

Written by Tom Seyer

Monday, 01 October 2007 10:42 - Last Updated Friday, 22 February 2008 08:02

Dateline Los Angeles, CA, Oct. 1, 2007, Coconut News Ngayon (The Other CNN kuno)

The PANHS has declared October as the "*Filipino Beer Heritage Month*." The declaration was made by Filipino media activist, Bobby Reyes y Mercado, and Poet-pundit Fred Bunao y Burce in a press conference in Los Angeles, California, held today at the lobby of the Philippine Consulate General's Jose Rizal Social Hall. The two beer-drinking gentlemen are the cofounders of the Philippine-American National Hysterical Society (

PANHS

). The PANHS will also organize starting next year a "Philippine-American OctoBeer Festival." The "OctoBeerFest" will feature the different ways of how Bicolanos cook octopus, aside from a real Filipino Food Festival, and of course the tasting of different kinds of Asian beer. The headliner of the OctoBeerFest is the world famous "San Miguel" beer of the Philippines.

{ice 409 -link} Click on the thumbnail to view the picture of Poet-pundit Fred Burce Bunao (the gentleman on the left side of the photo).

Reyes reported that Mr. Bunao said that the Philippines started producing beer in the first week of October 1890. This was after a Spanish royal grant authorized Enrique Barretto y de Ycaza to open La Fabrica de Cerveza de San Miguel, Southeast Asia's first brewery on Sept. 29, 1890. But it required several days to fine-tune the brewery's equipment and the first brew came out only sometime after the first few days of October 1890. It was said that Mr. Bunao was one of the first Filipino natives to taste-test the beer in 1890. (He is that old, or appears that old, as he looks in the photo above.) The first "San Miguel" brewery was located at #6 Calzada de Malacañang in Manila, near the palace of the (Spanish) Governor General of the Philippines. Don Enrique named the company after the section of Manila in which he lived and worked. Barretto was soon joined by Pedro Roxas y Pablo, who brought with him a German brewmaster, Ludwig Kiene, as technical director. San Miguel's brew won its first major award at the 1895 Philippines Regional Exposition. After six years of operation, the fledgling brewery was outselling imported brands five to one. At the outbreak of World War I, San Miguel was exporting its beer to Hong Kong, China and Guam. The American Governors General continued to occupy the Malacañang Palace as their official residence and administrative seat, after the Philippines was annexed by the United States in 1899.

Bunao, whose parents hailed from Albay Province, claimed that actually it was the Philippines' foremost national hero, Jose P. Rizal Mercado, who batted for the opening of a beer brewery in the Philippines. He said also that it was Dr. Rizal who started in 1895 (a year before his martyrdom) the celebration of a Filipino equivalent of the OctoberFest of Germany. This was after Dr. Rizal stayed in Germany on several occasions. It was in Germany where Dr. Rizal completed his major literary works. It was said that the Filipino national hero would consume

Written by Tom Seyer

Monday, 01 October 2007 10:42 - Last Updated Friday, 22 February 2008 08:02

bottles after bottles of German beer while he was writing.

Reyes' maternal grandfather was a Mercado (who was said to be a distant relative of the Mercados of Calamba, Laguna, where Jose Rizal Mercado was born and raised). According to Reyes, several Mercados moved to Albay Province (in the Bicol Region) after the Spanish authorities started a persecution of their clan in Laguna. The Mercados then moved from Albay to the next province, Sorsogon, to evade further the Spaniards.

According to Reyes, his maternal ancestors started celebrating a local version of Jose P. Rizal Mercado's OctoBeerFest in October 1905, after Sorsogon was made a province. It used to be part of the Albay Province during the Spanish regime. The Sorsogon version of the OctoBeerFest was made also significant by the fact that the first Catholic mass in the island of Luzon was celebrated in the town of Magallanes, Sorsogon Province, in October 1570.

Poet-pundit Bunao, who won the Palanca Award for Poetry in English in 1969, defended the declaration of October as the "Filipino Beer Heritage Month," if not the real "Filipino History Month" in the United States. He said that the coming OctoBeerFest is doubly significant as many Filipino immigrants to the United States are predominantly beer drinkers. The poet-pundit said that Filipino Americans now belong to the so-called "beer-tract Americans," who are usually members of a coalition of minorities and blue-collar workers.

Reyes added that it was his maternal ancestors who organized also the Bicol Gulp Club long before the first golf course was constructed in Albay Province in the 1960s. He said that he had to mention the golf course in the Bicol Region, as Bicolano players drink a lot of beer before, during and after playing gulp, oops, golf. He said that he would move for the organization of a Bicol-American Gulp Club to spearhead the staging of the OctoBeerFest in October 2008 in Southern California. # # #

[Joomla SEO powered by JoomSEF](#)