The Cabletow

The Official Publication of the Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the Philippines



MW ALAN LA MADRID PURISIMA
Grand Master of Masons
Philippine Grand Jurisdiction
2014-2015

SERBISYONG MAKATOTOHANAN PARA SA KAPATIRAN AT MAMAMAYAN

MASONRY: THE PATH OF GENUINE ENLIGHTENMENT AND SERVICE

VOLUME/ISSUE
91/1
2014
MAY & JUNE

In this issue:

One incredible mystic travel

The life & times of Bro. Mariano Ponce

In this Issue...

02 **Editorial**
Celebrating St. John the Baptist's feast day, accomplishing what we came here to do

07 **From the Grand East**
Toward providing genuine service to craft and community

By Alan LM Purisima, Grand Master

09 **From the Table of the Grand Sec**
Commentaries on Ancom 2014

By MW Danilo Angeles, PGM

14 **News**

28 **Ancom 2014**
The Ancom story

By VW Flor Nicolas, Editor-in-chief

44 Getting to know MW John Cooper

By MW Juanito P. Abergas, PGM

45 **GM's Profile**
PNP chief brings professional excellence to the Craft

52 **PGM Jewel Speech**
The promise that came with my second chance of life

By MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr., IPGM

54 **Circular**
List of GLP elected & appointed officers out

59 **Photo Folio**
April's changing of the guards

74 **Masonic Education**
Reexamining some definitions/descriptions of Freemasonry

By VW Juanito B. Vaño, Jr., SGL

82 **Feature**
One incredible mystic travel

By Bro. Dick Perlas

87 **Remembrance**
Baliwag 301 observed hero Mariano Ponce's 96th death anniversary

91 The funeral rite that saved the GLP

93 **History**
The life and times of Mariano Ponce

By WB Edmund Coronel

117 The widow saves the town

118 **Community Service**
Horton 379 cheered up kids in two remote adopted schools

123 **In Due Form**
ID 12

By WB Jonathan R. Amoroso, PM

The Cabletow

EDITORIAL BOARD
MW REYNATO S. PUNO, PGM, GMH
MW DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM, GMH
VW JUANITO B. VAÑO, JR.
VW GAMALIEL E. SARTE
VW FERDINANDO G. SEVILLA

EDITORIAL STAFF
VW J. FLOR R. NICOLAS
Editor-in-Chief
VW REX MILTON A. DOLINO
Asst. Editor-in-Chief
EDMUND CORONEL
Associate Editor
VW SAMUEL P. FERNANDEZ
Managing Editor
VW EMMANUEL T. DIESTA
Circulation Manager
WB GENE B. ILLENBERGER
Layout
MS. JENNIFER C. MAGALLANES
Secretary
VW NAPOLEON R. ESTILLES &
VW J. ERMIN ERNEST LOUIE R. MIGUEL
Consultants

The Cabletow

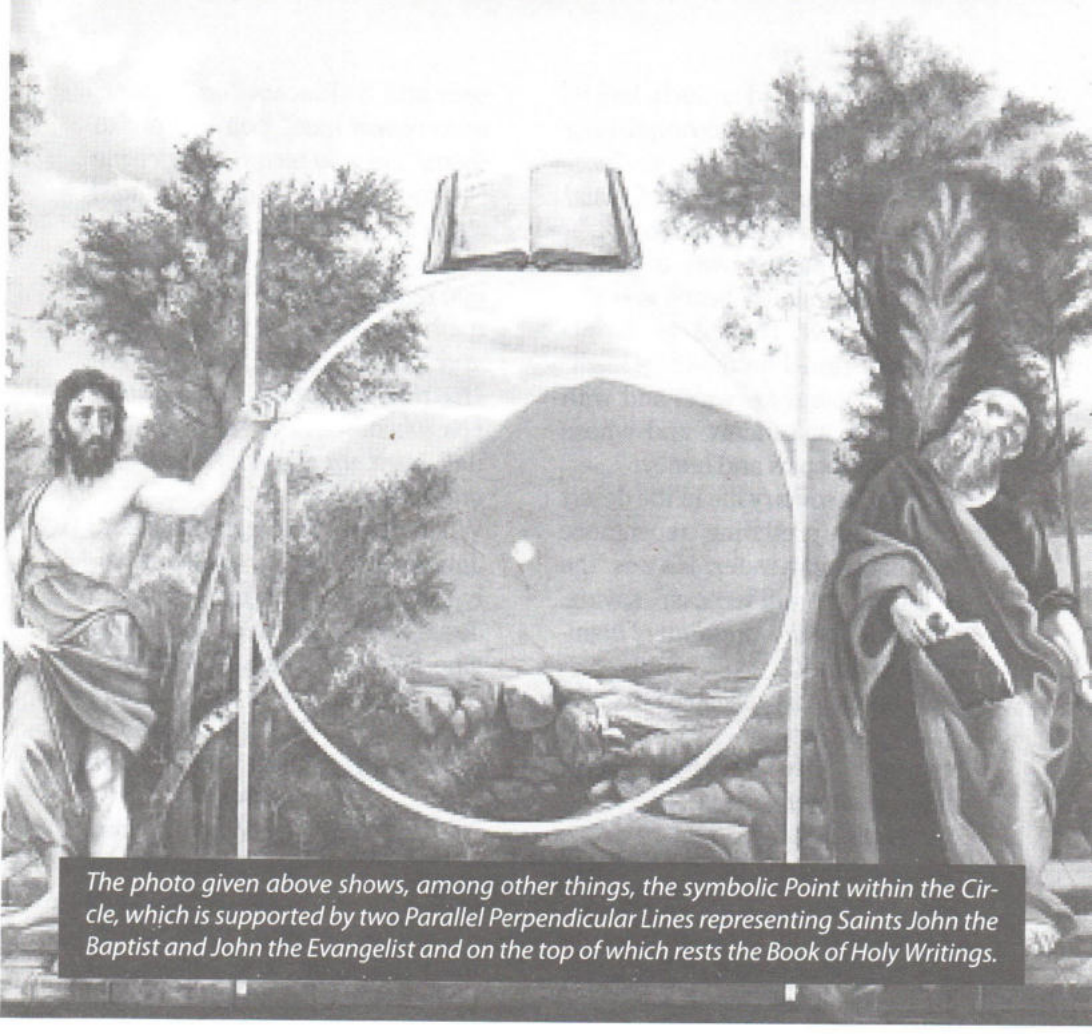
THE CABLETOW is a bimonthly publication of the Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the Philippines. Main Office: Plaridel Masonic Temple, San Marcelino St., Ermita, Manila, D 2801, Philippines. Members of Blue Lodges in this grand jurisdiction are regular subscribers thereto. Brethren in other grand jurisdictions are invited to subscribe to it at US $20 a year. Send check payable to the Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the Philippines, with complete mailing address, to **THE CABLETOW** at the address given above. Subscribers are advised to notify **THE CABLETOW** of address changes. Original articles are subjected to editing and, when published, become Cabletow property. Any article in **THE CABLETOW** may be reprinted in full, or excerpts thereof reproduced, provided proper attribution to the author is made, the source is given due credits, and the Cabletow office is furnished with a courtesy copy of the reprinted material.

Paid advertisements are accepted for printing in THE CABLETOW.

Celebrating St. John the Baptist's feast day, accomplishing what we came here to do

The latter part of our theme for this Masonic year, namely, "Masonry: A Path of Genuine Enlightenment and Service," makes us recall the afternoon, evening, or night we were initiated into the mysteries of Masonry. On that occasion, as poor blind candidates for the Entered Apprentice degree, we expressed our sincere desire "to be brought from darkness to light, to receive and have a part of the rights and privileges of this Worshipful Lodge erected to God and dedicated to the Holy Sts. John, as all brothers and fellows have done, who have gone this way before." Thus, we commenced our journey into Masonry under the auspices of Saints John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, who are said to have been eminent patrons of Masonry. From that mythical Lodge in Jerusalem, we started our trek to enlightenment by categorically declaring that we knocked on the door of Masonry in order to learn to subdue our passions and improve ourselves in Masonry.

The feast day of St. John the Baptist is celebrated on the 24th of June, the day the first Grand Lodge set its charter in 1717. We read in American Masonic publications that Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and other American Masons of yesteryears made it a point not to miss this day's celebration, and that two rival armies, meeting face to face, entered into an agreement that they should put off their battle until the morrow of this feast day. So, we ask: Why did those American Masons make June 24 a "do-not-miss day"? Why would armies lay down their arms on that day?



The photo given above shows, among other things, the symbolic Point within the Circle, which is supported by two Parallel Perpendicular Lines representing Saints John the Baptist and John the Evangelist and on the top of which rests the Book of Holy Writings.

We can get answers to the foregoing questions by re-examining those parts of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John which deal with John the Baptist and his cousin Jesus, as follows:

- Although Zacharias, a priest of the division of Abijah, and his wife Eizabeth, who was of the daughters of Aaron, were of advance age, they were blessed by God with a son whom they named John; for "they were righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." This shows that nothing is impossible with almighty God!
- This truth was also substantiated by the fact that although she was betrothed to Joseph, a carpenter of Nazareth, Mary, a cousin of Elizabeth, by the power of the Holy Spirit, gave birth to the Holy One, who would be called Jesus, Son of God.
- Jesus was six months younger than John, who, according to the prophet Isaiah, was the precursor

of the former, and as such, had to dedicate himself to accomplishing his mission, which was to "*prepare the way of the Lord (Jesus) and to make His paths straight.*"

- John the Baptist was a simple man, with matted beard and uncombed hair, clothed in simple robes of camel hair, with a leather belt around his waist and with dirty feet in sandals, and whose food was locusts and honey.
- He lived a solitary life in the desert of Judea, preaching repentance and baptism in water. He was "the voice in the wilderness," saying, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!*"
- He taught his disciples to live justly and uprightly. (In like manner, the Worshipful Master enjoins the Entered Apprentice in the northeast corner of the Lodge to ever walk and act as a just and upright Mason.)
- John baptized in water people from Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around Jordan who went out to him, and he urged them to confess their sins.
- When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to him for baptism, he told them in no uncertain terms, "*Bear fruits worthy of repentance because even now the ax is laid to the roots of the trees, and every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*"
- He baptized many of the Pharisees and Sadducees "*with water unto repentance,*" pointing out to them, "*He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. He will baptize you with the Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat in the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*"
- When Jesus went from Galilee to John at the Jordan, the latter willy-nilly baptized the former.
- Jesus told his disciples and others who listened to him, "*Of all men born of women, there has not risen any greater man than John the Baptist.*"
- When he had been baptized by John, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*"
- John courageously told Herod the tetrarch, "*It is unlawful for you to have Herodias.*" Herodias was the wife of Philip, Herod's brother. Because of John's brutally frank remark, for the sake of Herodias, Herod laid hold of John, bound him, and put him in prison. He wanted to put John to death, but because the latter was counted by

"Of all men born of women, there has not risen a greater man than John the Baptist."
–JESUS CHRIST

the multitude as a prophet, he was afraid of them and therefore refrained from putting his murderous design into execution. During the celebration of Herod's birthday anniversary, however, Herodias' daughter danced before Herod and his court and guests. Much pleased, Herod promised with an oath that he would give the girl whatever she might ask. So, at her mother's instigation, the girl said, "*Give me the head of John the Baptist on a platter.*" Although the girl's demand made the king sad, nevertheless, because of his promise to the girl and because of the remarks of those who sat with him, the king commanded that the daughter's request be given to her. So, he sent and had John beheaded in prison. And John's head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, who in turn brought it to her mother.

Based on the foregoing considerations, we can say that John the Baptist deserves to be honored not only by us Freemasons but by all other men as well; for he was, indeed, a great man, who started from humble beginnings and ushered in a brave, new world, and he exhibited himself as a man who was totally dedicated to accomplishing his mission: to pave the way and make paths straight for the Lord, and who lived each day with complete devotion and service to the Creator.

No, he did not live his life in splendor or luxury, but rather exhibited himself as a simple man who went about learning and sharpening his working tools. All the while, he prepared himself for the accomplishment of his mission, directing his special attention to his God-assigned task. He was, of course, met with temptation and with hardship, but he did not stop working. At times, he may have had his doubts, but he managed to be inflexible in his faith in God and "*to press forward in the straight path of right and truth, without inclining to the one hand or to the other in all his doings,*" steadfastly keeping his appointed mission in his mind, constantly laboring to make the right and truth known.

Like our Masonic forebears, we should regard the feast day of St. John the Baptist as a "do not miss" day. But when we celebrate it, we must not just gather around, say an invocation, eat, drink, and be merry, but rather renew, if not strengthen, our commitment to doing what we declared in open Lodge we had come here to do, namely, to learn to subdue our passions and improve ourselves in Masonry; for, decidedly, there is more to this life than just getting what we can today. If we are to be men of honor, we must regard that declaration of ours as an oath, a pledge, a vow. That declaration signifies, among other things, that like St. John the Baptist, we should live for a mission, which is, in the words of the Senior Deacon, who serves as guide to the blindfolded candidate for the first degree, to "*dedicate and devote his life to Thy service, and become a true and faithful brother among us....*"

To accomplish that mission, we should, among other duties, live by the symbolic meaning of the point within a circle, which is supported by two parallel perpendicular lines and on the top of which rests the Book of

Holy Writings.

According to the Lecture of the Entered Apprentice degree, the point represents each of us members of the Craft and the circle, the boundary line of his conduct, beyond which he should never suffer his passions, prejudices, and selfish interests to betray him. The two parallel perpendicular lines represent Saints John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, whose lives and teachings we should constantly use as guides for living richly, abundantly, and meaningfully during our pilgrimage on earth. Nature, which unfolds the glorious works of God's Creation, and the Volume of the Sacred Law (also referred to as Revelation) constitute our spiritual, moral, and Masonic trestle board. The latter is God's inestimable gift to us as the rule and guide of our faith. Since it is His Holy Word, we should regard it as the great light in our chosen profession, which is none other than Masonry, and as the unerring standard of truth and justice. Besides, we should study it with much reverence and obey with all our heart the laws it contains as means to regulate our lives and actions. We should erect our spiritual temples agreeably to the rules and designs which God has laid down in it.

Definitely, the symbol described above is fraught with deep meaning or significance. If we live by its message consistently, we will not materially err. The same symbol should constantly remind us to conduct ourselves as worthy and exemplary men and Masons at all times and in all places. Consequently, we will not only help preserve unsullied the reputation of the Fraternity as "*the path of genuine enlightenment and service*," as well as help remove every aspersion, or avert the shadow of any scandal or reproach, against it, toward making it known and recognized by residents in the community, local and national alike, as a highly credible, very relevant, and much respected fraternal organization, but also be enabled "*to acquit ourselves with the highest honors here and lay up a crown of rejoicing which shall continue when time shall be no more.*"

. . . John the Baptist was, indeed, a great man, who started from humble beginnings and ushered in a brave, new world, and he exhibited himself as a man who was totally dedicated to accomplishing his mission: to pave the way and make paths straight for the Lord, and who lived each day with complete devotion and service to the Creator.

There are many other working tools, emblems, and "symbolical forms borrowed principally from the mason's trade and from architecture" which we should use proficiently for improving ourselves and the world around us. We should be more highly resolved than before to faithfully discharge the duties, as well as to persistently practice the virtues, which they have been selected by the Craft to illustrate.

By MW Alan LM Purisima
Grand Master



Toward providing genuine service to craft and community

Now that we have ushered in the new Masonic Year, we should be guided by the theme Serbisyong Makatotohanan para sa Kapatiran at Mamamayan – "Masonry: The Path of Genuine Enlightenment and Service..."

My ascendancy as Grand Master of Masons in the Jurisdiction of the Philippines is a fulfillment of a long Masonic journey that began 30 years ago when I was raised as a Master Mason, courtesy of Gen. Mariano Llanera Lodge No. 168 in Gapan, Nueva Ecija. I do recognize that this title is a reward bestowed upon me by the Craft, who have extended to me their active assistance and sympathy to enable me to discharge my duties and responsibilities as a Mason with utmost fidelity and conscientiousness, and by the Great Architect of the Universe, who has endowed me with a competency of His Divine Wisdom and whose Divine Providence has brought manifold blessings and comforts in my life and that of my family.

Now that we have ushered in the new Masonic Year, we should be guided by the theme **Serbisyong Makatotohanan para sa Kapatiran at Mamamayan** – "Masonry: The Path of Genuine Enlightenment and Service," which sets forth our strate-

gic direction embodied in the Grand Lodge of the Philippines Roadmap for Masonic Year 2014-2015 towards the realization of the Five-Year Development Plan that started during the past administration. By this, we focus our attention on a Vision that by 2018, Philippine Masonry, which consists of the Craft (i.e., our M.W. Grand Lodge, together with its constituent Districts and subordinate Lodges) and our Appendant Bodies/Allied Orders, shall be a highly credible, relevant, and respected fraternal organization in the community – the way it has been socially and historically.

The new Masonic Year heralds a renewed optimism, numerous opportunities, and a brighter future for the Masonic Fraternity or Family in this sovereign jurisdiction. However, I give you a heads-up. Success does not happen overnight – it is a result of hard work and commitment. The attainment of our Vision, therefore, demands that every Brother takes up the challenge of embracing and applying with fervor and zeal the Fraternity's principal tenets, namely, Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, and the four Cardinal Virtues, to wit, Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice.

If and when all of us exhibit our firm determination to seek for more and more light or knowledge in Masonry, as well as work together in close unity in a grand design of providing genuine service to the Craft and to the community, both local and national, we can be sure that we are on the right track toward fulfilling our ultimate goal of living in real harmony within the Masonic Fraternity or Family in this sovereign jurisdiction and with more relevance to the society we live and work in.

Fraternally,

ALAN LA MADRID
PURISIMA
Grand Master

From the Table of the Grand Sec

By MW Danilo Angeles, PGM
Grand Secretary



Commentaries on Ancom 2014

In the aftermath of Ancom 2014, the Grand Secretary writes a few observations worthy of note by every Mason.

We send our most heartfelt congratulations to our newly-installed Grand Master, Most Worshipful Alan La Madrid Purisima. Concurrently the Director General of the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Craft looks up to his wide executive experience for the better governance of the Grand Jurisdiction and certainly, to his Masonic wisdom for instructions as much as inspiration.

Coming in the 102nd year of the Grand Lodge's operation, MW Purisima is the fifth police career officer to rise in the Grand Orient. Looking back, Past Grand Masters who had served in the constabulary and police services were MW Agustin V. Mateo (1992); MW Jose Percival L. Adiong (1996); MW Hermogenes E. Ebdane, Jr. (2005) and MW Avelino I. Razon, Jr. (2010).

Like him, the last two PGMs mentioned have been PNP chiefs themselves.

Talking with some brethren lately, a number is quick to judge a Grand Master's term by way of his profession. But stereotyping an individual by his job, even education, is an exercise in futility. Interestingly, none of these PGMs had exhibited the same management style or objectives. A good number of them went for the doctrinal nurturing of the Craft. But MW Agustin "Gusmati" Mateo, for instance, is remembered for installing the GLP elevator. Or that MW Ebdane constructed the all-white New Plaridel Masonic Temple along San Marcelino Street during his term. The insurance company paid the GLP Php8 million after the old Temple was gutted by fire at the onset of 2000.Using this for seed money, he went on pooling funds and resources to construct this new, costly, edifice. Some Past Grand Masters did really give more to Masonry than they could benefit from it.

This short trip down memory lane is not meant to compare Grand Masters, past or incumbent, in uniforms. Leadership, to my mind, is told by the necessities of the times. The objectives and approach will follow.

We live in troubled times today, wracked by natural and political calamities. The quality and worthiness of Masons have topped the program of MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr., Immediate Past Grand Master. Amid these issues, it falls on the Grand Master's shoulder to deftly steer the Craft, amid rough waters and dark skies, onto a safe and protected harbor.

In this regard, I urge all the brethren to support our newly-installed Grand Master, MW Purisima, and work together for the realization of the programs he has deemed fit for the Fraternity.

Similarly, I extend my warmest congratulations to VW Abraham N. Tolentino, for his election to the Junior Grand Warden post. As he is now set to travel the road leading to the Grand Orient in the next three years, let us send him off with a prayer to richly comprehend all the instructions that will come his way, surmount all the trials, and come out as a worthy Grand Master we all hope for.

* * * * *

In the afternoon of April 25, 2014, an unpleasant incident marred the Annual Communication (Ancom) just before the election of the Junior Grand Warden (JGW). I am most reluctant to report it here. But I believe that Masons, particularly Masons lately raised, ought to be informed and thus prevent the recurrence of similar unmasonic events.

As the Grand Lodge was set to vote, questions were raised from the floor (as usual). Until one stood up and boldly accused the outgoing Grand Master, MW Espino, Jr., of electioneering to the face with a brazen threat "I will (bring a) charge (against) you!"

We PGMs, as much as the common Lights on the floor, were stunned. What gall had one Mason had to point his finger at, accuse and threaten a Grand Master before the entire Grand Lodge duly assembled and convened? It was courageous. It was a show-stealer. But it was wrong.

Maybe, MW Espino, while presiding up in the Grand East, had rapped the gavel in preference to a JGW candidate while dismissive of others. Or maybe, he had uttered statements betraying favor to one and prejudice to all. And maybe, the accuser was quick and correct to see electioneering maneuvers in the lapses of MW Espino. But that never gave the accuser the right to act with impudence and depreciate the Office of the Grand Master before the eyes of the entire Grand Lodge.

Q: Are Grand Masters above fault and beyond reproach?

A: No. But the OFFICE of the Grand Master is, and ought to be.

You see, a Grand Lodge assembly, which is the Annual Communication, is the Grand Master's moment. The brethren all came at his sufferance. No Ancom transaction can be initiated without his authority, or can be concluded without his approbation. His function as chief governing authority of the Craft is enshrined in Ancient Landmark Fourth; his superintendency of the Ancom, in Landmark Fifth.

In other words, Grand Masters come and go—but the office remains.

Now, where "moral science" is the preoccupation of our Fraternity, it therefore becomes easy to see that "respect" is the proper attitude we must wear when in the presence of the Grand Master. For the Office of the Grand Master, for all its long and noble provenance, is an institution in itself within our larger "ancient and honorable institution."

With "moral science" and "respect" deeply operating in Masonic life, Masonic elections ought to be above and different from popular elections. But even then, candidates yet enjoy some of the privileges found in ordinary elections, like the transparency of election rules.

Masonry never divests a brother of his right to question or speak. But "moral science" puts the pressure on Petitioners, up to the Grand Masters, to behave gentlemanly in all occasions. The passage in the Middle Chamber also obligates us, among other responsibilities, to think and act like persons of learning—in Tagalog, asal ng may pinag-aralan. "Squaring our actions" keeps Masonic practices, like the Ancom elections, from crumbling into cheap and phony exercises.

Whether the accuser was right or wrong is beside the point. While at the floor, he actually hit not MW Espino; rather, the Office of the Grand Master—that is, while MW Espino was presiding in his official capacity.

Seemingly, the accuser was at a dilemma. He couldn't separate the office from the holder. In his frustration, he gave vent to his passions than attack the real issue at hand.

"Grand Masters come and go—but the office remains."

There are dozens of ways to skin a cat, so to speak. But the accuser picked the roughest method of them all. Had he only stifled his emotions, and relied solely on cold reason, he might have persuaded the assembly—Lights and PGMs alike—and got what he wanted.

But when the passions flared up, reason somersaulted. So, sentiments ironically swung in favor of a humbled Grand Master—and the accuser's method backfired on him. Rather than set a new precedence in Masonic jurisprudence, he was revealed as another campaigner and party of interest—very much like the Mason he had accused of.

Never forget that gentlemen, when in business, act and talk business-like. Bullying and arm-twisting

can win you the battle—but lose the war.

In short, moral ascendancy was crushed by passions heated up by a race for illusory and temporal gains. If you will believe me, this is the story of a number of cases filed before the Committee on Jurisprudence year after year.

Let this serve as a lesson to all Masons whithersoever dispersed.

* * * * *

Right after the Ancom, my office was flooded with guests and inquiries on why only one, out of 13 lodges under dispensation, had been approved for chartering.

The answer is simple: they have failed to conform to the procedures and comply with the requirements.

Q: Does a Masonic lodge under dispensation operate differently from a chartered or regular Masonic lodge?

A: No.

We draw this principle from what we call the "Gabionza Doctrine."

MW Santiago T. Gabionza, Jr., PGM, a notable lawyer himself, pored over the Masonic laws dealing with U.D. (under dispensation) lodges during his term in 2012. Then, he conferred with senior Masons knowledgeable in the Fraternity's jurisprudence to determine whether U.D. lodges are privileged to operate differently, or not.

At the end, the answer came as a resounding "no." The doctrine goes this way.

Allowing Masons to organize new lodges comes under the power of the Grand Master. It is his privilege. (Art. 9, Sec. 2, item a-1, Part I, Constitution of the Most Worshipful grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the Philippines)

A privilege is a peculiar benefit, advantage, or favor. By a written and signed Petition alone, the Grand Master gives authority to certain Masons to organize a new Ancient Craft lodge even without ascertaining yet the competence of these proponents.

The Grand Master acts generously but blindly at first. Now, that "blindness" is corrected by monitoring the progress of this new enterprise.

So, how ought a U.D. lodge operate? By operating like any regular lodge—or even better than a regular lodge—without any addition to, or omission from, Masonic customs and usages.

Why so? To prove its competence under question; thereby assuring the Grand Master that his early trust is not misplaced.

And why the need to convince the Grand Master? Because the Grand Master can stall, even withdraw, that privilege he has previously granted. He can dissolve a U.D. lodge.

"Trust" is the working concept behind the existence of U.D. lodges. Come to think of it. The Grand Master appoints the officers of a U.D. lodge dished up before him—Masons he didn't know from

Adam. Then, he gives power to these Masons to operate LIKE ANY regular lodge—but within the parameters of the By-laws these Masons have drawn up themselves.

This is too much trust—uncertain whether the lodge organizers will make good or awry of Masonry. But by losing sight of this trust, lodge organizers will work every which way but correctly.

Conforming to the by-laws, certain U.D. lodges did hold Masonic stated meetings—but held it in a Mason's house or a local restaurant. This isn't LIKE ANY REGULAR lodge operation. A "Masonic Stated Meeting" is held inside a Masonic lodge hall, of course.

Certain U.D. lodges did have a "Sponsoring Lodge." But they were just endorsers, not sponsors. Like in traditional Catholic baptism, a sponsor stands as a second parent to the infant—with the moral obligation to look after the child's spiritual education and material well-being, if necessary.

Sponsoring lodges are like that. They give shelter to a homeless U.D. lodge, allowing the latter to hold stated and special meetings and what have you. Sometimes, a generous sponsor lodge hands a gift of money (like a start-up fund) or goods (like Masonic furniture or tools) to get the U.D. lodge going.

A U.D. lodge must present Candidates for Masonic Degrees. Certain U.D. lodges did submit Membership Reports showing Masons initiated, passed and raised. But nowhere did these names appear in the early Minutes of the Lodge Meeting. It meant that the conferment of degrees had not been announced before and scheduled by the U.D. lodge. So, it looked like the Candidates had been rushed in like in a spur of the moment; hence, giving rise to a couple of suspicious thoughts by members of the Committee on Lodge Administration.

"Bearing in mind the trust conferred by the Grand Master, [U.D. lodges] will see to it that the confidence bestowed is highly valued, neither breached or squandered."

Officers of these U.D. lodges came to me explaining certain oversights here and there. For these unintentional misses, they pleaded for special consideration and get their charters this year.

Sympathizing with these very human lapses, yet the approbation of U.D. lodges for chartering is way beyond my territory. If I were the Grand Master, I will perhaps exercise leniency. But the members of the Committee on Lodge Administration are not that compassionate.

In 2006, for instance, a U.D. lodge in Bulacan had all the corners nailed down except for one: a lodge photo. In its report to the Committee on Lodge Administration, it included a picture showing the members in both Masonic and non-Masonic attires inside the lodge.

The photo was shot AFTER a stated meeting—hence, the variety of attire. Some members had changed clothes to keep the formal wear from getting soaked by the torrential rain then in progress. Others were late-arriving sojourners from work.

The committee, however, was impervious to reasons of typhoon or work. For this photo alone, they stalled the granting of the U.D. lodge's charter for another year.

The committee will certainly not take the extra trouble of soliciting explanation for every lapse. What they see is what they get. Quality control is their job. Severity is their attitude.

So, it pays for lodge organizers to study the ways of the Craft well. But then again, they must doubly check every move they make, every paper they submit. Bearing in mind the trust conferred by the Grand Master, they will see to it that the confidence bestowed is highly valued, neither breached or squandered.

This is enough reason—and motivation—to drive them into exhibiting competence in every step of the way. They must do well so that even the stern members of the Lodge Administration Committee can do nothing but raise their thumbs up.

News

MW Purisima led R5-A bros in 116th Independence rite

Newly-installed Grand Master MW Alan Purisima celebrated the 116th Independence Day Anniversary in Naga City, Camarines Sur province, on June 12.

The switch to Bicol—instead of the usual flag-raising rite in Rizal Park in Manila or at the Aguinaldo Mansion in Kawit, Cavite—was timed with the double commemoration of the Quince Martires del Bicolandia (Fifteen Martyrs of Bicolandia) now on its 117th year.

Noteworthy, President Benigno Aquino III, the guest of honor, came to lead the city's flag-raising ceremony at Plaza Quince Martires. He delivered a speech next, paying tribute to the 15 martyrs.

After Pres. Aquino, MW Purisima and the bros of District R5-A led by VW Joaquin Ed A. Guerrero, District Deputy Grand Master (DDGM), laid a floral wreath before the Quince Martires monument.

Bros from 3 lodges in Naga City

assembled at dawn before Moraville hotel at Calle Dinaga, a few meters from Plaza Quince Martires.

Headed by VW Guerrero, they received their individual passes issued by the city government.

At around 6:30 am, after a few souvenir shots, some 50 brethren in lodge attire and aprons marched to the celebrations site. They were led by Bro. Byron Jose M. Barrameda, Junior Warden, for Camarines Sur Lodge No. 382; WM Butch Roldan for Isarog Lodge No. 33; and WM Neneveigh Alcovindas for Naga City Lodge No. 257, respectively.

A tent was reserved for the bros, complete with seats, across Elias Angeles street, a normally busy thoroughfare. But traffic was temporarily suspended to give way for the occasion.

A city landmark, Plaza Quince Martires is located at the intersection of busy streets fronting an equally historic San Francisco Church.

Noteworthy, the plaza was constructed by provincial governor Julian Ocampo, a Mason, whose term ran from 1919 to 1922.

Similarly, 8 of the Fifteen Martyrs were Freemasons.

Also present were members of the Bicol Chapter Order of Demolay and Bethel 31 Job's Daughters International.

The 15 martyrs were nabbed by the Spaniards either for affiliating with or supporting the Katipunan revolutionary movement. They died by musketry on January 4, 1897.



MW Purisima poses for a shot with the bros of R5-A in a plaza similarly constructed by a Mason provincial governor.



The GLP party hands an incubator over to the Eastern Bicol Medical Center (EDMC) (front row from left): VW Joaquin Ed A. Guerrero, DDGM RV-A, MW Santiago T. Gabionza, Jr., PGM; newly-installed MW Alan Purisima; VW Benito Tan of MCCCI; VW Juanito B. Vaño, Jr., SGL; VW Napoleon R. Estilles, Grand Pursuivant , Catanduanes Gov. Araceli Wong; and Dr. Maria Alcantara of EBMC.

MW Purisima, MCCCI donated incubator to Catanduanes public hospital

MW Alan Purisima, Grand Master, led the Masonic Charities for Crippled Children, Inc. (MCCI) in the turnover rite of one unit of incubator machine to the Eastern Bicol Medical Center on May 27 in Virac, Catanduanes province.

Catanduanes Governor Araceli Wong and Dr. Maria Alcantara of EBMC were present to receive the donation.

In a brief speech, MW Purisima, also the MCCI chairman, said that the donation was the start of partnership between Masons, represented by Catanduanes Island Lodge No. 291 in the province, and EBMC.

"The Masonic fraternity firmly believes that 'the hurt of just one human being is the injury of all humanity' and it urges its members to exercise the principle of Relief or Service," he said.

Donation papers were signed during the rite, concluding the turnover ceremony.

Also present were MW Santiago T. Gabionza, Jr., PGM; VW Benito Tan, MCCI corporate secretary; VW Juanito B. Vaño, Jr., Senior Grand Lecturer; and Catanduanes police director Senior Superintendent Adelio Benjamin Castillo.

MCCCI-Bicol Unit's kid beneficiaries jumped to 7

By Bro. David E. Severo
Regional Representative, MCCCI -Bicol Unit

From 3 crippled children clientele in 2013, the Masonic Charities for Crippled Children, Inc. (MCCCI) Bicol Unit now tends after 7 crippled young patients all confined at the Bicol Medical Center in Naga City, Camarines Sur.

At the start, MCCCI-Bicol had a low number of patients with merely 3 crippled children at the end of 2013. Until it was discovered that the main cause was the lack of information drive on the charity program's details particularly, on the coverage of medical help, availment of assistance, application for treatment, contact persons, office and clinic locations, and screening schedule.

The program was established by a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the MCCCI-Bicol partner, the Bicol Medical Center (BMC), a tertiary government hospital in Naga City, on July 15, 2013.

The MOA signing was attended by then Grand Master MW Juanito G. Espino Jr. and VW Benito K. Tan, MCCCI corporate secretary, simultaneously launching the MCCCI-Bicol Unit.

The ceremony was witnessed by the officers of various lodges comprising Masonic Districts R5-A and B, all coming from Bicol's 6 provinces.

Contrary to Masonic saying "never flaunt or advertise acts of charity," MCCCI-Bicol Unit took heed of fraternal advices and consensus on the need for public information drive. The decision to pub-

The three prime movers of MCCCI-Bicol Unit: WB Crisostomo D. Lacuesta, WB Benjamin P. Villanueva and Bro. David E. Severo.



licize the program was due to the diversity in culture and dialects of Bicolanos scattered over a vast regional area. Going to the mass media would afford the MCCCI-Bicol Unit a means for wider public notice.

Thus, the MCCCI-Bicol Unit, in cooperation with BMC, launched a media campaign on January 15, 2014 over GMA TV's "Baretang Bicol" (Bicol News), a primetime news program running from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., aired over the entire Bicol region.

Again, on March 20, 2014, MCCCI-Bicol Unit aired its charity program over TV Patrol Bicol newscast, from 5 to 6 p.m. in ABS-CBN.

The TV announcements were free of charge.

As a result, MCCCI-Bicol patients rose to 7 crippled children under treatment, including 2 surgery cases in just a month after the information drive.

Also, the City Government of Naga invited the MCCCI-Bicol Unit to lay a wreath before the monument of Masonic brother Dr. Jose P. Rizal in commemoration of his 153rd birth anniversary on June 19, 2014 at Plaza Rizal of this city.

This writer delivered a short message in Filipino, highlighting Bro. Rizal's charity works and making connection with MCCCI's program for crippled children.

To sustain the charity program, the MCCCI-Bicol Unit officers solicited the benevolence and support of the brethren through e-mail and SMS. MCCCI-Bicol objectives are coordinated particularly with the newly installed R5-A and B District Deputy Grand Masters (DDGMs) VW Joaquin Ed. Guerrero and VW Mayor Noel E. Rosal, respectively.

Also coordination is conducted with the Worshipful Masters of the 10 Bicol Lodges with an ardent request to form a Standing Committee which will scout, sponsor, endorse and provide assistance to patients in the course of their medical treatment.

WB Crisostomo D. Lacuesta, 65, a doctor, is the unit's Medical Director. He travels every Thursday of the week from Manila to Naga City to fulfill his job with the able assistance of Bro. Jerkins Devarra.

WB Benjamin P. Villanueva, 71, is the unit's Regional Treasurer. He regularly takes a crippled patient every Thursday, from residence to BMC Hospital, for casting treatment.

He holds office at the Naga College Foundation, Inc. at Dr. Melchor T. Villanueva Ave., Naga City.

This writer is the MCCCI-Bicol Unit Regional Representative,

The MCCCI-Bicol Unit takes pleasure in its work, motivated by the deep sense of fulfillment in seeing crippled children since birth walk again with joy on their faces.

In lodge visits, the unit regularly enjoins the brethren to take heed of the Masonic ministry to practice charity, "to be altruistic or other-oriented . . . . to make life as comfortable as we can for as many as we can. . . and giving new hope to the disheartened"—and most of all, to give new hope to crippled children.

PGM Puno is new IMES head



MW Reynato Puno, PGM

MW Reynato Puno, PGM, was appointed by newly-installed Grand Master, MW Alan Purisima, in June to head the Institute of Masonic Education and Studies (IMES), the training arm and think tank of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the Philippines (or GLP).

MW Puno, the 22nd Supreme Court chief justice, is more than qualified for the job. He is a two-term member of the Board of Regents of the University of the Philippines (U.P.). Also, he is the Eminent Resident Scholar of the U.P. College of Law.

He was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court from 2006 to 2010. His term was notable for significant promulgations like the Writ of Amparo and Habeas Data which stripped military and police operatives of the defense of denial in extrajudicial killing and forced disappearance cases.

Also, he returned the "Justice on Wheels" program by sending out 4 buses to prisons and trying cases of overstaying or septuagenarian inmates which had already lapsed beyond the legal prescribed periods.

A staunch pork barrel critic, he was irrepressible for his sharp and correct views that whipped up the organization and rise of anti-pork coalitions and mass movements.

MW Puno was Grand Master in 1984.

MLQ 262 bros & families marked lodge's 30th anniversary

By Bro. Arnold B. Novicio

Salamat, at tayo'y nagkasamang muli
Salamat. sa paglipas ng panahon ay may darating na araw...
Kay tamis ng ating samahan, sa lungkot at kaligayahan,
tunay na kaibigan...Salamat.!!!

So WB Gerardo A. Noveras—and currently governor of Aurora province—belted out this former hit of the legendary Pinoy rock band, The Dawn.

Rightly, good relations filled the air as the bros of Manuel L. Quezon Memorial Lodge No. 262 and their families spent a fun-filled Family Day at the Lorentes Resort in Brgy. Ramada, Maria Aurora on June 14 to commemorate the lodge's 30th founding anniversary.

The occasion started with a sumptuous lunch which family members had prepared, followed by a short program. WM Isaias Noveras Jr., Incumbent Worshipful Master, gave a welcome address.

WB and Gov. Noveras delivered an inspirational message. Fun games were held, joined in by Kuyangs, Atengs and pamangkins who had been split into three-colored teams – Blue, Red and Yellow Teams.

Iloilo Acacia 11 holds "Bag-to-School" project

Text and photo by VW Charles G. Agar

Bros of Iloilo Acacia Lodge No. 11 handed out hundreds of school bags to elementary grade children in the town of Calinog, in Iloilo, on June 7.

Local officials gladly welcomed and helped the bros at the covered court of Barangay Carvasana where hundreds of moms and kids from adjacent villages had gathered.

The project was conducted in coordination with the Municipal Social Welfare Office of Calinog and the office of Councilor Andrew Gustilo.



A posterity pose after the affair: (Seated) on the center WM Robert L. Petate, on his right VW Tommy O. Que, PJGL-WV and VW Arnel Noel P. Gellada on his left VW Charles Galvez Agar, PDGL, and VW Edwin B. Aguinido, DGL

The Acacia 11 mission group was composed of WM Robert L. Petate; VW Tommy O. Que, PJGL; VW Jose Luis Maria D. Ong, PDDGM; VW Manuel B. De Asis, PDDGM; VW Juanito L. Veloso. PJGL; VW Edwin B. Aguinido, DGL; WB Lirio A. Gustio; WB Rafael C. Chiva; VW Arnel Noel P. Gellada, PDGL; Bro. Arnel Bionat; Bro. Perpetuo G. Nafarrete III; Bro. Anhony Andrew C. Gustilo; Bro. Vicente F. Famindalan; Bro. Henry Luna of 280 and Bro. Melvin Quilang of 229.

Mabuhay Shriners celebrate "Shrine Week"

Led by the Mabuhay Divans, the Nobilities of the different Shrine Clubs celebrated Shrine Week on June 1 to 7.

The festivities kicked off with a parade on June 1, led by Noble Robert Fajardo, from the GLP to the Quirino Grandstand in Luneta.

Shriners, led by Noble Francis Blanco, joined the GLP staff In the flag-raising ceremony on the morning of Monday, June 2.

Tuesday, June 3, was Fez Day. All Nobilities were enjoined to take pictures of themselves either at home or in workplace and to submit their shots to the Mabuhay Shriners Office.

At the Camp Crame Firing Range, Noble Robert Po organized Shriners in the Interclub Fun Shoot. In the afternoon, the Divans of Mabuhay Shriners and presidents of the different Shrine Clubs sat down in an interview with media at the Plaridel Masonic Temple.

Nobles Ramon Clavecillas and Adam Sim led Shriners to the Phil-

ippine Orthopedic School for Crippled Children on Wedneday, June 4. They conducted a feeding program and distributed school supplies to them.

9th Ceremonial

On the night of Thursday, June 5, Noble Alejo Antonio, president of the Chuck Demorse Shrine Club, held the 9th Mabuhay Shriners Ceremonial, backed by Nobles Zidney Zamora, and Don Garcia.

Orientation among Novices, Nobles, Marshals, Camel Herders, and Wrecking Crew was conducted by Nobles Adam Sim, CDMSC; Roberto Fajardo, CDMSC; Gabriel C. Lopez, CDMSC; and Wilfred Yu, CDMSC.

Imperial Potentate John Cinotto, the Mabuhay Shriners Divans, Nobles of the different Shrine Clubs attended the opening of the Temple. Conferral Director was Noble Sim, assisted by Nobles of the host Chuck Demorse Shrine Club.

Representatives from the various Shrine Clubs served as Marshals and Camel Herders such as Maginoo, Maharlika, Bamboo,Saigon, Cavite, Metro Manila, Luzon, Sierra Madre, Amianan, and Kabukiran.

Noble Antonio was overall coordinator of the Parade while Noble Adam Sim oversaw the Auction of Novices. Representatives of the different Shrine Clubs were in charge of the meals, as well as the Novice Night.



Imperial Potentate John Cinotto (front row, 3rd from left) and next to him, Mabuhay Shriners Potentate, MW Alan Purisima, review the Nobles while on parade up from the grandstand.

Noble Wilfred Yu and other Mabuhay officials took charge of the 2nd Second Section of the conferral. The event was capped by the graduation and fezing of the new Nobles, followed by a festive dinner-fellowship.

Mabuhay Shriners Potentate Alan Purisima was guest.

Culmination

The Mabuhay Fun Golf, with Nobles Rodel Matias and Matthew Baccay in charge, opened at the Philippine Navy Golf Club at 6 a.m. on Friday, june 6.

The weeklong celebration was capped by the Shriners Ball on the night of June 7, Saturday at the PNP Multi-Purpose Center in Camp Crame, Quezon City,

Wearing black suit and red tie with a Fez, Nobles came with their ladies to dance the night away.

Noble Joselito Mendoza was in charge of this final event.

Noble Zamora chaired the Program Committee, and Noble Guillermo Eleazar, the Food and Drinks Committee. Noble Manuel Espiritu, Jr., Chief Rabban, was Overall Committee Chairman, ably assisted by Noble Juanito B. Vaño, Jr., Assistant Chief Rabban.

Bro made Shriner-on-sight

Shriners International Imperial Potentate John Cinotto declared Bro. Manuel Agulto a Shriner-on-sight during the 9th Ceremonial on June 5.

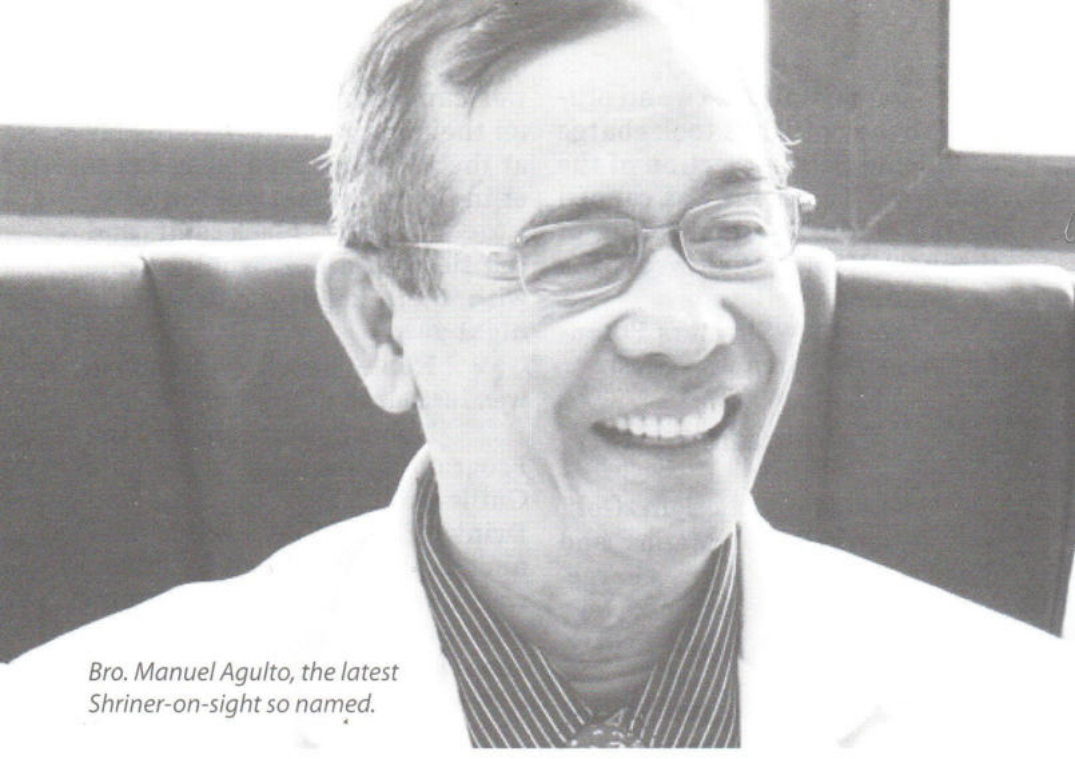
Witnessing the event was newly-installed Grand Master MW Alan Purisima, also Mabuhay Shriners Potentate.

Bro. Agulto is the second member of the Jacques DeMolay Memorial Lodge No. 305 to be made a Shriner-on-sight after VW Jose Avelino "Joby" Magbanua.

VW Magbanua was declared a Shriner in September 2013.

Bro. Agulto, a doctor, is currently the Chancellor of U.P. Manila. He was affiliated with the Jose Abad Santos DeMolay Chapter. In his acceptance speech, Bro. Agulto expressed his readiness extend help to the community, particularly to physically handicapped young Filipinos.

Other Masons made Shriners-on-sight are MW Pacifico Aniag, PGM in 2008, and MW Juanito Abergas, PGM in 2010.



Bro. Manuel Agulto, the latest Shriner-on-sight so named.

Eastern Star holds 11th Triennial Convention

The Order of the Eastern Star (OES) in the Philippines held its 11th National Triennial Convention on May 23-25 at the Island Cove Hotel & Leisure Park in Binakayan, Cavite.

Newly-installed Grand Master MW Alan LM Purisima delivered the opening address before the 200 OES members and guests.

He urged the OES to firm up ties among members, provide updates on ritualistic works, discuss common concerns, and give members chances to meet new members while renewing old friendships.

Also, he invited the OES ladies to "to join us Masons in this sovereign jurisdiction in giving due meaning and substance to the theme `Serbisyong Makatotohanan sa Kapatiran at Mamamayan—Masonry: The Path of Genuine Enlightenment and Service.' "

The Order of Eastern Star in the Philippines is made up of 26 subordinate chapters all subordinated to the General Grand Chapter in Washington, D.C.

Noli 42 & families go on Family Day

By Bro. Mark Francis Crisostomo, JW

Summer + Family + Masonry = Fun! Fun! Fun!

This was what we, the brethren of Noli Me Tangere Lodge No. 42 in Masonic District NCR-D, experienced when we celebrated our Annual Lodge Family Day, with the theme of "Summer 2014 Family Day, Noli Beating d' Heat," on May 17 at the Metrovilla Subdivision Clubhouse in Valenzuela City.

Led by WM Fred Opriasa and Bro. Romy Salen, Senior Warden, the brethren and their families spent the day swimming and relishing the sumptuous food and refreshments. Kuyang Siso Pineda provided for 2 roasted pigs.

WB Leonard Lu, IPM, is president of the subdivision's Homeowners Association. He lent the clubhouse to the lodge free of charge.

This correspondent chaired the committee assigned for this event.

Family & community topped Cam Sur 382's summer season

By WB Tony Aberca Jr.

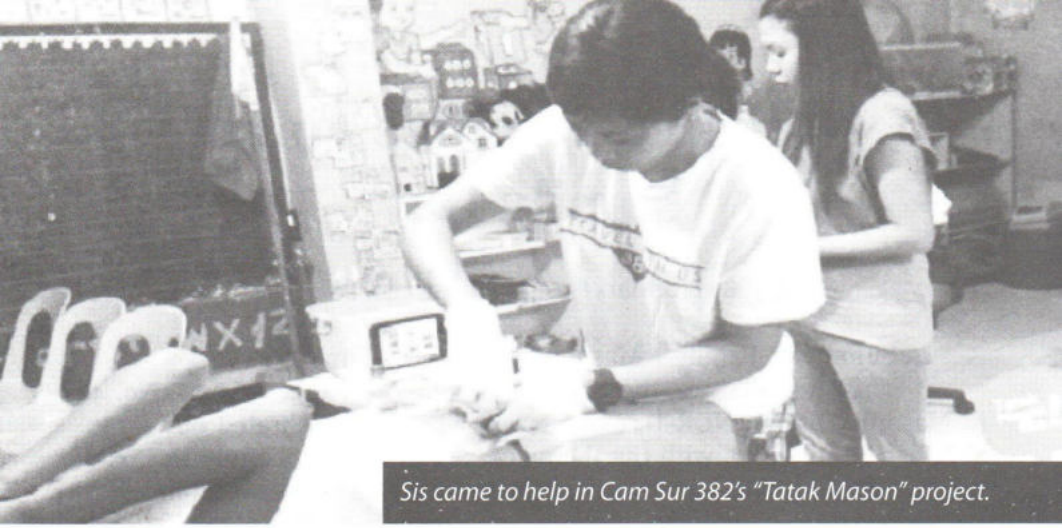
Nervous, 13-year-old Joe amused himself by playing jokes on a boy of same age sitting next to him. They both waited to be called and "cut" inside a makeshift surgical room in the barangay day care center.

So did 18 other boys on that sweltering 10th of May, at Barangay San Felipe in Naga City, when the bros of Camarines Sur Lodge No. 382, headed by WM Moncito I. Ilarde, held free circumcision surgeries dubbed as "Tatak Mason."

Bros who came, unfazed by the sight of blood, got free t-shirts, a memento from Bro. Ralph Angelo Real, Lodge Treasurer.

The Cam Sur 382 medical team was headed by Bro. Joseph Anthony Briz, a medical practitioner. He was assisted by Sis. Jeejane Bonggao, a doctor and wife of WB Jun Bonggao, PM.

Brethren nurses also helped like Bro Alan Bonggao with his wife,



Sis came to help in Cam Sur 382's "Tatak Mason" project.

Sis. Tin, even Petitioner Christian Dela Trinidad.

Bros and sis joined hands to see some 20 village kids pass to manhood. "Tatak Mason" project is on its third year which has begun in the town of Gainza in 2012.

Summer Splash

After the work came the fun. To beat the summer heat, Cam Sur 382 bros and their families went out for fun on May 25 at the Mini-hydro Hot Spring Resort in Barangay Panicuason, Naga City, a popular destination among locals.

Led again by WM Ilarde, bros and their families splashed in the 4 hot pools of varying temperature ideal for soothing relaxation and therapy.

Organized by Bro. Byron Jose M. Barrameda, Junior Warden, the family outing not only firmed up the bonds, but also impressed on family members that they also belonged to the Masonic circle.

Palilan 239, York Rite bros held free medical services

Bros of Palilian Lodge No. 239, along with the local York Rite bros, conducted a joint medical outreach program on April 12 at the lodge grounds in Jimenez town, Misamis Occidental.

The free medical services were a combination of circumcision surgeries in the morning and eye-screening in the afternoon.

Palilan 239, under WM Regin Magana, sliced into manhood 50



Palilan 239 and York Rite bros came with their families and friends to get the free medical help going.

children from indigent families. Similarly, 65 individuals benefitted from free corrective lenses, reading glasses, eye check-ups and consultations.

The project was held in coordination with the Jimenez local government largely through Companion Jaime B. Baldomero, PM, Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator, and Companion Loreto T. Bhagwani, PDDGM, a Sangguniang Bayan member.

Companion Luisito S. Yu, PDDGM, provided the eye-care team headed by Dr. Eufrocina V. Juat from Ozamis City.

Bro. Randolph M. Sino Cruz, Philippine Army colonel of the 1st Infantry Tabak Division, aided the circumcision surgical team.

York Rite bros who backed the blue lodge's project were Excellent High Priest and Bro. Ronnie M. Ortega, PDGL, of Misamis Chapter No. 34 Royal Arch Masons of Misamis; and Illustrious Master and Bro. Louie Thorn-Arman E. Yu, PM, of the Subanen Council No. 23 Royal and Select Masters.

Sis and family members from the Order of Eastern Star, Job's Daughters, and Demolays came to help in the project.

98th Ancom in Manila

The Ancom story

By VW Flor Nicolas
Editor-in-chief

April 21-23
(Pre-Ancom Activities)

On April 21 and 22, delegates registered at the Plaridel Masonic Temple (PMT) on San Marcelino St., Ermita, Manila.

As early as 5 a.m., April 23, interested brethren participated in the Grand Master's Cup held at the Villamor Air Base Golf Club. Later that morning, more delegates registered at the PMT.

Led by MW Grand Master Juanito G. Espino, Jr., members of the Masonic Fraternity, together with foreign dignitaries, offered floral wreaths at the Rizal Shrine at the Luneta; they later paid the Mayor of the City of Manila, Hon. Joseph Ejercito Estrada, courtesy call at his office.

MW Espino and other Masonic leaders then treated the foreign dignitaries to a welcome lunch and, afterwards, gave them a guided tour of the City of Manila, particularly Intramuros.

At about 2 p.m., the Grand Guild of Past Masters of the Philippines (GGPMP) held its 30th Annual Convention at the Jose Abad Santos Hall of the PMT. During the convention, it bestowed upon MWBs Reynato S. Puno and Rosendo C. Herrera, Past Grand Masters and Gold Medal of Honor awardees, much-deserved honors for their invaluable contributions to its growth and development.

Writes GGPMP Secretary Samuel Fernandez: "The brethren will always be grateful to MW Puno for his vision, insight, and wisdom. In 1984, he issued Edict No. 84, which created the GGPMP, the mandate of which is to promote the welfare and interest of living Past Masters and those of the widows and orphans of the deceased ones. The brethren will also remember the dedication and commitment of MW Herrera during the trying early stage of the Grand Guild. The one-hundred-thousand-peso seed money he raised during his term as

word, will and leadership. As we face the busy days ahead, we are reminded more strongly that we need Thy help not only in our actions, but in our attitudes as well. We pray that personal prejudices will be dispelled and that genuine concern for the proper direction for Masonry will prevail. Enable us to learn restraints of time and not to proscrastinate, so that we will realize the plans and programs Thou hast inspired us to achieve. Remind us of our dependence upon Thee and our interdependence upon one another as we endeavor most earnestly to establish upon earth a veritable brotherhood of men of different countries, sects, and opinions under Thy Fatherhood. Grant us perseverance to be really good and true men and Masons – living and sharing harmoniously in Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.

Guide us now as we proceed in our Annual Communication. As we deliberate and decide on matters that will serve as guide and catalyst for us to move forward and cause us to advance and see growth in all areas of the Grand Lodge, we pray for Thy guidance and blessings. Enable us to show to the world that the principles and tenets which our ancient Craft has instilled in us continue to live on. Let Thy wisdom and light be with us to help us to do more, so that our accomplishments may stand the test of time.

Our prayer also is for a spirit of harmony, understanding and mutual concern to pervade our deliberations. May we grow in sensitivity to the many needs of persons in our communities.

May each of us here look into himself and resolve to seek Thy guidance on every issue before us to make the right choices for our beloved Brotherhood.

We also thank Thee for the dedication and commitment of MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr. and his set of elected and appointed officers for successfully leading our M.W. Grand Lodge throughout their term of office. We also pray that their successors, led by our incumbent Deputy Grand Master, RW Alan LM Purisima, will continue the plans they have set for the good of Philippine Masonry.

In Thy most precious Name, we pray. Amen.

After the presentation of the Philippine Flag and the singing of the National Anthem, the "Pagpupugay ng Watawat" was dramatically recited. Then the brethren sang the Grand Lodge March.

VW Roberto L. Morales, DDGM of host MD R III-D (Nueva Ecija-South), delivered the opening remarks, and Pasay City Mayor Calixto's welcome address was read by his representative.

MW Juanito P. Abergas, PGM, introduced the guest of honor and speaker, MW John L. Cooper, Grand Master of Masons in California, and Very Reverend Leonard B. Oakes, Grand Chaplain of the M.W. Grand Lodge of California, read the text of MW Cooper's speech, as follows:

Separated by a Common Bond

When I wrote this message, it was my intention to be able to deliver it in person at the 98th Annual Communication of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines. I accepted the invitation of your Most Worshipful Grand Master to address your Grand Lodge on the occasion of his visit to our Grand Lodge last October in San Francisco, and had it not been for a significant deterioration of my health, which prevented my traveling to Manila at this time, I would have been present to bring you the greetings of the more than 60,000 Masons in California, and to salute you on the occasion of your own Annual Communication. I have, instead, asked our Grand Chaplain, Very Reverend Leonard B. Oakes, to represent me, and to bring you the message that I would have delivered to you in person. In addition to serving as our Grand Chaplain, he is the Master of our Mission Lodge No. 169 in San Francisco, and by profession a priest of the Episcopal Church. I could not be better represented in my absence than by this brother.

I have chosen as my topic "Separated by a Common Bond." That seems to be an unusual and even a contradictory title, but it reflects the nature of the relationship between our two Grand Lodges, which is, in a sense, a contradictory, as well as a warm and fraternal, one. The nature of the ties between our two Grand Lodges in turn closely mirrors the relationship between our two countries, which is also of a warm and fraternal nature, but one that also has had its contradictions. Let me be candid at this point. The relationship between the Philippine Islands and the United States of America has not always been one of harmony and mutual understanding. After almost four hundred years of occupation by Spain, the Philippine Islands fully expected that the Spanish-American War would result in the liberation of the Islands and a recognition by the United States of the independence of the Philippines. Such an expectation was not unwarranted, because the Unite States itself had been occupied by the colonial government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, against whom it had successfully fought its own war of liberation. The shocking realization that the United States had no intention of recognizing Philippine Independence after Spain had been driven out was the occasion f the Philippine-American War of 1899-1902. It is well-known that many of the Filipino patriots who established the First Philippine Republic and led the struggle against both Spain and the United States were Masons. Bro. Emilio Aguinaldo, the first President of the First Philippine Republic, was not only a Mason, but also a man who deeply believed in the principles which Freemasonry shared with the United States of America through such great American heroes as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Paul Re-

vere, among many others.

In his book, The Imperial Cruise: A Secret History of Empire and War, author James Bradley tells the sad tale of hope and betrayal which marked the brief history of Bro. Aguinaldo as the Father of his country, an honor which he shared with our own President George Washington. If George Washington and the (other) American patriots had been "liberated" by an imperial power in the same way that the Philippines were "liberated," all the Founding Fathers of America might have spent years in exile as did Bro. Aguinaldo and his fellow patriots. This is a story that most Americans do not know, although I am quite sure that anyone who has taken the time to read Philippine history knows the truth. Whatever the subsequent relationship between our two countries – and we now have more than one hundred years of a close bond between us – we must not forget those early years when American imperial ambitions, and – let us be candid – American hubris and outright racism could have poisoned forever our friendship. That it did not do so is more a tribute to the forgiveness of history, and the magnanimity of the spirit of our two peoples than anything else.

I am reminded of a story that I once heard about forgiveness:

> A young man had a terrible temper, and his father did not know what to do with his son whose anger was a very destructive force in the young man's life. So, the father sat his son down, and told him that he either needed to learn to control his anger, or it would destroy him. He then told the young man to take a hammer and a nail, and each time he lost his temper, to go out to the back yard of their home, and drive a nail into the fence. The young man did so, and soon noticed how many nails he was driving into the fence. And then a change began to occur. The young man drove fewer and fewer nails into the fence as he began to control his temper, until at last there were no more new nails.
>
> He then went to his father, and said, "Father, I have learned to control my temper! Look! No more nails in the fence!" And his father said, "Well done, my son. You have learned an important lesson. But now you must learn one more. Go out to the back yard, and pull out each and every nail that you drove into the fence."
>
> The young man did so – and noticed that the fence was covered with nail holes. His father then said, "Even if you have learned to control your anger, the damage you did will never go away. Those nail holes will remain long after you have stopped driving new nails into the fence. You cannot undo the hurt that you have done to another, even if you are forgiven for it."

I would suggest that this is an apt illustration of the relationship between our two peoples. We have learned over time to be "friends an brothers," to use a Masonic term, but the damage which Americans

did to your nation during the Philippine-American War of 1899-1902 will never completely go away. Nor should it. Acknowledging our past is but the beginning of ensuring that the present is based on truth – another fundamental tenet of Freemasonry – and that our future is built not only on mutual understanding and lasting friendship but also on a friendship that never forgets the past – never forget the nail holes in the fence, which remind us that we have not always been friends.

Freemasonry creates a bond of brotherhood which goes far beyond that which the outside world is able to create. The Constitutions of 1723, a foundational document in Freemasonry, says that "Masonry becomes the Center of Union, and the means of conciliating true friendship among persons that must else have remained at a perpetual distance."

Freemasonry reaches across the boundaries which divide us and unite us across these boundaries. Those things which can divide us in the world outside of Freemasonry recede into the distance within Freemasonry. We enter the portals of Freemasonry by laying aside all the trappings of worldly wealth and honor, and as poor, blind candidates, freely offer ourselves for the mysteries of Freemasonry. We also lay aside all those accidents of history with which we are clothed. In a Masonic lodge, we are no longer Christians or Jews, Moslems or Hindus, but men seeking spiritual strength from that which we have in common as human beings. In a Masonic lodge, we are no longer divided by language, race or nation, but celebrate that which we share as human beings on "this fragile earth, our island home." In a Masonic lodge, we are neither East nor West, North nor South, but rather "one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide world."

"Masonry becomes the Center of Union, and the means of conciliating true friendship among persons that must else have remained at a perpetual distance."
–THE CONTITUTIONS OF 1723.

We know this – and yet we sometimes fail to understand it and sometimes fail to apply it. Some lodges, and some Masons, still have a long way to go to truly understand the implications of these important principles. If every Mason s divested of all minerals and metals at the beginning of his Masonic journey, then there is no reason for us to esteem one Mason more than another because of his worldly wealth and honors. If we are to sit down in harmony with men of different races, cultures and religions, then it behooves us to keep out of the lodge the animosities which those differing races, cultures and religions perpetuate against one another in the outside world. If there is neither East nor West, North nor South, then it is incumbent upon us to act

as if nationality is unimportant to the greater calling of being a Mason. In some places, Masonic lodges are plagued with the irresponsible casting of black cubes, not to ensure that those seeking admission are "worthy and well-qualified," but simply to exclude a man because of his race or religion. In some places, Masonic lodges are plagued with the irresponsible casting of black cubes, not to ensure the harmony of the lodge, but rather to punish someone already a Mason in the lodge by excluding his friend who would become a brother amongst us. And the result of this egregious conduct is that it brings our beloved Fraternity into disrepute damaging our reputation as Masons and proving the lie to the principles to which we are pledged.

There is a concomitant behavior that some Masons exhibit which is equally offensive to our time-honored institution. Instead of understanding that the degrees of Freemasonry are intended to transform a man by directing him along a spiritual path, the initiatic experience is damaged or destroyed by those who see the degrees as a test of manhood, the ability to endure humiliation and punishment. Some of our lodges in California have been plagued with "hazing" – the intentional infliction of physical and emotional pain on the candidate for a purpose which is alien to the nature of Freemasonry itself.

I am pleased that our two Grand Lodges have each taken a strong stand against any such perversion of Freemasonry, and stand united in stamping out any and all instances of such destructive behavior on the part of the misguided Masons who fail in their primary obligation never to injure a brother "in his person or good name."

"Instead of understanding that the degrees of Freemasonry are intended to transform a man by directing him along a spiritual path, the initiatic experience is damaged or destroyed by those who see the degrees as a test of manhood, the ability to endure humiliation and punishment."

There is a further problem when Masons import into the lodge the pernicious influence of organizations whose rituals mock Freemasonry, and whose principles are at war with the Grand Design for which Freemasonry was created in the first place. A Masonic lodge is supposed to be a "Center of Union," to quote again the Constitutions of 1723. It cannot be that when an outside organization, whether it is a "Masonic" organization or one that is not, intrudes its own agenda into a lodge and tries to set its own agenda in place of those of Freemasonry. We are struggling with this issue in California in the same way that we are struggling with the perversion of our degrees by physical and mental

attacks on candidates. My brethren, this must not be so. We must not tolerate the subversion of Freemasonry by subjecting it to the agenda of any organization other than Freemasonry itself. Practices which are destructive of Freemasonry must not be allowed to destroy what has taken centuries to build.

I am very pleased that our two Grand Lodges are committed to the same principles, and are determined that Freemasonry will not be undermined by the ulterior motives of Masons who are either poorly instructed in the principles of Freemasonry or have forgotten the Obligations which they took . Neither Grand Lodge can tolerate destructive behavior on the part of some Masons who have little regard for the true meaning of the initiatic process or who are so committed to some organization other than Masonry that they would rather see Freemasonry fall than to admit that their allegiance to the other organization is destroying our beloved Fraternity. Our two Grand Lodges stand united in making it clear that we will not tolerate the subversion of Freemasonry in the name of "having fun" at the expense of a candidate, nor the take-over of our lodges by Masons who owe more to some other organization than they d to Freemasonry itself. A house divided against itself cannot stand, and if we do not remain united in this conviction, we will both lose.

I am proud of the Filipino Masons who are active in our lodges in California. They are some of the most dedicated and enthusiastic Masons that we have. Many of them are members of lodges here in the Philippines as well as members of California lodges. They bring to California Freemasonry a rich cultural heritage along with an understanding of Freemasonry which is without parallel. It is clear that they bring to Freemasonry in California a commitment to our beloved Fraternity which cannot be equaled.

It is also evident that we have much to learn from one another. The history of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines and that of the Grand Lodge of California are intertwined more than those of any two other Grand Lodges in the world.

Your Grand Master gave me a copy of your beautiful centennial history published for the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the foundation of your Grand Lodge in 1912. It is a magnificent volume which says more than all the words I could say to you today. The frontispiece contains a picture of a Mason kneeling at the Altar of Freemasonry, his hands resting upon the Holy Bible, Square and Compass. This is the defining moment for every Mason. This is the moment when he takes upon himself all the obligations that will determine the rest of his life. This is the moment when he promises before God and his brethren that he will respect and obey the time-honored principles of Freemasonry. It is the moment when each candidate for the degrees of Freemasonry promises, on his sacred honor, that his life will henceforth be different. It is the moment to which each of us must return again

and again.

I am confident that although we may be separated by language, by homeland, by culture and religion, and even by tradition, we are united in one purpose that transcends all of this. That purpose is all summed up in the frontispiece of your centennial history: "In the presence of God, and this Worshipful Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons . . . ."

After the lunch break, the Committee on Credentials, headed by MW Danilo D. Angeles, PGM, Grand Secretary, declared that there was a quorum to transact the business of the ANCOM. Then he called the roll of Grand Representatives, who designated MW Rudyardo V. Bunda to speak in their behalf.

VW Aurelio M. Umali delivered an eloquent Grand Oration.

Next to address of the assembly were the following Grand Lodge Committees: Finance; Jurisprudence; Revision of the Constitution; Resolutions; Accounts; Foreign Relations and Correspondence; Administration of Lodges, Returns and Charters; Awards; ANCOM Evaluation; Scholarship; Electoral Reforms; Charity; Youth; Information Technology; Cemetery; and Necrology.

The following also presented their reports to the assembly: Temple Builders Club, Grand Historian, and Administrative Assistant to the Grand Master.

Having heard the various reports, the brethren approved the Proceedings of the 97th ANCOM held in Iloilo City in April 2013.

During the Grand Master's Night, which was held at the SMX Seaside, upon recommendation of the Committee on Awards composed of MW Danilo D. Angeles, PGM, GMH, as Chair and VWBs Amante A. Liberato, Roseller M. Malabanan, Raynor L. Taroy, Benjamin M. Lasam, and Alejo C. Antonio as Members, MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr. gave out much-deserved awards, as follows:

- **Most Outstanding Junior Grand Lecturer** -- VW Alejo C. Antonio, JGL-Luzon
- **Outstanding Junior Grand Lecturers** -- VW Martin P. Ciriaco, JGL-Luzon; VW Benjamin M. Lasam, JGL-Luzon; VW Alexander U. Ampatuan, JGL-Mindanao; and VW Efren D. Marquez, JGL-Mindanao.
- **Most Outstanding District Deputy Grand Master** -- VW Edwin P. Costes, MD NCR-D.

Outstanding District Deputy Grand Masters -- VW John Co Tan, MD NCR-A; VW Edwin P. Amene, MD RX-A; VW Francis S. Celis, MD RX-B; and VW Floren V. Lumo, MD RXI-A.

- **Most Outstanding District Grand Lecturer** -- VW Raul E. Canon, jr., MD RIV-A1.
- **Outstanding District Grand Lecturers** -- VW Rhoumel A. Yadao, MD NCR-F; VW Erwin Pio B. Pollozos, MD RX-A; and VW Mark Landseer O. Llado, MD RXII-B.
- **Most Outstanding Worshipful Master** -- WB Tony D. Ong, Norberto S. Amoranto

Mem. Lodge No. 358, F.&A.M.

- **Outstanding Worshipful Masters** -- WB Jonathan R. Amoroso, Silanganan Lodge No. 19, F.&A.M.; WB Guanson T. Lo, Alfonso Lee Sin Mem. Lodge No. 158, F.&A.M.; WB Robert L. Tiu, Macajalar Lodge No. 184, F.&A.M.; and WB Manuelito U. Acabal, Makahambus Lodge No. 315, F.&A.M.
- **Outstanding Grand Lodge Inspectors** -- WI Mckentyre V. Cabrera, Pinaglabanan Lodge No. 374, F.&A.M.; WI Reynaldo A. Garcia, Rafael Palma Lodge No. 147, F.&A.M.; WI Emmanuel J. Diesta, Dalisay Lodge No. 14, F.&A.M.; and WI Nathaniel J. Diesta, Manila Mt. Lebanon Lodge No. 1, F.&A.M.
- **Most Outstanding District Newsletter** -- "The Craft," Masonic District NCR-F.
- **Outstanding District Newsletter** -- "The Cavite Trowel," Masonic District RIV-A1.
- **Most Outstanding Lodge Newsletter** -- "Lee Sin Times," Alfonso Lee Sin Mem. Lodge No. 158, F.&A.M.
- **Outstanding Lodge Newsletter** -- "Tinig Silanganan," Silanganan Lodge No. 19, F.&A.M.

Additionally, MW Jun Espino bestowed plaques of appreciation to the following in recognition of their invaluable contributions to the humanitarian efforts of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines to relieve the distresses, as well as to soothe the afflictions, of the victims of Super typhoon Yolanda:

- VW John T. Teng, Laong Laan Lodge No. 185
- WB Adriatico "Akok" Tee, Biak-na-Bato Lodge No.7
- VW Edwin P. Costes, DDGM, NCR-D
- VW James A. Olayvar, Kagitingan Lodge No. 286
- Labong Lodge No. 59;
- VW Sansaluna A. Pinagayao, DDGM, R II-A
- VW Edward Y, Chua, Makabugwas Lodge No. 47
- VW Benito K. Tan, PJGD, Labong Lodge No. 59
- VW Leoncio De Guia, Mount Huraw Lodge No. 98;
- VW Dante Denate, DDGM, RVI-B
- VW Vic Atilo, DGL, RVI-B
- Bro. Dave Sy
- Bro. Robert James Iringan
- Bro. James Burnos
- Bro. Ebong Chiong
- Bro. Jake Hubert Tan
- VW Leon Tan
- Bro. Jeffrey & Sis. Aileen Mae Taripe
- VW Ramon & Sis. Ana Marie Ledesma
- RW Tomas G. Rentoy, SGW & Ill. Potentate, Mabuhay Shriners;
- Masonic Service Association of North America
- Grand Lodge of Japan
- United Grand Lodge of Queensland
- PhilCan Lodge No. 137; PhilCan Cabletow Masons
- District Grand Lodge of Hong Kong & the Far East, English Constitution
- District Grand Lodge of New Zealand

- District Deputy Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of Hong Kong
- MW Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington
- VW Roberto L. Morales, DDGM of MD RIII-D.

April 25

In the morning of Friday, April 25, upon the resumption of the proceedings of the ANCOM, the Committee on ANCOM Evaluation reported that Baguio City would be the venue of the next ANCOM, with MD NCR-F as host. But a heated discussion ensued. In the end, the brethren decided that the next ANCOM would be held in Legazpi City, Albay.

In the afternoon took place the election of Grand Lodge Officers for M.Y. 2014-2015.

The following brethren were automatically elected as Grand Lodge Officers for 2014-2015: RW Alan LM Purisima, Grand Master; RW Tomas G. Rentoy III, Deputy Grand Master; RW Voltaire T. Gazmin, Senior Grand Warden; MW Rudyardo V. Bunda, PGM, GMH, Grand Treasurer; and MW Danilo D. Angeles, PGM, GMH, Grand Secretary.

In behalf of his fellow Past Grand Masters (PGMs), MW Rudyardo V. Bunda, GMH, announced that the following brethren had been selected as the final contenders for the position of Junior Grand Warden (JGW): VWBs Gualberto F. Agatep, Jr., Evaristo A. Leviste, Van D. Luspo, Abraham N. Tolentino, and Celso S. Viray.

After the first balloting, VWBs Agatep, Luspo, and Tolentino emerged as the top three candidates.

In the second balloting, VW Abraham N. Tolentino was elected by the voting delegates who remained in the hall as the JGW for 2014-2015.

The new Junior Grand Warden's victory party took place at ---, while the Tribute to the Past Grand Masters was held at ---

April 26

In the morning, the Grand Lodge Officers, both elected and appointed, were briefed on the Grand Lodge's administrative program for M.Y. 2014-2015.

Meanwhile, the Installed Past Master's degree was conferred upon qualified brethren who applied for it.

The Grand Installation took place in the afternoon at the Fiesta Pavillon of the Manila Hotel on Roxas Blvd., Manila.

The following Past Grand Masters composed the installing team: MW Hermogenes E. Ebdane, Jr., Installing Officer; MW Santiago T. Gabionza, Jr., Master of Ceremonies; MWBs John L. Choa and Juanito P. Abergas, PGMs, Asst. Masters of Ceremonies.

Having been received into the installation hall, MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr. in turn received the PGMs, other Masonic dignitaries,

and guests.

Then VR Samuel P. Fernandez, Grand Chaplain, led the assembly in the invocation.

After the presentation of the Flag and the singing of the National Anthem and the Grand Lodge March, the installing team installed into their respective offices the elected and appointed Grand Line Officers, the District Deputy Grand Masters, and the District Grand Lecturers.

The ceremony of installation of Grand Lodge Officers over, the newly-installed Grand Master, MW Alan LM Purisima, delivered his inaugural address, the text of which reads as follows:

"Serbisyong Makatotohanan Para sa Kapatiran at Mamamayan"

Serbisyong hindi para sa iilan lamang. Serbisyong hindi tumitingin sa kalagayan nino man. Iyan ang Serbisyong Makatotohanan: tunay, wagas, at higit sa lahat, walang kinikilingan.

Dear Past Grand Masters, Dignitaries in the East and on the floor, Most Worshipful Sirs, Right Worshipful Sirs, Very Worshipful and Worshipful Sirs, Brethren, mga Kapatid ko sa Masonerya, isang mapagpala at makabuluhang gabi! Pagbati ng kapayapaan sa inyong lahat!

We are gathered here tonight not only for the purpose of these Installation Ceremonies and the celebration that comes hereafter, but rather to consecrate ourselves to the Divine Providence as we, in unison, sacredly vow to serve our benevolent Fraternity and our beloved country. Similarly, in our rituals, before a candidate takes his solemn obligation, he is asked to answer a definite and direct question: Are you willing to proceed? This is the same question which we, the newly-installed Grand Lodge Officers, wish to ask each one of you on this auspicious occasion. If your answer is "No," we will not coerce you to embrace the path of genuine service. This must be of your own free will and accord. However, it is but proper that you give way to those who are willing to sacrifice for the greater good of Freemasonry and that of the country.

Those who did not answer the question clearly belong to somewhere else. We certainly have no place for the confused and fickle-minded. Hindi ako naniniwala sa awitin ng APO Hiking Society na ang "ewan ay katulad na rin ng oo na inaasam."

I commend all of you who said "Yes" because you have the zeal and enthusiasm for service. Thank you for saying "Yes" to *Serbisyong Makatotohanan*. I assure you that though this journey is a travel over a "rough and rugged road," it is still a rewarding and meaningful experience. As an old Latin adage aptly puts it, "*Amat victoria curam*" (Victory favors those who take pains).

Our theme "*Serbisyong Makatotohanan para sa Kapatiran at Mamamayan*" (Genuine Service to the Fraternity and the Community) speaks well of the important

and guests.

Then VR Samuel P. Fernandez, Grand Chaplain, led the assembly in the invocation.

After the presentation of the Flag and the singing of the National Anthem and the Grand Lodge March, the installing team installed into their respective offices the elected and appointed Grand Line Officers, the District Deputy Grand Masters, and the District Grand Lecturers.

The ceremony of installation of Grand Lodge Officers over, the newly-installed Grand Master, MW Alan LM Purisima, delivered his inaugural address, the text of which reads as follows:

"Serbisyong Makatotohanan Para sa Kapatiran at Mamamayan"

Serbisyong hindi para sa iilan lamang. Serbisyong hindi tumitingin sa kalagayan nino man. Iyan ang Serbisyong Makatotohanan: tunay, wagas, at higit sa lahat, walang kinikilingan.

Dear Past Grand Masters, Dignitaries in the East and on the floor, Most Worshipful Sirs, Right Worshipful Sirs, Very Worshipful and Worshipful Sirs, Brethren, mga Kapatid ko sa Masonerya, isang mapagpala at makabuluhang gabi! Pagbati ng kapayapaan sa inyong lahat!

We are gathered here tonight not only for the purpose of these Installation Ceremonies and the celebration that comes hereafter, but rather to consecrate ourselves to the Divine Providence as we, in unison, sacredly vow to serve our benevolent Fraternity and our beloved country. Similarly, in our rituals, before a candidate takes his solemn obligation, he is asked to answer a definite and direct question: Are you willing to proceed? This is the same question which we, the newly-installed Grand Lodge Officers, wish to ask each one of you on this auspicious occasion. If your answer is "No," we will not coerce you to embrace the path of genuine service. This must be of your own free will and accord. However, it is but proper that you give way to those who are willing to sacrifice for the greater good of Freemasonry and that of the country.

Those who did not answer the question clearly belong to somewhere else. We certainly have no place for the confused and fickle-minded. Hindi ako naniniwala sa awitin ng APO Hiking Society na ang "ewan ay katulad na rin ng oo na inaasam."

I commend all of you who said "Yes" because you have the zeal and enthusiasm for service. Thank you for saying "Yes" to *Serbisyong Makatotohanan*. I assure you that though this journey is a travel over a "rough and rugged road," it is still a rewarding and meaningful experience. As an old Latin adage aptly puts it, "*Amat victoria curam*" (Victory favors those who take pains).

Our theme "*Serbisyong Makatotohanan para sa Kapatiran at Mamamayan*" (Genuine Service to the Fraternity and the Community) speaks well of the important

role of Freemasonry in the different chapters of our nation's history. Since time immemorial, the contributions of the Craft to the society are exemplified by brethren who have taken the path of genuine service to humanity and the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. Our forefathers fought the "darkness of tyranny" with the "light of patriotism". They were the heroes and martyrs of the past who offered their lives for freedom. This time, let us honor them by fighting a totally different battle, a war against apathy. Our weapons are not anymore the "bolo" and the "pistola" but the teachings of our Fraternity. Our defense against evil intentions is our strict adherence to the Fraternity's time-honored principal tenets, Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, and the four cardinal virtues, Temperance, Prudence, Fortitude, and Justice. We are resolved to live by the morals we are taught in each of the degrees of Symbolic or Ancient Craft Masonry. *Isabuhay natin ang mga aral ng ating Kapatiran sa bawat kilos at hakbang na ating gagampanan. Makibahagi tayo sa pagpapaunlad ng ating pagkatao at ng lipunang kinabibilangan. Ang pakikitungo natin sa komunidad ay sumasalamin kung ano ang Masonerya at mga pagpapahalaga natin sa buhay.*

In consultation with my predecessor, MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr., and those who will succeed me, we have conceptualized the Grand Lodge Roadmap that envisions Philippine Freemasonry to be a highly credible, most relevant, and well-respected fraternal organization in the community. To attain our goals, we have formulated the Strategic Perspectives which shall be focused on four important points, namely: (1) Grand Lodge Administration and Resource Management; (2) Masonic Education and Growth; (3) Fraternal Service; and (4) Fraternity and Community.

Under Grand Lodge Administration and Resource Management, we shall undertake organizational review, evaluation, and assessment of the Grand Lodge, its recognized bodies, committees, and corporations, with the end in view to initiating constructive reforms to keep us attuned with the changing needs of time. On the other hand, we shall continue the programs which remain effective and productive, such as improving the "customer relations" skills of all the employees of the Grand Lodge. Dear brethren, you should treat the employees of the Grand Lodge as family, and you may be sure that they will do the same to you. All your transactions with the Grand Lodge staff must be the most pleasant experience you should ever encounter.

We are also bent on continuing the systematic procedures. The perennial dilemma of our Grand Jurisdiction has been that the records of the subordinate lodges have not been consistent with those of the Grand Lodge, and vice versa. We must put an end to this dilemma to avoid future disputes and to preserve the rich history of our Fraternity. We are, therefore, strongly appealing to the subordinate lodges to reconcile their records with those

of the Grand Lodge. On our end, we shall continue to commission Information Technology experts to help us improve our technical capabilities in this era of the World Wide Web.

Under Masonic Education and Growth, we have tapped VW Juanito "Boy" Vaño, Jr. as the Senior Grand Lecturer and his Team to formulate a comprehensive Masonic Education that will create an impact in the lives of individual Masons by strengthening their morals, knowledge, and competence. Masonry should be an endless quest for higher learning and a constant seeking for the path towards illumination. In this regard, Masonic lectures must not be dull and uninteresting. They should be relevant, awe-inspiring, and life-changing.

We will also bring the Institute for Masonic Education and Studies (IMES) to the regional level to reach more brethren in the far-flung areas of the archipelago. IMES shall also be directed to come up with leadership modules that will prepare future leaders of the Craft. Simultaneously, we shall develop and implement an E-Learning Program to increase knowledge and awareness of the brethren. Furthermore, all Grand Line and District Officers are called upon to always carry with them the Masonic Law Book in all their official duties. This will assure that all future decisions and actions shall be in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Fraternity.

Equally important under this perspective is that we shall design and implement a stringent screening process to investigate the character and background of petitioners. It is the quality and not the quantity of our petitioners that we should be concerned with. Huwag nating hayaang makapasok sa ating Kapatiran ang may mga masamang balakin at may maitim na budhi. We are not a factory that fabricates spare parts. We are an ancient Society that makes good men better. We must ever remember, dear brethren, that each of us has been charged thus: ". . . Be faithful and true, and manifest your fidelity to your principles by strictly adhering to the Constitutions of the Fraternity, by adhering to the Ancient Landmarks thereof, and by refusing to recommend anyone to a participation in our privileges unless you have strong reasons to believe that, by a similar fidelity, he will ultimately reflect honor upon our Ancient Institution."

Under Fraternal Service, it is our directive to the subordinate lodges to extend utmost fraternal service to our living brethren in distress, as well as to the widows and orphans of our deceased brethren. Let us never lose sight of this important obligation, which is the ultimate reason of our existence as a Brotherhood. It is a sad reality that sometimes we can give thousands of cash for fellowship and refreshment, but could give only twenty pesos for the almoner's collection. We do not infrequently conduct medical and dental missions for the benefit of non-Masons in the community, yet we tend to forget that

we have a member in our lodge who is aging and sick and cannot afford to buy his own medicines. We often give scholarships to students who are not of the Masonic Fraternity or Family, but we fail to consider the children of distressed worthy brother Masons and the orphans of our own departed brethren. In connection with this, we shall enhance the GLP Scholarship Program that shall prioritize as beneficiaries the orphans of our departed brethren and the children of distressed worthy brother Masons.

We shall likewise initiate family fellowship activities and involvement on other masonic-related occasions. *Ating tinatagubilinan ang mga loya na bumuo rin ng mga ganitong programa. Ito ang tunay na Serbisyong Makatotohanan.* I expect that every lodge shall have its own program in helping the brethren and their families in times of need. We shall request VW Fernando "Ding" Sevilla to monitor the minutes of meetings of the lodges to find out if we are indeed complying in this regard. Also under this agendum, we shall establish close cooperation with the Shriners, the Appendant Bodies (Scottish Rite and York Rite), and the Allied Orders like the Orders of DeMolay, Eastern Star, Amaranth, Job's Daughter, and Rainbow for Girls, as well as our side organizations, toward the accomplishment of our mission and the attainment of our goals.

"No man is an island," as they say. We shall, therefore, be working closely with our brethren belonging to other Masonic organizations to bring about better service to the Fraternity and Community.

Furthermore, on a personal note, it is my intention to institute Electoral Reforms to ensure fair and honest elections. I wish that those who will be candidates for the position of Junior Grand Warden be allowed to join the travel of the Grand Master for the purpose of introducing themselves to the brethren. Perhaps the candidates may shoulder their own travel expenses and the rest shall be subsidized by the Grand Lodge. This scheme will give a fair and equal chance to all who desire to serve our Fraternity. *Minsan, lamang na agad ang isang "national figure" na kandidato, dahil kilala na sila. Pero, hindi naman sa pagiging sikat lamang nasususkat ang husay ng isang tao. Ang basehan pa rin natin ay galing at damdamin.* Let us give the voting brethren the right to know all the candidates and what they can offer for the benefit of Freemasonry.

Under Fraternity and Community, we shall empower the Harmony Officers and the Worshipful Masters of the Subordinate Lodges to ensure that the desired harmonious relationship and camaraderie among the Brethren is preserved. There is no sense in becoming members of the Craft if we cannot love and care for our own brethren. How can we expect to forge partnerships with other sectors of the community if we cannot even reconcile with our own brothers in the Fraternity? We should take heed of the prayer that clearly spells out our commitment as Masons for peace and harmony,

and I quote:

"Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is error, truth;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy."
Unquote.

As Masons, we should be channels of peace and harmony. Let us start spreading love in our own turf, in our own lodges, with our own brethren. Hindi bukas, mga Kuyang, hindi sa susunod pang araw. Ngayon na!

Also part of the service to the community, we shall formulate a Communication Plan (COMPLAN) for GLP Roadmap that will propagate awareness among the Brethren and the community. We shall develop and implement a GLP-wide Public Affairs Program and maximize use of Quad-Media (TV, Radio, Print and Social Media). We have requested VW Bobby Sarte and his Team to strengthen The Cabletow to keep the brethren informed and updated. We will also conduct inter-faith dialogues/services in coordination with the different religious sectors. We want to gain more grounds by making people realize that we are their allies in nation-building and in the pursuit of moral and spiritual development.

In closing, all this, my dear brethren, is a daunting and challenging task. I am not afraid for I am not alone. *Nariyan kayo mga kapatid ko. Kayo ang magiging katuwang ko sa pangangalaga ng ating Kapatiran. Hindi tayo palulupig.* We are determined to accomplish all that we have pledged to do. With your sincere cooperation, and above all, with the blessings of the Great Architect of the Universe, the most beneficent and most merciful, we shall prevail. *Sa KANYA, ating itinataaas ang lahat ng ating mga kahilingan at pagpupunyagi.*

Allow me to express my deepest gratitude to all who have been instrumental in my journey to the Grand Oriental Chair. I will not enumerate them all for I may omit a name. They are the faceless but hard-working men and women and brethren who provided the resources and talents that sustain me through the years as I assumed the positions of Chief of the Philippine National Police, the Illustrious Potentate of Mabuhay Shriners Philippines, and now as your Grand Master.

I wish to extend my profound appreciation to you, the Past Grand Masters who believe in my capacity to lead this great Fraternity. My grand salute to you, Most Worshipful Sirs!

To you, the members of my family, who are the source of my strength and inspiration, thank you for your unending understanding and support.

Continued on page 71

Ancom 2014 Guest of Honor and Speaker

Getting to know MW John Cooper

By MW Juanito P. Abergas, PGM

The Most Worshipful Grand Master of California can be aptly described as a Brother who has given not only unparalleled dedication to the Craft, but also relentlessly spent almost two fruitful decades in the service of the M. W. Grand Lodge of California.

He obtained his bachelor's and master's degrees in political science from the University of California in Los Angeles, and his doctor's degree in Education from Claremont Graduate School.

He, moreover, devoted approximately 25 years as a high school teacher and administrator, and five years as Superintendent of the Escondido Union High Schools District in San Diego County.

John Cooper began his association with Freemasonry in 1958 when he was initiated into the Order of DeMolay in Fullerton, California. He later served as Master Councilor of his chapter, and was honored with the Degree of Chevalier and the DeMolay Legion of Honor. He is now an Honorary Member of the International Supreme Council of the Order of DeMolay.

He was raised a Master Mason in Azure Lodge No. 533 at Fullerton, and later served as Master of James A. Foshay Lodge No. 641 in Los Angeles. That lodge is now a part of Culver City – Foshay Lodge No. 467 in Culver City. In addition, he is a member of Eureka Lodge No. 16 at Auburn, Consuelo Lodge No. 325 at Escondido and Burlingame Lodge No. 400. He is a past master of both Northern California and Southern California research lodges, and over the years has served on many Grand Lodge committees and boards.

MW John is a Thirty-Third Degree Scottsh Rite Mason and a Knight of the York Cross of Honor in the York Rite. He is a member of the Shrine, and also many other Masonic organizations. His interest in the history and philosophy of Freemasonry led him to membership in many Masonic research bodies, he is First Vice President of the Philalethes Society – America's oldest and largest Masonic research organization.

In 1991 he was elected as Grand Secretary of the Masonic Grand Lodge of California, and held that position under eighteen Grand Masters until his retirement in 2008.

John and Heather, his wife of thirty-one years, have five children, three daughters-in-law, one son-in-law and seven grandchildren. They make their home in Lincoln, California, where both are active members of the Episcopal Church.

MW Alan M. Purisima

PNP chief brings professional excellence to the Craft

Excellence in police service marks the professional life of the 107th Grand Master of Philippine Freemasonry, Alan Purisima y La Madrid.

With 35 years of devoted public service as a well-rounded police commander and executive, he now brings this same excellence to the Craft under the administrative banner theme of "Serbisyong Makatotohanan para sa Kapatiran at Mamamayan."

Introducing reform measures while motivating the best out of his men are the trademarks of this current Philippine National Police (PNP) Police Director-General Alan La Madrid Purisima.

MW Purisima traces his humble roots to the town of San Ildefonso, Ilocos Sur.

He was born on November 21, 1959 from parents, Technical Sergeant Rodolfo R. Purisima formerly of the Philippine Constabulary, and Mrs. Josefina La Madrid Purisima, a public school teacher.

The frugal ways of rural Ilocano life had instilled early in him the values of perseverance, industry, dedication and love for simple but straight living. At home, he helped his parents in the backyard poultry and hog-raising businesses. In the morning, he saw to it that all household chores were done before leaving for school. When poultry harvest came, he dressed the chicken, helped by his other siblings, and delivered the products to the Vigan public market for consignment.

Education

MW Purisima finished his elementary education in San Ildefonso Central School in his hometown; his secondary education, in Ilocos Sur National High School in Vigan. Initially set for an engineering career, he enrolled in the Mapua Institute of Technology in Manila.

In 1976, he took the entrance examination for the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) and passed. He switched to military studies to fulfill his dream of becoming a soldier after his father.

He was formally appointed cadet of the Cadet Corps, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine

Military Academy, Fort Gregorio del Pilar in Baguio City on April 1, 1977. Hardships and challenges marked his cadet life, even exposing him to serious injuries which had nearly cost him his life. But this did not deter the young and determined Cadet Purisima. On the contrary, it made him stronger and decisive. Thus, he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree on March 15, 1981 and joined the former Philippine Constabulary (PC).

MW Purisima belonged to the PMA "Dimalupig" Class of 1981—distinguished for not accepting honorary members except PMA alumni who have passed through the portals of the academy.

Early police service

Truly a "soldier's son," he vowed to himself to make his father proud as he set on a sterling police career. Similarly, he joined the PC as a 2nd Lieutenant.

Freshly out of the academy, he was quickly sent to the field to fight the communist insurgents. Then 2Lt Purisima was assigned to the 58th PC Battalion based at Sto, Domingo, Mexico in Pampanga. Next, he was dispatched to the 583rd PC Company in Tabon, Mabalacat again in Pampanga, then ordered to supervise the Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDF) in Porac in same province. Here, the young 2Lt Purisima honed his basic skills in small unit leadership.

He cut his teeth into crime fighting when he was appointed Intelligence Officer of the Nueva Ecija Constabulary Command. As a young operative, he figured well in neutralizing and arresting holduppers, carnappers and gun-for-hire personalities. He led his men in destroying vast marijuana plantations in the province of Nueva Ecija particularly, in the mountain boundaries with adjacent provinces.

"Truly a "soldier's son," he vowed to himself to make his father proud as he set on a sterling police career. Similarly, he joined the PC as a 2nd Lieutenant."

While in Nueva Ecija, he stood out in the rescue of the 6-year-old kidnap victim Ivan Lloyd Ty in San Antonio town. The boy was snatched in Sta Mesa, Manila, grabbing along the family-owned Mitsubishi Lancer sedan.

The rescue led to the arrest of kidnap-carnap leader Armando Yumang and his 11 cohorts. The ringleader and his gang were turned over to Manila Police Operatives and MISG.

When the EDSA revolt broke out in 1986, the Nueva Ecija PC Command was one of the first provinces to support the breakaway of then PC Chief Gen. Fidel V. Ramos. Then 1Lt Purisima was assigned as Team Leader of a specially-trained reaction force on standby should the Camp Crame holdout come un-

der siege.

Similarly, he and his team made up a blocking force to keep loyalist troops up in the North from reinforcing the tottering Marcos government.

Right after EDSA, then 1Lt. Purisima was picked for assignment to the Presidential Security Group (PSG). Looking after the safety of the country's Chief Executive, then Pres. Corazon C. Aquino and the rest of the First Family, was no easy job. For this, he and his unit were trained with highly specialized skills, like the Protective Operations Course by the U.S. Secret Service, and Hostage Rescue Team Training conducted by the British Army.

While in the PSG, then 1Lt. Purisima served as close-in security for Pres. Aquino and her family here and abroad. Amid coup and other security threats, he switched to special ops readiness to crush the dangers aimed at the newly-established government. When coups were in progress, he was in combat mode as he comprised the palace defense forces against ambitious power grabbers.

Certainly, then 1Lt. Purisima had held various capacities in the PSG until 1989.

After the PSG, a well-trained 1Lt. Purisima saw assignment next in the Special Action Force (SAF) as an Operations Officer. He battled communist insurgents as much as criminal elements. The political instability which had rocked the year 1989 also saw him fighting military mutineers.

During the bloody December 1989 coup, he was primarily deploying troops. But systematically fanning out units of the elite SAF to trouble spots saved the day for his former boss, Pres. Aquino.

It was the SAF that neutralized the rebel soldiers who had seized the Greenhills Shopping Center. Later, they engaged the mutineers' hard core remnants who had refused to return to the barracks.

It was also the SAF who, by smart maneuvers, had stolen the morale of the rebel soldiers that took over the Makati commercial district.

Hence, the bloodiest and most serious threat to the embattled Aquino presidency was crushed.

After SAF, the young officer Purisima returned to provincial assignments as Intelligence Officer of the Pangasinan PNP Command in 1991. Later, he was the Commanding Officer of the 151st PNP Mobile Force Company in Tayug of same province.

He was back fighting crime.

Command positions

MW Purisima finally saw his first command position in urban Metro Manila.

Landing next at the Western Police District, he ran the District Police Intelligence Unit (DPIU) of "Manila's Finest." Battling the criminal gangs and syndicates of the nation's capital city was tough. But the PNP command saw into Bro. Purisima's effort so that it put him next as chief of Task Force Gagamba (Spider), the metro-wide police an-

ti-crime intelligence unit.

With more men and resources at hand, MW Purisisma finally scored big against criminals. He checked on and busted, among others, the Joel Arnan Group—a wing of the dreaded Kuratong Baleleng Gang—which had figured in high-profile bank robberies, money-changing robbery-hold-ups, and armored car robberies.

"Already deep into big, sensitive and deadly cases, yet MW Purisima was not choosy in community police assignments."

Making his name in intelligence works, he was designated Chief of the Regional Intelligence and Investigation Division (RIID), NCRPO (National Capital Region Police Office). He introduced a number of administrative reforms that kept him as the "Highest Rating Regional Intelligence Division Chief" nationwide for 18 consecutive months.

Already deep into big, sensitive and deadly cases, yet MW Purisima was not choosy in community police assignments. He served as Station Commander of Police Station 3 (Talipapa) and particularly Police Station 7 (Cubao) in the Quezon City Police District (QCPD). Here, he further honed his investigation and detection skills, beat patrols, civil disturbance and other police functions.

The rash of kidnappings nationwide saw MW Purisima deep into anti kidnapping operations from 2001 to 2004. He was assigned to the Presidential Anti Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) which was renamed later to Special Task Group (STAG), then to the National Anti Kidnapping Task Force (NAKTAF) and finally, the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response (PACER).

Former PAOCTF personnel were replaced. Police with anti-kidnapping skills or experience were recruited and trained. A standard operating procedure was established for all PACER operatives to follow.

Under MW Purisima's watch, PACER busted 173 hardened criminals involved in kidnapping, solved 117 out of 145 KFR (kidnap-for-ransom) cases and effected the rescue and safe release of 141 out of 201 KFR victims.

MW Purisima was pulled out of PACER when he was designated Provincial Director (PD) of Pangasinan Provincial Police Office (PPO) in July 2005. As a mid-level manager, he introduced a number of management reform programs and "Best Practices."

He was the first PD to institutionalize "e-communication" via the internet, affording police stations to report faster and efficiently. He also conducted "Rotating Venue for Command Conferences" to unburden the Chiefs of Police in remote locations of long travels.

Assigned next to the Civil

Security Group (CSG) as Chief of Staff, he led the writing of the Canine Manual. It currently serves as the guiding doctrine for security operations employing canines (K-9s).

He was into the review and study on CSG systems and processes when he was called to handle the Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management (DIDM) as its Executive Officer in 2008.

MW Purisima was well on his way to the top.

Earning Stars

MW Alan L Purisima finally earned his first star when he became DIDM Executive Officer.

A highly motivated General Purisima made a very productive stint at DIDM. He revised the PNP Criminal Investigation Manual. He improved on the police investigation and detection methods, crime reporting, investigators' training and scene of the crime operation. He also instituted a Unit Crime Periodic Report (UCPER).

On July 30, 2010, he was appointed Regional Director of Police Regional Office 3 (Central Luzon). Reform-minded, the new Chief Superintendent (PCSUPT) jumped the management programs to improve unit and personnel competencies. Criminal Investigation and Detection and SCOUT trainings gained importance.

Not for nothing why Central Luzon police investigators were all, and most trained, among the regions during his term.

At the heart of the program was the simplification of a policeman's job. Doing away with irrelevant practices keeps cops operationally-focused and morally-straight.

"He was the first PD to institutionalize "e-communication" via the internet"

On May 2, 2011, he was appointed Regional Director of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) that earned for him his second star as Police Director (PDIR).

While NCRPO chief, he advanced his PNP reforms by instituting a "3-Pronged Approach"—that is, service to the people, the community, and fellow police officers. Matched with "Subukan N'yo Po Kami" SMS platform, he encouraged communities to actively participate in crime prevention.

As a result, police response turned out faster. More criminals were nabbed.

On September 6, 2012, MW Alan Purisima earned his third star as Chief Directorial Staff with the rank of Police Deputy Director General.

Finally, on December 18, 2012, he was appointed Chief of the 150,000-men Philippine National Police (CPNP) by President Benigno C. Aquino III.

Later, he was promoted to a 4-star rank Police Director General.

As PNP chief, MW Purisima introduced the "CODE-P: 2013 and Beyond" program to achieve its logo "Serbisyong Makatotohanan" (Truthful Service).

The program's initials stand for the "competence" of police officers by undertaking "organizational development" and reforms, embracing "discipline" within the ranks, promoting "excellence" in the performance of duties; and instituting "professionalism" at all levels of the organization. (CODE-P)

Postgraduate & Specialization Studies

Over the years, MW Alan Purisima had taken various local and international studies, such as: Senior Crisis Management Seminar (USA); FBI Critical Incident Management Course (USA); Arson and Post Blast Investigation Courses (USA); Protective Operations Course and Defensive Marksmanship Course conducted (USA); and, Police Administration and Crime Investigation (Japan).

He now holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the Manuel L. Quezon University.

He also successfully passed his Ph.D. Program in Peace and Security Administration in Bicol University, Legaspi City in Albay.

Service awards

For his selfless service and work efficiency, he was accorded with various awards and commendations.

Most notable is the Distinguished Conduct Star, the second highest military award in the Philippines.

He is twice recipient of the PMA Alumni Association Inc. Cavalier Award for Police Operations in 2005, and Cavalier Award for Command and Administration in 2012.

His awards and medals included the following: Medalya ng Katangi-tanging Gawa, Medalya ng Kabayanihan, Medalya Ng Kadakilaan, Medalya ng Kagalingan, Medalya Ng Kasanayan, Military Merit Medal, Bronze Spearhead Device, Medalya ng Papuri, Medalya Ng Mabuting Asal and others.

For his appointment as PNP chief, he was cited with the Command Achievement Award by the PMAAAI. Also, he was conferred with the "Bayaning Likas Parangal Award" given by President Benigno S. Aquino III.

Outstanding Mason

Aside from being a consummate police officer, he is also a true-blooded brother Mason.

He is a member of Gen. Mariano Llanera Memorial Lodge Nr. 168 (Gapan, Nueva Ecija). He was initiated on June 25, 1983, passed on September 3, 1983, and raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on September 22, 1983.

He is a Charter and Dual Member of San Leonardo Lodge

No. 386 in San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija; Charter Member of Isaac Puno, Sr Memorial Lodge No. 401, as well as Honorary Member of Zaragosa Lodge No. 263, Palayan City Lodge 331; AR Lamson Lodge No. 290; MS Garcia Memorial Lodge No. 306 and Kagitingan Lodge No. 286 in Makati City.

"Aside from being a consummate police officer, he is also a true-blooded brother Mason."

He served as the Worshipful Master of Gen. Mariano Llanera Memorial Lodge No. 168 in 2005.

He also served as Grand Lodge Inspector of Zaragosa Lodge No. 263 in 2006; District Grand Lecturer of Masonic District RIII-D in 2007; and District Deputy Grand Master of the same District in 2010 when he was nominated to the position of Junior Grand Warden. He overwhelmingly won the election at the Annual Communication 2011 held in Davao City.

His labors are not only evident in the confines of the Blue Lodge but also in Shrinedom and various Appendant Bodies of Freemasonry. He is a 32nd Degree of the Ancient Scottish Rite Freemasonry (Cabanatuan Bodies). He is also a York Rite Mason being a member of Manila York Rite Bodies. He served as the President of Saigon Shrine Club in 2012 and the incumbent Illustrious Potentate of the Mabuhay Shriners Philippines.

He was awarded as the Most Outstanding Worshipful Master, GLP jurisdiction M.Y. 2005 and Outstanding District Grand Lecturer, GLP Jurisdiction MY 2007.

Also, Masonic District RI-II-D (Nueva Ecija) was adjudged as the "Most Outstanding Masonic District" in the whole jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines during his incumbency as DDGM, MY 2010-2011.

Family man

Born of parents both in public service, MW Purisima brought to the police service the home-grown values of honesty, perseverance and integrity, allowing him to attain excellence in his career. But these values also constituted the core of his person by which he conducted his Masonic and family life.

He is married to the former Maria Ramona Lydia Isidoro and blessed with four loving sons namely Eumer Von Andrei, Rainier Van Albert, Alan, Jr. and Jason Arvi. He is also a grandfather to Raylan D. Purisima.

Truly, an officer and a gentleman, the 107th Grand Master is an outstanding brother mason, a high-flying career officer, and a devoted family man who is set to take the Craft to brighter future.

PGM Jewel Speech

The promise that came with my second chance of life

By MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr., IPGM

Delivered at the conferment of the Past Master's jewel and ring at the Manila Hotel, Manila.

A few years back, this humble servant went through a crucial surgery for the severance of a cancer cyst about the intestinal region. At that time, thinking that I was already a goner, I had prepared my final will and set my businesses in order. Staring at the ceiling while lying at the hospital bed, I already made my peace with the Lord should my condition not exhibit any bright improvement.

Then, the doctor came and broke out the news. The cyst was gone and was not recurring anymore. I felt a so profound joy that I had never felt in all my life. I shed a tear or two, very grateful to the Lord for granting me a second chance of life. But that joy did not go empty; for it came with a promise—a promise to make the best and the most out of every situation where I could be of service to my fellowman.

I brought that promise to the Grand East in 2013. My vow to give second chance to people extended to the entire Craft that we all love and highly esteem. Not for nothing why my administration's theme aspired for the reinforcement of our timeless tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth if the Craft were to remain firm and survive the test of time.

My gratitude to God for granting me a second chance of life went first to the healthy improvement of our fraternal linkage with our Mother Grand Lodge, the Grand Lodge of California—and mostly, through the invaluable help of our ever reliable and erudite Grand Secretary, MW Danilo Angeles.

Hardly had I reached the midterm of my administration when crisis and calamities struck left and right—the Zamboanga Siege on September 9, the Bohol Earthquake on October 15, and

the Super Typhoon Yolanda and Storm Surge on November 8, all in 2013.

Truly, the year 2013 was a year of disasters. But it was also a year of heroes. Of Masonic heroes.

Certainly, it is incumbent upon Grand Masters to look after his members—as it is also incumbent upon Masons to help distressed Brother Masons. But nothing had warmed the heart of this Past Grand Master so much than to see Masons—ordinary Masons—rising up to the adversities, exhibiting deeds that are far brighter and heavier than any high-sounding jewel that the GLP can confer; actions more noble than the jewel I now wear.

It was a revelation to me—a revelation that had driven me to go on for a so deserving and worthy cause. For our effort to strengthen the Craft onto the next centuries showed its bright promises among these Masons of tough mettle and lofty spirits.

With this kind of Masons among us, I now feel confident that the Craft will endure.

And so will Masonry endure as I also gave GLP-subsidized education to Masons—about 70 of them from various districts—who hold fidelity and affection for the Craft, through the Lodge Mentor Classes.

I thank my successor, MW Alan Purisima, for the assurance of continuing the Lodge Mentor Class in his term. It is a wise and forward-looking decision.

Most Worshipful Purisima, you will never go wrong with your decision. The future of Philippine Masonry depends on the Blue Lodges. The program not only identifies and gathers the studious and the scholar Masons we have ignored for so long. It also patiently works in the quality upgrade in our lodges.

With all my labors in the Grand East now over, I profusely thank the Past Grand Masters Council for the conferment of this Past Master's Jewel on this humble brother. And as I will soon join this highly respectable assembly, my conviction for life's second chances will come with me.

I dedicate this Jewel to my wife, Susan, who threw all her unconditional support behind me during my term, taking care of home and business in this one whole year.

Also, I dedicate this Jewel to my children, Maria Paula and Monique, who never ceased caring for their father while performing his Masonic duties.

I thank all the Grand Lodge Officers of 2013 who generously shared their time and effort in carrying out the labors for a firmer and brighter Masonry.

I thank all the Brethren who gave their indispensable cooperation and hard work, making the success of my administration possible.

Again, thank you and good evening to you all.

Circular No. 1

List of GLP elected & appointed officers out

Newly-installed Grand Master MW Alan Purisima issued Circular No. 1, dated May 2, 2014, announcing the elected and appointed officers of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the Philippines (or GLP).

Bros comprising the grand line, district officers and other GLP officers for this year are printed below.

Grand Master	MW ALAN LA MADRID PURISIMA
Deputy Grand Master	RW TOMAS G. RENTOY, III
Senior Grand Warden	RW VOLTAIRE T. GAZMIN
Grand Junior Warden	RW ABRAHAM NG TOLENTINO
Grand Treasurer	MW RUDYARDO V. BUNDA, PGM, GMH
Grand Secretary	MW DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM, GMH
Asst. Grand Treasurer	VW GAMALIEL E. SARTE
Asst. Grand Secretary	VW FERDINANDO G. SEVILLA
Grand Auditor	VW RICO E. PUNO
Grand Chaplain	VW SAMUEL P. FERNANDEZ
Grand Orator	VW INOCENCIO B. SAGUN, JR.
Grand Marshall	VW MANOLO M. MERCADO
Grand Historian	VW HERNANI T. BARRIOS
Grand Senior Deacon	VW ANDRES MERLIN N. BERNARDO
Grand Junior Deacon	VW REYNALDO J. PINE
Grand Standard Bearer	VW VIRGILIO O. DOMINGO
Grand Sword Bearer	VW ROBERTO B. FAJARDO
Grand Bible Bearer	VW ALFREDO C. SORIANO
Senior Grand Lecturer	VW JUANITO B. VAÑO, JR.

JUNIOR GRAND LECTURERS

National Capital Region	VW EDWIN P. COSTES VW OLIVER V. YABUT

National Capital Region	VW ROSELLER M. MALABANAN
Luzon	VW BEDA R. QUIAMBAO, JR. VW RODEL T. MATIAS VW ULLYSSES C. LLADO VW ROYV. SERRANO VW REYNERIO V. PINE, JR.
Luzon South	VW DENNIS J. PENIA VW EDWIN I. CORVERA VW RAUL E. CANON, JR. VW RONALDO GENARO E. YLAGAN
Visayas	VW ELIAS A. CONLU VW JOSELITO R. YULO
Mindanao	VW NIXON T. GO VW HENRY S. OAMINAL VW MICHAEL ARCHANGEL B. BRON VW AGUSTIN D. DEMA-ALA VW CONRAD P. LIM
Overseas	VW ROGER R. REBANAL
Grand Senior Steward	VW MARIONITO DC. PACHECO
Grand Junior Steward	VW PABLO S. CHU
Grand Pursuivant	VW NAPOLEON R. ESTILLES
Grand Organist	VW ROLEN C. PAULINO
Grand Tyler	VW ROBERTO L. MORALES

BOARD FOR GENERAL PURPOSES

Chairman	MW REYNATO S. PUNO SR., PGM, GMH
Vice-Chairman	MW DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM
Members	MW JOHN L. CHOA, PGM
	MW HERMOGENES E. EBDANE, JR., PGM
	MW JUANITO P. ABERGAS, PGM
	MW SANTIAGO T. GABIONZA, JR., PGM
	MW JUANITO G. ESPINO, JR., PGM
Secretary	RW VOLTAIRE T. GAZMIN, SGW

DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND MASTERS

District	Location	Name
NCR-A NCR-B NCR-C NCR-D NCR-E NCR-F NCR-G	Metro Manila	VW MACARIO E. DELA PENA VW OSCAR T. GARCIA VW J. ERMIN ERNEST L.R. MIGUEL VW REYNATO D. PUNO, JR. VW LUTMYR P. TEOXON VW WILFREDO DS. REYES VW MANUEL LUIS P. IDQUIVAL
CAR-A	Bontoc, Kalinga, Mountain Province	VW LUKE WARREN A. CHALLONGEN
RI-A	Pangasinan	VW MICHAEL CAMILO P. DATARIO
RI & CAR-B	Baguio & La Union	VW RAMON F. LAUDENCIA
RI & CAR-C	llocos Sur, llocos Norte Abra	VW BON HOEFER V. BERNARDEZ
R ll-A	Nueva Vizcaya (South)	VW NATHANIEL B. VIDAD
R ll-B	lsabela (North)	VW BENITO T. RAMOS
R ll-C	Cagayan	VW RENE S. GONGORA
R ll-D	lsabela (South) Quirino	VW MARIO A. ANCHETA
R II-E	Nueva Vizcaya (North) lfugao	VW SAMUEL M. JAMIAS
R III-A	Pampanga	VW ERNESTO S. DUMAS
R III-B	Bataan	VW MODESTO P. SALANDANAN
R III-C	Zambales	VW JUN OMAR C. EBDANE, JR.
R III-D	Nueva Ecija (South)	VW JUAN JEROME T. MALACA
R III-E	Bulacan	VW ENRICO G. SALAPONG
R III-F	Nueva Ecija (North)	VW THRISTAN B. ESCUDERO

District	Location	Name
R III-G	Tarlac	VW JOSE ANTONINO I. PALOMAR
R IV-A1	Cavite	VW JOSE L. BAUTISTA, JR.
R IV-A2	Cavite	VW ZIEGLER P. VITAL
R IV-B	Laguna	VW JOEL F. LIMPENGCO
R IV-C	Quezon	VW RODANTE A. SANGA
R IV-D	Batangas	VW MANUEL C. ESPIRITU, JR.
R IV-E	Mindoro	VW CARLOS G. CARLOS
R.V-A	Camarines Sur/Norte Catanduanes	VW JOAQUIN ED A. GUERRERO
R V-B	Albay, Sorsogon	VW NOEL E. ROSAL
R VI-A	Panay, lloilo, Aklan	VW ROBERTO C. VILLANUEVA
R-VI-B	Neg. Oriental, Neg. Occ.	VW MANFRED M. FUENTESFINA
R VII-A	Cebu-Bohol	VW BRAULIO C. PADILLA
R VIII-A	Samar	VW WALBERTO A. HONEY, SR.
R VIII-B	Leyte	VW NICOLAS C. RISOS
R IX-A	Zamboanga del Sur	VW LUTERMY M. YUKOYA
RIX-B & X	Misomis Occidental Zamboanga del Norte	VW RICHARD C. TIMOSA
R IX-C	Zamboanga, Jolo, Tawi-Tawi	VW NABIL A. TAN
R X-A	Cagayan de Oro	VW CESAR A. MERLAS
R X-B	Misamis Oriental, Camiguin	VW ALAN E. FERNAN
R X-C	Misamis Occidental	VW JOHN L. GO
R X-D	ARMM-Lanao	VW FELICIANO B. ALAGAO

District	Location	Name
R X-E	Bukidnon (North)	VW SULPICIO H.M. LEGASPI, JR.
R X-F	Bukidnon (South)	VW JOEL P. ALON
R XI-A	Davao City, Davao Del Sur	VW LEONARDO A. FELONIA
R XI-B	Davao Prov., Davao Or.	VW SAMUEL B. GADINGAN
R XII-A	Cotabato City, N. Cotabato	VW EDWARD J. SORIANO
R XII-B	SOCSARGEN	VW ABNER N. BAAC
R XIII-A	Agusan, Surigao	VW CESARIO E. ESPEJON
OVERSEAS-A	Guam	VW NAPOLEON B. BIGALBAL
OVERSEAS-B	Camp Zama, Japan	VW NAPOLEON A. SISON
OVERSEAS-C	Okinawa, Japan	VW MARK E. FREASE
OVERSEAS-D	Korea	VW HEMINIGILDO F. FLANCIA
OVERSEAS-E	Northern Marianas lsland	VW EDWIN M. ARENAS

DISTRICT GRAND LECTURERS

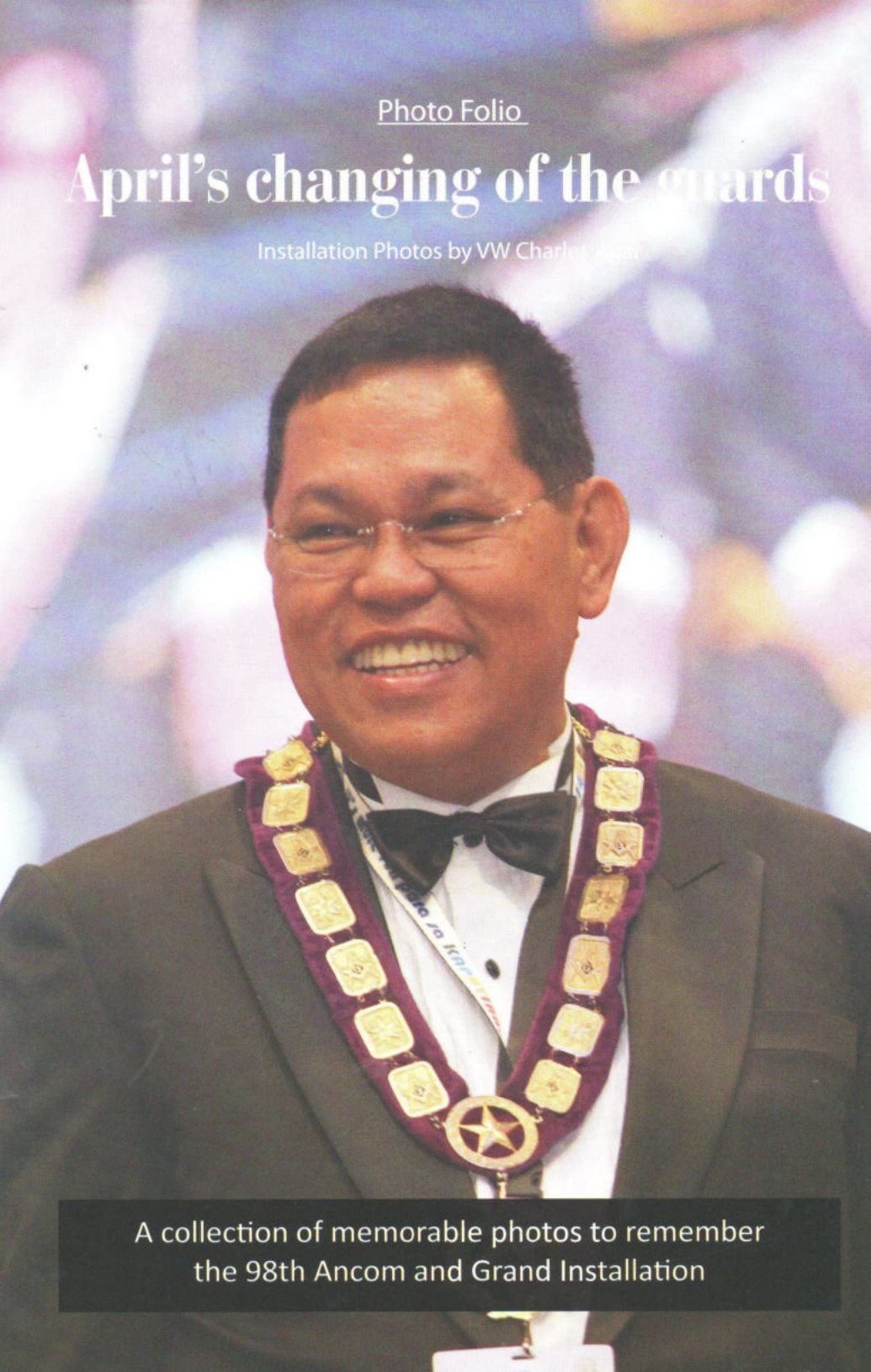
District	Location	Name
NCR-A	Metro Manila	VW MARIO T. AVILA VW SECINIO Z. BERMUDEZ, JR. VW FRANCIS E. BLANCO VW MAURITO D. MENDEZ VW JOSE ALVINE P. SEVILLA
NCR-B	Metro Manila	VW MARC SHERWIN C. KHO CHOC VW GENEROSO V. SANTOS VW MICHAEL ANGELO G. TAN VW ALEXANDER E. YU

Continued to page 67

Photo Folio

April's changing of the guards

Installation Photos by VW Charles Ryan



A collection of memorable photos to remember the 98th Ancom and Grand Installation

Registration. *Bros queued up to register at the SMX Convention Center, Seashell Drive, Mall of Asia Complex, Pasay City on April 24, 2014.*

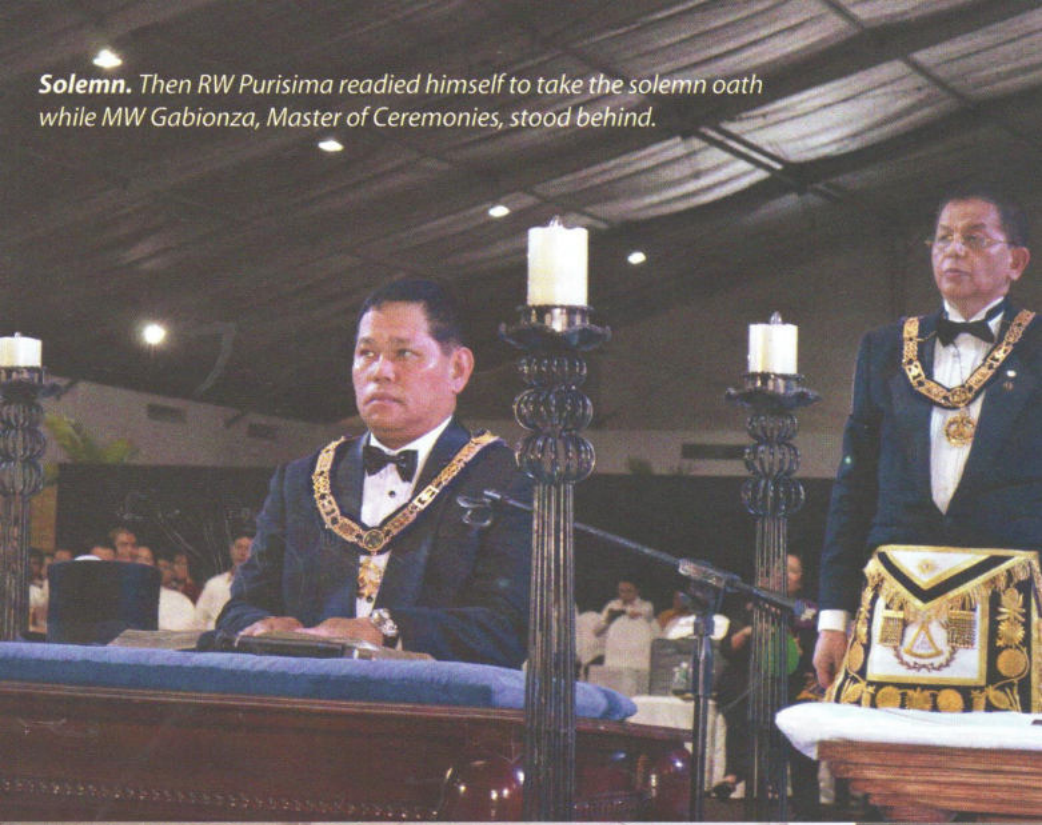


Past, present and future GMs. *(L to R) MW Santiago T. Gabionza, Jr., PGM; RW Voltaire Gazmin, then Grand Junior Warden; MW John L. Choa, PGM; MW Danilo Angeles, PGM; and then Incoming Grand Master RW Alan Purisima.*

Joining the bros. *Then Grand Marshall VW Rico Puno led the officers of the appendant and adoptive bodies up to the Grand East.*

Awardees. *MW Espino handed the plaques to the rejoicing awardees during the Grand Master's Night at the SMX Seaside.*





Solemn. *Then RW Purisima readied himself to take the solemn oath while MW Gabionza, Master of Ceremonies, stood behind.*



Promising. *Newly-installed MW Alan Purisima with the GLP and grand line officers.*

Gavel. *Finally invested with gavel, MW Purisima was set to take on the job up at the Grand East.*

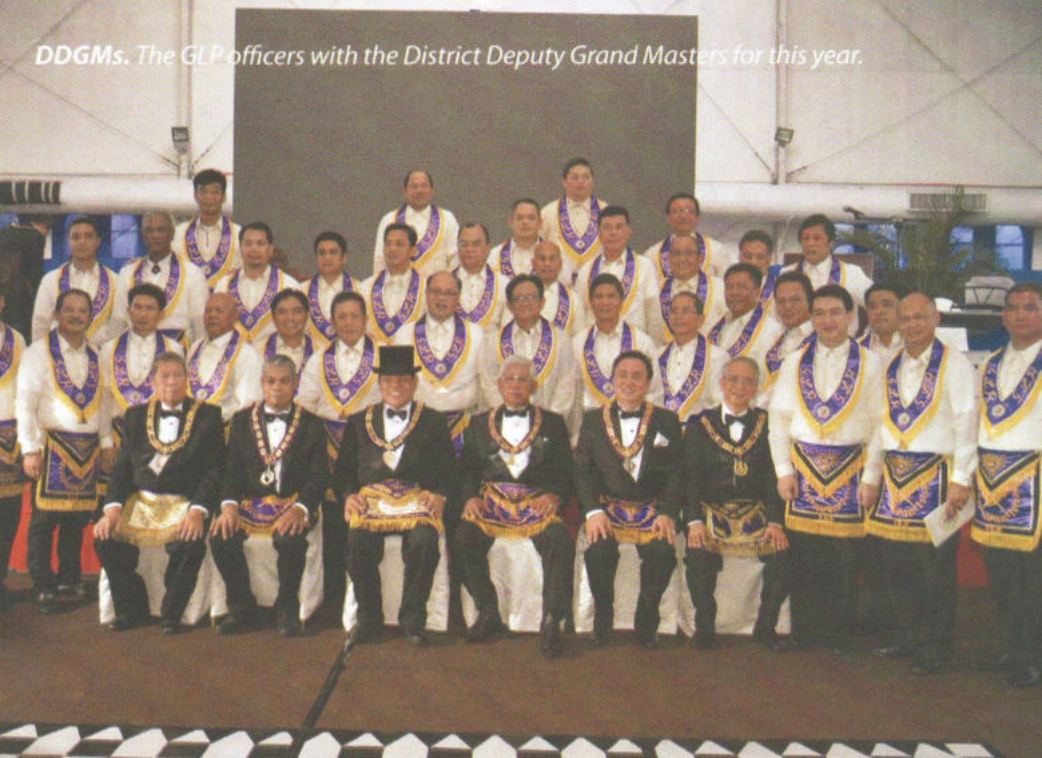


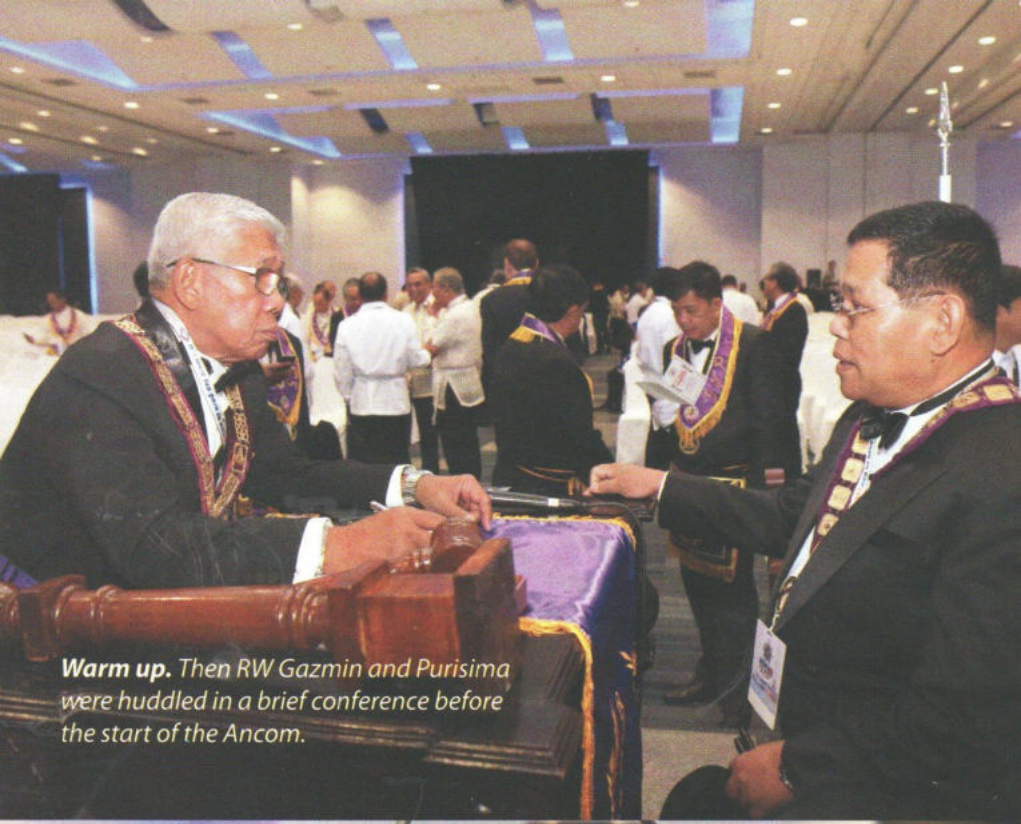


Team 2014. Front row (L to R): *MW RUDYARDO BUNDA, PGM, GMH, Grand Treasurer; RW TOMAS G. RENTOY III, Deputy Grand Mater; MW ALAN LM PURISIMA, Grand Master; RW VOLTAIRE T. GAZMIN, Senior Grand Warden; RW ABRAHAM N. TOLENTINO, Grand Junior Warden; and MW DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM, GMH, Grand Secretary.*



DDGMs. *The GLP officers with the District Deputy Grand Masters for this year.*





Warm up. *Then RW Gazmin and Purisima were huddled in a brief conference before the start of the Ancom.*



Reception. *Outgoing Grand Master MW Juanito G. Espino, Jr. was escorted into the hall for his final duty to convene the Grand Lodge.*



Presiding. *MW Espino opened the Ancom from up the Grand Orient while his Deputy Grand Master stood by him.*

Guests. *Then Grand Marshall VW Rico Puno escorted and introduced the visiting dignitaries.*

Continued from page 58

NCR-C	Metro Manila	VW HENRY S. CAPELA VW ALEX R. ESPINOSA VW GLENN G. MANUEL VW RAUL B. MARIFOSQUE VW CESAR ORTEGA VW PAUL V. SANTOS ESTRELLA
NCR-D	Metro Manila	VW WILFREDO E. BALTAZAR VW PLUTARCO B. BAWAGAN, JR. VW JAIME C. LEE VW MARCELINO SM. PESCANTE VW JOY C PUNO
NCR-E	Metro Manila	VW VIRGILIO A. DE FRANCIA VW NINO A. ESPIRITU VW ARIEL D. FRONDA VW TONY D. ONG VW BELLI B. TAMAYO
NCR-F	Metro Manila	VW AMADOR P. BUENASEDA VW EDWARD C. DAVID VW FREDERICK S. GOMEZ VW CYRILL G. MARASIGAN VW JASON J. ZAPANTA
NCR-G	Metro Manila	VW EMMANUEL R. BRAVO VW JOHNNY S. CAMBA VW JORGE A. MANAOG VW PERFECTO M. PASCUA VW ARNEL F. PILAPIL VW NORMAN T. TAGUM
CAR-A	Bontoc, Kalinga, Mountain Province	VW DANILO A. DOMINGO VW PHILIP B. DUCLAN VW SITO BAY AKEN PESPES
RI-A	Pangasinan	VW RENY A. ABETONG VW WILFREDO L. ESTRADA VW LOURDE R. FAJARDO VW JOHNSON L. FERNANDEZ VW DENNIS C. UY
RI & CAR-B	Baguio & La Union	VW RENE U. BAYSA VW ARTURO V. FIGUEROA VW JOSEPH M. HUMIDING
RI & CAR-C	Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte Abra	VW ALLEN D. AGUILAR VW NESTOR E. FELIX

District	Location	Name
R ll-A	Nueva Vizcaya (South)	VW RICARDO I. ASUNCION VW REDENTOR V. MASON
R ll-B	lsabela (North)	VW ARTURO C. BANAL VW JEMUEL T. CAYABA VW SEVERO B. SINENSE
R ll-C	Cagayan Valley	VW DOMINGO J. DE ASIS VW NEIL S. GUIMMAYEN VW MANUEL S. ORDINARIO VW RUSTICO R. TURINGAN
R ll-D	lsabela (South) Quirino	VW CHARLIE T. AGCAOILI VW DANNY S. DE LEON VW ELMER A. DOMINGO VW EFREN M. MARQUEZ, JR.
R II-E	Nueva Vizcaya (North) lfugao	VW RAMON D. DE GUZMAN VW ELEHIMICON M. LORENZANA
R III-A	Pampanga	VW NOMER ABER P. CANLAS VW RONNIE M. MANUEL VW NELSON E. NUCUP
R III-B	Bataan	VW JAIME D. RODRIGO
R III-C	Zambales	VW ROMEO B. LIM VW LUISITO M. LOPEZ VW BRIAN O'HARA VW NESTOR M. MARCELO VW LEVI D. SAN LUIS VW RUBEN S. SANTOS, JR.
R III-D	Nueva Ecija (South)	VW LORENZO G. CAMATO VW ROY G. CLAUDIO VW EMMANUEL DEL ROSARIO VW ERNESTO V. ESGUERRA VW LYNDO MARIE S. ESTEBAN VW FLORANTE A. FAJARDO VW JONALD HERNANDEZ VW MARCIAL ROMMEL J. MARCELO VW RHOMEL A. MARTINEZ VW JEWELA. MANZANO VW LAMBERTO B. MIRANDA VW GIL C. SURATOS VW MELVYN G. SANDOVAL

District	Location	Name
R III-E	Bulacan	VW EUFROCIO S. ARELLANO, JR. VW ALEX C. CARIAGA VW PRESILO G. LAZARO VW NELSON G. NICOLAS VW PABLO T. PANGANIBAN, JR. VW FRANCIS P. SALAMAT
R III-F	Nueva Ecija (North)	VW TERESITO DG. AGUINALDO VW DIONISIO DG. ALVINDIA VW ANTHONY T. CHAN VW FLORENTINO G. CUEVAS, JR. VW SESINANDO R. DELA CRUZ VW ARMANDO Z. MANABAT VW ENRIQUE B. MARQUEZ VW ERICK A. SADURAL VW GRACIANO DV. RAMOS VW MANUEL S. TAMBALQUE
R III-G	Tarlac	VW ENRICO G. BARIN VW JERRY NG. CHUA VW BENEDICTO S. BENIN VW JOHN Y. DE PANO VW PEPITO M. PACADA VW ANTHONY E. TAN
R IV-A1	Cavite	VW ROMEL GABRIEL P. CARAG VW ALBERTO J. MACION, JR. VW BENJARDI H. MANTELE VW HERSAN H. MOJICA VW DOMINGO M. MORA
R V-A	Camarines Sur/Norte Catanduanes	VW RUPERTO M. GARLAN, JR. VW EYMARD Z. GOMEZ VW BON EDISON C. QUINTO
R V-B	Albay, Sorsogon	VW MAGTANGGOL B. HATOL VW ROMMELJOHN C. MELLA
R VI-A	Panay, lloilo, Aklan	VW EDWIN B. AGUENIDO VW VIRGILIO B. CASIO VW PAUL I. MACAHILAS VW NOE C. MAAYO
R-VI-B	Neg. Oriental, Neg. Occ.	VW GIG T. EMPERADO VW MILKO D. LIRAZAN VW ALFREDO D. MARANON, III

District	Location	Name
R VII-A	Cebu-Bohol	VW DANIEL DAN A. CANTOR VW ADRIAN GODORNES VW DOUGLAS S. TAN
R VIII-A	Samar	VW CARLITO B. LABINE VW RONNIE T. LAO
R VIII-B	Leyte	VW JUANITO B. GEONZON VW JONAS PRISLE B. PRETE
R IX-A	Zamboanga del Sur	VW RUBEN Q. CAPULONG VW NELSON D. EUCOGCO VW ROGELIO E. LOQUIAS VW OLIVER B. OMBOS
RIX-B & X	Misamis Occidental Zamboanga del Norte	VW PATRICIO JAYBIE O. ATAY, III VW JAMES P. VERDUGUEZ
R IX-C	Zamboanga, Jolo, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi	VW RAMON C. LEDESMA VW ABDUUIM J. HASSAN VW MARTIN M. PORTO, JR. VW MEINRAD B. YANGA
R X-A	Cagayan de Oro	VW KEVIN R. CHING VW EDUARDO T. CHIONG VW JOSE JUSTO S. YAP VW ALDEN V. SAMBAAN
R X-B	Misamis Oriental, Camiguin	VW MANUEL SUKARNO ALVAREZ VW RONNIE FRANCIS M. CARIAGA VW JORDAN G. TIU VW ROBERT L. TIU
R X-C	Misamis Occidental	VW VERMIO R. BETONIO VW JOHN FRANCIS G. GO, JR. VW JOSE J. MARQUEZ
R X-D	ARMM-Lanao	VW STEPHEN T. MONTERROYO VW ROMULO G. TAPIA VW IAN C. UY
R X-E	Bukidnon (North)	VW NEIL E. CABALLERO VW RAUL C. LEONEN
R X-F	Bukidnon (South)	VW ISAIAS A. BACURNAY, JR. VW JAIME L. MANACAY, JR.

District	Location	Name
R XI-A	Davao City, Davao Del Sur	VW FELIZARDO A. NAJERA VW RAYMUNDO N. SOLIBAN VW ABE JUN R. VERSOZA
R XI-B	Davao Prov., Davao Or.	VW LITO S. LUZON VW REINALDO M. UY
R XII-A	Cotabato City, N. Cotabato	VW ROMEGILDO B. ALOCEUA VW LEOPOLDO P. LUGTU
R XIl-B	SOCSARGEN	VW ORLANDO N. DELA CRUZ VW RICARDO F. JALIPA, JR. VW BERNARDO C. LIM
R XIII-A	Agusan, Surigao	VW FERDINAND C. ACMA VW CACEL R. AZARCON VW ARNULFO A. YLANAN
OVERSEAS-A	Guam	VW JOSE CARLO R. DELOS SANTOS
OVERSEAS-B	Camp Zama, Japan	
OVERSEAS-C	Okinawa, Japan	VW AUGUSTUS G. DELA ROSA
OVERSEAS-D	Korea	VW HERMINIGILDO R. FRANCIA
OVERSEAS-E	Northern Marianas lsland	VW WILFREDO G. CHING

The AnCom Story Continued from page 43

ing Kapatiran, nag-aalay sa inyo ng handog na pag-uukulan ko ng buong lakas at husay: ANG SERBISYONG MAKATOTOHANAN, PARA SA KAPATIRAN AT MAMAMAYAN.

Finally, I want to ask you again, fellow Grand Line Officers, both elected and appointed, "ARE YOU WILLING TO PROCEED?"

Mabuhay ang Masonerya! Mabuhay ang bawat Pilipino!

The Grand Master's Calendar of Activities for Year 2014-2015

The calendar of activities which newly-installed Grand Master MW Alan Purisima are laid out below in a monthly basis.

2014

May

First District Meeting:

- District Officers Turnover
- Organization of District Council
- DDGM's Power Point Presentation on GLP's Programs, Activities and Masonic Education Concerns
- DDGM's Night – Honoring Past DDGMs

Installation of Grand Lodge Inspectors
May 23 – Honoring Bro. Apolinario Mabini

June

June 12 - Philippine Independence Day
June 19 - Bro. Jose P. Rizal's Birthday
Installation of GLIs (Continuation)
District-Sponsored Lodge of Instruction
Adopt-a-School Program
Public Information Drive – "Freemasonry: Fraternal Organization That Cares"

July

District-Sponsored Lodge of Instruction (Continuation)
District Sports Activities
Blue Lodge-Sponsored Public Information Drive and Masonic Orientation for Prospective Petitioners
Institution and Constitution of New Lodges

August

August 19 - Honoring Bro. Manuel Luis Quezon
(President, Philippine Commonwealth)
August 30 - Honoring Bro. Marcelo H. del Pilar
(Father of Philippine Masonry)

Masonic Charity Outreach Activities
Visitation of Other Grand Lodges
District Conventions

September
Past Masters and Senior Masons Month
Environment Care Month/District Tree-Planting Activities
District Conventions

October
Remembering Our Departed Brethren
Masonic Charity Outreach Activities (Continuation)
District Conventions (Continuation)

November
District Conventions (Continuation)
November 30 – Honoring Bro. Andres Bonifacio and Other National Heroes

December
Election of Officers of Subordinate Lodges
Christmas Fellowships/Programs
December 19 – Founding Anniversary of the GLP
December 30 – Bro. Jose p. Rizal's Day

2015

January
District-Sponsored Seminar on Lodge Management
Proficiency Examination for Elected Officers of Subordinate Lodges
Installation of Officers of Subordinate Lodges

February
Installation of Officers of Subordinate Lodges (Continuation)
February 14 -- Masons Ladies Night (Valentine Party)

March
District Recognition/Awards Night

April
Family Fellowship Month
ANCOM 2015 – Legazpi City, Albay

Reexamining some definitions/ descriptions of Freemasonry

By VW Juanito B. Vaño, Jr., SGL

To strengthen our resolve to be faithful to the Craft in general and to our respective Lodges in particular, as well as to be of genuine service to them, let us re-examine some definitions or descriptions of Freemasonry, which on our own free will and accord we have embraced as our special profession and way of life.

Preston's Definitions

In the first paragraph of the Charge of the Entered Apprentice degree, William Preston first defines Freemasonry as "*an ancient and honorable fraternity – ancient as having existed since time immemorial, and honorable as tending to make all men so who are strictly obedient to its precepts.*"

Unquestionably, Freemasonry is an ancient fraternal organization because its mystic symbols are found among the ruins of buried cities, carved by forgotten peoples on the tombs of bygone kings and on the rocks in secret caverns. In fact, in his article entitled "*Towards the Sources of Freemasonry,*" Bro. J. Mason Allan points out that the origins of the Fraternity are lost in the mists of tradition.

Freemasonry, moreover, is an honorable fraternity because, as the late Worshipful Brother and Chief Justice Manuel V. Moran phrased it, "*Its principal purpose is to create in the world a band of men to whom others might look for example and inspiration – men who others will say are men of honor, virtue, and charitable feelings.*"

That is why when we were initiated into it, we were caused to declare in open Lodge that we had sought the fellowship of the Craft "to learn to subdue our passions and improve ourselves in Masonry."

Next, Preston defines Freemasonry as "*an institution having for its foundation the practice of the social and moral virtues.*" Hence, toward the end of every Lodge meeting, we beseech God to "*be pleased so to influence our minds and hearts that we may, each of us, practice out of the Lodge those great social and moral duties (and*

virtues) which are inculcated in it, and with reverence study and obey the laws which Thou hast given us in Thy Holy Word..."

That prayer is, to me, equivalent to a promise we must fulfill; for, as Emilio Jacinto has stated in Kartilya ng Katipunan, "*To a man of honor, his word is his oath.*" Besides, as stated in the ceremony of installation of Lodge officers, "*There is no other human institution which requires of its votaries a more faithful and conscientious discharge of duties than does the Masonic fraternity.*"

Yes, my brethren, how important it is for us to convince the world, by our acts, that such a statement is true; for, as Preston once more stresses in the Charge of the Master Mason degree, to help preserve unsullied the reputation of the Fraternity ought to be our constant care. To fulfill this duty, at least in part, we must judiciously and responsibly use the authority which the Craft has given us to correct the irregularities of our less informed brethren, to strengthen their minds with resolution against the snares of the insidious, and to guard them against every allurement to vicious practices, as well as to caution the inexperienced among us against any breach of fidelity to our teachings, tenets, laws, rules, and regulations. But, certainly, the best way we can help remove every aspersion, or avert the shadow of any scandal or reproach, against our venerable Institution is to conduct ourselves exemplarily or regularly at all times and in all places. We must, in other words, show to non-Masons, by our deeds, that we are good and true members of the Craft 24 hours a day. To be able to do this, we must not lose sight of the following injunction:

> *... You are so well acquainted with the principles of Masonry as to warrant any distrust that you will be found wanting in the discharge of your respective duties. Suffice it to say that what you have seen praiseworthy in others you should carefully imitate, and what in them may have appeared defective you should yourselves avoid. You should be examples of discretion and propriety; for it is only by a due regard to our rules and regulations, as shown in your own conduct, that you can expect obedience to them from others....*

Invariably, we who occupy positions of responsibility and authority in the Craft must lead our less knowledgeable and inexperienced brethren by inspiring and edifying example.

In the first paragraph of the Charge of the Entered Apprentice degree, furthermore, Preston provides us with this piece of information: "And to so high an eminence has its (Freemasonry's) credit been advanced that, in every age and country, men preeminent for their intellectual and moral attainments have encouraged and promoted its interests. Nor has it been thought derogatory to their dignity that monarchs have, for a season, exchanged the scepter for the trowel

to patronize our mysteries and join in our assemblies."

Indubitably, through all the ages, countless achievers in different fields of knowledge and activity, as well as men of royal blood or noble rank, have affiliated with Freemasonry and found in it a key to rich, abundant, and meaningful living, so that they have encouraged and promoted its interests. In fact, a great number of great men (i.e., men who have led in the march of human progress) found inspiration in its imperishable ideals, priceless principles and precepts, as well as high ethical standards.

Like those eminent brethren of ours, we should develop ourselves to our highest potential or attain self-mastery through the beneficial influence of the Fraternity's ideals, principles, and values, which were evolved ages ago by our ancient brethren, who did not even know of the existence of our own country, and which were disseminated with much zeal and enthusiasm by their successors among different peoples throughout the world.

Like them, we should also encourage and promote its interests and welfare in order that good and true young men will seek our fellowship and join in our assemblies.

As you may have already learned, it was only during the second half of the 19th century that Filipino expatriates joined Masonic Lodges in Spain and in other European countries. Later, they established in the Philippines Masonic Lodges exclusively for Filipinos and eventually founded the Filipino nation on the pillars of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth and on the columns of other Masonic ideals, principles, and values, which their successors enshrined in the Philippine Constitution.

In the second section of the Fellowcraft degree, in addition, Preston provides us with the following explanation of the two denominations of Masonry:

> *By Operative Masonry we allude to a proper application of the useful rules of architecture, whence a structure will derive strength and beauty, and from which will result a due proportion and just correspondence in all it parts. It furnishes us with dwellings and convenient shelters from the vicissitudes and inclemencies of the seasons, and, while it displays the effects of human wisdom as well in the choice as in the arrangement of the several materials of which an edifice is composed, it demonstrates that a fund of science and industry is implanted in man for the bet, most salutary, and most beneficent purposes.*
>
> *By Speculative Masonry we learn to subdue the passions, act upon the Square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy, and practice charity. It is so far interwoven with religion as to lay us under obligations to pay that rational homage to the Deity, which at once constitutes our duty and our happiness. It leads the contemplative mason to view with reverence and admiration*

the glorious works of the Creation and inspires him with the most exalted ideas of the perfections of his divine Creator.

He further informs us that while we are speculative only, our ancient brethren were both operative and speculative; that they wrought at King Solomon's Temple and other stately edifices; and that they worked six days a week, but rested on the seventh day, thereby enjoying frequent opportunities to view with reverence and admiration the glorious works of the Creation as well as to adore their great Creator.

The foregoing distinction between Operative and Speculative Masonry is reminiscent of that part of the Lecture of the Entered Apprentice degree which deals with the ornaments of a Lodge, namely, the Rough Ashlar, the Perfect Ashlar, and the Trestle Board. Let's listen to Preston once more:

. . . By the Rough Ashlar we are reminded of our imperfect state by nature; by the Perfect Ashlar, of that state of perfection at which we hope at last to arrive by a virtuous education, our own endeavors, and the blessing of God; and by the Trestle Board we are reminded that as the operative workman erects his temporal building agreeably to the rules and designs laid down by the Master on his Trestle Board, so should we, both operative and speculative, endeavor to erect our spiritual building agreeably to the designs laid down by the Supreme Architect of the Universe in the great books of Nature and Revelation, which constitute our spiritual, moral, and Masonic Trestle Board.

Additionally, in the Charge of the Fellowcraft degree, Preston defines Freemasonry as "*a progressive moral science divided into different degrees.*" Through the use of various forms and ceremonies, each degree regularly develops and illustrates certain important lessons and principles, which, hopefully, will be deeply impressed upon the mind and heart of every candidate for it. The degrees into which Ancient Craft Masonry is divided are those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellowcraft, and the Master Mason, which, according to the Masonic Service Association (MSA) in *Tried and Proven*, represent youth, middle life (i.e., manhood or adulthood), and old age, with its trials, its problems, and its final termination in death, respectively.

Let's weigh and consider the following explication by the MSA of the symbolism of the three degrees:

- The Entered Apprentice represents youth standing at the portals of life, his eyes on the rising sun. Just as a young man acquires a useful and virtuous education in order to prepare himself for his journey over the rough and rugged road of life, so the Entered Apprentice obtains the first instructions whereupon he is to erect his future moral and Masonic edifice. He re-

ceives the elementary details of that universal language in which hereafter he is to converse with his brethren in Masonry in order that he will understand them and they will understand him. He is directed to take as a staff and script for his journey a knowledge of all the virtues that expand the heart and dignify the soul, such as secrecy, obedience, humility, trust in God, purity of conscience, wise and useful employment of time, and above all, charity for all mankind, which is the cornerstone of all Masonic virtues.

- The Entered Apprentice degree, in effect, is one of probation and preparation for a more advance position, as well as more exalted privileges and duties.
- The Fellowcraft represents a man in the prime of life – experienced, resourceful, strong, and able to bear the heat and burden of the day. Just as an adult or man in middle life is required to engage himself in honest-to-goodness work and study in order to acquire new skills and ideas that enlarge his mind and extend his usefulness to his fellow-creatures, so the Fellowcraft is directed to continue his investigations in the different aspects of Masonry. He is also directed to labor diligently in the tasks which Masonry prescribes. He learns, among other things, to trace the goodness and majesty of God, the Great Architect of the Universe, by minutely analyzing His glorious works. Here lies the significance of the lecture on the letter "G".
- While the Entered Apprentice degree is calculated to imbue the candidate with moral or ethical values, the Fellowcraft degree is intended to appeal directly to the candidate's intellect or mind rather than to his heart. Although the moral or ethical precepts of the Entered Apprentice degree are reiterated and stressed in the Fellowcraft degree, the great theme of the latter degree is the attainment of knowledge, the cultivation of the mind, and the acquisition of the habits of industry. The Fellowcraft learns, among other things, that if he faithfully and conscientiously performs his tasks, he may, in due time, be entitled to the wages he has worked for.
- The Master Mason represents the man of years, already on the further slope of the hill (of life), with the setting sun in his eyes. That is why the Craft selected Ecclesiastes XII: 1-7 as the fitting passage to be recited aloud during the rite of perambulation in the Tragedy of Hiram Abif. . . .

Some Other Descriptions

Some Masonic writers and scholars define Freemasonry as "*a science of character building and an art of high ethical living that walks arm in arm with progress toward a better way of life*"; others, as "*a peculiar system of morality*

veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbol"; and still others, as "*a philosophy of life relationships.*"

RW Charles C, Hunt, Grand Secretary Emeritus, Grand Lodge of Iowa, A.F. & A.M., considers Freemasonry as "*an organized society of men applying the principles of operative masonry and architecture to the science of character building.*"

The German Handbuck of 1900, Vol. I, provides us with the following definition, which Rev. Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, 33°, regards as a very appropriate description of the Fraternity:

Freemasonry is the activity of closely united men who, employing symbolical forms borrowed principally from the mason's trade and from architecture, work for the welfare of mankind, and who, striving morally to ennoble themselves and others, aim to bring about a universal league of mankind, which they aspire to exhibit even now on a small scale.

From the foregoing definitions or descriptions we can infer that Freemasonry is essentially different from any other fraternal organization that teaches a system of morality, and that it is one of the most potent forces for good available to the modern world in general and to Philippine society in particular, precisely because it seeks to build rather than to tear down.

Seeing this truth, we latter-day Filipino Freemasons must, exert all-out effort to imbibe Masonic tenets and teachings and to make them a part of our very being, so that we will convince other men, particularly fellow Filipinos, by our acts, that since our raising to the sublime degree of Master Mason, we have become increasingly better men.

But, first, we must eagerly, zealously, and enthusiastically study it and its various aspects, such as its organization and purpose, the meaning of its symbols, its tremendous background, its ethical or moral demands, its tolerance, and its great lesson of brotherhood – a brotherhood that is not limited to the confines of a Symbolic Lodge or a Masonic District or even a Grand Jurisdiction because Freemasonry is a world brotherhood of men of different countries, sects, and opinions, who are all children of one all-loving and all-powerful Father and inhabitants of the same planet, Earth, and as such, must aid, support, and protect one another.

As we advance in our study of Freemasonry, we will realize that every symbol and every observance in it has some application in our respective lives. With that realization, we must strengthen our resolve to persistently search for "*that which was lost*" or for the secrets of a Master Mason in order that we will become better builders of ourselves and of the world around us; for, after all, as the philosopher Henri Bergson has put it, it is more appropriate to call man a "*homo faber*" (doing man) than a "*homo sapiens*" (thinking man) because his constant urge is, essentially, to improve himself and his environment.

God has tasked each man,

whom He made in His image, to build his own life and character into a spiritual temple fit for Him to dwell in. Each Freemason must, therefore, proficiently use the various "*symbolical forms borrowed principally from the mason's trade and from architecture* for strengthening both the foundation and the superstructure of his own spiritual temple, so that, eventually, he will give due honor both to himself and to the Fraternity to which he has pledged allegiance. By proficiently using the working tools and hieroglyphic emblems with which the Fraternity has equipped us is meant that we should, each of us, persistently practice the virtues, as well as faithfully and conscientiously discharge the duties, which those tools and emblems have been selected by the Craft to illustrate.

Then each must build his own little part into that larger temple which is the sum of all human achievement, the Temple of the Brotherhood of Man under God's Fatherhood. This is the great structure which is gradually rising through the ages according to the plan or design laid down by The Great Architect of the Universe (TGAOTU) on His trestle board, which, as said earlier, consists in the great books of Nature and Revelation.

Clearly, we Freemasons are building on foundations laid by our ancient brethren, and the work must go on in generations yet to come until Freemasonry has brought about a universal league of mankind; until there is no more need for Relief or Service; until God's plan or design is realized, namely, that all His creatures at long last dwell together on earth in peace and harmony as "*a sacred band, or society of friends and brothers, among whom no contention should ever exist but that noble contention, or rather emulation, of who best can work and best agree.*"

To contribute to the eventual establishment upon earth of a veritable Brotherhood of men of different countries, sects, and opinions under God's Fatherhood, each of us should strive hard to make his own ashlar perfect by breaking off its rough corners with his symbolic common gavel and squaring it with the square of virtue, so that the Master Builder will accept it and fit it into its proper place in His grand design.

As we advance in our knowledge of Freeemasonry, we will realize that our obligations to ourselves and to our neighbors correspondingly increase. But this realization should not deter us from obtaining more and more Masonic light through honest-to-goodness Masonic Education and from living by the Fraternity's teachings and tenets each day.

Patiently and perseveringly, we must manifest our fidelity to our respective Lodges and to the Craft by performing all our duties to them with much zeal,

enthusiasm, and responsibility, and by emulating the good example set by that celebrated artist we represented in the Tragedy, particularly his daily practice of entering into the Temple to see if any improvement could be made either for strength or for ornament and also to enter the Sanctum Sanctorum or Holy of Holies, there to offer up his devotions to the Ever-Living God and pray for wisdom necessary to enable him to draw designs upon the trestle board, whereby the Craft might pursue their labors. Like him, we should be adorned with truly exalted and exemplary character, unfeigned piety to God, and inflexible fidelity to every trust committed to our care.

Finally, dear brethren, we should, each of us, heed a wise counsel of Ill. Albert G. Mackey, 33°, which I may paraphrase this way: "*Demonstrate your fidelity to your Mother Lodge in particular and to the Fraternity in general by morally* ***squaring*** *perfectly every contributing element that makes you what you are and then taking all these elements and applying them one to another in the formation of a praiseworthy life. Build your personal structure, so that you may stand upon your record* ***squarely*** *before men with an integrity perpendicularly like unto a plumb, with a purpose absolutely* ***square*** *as even the most accurate of such tools would verify.*"

The life and times of Mariano Ponce Continued from page 116

mentor Del Pilar, of tuberculosis on May 23 at the age of 55.

His body was shipped back to the Philippines. Masons administered him a funeral rite. Then, he was buried amid ceremonies at the Cementerio del Norte in Manila. He left behind his wife, Okiya, his son Pedro and three daughters namely Carmen, Consolacion and Maria.

Leading a life well lived, his National Library successors—Epifanio de los Santos and Teodoro M. Kalaw—and Filipino writer Pascual H. Poblete were one in calling him as the low-profiled but equally important member of *el gran* triumvirato (the grand triumvirate).

Counting the arms deal he had made among his contributions, Ponce could well be the man who nearly changed history.

Feature

One incredible mystic travel

By Bro. Dick Perlas
Araw Lodge No. 18

Read this article and ask yourself: how much of a man and a Mason can you get if you were in Bro. Dick's situation?

My mystic journey had been set when I received the Masonic lights from Araw Lodge No. 18 in 1988. I was 31 years old and a police officer then in the Western Police District in Manila.

My family life, career and business were all going well. Until one day in 1994, two Bureau of Immigration and Deportation (BID) agents, a bar-topnotch lawyer and I were charged before the Ombudsman for "Conspiracy to Commit Direct Bribery."

It was a shock to all of us. Only a measly Php 25,000 was involved.

In Christianity, it was supposed to be the start of my Calvary. Masonically, it was the beginning of my "mystic travel" and no doubt, over extremely rough and rocky road.

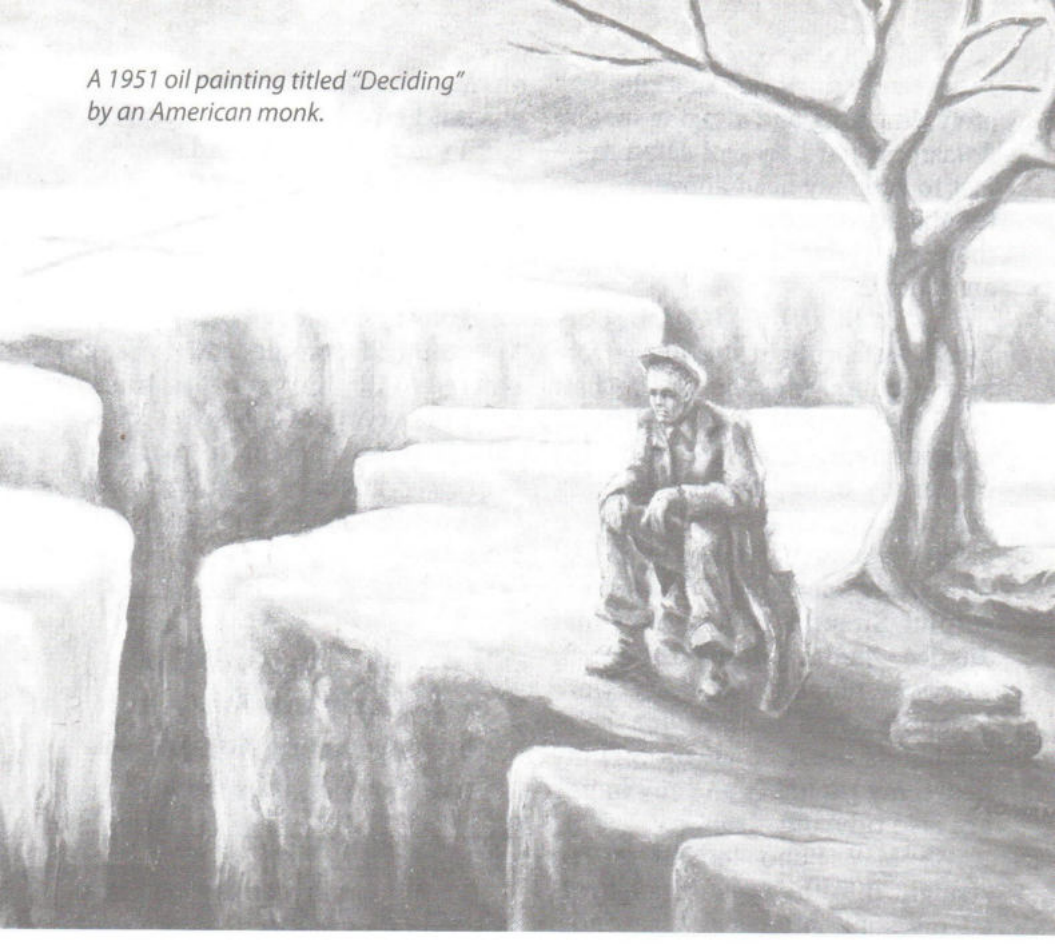
My initial reaction was to ask for legal help from Mason lawyers. Two brethren came to my rescue. WB Paner and Bro. Tiburan represented me in court. After eight years of hearing, bad news came. We were all convicted by the Sandiganbayan beyond reasonable doubt in 2002.

We filed a Motion for Reconsideration. Only the mastermind was acquitted—a Senior Intelligence Officer of the BID. The junior agent died during appeal. Only the topnotch lawyer and I remained convicted.

Trouble

My trouble began when I performed a wedding ceremony in 1993 in my capacity as evangelical pastor. My wife stood as a principal sponsor; my daughter, as flower girl. The groom was a Japanese suspected of being a Yakuza. His rented house was raided eight months later. But nothing illegal was found.

A BID agent confiscated his passport. The Japanese asked me for help since I can speak a little Nihongo. I referred him to the law firm of my former father-in-law. Two lawyers helped. Until a third lawyer



A 1951 oil painting titled "Deciding" by an American monk.

stepped in.

On January 1994, the BID returned to the Japanese his passport. The third lawyer received money from the same Japanese. Suddenly, the NBI swooped down and arrested us.

The lawyer claimed it was payment for his attorney's fee. I claimed innocence, unaware of the fee or bribe whatsoever. I was only an interpreter.

The NBI was deaf to my reason. I consulted MW Raymundo Beltran, PGM, and VW Ding Arandia who are known to be notable lawyers. The three of us convicts went to the Supreme Court and filed our appeal. But the high court sustained our conviction. Suddenly, I saw my life crumbling into shattered pieces. I lost face before the brethren. I cringed at the thought of showing myself before our Police Director who later became Chief PNP and then, Grand Master.

Lost

Lost, I consulted MW Gene Labotoria, formerly with the Court of Appeals and a Past Grand Master.

I was like a drowning man desperately thrashing and clinging on any flotsam or hard rock of safe refuge just to keep my head above the water and breathe. *Breathe!* All my life then was reduced into gasping for air of hope.

Calling on TGAOU, my heavy feet brought me to the former Grand Master and Chief Justice Reynato Puno. Without appointment, I walked into his office. My thoughts were swirling fast and aimlessly. I hadn't been offered a seat yet when I managed to politely speak out, "Most Worshipful Sir and Honorable Chief Justice, before joining the Craft, we were taught that if we were to approach a brother for help, his hands must be clean. Sir, my heart, my thoughts and my hands are also tidy and clean."

MW Puno looked at me straight into the eyes. It penetrated my soul. After a few seconds, he relaxed and warmly told me, "Please sit down, my brother."

I asked him for five minutes of his time. But he gave me more than that. He explained that he cannot, and never interferes, with how other Justices write their decisions.

Suddenly, I felt all the weight of the world coming down on my head. It was all lost. But MW Puno gave me an assurance which had sounded cryptic to me at that time—that TGAOU will surely guide me and show the way.

The promulgation of judgment finally came on November29, 2006 by the Sandiganbayan. My two other co-accused were absent. I stood alone—and scared. Until the verdict was read aloud. I was sentenced to serve 4 to 7 years in the National Bilibid Prisons (NBP).

Suddenly, I went cold like I was splashed by a pail of icy water. My stomach cramped. My vision blurred. All the conversations, even the crying of my loved ones, sounded very distant to me. The court was just a room full of people moving about without noise or sound.

"I was like a drowning man desperately thrashing and clinging on any flotsam or hard rock of safe refuge..."

My brain conked out and stopped—unable to comprehend the injustice of a world turned upside down. But my body instinctively wanted to flop, sink and vanish into the floor. It felt like death. The desire for instant death had never gripped me so hard than that very moment.

So, the bailiffs had to drag me to the detention cell. I could hardly walk. My feet went numbed. But my mind was screaming, "Why me, oh Lord? Why me?"

Surprises

A year and a half passed. Life in prison was hard. But

knowing that I was suffering for a crime I had never committed was a daily torture. Learning that my family had left me in the midst of my agony and flown to Australia—and I was too helpless to stop or even see them—made me wish to die fast.

But were it not for the Bible besides me always, I would have lost my mind, or my life, early in Bilibid. Until a most wonderful surprise happened one day.

The enrollees in our Teacher-Inmate and Inmate-Artist programs were about to graduate. Simultaneously, the officers running it—myself included—were to be sworn in. And MW Puno, the Chief Justice, came to Camp Sampaguita, National Bilibid Prisons, as our Guest Speaker and Induction Officer.

An open forum was held on his arrival. I took the opportunity. I stood up, gave him the sign, and addressed him politely. He did notice me. So, after our induction, we queued up to shake hands with him. When my turn came, MW Puno congratulated me and whispered to see him later.

We talked in a corner. Both Bureau of Correction officials and inmates were eyeing me dumbfoundingly. The Chief Justice wore an elegant barong. I was in my blue prison uniform.

Always a brother, MW Puno encouraged me to be patient. He uplifted my spirit by repeating the cryptic consolation he had uttered to me a year and a half before. "God will guide and help you find your way out," he said while patting my shoulder. I thanked him.

Then, he asked, "Tell me, Brother, how can I help you?'

I replied, "Can you please endorse my parole?"

Without hesitation, he answered, "Yes, I will."

True enough, my application for parole was given due course. It did reach the Office of the Board of Pardon and Parole.

For many nights and long hours, I prayed. Then, another surprise came my way again.

A Mason, named Bro. Jun Cruz of Bagumbayan Lodge No. 4, visited me in prison in the first quarter of 2010. We had never met yet. But he surprisingly came with his family.

Upon approach, he gave me one warm fraternal hug. He introduced himself, his wife Sis Lurleen, and daughter Faith. He read my life story at the Pinoy Mason website and was touched. Also, he informed me that Bro. Jojo Sabban, a lawyer and member of Bagumbayan 4, could come helpful to my case.

Before he left, he handed me a financial aid.

Lesson

All my prayers were answered in June 2010. My parole was granted.

Immediately, I used my newfound freedom to see the brethren who had helped me in my darkest hours. Bro. Deo Macalma, of DZRH radio station, had extended me substantial assistance while inside Bili-

bid. There was also WB Bob Cloa of the Roosevelt Memorial 18 and my brethren in Araw Lodge who had assisted me without letup.

Also, WB Cesar Magpayo presented me with three new pair of pants, 2 barong tagalog, and a fine polo shirt. Of course, I went to see Bro. Jojo Sabban. Without him, I would rot in NBP.

Out of prison, yet I had no home or family to go to. No feeling like it could be so depressing. Rather than sulk in a corner, I set my mind onto finding a job instead. Feeding myself became my next concern.

Convicts suffer discrimination when released out to society. With my family gone, and without a reputation to protect anymore, I was prepared to take the most menial job available, even as a *caminero*(street sweeper).

So, with my biodata in hand, I walked into the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Muntinlupa (PLM) in old and simple clothes. I filled up the application form, applying for the position of a Janitor.

Interestingly, PLM rejected me. Instead, they offered me the position of a Professor at the College of Criminal Justice to teach Philosophy, Logic and the Rizal Course.

I needed a job. I took it.

Looking back, the past three and a half years of my life was a painful journey up and down the valley of the soul. When over, I stepped out to a brave new world. I am certain of it. For what I have loved and cared before are now gone. What I have prized so much before are just flitting illusions that are heavy baggages in life's spiritual journey.

From the ruins of my life, I picked up the pieces and carried on as a college professor, a marriage counselor and a pastor for prison ministry—with the hope of building my second family.

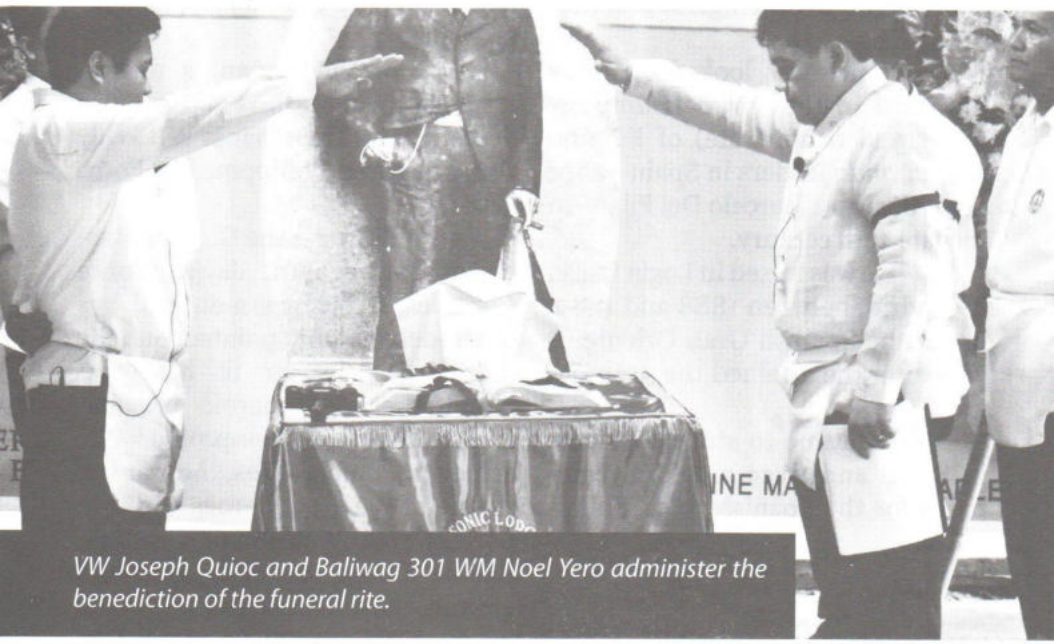
"Looking back, the past three and a half years of my life was a painful journey up and down the valley of the soul."

But all these years, it was my faith in TGAOU that had kept me strong. It was Masonry that taught me hope. Even today, the Muntinlupa Square and Compass Club, and the APO Masons, never quit from helping me.

If there ever was a lesson I have learned from it all, it is this: when at last your weary feet shall have come to the end of their toilsome journey, and your spirit has dipped so low to the darkest pit, a mystic tie surprisingly appears above for you to hold on in time of need.

Baliwag 301 observed hero Mariano Ponce's 96th death anniversary

Photos by Bro. Joseph "Tep" Sevilla



VW Joseph Quioc and Baliwag 301 WM Noel Yero administer the benediction of the funeral rite.

Long forgotten, yet Philippine hero and Masonic pioneer Illus. Bro. Mariano Ponce got his overdue recognition.

Bros of Baliwag Lodge No. 301 in Bulacan held a symbolic funeral rite for Ponce in the afternoon of May 23 at the hero's ancestral home at Mariano Ponce Street in Barangay Tibag of this town.

"Illustrious Brother Mariano Ponce, a noble son of Baliwag, played an important role in the founding of an all-Filipino Masonry as much as in national history," said Worshipful Master Noel Yero of Baliwag 301.

The funeral rite was simul-

taneously held with the 21st lodge founding anniversary and Past Masters' Night.

The symbolic funeral rite commemorated Ponce's 96th death anniversary on that day. The hero reached his 150th birth anniversary last year on March 23. Sadly, no Masonic remembrance was held even while Bulacan province paid him tribute.

Significantly, it was the first time that the Ponce descendants had helped and joined Freemasons in remembering their great grandfather.

Ponce was looked up to as the third in the "*gran triumvirato*" (grand triumvirate) of Filipino *propaganda* leaders in Spain—after Jose Rizal and Marcelo Del Pilar—in the late 19th century.

He was raised in Logia Iberia in Madrid, between 1888 and 1889, under the Spanish Gran Oriente. A year after, he attained the 30th degree.

He came to study medicine in Spain and wage a reform campaign for the Spanish-ruled Philippines.

Rite

VW Joseph P. Quioc, of Leonard Wood Lodge No. 195 in Angeles City, Pampanga, solemnly administered the rite. WM Yero assisted.

Mayor Carolina Dellosa of Baliwag was the guest speaker. Extolling Ponce's historic and selfless contributions, she said "*Napakaswerte ng Baliwag. Meron tao dito na kinikilala ng buong Pilipinas.*" (Baliwag is so lucky. There is a man here who is recognized by the whole Philippines.)

Mayor Dellosa is a `Sis.' She is married to Bro. James Dellosa of Cebu.

Two male Ponce descendants took turns in delivering brief eulogies to the hero.

Bro. Alfonso "Ponch" Villaroman, of Tagaytay Lodge No. 165 in Tagaytay City, gave a brief narrative of his great grandfather's exemplary life.

Bro. Villaroman, a doctor, is one of the 2 Masons in the Ponce descendants. The other is WB Willy Cruz, a retired Philippine Air Force general.

WB Cruz is the Charter Master of Baliwag 301. Jayjay Ponce Gonzales, a businessman and another descendant, pointed out the sacrificial character of his great grandfather. His heroic progenitor had lived with low-profile while achieving much. "Yes, he ranked as one of the great heroes with important role in Philippine history. But he always stayed in the background," he told Masons and guests.

VW Enrico G. Salapong, District Deputy Grand Master (DDGM) of R3-E, closed the ceremony by reading a message from MW Alan Purisima.

"Bilang isang manunulat, manggagamot, at kasapi ng Kilusang Propaganda, isinulong ni Mariano Ponce ang pagpapahalaga sa kalayaan at katarungan. Mahalaga din ang kanyang papel



Baliwag Mayor Carolina Dellosa, a Sis, takes pride in local hero Mariano Ponce.

na ginampanan sa ating Kapatiran sa pagpapalaganap ng Masonerya sa loob at labas ng bansa. Tama lang at napapanahon na bigyan ng parangal ang ating Kapatid na si Mariano Ponce. Isang tunay na anak ng Baliuag, isang tunay na anak ng ating Kapatiran," (As a writer, doctor and member of *Propaganda* Movement, Mariano Ponce advanced the values of freedom and justice. He also played an important role in our Fraternity by spreading Masonry in and out of the country. It is only right and timely to give tribute to our Brother Mariano Ponce. A true son of Baliuag, a true son of our Fraternity.) read VW Salapong.

MW Purisima also sent his congratulations to Baliwag 301 for their simultaneous Past Master's Night and lodge anniversary.

VW Salapong concluded reading the Grand Master's message, ""*Ito ang ating pinili, ang maglingkod ng tunay sa Kapatiran at sa bayan,"* (This is what we chose, to genuinely serve our Brotherhood and our Country.) ... Let us be a Mariano Ponce to our Fraternity and Country!"

Recollections

Ponce had 4 children—Pedro, Carmen, Consolacion and Maria.

Bro. Villaroman, coming from the line of the daughter Car-



VW Quioc delivers the funeral rite.



Baliwag 301 bros with the Ponce descendants: (Foreground, starting 3rd from left) VW Enrico Salapong, DDGM R3-E; Bro Alfonso "Ponch" Villaroman; Mrs. Aurora Gonzales (mother); Jayjay Ponce Gonzales (son); WM Noel Yero; and Bro. Jay Villangca, SW.

men, recalled certain handed-down family stories. "He was a polyglot. He could speak straight Spanish, French, German, English, Cantonese and Nihongo."

The Ponce siblings grew up in a home that was regularly filled with visitors. Townsfolk came asking for help. Ponce's associates in politics, government, publishing and old 1896 comrades often dropped by for a chat or a conference.

But it was a happy home. No matter how often Ponce was out of the house, yet he always returned with pasalubong (present) for the family.

Unfortunately, the ancestral house was gutted by flames in 1962. A lighted cigarette, left untended by the caretaker, started the fire.

Pilar Bautista, from daughter Consolacion's lineage, missed the crisp yellowing manuscripts that had been razed to ashes. Heaps of history vanished forever.

One invaluable relic lost was a papier mache statuette that Rizal had personally made and presented to Ponce as a gift.

With the house gone, yet impressions and stories remained. "He was a doctor. He could have just practiced his profession and lived well. But he chose to sacrifice and suffer for his country despite coming from a well-off landed family," she said.

"These are what we need in the country today—sacrifice and love for the country. That's why our great grandfather admired the patriotic spirit of the Japanese," she said.

VW Salapong commended the bros of Baliwag 301. He said, "Masons owe it to their deceased brothers to offer the last tribute of their affection. While the demise of a brother could have severed our strong connection with him, it has not impaired our obligations to the living. Hence, I am deeply honored and privileged to be included as one of the participants in this time-honored and long due rite for Bro. Ponce."

Baliwag 301's initiative was a fitting kick off for the District's centenary countdown in 2019, the 100th year anniversary of Malolos Lodge No. 46.

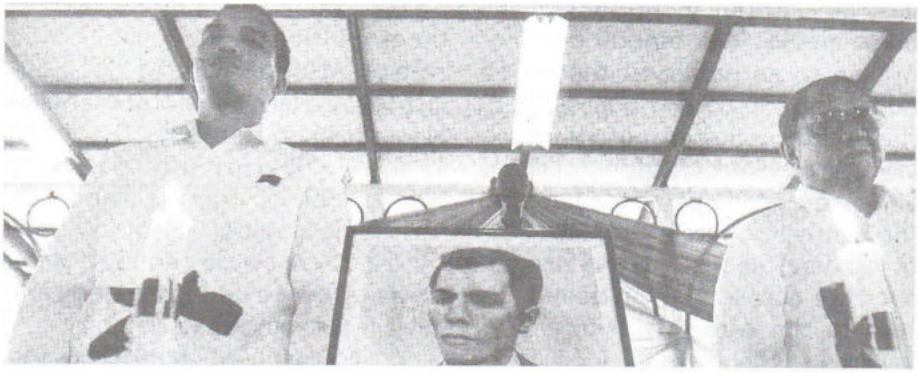
Malolos 46 is the oldest of Bulacan's 9 blue lodges.

"Bulacan is a cradle of noble heroes. We must carry on with the tradition of honoring these outstanding men and women in our history. Bros. Ponce and Del Pilar will serve as our inspiration for 2019," said VW Salapong.• **EC**

See article on Mariano Ponce.

Bonifacio Sesquicentennial

The funeral rite that saved the GLP



This Bonifacio 199 funeral rite photo—printed in the Manla Bulletin on December 1, 2013—is a message enough. At left is VW Bro Rafael B. Roxas, Jr.; at right, WB Juanito R. Angeles.

Philippine Masons would have been plunged into public ridicule were it not for the bros of Andres Bonifacio Lodge No. 199.

It was two weeks after super typhoon Yolanda, the strongest storm ever to hit man on record. It plowed right through Central Philippines killing thousands, destroying millions—and disrupting social schedules.

But still, the nation was set to observe the 150th Birth Anniversary of national hero and Mason Andres Bonifacio on November 30. The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the Philippines (GLP), however, had not readied any event yet to honor its own.

What would it make of Masons, touting themselves as "cradle of heroes" and "leaders of the 1896 Revolution," if they would only stand back and ignore a brother feted by the whole country?

Then MW Juanito G. Espino was deep in organizing and trafficking relief. Help had to be rushed quickly and regularly to the bros in Tacloban City in Leyte and elsewhere in the Visayas. With his hands full, he called then WM Noel Loyola of Bonifacio 199.

MW Espino instructed WM Loyola to come up with a public event, like a funeral rite, for their lodge's namesake on November 30.

WM Loyola obeyed. November 30 was the 39th founding anniversary of Bonifacio 199. The bros were ready. All it needed was to find the funeral rite a spot in the lodge's tight schedule—between the flag-raising ceremony at Bonifacio Monument in Caloo-

can City in the morning, and the Lodge Anniversary Celebrations in the afternoon.

WM Loyola only had 5 working days in his hands. On the third day, he sent out invitations to the mass media. The funeral ceremony had to go public—if the Grand Lodge were to deliver a message in the Bonifacio Sesquicentennial.

Noteworthy, a funeral rite is a Masonic privilege. Together with the family of a deceased Mason, the bros come together to say prayers over the corpse and commend the soul to the Almighty before it is lowered to the grave.

But Bonifacio was secretly executed and buried, along with his brother Procopio, on May 10, 1987 in Maragondon, Cavite. His skull and bones were dug up nearly three decades later.

Displayed next at the Department of Justice building then—now the College of Arts and Sciences of U.P. Manila along Padre Faura— his remains, along with his surviving manuscripts, were buried under the ruins during the Liberation bombing of Manila in 1945.

Bonifacio's remains had never been recovered since then.

Without a corpse or remains, the Bonifacio funeral rite was to be symbolic.

Cool and mild-mannered, WM Loyola systematically set things in place like the I.T. expert that he is.

On November 30, 2013, Bonifacio 199 and their families trooped to Orosa Hall, inside the Balara Filtration Plant, in Diliman, Quezon City. Veteran ritualists administered the rite. RW Fernando V. Pascua and VW Raynor Taroy led the brethren and guests during the ceremony.

Next, Bro. Gary Bonifacio, of the Scottish Perla del Oriente Lodge and great-grandnephew of the revolutionary hero, paid a brief eulogy. Also, he pointed out similarities between the Katipunan and Masonic operations.

He is currently writing a book about it, drawing from historical documents.

There were no TV news crews. All were on big events. Only newspaper journalists came.

Regardless, Bonifacio 199 made it to the news on the next day.

The *Philippine Star* quoted WM Loyola about giving "the soul of Bro. Bonifacio a rest"—after 116 years.

The *Manila Bulletin*, in its inside pages, laid out an impressive photo of the rite—affording cowans to take a peek into the solemnity, elegance and God-centeredness of Masonic rituals.

The long-year calls for a Bonifacio state funeral, by Vice-president Jejomar Binay and other sectors, in the run-up to the sesquicentennial fell on deaf ears. But the Bulletin photo, showing Masonry's care and remembrance for its members, was comfort enough—even when the state had ignored the heroes to whom it owed huge debts of gratitude.

But for the bros of Bonifacio 199, the reason behind holding the rite was plain and simple. They leave no brother behind—even in death. • **EC**

The life and times of Mariano Ponce

By WB Edmund Coronel

The third bro in the Grand Triumvirate, low-profiled Mariano Ponce is the unsung hero behind the survival of the newfound Philippine Masonry and a number of events in history.



The famous propagandista triumvirate photo of (from left) Jose Rizal, Marcelo Del Pilar and Mariano Ponce—all Masons.

Rarely have Filipino Masons acknowledged the important role Illus. Bro. Mariano Ponce played in history; even in Masonry. Many do not even know who Bro. Ponce is. But to know Ponce is to discover how Philippine Freemasonry was founded, saved from near collapse, and persisted.

Ponce is the guy-in-chair in the famous *propagandista* triumvirate photo with Jose Rizal and Marcelo Del Pilar. Unfortunately, ready biographies of Ponce in the internet are disappointing. They are few, short and say nothing much.

Searching for Ponce

So, a patient and systematic research was taken. Data popped up here and there. But when you wriggle them out for a narrative, they remained firm. It meant that something bigger lay underneath, weighed down by a mass of tangling roots and concatenated linkages.

This is true for Ponce's life in Spain. There is little personal data about his Madrid days. But if his propagandista days were ever to be known at all, one has to pore over the history of the *La Solidaridad* paper itself. It's because Ponce and La Solidaridad are one.

But then again, you search for Ponce by reading into the lives of either Rizal or Del Pilar. True, they made up a triumvirate. But they were also, in a sense, the three Grand Masters—Solomon the King of Israel, Hiram the King of Tyre, and Hiram Abiff the widow's son. You cannot know the life of one without getting the Master's password from the other.

And until Hiram Abiff passed away, the other Grand Masters have never gone to live their separate lives. With Rizal and Del Pilar gone, Ponce finally led his own life as a diplomat and later, as a statesman. Copious data finally came out in the second and third phases of his life.

Assembling all these data into an article, they inevitably run into a long piece. For one, Ponce had led a long career, popping up at history's crucial twists and turns. For the other, background events needed description if we were to get a clearer picture of the whys-and-wherefores of Ponce's actions and his times.

Patriotic bug

Mariano Ponce y Collantes was born to a rich landed family in Baliwag, Bulacan on March 23, 1863. He was the eldest of the seven children of Mariano Ponce, Sr. and Maria Collantes y de los Santos. Privileged with a good life, he enjoyed the benefits of education first, in his hometown, and later in the private secondary schools of Juan Evangelista, Hugo Ilagan and Escolastico Salandanan in Manila.

He went to Colegio San Juan de Letran in 1885 and got his *Bachiller en Artes* degree. Wanting more, he enrolled in the University of Santo Tomas (UST) for a medicine degree In 1887. It was during his medical studies when he was



Rare photo. *Ponce (back row in the middle) poses for a souvenir shot with Jap doctors and certain Filipinos. The guy at far left (back row) is Bro. Artemio Ricarte. Help! Can someone please help us identify the other Filipinos in the picture who are probably Masons, too? / Photo courtesy of Ponce Descendants*

bitten by the patriotic bug. It had become his life ever since.

The *Samahang Pangkasaysayan ng Bulakan (Sampaka)*, a local history society, have stored up a rich stock of historical info about Ponce and other Bulacan heroes over the past half century. In its Facebook page, the Sampaka had it that Ponce, while studying in UST, once attended a political powwow in Tondo. There, he heard and met his legendary fellow Bulakeño, Del Pilar. They had stuck together since then.

First Propaganda Movement

Del Pilar mentored Ponce into the reform works. A bold and smart lawyer, Del Pilar was actually a product of Padre Jose Burgos, the leader of the First Propaganda Movement in 1870.

Padre Burgos, a *mestizo* priest, championed the secularization of the churches. *Indio* (native) clergies, who had graduated from the seminaries, were called "*seculars*." In the mid-1800s, it was already crystal clear that the friars, all Spanish, had been the immoral and corrupting influence in Spanish-ruled Philippines. They spread malice and offsprings more than the word of God.

So, Burgos waged his secularization campaign on two fronts—at home and in Spain. In Manila, he published self-authored pamphlets dealing with correct Church beliefs

and political exposes. He also conducted teach-ins on issues of the day with students and liberal Filipinos who came to be called "*reformadores*" (reformists).

"True, Del Pilar fathered the Filipino newspaper profession. But it was Ponce who first sat on the crucible of press freedom; moreover, in an international scale."

Fully aware of the friars' tenacious cling to power, the reformists brought the campaign to Madrid and aired out issues through a periodical called *El Eco de Filpinas*.

Passing the parishes to the indio priests meant throwing hundreds of rich and horny *frailes* out of job—and back to Spain. Soon, the friars struck back. They wheedled soldiers in Cavite to mutiny, framed Burgos up, and wrung his neck in 1872 with two other priests.

The reformists suffered a heavy blow. They were rounded up, executed and exiled abroad. Many of them were Masons like Antonio Regidor, Jose Ma. Basa, Maximo Innocencio, Enrique Paraiso, Maximo Paterno, Ambrosio Rianzares Bautista and Joaquin Pardo de Tavera.

During the trial, Enrique Genato ratted the regular attendees of Burgos' teach-ins in his *almacen* (warehouse) in Malabon. Del Pilar's name popped up.

This was the First Propaganda Movement. But it was also the first time that Filipino priests and Masons had teamed up together for a cause.

Del Pilar escaped and survived the 1872 crackdown. His law studies in UST were interrupted. But he had vowed his life to pester the friars from then on.

After nearly a decade, he resumed and finished law in 1880. On his return to Bulacan, he turned the province into a steaming cauldron of dissent.

In 1885, he was counsel to the *cabezas de barangay* ("barangay captains") of Malolos protesting over the padding of the local tax list by the cura paroco (parish curate) in 1885.

On his advice, the Malolos *gobernadorcillo* (town mayor), Manuel Crisostomo, had the Malolos cura censured for exposing corpses (but costly serviced by the Church) in church wakes—in full defiance of a national sanitation law—by the Spanish Bulacan governor, Manuel Gómez Florio.

Del Pilar's anti-friar coups even reached Binondo. In 1887, he lawyered for the Binondo *gobernadorcillo*, Timoteo Lanuza, and his constituents against their parish priest for favoring Chinese *mestizos* in lucrative Church appointments in 1887.

Del Pilar resumed where Padre Burgos had left off. He almost single-handedly revived the slumbering reform campaign. Old *almacen* pals were called back to action. Filipino exiles of 1872 were contacted. Fresh recruits were enlisted.

Until Del Pilar and the reformists launched the biggest strike of them all, the Manifesto Rally, in the following year.

Manifesto Rally

On the morning of March 1, 1888, *principales* (prominent citizens) from Manila's various districts and nearby provinces—led by Doroteo Cortés and José A. Ramos—marched to Intramuros.

Cortez was the *gobernadorcillo* of Sta. Cruz district in Manila. Ramos owned La Gran Britaña bazaar—where Jose Rizal's novel, *Noli Me Tangere*, from Hong Kong were being secretly dropped for distribution.

The marchers filed before the office of the Manila Civil Governor, José Centeno. a manifesto (or petition) calling for the expulsion of all the friars in the Philippines.

Titled "*Viva España! Viva el Rey! Viva el Ejército! Fuera los Frailes!*" (Long live Spain! Long live the King! Long live the Army! Kick out the Friars!), the petition was penned by Del Pilar.

The rally itself was unprecedented. But no mass action in Spanish ruled Philippines had been so bold, so direct, as to call openly for the expulsion of the friars.

Noteworthy, Governor Centeno and Ramos were Masons. They were both members of Logia Luz de Oriente in Manila. But the protest rally had pressed the friars' button so that even the fraternal connections collapsed in the heat of the backlash. Pulling strings, the friars had maneuvered Governor-general Emilio Terrero—the silent reformist supporter—into resignation.

Governor-general Terrero was a Mason.

Soon, acting Governor-general Antonio Molto, a friar stooge, jumped into nabbing, jailing and trying the rally's organizers.

Flight to Spain

After meeting Del Pilar in 1887, a driven Ponce quickly threw himself into organizing works. Along with fellow Bulakeños—Gregorio Santillán, Mariano Crisóstomo, Pedro Serrano Lactao, and José Gatmaitán—they established the *Caja de Jesús, María y José* (Jesus, Mary and Joseph Fund), a reformist fundraising machine fronting as a charity foundation for bright but indigent kids.

Ponce was also among the efficient hands that had secretly distributed the Noli around. Rizal borrowed the printing money from another rich kid in Bulacan, Maximo Viola. Viola, in turn, referred Ponce to his idol, Rizal.

Ma. Luisa T. Camagay, history professor at the University of the Philippines, quoted Rizal's letter to Ponce dated April 30, 1888, in her paper "Mariano Ponce: Emissary to Japan"—

> Forgive me for calling you my friend as I do in this letter. Even if we have not met in person, I already consider you a

friend because of the many times you have extended your help to me. It is a great honor to be your friend. Our common friend, Viola, mentioned your graciousness in taking care of my book. I am very grateful for your kindness and I hope I will be able to return the favor someday. I am presently in America and on my way to Europe. I will write to you from there because I would like us to continue our communication.

Ponce was deep in patriotic works even while still in college. He was, by all indications, one of the organizers of the Manifesto Rally. But suspects were being rounded up left and right.

Anticipating perhaps an imminent arrest, Ponce suddenly quit his medical studies in UST in the first week of June in 1888 to finish it in Spain. He joined—or was joined by—his cousin Damaso in Madrid.

In Spain, Ponce enrolled in medicine at the Universidad Central de Madrid. He was barely over with his first semester when he had busied himself again with patriotic works—and Masonry.

By all indications, he was yet a student when he joined, and was raised, in Logia Iberia in Madrid sometime in 1888.

Before the year was over, Ponce joined the other Filipino students in Barcelona in the first week of December to sit down with the older batch of reformers. They laid out a propaganda campaign program. Here, Ponce met Rizal for the first time.

On December 13, 1888, the attendees organized themselves into an association called *La Solidaridad* (The Solidarity). The leadership was offered to Rizal. But he refused it. The presidency was passed to Rizal's cousin, Galicano Apacible.

Like Apacible, the rest of the officers were students in Spanish medical schools, as follows: Graciano Lopez y Jaena, of Iloilo, vice-president; Mariano Ponce, of Bulacan, treasurer; and Manuel Sta. Maria, secretary.

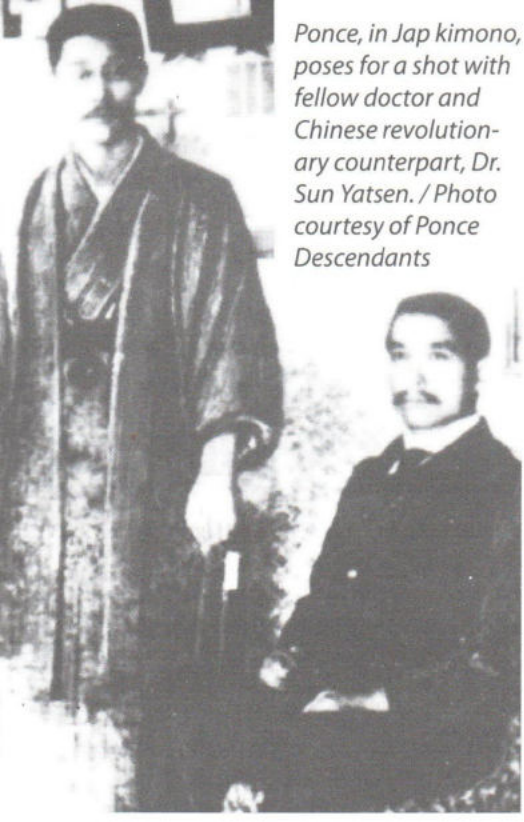
More Filipinos came to Barcelona for a *media noche* (New Year's Eve) banquet. On the next day, January 1, Del Pilar arrived from Hong Kong carrying instructions from Manila.

Ponce and Del Plar were reunited at last.

Second Propaganda Movement

When Ponce sailed to Spain, Del Pilar was left behind running from *sala to sala*, representing the rallyists in court. He was yet a shadowy figure to the friars. But the reformers knew that, sooner or later, the authorities would discover who and what Del Pilar really was.

So, the Manila reformers took over Del Pilar's *Caja de Jesus, Maria y Jose* and turned it into the Comité de Propaganda—codenamed "*Comite de San Patricio*" in their succeeding letters. Its task was to gather funds in Manila to ship comrades out to Spain and finance the reform campaign in the heart of



Ponce, in Jap kimono, poses for a shot with fellow doctor and Chinese revolutionary counterpart, Dr. Sun Yatsen. / Photo courtesy of Ponce Descendants

the empire.

It had taken the authorities nearly eight months since the rally to discover the brains behind the anti-friar coups. A warrant was finally issued for the arrest of Del Pilar on charges of *filibustero* or "subversion."

Seeing his wife and two daughters for the last time, Del Pilar secretly boarded a ship for Hong Kong on October 28, 1888—by all indications, the *Don Juan*, captained by Rafael Beltran, a Mason, who had smuggled the *Noli* into the Philippines.

Significantly, Hong Kong had served as a sanctuary and a springboard for both the persecuted and the reformers, respectively. Jose Ma. Basa, an 1872 veteran, was the Filipino contact in the British colony.

Seemingly, Del Pilar and the reformers had primed and installed the propaganda machinery in place—from the Manila *Comite de Proganda* to the Hong Kong backdoor. Hence, a long operational network running from Manila, to Asia and Europe laid at the *propagandistas*' disposal.

No sooner had Del Pilar sprang into action. First, they established a regular publication—if the propaganda were to have a medium, of course. Each member threw in a couple of pesos for start-up capital. Hence, each one had a share. Jaena, the orator among the students, was voted Editor. Ponce landed as Literary Editor.

But still, the paper required official registration. The Sampaka files claimed that Ponce and Ambrosio Rianzares Bautista were listed as "owners." Its office was Ponce's apartment in Barcelona—Rambla, Canaletas 2, 30–where Del Pilar was similarly staying.

Finally, Del Pilar bridged the First and Second Propaganda Movements.

On February 15, 1889—6 days after the 52nd birth anniversary of Padre Burgos—the newspaper "La Solidaridad" went off the press with a proclaimed mission—

> To combat all reaction and all backward steps; to applaud and accept every liberal idea and to defend progress; in a word, to be propagandists first and foremost of all democratic ideals, hop-



Besides arms and ammo, Ponce (in kimono) helped the Chinese win independence by lending the Philippine office to Dr. Sun Yatsen for a press interview in 1901. It was a Philippine office because of the La Independencia newspaper pinned on the wall. Also, only a Filipino (right of Ponce) would photo bomb when everybody else, besides the reporter, was staring down.

ing that these may reign in all nations here and beyond the seas.

The Second Propaganda Movement was on.

Running a paper

It was a wonder where Ponce had drawn up all his energies to finish his medicine degree, study for Masonic degrees, run and write for a paper—and save a country.

Ponce, in his late 20s, was admirable for handling a wild pack of writers and artists with attitudes—even ego-parading politicians in the group. His people skills allowed him to swim past the youthful craziness of his contemporaries and got the job done.

Even the Ponce descendants today remembered stories of how their great grandfather has dealt with Jaena, a real character among the *propagandistas*. Ponce himself was a witness to Jaena's crowd-moving orations. The women waved their hankies. The men stood up on their seats applauding and catching a glimpse of the Filipino orator mobbed by the audience.

But when drunk, Jaena was often dragged by Ponce before a table with a pen and paper, and forced to write between cups of coffee, to beat the press deadline.

Soon, Jaena turned alcoholic. Ponce and Del Pilar held back his allowance until he had submitted all his works.

This led Del Pilar to take the editorship away from Jaena when the paper moved to Madrid in the following year.

Jaena complained to Rizal about the "injustice" committed by the two *patrioteros* (false patriots).

But Rizal took the issue lightly. He once bantered about Jaena, "His great love is politics and literature. I do not know for sure whether he loves politics in order to deliver speeches or he loves literature to be a politician."

When sober, Jaena worked on his plan to go to Cuba, another Spanish colony, and do good for the Philippines. Rizal discouraged him. He would get nothing but yellow fever out of Cuba.

Jaena only gave up when the *Ministerio de Ultramar* (Overseas Ministry) failed to come up with his shipping fare to Havana.

Seemingly, Rizal was not original in going to and serving in Cuba.

Press freedom

La Solidaridad—codenamed "Sol" by the *propagandistas*—was nine months into operation when it was dragged to court and its mettle, tested. Ponce was caught in the center of the controversy.

Sol printed on its October 31, 1889 issue a satirical piece titled "Madrid Impressions of a Filipino" by the prized painter Juan Luna. Celso Mir Deas, publisher of *El Pueblo Soberano*, got hold of a copy and took it as an insult to the Spanish race.

He returned the satire, in slimy debasing superlatives, in his article "To Taga-Ilog" printed in his paper on November 9, 1889. A tit for tat, Mir Deas would have been right had he not committed a slight error. He mistook Juan for the kid brother, Antonio, whom he had accused of ingratitude, filibusterism, disloyalty, and indecency. The article also disparaged the Filipinos in whole in the lowest terms.

Taga-ilog was the nom de plume of Antonio Luna in Sol.

Expectedly, the hot-tempered Luna was enraged. From Madrid, he traveled to Barcelona and spotted Mir Deas in a coffee shop. Antonio walked before Mir Deas, spat him on the face, threw him his business card and challenged him to a duel.

Mir Deas refused, of course. Luna made pun of his name into "*Mier das*" (shit in Spanish). Rather than accuse Luna, Mir Deas swung his finger to a surprised Ponce for the name-calling, instead.

Mir Deas was mad for being called a "shit." But Ponce was matter-of-fact about it.

Mir Deas, however, was a poor loser. Soon, police came and searched Ponce's apartment. Four copies of *La Vision del Fray Rodriguez* (The Vision of Friar Rodriguez) by "Dimas Alang"—a satire about the friars' censure of Rizal's *Noli*—were found. Hurled to court, Ponce explained that he had got the pamphlets in his professional capacity as a newspaper editor—not personal belief or anything.

The Madrid and Barcelona papers broke out the news. The Spanish Senate, Congress and Council of Ministers looked into the incident. The court dropped the accusations against Ponce.

So, Ponce was briefly famous

in Spain. He wrote to Rizal that the Spanish press had sided with the Filipinos.

The Spanish newspapers had no doubt seen a threat to free press with the arrest of one of their numbers, regardless if he was a Filipino or not. But Ponce and the *propagandistas* were unmindful of what they had passed onto Philippine journalism.

True, Del Pilar fathered the Filipino newspaper profession. But it was Ponce who first sat on the crucible of press freedom; moreover, in an international scale.

Logia Revolucion

Many missed this point. Sol was labeled as "*Quincenario democratico*" (Democratic fortnightly). The *propagandistas*, in its first issue, branded themselves as "democrats."

They were carrying out in fact a program beyond mere Enlightenment rhetoric of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity." A democrat, being a proponent of democracy, advances a majority rule—that is, a representative government.

Certainly, a colonial government, no matter how reformed, is not a representative government by any means.

So, in April 1889, Del Pilar, a Master Mason by this time, gathered all the Filipino Masons in Barcelona and founded "Logia Revolucion"—with Jaena as Master. Two Cubans and a Spanish, Celso Mir Deas—when still an agreeable fellow—were charter members.

By all indications, Del Pilar was raised in Hong Kong.

Like Del Pilar, Ponce was yet a 30 degree Mason.

Surprisingly, Grand Master Miguel Morayta of the Spanish Grand Orient —a statesman and professor—approved the radically-named lodge. This is proof enough how he loved the Filipino Masons.

Logia Revolucion is also proof enough that the *propagandistas* are not the lame assimilationists that leftist-posturing historians have painted them today. They got it all wrong.

Wearing fine suits and vests, the *propagandistas* were certainly not in the same class as the hippies and student activists of the early 1970s. The hippies and student activists rebelled because of materialism and capitalism.

The *propagandistas* rebelled from lack of these.

So, founding Logia Revolucion, if anything, was Del Pilar's message to Madrid—deliver the goods or we will rise in revolt.

Now, what is the big deal about sending Filipino *deputados* (deputies) to the Cortes (Spanish parliament)? The Philippines actually had a seat that was first acquired in 1811 but discontinued in the 1860s.

What had irked the *propagandistas* and sympathetic Spanish liberals was the fact that the more backward and unproductive colonies, Cuba and Puerto Rico, had deputies; the Philippines—despite being the Church's milking cow—



A 1955 photo of Boy Scouts on a field trip to the Ponce ancestral home before it was gutted by fire in 1962. / Downloaded from Flicker

none.

So, on April 25, 1889, they sent a petition to the Cortes asking for the restoration of the Philippine seat. Representatives from the Hispano-Filipino Association of Madrid, the Mutual Association of the Philippines in Catalufia and La Solidaridad came together and signed the document that was sent next to the Ultramar Minister.

Tomas Arejola, a lawyer and another propagandista, led the legal battle in the Spanish government offices.

Regaining the Philippine seat—hence, passing pro-Filipino legislations—was one of the key reasons why they had waged a propaganda campaign. And its first bid for a representative government was snubbed.

Logia Solidaridad

So, Del Pilar set his eyes on Madrid to become the propaganda base before 1889 ended. The Mir Deas controversy had made La Solidaridad a name. It gave the propaganda a windfall of attention. They were going for the bigtime. Barcelona was a fun and liberal city, alright. Las Ramblas—the 1.2 km. stretch where Sol had its office located—was (and still is) famous for street cafes by day and hot chicas by night.

But Madrid was the capital of the Spanish empire. With all its government offices, Madrid was the audience that the *propagandistas*

ought to persuade.

Readying to move to Madrid, Ponce was elected as quickly as he resigned as Venerable Master of Logia Revolucion in November 1889. Rapid turnovers marked the newfound lodge from Jaena to Ponce.

So were the advancements of Del Pilar, Ponce and other Filipinos in the Craft. As early as September 1889, the two Bulakeños were already upped to 300.

On December 9, in Madrid, Del Pilar sat down with Filipino Masons again. They wanted to reconstitute a dissolved Spanish lodge called "Logia Solidaridad No. 53." Fund irregularities had rocked the dead lodge, driving the members away. It crashed after nearly 2 years of operation.

It was a chance the *propagandistas* would never want to miss.

Again, Grand Master Morayta backed up the Filipino Masons. On May 21, 1890, he handed Logia Solidaridad back its charter. The reconstitution was approved because old members, like Julio Llorente of Cebu, were part of the revival. Morayta even administered the installation rite to the officers, led by Llorente as Venerable Master.

Finally, the *propagandistas* were juggling three La Solidaridad in a row—the propaganda committee, the paper and the Masonic lodge.

Logia Revolucion was the first Masonic lodge founded by Filipino Masons along with Cubans and a Spaniard. But Logia Solidaridad was the first all-Filipino Masonic lodge.

With a lodge filled and ran by Filipinos, confidence was secured. Combining Masonry and reform therefore became possible.

In the following year, in 1890, Del Pilar was elected Master of Logia Solidaridad; Ponce, the Secretary.

On November 5, 1890, Del Pilar raised Jose Rizal to the Master Mason degree.

But before the year ended, an intrigue would split the Master and the newly-raised Mason.

Keeping the bond

In Madrid, Ponce was appointed Assistant Editor of Sol. But the job covered not only the paper. He also had to look out for things that the Editor, Del Pilar, could not. Keeping the bonds between the *propagandistas* topped his non-journalistic duties.

One clear case was Jose Ma. Panganiban of Camarines Norte, another writer for La Solidaridad, who had run into serious trouble. He fell in love with a woman. But her husband discovered the affair.

So, the furious husband and his companion beat Panganiban senseless, leaving him with a big wound on the head.

Ponce fixed things up. "The case never reached the court and we separated the lovers," he wrote.

Until tuberculosis hit Panganiban. On his deathbed, he apologized to Rizal, "If I only have the strength I had before, I will work

with you unto the bitter end."

To Ponce, he passed his dying request. Panganiban wanted his epitaph inscribed as—"Here lies the Defender of the Filipino Dignity."

The *propagandistas* mourned the death of Panganiban, at age 27, on August 19, 1890. Buried at the Barcelona public cemetery, the lines on his tombstone read "Here lies the Defender of the Filipino Dignity."

Ponce fulfilled his comrade's final wish.

By caring for peers and seniors even at deathbed, Ponce had undoubtedly taught the *propagandistas* Brotherly Love which they would later bring to the battlefield.

Rizal-Del Pilar tiff

When Rizal was raised to Master Mason, the national hero was 29; Rianzares Bautista, 60; Del Pilar, 40; Jaena, 34—and Ponce, 27. Many of the *propagandistas*, being students, were in their late twenties.

Seemingly, Ponce was equipped with maturity and PR skills beyond his age to keep men of various backgrounds in line and behind the program. His people skills were put again to the test during the New Year's Eve banquet on December 31, 1890.

In a Del Pilar biography (*Marcelo H. Del Pilar: Ang Kanyang Buhay, Diwa at Panulat*, 1984), the author Antonio B. Valeriano printed a portion of Del Pilar's report to his brother-in-law, Deodato Arellano, a key figure in the *Comite de Propaganda* in Manila.

Two days before—so Del Pilar wrote—the *propagandistas* were actually huddled in a serious conference about the paper's policy. Must Sol, the propaganda instrument, come under the chairman of the politics department or stay independent? If so, who would Sol represent? Conversely, to whom was the paper accountable?

Amid the meeting, Rizal reproached some of the members for unproductive wine-swilling, women-chasing and dusk-to-dawn gambling habits—all detrimental to their studies and an infidelity to their parents who sent matriculation fees from home.

Rizal was right. But the guilty found him too bossy and preachy. Fearing a Rizal takeover in a revamp, they decided to move fast.

So, as the New Year's Eve party raged on in the next evening, a snap election for the leadership of the Filipino colony in Madrid was surprisingly called out. Voices chorused seconding the suggestion just as fast. Eduardo de Lete, the party host, approved it.

Soon, all the fun shifted to partisan excitement. But Del Pilar took his leave, instructing Ponce to make the judgment calls in his behalf.

Two candidates were put up to a vote—Rizal and Del Pilar. Whoever gets the two-thirds vote wins.

On the first balloting, nobody got the 2/3 vote though Rizal had the most number. A second and third balloting was conducted. Still, neither Rizal nor Del Pilar was get-

ting the magic number.

At this point, Rizal stood up and addressed all, *"Bueno!* Now I know I have nineteen friends in the colony. Adios, gentlemen. I will prepare my suitcases. Till then." He left the party.

Seeing the unity of the colony tearing apart between Pilaristas and Rizalistas, Ponce stood up and urged everyone to vote for Rizal instead of Del Pilar. But with Rizal gone, the voters went for Del Pilar.

Biographer Valeriano pointed out that, of all the attendees, De Lete, the party host, had the most reason to gloat and swap high-fives in a corner. It was fun for him to see Rizal's ego blasted by the knowledge that Madrid was not solid behind him. The armor of the propagandista figurehead was dented.

De Lete and Rizal were rivals since Ateneo high school days.

Healing the tiff

Ponce was late to realize that it was a set up. De Lete and his pals had pulled a fast one. True, he was closely identified with Del Pilar. But that didn't make him prejudicial to Rizal.

Ponce was actually looking up to Rizal.

When Sol had taken off, he wrote Rizal to come to Spain and stay in his Barcelona apartment *along with* Del Pilar free of charge.

Rizal wrote back that they must also invite Pedro Serrano Laktao to come and make the "Three Musketeers" four; hence, raising the chances to change the people and save the world.

When Rizal called for more features on renowned Filipinos, Ponce quickly complied. He wrote about Panday Pira, the canon-maker, as proof of an advanced precolonial Filipino civilization contrary to the debasements of the bigoted friars and Spaniards.

Writing for La Solidaridad, Ponce hid his true identity behind the pen names of "Kalipulako" (the actual name of Lapu-lapu), "Tikbalang" (a Philippine nocturnal creature) and "Naning" (his real nickname).

Rizal, in turn, trusted Ponce with the manuscripts of *La vision del Fray Rodriguez* and *Por telepono* for printing into pamphlets.

Ponce and Rizal were actually in good terms. And Ponce used it to heal the rift.

A month after the New Year, Rizal boarded with the Boustead family in Biarritz in France to write his second novel, *El Filibusterismo*. His British host, Eduardo, was married to a Filipina. They begot two good-looking Fil-Brit daughters. The youngest, Nelly, pumped Rizal's heart a mile a minute.

News traveled fast among the Filipinos in Europe. Ponce picked up his cue.

He wrote Rizal, briefly reported certain businesses and kidded him with an "advice" from Selong (Del Pilar)—never to switch the O with E of the *Noli* (hence Neli); lest, he writes a different novel.

Ponce's joke tickled Rizal's rib. Rizal wrote back giving a simi-

lar "advice"—"You, Naning (Ponce), take care in addressing me, not my *tocaya* (namesake) `My dear Pepa'..."

Seemingly, Ponce was hot for a girl named Josefa—commonly nicknamed Pepa—in Madrid.

Rizal continued, "Selong is in a better lot should `Arao' and `Aurora' switched during his sleep-talking because they sound alike and are not recognizable."

Now, it sounded like Del Pilar was flirting with a woman named Aurora.

Unlike Masons today, Rizal and Del Pilar didn't rush to a lodge trial or the Committee on Jurisprudence. Instead, a brother (Ponce) stepped in as go-between and cracked a joke—laden with plain but sincere affection. Bad feelings were dissipated. Good relations resumed between the triumvirate.

Interestingly, Ponce saved Philippine Freemasonry by a sweetheart joke from near abortion by the idiots who had conspired to destroy it.

Folding up

Between June and July 1891, Logia La Solidaridad sent a second petition to the Spanish parliament.

It was a bold move. It was the first time that a Masonic lodge or "chapter" had lobbied for a national issue before a national legislative body.

A circular was sent out to the Spanish lodges asking for help to get the petition through.

Like in 1889, no response came down from the Cortes or Overseas Ministry for nearly a year. Another circular was issued on April 5, 1892 to the lodges for help but again, with same result.

Nothing was gained. It was the cue Rizal had been waiting for to finally return to the Philippines and bring the reform campaign home. All this time, he was telling the *propagandistas* that the real battle was at home. But the *Comite de Propaganda* in Manila never wanted him to come home.

"Ponce saved Philippine Freemasonry by a sweetheart joke from near abortion."

Knowing of Rizal's unstoppable homecoming, Del Pilar executed a plan which had been gathering dust since 1890. He tasked Antonio Luna and Pedro Serrano Lactao to return to Manila and organize Masonic lodges to help Rizal on his return.

Again, Grand Master Morayta backed up the Filipino Masons. Five Spanish Grand Orient lodges were already operating in the Philippines. Still, he saw to it that Del Pilar would get his plan moving.

But Luna, for some reasons, was diverted to France. Only Lactao headed to Manila at the close of 1891. On January 6, 1892, Nilad Lodge, the first all-Filipino lodge in the Philippines, was organized.

Making good of his word,

Rizal immediately went around seeing and gathering associates as soon as he had arrived on June 21, 1892. Masons were at hand to receive him in Bulacan, Pampanga and Manila.

On July 3, 1892, he founded La Liga Filipina, a reform group fronting as a civic association. Three days later, he was nabbed and deported to Dapitan in Zamboanga province.

For the reformers, losing Rizal meant losing their leader. It was like losing the battle. But still, Rizal was correct.

On the night of July 7, a day after Rizal's arrest, Andres Bonifacio, Teodoro Plata and Ladislao Diwa organized the Katipunan revolutionary society. Deodato Arellano, Del Pilar's brother in law, was the first Supremo. The battle had just begun.

The growth of Masonic lodges in the Philippines soon cut into the Comite members' finances. But the rise of Katipunan dried up sources of the Comite's funds. Supporters were diverting contributions to a deadlier and more realistic revolutionary project.

Expectedly, Sol subsidies dwindled into trickles. Soon, the paper jumped on issues. The last came out on November 15, 1895. Sol finally folded up.

Gloomy year

At the onset of 1896, there was hardly any propagandista in Madrid anymore. Many had gone home knowing that the Cortes representation bid was lost. Without Manila's subsidy, Del Pilar was reduced to pitiful poverty. He pawned his clothes for money. He picked up tobacco stubs in the streets to smoke. Worse, he was coughing blood.

In February, Del Pilar and Ponce decided to sail for Hong Kong to get updates, even new marching orders. They knew that a revolution was about to break out. Del Pilar, along with Arellano, actually devised the Katipunan coded communications drawn from Masonic cryptology.

"All this time, Ponce was a background figure who had fixed, smoothened and got things done. He was, by all accounts, a natural Lodge Secretary that he had been."

Arriving in Barcelona to board an Asian-bound ship, Del Pilar was suddenly seized by severe coughs and blood sputters. His tuberculosis had worsened. Ponce rented a room and waited for Del Pilar to improve. The wait took nearly 5 months—but to no avail.

All this time, Ponce was a background figure who had fixed, smoothened and got things done. He was, by all accounts, a natural Lodge Secretary that he had been.

And his final duty had never been more poignant than caring for the Lodge Master he once served in

the latter's dying days.

On his deathbed at the public Hospital de la Santa Cruz in Barcelona, Del Pilar gave Ponce his final requests and instructions. "Tell my family that I died in the presence of loyal friends," he said.

When Del Pilar passed away on July 4, 1896, there was nobody around except Ponce.

With the passing of Del Pilar, Ponce's 7-year propaganda works came to a close. He stayed in Spain. When the revolution broke out in the Philippines on August 26, 1896, he and the remaining Filipinos in Madrid, like Tomas Arejola, were jailed on suspicions of collusion with the Katipunan.

Ponce was released two days later through the intervention no doubt of Spanish Masons.

The year 1896 was a gloomy year. It opened with the death of Jaena due to tuberculosis on January 20, topped by Del Pilar on July 4, and closed with Rizal on December 30.

The titans were gone. Ponce, the last of the "Three Musketeers," sailed to Hong Kong alone.

Hong Kong interlude

Ponce was stuck In Hong Kong and nowhere to go. He watched, along with other stranded reformists and fleeing evacuees, the roller-coaster progress of the revolt. Spanish-ruled Philippines had never seen yet an uprising of this ferocity and wide scale.

It was difficult to picture upscale *ilustrado* reformists ("illustrious" or learned men) like Ponce overthrowing a government. But revolution was actually Plan B of the reform program should Spain remained callous to pleas and reason. Del Pilar bannered revolution over a Masonic lodge. Rizal tipped his readers on the how-tos—from organization to specific terrain movements around Manila—through his Fili character, the anarchist Simoun. And Bonifacio conscientiously took heed and implemented them all.

Radical, yet Bonifacio was just carrying out to inevitable conclusion what Burgos and the propaganidistas had begun. He was closely in touch with Apolinario Mabini and other reformists all this time. He was counted among the old guards.

Until Bonifacio was killed on May 10, 1897 in Cavite. Expectedly, the revolution fizzled out. And surprisingly, Emilio Aguinaldo quit the fight through the Pact of Biakna-Bato on December 14, 1897.

He left for Hong Kong with 25 of his men on December 27 carrying P400,000, half of the indemnity payment handed by the Spanish government.

It was in Hong Kong where Ponce met Aguinaldo for the first time. But according to historian John R. M. Taylor, author of the 5-volume "The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States" (1971), a wall of suspicion stood firm between the old and new guards while in the British colony.

Even then, the fledgling Aguinaldo government was in se-

rious trouble. Spain broke her promise to issue the P400,000 indemnity balance. Disgruntled revolutionary leaders in the Philippines were running after Aguinaldo. They sent Isabelo Artacho, Aguinaldo's director of commerce, to file an injunction in the Hong Kong court to freeze the release or use of the P400,000 indemnity pay that Aguinaldo had deposited in the banks. Many revolutionaries and their families direly needed the money.

Worse, in April 1898, U.S. Commodore George Dewey and U.S. Consul E, Spencer Pratt in Singapore promised to recognize Philippine independence if Aguinaldo would only lead his troops again and fight the Spaniards—a deal unknown to and not approved by the U.S. Congress. Aguinaldo, however, had promised U.S. control over the Manila Customs and two Philippine provinces as security in payment to all U.S. military aid.

Soon, the Spanish-American War broke out in the last week of April. It ended on December 10, 1898 with the Treaty of Paris. Spain sold the Philippines to the U.S. for $20 million.

Old or new guard, Ponce was still a Filipino. With the coming of a new enemy, he found a job in the Aguinaldo government as an emissary to Japan. Similarly, Antonio Luna, also stranded in Hong Kong, was listed as army general.



ABOVE: Ponce's wife, Okiyo Udanwara, wears a Filipino baro't saya when visited by a family member in Japanese kimono in Baliuag. / Photo courtesy of Ponce Descendants

Emissary

Ponce, 33, arrived in Yokohama in Japan on June 29, 1898. He put up office at 637 Myokojiyama in Kitagatamura district; his house, subsidized by the Hong Kong Filipino committee. It was an international port city. The locals, unlike in other parts, were tolerant of foreigners.

Jose Ramos-Ishikawa, one of the principal organizers of the 1888 Manifesto Rally, met him at

the port. He had settled down in Japan, adding "Ishikawa" to his name.

Ramos introduced Ponce to Ikariyama, a member of the Mikado council which was investigating the Philippine events. Ponce was passed next to Fukushima, teacher of the imperial prince, who grilled him hard on the policies of the Aguinaldo government, its viability to govern and win a war, strength of American forces in and around Manila, Filipino activities in Hong Kong, etc.

Ponce's transactions were abruptly stalled when the Japanese parliament held its regular elections. The Mikado party, which was investigating on Philippine affairs, stepped down to give way for the Shimpoto party with a more inward-looking program of government.

While waiting a call from the new cabinet, Ponce was invited to dinner at the house of Inukai Ki, formerly education minister and a prominent politician, in winter. There he met the other guest, Dr. Sun Yatsen, then China's revolutionary leader.

The 47-year grip of Empress Dowager Cixi on the Chinese throne had plunged the empire into the Dark Ages. Until China was humiliated before the world when the small Japanese kingdom had thrashed Empress Cixi's forces in Korea during the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895.

Empress Myeongseong of Korea—then a tributary of China—called on Empress Cixi for help to crush a growing peasant rebellion. Cixi sent a 3,000-man army with matchlock rifles and other Medieval armaments. But Japan resented a China staring across her border. So, the Japanese sent an 8,000-man army equipped with mod-

BELOW: Another rare photo. Ponce with Filipino friends in Japan. The mustachioed guy on the foreground looked like Bro. Jose Ramos. Can somebody please help us identify the other Filipinos who are also very likely Masons? / Photo courtesy of Ponce Descendants





ABOVE: A portrait of Mariano Ponce in his midlife years. / Photo courtesy of Ponce Descendants

ernized rifles and artilleries.

Frustrated by his country's rapid downhill slide, Dr. Sun and his band quickly rose up in a revolt in Guangzhou province on October 26, 1895. But the plan leaked to the authorities. Hence, the imperial forces rounded up his leaders—and Dr. Sun was on the run.

Rebel to rebel, Ponce and Dr. Sun quickly struck friendship. Dr. Sun also lived in Yokohama. But just like in 1889, it was Ponce's house which had become the favorite hangout of the exiled Chinese and other Asian patriots.

Arms deal

It paid for Ponce to be a host. First, he met a number of Asian contacts—Indian, Siamese and Chinese—that Dr. Sun was organizing into the Association of Oriental Youth. Discussions were lively and frequent. Moreover, Ponce was in the best position to teach Dr. Sun on how to launch revolutions without informing the authorities first.

Both patriots also tinkered with a Pan-Asian cooperation. Asian countries, bugged by the same internal problems and colonial bullies, ought to help one another to be free. Or after they are freed. Whichever comes first.

For the Philippines, Dr. Sun's vision of Pan-Asianism was to use Luzon as the staging ground of his revolutionary troops to attack China—should Aguinaldo defeated the Americans.

Ponce seemed to have nodded to Dr. Sun's proposal with tongue-in-cheek.

Second, the Asian contacts served as walking billboards for Ponce's need to buy arms.

UP history professor Camagay ably reconstructed the arms transaction.

A certain Lung Tai-Kwang from the Kang Yu Wei group—a former imperial adviser who wanted Empress Cixi out but still keep a constitutional monarchy in place—saw Ponce and Gregorio Agoncillo on November 9, 1898. Besides the arms,

the pro-monarchy Chinese wanted to establish alliance with the Filipinos.

Not to be left out, Dr. Sun brought his friend, Miyazaki Toten, a former samurai, before Ponce. Promising to broker the deal, Dr. Sun asked Ponce to pay him and Miyazaki 100,000 pesos, as "agents' fee"—the money going to the capitalization of a newspaper that would counter the Kang Yu Wei press.

Ponce closed the deal with Dr. Sun. They saw next their winter dinner host, Inukai Ki, for help. Inukai strongly advised to keep the deal confidential; lest, it explodes on the cabinet's face—and there goes all the capital joint ventures with the American industries. Japan was rushing her modernization program.

Inukai passed the job to Nakamura Haizan, the secretary-general of the Shimpoto party and a member of the Imperial Diet (parliament). A smooth operator, Nakamura persuaded the Japanese high command to secretly sell arms and ammo to the Filipinos. Approved, stocks were moved out of the Japanese armory and sold to the Okura Trading Company. The firm, in turn, sold them next to a German, a certain Weinberger and also friend of Ponce.

The transfers were meant to cover the arms trail, keeping it untraceable to the Japanese armed forces.

The arms were finally loaded onto the *Nunobiki Maru*, a boat purchased from the Mitsui Company. The cargo list ran as follows: 6 million kilograms of ammunition; 10,000 rifles; 1 cannon; 10 field guns; 7 field glasses; 1 pressing machine for gun powder and other materials for the manufacture of ammunition.

Tsunjiro Hiraoka, owner of the Fukuoka Colliery, supplied the coal fuel.

The boat sailed out of Nagasaki port on July 19, 1899. But three days later, on July 21, it met a storm at sea and sunk off the coast of Shanghai.

The bad news certainly devastated Ponce. He cabled Aguinaldo and offered to resign from his emissary post. Worse, he was taken ill so that he left Yokohoma for Hong Kong for a short vacation.

"Had Ponce's arms arrived, history would have turned out very differently."

There was a whole lot of reason for Ponce to be depressed. There were 10,000 rifles on board the *Nunobiki Maru*—which came with a metal press to manufacture bullets. When war broke out between the Filipinos and the Americans on February 4, 1899, U.S. troops numbered to only 12,000 men in the Philippines.

A 10,000 armed Filipinos was enough to even the battlefield with 12,000 U.S. troops. Enjoying a home terrain advantage and fired by the iron will of a dispossessed, a decently armed Philippine force would either send the Americans packing

out of Manila or crush them resoundingly. The Philippines would never come under U.S. occupation. Had Ponce's arms arrived, history would have turned out very differently.

UP history professor Camagay wrote that Ponce still managed to arrange for a second arms shipment in the following year. But again, the delivery failed.

Dr. Sun did the legworks for Ponce. Like his uprising, the deal leaked again to the Americans.

As the boat sailed to the Philippines, the Americans were tipped of the pending delivery. Immediately, they filed a protest before the Japanese government. Caught, the Japanese could do nothing but order the boat to drop anchor at Formosa (Taiwan) and unload the cargoes.

As the cargoes laid in the Taiwanese warehouse, Dr. Sun asked permission from the Filipinos in Hong Kong for temporary use of the idle arms and ammo by his revolutionaries. The Filipinos okayed it.

The Philippine arms and ammo, however, were never returned.

The Philippines had never been used as a Chinese staging ground as Dr. Sun wanted it. But the unreturned arms and ammo stood as proof of Philippine aid and assistance to Chinese independence.

Lovelorn

It was not all arms deal for Ponce while in Japan. As emissary, he waged a propaganda campaign among the Japanese press to keep public opinion favorable to the Filipinos at war. He sent framed photos of Aguinaldo to editors and politicians as PR giveaways. He guested in symposia ran by professional and academic associations.

Unlike the crowd surrounding *El Presidente*—then and now—he regularly sent an accounting of his expenses to the Hong Kong committee through Galicano Apacible, detailing each item like "Travel to Kobe to meet the Commission $119.70," or "Blanket, gloves, one kimono $14.40."

The frugal ways of the propagandista days had never left Ponce even when already a diplomat. Or had the romantic bug that bit many of the *propagandistas* abandoned him even at the age of 35.

Once, he played host to the Korean Prince Pak Josun Younghio of Kunmung and his party. The Paks—no pun intended—were turncoats who had taken refuge in Yokohama. Korea then was opposed to a bullying Japan.

But Ponce was not interested in politics or in Prince Pak either. He was smitten by the prince's daughter, Princess Pak.

UP history professor Camagay quoted from Ponce's letter explaining why she had taken his breath away—

> A poor little princess was his daughter—so pretty, so white, so sweet, with her naughty slanting eyes, her rounded chin, her white teeth, her red lips, her slim figure, and her 14 Aprils!

People today will no doubt call Ponce a "cradle snatcher." But understand that Ponce was a legitimate bachelor then. Besides, girls as young as 12 were given away as brides during the time of the cavemen.

The princess was in Japan to study. It waffled Ponce's heart to see the royals lived in a shabby minimum-wage worker's house.

In a bid to rescue the princess from her low-class home, Ponce soon made his intentions clear to the prince. Informed, Prince Pak occasionally dined with Ponce along with his royal war minister and general. Seemingly, the prince was closely observing his aspiring son-in-law between the passing of *kimchi* and *wasabi*.

Ponce's romantic delirium briefly lasted for about two months or so. Seemingly, the prince rejected him. Ponce was not of royal blood. Not even his titles of "Prince Adept" and "Prince of Libanus" passed for royal titles with Prince Pak.

Homecoming

With Aguinaldo's capture by the Americans on March 23, 1901, Ponce lost his purpose of being an emissary of a defeated government. He stayed in Yokohoma and slowly sunk into private life. To make a living, he resumed his medical practice full-time.

Occasionally, he went out to tee up at a local green, or see old and new friends like in the upscale multinational Club de la Nobleza. Ponce was welcomed in the Japanese nobility circles. Not for nothing why he met Okiyo Udanwara, daughter of a samurai warlord.

She studied in a Catholic school; hence, affording Ponce and herself certain cultural connections. They were married soon.

On the wedding day, family stories had it that Ponce's in-laws handed him a knife as a gift—that he would commit *seppuku* (self-disembowelment), a ritualized and systematic suicide, should he become unfaithful to Okiya and bring shame to the family.

Ponce, no doubt, became a faithful husband. Their first child, Pedro, was born in Yokohoma.

Around 1906, news reached Ponce in Japan that the Americans were going to make good of their promise to gradually hand self-government to Filipinos. They called for elections to fill up local government and legislative positions.

Ponce packed up his bags and returned to the Philippines. Gone away for 18 years, he was bringing home a family.

Statesman

Ponce had hardly gone around Baliuag when old friends came and hied him off to run as Assemblyman for the Second District of Bulacan. He did—and handily won. The 1896 veterans campaigned for him, The old rich went for him. His name was already a byword in the province, associated with Rizal and Del Pilar.

After a one-time stint in the Philippine Assembly, Ponce was treated to a reunion and honoray banquet by former propagandista Teodoro Sandico—this time as Bulacan governor—on January 26, 1908 in Malolos.

"The Philippines had never been used as a Chinese staging ground as Dr. Sun wanted it. But the unreturned arms and ammo stood as proof of Philippine aid and assistance to Chinese independence."

Good things were going for Ponce. But nothing could be better than his appointment as director of the National Library and Museum in 1908.

In the old days when the world still enjoyed consistency and form, the national library director was a highly prestigious office. It wasn't powerful. But it commanded more respect than say, a governor or a general. People yet paid solemn respect to the books. Erudition was equated with destiny, wealth and culture all at once.

True to his character, Ponce chose the National Library over a second term in the legislature. During his directorship, he single-mindedly searched and collected books, manuscripts and other works about the 1896 Revolution.

It was Ponce who compiled the *Epistolario Pilareño* and *Epistolario Rizalina*, the personal letters of his Sol associates.

According to the Sampaka, Ponce once said that he wanted the youth to know the ideals his generation had fought for to serve as standard for future Filipino generations.

Nothing had wrenched Ponce away from his library works except the occasional calls from U.S. Governor-general William Cameron Forbes. The American chief administrator intermittently asked him for advices on Philippine affairs.

After his brief government service, Ponce went back to writing.

On October 11, 1911, the Chinese revolutionaries succeeded in ending the 2,000-year imperial rule in China. The emperor, Puyi, was deposed in December. Finally, the Chinese won their independent republic. And Dr. Sun packed up his bags, left the U.S. and headed for China to claim the presidency.

When Dr. Sun took office as the first president of the new Chinese republic, Ponce wrote a brief biography about him and published it in 1914.

He also wrote newspaper columns titled *Filipino Celebres* and *Efemerides Filipinas* with journalist Jayme C. de Veyra. They were blast-from-the past pieces, casually narrating stories of lives

Continued on page 81

The widow saves the town

Like her husband, the widow Okiyo Udanwara paid the town of Baliwag a great service during World War II.

Japan attacked the Philippines on December 8, 1941, ten hours after her sneak attack on the U.S. naval facilities in Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. All units of the USAFFE (United States Armed Forces in the Far East) were rushed to Bataan. Manila was declared "Open City."

Hence, Japanese troops entered Philippine towns without resistance.

So, at the onset of the Christmas season, the town of Baliwag was thrown into confusion. The Japs were coming.



Ponce and wife, Okiyo, in their late years. / Photo courtesy of Ponce Descendants

Townsfolk ran and took shelter in the Ponce house, totally unaware of the kind of colonial masters that the Japanese were. In minutes, the whole yard was crowded with people like it was holding a feast or a town meeting.

The Jap commander walked into the yard trailed by minions dangling *katana* swords and poking bayonet-fixed-rifles. He was barking cusses and wonder at the crowd. Slowly, Okiya stepped out and welcomed the officer in Nihongo.

Surprised, the Jap commander engaged Okiya in a formal conversation. After a minute or so, the commander and his staff were repeatedly bowing low before Okiya. After a few more chitchats, the Japanese left.

Asked by her children what happened, Okiya said that she had simply introduced herself. After discovery that she was the daughter of a samurai lord, the officers bowed to pay her respect.

Noteworthy, samurai lords held a high social status even in wartime Japan. Respected as warrior leaders, they owned vast lands just as they also kept private armies.

Confronted only with career military officers, Okiya heaved her samurai-daughter's weight and ordered the commander never to touch the people of Baliwag. They were all under her care, she said.

Okiya's stature sunk deep into the Jap commander's mind; moreover, after he learned who and what Mariano Ponce was. Hence, no Japanese atrocity happened in Baliwag.

Okiya died in a car accident after the war. • **EC**



Minalin, Pampanga

Horton 379 cheered up kids in two remote adopted schools

Promises are meant to be kept.

So, the bros of **Frank Reed Horton Memorial Lodge No. 379** in Quezon City motored and hopped next into bancas on June 7, 2014 to bring kids school supplies and equipments to the lodge's 2 adopted schools in Minalin, Pampanga.

The "Frankies," with their families, begun assembling at the Total gas and stopover station at the North Luzon Expressway in Apalit, Pampanga. After counting heads, Horton **WM Gene Illenberger**, also THE CABLETOW Artist, led the bros to Minalin town and onto the local landing wharf.

They boarded motor boats, rode through winding swamps amid drizzles, until they reached the islet where Dawe Elementary School, lately adopted by the lodge, was located.

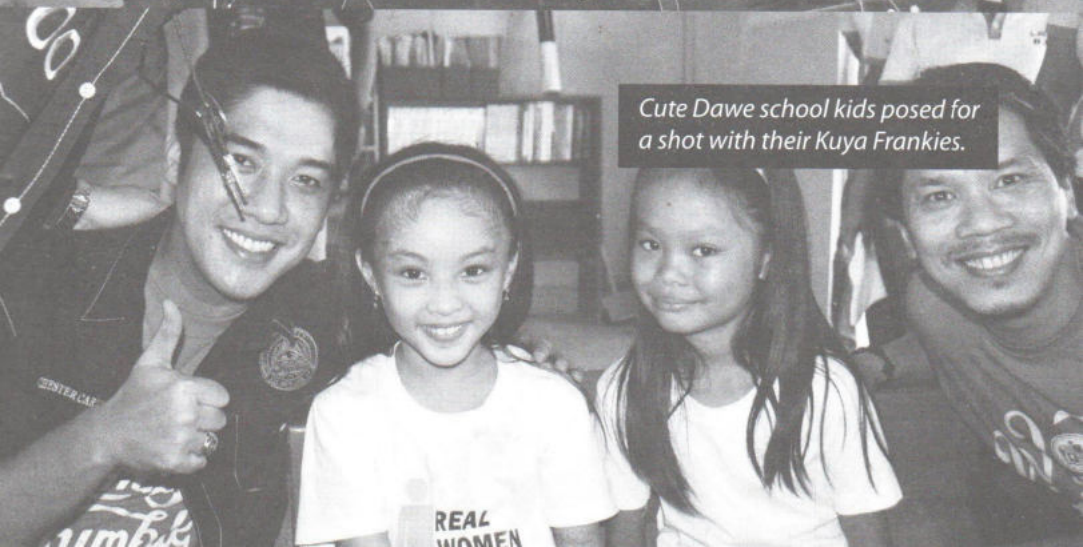
Barangay officials met the



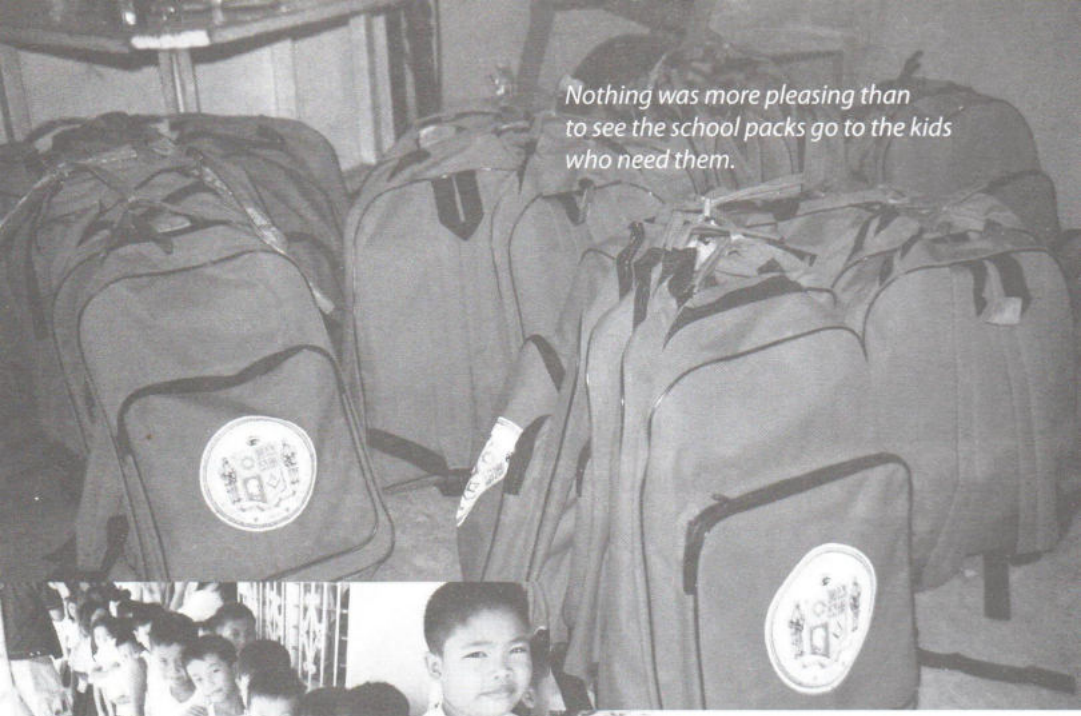
Frankies passed the backpacks hand to hand from the jetty.



One computer unit went to the Dawe Elementary School.



Cute Dawe school kids posed for a shot with their Kuya Frankies.



Nothing was more pleasing than to see the school packs go to the kids who need them.









School kids try on their new raincoats not without the "pogi" gestures.



Sunshine broke out just after the Frankies dispatched all the goodies amid rain and cloudy skies.



School kids leave for home aboard motor bancas which they also ride on to school everyday.

Frankies. At the school, the principal, teachers and schoolchildren warmly welcomed the bros. Despite a pouring rain, spirits upped as the Frankies handed 1 computer unit to the school and raincoats to the kids.

Then, they boarded the bancas again and motored next to Saplad Elementary School earlier adopted by the lodge. The Frankies handed over raincoats and school bags to the excited pupils.

Going to school in open bancas, the school children will now stay dry with their new raincoats as the classes begun.

In all, the Frankies gave away 213 school backpacks containing notebooks, writing pads, sketch pads, crayons, ballpens, pencils, raincoats and a desktop computer.

But no gift was greater than the heart-to-heart talk the Frankies had shared with the kids. They stressed the importance of education so that the kids will achieve their dreams coupled with the promise of support that their Kuya Frankies will lend.

The Frankies were treated next to a sumptuous lunch that the teachers had prepared.

With the mission completed, the Frankies boarded the bancas to return to town. But their hearts creaked as the children waved and shouted in chorus "*Maraming salamat po! Ingat po kayo!*"

Rain-drenched and wading in water, yet the warm reception and the sound of young grateful voices were enough compensation for the Frankies who returned home fulfilled. See you again next year!

In Due Form

By WB Jonathan R. Amoroso, PM

ID 12

From A Distinct Knock, pp. 33-34.



It (the title) stands for Independence Day celebration on June 12, brothers.

History books are replete with accounts that battles were fought and many a patriot's blood sprawled like monsoon raindrops on parched country roads for the recognition of one of man's basic rights – the right to liberty or independence. These wars were even dramatized in several books and movies perhaps to make the readers or viewers timely realize that freedom – like a love lost – is more appreciated in its absence.

In Kuya Dante's favorite movie, Braveheart, William Wallace, perfectly portrayed by Mel Gibson, announced before hesitant Scottish rebels the beggarly worth of a freedom fighter's life if only to yield the prize of freedom. He decried:

`Sons of Scotland ... I see a whole army of my countrymen here in defiance of tyranny.... You have come to fight as free men and free men you are.... What will you do without freedom? ... Will you now fight?! ... Fight and you may die.... Run and you will live -- but only for a while.... And dying in your beds many years from now.... Would you be willing to trade all these ... from this day to that ... for one chance ... just one chance ... to come back here and tell our enemies ... that they may take our lives ... but they will never take our freedom!!!

The battle of Stirling Bridge did not end up as a luxurious ballroom dancing for the British and Wallace. Heads rolled and human torsos flew around the battlefield as brutal ransom for the release of Scotland. Eventually, the rebels were defeated, but their dream of independence lived on – unshackled by English bolts and chains.

The universal thirst for freedom, aside from the arbitrary taxes and duties, was the driving force when the Americans rebelled against the British and finally broke free from the latter on July 4, 1776. The freeborn Englishmen argued to their conquerors that all men are created equal,

that they are endowed by their Creator with certain "*unalienable rights*" and among these are life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. To justify the rebellion, Thomas Jefferson and his team wrote the following arresting opening sentence in the Declaration of Independence:

When in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands, which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitles them, a decent Respect to the Opinion of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

More recently, the uprisings in Africa against apartheid (Afrikaans' word for "apartness" involving the enforced geographical separation of the races) drew blood that, as poetically put, "turned out to be just as red as their white brothers." The African national consciousness paved the way for the "wind of change" speech of British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan on February 3, 1960:

In the 20th century, the processes which gave birth to the nation states of Europe are being repeated all over the world. Today, the same thing is happening to Africa, and the most striking impression I have formed since I left London a month ago is one of the strength of African national consciousness. The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of consciousness is a political fact.

The article's closing statement brings us back to our own history. Some patriots lived their dreams. Others just chased the nights away. It is our pride that our brethren – Aguinaldo, Bonifacio, Rizal, Mabini, the Luna brothers, and others – made their valiant steps more than 100 years ago to make their dreams converge with reality. The sentiment was overwhelming. A free and independent Philippines was worthy of their lives. Their deeds took us to where we are now.

Caught up in a traffic at 12:00 noon earlier, I was thinking where to eat my lunch. My right leads to Greenhills or Makati. Left directs me to SM North. Straight means I could go home and feast on my aunt's lutong bahay. Come to think of it. This predicament is also a gift. The right to choose whether one would eat burger, pinapaitan or beef mami and where to eat is like love – lost or found. By our heroes' labors, it's free.

Happy Independence Day!

GRAND LODGE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Roadmap M.Y. 2014 - 2015

THEME: "Serbisyong Makatotohanan para sa Kapatiran at Mamamayan."

VISION

Imploring the aid of the Divine Providence, by 2018, the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines shall be a highly credible, relevant and respected fraternal organization in the community.

MISSION

To make good men better.

PHILOSOPHY

"Service to Brother Masons, Fraternity and Community."

4 CARDINAL VIRTUES

Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice

FRATERNITY & COMMUNITY

- Harmony and Relevance to Society
- People's Respect and Recognition

FRATERNAL SERVICE EXCELLENCE

- Strengthen Control and Supervision over Subordinate Lodges
- Ensure strict Implementation of GLP Edicts, Circulars, Laws and Regulations
- Increase Involvement of Family, Shriners & Appendant Bodies

MASONIC EDUCATION & GROWTH

- Develop highly Competent, Motivated and Values-oriented Individual Masons
- Develop Pool of Leaders and Produce Quality Members
- Improve Attendance to Stated Meetings and Ceremonies

LODGE ADMINISTRATION & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Improve Administration and Management Systems & Procedures
- Develop more Efficient and Responsive Organization
- Optimize Utilization of Financial and Logistical Resources

SHRINERS APPENDANT BODIES

FAMILY

Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth



The GLP Elected & Grand Line Officers 2014-2015

Front row, seated (L to R): MW RUDYARDO BUNDA, PGM, GMH, Grand Treasurer; RW TOMAS G. RENTOY III, Deputy Grand Mater; MW ALAN LM PURISIMA, Grand Master; RW VOLTAIRE T. GAZMIN, Senior Grand Warden; RW ABRAHAM N. TOLENTINO, Junior Grand Warden; and MW DANILO D. ANGELES, PGM, GMH, Grand Secretary.