Apo. It is the signal for farmers to rush indoors or take cover and stop feeding livestock, for women to pull down clothes hanging out to dry, and for everyone to stay indoors, windows shuttered.

The small fixed-wing planes, known as crop dusters, are owned by the huge banana plantations nearby, spraying fungicide-a kind of pesticide that destroys fungus-on the banana plants. Residents say anyone caught outdoors during an aerial spray is likely to experience skin itching, eye irritation and nausea. Water exposed to fungicide turns milky white, and vegetables like malunggay curl up or retain a sticky residue.

Because of their rapid expansion, Davao's big banana plantations are encroaching into the city's built-up areas and farmlands like Calinan,

where small farmers grow crops and fruits such as durian and lanzones that are sold in Davao City markets. Communities around these plantations have been complaining of health problems every time toxic pesticides would drift their way.

Convinced of its ill effects on health and environment, the city government of Davao passed an ordinance in February last year banning the aerial spraying of pesticides. City officials and small farmers have since been locked in a legal battle with the banana companies over the ban.

When powerful banana growers questioned the constitutionality of the ordinance, the lower court upheld the ban, as did the Office of the Solicitor General. It was only in the Court of Appeals where banana companies scored a victory: The CA issued an injunction to stop the ban, allowing them to continue aerial spraying.

Last July, the Davao City government, in alliance with farmers, asked the Supreme Court to break the impasse in what is now considered a landmark case that will test the power of the local government to protect public welfare.

Aerial spraying is done on 1,800 hectares, about one-third the total area of banana plantations in Davao City, said a fact-finding report headed by City Planning and Development coordinator Mario Luis Jacinto. Pilots guided by Global Positioning System devices spray 30 liters of solution per hectare using automated nozzles.

Although the Philippines has no specific law on aerial spraying, government regulations require pilots to observe buffer zones "20 to 30 meters away" from plantations, according to regional officer Estrella Laquinta of the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority. The rule is meant to spare humans, animals and plants from the ill effects of the spraying. But it is a rule only on paper.

Rosita Bacalso, whose farm is just three meters away from the Cavendish banana plantation of Davao Fruits Corp. (DFC), said she saw white insects swarming toward her coconut trees from the corporate farm when aerial spraying began in 2004. The coconut fronds turned black and began falling off, while the young fruits failed to mature fully. As a result, her usual income of P12,000 from coconuts fell to P3,000 every quarter.

On one occasion, Bacalso recalled, she looked in horror at a glass of water from the tap after heavy rains washed off pesticide residues from the gutter into their water tank. "*Murag gatas. Mao ni ang among ginainom?* [It was milky. Is this what we've been drinking?"] she wondered. Since then, the family has been fetching water from the community tank 200 meters away.



Children on the way to school get sprayed with pesticide in Subasta, Davao City; photo taken June 2006.

Another farmer, Virginia Cata-ag, said members of her family experienced eye irritation, nausea and skin diseases after getting directly hit by pesticide spray. Her house in barangay Sirib is surrounded by a DFC banana plantation, the nearest boundary just 10 meters away, and the company does not notify them when aerial spraying would be done.

In barangay Dacudao, longtime resident Cecilia Moran said her family had to sell their cows that started getting sick from grazing on pasture land hit by pesticide spray. Leafy vegetables such as malunggay and camote tops curled up or had sticky residue that could not be washed off, forcing them to buy from the market what had once been a daily supply of fresh produce from their own farm.

Just a 'perceived' problem

The Pilipino Banana Growers and Exporters Association (PBGEA), together with DFC and Lapanday Agricultural and Development Corp. (LADC), has dismissed the complaints against aerial spraying of fungicide as "a perceived (but nonexisting) problem."

In a petition with the Regional Trial Court to declare the city ordinance invalid, the banana companies claimed that "fungicides are comparable to safe household items such as Nizoral anti-dandruff shampoo or anti-fungal preparations such as Trosyd."

The firms said aerial spraying of fungicide is necessary to control the Black Sigatoka disease, which mainly attacks leaves. If the infection spreads to fruits, the bananas can "suffer from premature ripening, rendering them useless for export."

In the same petition, however, the banana companies admitted that a simple way to eradicate the Sigatoka disease without resorting to aerial spraying of pesticide "is to cut off the leaves and prevent the spread of the disease to other nearby banana plants."

Reacting to the city government's report that other banana plantations use truck-mounted boom spray to manually apply 80 to 200 liters of fungicide solution per hectare, the companies said this method only covers up to 60 hectares per day, compared to aerial spraying that covers 250 hectares in three hours.

"Aerial spraying is the method of choice considering that it is the safest, most effective, and most accurate method of applying the water cocktail containing the fungicide," the banana firms said in their petition.

The banana companies also disputed testimonies of residents that they do not issue warnings. They said an alarm is sounded 15



Photo by DAGS MAGAWAY



Calinan farmer Virginia Cala-ag shows lanzones leaves full of tiny white insects that drift out from banana plantations at dawn.

minutes before the planes start spraying fungicide, and notices about spraying schedules are placed in strategic areas.

They also said the first three loads are sprayed near the boundaries at daybreak to avoid foot traffic, before the planes start spraying toward the interior of the plantation. In Calinan, people usually wake up and go to their farms at dawn.

In an affidavit supporting the banana firms' petition, plant pathologist Anacleto Pedrosa of the AMS Group of Companies, which includes DFC, asserted that fungicide spray has "no adverse effects" on the skin or respiratory system.

"Exposure must be by ingestion. An adult person has to directly ingest 425 milliliters of fungicide (which is more than a bottle of beer) to cause some adverse effect," he said.

Pedrosa also downplayed the health risks reported by anti-aerial spraying advocates, claiming that "a person can eat one million apples (directly treated with Mancozeb) a day and still show no adverse effect from the ingestion."

Mancozeb is the active ingredient in Dithane 600, a fungicide sprayed in banana plantations, with up to 1.5 liters used for every 30-liter solution, according to Pedrosa.

No safe dose

In pushing for the ordinance, the joint committees on environment, agriculture and health of the city council rejected the banana companies' arguments. Instead, they put more weight on the statements of Lynn Panganiban, head of the National Poison Control and Management Center at the University of the Philippines.

"There is no such thing as a safe dose when it comes to pesticides," Panganiban said. "Pesticide vapor is the best predator of the child."

Anti-aerial spraying advocates often show a photograph of children walking to school while a crop duster flies over a nearby banana plantation in a Davao City suburb.

"The theory now of cancer development is a one-cell-hit theory, meaning one molecule in our organ could be hit and this can already produce clonal transformation which will eventually develop into cancer," Panganiban added.

At a forum in UP Diliman last July, Panganiban said various studies have linked Mancozeb to health risks such as skin diseases, thyroid gland disorders and cancer.

Saligan, a legal assistance group helping the farmers in their complaints against the banana companies, showed a specimen label of the fungicide Dithane in court that clearly stated it "may cause irritation to nose, throat, eyes and skin." The label also contains the advisory, "Do not breathe dust or spray mist."

Several health studies in recent years have shown abnormally high rates of cancer, anemia and skin ailments among residents living beside banana plantations. In a 2006 study, the Kalusugan Alang sa Bayan health group documented nine patients who had died of cancer in a plantation site in Davao City. Seven of them had been working for a long time in the plantation, up to 29 years in one case.

Felixberto Batuhan, who used to work in a plantation, cleaning canals and harvesting bananas for three years, blames his employer for the loss of his eyesight. He recalls the pesticide spray getting into the workers' breakfast, as they had to be inside the plantation at 6 a.m. He is now one of the blind masseurs working in Davao City's malls.

Even the city government's Jacinto report, which has been widely criticized for allegedly favoring the banana companies, validated the complaints of farmers on the impact of aerial spraying on coconut trees, saying the fronds had become susceptible to attacks.

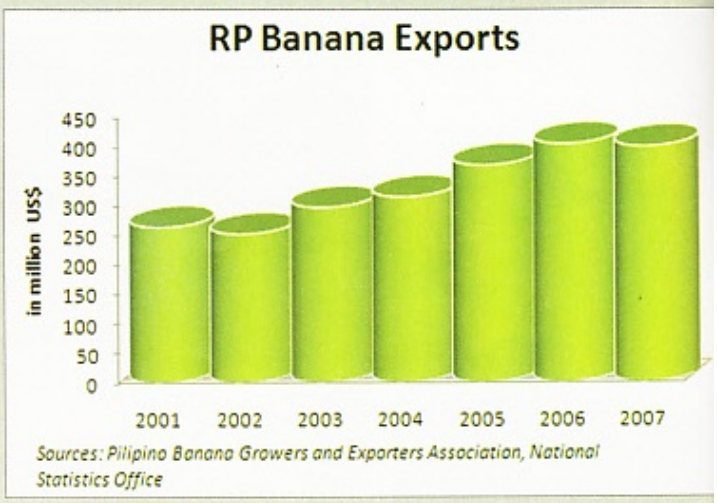
"This can happen when the fungus Metarhizium anisopliae, which infects and kills the Rhinoceros beetle, is eliminated or killed by the fungicides that drift to the coconut. Thus, about three to five rows of coconuts adjacent to the banana plantations commonly manifest Rhinoceros beetle-damaged leaves," the report said.

The city ordinance banning aerial spraying had started on a milder note with a resolution from city councilor Nenita Orcullo in 2004 seeking to regulate the practice. Orcullo, who lives in a community where aerial spraying is done, changed the proposal to a total ban a year later following widespread clamor from affected residents in various places.

Earth Day in April 2006 saw the legislation's supporters coming together under the loose alliance Mamamayan Ayaw sa Aerial Spray, which received logistical support from the environmental group Interface Development Interventions.

These groups found an influential ally in televangelist Apollo Quiboloy, whose prayer center in Calinan is adjacent to banana plantations. A video made by his television company showing the misty trail of the crop dusters and calling for a stop to the practice has been made into an anti-aerial spraying campaign material on the Internet.

Quiboloy was photographed standing beside Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte when the latter signed the ordinance banning aerial spraying in the metropolis.



RP banana exports (2001-2007)

Davao aerial pesticide row tests LGU power

THE LEGAL BATTLE OVER THE BAN ON AERIAL spraying of poisonous pesticides in Davao City, which has reached the Supreme Court, is not the first case in which farmers squared off against big agribusinesses over the issue of public health.

But it is the first time that farmers have the city government on their side. The city government, in fact, went as far as imposing a ban on aerial spraying of pesticides, through an ordinance banana companies say is unconstitutional and which is now the subject of the legal tussle.

"This is a landmark case on health and environment, which highlights the obligation of local government units to protect the public welfare," said Lia Esquillo, executive director of the Interface Development Interventions (IDIS). The environmental group is assisting local communities in their protest against aerial spraying.

The joint committees on environment, agriculture and health of the city council, in their report, aptly described the controversy as a case of "public health and environment vs. local economy."

Bananas provide more than 75% of export revenues in the region, making it Davao's No. 1 dollar earner. The Philippines is the fourth largest exporter of bananas in the world and, together with leading exporter Ecuador, has posted the highest growth rates in the industry in recent years, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization.

The case is not the first one involving controversial pesticide use in banana plantations in Davao. In 1993, banana workers in Davao del Norte were among 16,000 banana plantation workers who filed a class suit in Texas, U.S., against chemical companies that manufactured the pesticide DBCP, or dibromochloropropane.

A $41.5-million settlement was paid in 1997 by the companies, although refusing to admit fault or liability. They claimed DBCP pesticide, which was found to cause sterility in men, was not used properly.

In the current case, both the farmers and banana companies feel they are the aggrieved party. The companies were the ones that initiated court action to stop the enforcement of an ordinance banning aerial spraying of pesticide. They filed a case against the city government with the Regional Trial Court for "violating the equal protection clause of the Constitution" after the local legislation took effect in March last year.

The Pilipino Banana Growers and Exporters Association (PBGEA), Davao Fruits Corp. (DFC) and Lapanday Agricultural and Development Corp. (LADC) said the city ordinance constitutes "unreasonable exercise of police power" because banning aerial spraying would be "tantamount to confiscation of property without due process of law."

An immediate shift to ground spraying would cost banana companies P882 million in potential losses, the petitioners said. They also questioned the requirement of a 30-meter buffer zone to protect neighboring farms and residents from pesticide drift, saying this would greatly reduce the area of banana plantations.

In September last year, the lower court upheld the validity of the city ordinance. It said the experts presented by the banana growers merely gave "unsupported allegations" and "theoretical analysis" on the health and environmental risks of aerial spraying.

Judge Renato Fuentes gave weight to farmers' testimonies of "simple lives, gravely affected by a concerted problem, confronting them in their everyday existence."

The banana companies elevated the petition to the Court of Appeals, which granted in November a temporary restraining order allowing the banana companies to resume aerial spraying.

In January, the court issued a preliminary injunction, citing the "apparent unconstitutionality of the ordinance, albeit inconclusive." It further stated that the ordinance "seriously invades the appellants' right that will cause them irreparable injury if not protected."

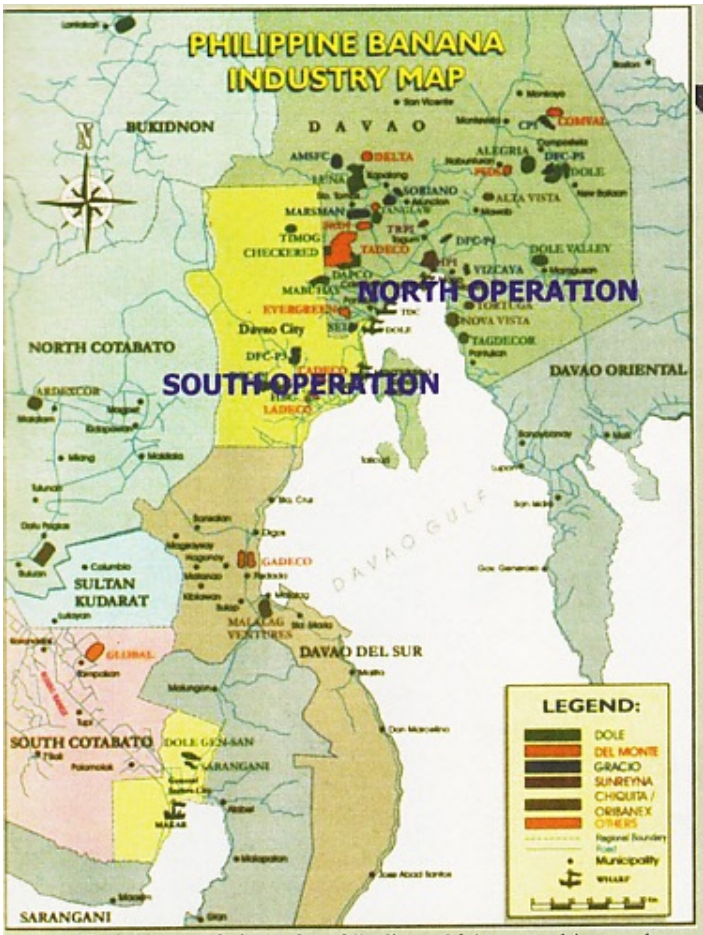
Under the new Rules of Court, the CA should have decided the case by July this year, or six months after it granted the preliminary injunction, according to lawyer Raymond Salas of the legal advocacy group Saligan, which is assisting the farmers.

When the CA failed to do so, the city government and the farmers elevated the case to the Supreme Court last July 25, questioning the injunction order, which had effectively prevented the enforcement of the ordinance.

"Mere allegations of unconstitutionality cannot be enough for the Court of Appeals to issue a preliminary injunction," Salas said.

The farmers, in their appeal, argued that "the conduct of aerial spraying, being a mere method to release toxic substances over an area, is not a right under the law. By concluding otherwise, the Honorable Court of Appeals commits clear and grave abuse of discretion."

Even the Office of the Solicitor General upheld the action of the city government. In response to the appellate court's request, Assistant Solicitors General Magtanggol Castro and Charina Soria issued a legal



Map of banana industry from http://www.tristar.com.ph/maps.php

opinion last June 20 that the banana companies had failed to show the ordinance was unconstitutional, and that the city had simply followed the general welfare clause of the Local Government Code.

On the other hand, banana companies found support from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in Region 11.

DTI Regional Director Merly Cruz said in a position paper submitted to the city council that Davao's leading banana industry directly employs 12,000 workers in the plantations. Support services such as stevedoring, trucking, packaging and security indirectly link up 100,000 more workers to the industry.

Public nuisance

Before coming out with the ordinance, the city council had created a Technical Working Group, which included representatives from NGOs, affected communities and PBGEA. The city government also created a fact-finding team headed by City Planning and Development Coordinator Mario Luis Jacinto to look into the issue.

After collating all the data, the joint committee on environment, agriculture and health of the city council issued their report, which said in part: "We have heard both sides of the issue: Public health and environment vs. local economy. The two are of great importance to any civilization. But when both factors collide, the policy of the State comes in to shed light and to remind us of the basic framework in which the government is created."

"Pesticides are poisonous, aerially spraying it is a nuisance, banning its aerial application is a justified response," the joint committee asserted. "Can anyone imagine an urban area being aerially sprayed with pesticides? What makes the life and safety of the inhabitants of a community in nearby agricultural entities less? To remain indifferent to the plight of those being aerially sprayed with pesticides is inhuman."

Davao City has the biggest population in the region: 1.3 million people compared to less than one million each for the three Davao provinces and Compostela Valley, according to the latest National Statistics Office figures. Its population density and status as a major urban center have made it a flashpoint in the aerial spraying controversy.

However, the city is not the first to enact legislation against aerial spraying. In 2001, the provincial board of Bukidnon passed its own ordinance against the practice, saying "unstable wind direction" while applying pesticide could pose danger to people, animals and crops. The ordinance noted that "poultries, piggeries, cattle ranches and other agri-based businesses and residential areas abut farm boundaries" of banana plantations.

The city ordinance has sent ripples in the neighboring province of Davao del Sur. During the Earth Day celebration last April, Gov. Douglas Cagas publicly criticized aerial spraying, citing the results of a health study in a village beside a banana plantation.

"Traces of pesticides that are being aerially sprayed were detected in their blood samples and water resources. If this practice continues, I am not providing my constituents a healthy body and environment that they inherently deserve," he said.

Provincial board member Merlin Bello, who chairs the committee on health and agriculture, said he has attended many community meetings where residents have complained about aerial spraying in banana plantations. He has expressed support for the passage of a similar ordinance in Davao del Sur.

Alan Sanggayan, president of a local association called Lambigit, said their group has submitted a petition to the provincial government calling for a ban on aerial spraying due to health concerns and environmental pollution.

Sanggayan is a member of the Kalagan indigenous community in sitio Budoy in Barangay Guihing, Hagonoy town, where vast areas are devoted to bananas. Successive expansion of the plantations since the 1970s has hemmed in the 700 families living inside the ancestral land claim on all sides, which have to contend with pesticide spray.

Near the market of Hagonoy, a bulletin board indicating the supposed date of spraying is blank, despite regular aerial spraying in the area. Elders of the Kalagan people said they are rarely notified about the schedules. They are also complaining about the more potent nematicide applied on the ground, and the stench of boom spray in other areas.

Organic bananas

Even before the city ordinance was proposed, environmentalists have reported cases of pesticide poisoning from various application methods, expansion into watershed areas, and conversion of rice and fruit farms into banana plantations.

The aerial spraying issue epitomizes the ills of corporate agriculture," Esquillo of IDIS said. "Corporate-led plantations and mono-cropping are the real problems."

She said farmers' cooperatives in Mindanao are already producing organic bananas, and many have gone into diversified plantations or intercropping to control diseases.

In the farming district of Calinan, farmer Cecilia Moran said most of her neighbors have leased their coconut farms to banana and pineapple growers that practice mono-cropping. Only farmers in the village of Malagos grow bananas under their coconut trees.

Davao businessman Jesus V. Ayala, a longtime industry player, has ventured into the production of upland Cavendish bananas using organic methods through his Tristar group. The company has toured city officials in its plantations, presenting the farm as an environment-friendly model of corporate farms near watershed areas.

The move is in line with the city government's Jacinto report, which recommended that "long-term use of organic pesticides should be adopted" in banana plantations to eliminate health and environmental risks to surrounding communities. *(Yasmin D. Arquiza/VERA Files)*

(VERA Files is put out by veteran journalists taking a deeper look into current issues. Vera is Latin for "true.")

BY INDAY ESPINA-VARONA

THEIR TIMING COULDN'T HAVE BEEN WORSE. ON THE day following the closing of the Interpol's 77th general assembly in St. Petersburg, Russia, Moscow customs officers nabbed the comptroller of the Philippine National Police (PNP) for carrying a huge amount of euros.

One for Believe It or Not

Black eye for RP cops



JIMBOY ALBANO

After stalling for days, the PNP finally admitted that comptroller retired Director Eliseo de la Paz was carrying at least €100,000 when nabbed by customs officers. The PNP at first insisted it was not arrest but later acknowledged the truth and the Department of Foreign Affairs said it was trying to find a criminal lawyer for de la Paz, and region 9 Director Jaime Caringal, another officer in the comptroller's entourage.

There is no word about Caringal carrying cash beyond Russia's 3,000-euro limit. A senior police source said that Caringal had volunteered to stay behind and had also worked to spare yet another member of their party from embarrassment.

The irony that no less than a member of the official Philippine delegation to the Interpol summit got nabbed for currency violations did not escape many police officers. More than 700 law enforcers worldwide had participated in the assembly, which ended with a call for coordinated police activity to halt the "globalization" of crime.

PNP spokesman Chief Superintendent Nicanor Bartolome described the money as "a contingency fund to support other activities that may arise during the convention." Asked how much the contingency fund was, Bartolome said they had no details.

A contingency fund is usually 10% of the official budget. But documents detailing the travel permits for the eight-member official delegation show their approved budget was only P2 million, which only increases the mystery of the de la Paz fund. Philippine officials have noted the high cost of living in Russia and other European cities to explain the huge contingency fund but government auditors and administrators have noted that travel and hotel bookings are always made in advance and not on the fly.

Contingency or not, all police officers must be aware of laws on the egress and ingress of currency. Philippine regulations require amounts of more than P10,000 or $10,000 to be declared with the Customs bureau.

If de la Paz, who was scheduled to visit other European cities with some fellow generals and spouses, was carrying at least €100,000, how did he get this out of the country?

The **Graphic** confirmed from the Bureau of Immigration that de la Paz and several other senior PNP brass and spouses left the country last Oct. 5, on a Philippine Airlines flight to Hongkong enroute for Russia.

Delegation list

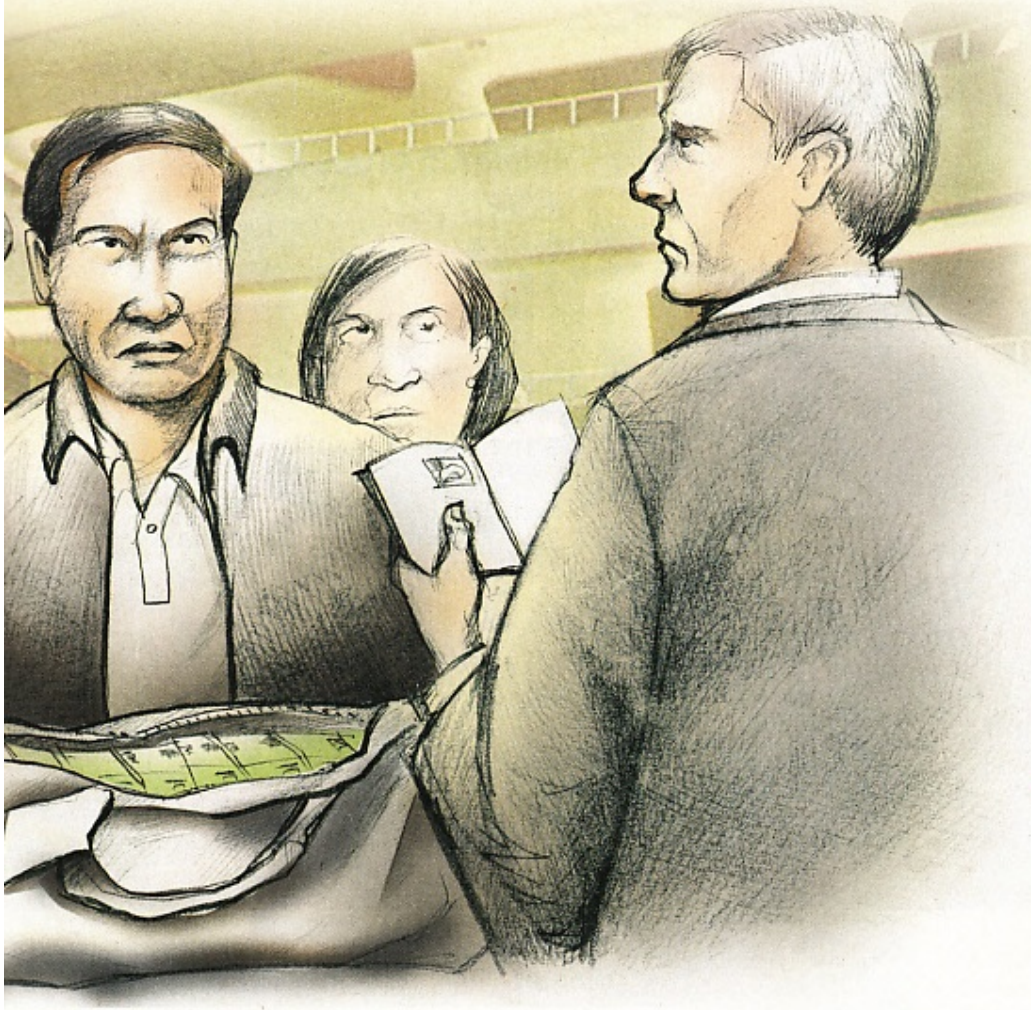
A senior police source said the eight-member PNP delegation split up at the close of the Interpol assembly. De la Paz and some other identified companions were scheduled to visit some European cities, while some departed for other countries and others opted to stay for a couple of days more in Moscow.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno waded into the mess and muddied the waters further when he and PNP officers ended up giving conflicting statements.

Caringal, for one, initially thought the money seized was de la Paz's personal fund. If the funds, indeed, were for contingency, at least one member of the official delegation did not know of this fact. Later, Puno used the term cash advance to explain de la Paz's money, saying it was to be liquidated and audited on the return of the delegation.

The complete delegation list reads like the PNP general staff sans Director-General Jesus Verzosa, Bartolome and new chief of staff, Deputy Director-General Geary Barias. Verzosa's wife as also part of the delegation though the PNP chief stayed at home.

Aside from de la Paz, the other delegation members were PNP chief of operations, Deputy Director-General Ismael Rafanan, region 9 (Western Mindanao) Director Jaime Caringal, administration chief, Deputy Director-General Emmanuel Carta, Director Romeo Ricardo (legal services), Director German Doria (human resources), Director Silverio Alarcio Jr. (operations), and Supt. Elmer Pelobello.



How did Philippine National Police comptroller, retired Director Eliseo de la Paz, get to take out €105,000 (P6.9 million) out of the country? Every Filipino traveller knows the law—anything above P10,000 and $10,000 should be declared to customs authorities.

In response to questions about the spouses, including one whose husband did not join the trip, Bartolome said: "Spouses are travelling on their own in a personal capacity. But they are invited to attend social functions and fellowship among Interpol ladies that are part of the activities of the assembly."

Remember when?

The incident evoked memories of the humiliation experienced by the Armed Forces of the Philippines in 2004 when the United States Customs Service tipped off authorities to the huge amounts of cash brought into that country by the family of military comptroller, Maj. Gen. Carlos F. Garcia.

De la Paz insisted he was a different case. "It was not my money. It was the PNP's money," he told reporters.

Garcia was receiving a monthly salary of P37,000. Yet he apparently earned enough from "gifts" to allow wife and sons to waltz into the United States with hundreds of thousands of dollars stuffed into their personal luggage, and lease or own three high-end properties in the land of green and honey.

The US customs service told the Ombudsman that the Garcia family brought $685,630 into that country between November 1993 and January 2004. At that time's conversion rates, this was equivalent to P44 million.

The US government also said the Garcia family owned two posh New York apartments, each worth more than $700,000 and a house in Westerville, Ohio.

Freeze orders on Garcia's assets, issued on the request of the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLF), detailed at least 40 bank accounts, including a slew of dollar time deposits in his name and those of his immediate family, 53 vehicles and several homes and estates around the Philippines.

US customs officials seized $100,000 on Dec. 19, 2003 from Garcia's son, Juan Paolo, for non-declaration.

The Garcia family otherwise declared their cash:

The general brought in $15,000 on Nov. 4, 1993 and $10,400 on Aug. 1, 1995.

His wife, Clarita, brought in $48,000 on May 10, 2003; $100,000 on Dec. 17, 2003; $204,230 on Jan. 13, 2004. According to the US immigration and customs enforcement, the Garcias' last transaction involved a $308,000 deposit in Citibank's One Park Avenue branch in New York City.

Garcia told US authorities his money came from "personal income, honorariums and allowances and dividends from capital contributions earned and saved through the years."

He later told military superiors that his funds were "personal loans from family members and friends".

But the general's wife, Clarita, breezily told American officers that her funds—$100,000 last Dec. 17 and $204,230 last January—were "gratitude money from contractors and suppliers," apparently those awarded contracts for AFP's infrastructure projects, and funds "for travel and expenses from businesses that are awarded contract for military hardware." G



WHO'S AFRAID OF THE MEDIA?

Definitely, not President Arroyo. In a recent speech, she raked the Philippine media over the coals once more, this time, blaming them for the country's reputation as one of the most corrupt countries in the world, the most corrupt in East Asia, in fact.

Corruption in the Philippines is just the perception of some investors, she said, projected by the "freest media" in Asia.

Wisely, no one in the media took her seriously; she was practically ignored.

The occasion was a business conference earlier this month in Makati attended by foreign and local economics experts. It was organized by the Economist Conferences to enable government leaders in host countries to present their policies and get reactions from the business community.

The World Bank, in its "2008 Worldwide Governance Indicators," tagged the Philippines as "the most corrupt" country in East Asia, dislodging Indonesia which topped the WB corruption list last year. Transparency International, in its annual Corruption Perceptions Index released last year, also labeled the Philippines as the eighth most corrupt country in the world.

"A lot of their basis is what they read in the (local) papers. It's a whole layering of perception indexes. And if you compare the Philippines with the rest of the region, we have to remember that the Philippines has the freest media in the region," Mrs. Arroyo said.

"What would be on page 10 in some other countries would be a banner headline in the Philippines. Even rumors and innuendoes become fact when they're in the banner headline. That's part of what we have to deal with.

"I don't think the business community would like a clampdown on freedom and liberties in the Philippines because that's part of the competitiveness, I suppose," the President said.

"I am no great fan of Mrs. Arroyo, and you know that," my friend said. "But she was right in her observation about rumors and innuendos in the Philippine press."

"Are you telling me she was right when she said corruption in the Philippines is just a perception?" I demanded.

"I didn't say that," he replied. "I merely said newspaper readers or radio- and television-news listeners tend to believe as facts rumors and innuendoes that are given the banner treatment by editors.

"Let's face it, my friend. The present situation in media really sucks. You have tabloid 'columnists' and radio 'block timers' who, by the sheer tolerance and apathy of serious journalists like you, are allowed to traffic day in and day out in rumor and innuendo—often for a fee—giving the media as a whole, a very bad name.

"If you ask me, this sort of written and oral pieces—I think they should be more properly classified as feces—must not be allowed, especially in news organizations that purport to be serious and wish to be respected. But there seems to be no ethical body in the Philippine media that could correct the situation. True, you media people have a so-called Code of Conduct. But I think, to all intents and purposes, it only exists in your so-called minds because I daresay this is honored more in the breach than in the observance.

"I know that many responsible members of your profession are also appalled by this kind of trash journalism. Unfortunately, we rarely, if at all, hear or read any actual

"What would be on page 10 in some other countries would be a banner headline in the Philippines. Even rumors and innuendoes become fact when they're in the banner headline"

The blind leading the blind

BY ROY G. ACOSTA



condemnation of it. They'd rather keep it to themselves; none of them would be willing to say on the air or in print what they are willing to say in private," my friend said.

Then he segued to the latest development in media that had raised howls from many journalists. We refer to the recent approval by the Senate of a bill filed by Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. that would require newspapers and radio and TV stations to print or broadcast the reply of a party offended by their report. Failure to comply would make them liable for fines.

"Probably, by giving the persons being criticized a chance to reply and get their reply published (or aired), according to the strictures of this bill, then hopefully, we can reduce the incidence of 'resort-to-the-gun' as a way to even up things with media practitioners," Pimentel explained. "The bill will, in fact, widen the freedom of expression by obliging the media to provide space to the response and explanation of persons to media reports or commentaries that are inaccurate, unfair or biased against them and injurious to their reputation."

My friend noted that Pimentel is considered a friend of the media. "I know that he was close friend of the late Joe Burgos Jr.," he said. "Now, why would a guy friendly with the media file a bill that would abridge the freedom of the press? Don't you think you guys are overly sensitive about the bill? Don't you think you also ought to give a chance to the guys you are hitting left and right the right to answer?

"I remember what former Carter Press Secretary Jody Powell once wrote in his book *The Other Side of the Story* where he quoted Bob Woodward as having told him once: 'We (in the press) are very good at investigating and nailing someone who is guilty. When we set our minds to it, we can do that, but we never find anyone innocent. If we can't verify an accusation, we just go on to the next one. I'm not sure that is the way it should be."

My friend was right; I've read the book, too, but couldn't tell him just yet as it would only give him added ammo to fire away.

But the fact is I have highlighted certain passages in Powell's book which I feel hit the nail on the head as far as some media abuses were concerned. To cite a few:

*The best way to get people to do what is right is to introduce into their hearts and minds a healthy fear of what would happen to them if they do wrong. The fear that mistakes, incompetence, or malice shall be discovered and exposed and those responsible shall suffer the consequences simply does not exist in journalism to the extent that it should, or even to the extent that it does in many other powerful institutions.

*Often, both the government and the media fail to punish adequately mistakes and incompetence. But the consequences of this shortcoming are more serious in the press than in the government, not because reporters are more prone to error, but because while the political process, of which the press is an important part, works to expose and punish mistakes in government, there is for the press no system of external discipline that is even remotely comparable.

*The press has never been known for adhering to strict rules of evidence or fair play when dealing with stories of scandal in high places. There is no concept of innocent until proven guilty; there is no right to confront, much less cross-examine, your accuser. Too often, there is little or no restraint on the publication of the rankest sort of hearsay and innuendo.

*It is a fact that there are large and powerful groups throughout society whose internal goals and imperatives are in conflict with the public good and the general welfare. The rationalization process by which the pursuit of selfish groups is ascribed to unselfish motivations is nothing new to most of us, primarily because we use it ourselves every day. Journalists share these problems and the rationalization process with doctors, lawyers, farmers, business, labor, political parties, and much of organized religion. What sets journalists apart, however, is that no one is looking over their shoulder, at least no one who is in a position to do much about what is seen.

*It is not that editors do not edit or that all reporters are without scruples. But a careful observer can quickly detect large differences in the amount of editorial scrutiny among news organizations and the fatal weakness is that almost all the checks and constraints are located within the organization. The only judge of the performance of, say, the *Washington Post* is the *Washington Post*—or at least the only judge in a position to do much about it.

*We leave the question of right and wrong in the press, unlike other powerful institutions in our society, to the individual consciences of reporters and editors. I am a great believer in individual conscience. But one of the things I believe most strongly about it is that it usually is not adequate.

"We have digressed enough," my friend said. "What else did the President tell her business audience?"

She urged investors to report any "irregular payment" demanded for facilitating transactions. Later, during an open forum, she said the government "would want to hear specific cases (of irregular payments) so we can work on them... work on the individual that is doing it, and also work on the system that is allowing the individual to do it."

She said the Ombudsman was working on stronger enforcement. "On our own, within the Executive branch, we do lifestyle checks .We have dismissed a lot of officials on the basis of unexplained wealth. And we have filed a number of cases with the Ombudsman. Its conviction rate has increased five-fold... four out of 10 cases will probably result in conviction," she said.

In a previous article in the **Philippines Graphic**, it was noted that the Ombudsman has apparently lowered its anti-corruption targets and that as a result, we may be facing a shortage of clerks and messengers, the apparent targets of the so-called lifestyle checks.

If we were to follow her logic, does she mean that the latest charges against her, rooted as they are in corruption, are just perceptions of the freest media in Asia?

The President concluded her piece by saying that the government was also taking steps to forfeit the gains of corruption. "So, (the approach) is two-fold. It's enforcement and also systems, and we hope that soon enough, perception will catch up with reality."

Justin Wood, director of the Southeast Asia corporate network, the Economic Intelligence Unit, noted in his speech before the same audience that last year, the Philippines ranked behind China, Singapore, India, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Indonesia in foreign investments because of the "poor quality" of its investment climate, describing it as "too uncertain, too risky and too difficult to operate in."

Citing Transparency International's corruption perception index that the Philippines was "perceived as one of the most corrupt countries in the world," he said he had spoken to investors and their general assessment was that, "the perception was very correct."

Wood also told reporters during a break in the conference that the President was making the "right noises" about stamping out corruption but that her suggestion that companies report any irregular payment to the government was "not that simple."

"I've explained to many foreign companies that say they have been asked to make irregular payments. They, of course, can't do that because they're bound by the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act in the United States. They can't make these payments, and yet they're reluctant to report these cases to the authorities because they feel that there may be retribution. They may feel that it's going to limit their access to opportunities, resources and contracts.

"It sounds good for the President to say 'we want to hear about these cases.' The reality is not that simple. If you talk to business people privately they believe that corruption is a problem that needs to be addressed, and it's not an easy one to address," Wood said.

"So what is your conclusion?" I asked.

"You'll notice that in the latest impeachment move against her, many of the charges raised are actually about corruption in the government—the North Rail and ZTE scandals, the Quedancor swindle, the Bolante scam, the bagfuls of money distributed to provincial officials and congressmen right inside Malacañang and, lest we forget, the Garci scandal where billions in Juan de la Cruz's hard-earned money was poured into the administration's party machine to ensure her victory. If we were to follow her logic, does she mean that the latest charges against her, rooted as they are in corruption, are just perceptions of the freest media in Asia? It makes me wonder if she did not purposely make her 'corruption-is-just-a-perception' speech to try to ward off this latest attempt to kick her out of Malacañang. I feel that even Nograles and her other faithful toadies in the House of Representatives recognize the gravity of the charges so they are now questioning the timing of the filing of the case because the economy, as a result of the global financial meltdown, is facing a crisis. But as the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* correctly pointed out in an editorial, the timing was not determined by the complainants but by the Constitution, Congress and the courts," my friend said.

"The Constitution is blind to world or local events with regard to impeachment, because impeachment is about eternal constitutional principles; public office is a public trust, and no official, including the head of state, is entitled to stay in office if he or she betrays trust, regardless of competence, or even the original term for which he or she has been elected," the *Inquirer* editorial said in part.

"So you're telling me that corruption in the country is not just a perception?"

"But of course," he said, with a naughty gleam in his eyes. "Unless you believe that corruption and abuses in the media are also just perceptions." G

No Worries!



Life * Pension * Education

Plan for your Life's Plans.

ETERNAL PLANS, INC.

"your future is our concern"

Since 1981

20th Floor Citystate Centre, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City

Tel. Nos. (02) 706-3740 to 47 / Telefax No. (02) 706-3594 / www.eternalplans.net.ph

"The Securities and Exchange Commission has not approved this advertisement or determined if this is accurate and complete.Any presentation to the contrary constitutes a violation of the securities regulation code and is criminally punishable. The public is encourage to report immediately to the Securities and Exchange Commission any misrepresentation or false or inaccurate statement."



Mindanao braces for MOA fallout in the wake of SC ruling

FIRST A HUGE FANFARE; THEN A SHRUGGING OF SHOULDERS. And after a series of clashes, with dozens killed and tens of thousands of rural folk fleeing their homes, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo nonchalantly dismissed the Supreme Court's (SC) Oct. 14 decision, which found the memorandum of agreement (MOA) on ancestral domain between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) unconstitutional.

Mindanao's secessionist rebels have been fighting for decades under different banners. But the recent MOA on the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity takes the rollercoaster prize in the on and off peace process and the rebels' reaction, that it would strengthen the hand of the radicals, bodes ill for southern Philippines.

The High Court ruled 8-7 to trash the MOA. The 90-page decision penned by Justice Conchita Carpio-Morales said: "The failure of the respondents to consult the local government units or communities affected constitutes a departure by respondents from their mandate under E.O. [Executive Order] No. 3." It also said the government exceeded its authority "by the mere act of guaranteeing amendments to the Constitution."

The majority included Chief Justice Reynato Puno, and Justices Consuelo Ynares-Santiago, Antonio Carpio, Adolfo Azcuna, and Senior Justice Leonardo Quisumbing and Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez.

The dissenting justices—Dante Tinga, Minita Chico-Nazario, Presbitero Velasco Jr, Antonio Eduardo Nachura, Teresita Leonardo-de Castro, Arturo Brion, and Renato Corona—wanted to dismiss the petition because the government's withdrawal made it moot.

The High Court ordered the government to conduct public information, to comply with the constitutional guarantee on people's right to information. The MOA would have been signed last Aug. 5 but was preempted when local officials led by North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Pinol sought a restraining order.

MILF leaders shrugged off the setback, saying they were not respondents to the case, nor did they consider themselves bound by the Philippine Constitution. But the MILF's political affairs chief, Ghadzali Jaafar, said the SC decision could give enemies of Mrs. Arroyo additional fodder for their latest impeachment case, filed earlier in the month. Under Philippine laws, impeachment should be based on a violation of the Constitution.

"The MILF is a revolutionary organization and, therefore, we don't submit to the judicial process," MILF spokesman Eid Kabalu said. "Therefore, the Supreme Court decision is not binding on the MILF.

Jaafar, however, said the SC decision proved that justices do not want a peaceful solution to the Mindanao conflict.

More ominous was the warning by MILF chief negotiator Mohagher Iqbal. He said the SC ruling could trigger more clashes and strengthen the hand of commanders opposed to continuing negotiations with the government.

Iqbal said radicals could gain new adherents as the High Court decision pulls the rug from the MILF leadership.

"It will be difficult to restrain them now," Iqbal added. "They will now really look at the government with mistrust."

After the issuance of the restraining order, three MILF leaders who unleashed their men on communities. Ameril Umbra Kato, Abdullah Macapaar and Aleem Pangalian remain at large despite wide-scale manhunts by government forces.

Legislators and Mindanao local officials, however, praised the High Court ruling.

"I congratulate the SC for standing up to our sovereignty," said Deputy Majority Leader Crispin Remulla. "The MOA would have led to the dismemberment of our Republic."

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, deputy minority leader, described the ruling as a "slap" to the Arroyo administration, which "agreed to unconstitutional provisions in MOA regarding the powers of the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity."

Earlier, leaders of Lumad (indigenous people) communities had decried the MOA, saying they were not consulted and warning that it threatened their way of life and culture. *(IEV)* G

Nag-uulat. Nagmumulat. Nanggugulat.



DWIZ 882 kHz

KARAMBOLA

Anchored by Jonathan dela Cruz, Salvador Escudero, Boying Remulla, Teddy Boy Locsin and Alvin Capino

Monday to Friday, 8-10Am



Quezon City Mayor Feliciano "Sonny" Belmonte Jr.

YEARS AGO, MAYOR FELICIANO "SONNY" BELMONTE JR. of Quezon City said, "I did not aspire to be a mayor simply to look good while in office. I have heard a man say that the first task of a leader is to keep hope alive. I want to go beyond that. I am working to make hope happen. I want the ensuing reality to endure for many years to come by investing in the future."

Investing in the future

Quezon City's growing economic clout proves that investing in the future is the way to go

And invest in the future, he certainly has.

After transforming Quezon City into a financially robust city, he used the extra cash to upgrade the urban infrastructure, thus attracting new businesses and employment while at the same time setting up special places for a new type of entrepreneur, the "technopreneur."

IT capital

Since the city's future is firmly in Belmonte's mind, he wholeheartedly gives his support for the establishment of a science and technology park in Quezon City. Located within the vacant lots of the University Philippines-Diliman along Commonwealth Avenue (see sidebar), Belmonte believes this will secure Quezon City's hold to the title of Information Technology Capital of the Philippines. There are other similar development projects in other places within the city, Belmonte adds.

"These are smaller but also related to IT," he says. "Some are in Novaliches and Eastwood. In fact, we have just given SM a permit to redevelop portions of their mall's upper floors into an IT center."

Belmonte concedes that developing something new will not be easy. He has created a committee to coordinate the various IT development projects within the city. The committee, he adds, would also address any problems that may arise during the course of the development.

P4.2 billion income for UP eyed in 25-year land lease

The University of the Philippines-Diliman expects to earn P4.2 billion from Ayala Land's use of a 37.5-hectare property along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.

Dr. Ruperto Alonzo (PhD), UP vice president for development, told the **Philippines Graphic** that the amount would be paid to the university within the 25-year lease period that Ayala Land signed with university officials. Alonzo added that Ayala Land paid UP an initial P100 million last May.

According to Alonzo, the development of the 37.5-hectare UP property is just the first phase of a master plan to develop the largely vacant 98.5-hectare property that used to be known as the UP Arboretum into the UP North National Science and Technology Park. The first phase, known as the UP-Ayala Technohub, will house firms in high-technology fields and high-value business process outsourcing services, start-up companies, and "technology incubators." The 25-year lease contract for the Science and Technology Park at UP-Diliman was signed by UP Board of Regents chairman Carlito S. Puno and president Emerlinda R. Roman and ALI board chairman Fernando Zobel de Ayala and president Jaime I. Ayala at the UP Executive House in Diliman, Quezon City on Oct. 27, 2006. The groundbreaking rites were held on March 8, 2007.

Ayala Land's project in Diliman consists of 10 low-rise buildings to be built in phases and includes the establishment of a retail center for the complex's employees and tenants aside from a business hotel, which will be located near the UP Asian Institute of Tourism. Alonzo said three of the buildings have been completed and are now occupied by IBM, Convergys and Manulife. The other six buildings are expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Alonzo also said the agreement is basically a "sharing system." He said the entire complex is designed to give high-tech companies and technopreneurs a way to tap the university's different research departments, and at the same time give UP students of higher level technology courses access to the latest in information technology equipment.

The UP-Ayala Technohub is the second site within the UP campus to be reserved for science and technology. The first site, known as the Technology Business Incubator, is a collaboration between Ayala Foundation and UP and is located along C.P. Garcia Avenue near Katipunan Avenue. The **Graphic** has learned that technopreneurs whose businesses have developed in the first site could then move into larger offices within the Technohub complex where these newly matured businesses can have direct access to established international technology firms such as IBM.

According to news reports, UP's Technology Business Incubator received a P500-million allocation in the P46.4 billion supplemental budget for 2006.

Rep. Luis Villafuerte of Camarines Sur said the P500 million was used for the "infrastructure development" of the 22-hectare Diliman Science Complex and Technology Incubation Park at the University of the Philippines campus in Quezon City.

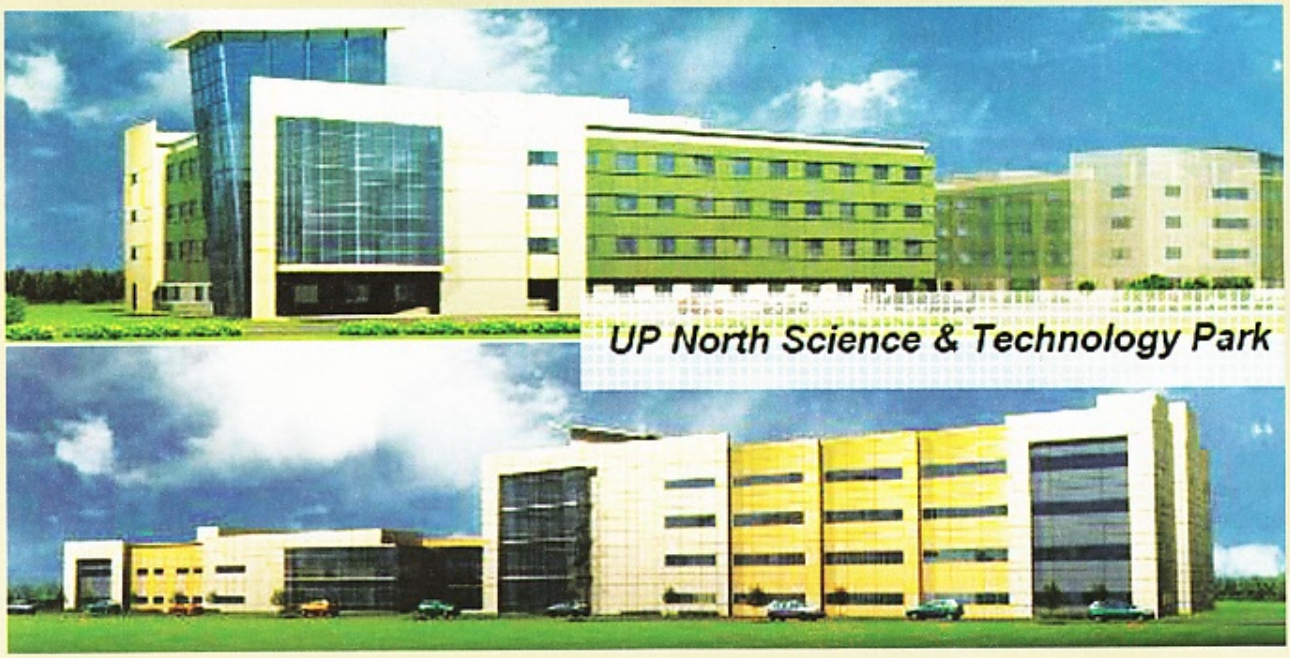
Villafuerte added that the allocation was part of fulfilling President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's pledge to build up the country's science and technology capabilities.

The congressman said the Diliman hub would serve as national center for the generation (research and development, or R&D) and application (innovation) of new knowledge in the natural and applied sciences, and mathematics.

Villafuerte said the center would provide "institutional facilities, including advanced laboratories, and a nurturing environment that would sustain S&T development."

'Many IT businesses have looked at Quezon City and liked what they saw; some are interested in relocating their main offices because of improved infrastructure and potential for expansion'





UP North Science & Technology Park

The idea of a science and technology park attached to a university is not unique to UP. UP, which is the first in the country to have such a complex within its campus, is just following the examples of other world-class universities that have set up such facilities adjacent to their campuses. UP official news releases cite as examples the S&T parks in Bangalore and Hyderabad, which are attached to the Indian Institute of Science and the International Indian Institute of Information Technology, respectively. Other examples are the University of Tsukuba in Japan, which has Tsukuba Science City; University of Beijing's Haidan Science Park` Hsinchu Science Park in Taiwan's Tsing Hua University; and of course, Stanford University's Silicon Valley in Palo Alto, California; and MIT's Route 128 in Massachusetts.

Alonzo said UP's S&T facilities were part of a master plan to develop a certain part of Quezon City into a dedicated S&T center. Once completed, the area would include portions of North Triangle, Diliman and Loyola Heights, with the university as the area's heart.

Alonzo said the UP hopes to earn around P200 million a year once the entire project is completed.

"I think Phase 2 of the project will be open for bidding in 2009," Alonzo revealed. "Ayala Land has expressed interest in handling the second phase but UP has to obey the law. Phase 2 must go through the bidding process to allow other investors a chance to join the project." **G**





According to Belmonte, there are more than 30-IT related companies now operating within the city and the number is expected to grow each month.

"Many IT businesses have looked at Quezon City and liked what they saw," Belmonte says. "Some are interested in relocating their main offices to Quezon City because of the city's improved infrastructure and potential for expansion."

Among the recent investors who have moved into Quezon City is Dell Philippines, which has established a new customer contact center at the Eastwood Cyberpark. Another one is Teletech, which set up a new set of workstations in Novaliches, and Sykes, which opened a shop along Quezon Boulevard to take advantage of the city's large pool of qualified IT professionals. Among the most notable IT investors in the city is IBM Daksh, which just opened its third and biggest branch in the country inside the UP-Ayala Technohub.

At present, the highest concentrations of Business Process Outsourcing firms can be found in the Eastwood City Cyberpark, which is a 13-hectare mixed-used development area. According to Belmonte, the 62 cyber locators there reported earnings of $188 million in 2006.

Competitive edge

Ricky Castillo, manager of IBM Daksh, told Quezon City officials that his firm decided to place their largest branch in the city after eight months of searching for an ideal location all over Metro Manila.

"We finally decided on Quezon City because of several factors," he said. "One is that the city has the largest population, so manpower won't be a problem. We have as much as 20 walk-ins a day. Second, it is less expensive than other cities. Competition is less congested here compared to Alabang and



'It's not really about how much infrastructure a city has; rather, it's how people can benefit and productively use the infrastructure'

Makati, where there can easily be five call centers in a single building. Another factor would be accessibility."

Castillo's statement is taken as confirmation of Belmonte's belief that a debt-free city government helps entice new businesses to set up in Quezon City.

"That's one of good thing about the state of the city government," Bemonte tells the **Graphic**. "We have largely succeeded in keeping our housekeeping expenses, including personnel, maintenance and operating expenses, relatively low. In some cities, those expenses take up 90% of their budgets. In Quezon City, it's about 60%. That gives us approximately 40% to use for infrastructure and other projects. In a way, this can be seen as the root of our ability to manage the city's development. If the budget was devoted entirely to salaries and expenses, such as fuel, electricity bills and the like, *wala kaming magagawa*. One thing about Quezon City, this city is not in debt unlike some of the supposedly richest cities in the country which are in debt. *Sa* Quezon City, *wala kaming* debt."



The mayor shows a copy of a 1940 Graphic magazine.

BBO VENIDA

He explains that this assures businessmen that the city has the funds to maintain and even expand the infrastructure their businesses rely on.

"It's an important competitive edge," Belmonte points out.

The development of the city as the IT capital of the country also complements the mayor's intention to establish a new business district in Quezon City's North Triangle. The mayor says that it would take the city an estimated 10 years to build the new business district, which will be designed to showcase the latest in eco-friendly technology.

Tax breaks and revenue

The mayor says qualified IT investors setting up in the city can easily obtain permits and tax breaks from the city government, explaining that this was a good way to show that opening a new business in the city is less costly compared to other cities.

The city, he adds, can actually earn more from the tax breaks given to these new investors. "New businesses generate employment and give income to city residents," he says. "They also produce new downstream industries that generate more employment." Eventually, all these economic activities would lead to more revenue sources for the city government, the mayor explains. This, the mayor adds, is part of the city government's task of reducing poverty by creating jobs and income for a greater number of the populace.

The mayor also stresses that the city government would be able to get more revenue by supporting the development of the empty tracts of land in the city. One estimate says that these empty tracts of land yield less than a million pesos in property taxes annually but if fully developed could generate more than a billion pesos annually in real property and business taxes for the city government.

Legacy: the city is the people

Belmonte says that investing in the future also involves changing the attitudes of the city's residents. He wants Quezon City's people to realize that they have a stake in the city's ongoing development.

"I want to instill a spirit of civic mindedness among Quezon City residents," says the mayor. "*Mas importante sa akin yon* because for me, the city is the people. It's not really about how much infrastructure a city has; rather, it's how people can benefit and productively use the city's infrastructure. I believe the mere fact that the city has a lot of infrastructure can instill a sense of pride in residents. And when there's a sense of pride, *may* sense of responsibility *ka, may* sense of ownership *ka, di ba?* That's my goal. To be able to instill that sense would be a real achievement, as far as I'm concerned." *(FVE)* **G**



Health and wellness tourism has become a multi-billion dollar industry a year as patients from all over the world take charge and have more options to direct their own 'healthcare'. The wave of the future is now here with us. Maximize your advantages in globalized healthcare by attending this international summit to learn from the world's industry experts, leaders and decision makers right here in the Philippines – home to the most caring, competent and compassionate people in the world!

PRE-SUMMIT WORKSHOP: October 22, 2008 *(limited slots)* **PLENARY SESSIONS: October 23-25, 2008**

PRIVATE NETWORKING SESSION WITH BUYERS

- Meet and generate business leads from invited healthcare buyers from US, Canada and Europe through a private roundtable discussion
- Business matching sessions and one-on-one meetings that will convene both the government and private sectors. *(by invitation only)*

SPECIAL NETWORKING EVENTS & ACTIVITIES:

- VIP & Speakers' Night at the Presidential Yacht for a private cruise of the bay (October 22)
- Complete physical pampering Spa Party (October 23)
- Tour of Makati City as health and wellness tourism hub and Gala Dinner at Dusit Thani Manila hosted by Makati Tourism Foundation, Inc. (October 25)
- Daily Morning Wellness Activities by Gold's Gym (October 23 to 25)

FAMILIARIZATION TOUR FOR FOREIGN DELEGATES, BUYERS & MEDIA

- Tour of International Patient Centers of the Philippines' top hospitals
- Tour of the Philippines' top spas

SPEAKERS AND TOPICS

Soe Nyunt-U, MD, MSc
World Health Organization Country Representative
"Global Strategies in Achieving Health"

John Gray, PhD
Best-selling author, "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus"
Doctor, Human Psychology and Sexuality
"The Dynamics Between Diet, Male-Female Relationships and the Human Brain"

Eva Kiess
Lead, Accreditation Canada International
"Accreditation in the Health of Nations: Expert Perspective of Accreditation Canada"

Sanjiv Malik, MD
Senior Healthcare Management Guru
"Building Your Branding Muscles: Creating Brand Champions from Your Employees"

Robert P.K Keller, MD
Founder and Medical Director, Keller Medical Institute
"New Technologies in Staying Healthy Looking Beautiful and Living Longer"

Samuel Bernal, MD, PhD, JD, MBA
Molecular Biologist (Expert in Regenerative Medicine)
"Innovation in Treating Cancer and other Catastrophic Illnesses Using Stem Cells in Regenerative Medicine"

Noah McKay, MD
Best-Selling Author, "Wellness at Warp Speed"
"Mind and Body Interrelationships"

Special Message:
Deepak Chopra, MD
Chairman and Co-Founder
Copra Center for Wellbeing Former Chief of Staff, Boston Regional Medical Center

VISIT THE WEBSITE FOR MORE TOPICS AND SPEAKERS

REGISTRATION FEES

PLENARY SESSIONS — *All rates are VAT inclusive*

Regular Rate: PhP 19,600.00 / US $ 490 (before Oct.15)

On-site Rate (Excludes entry to Spa Party and Gala Dinner): PhP 22,400.00 / US $ 560

WORKSHOP SESSIONS — *All rates are VAT inclusive*

Pre-Conference Workshop: PhP 5,600.00 / US$140
(limited to 150 slots only)

SPECIAL RATE OF P10,000
- Spa Association of the Philippines (SAPI) members
- Travel trade members (travel agencies, tour guides)
- DOH-accredited hospitals for medical tourism
- Cebu Wellness Council members
- Local Government Units
- Tourism educators

(Pre-registration with proof of organizational affiliation is required on or before October 15, 2008)

STUDENT RATE OF P1,500 *(limited to 100 slots only)*

Organized by HTM COMMUNICATIONS, INC

For registration details and inquiries, contact: 440-3354 / 437-7090 / 0928-5044916 or log on to www.philippinehealthandwellnesstourism.com

GALA DINNER HOST

CORPORATE SPONSORS

MEDIA PARTNERS

SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

ISUZU GENCARS @30:



GEARED UP FOR EXPANSION

More dealerships serve more Filipino motorists

ASK ANY MOTORIST: WHAT IS THE SECRET OF HAPPY DRIVING? He will doubtless answer: Engine power, comfort and safety, fuel efficiency and dependability.

These are the qualities that Isuzu Gencars has provided through the years for its thousands of satisfied customers, in terms of motor vehicles delivered and motoring services rendered.

As it celebrates its 30th year as distributor of Isuzu vehicles in the Philippines, Isuzu Gencars counts on a broad network of dealerships in key places to bring its vehicles, automotive services and products to more Filipino families.

The network had its beginnings in Makati City, sprawling southward to include dealerships in Sto. Tomas, Batangas; San Pablo City, Laguna; Lemery, Batangas; and extending on to Bicolandia with Isuzu Gencars Legazpi City, the youngest dealership.

Like the first dealership in Makati, those outside Metro Manila offer the quality vehicles, automotive services and products that Gencars is noted for: Dependable pickups, vans, light trucks and buses and passenger cars, automotive parts and products and its excellent after-sales quality service at a 5-Star service shop. Exactly what Ambassador Antonio L. Cabangon Chua envisioned when he established the dealership on Oct. 16, 1978.

The fulfillment of this vision is ably led by D. Edgard A. Cabangon, managing director of Isuzu Gencars. He initiated the expansion by opening the first dealership outside Metro Manila, Isuzu Gencars Batangas, and continues to directly oversee the growth to other key places.

Key executives assisting him are Marketing head Jerin Guevarra, Fleet Sales division manager Nelson Foster, and Retail Sales manager Ariel Raymundo.

Earlier, the young Mr. Cabangon took over as president fulltime in 1995. But he had been closely involved with Isuzu Gencars since 1989. When he came back from the United States, he had started handling Gencars, at the same time that he took up his studies for a law degree. He had to give up these studies to be able to devote his full time and attention to the expansion program.

Today, the steady push for growth has brought Isuzu Gencars' name for quality vehicles and motoring service beyond Metro Manila and on to major areas of growth.

Lemery, Batangas dealership boosts southward push

In July 2006, Isuzu Gencars stepped up its southward expansion by opening two dealerships. These were Lemery, Batangas, which heightened its presence in the province of Batangas, and Legazpi City, which brought the dealership to Bicol region. These two youngest dealerships in the group opened only days apart—Isuzu Gencars Legazpi on July 12, and Lemery, Batangas five days later, or on July 17.

The company was emboldened to make this southerly push in that year by a vote of confidence from Isuzu Philippines Corporation. This came in the form of the first ever Dealer of the Year Award in 2004 and again in 2005 for a back-to-back victory.

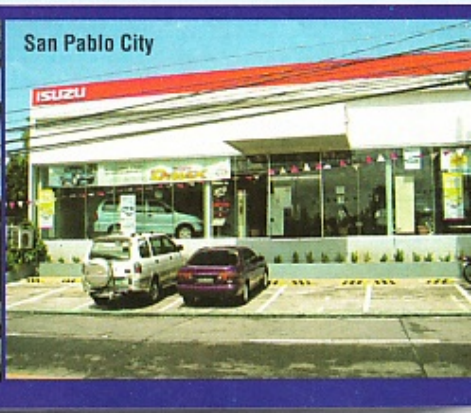
Isuzu Gencars Lemery was envisioned to help the dealership in Sto. Tomas, Batangas to transform the province into an "Isuzu Province." For the past two years, it has lived up to expectations.

Isuzu Gencars Lemery is located on Ilustre Avenue, barangay Palanas, Lemery, Batangas. It is headed by Carlito Bacalla, officer in charge.



Lemery, Batangas


Legazpi City



San Pablo City



Photos by BIBO VENIDA

CROWN JEWEL OF THE NETWORK

Makati dealership started it all

The Isuzu Gencars story began 30 years ago with the opening of the Makati-based dealership on Oct. 16, 1978 at the corner of Chino Roces (or Pasong Tamo) Avenue and De La Rosa Street.

Initially named Supercars, the dealership evolved from the General Motors franchise of founder Antonio L. Cabangon Chua, father and mentor of Isuzu Gencars executive director D. Edgard A. Cabangon.

General Motors of the United States, in partnership with Isuzu of Japan, introduced the Isuzu brand in the country through its trucks in the 1950s. These were much in demand to meet post-war development needs.

As National Artist Nick Joaquin wrote in an early biography, *"The Saga of Success,"* Gencars is one of three businesses set up during the late 1970s that came closest to the founder's heart and which he was proudest of. The two others were Fortune Insurance Group and Eternal Gardens.

The company has Gencars in its name, the book continues, because it has generals on its roster. It came into being when several of the founder's colleagues in the military asked him to organize a company they could invest in.

Isuzu Gencars Makati has had the same location for all its 30 years, but instead of the present four-story Dominga III Building, its showroom and administrative offices were housed in a one-story structure facing Pasong Tamo street. The showroom, not yet the glassed in plush display area that it is today, had the same location. The company's administrative and other offices were located where Citystate Savings Bank and the offices of other sister companies are found.

The rest of the one-hectare property held the parking space and the company's service shop where they are now found.

The one-story structure would later be rebuilt into today's four-story building. Rolando Gabriana, a pioneer and company vice president, recalls that for a time Gencars continued to have its offices at the ground floor of the building.

The company had its own building, today's Gencars Building fronting De La Rosa Street, shortly after D. Edgard A. Cabangon, home from law studies in the U.S., joined it fulltime in 1995. In the process, the young Cabangon had to sacrifice his desire to be a lawyer.

Isuzu Gencars Makati, with its sparkling glass-walled showroom displaying Isuzu's powerful commercial vehicles and passenger cars, is the epicenter of the sales, marketing and service activities of the dealership network.

From it radiates all the energy that empowers Isuzu Gencars to live up to its mission of marketing only the best products and to provide highest quality service for total customer satisfaction.



Founder and Chairman Ambassador Antonio L. Cabangon Chua (right) and D. Edgard A. Cabangon, managing director

Serving Bicolanos through Isuzu Gencars Legazpi City

Isuzu Gencars opened its dealership in Legazpi City, "the gateway to Bicolandia," in 2006. The city is home to several major establishments that will require an improved mode of transport with modern facilities for after sales service and parts.

That year, the city was recognized as one of the most competitive cities in the Philippines by the Asian Institute of Management. It was also cited as the most business-friendly city for the whole South Luzon by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Isuzu Gencars Legazpi City is located on Rizal Street, Legazpi Port District, Legazpi City. It is headed by Moel Montemayor, operations manager; and Janus G. Siddayao, accounting and administrative officer.

Isuzu San Pablo City—3rd dealership

The company's third dealership started operations on Nov. 17, 2000, or four years after the second dealership in Gencars Batangas. It is situated on a 1,070-square meter piece of land along Colago Avenue, barangay 1-A, San Pablo City, Laguna.

In early 2006, during the Dealer of the Year Awards topped by Isuzu Gencars Makati for the second year in a row (2004 and 2005), Isuzu Gencars San Pablo received a special gift, an award as the dealership with the Top Customer Satisfaction Rating.

Operations manager Fidel M. de los Reyes, who had earlier headed Isuzu Gencars Batangas as it aimed for growth, promises to make San Pablo dealership just as successful.



Santo Tomas, Batangas

Isuzu Gencars Batangas—first branch to rise outside Metro Manila

Isuzu Gencars opened its first provincial branch, Isuzu Gencars Batangas, on Nov. 7, 1996. It is located on a 5,884-square meter lot at Crossing, barangay San Roque, Sto. Tomas town.

As the following years showed, the expansion to Batangas kicked off a period of strong growth that characterizes the administration of Mr. Cabangon.

By making available to the region Isuzu's workhorses like light, medium and heavy trucks, pick ups, buses and passenger cars and other commercial vehicles, Isuzu Gencars Batangas pushes the industrialization and progress of the Calabarzon region, a growth area to which the province of Batangas belongs.

"There is a sense of fulfillment in knowing that we are partners in promoting development and progress in this region, and eventually in other regions that hold great prospects for growth," says Mr. Cabangon.

"Isuzu Gencars Batangas guarantees the supply of genuine Isuzu parts and our service technicians always strive to provide satisfactory after-sales service and repairs for our customers' comfort, safety and convenience," says Danilo F. Serrano, operations manager.

Quality people of Gencars

BY IVEE L. JOHNSON

On its 30th anniversary, Isuzu Gencars honors three pioneers who have rendered exemplary service from the time the company started operations to the present. These are Rolando L. Gabriana, vice president; Imelda Peterson, in charge of Treasury; and Linda Gonzales, executive secretary to the managing director.

With their hard work and passionate service to the company, these recipients of the 30-year Service Award on this Pearl Anniversary of the company are an inspiration to fellow workers to keep on giving better than their best for "the best ain't good enough," as the company slogan says.

Here are their thoughts, ideas and insights on how it has been working for Isuzu Gencars all these years.



Rolando L. Gabriana, vice president

Having a lucrative job, much more a long-lasting career in a company, requires much more than hard work. Rolando L. Gabriana, vice president of Isuzu Gencars, Inc., also put in a lot of discipline, passion and loyalty into his work. All these account for having 30 years in the service.

Mr. Gabriana—or Rolly and Mang Gabby to everyone in Gencars—started as assistant accountant for Gencars in 1978. Before Gencars, he was finance manager in another company and administrative assistant when he worked in Libya. "I had to start over and go back to being a clerk," Mr. Gabriana said. Taking a step back career-wise to get into Gencars was a brave decision and, as it turned out, one of the best decisions he made in his life.

He gradually worked his way up, taking every promotion as a challenge. "With each promotion came the question of whether I would be able to handle the new position well," he said.

The top leaders of the company have always been a source of inspiration. "The founder himself, Ambassador Antonio L. Cabangon Chua taught me to keep focused on the job at hand until it is completed, and I believe that is an important key to success," And, of course, "Boss Edgard (Cabangon) is always there to guide not only me but all of us in the company."

Mr. Gabriana's loyalty to Gencars, worth emulation by the younger workers, comes from a family feeling that pervades Isuzu Gencars, making everyone feel like they are "one big happy family," he said.

Imelda Peterson, treasury in charge



Teamwork and dedication, like loyalty, are keys to a long-lasting career in a company. This is the important lesson learned by Imelda Peterson, Treasury in Charge and 30-year service awardee of Isuzu Gencars—Makati.

Ms. Peterson joined the company as cashier in 1978, through the invitation of one of her colleagues in her former company. Since then she has been the trusted person to take care of the branch's fund.

Handling the company's collections and taking care of releasing petty cash and cash advances to employees is a highly sensitive job. Her exceptional trustworthiness has kept her at her post for 30 years.

An accounting graduate from Philippine School of Business Administration and mother of one, a girl, recognizes the give-and-take relationship of the company, and that is why she always makes sure she does her best at work. "The company is always willing to share its blessings with its employees. In turn I am also willing to give my 100% dedication in my job," she promised.



Linda Gonzales, executive secretary to the managing director

Dedication and hard work and genuine concern for the company are traits that characterized the 30 years in the service to Gencars of Linda Gonzales, executive secretary to the managing director.

A graduate of Secretarial Administration from Divine Word College in Legaspi City, Ms. Gonzales first worked as a legal secretary at the Paglinawan Law Office. Impressed with her performance there, Atty. Paglinawan, who is with the central legal department of the ALC Group to which Gencars belongs, recommended her to the management.

She was first assigned at the legal department of Gencars in November 1978. Besides her own work, she was also always ready to lend a hand in the other departments, such as in the credit and collection, accounting, finance, personnel and sales divisions. "I was once assigned to do the payroll and as a secretarial graduate I was very reluctant to take the job. But eventually I was able to learn the system," she said, recalling her early days.

In October 1997, she became the executive secretary of D. Edgard A. Cabangon, then president, the biggest challenge in her career.

Mother of four, Ms. Gonzales attributes her current success to her exposure to the different divisions of Gencars. "I guess it prepared me for my current job because now I don't only attend to needs of my boss concerning Gencars. I also help him with matters concerning the other companies that he handles," she said referring to various other positions held by Mr. Cabangon.

5-STAR SERVICE SHOP

Ensuring total customer satisfaction

The Service Division of Isuzu Gencars lives up completely to its classification by the Department of Trade as a five-star motoring service and repair shop.

The division boasts of state-of-the-art equipment and tools and a manpower complement of skilled technicians and dedicated support personnel, all striving to give their best under the leadership of Danilo Patio, general service manager.

This commitment to excellence adheres to the principle that for Isuzu Gencars, its responsibility to customers does not end after purchases.

Among the division's sophisticated equipment are two huge painting ovens, including a wonder laser with television monitor for computerized wheel balancing and a computerized wheel alignment system.

Isuzu Gencars' service shop attends to an average of 40 vehicle units everyday. To better handle these, the company implements a "service by appointment" scheme. It also fields "roving mechanics" as a special maintenance



service for customers who wish to have their vehicles checked at home or at the office.

To continuously improve their skills, the Service Division implements regular update training for its mechanics and other car care workers. They are trained to handle all kinds of vehicles available in the market, besides Isuzu vehicles.

The Division has adequately proven that it is among the best providers of after-sales automotive services. It was named third best in service operations by Isuzu Philippines in 2005.

Before this, it was also awarded as the Most Outstanding 5-Star Repair Shop by the Consumers Union of the Philippines for excellent car care services rendered in a positive work environment.

GENCARD PROGRAM

Worry-free driving and vehicle care for customers

Isuzu Gencars has always promoted the concept that it is possible to enjoy the longest ride possible by caring for vehicles properly.

To attain this, it offers the Gencard vehicle maintenance plan.

Under this plan, owners of Isuzu cars and other vehicles purchased from the company can avail themselves of preventive or periodic maintenance services at reasonable cost.

The Gencard program is patterned after an American car maintenance scheme adopted by managing director D. Edgard A. Cabangon during his stay in the United States several years ago.

The program was modified to fit the Filipino motorist's needs and for several years now, it has been providing worry-free affordable maintenance services to vehicle owners.

By enrolling themselves in the Gencard program, card-holding vehicle owners need no longer worry about smoke emission, worn-out parts, fuel leak, overheating airconditioner, sliding clutch and other motoring problems.

Gencard offers preventive maintenance service (PMS) checkups and repairs from Isuzu Gencars Makati as well as its existing branches in Batangas City, San Pablo City, Lemery, Batangas; and Legazpi City in Bicol.

Benefits

The benefits that vehicle owners get on a discounted annual Gencard membership include:

- Engine tune-up four times a year
- Unlimited change oil service
- Brake service twice a year including cleaning, adjustment and other works
- Total wheel alignment twice a year for all types of vehicles, except light trucks
- Wheel balancing and tire rotation four times a year, also for all types of vehicles, except light trucks
- Aircon system checkup four times a year

Aside from these services, the Gencard program allows the holders to avail of additional free services, such as body wash, 24-hour towing service (within Metro Manila), diagnosis for any car trouble, clutch adjustment, differential oil check-up and vulcanizing and liaison services with the Land Transportation Office for vehicle registration.

Topping these benefits from Gencard is a free P50,000 personal accident insurance coverage for a cardholder and 5% discount on parts.

TRUCKS AND BUSES DIVISION

Moving people toward a better life

Like the rest of the Philippine economy, remittances of Filipinos abroad are buoying up the motoring industry. An emerging trend in the industry is the rise in sales of multi-purpose vehicles that overseas Filipino workers are buying for business and entrepreneurial purposes.

Isuzu Gencars is well positioned to meet the entrepreneurial ambitions of returning overseas workers through its trucks and buses division. This new unit provides the commercial vehicles preferred by these customers, like multi-purpose vans, pick-ups and light- and medium-duty trucks that are very useful for business activities.

Besides these multi-purpose vehicles, Isuzu Gencars also makes available Isuzu's line of buses preferred by transport companies and other organizations for comfort, safety, reliability and strength.

From mini-buses to full-sized city and provincial buses, these large passenger vehicles boasts an array of standard features as well as customized features to suit buyers' preferences.

The unit was set up only last year through the initiative of D. Edgard A. Cabangon, managing director. The Truck and Bus Division is headed by Albert Zata.

The young Cabangon correctly foresaw the need for the type of vehicles provided by the Division. "The national leadership's determination to push development efforts in all the regions requires the deployment of trucks and buses to service development needs," he says.

Isuzu's trucks have proven perfect for moving products, materials and supplies for various projects all over the nation. Its buses, on the other hand, render valuable service by moving people from place to place as they pursue economic as well as leisure activities.

To boost its distribution of buses, Isuzu Gencars has built a good working relationship with leading vehicle body builders, including Del Monte, Pil-Hino, JMC, Metro and Kaunlaran, among other makers.

As the young Cabangon says, with the expected increase in economic activities all over the nation, "there is no way but for the country to keep on moving forward."

Isuzu Gencars is determined to be a dynamic partner in the nation's drive toward progress and a bright future for Filipinos.

Cory, the Musical: The People's Gift

BY JOEL PABLO SALUD

"There is no one to keep me company / in this lonely cell, in this compound / Where simple, honest men turn to beasts / Unmoved by pity, untouched by conscience / I eat alone what food I'm thrown / In unclean plates licked by dogs / I pray, I jog, I tire myself, I sleep / Desperately hoping to dream joys I once knew…"

THIS POEM, WHICH THE LATE SENATOR BENIGNO "NINOY" Aquino Jr. wrote in the summer of 1973, inside a Fort Bonifacio prison cell, helped him endure the long and lonely months of confinement after his arrest upon the declaration of Martial Law. Until his death years later at the hands of an assassin (or assassins, depending on whom you believe), the man, who was once hailed as this country's one chance at restoring freedom, spoke openly against the Marcos regime "where the pervading atmosphere of fear makes calm thought most difficult." And as the late senator aptly added, "How much more a defiant cry?"



(Photographed by Rene Ganlota)

Isay as Cory, Sherwin as Ninoy



Mrs. Lourdes 'Bing' Pimentel, producer-composer of *Cory, the Musical*

Needless to say, it was tough to be Ninoy then as it is now, as stage artist and classical singer Sherwin K. Sozon found out as he rehearsed the role of Ninoy Aquino in *Cory, The Musical*. Fittingly framed as "the gift of the people to Corazon Aquino" when she was diagnosed recently with cancer, the musical is the *idée fixe* of celebrated composer Lourdes "Bing" Pimentel in partnership with her *kababata* Nestor U. Torre, who directs the musical. It will be set onstage on November this year at the Meralco Theater. The role of Cory will be played by acclaimed singer-actress Isay Alvarez of the original London production of *Miss Saigon*.

Sherwin, despite being a newcomer in classical opera, already has a string of musicals to his credit: *Tsinoy—Kaisa Ka!*, which showcases the history of Filipino-Chinese in the Philippines; *Why Flowers Bloom in May*, the opera written by the late National Artist Lucrecia Kasilag; and *Ang Dalawa Niyang Libing*, a straight play written by Malaysian writer Koh Jun Eiow. Playing the part of Ninoy, according to Sherwin, is undoubtedly a role of a lifetime.

"I really have to act out some of the parts because Ninoy is really larger than life," Sherwin said of his experience playing the late senator. "The description they told me was Ninoy was a force of nature. He's always on the move, he always talks, he wants so much for everybody to understand what he was doing. I am more of a reserved person, but I can identify with some of his qualities. For example, Ninoy is really an idealist. He really believes that we can do things to make things better, to make society better, and I'm kind of like that. I'm still a dreamer, and I'm in the arts, so I'm still a dreamer and idealist at heart. I could say that out of all his qualities, that's the one I can identify with."

Sherwin, who was chosen for the part on account of the spitting image he has with the former senator, among other things, admitted he knew very little about Ninoy save for what he understood as a young man: That Ninoy was going to run for president in the 1972 polls.

"I didn't really know who Ninoy was except the fact he wanted to become president," Sherwin relates. "That's Ninoy, running for president against his archrival Marcos—that's the only thing." (Editor's note: Ferdinand Marcos had already been re-elected president in 1969 and was not allowed to run for another term.)

"My impression of him was only up to that. But when I was made to join this play, when we did the research, that's the time I said, 'Wow! His life is so big, so dynamic.' The things he had to go through, the things he had to sacrifice, the things he needed to change. I mean, for someone to go through that kind of life and direction, to literally go against the president, and basically, since it is Martial Law, he is going against the country, for somebody to find in himself the strength to do that and continuously be a symbol to most of the other Filipinos who wanted a free Philippines, wow, that's something! When I finally realized that, I sat down and thought that the country really missed out a lot with Ninoy's sacrifice."



Isay as Cory at Edsa

The audition for the part, he says, was so challenging, it provoked the artist in him to summon the commonplace gifts of singing and acting. It's as big a project as it can be with luminaries in Philippine theater arts auditioning for major roles. Regardless of his newcomer status in professional theater, Sherwin is a talent waiting to be discovered. His exposure to classical opera and music in general was enhanced by his mother, a mezzo-soprano whom he would accompany in her singing soirees.

But it was Shirley Bangayan, another celebrated soprano, who was able to lure Sherwin into the world of classical singing. At a soiree at Bangayan's home, Sherwin was invited by the pianist to sing a neopolitan song—*Core N'grato*—where he pleasantly discovered his talent and fondness for classical songs. The passion demanded by classical singing, he says, was to hallmark his introduction to that world. Later encouraged by the successes of crossover artists like Josh Groban, Il Divo, Andrea Bocelli, Celtic Woman, and the Ten Tenors—and the windfall triumph of talent show winner Paul Potts in the operatic aria—Sherwin made that leap into the world of *Cory, The Musical*.

"I participated in the auditions, and when they called me back, they gave me the part and I learned I am going to play Ninoy. I was so surprised," he said. "I really felt very honored, especially when I found out that the scope of the project is this big. I didn't know how big the project was before. So, when I got the part of Ninoy, I was really happy and surprised."

In that robust certainty Ninoy was known for, Sherwin relates how the most difficult part of his role made him realize, more than ever, both his vocation as an artist and who he is as a person and a Filipino.

"The most life-changing for me, I would say, is the time Ninoy realized he was a child of God," he shared. "He used to be a Catholic, a typical Catholic who went to church on a Sunday… And you can read it through his writings. *Parang feeling ko noon,* he treated God like everybody else, like any Filipino, like God is there, okay, but I still live my life. But what happened to him, especially in prison, when he suddenly felt he was nothing, that after everything he had done, this is what he got, it opened his eyes. Instead of feeling sorry for himself, he found God, he found his faith and he found his religion again. That's the thing that changed my perception—that everything we do in life, whatever it is we are striving for, God has something for us. He knows better than anybody what is best for us. He sends us these troubles to test us, to test our mettle. In the end, we have to accept that everything is part of God's will—as Ninoy obviously did. At that time he was in the second best position in society—the only contender for Marcos' seat as president. In the end, he realized that God is in it all, in his battles and in his prison, and that's the thing that got to me."

Asked if the Philippines would be better having Ninoy Aquino as president, Sherwin answered indubitably, "I believe so because he is very strong in everything he believed in, and he believed in the Filipino people. It was so encompassing, and he really felt we are a strong people, and we can do so much to help ourselves, that he can wake up the Filipino people and see what is happening in society. He wanted so much to wake up the Filipino people—*look what is happening around you*! We can do so much, we can accomplish so much, but first we have to wake up. That's why I think he knew he had to die because he felt he was a symbol. He wants Filipinos to feel good about themselves, *na kaya nila*. That's the part in his writings that struck me."

It was Ninoy Aquino himself who wrote, in the quiet of his prison, his last hurrah, "I do not claim to be a cut above the common man. Indeed, as I stand here, I am humbled by the shades of the fallen among my beloved Filipinos in their struggles to be free. With head bowed, I say: May I do as the heritage you have given us bids me; may I not falter in bearing the torch you have passed on to me."

It may just be a role on the stage, but Sherwin Sozon is blessed to have "lived", however briefly, the life of the man to whom Filipinos owe much of their freedom today. No doubt, *Cory, The Musical* will be as life-changing to today's generation as its unforgettable history was to the generation of their fathers.

The other major roles will be essayed by Robert Seña as Ferdinand Marcos and Pinky Marquez as Imelda. Tommy Abuel, Andy Bais, Edmund Sicam, Rito Asilo, and Lou Veloso will also play significant roles. The musical director, conductor and arranger is Leo Quinitio. G



Fortune Life recognizes top insurance specialist

Leonila P. Parreno of Fortune Life Lucena City branch was acclaimed top insurance specialist at the recent Summer Spree 2008 sales production drive.

Parreno received her plaque and cash prize at the office of senior vice president for marketing and sales, Oscar S. Reyes (left). With them is regional sales manager for NCR – South Luzon / HOD, Joseph Brian A. Servando (right).

Splendid teas offered at Royal



Feel the ecstasy of Lu Tong's famous poem, "*The Seven Bowls of Tea*", captured in a single cup.

Experience it only at Century Park Hotel's Royal Tea House, which recently introduced a selection of invigorating teas from Yunan and Wuyi Shan, China, including *Pu-Erh* and rock tea.

Drinking *Pu-Erh* isn't really about the flavor; it's more about the taste, especially when aged *sheng* (raw), and feeling good.

Pu-Erh is processed differently, has four types, and is measured by grades that reflect the amount of buds in each leaf.

Ripe and raw *Pu-erh* tea cakes (compacted tea) are also available for connoisseurs. This kind of tea can be purchased as either raw/green (*sheng*) or ripened/cooked (*shou*), depending on the method of processing or aging.

For the raw type, prices range from P815-P7,200 per pack, while the ripe variety goes between P1,176-P3,920.

Dullop is also available in platinum or gold canisters at P462 (mini or coin-sized), P672 (medium), and P392 (small).

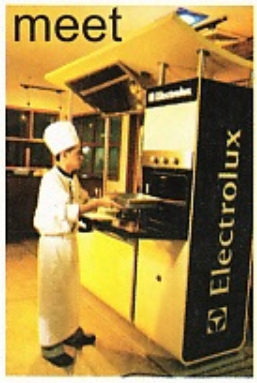
Aside from *Pu-erh* loose leaves, Royal Tea House is also offering instant flavored powder in boxes with 10 sachets. Popular flavors are orange, lemon, blueberry, ginger, milk and original.

Better than the best

The Manila Doctors Hospital recently bagged the Asian Hospital Management Awards for its entry: *Housekeeping Staff: Di Lang sa Paglilinis, Pang Disaster Preparedness Pa* [Not Only for Cleaning, for Disaster Preparedness, Too] in the Internal Customer Service Project Category. Receiving the award is Manila Doctors Hospital president Mr. Aniceto M. Sobrepeña (second from left). Also in photo are Dr. Paul Chang of Joint Commission International, Ms. Raffaella Molteni of John Hopkins Medicine International, and Mr. Rustico Jimenez of the Private Hospitals Association of the Philippines.



Electrolux seeks to meet consumer demand



Trusted household appliance company and Scandinavian brand Electrolux recently launched its modern kitchen line. With designs grounded in consumer insights, the latest consumer findings show that Asians are passionate about food. In tandem with this insight, Electrolux has decided to share its consumers' passion of "We love food as much as you do."

Touching on the modern kitchen categories of food preparation and preservation, Electrolux has designed a wide range of kitchen appliances with Asian cooking in mind.

In keeping with the company's 'Thinking of you' philosophy, which aims to put the consumer at the heart of everything, before designing their new range of appliances, the company conducted extensive research across Asia on the specific requirements consumers have. This included the first-ever Asian Food Survey. Conducted in partnership with *Reader's Digest* and the independent research organization, AC Nielsen, the survey was the first of its kind in Asia. It was the largest, spanning nine countries and involving 27,000 respondents. Given the immense customer interest and response, Electrolux gained invaluable insights into the aspirations, habits and motivations of Asian consumers on a wide-ranging set of questions about food shopping, storage, preparation and consumption. This feedback influenced the design of Electrolux's range of built-in kitchen appliances. The range includes hoods that are quiet, yet powerful; versatile hobs that deliver superior wok cooking results; and easy-to-clean, multi-function ovens that are safe to touch even when they are on.

"Our company philosophy of 'Thinking of you' is more then just words but a real commitment to listening, understanding and designing appliances to bring ease to our consumers' lives. Thus, listening to their passions is our key for delivering relevant and innovative products," says Electrolux Philippines general manager Thomas Hong.

For more information about Electrolux's lifestyle and environmentally friendly appliances, call 875-ELUX or its domestic toll-free number 1-800-1-888-0801, or visit www.electrolux.com.ph.

Tea House



The most famous kind of rock tea is the *Da Hong Pao* (P380/50g), which means big red robe. Known as the emperor's tea in China, this kind of tea only grows in the mountain cliffs of Fujian province.

Another interesting type is the *Rou Gui* (P300/50g), which has a clear yellow color after brewing. It also has a sharp fragrance, with a slightly bitter to sweet taste.

Chen Nian Yan Cha, or the aged tea (P260/50g), has been known as the favored drink of scholars, artists, and other famous individuals throughout history because of its smooth, full-bodied flavor.

Shui Xian (P230/50g) has a sweet, tangy taste, with a strong fragrance and a golden yellow color after brewing, *while Lao Chung Shui Xian* (P520/125g) emits a golden brown glow.

DBP facility to encourage entrepreneurship among OFWs

The Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) has a program that will promote entrepreneurship and savings and investment activities among overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their families.

DBP president and chief executive officer Reynaldo G. David said the DBP Livelihood Loan and Savings program for OFWs will support migrant workers and their families in putting up livelihood projects, or for expanding existing businesses.

"This program will encourage the entrepreneurial spirit among OFWs and their families while teaching them the values of engaging in savings activities and maximizing investment opportunities," he added.

David said the program was developed in line with DBP's commitment to further intensify assistance to the ever-growing OFW sector to uplift the socio-economic conditions of migrant workers and their families.

The facility shall be initially available to OFWs working under controlled environments such as seafarers, as well as those working in hospitals, remittance companies, and similar businesses. Applicants should have co-borrowers/specified beneficiaries who will manage the business.

Qualified beneficiaries are the spouse, children or parents of a married OFW, and the parents, siblings, nephews or nieces of a single OFW.

The program can provide loans for working capital, acquisition of machinery and equipment, franchise fees, and other project-related expenditures. The regular livelihood loan amount ranges from P10,000 up to P100,000, while the franchising loan amount is P500,000.

The total loan amount to be granted shall be based on 90% of total project cost.

Eligible projects for the program include manufacturing, export and support industries; transportation, communication, information technology; franchising, distribution, dealership and trading; education linked to manufacturing; tourism related businesses; and agri-business.

Interested OFWs and their beneficiaries may inquire at any DBP branch or at DBP's remittance center located at the DBP head office in Makati.

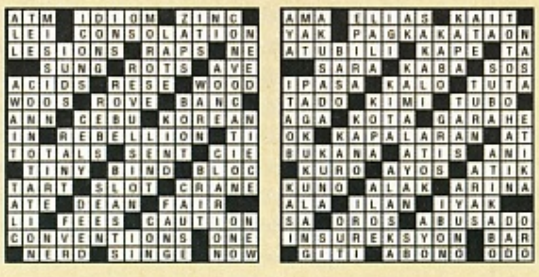
SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S SUDOKU PUZZLE

8	2	5	6	9	3	7	1	4
9	6	3	1	4	7	2	5	8
1	4	7	8	5	2	3	9	6
6	7	1	9	2	5	8	4	3
2	3	8	4	1	6	5	7	9
4	5	9	3	7	8	6	2	1
7	8	4	2	6	9	1	3	5
3	9	2	5	8	1	4	6	7
5	1	6	7	3	4	9	8	2

9/5

© 2008 Knight Features/Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate

Solution to last week's Graphicrosswords



UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

8	2	5	6	9	3	7	1	4
2	6	9	7	4	1	8	5	3
1	4	7	8	5	6	3	2	9
7	8	3	1	2	5	6	4	9
4	3	8	9	1	2	5	7	6
9	5	2	3	7	8	4	6	1
3	7	4	2	6	9	1	8	5
6	9	1	4	5	7	2	3	8
5	1	8	7	3	6	9	6	7

9/6

DIFFICULTY RATING: ☆☆☆☆☆☆

SOLUTION NEXT WEEK

© 2008 Knight Features/Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate

BY MIRAVA M. YUSON



ANYONE WHO DROVE ALONG GREEN STREET IN CAPITOL 7 subdivision would easily have noticed something strange. Aside from having streets named after colors, Capitol 7 was known for its rows and rows of eye-catching houses. However, Green Street was different from Red, Yellow, Purple, and Blue since it was the only street with a gap between two of its homes.

Jonat's luck

"Three... Three... Three..." he mumbled to himself, growing more frustrated at the sight of each ordinary clover. He was ready to give up when a voice from behind him made him jump

One of these houses was small and had only a single window, and to its right was an empty lot. This unused property was overgrown with weeds, tall grass and a single acacia tree. It was peculiar, not just because it had never been bought, but because it was not completely abandoned.

Passers-by often saw a boy no older than ten walking around in that empty lot, doing the oddest things. He would throw a tennis ball into patches of long grass that were taller than him, and then run to retrieve it. He would crouch down, knees pressed against the soil, and stroke the weeds almost lovingly. He would hide behind the lone acacia tree, occasionally peeking from behind it to stare back at curious onlookers.

These people knew almost nothing about the boy and why he would do the same things almost every day. They were aware that he was the only child of the family that lived next to the lot, in that tiny house with only one window. However, they did not know, for one, that his name was Jonathan. They assumed that he could not find a better way to spend his summer vacation, but they did not think hard enough to realize that the boy was very lonely and simply desired a friend he could play with.

Jonathan played by himself each day, took a water break every hour and wished for a friend almost every second. He also wished he was more outgoing, so that it would be easier for him to have companions. And while he was at it, he desired a bigger house and better grades. People would like him better if he were richer and smarter, he thought.

Soon, Jonathan began to feel unlucky.

It was during one particularly boring game of catch-and-retrieve that Jonathan decided to add a new activity to his hours spent at the lot. He had been searching for his tennis ball in the familiar tall grass when, unexpectedly, he tripped over a rock.

With a loud "Oof!" did he find himself on his knees, staring down at what seemed to be a pile of oval-shaped green leaves. Upon closer inspection, he realized that they were clovers. He recalled something his mother had said a long time ago: Four-leaf clovers were supposed to bring good luck.



Before Jonathan knew it, he was pulling them out one by one, counting their leaves and then tossing them away.

He searched for hours, bent over that single patch of clovers. His hands began to get dirty from all the plucking, and the sun's rays kept burning his already aching back.

"Three... Three... Three..." he mumbled to himself, growing more frustrated at the sight of each ordinary clover. He was ready to give up when a voice from behind him made him jump.

"I see that you're looking for a four-leaf clover."

Jonathan quickly turned around and gasped at the sight. A two-foot-tall man stood a few meters away, staring at him straight in the eye. He quickly realized that the man was a *duende*.

Although they were known for their devious spells and trickery, the one in front of him did not appear menacing in any way. The *duende* was wearing a spotless *barong* Tagalog, complete with fashionable black pants. His round face, brown eyes and short black hair actually made him appear quite young.

If not for the stories about them that he heard from various *yayas* over the years, Jonathan would have merely thought of him as a very short man.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" Jonathan asked. Those were the first questions among hundreds to pop up in his head.

"My name is Homay, and I'm here because you want me here," the *duende* answered, smiling. "I'm going to help you find the four-leaf clover."

"But wouldn't that make you a leprechaun?" Jonathan recalled all those cartoons and cereal boxes that always put clovers and leprechauns together.

Homay huffed. "I'm no leprechaun. And why are you so critical? I even put on my best outfit for you."

"Sorry, sorry," Jonathan said, feeling slightly ashamed. "Anyway, thank you for coming to help me."

The boy then resumed his crouching position right next to the familiar clover patch, expecting Homay to join him. The *duende* did not budge, however.

"Jonat, first of all, you have to know more about the four-leaf clover," he said instead.

The boy was confused at first by the nickname Homay had just given him, but he didn't mind it.

"I already know that the four-leaf clover will give me good luck if I find it, and I know that there is only one four-leaf clover for every ten thousand three-leaved ones. But if I keep searching, I'll surely find one here!"

"But did you know that when it comes to four-leaf clovers, 'luck' is an acronym?"

Now Jonathan grew even more confused.

"An acronym?"

"The letters L, U, C, and K each stand for

something. And only one person among ten thousand manages to discover the true meaning of 'luck'."

"So what does L-U-C-K stand for then?" Jonathan scratched his head as Homay smiled knowingly.

"That," the *duende* said, "... is something I cannot tell you yet. You'll have to figure them out yourself, and each word will bring you closer to the four-leaf clover."

Jonathan asked more questions, but Homay refused to speak any more about LUCK, urging the boy instead to keep searching for the rare clover.

It turned out that Homay was not helpful at all when it came to actually looking for something. He would simply stand beside Jonathan and either tell him the names of various plants nearby, or demonstrate some of his powers by enlarging leaves and changing their colors from bright green to vivid shades of blue.

During breaks, however, he proved to be a very enjoyable playmate. For the first time, Jonathan had someone who could catch a tennis ball and throw it back to him.

Homay was a challenge to find whenever they played Hide and Seek, mostly due to his very small physique. The *duende* also bewitched the acacia tree and made it larger. He and Jonathan would sit on its now longer branches and observe the passing neighbors.

"What else can you do?" Jonathan asked one day, as the tree emitted creaking noises when he swung his legs back and forth. "Can you make pots of gold?"

"Probably not," Homay responded good-naturedly. "But I can make a *tabo* full of *piso* coins."

Jonathan was about to ask if he had been joking when a giggle interrupted his thoughts. Surprised, the boy raised his head and immediately noticed a girl standing right in front of the empty lot. She stared at him for a few moments, and then proceeded to walk away, laughing loudly.

Jonathan felt his cheeks heat up from embarrassment. The girl must have thought he was either strange or crazy, talking to himself and apparently being obsessed with plants. She probably couldn't see Homay.

Regretting that he may have just missed an opportunity to make a new friend, Jonathan quickly climbed down the acacia tree and began running back to his home. Homay's shouts of "Jonat!" only made him sprint faster.

After that incident, Jonathan refused to return to the lot. Instead, he sat inside his house, looking out of the lone window while hoping that the girl would pass by once again.

He planned to introduce himself as a wealthy boy who didn't care about plants and who certainly had no imaginary friends. But the other child never revisited Green Street.

"Jonat," he heard a familiar voice say one day. The boy looked down to see Homay standing in his garage, wearing the same *barong* he always wore. Jonathan greeted the visitor with little enthusiasm.

"You haven't been looking for the clover," the *duende* said.

> *"You, Jonat, have learned to appreciate yourself, your own life. You've also learned to value the things around you, meaning the universe. Just two letters more and you could gain good luck!"*

Jonathan continued to look morose. "I don't want to go back to the lot anymore," he said. "A boy shouldn't be playing with plants. It's embarrassing. I wish I were different."

With a sigh, Homay began to float upwards before landing on the window's ledge.

"You have to learn to like yourself for who you are," he said. "Stop pretending to be someone else, because I can tell you're not having fun doing that. Do you honestly prefer staring out of this window all day instead of playing in the lot you've made your own?"

Jonathan didn't reply, but he slowly realized that Homay was right. He grinned and allowed himself to be led back to the lot, where the plants had never looked so beautiful. Jonathan quickly raced to the acacia tree, laughing the whole way.

"That was fun," he said a few hours later, breathless from playing catch with Homay.

Once again, they sat on the tree's branches as the sun began to set.

"Are you happy with yourself now, Jonat?" Homay asked, eyeing his companion curiously.

"Very," the boy answered. "I understand now that I shouldn't want to change myself, especially for someone else. I like being me." He looked down at his lap as he spoke. "I'm sorry I haven't been looking for the clover. I'm sorry I ran off. I'll never do it ever again, because I like this place a lot. I don't want to be rich, and I don't want to be anywhere else."

"In that case," Homay said, smiling widely, "you are two steps closer to finding the four-leaf clover."

"What?"

"The first two words in L-U-C-K are 'life' and 'universe.'"

Jonathan continued to look confused, so Homay went on.

"You, Jonat, have learned to appreciate yourself, your own life. You've also learned to value the things around you, meaning the universe. Just two letters more and you could gain good luck!"

The boy was so amazed that he almost fell out of the tree. Life? Universe? He had assumed that the words would be plant-related like "leaves' or "upside-down ferns," despite how nonsensical they sounded when put together.

Surprised by the unexpected discovery, his excitement was instantly renewed. The next day, he resumed searching fervently for the clover, under the watchful eyes of Homay.

Several days went by, and yet there was still no sign of the four-leaf clover. Jonathan's hopes dwindled bit by bit. His anticipation was gradually replaced by resentment towards the *duende* that kept urging him to go on. He began to ask himself why Homay never actually helped him look, instead of giving long-winded speeches. He soon grew bored of the games they played. Eventually, his patience reached its limit.

"That's it!" Jonathan threw down the nth clover he had plucked, and stood up. "I'm tired of you just watching," he told the *duende*. "You're useless. You haven't been helping me at all. I've been searching for days, believing everything you've told me about the four-leaf clover, and until now, I've found absolutely nothing."

"But..." Homay tried to argue, but was quickly silenced.

"Go away."

He bowed his head, knowing that he was no longer wanted. The boy did not even cast him a glance, as he was left alone in the lot for a second time.

Jonathan returned the next day out of curiosity, wondering if Homay had actually left. He called the *duende's* name repeatedly, but received no reply. Suddenly, he spotted a two-foot-tall creature standing by the acacia tree.

"Homay?" He called out one more time, but upon closer inspection, he realized that it wasn't Homay at all. Though the creature was of the same height, it wore green clothes instead of a *barong*, all the way up to its lime-colored bowler hat. Its beard was puffy and bright red, and sticking out of its mouth was a lit pipe. Jonathan's heart began to race as he realized that he had come across an actual leprechaun.

"Are you here to help me find the four-leaf clover?"

The leprechaun simply emitted a hoarse laugh before fleeing into the patch of tall grass.

"Wait!" Jonathan called as he quickly scampered after it. He assumed that the leprechaun was leading him to the four-leaf clover, so he hurried to locate it. However, it was too late, and Jonathan found himself fruitlessly searching the lot for a leprechaun that could use its surroundings to its advantage. He was reminded of the times he played Hide and Seek with Homay; the *duende's* white *barong* would stand out against all the green, which made him easier to find.

The skies darkened and it began to rain. Jonathan grew more desperate in his search for the green-clothed creature. He continued to circle the lot despite the heavy downpour. The soil dissolved into mud. Puddles began to form, and before he knew it, the boy found himself slipping and landing face first in the sludge. He was too tired to get back up on his feet.

"Homay..." he called out weakly, hoping that his first and only friend would come to his rescue. His cry was barely heard over the sound of thunder. At first, only the pitter-patter of the rain answered him. It seemed that all was lost when a familiar voice spoke.

The skies darkened and it began to rain. Jonathan grew more desperate in his search for the green-clothed creature. He continued to circle the lot despite the heavy downpour. The soil dissolved into mud. Puddles began to form, and before he knew it, the boy found himself slipping and landing face first in the sludge

"Hello."

Jonathan raised his head slightly and saw the *duende* paddling towards him in a small *banca*. In an instant, relief washed all over him. He would have chuckled if he hadn't been so tired, but all he could do at the moment was smile at the friend who had come back for him.

"You came back..."

"I'm here because you want me here," Homay said simply. With his powers, he gave Jonathan enough energy to stand up. "Just like how the leprechaun appeared because you wanted him to. But it seems," the *duende* smiled wryly, "that only part of you wanted him to be here. That's why he ran away."

"I'm sorry," Jonathan apologized, feeling both guilty and thankful. "I made another mistake. You were the friend I'd always wanted and I made you leave. I think..."—He clenched his fists and stared at the ground, feeling uncomfortable yet strangely content. —"... I don't need the four-leaf clover anymore. I'm happy with my life, I love everything around me, and I finally made a friend. I just hope you forgive me."

"But, Jonat, I forgave you the moment I came back. And," Homay leapt from his *banca* and gently poked the boy in the forehead. "The clover is now much closer than you think."

Jonathan touched the spot where he had been poked, and was surprised to feel something soft and slippery instead of his skin. Slowly, he peeled the object off his face and looked at his hand. What lay in his palm was a wet but otherwise intact four-leaf clover.

"I found it," he whispered, too stunned to say anything else.

"Because you discovered the meaning behind the last two letters in 'luck'," Homay explained. "Can you tell me what they are?"

"...Yes," Jonathan said after a moment. "Company and... and... Knowledge."

"That's right," the *duende* nodded.

"I value my own life, my surroundings, my friends, and I've learned to appreciate even the things I am not yet sure of, like the future."

"So let's celebrate!" With a flick of his wrist, Homay made it stop raining. Another flick, and a rainbow formed as Jonathan watched, awestruck. Its end materialized right in front of them.

"Come with me, Jonat," Homay urged.

Side by side, they set foot on the rainbow. To Jonathan, it felt like he was walking on a multi-colored bridge. He looked around, amazed by his surroundings. To his left, he spotted his house, which was small, but in his eyes, lovely. To his right was Homay, his first ever friend and companion. Below him was the empty lot he had grown to love so much, as well as everything that surrounded it. Finally, when he looked upwards, what he saw was the sky and the continuing arc of the rainbow.

"What will we find at the end of it?" Jonathan asked. "A pot of gold or a *tabo* full of *piso* coins?"

Homay looked amused." Does it matter?"

"No," Jonat replied, smiling in perfect understanding. "I look forward to anything that comes my way. Thank you for teaching me that." G

*The **Philippines Graphic** invites its readers to become literary contributors (fiction, poetry). Original, certified contributions must be sent to the **Graphic's** editorial office or e-mailed to editorial@philippinegraphic.com.ph (Attn: Literary Editor), and submitted in Word file, 12 points, doublespaced (diskette supplied if hard copy), accompanied by the author's name (even if published under a pseudonym), address and contact numbers. If previously published or submitted elsewhere for consideration, please indicate relevant information.*

*The **Philippines Graphic** reserves all rights related to editorial selection and publication of literary pieces on its pages.*

POEMS

By Karen Manalastas

Pai Gow Poker

My mother is fond of shaking the hand
of the slot machine man.

Like religion, it requires grace, not
merit incurred like airline miles. What

reward comes, rushes in a flood
to be exchanged at the altar, for the body and blood—

amen. I tried it once, but there was so much more than
lining up the dots. I could not understand

whether I was winning or losing or
both. By the end, I felt like sinner

and saved, washed clean and absolved of one
hundred pesos. Still, in the corner, the woman

playing Pai Gow poker, keeps her silence (and
her money) behind a veil of smoke, firsthand.

How to write horror

I have never been afraid of dentists, for example
But I do fear the usual things: Mirrors, dark
water, the echoes of voices, the shared gleam
in the eyes of twin children. Doubles and iterations
of what had gone before, the endless replications
and distortions of a mirror maze.

When I was two, I had nightmares about lemmings
burying me alive. It was not funny, but you laugh,
the sound fracturing into a million sharp wings. It
cannot be helped that you think mirth is the answer.
However, light is only the opposite of dark, not of
the faces, sallow as the sides of a paper lantern,
swinging by the window

We never talk about ghosts. There's no need for
the extraneous when I jump at my own face reflected
in the twin globes of your irises.





Body of evidence

Pompeii
At the last possible moment, it is your fingers I
love, curled tight as fiddleheads, the cool green
taste as I suck on them. There is no time; dust
is quicker than hand, though slower than thought.
One only hopes that a look is enough to claim
what the mountains have chosen

Sarcophagus
I follow you into the scene of the crime, four years
later: we wade the dry river of forgetfulness, nothing
but dust on the Lethe, ankle deep. In the kitchen is a
still death of fossilized banana and blackened milk box
spire. Why you have returned is the mystery.

You open the bedroom door

For an instant she is there, a corpse gleaming
in twilight with the repose of sleep. A breath and
she breaks up into a thousand golden dust motes, a thousand
paper cranes. These are portents I cannot read.

You are quiet as you lock the door

Salvage
Finally, it is your breath that damns you. You sleep too
peacefully to be believed, inhaling even the mites that chew
blindly on the bedspread, on the pillows, on our used flesh.

I stand guard at the witching hour: Sleepless between
amnesia
and remembrance, between retreat and surrender.

We celebrate the word.
We remember the man.



Philippine GRAPHIC

Nick Joaquin Literary Awards

Season 2008

Contest Requirements:
The story has to have been published in the Philippine Graphic between May 5, 2008 and April 27, 2009 to be included in the roster of entries. Stories that have won previous awards will still be considered, although priority may be given to those that have not yet gained formal recognition.

Media Partners:

BusinessMirror

DWIZ 882 kHz

HOME 97.9 MANILA RADIO

Prizes:

1st Prize	P50,000
2nd Prize	P30,000
3rd Prize	P20,000

Produced by:

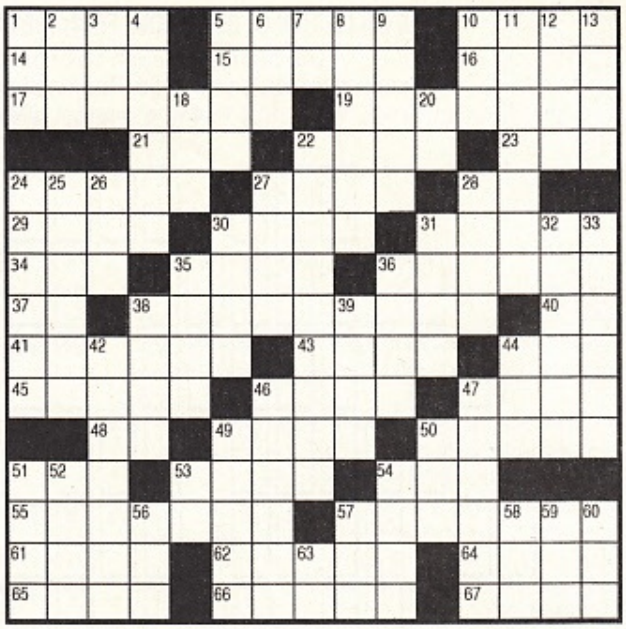
PHILIPPINE GRAPHIC PUBLICATIONS INCORPORATED

ACROSS

1. Indigo
5. Land scam
10. Theaters
14. Lesion
15. Unveils
16. Brotherhood
17. Forced
19. Dullest
21. Roosted
22. Excel
23. Red or Dead
24. Inspected
27. Look
28. Nazi police
29. Norse god
30. Grit
31. Tableau
34. Latin pronoun
35. Ulvan, wresting?
36. Terrifies
37. Comparative suffix
38. Ms. Nora Aunor
40. San Pablo (abbr.)
41. Show displeasure
43. Image
44. Computer school
45. Lorry
46. Photocopy
47. Only
48. Right turn
49. Impale
50. Fathered
51. Lawyer's assc.
53. Professors
54. Distress call
55. Seashore
57. Seedless raisin
61. _ _ _ _ majesty
62. Canvass stand
64. Phil. President
65. Existence
66. Kiss
67. Network

DOWN

1. Viper
2. Neither
3. Wrath
4. Minify
5. Incite
6. Rabid
7. Argon symbol
8. Paused
9. Muslim religion
10. Worker abroad
11. Vanity
12. Relief
13. Soul
18. Dolent
20. Alternate
22. Span. maidens
24. Hidden
25. Doter
26. Sibling
27. Ditto
28. Cicatrix
30. Police officer (abbr.)
31. Examine
32. Snuggle
33. Beheld
35. Immersed
36. Stumble
38. Denomination
39. Blackleg
42. Eclipse
44. Nun title
46. Arroyo
47. Soror
49. Flanks



50. The sun
51. Eyat
52. Honey makers
53. Yes, Don Juan
54. Pout
56. Diocese
57. Regulator of corporations
58. Appear
59. Mr. King Cole
60. Mock
63. Continent

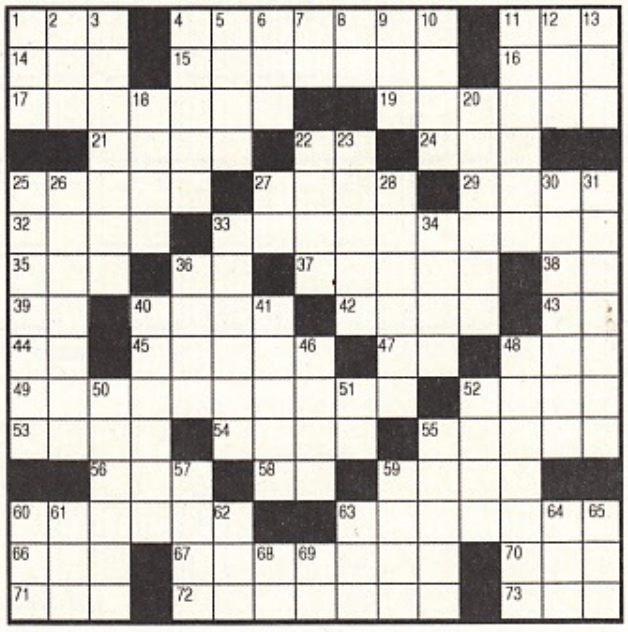
SOLUTIONS TO LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORDS ON PAGE 39

PAHALANG

1. Pamalo ng bola
4. Baliw
11. Gamit sa selpon
14. Tula
15. Biglang lakas
16. Konstelasyon
17. Opisyal ng barangay
19. Bagay na dala
21. Huling baraha
22. Simbolo ng "Bismuth"
24. Negrito
25. Tindig
27. Malakas na pagtatalo
29. Report
32. Gustong gusto
33. Magneto
35. Kurso ni Atorni
36. Ika-2 titik
37. Hinula
38. Nakasindi
39. Nota ni Guido
40. Tudyo
42. Punla
43. Simbolo ng nikel
44. Katawagan sa matanda
45. Ipisan
47. _ _ Eliot
48. Guntingin (Ing.)
49. Abakada
52. Masarap
53. Istorya
54. Estado sa USA
55. Punongkahoy
56. Ahensiya paggawa ng UN
58. Klase ng baterya
59. Hangad
60. Sulatan ng guro
63. Narinig na balita
66. Anak ng anak
67. Masigla
70. Humilde
71. Mayamang Kastila
72. Binuntal
73. Titulo ng madre

PABABA

1. Adre
2. Nimpa
3. Tag-init
4. Luwang
5. Kitil
6. Totoy
7. _ _ 47
8. Bathalang araw
9. Unang ginang
10. Gawain ibinigay
11. Halaman panlago-buhok
12. Buwis para sa LGU
13. Karpet
18. Hidwaan
20. Udyukan
22. Bokya
23. Iluwa
25. Takip ng alimango
26. Iimpukin
27. Kurso sa kolehiyo
28. Dala-dalahan
30. Di-alam kung sino
31. Tinasa
33. Kondisyon ng lababo
34. Lisan
36. Pangalawa
40. Kamalian
41. Beach sa Normandy
46. Melodia
48. Natanggal, dahon?



50. G. Thomas Alvia, inventor
51. Sigaw ni Francis M.
52. Ahensiya ng intelihensiya
55. Entra
57. Tiyempo
59. Wala!
60. Sulatan ng mag-aaral
61. Dam sa Bulacan
62. Bunga
63. Siyesta
64. Sinisa
65. Iskor sa golf
68. Hulapi
69. Ermat

SOLUTION NEXT WEEK

GENCARS, INC.

2004 - 2005 BACK TO BACK DEALER OF THE YEAR

www.isuzu-gencars.com.ph

ALTERRA

Treat your senses



ISUZU

AIRCON/NON-AIRCON BUS

LIGHT/MEDIUM TRUCK



Your responsible partner

For unit and service inquiries please visit us at:

ISUZU Makati
2113 Chino Roces ave. cor. Dela Rosa St.
Makati City. Tel. #: 819-1213/19 Connecting all Dept.
Telefax: 893-1674; 893-8913

ISUZU Batangas
Crossing, Bo., San Roque, Santo Tomas,
Batangas. Tel. #: (043) 778-1227/25
Telefax: (02) 520-6601

ISUZU San Pablo
Colago Avenue, Brgy., 1-A, San Pablo City
Laguna. Tel. #: (049) 562-9996
Telefax: (02) 520-6014

ISUZU Legazpi
ALC Fortune Bldg., J.P. Rizal St., Legazpi City
Albay. Tel. #: (052) 481-6054
Telefax: (02) 429-1593

Lemery Satellite Office
Brgy., Palanas, Lemery, Batangas. Tel. #: (043) 409-1253

CITY MAX ACCOUNT

YOUR 3-IN-1 ACCOUNT FOR MAXIMUM BANKING CONVENIENCE



SAVINGS account



CHECKING account



ATM card

Open a CityMAX account for as low as P1,500.00 NOW!

Operates with full bank licenses on:

Government Securities Eligible Dealer (GSED)
Quasi-Banking Services
Foreign Currency Deposit Unit
Trust and Other Fiduciary Business

CITYSTATE SAVINGS BANK
www.citystatesavings.com

Head Office
Citystate Centre Bldg.,
709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City
Tel. Nos. : 636-3333

Antipolo
144-A M.L. Quezon St.,
Brgy. San Roque, Antipolo City
Tel. Nos. : 695-1944

Baclaran
260 Quirino Avenue
Baclaran, Parañaque City
Tel. Nos. : 551-1751

Baliuag
Aliw Cinema Complex
Dr. Gonzales Avenue,
Poblacion, Baliuag Bulacan
Tel. Nos. : (044) 673-3559

Binondo
461-463 Quintin Paredes St.,
Binondo, Manila
Tel. Nos. : 244-9436

Blumentritt
1733 Cavite Street,
Sta. Cruz, Manila
Tel. Nos. : 749-1976

Caloocan
Rizal Ave. cor. 10th Ave.,
Grace Park, Caloocan City
Tel. Nos. : 362-6897

Chino Roces
Dominga Building III
2113 Chino Roces Ave.
cor. Dela Rosa St., Makati City
Tel. Nos. : 893-7078

Cebu
G/F Fortune Life Bldg.,
Osmeña Blvd., Cebu City
Tel. Nos. : (032) 254-5355

Cubao
852 Aurora Blvd. cor. Pinatubo
St., Cubao, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. : 413-5049

Greenhills
G/F Medecor Building,
Ortigas Ave., San Juan, M.M.
Tel. Nos. : 724-0841

Guadalupe
2188 R. Magsaysay Ave.,
Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City
Tel. Nos. : 882-2326

Katipunan
337 Katipunan Ave.,
Loyola Heights, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. : 927-8037

Las Piñas
279 Alabang Zapote Road,
Pamplona, Las Piñas City
Tel. Nos. : 873-0321

Mabini
1315 A. Mabini St.,
Ermita, Manila
Tel. Nos. : 526-2736

Marikina
357 J.P. Rizal, Brgy.
Sto. Niño, Marikina City
Tel. Nos. : 933-0662

Meycauayan
Aliw Cinema Complex,
McArthur Highway,
Calvario, Meycauayan, Bulacan
Tel. Nos. : (044) 721-0803

Muntinlupa
10 National Road,
Brgy. Putatan, Muntinlupa City
Tel. Nos. : 862-5097

New Panaderos
Amor Cinema Complex,
569 New Panaderos St.,
Mandaluyong City
Tel. Nos. : 531-4567

Paco
1135 Pedro Gil St.,
Paco, Manila
Tel. Nos. : 524-4841

Pasay
2350 Taft Ave., Pasay City
Tel. Nos. : 804-0420

Pasay Road
G/F Colbella Bldg., 910
Arnaiz Ave., Makati City
Tel. Nos.: 887-5095

Plaridel
Banga 1st Cagayan Valley Rd.,
Plaridel, Bulacan
Tel. Nos. : (044) 795-0895

Shaw Boulevard
429 Shaw Blvd. cor. A. Mabini
St., Mandaluyong City
Tel. Nos. : 718-2354

BancNet
Non-Stop Banking Network

Member : Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (Deposit insured up to P250,000)
LISTED IN THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE