

## ***JGL Eye***

By JOSEPH G. LARIOSA

CHICAGO, Illinois (JGLi) – May is the fiesta month in the Philippines. But for Overseas Filipinos, particularly, those in the United States, they have marked June as a red-letter month.

It is that month of the year that the Filipino community feels uneasy as its members try to fulfill its annual social obligation to pay homage to the land of their birth – the celebration of its June 12 Philippine Independence.

They don't mind if they would take days off from work or buy dinner tickets that will lighten up their wallets.

They really could not avoid this self-denial like a plague. The viruses that sometimes bit the community are as pesky as a swine flu. For the civic-conscious community, it is like Christmassy atmosphere in June: it's better to give than to receive.

From a solo celebration more than 20 years ago, the Philippine Independence Week celebration in Chicago area would subdivide like amoeba into four groups. Thankfully, it did not multiply by geometric progression but is now heading into absorption as two of these celebrators are trying to blend some of their activities, like water seeking its own level.

Hopefully, these four groups will come together one day and will sprout from a single tree – the Philippine tree.

In fact a visiting official from the Philippine National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA), who came by Chicago some years ago, and came to know about this quadruple celebration found it strange that the Filipino non-government organizations (NGOs) are leading the charge of the celebration, instead of the Philippine Consulate officials, who are relegated to the sidelines of the festivities.

Even my news group – the National Press Club of the Philippines in the United States of America

(NPC Phil-U.S.A.) -- was bitten by community-organizing fatigue bug. We did not really want to compete with other community organizations to stage an event in June but it just so happened that a dream guest of our club from the

Philippines

happened to be able to visit

Chicago

area in June.

Instead of staying in the sidelines, the officers and members of the NPC Phil.-U.S.A. led by Ms. Lourdes M. Ceballos are finding themselves in the limelight as newsmakers and news shapers.

They will share a full plate of community activities as they welcome in their midst, the multi-awarded book author and insightful and compelling columnist Conrad S. De Quiros of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*.

Mr. De Quiros will be the featured speaker at the induction of Officers and New Members for 2009 and 2010 of the NPC Phil.-U.S.A. at a luncheon on Father's Day, Sunday, June 21, at Chateau Ritz at 9100 North Milwaukee

Ave. , Niles, Illinois.

The induction is going to be followed by a Media and Community Relations Workshop that will last until 3 p.m.

A host of government officials, including Consul General Blesila Cabrera, has been invited to grace the event.

Mr. De Quiros will also give participants, mostly press relations officers and presidents of community organizations, and community journalists, some pointers on how to write an effective column.

A short-story first-prize winner of a piece entitled “The Hand of God” in the 1985 Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature, Mr. De Quiros was the author of critically-acclaimed books, “Dead Aim: How Marcos Ambushed Philippine Democracy” (Foundation for Worldwide People Power (Manila, Philippines, 1997) and “Dance of the Dunces” (1991).

As a columnist, Mr. De Quiros has earned the respect not only of his peers in the business but also his readers, among them former Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos.

When I first invited Mr. De Quiros to speak on the state of Filipino journalists' Killings at the 2006 4th Global Networking Convention and 7th National NaFFAA Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii, he happened to be on the same plane with President Ramos.

After they came together, Mr. Ramos introduced Mr. De Quiros to his hosts at the Hawaii airport as “the Manny Pacquiao of Philippine Journalism. In fact, Mr. Quiros’ fist is more lethal than Pacquiao's when he drives home his point.”

Indeed, the officers and members of the NPC Phil.-U.S.A. will be very honored with Mr. De Quiros’ presence, whose flair for writing is second to none.

As my colleague, Marlon L. Pecson, a frequent Manila visitor, would tell me, Mr. De Quiros will be in the best position to discuss with club and community members the burning Philippine issues of the day during Mr. De Quiros visit to Chicago.

The issues that he will discuss should be guide on whom Overseas Filipinos should root for in the upcoming Philippine presidential elections in 2010, if there is one.

But first, Chicago community journalists will be kept busy by the reception to be tendered by Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley to honor Philippine Independence Day on Tuesday, June 9, 2009, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Chicago Cultural Center, GAR Hall – 2nd Floor, 77 East Randolph Street in Downtown Chicago;

The flag-raising ceremony to be held at the Daley Plaza in downtown Chicago (West Washington and North Clark Streets) on Friday, June 12, 2009, at 9 a.m. This year’s celebration theme is “Kagitingan, Kagalingan at Kasipagan Tungo sa Tunay na Kalayaan.” And other festivities.

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Friday, 29 May 2009 05:50 - Last Updated Friday, 29 May 2009 06:40

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Happy 111th Independence Day, Filipinos! ( [lariosa\\_jos@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lariosa_jos@sbcglobal.net) ) # #  
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