

Written by Bobby M. Reyes
Sunday, 15 May 2011 16:27 -

“ELM Criminal Clique” Members Make Fools of Themselves Again and Display More Ropes to Hang Themselves in Court

By Lolo Bobby M. Reyes

Greg “Lagareng Hapon” Macabenta once again loses his cool and throws away good manners, if not right conduct, in going after – and shouting at – Ernie Gange, a fellow cofounder of the National Federation of Filipino-American Associations (NaFFAA). The scene of the “Lagareng Hapon” Macabenta’s Kamikaze-like tirade was the Bally’s Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, where a motley crowd of less-than 90 NaFFAA’s national executive officers (NEOs) and regional chapter officers met in a three-day conference from Friday to today (May 13-15, 2011). Observers could not confirm if Mr. Macabenta was drunk again during his Kamikaze performance.

Mr. Macabenta, who is affectionately dubbed by the Filipino-American press as “Lagareng Hapon,” is one of the principals of the so-called “Esclamado-Lewis-Macabenta (ELM) Criminal Clique” that has ruled the

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NaFFAA from 1997 to November 2010.

Once again, the “NaFFAAGate,” the “Menorgate” and the Ballygate of Oct. 1, 2000, huddled the limelight at the NaFFAA national conference. Without being there, Bobby Reyes and his fellow investigative reporter, Romy P. Marquez, were made the topics of many conversations and even floor deliberations. Atty. Rodel Rodis made his usual reference to Bobby Reyes as “BoRat,” in spite of the fact that Reyes has said that it is the acronym for “Bicolnons Ostracizing, and Reporting to the Authorities, the Thieves” of the NaFFAA.

Mr. Macabenta wielded a proverbial form of his “Lagareng Hapon” (Japanese saw), if not a verbal version of a chainsaw, and tried to cut at the person and reputation of the much-respected Apo Ernie Gange for allegedly being the “Deep Throat” of Bobby Reyes and Romy Marquez. Apo Ernie, a septuagenarian gentleman from Philadelphia, PA, was the first Filipino-American member of the Board of Trustees of the Pearl S. Buck Foundation and a former State chair of the NaFFAA for Pennsylvania.

. Mr. Gange kept his cool and refused to engage the “Lagareng Hapon” Macabenta in a shouting match.

The outburst of Mr. Macabenta was uncalled for and the program moderator

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at the time, Benedicto “Bin” Menor of the “Menorgate” fame, did not rule the “Lagareng Hapon” as out of order.

A 2011 Version of [“Dietzcoveries:” Sex, Lies and NaFFAAGate](#)

Ms. Lorna Dietz even displayed on a big screen a reproduction of Apo Ernie’s e-mails to Willie Dechavez, as also replicated in the article, [Lolo Bobby Finally Mails Dossier to the IRS on the Income-tax and RICO-Act Violations of the NaFFAA’s “ELM Criminal Clique”](#)

Ms. Dietz, a reputed relative of the late Russian cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, echoed his boss at the *Filipinas Magazine*, Greg “L. H.” Macabenta, that it was Apo Ernie Gange, who supplied the supposedly-incriminating e-mails to Bobby Reyes. For all her IQ, Ms. Dietz never realized that the said e-mails were posted actually in three e-newsgroups:

[2011_NaFFAA_NST@yahoogroups.com](#)

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,
ace_international@egroups.com
and
brucefamily@googlegroups.com
, with CC to
EJN0115@aol.com
(e-mail address of current NaFFAA National Chairman Ed J. Navarra).

Any member of the said three e-forums or Mr. Navarra, who is reputedly Bobby Reyes’ best friend in the Midwest, could have provided the writer with a copy. Besides, Apo Ernie Gange said that he has never met in person both Messrs. Reyes and Marquez.

Actually many of the delegates to the said NaFFAA conference said privately that Macabenta and Company could have replied to Mr. Reyes’ May 13th exposé by simply producing the missing documents.

“Piercing the Veil of Corporate Fiction”

Many of the delegates were also scratching their heads upon knowing that “Bin” Menor, the chairman of 2010 NaFFAA national convention in San Francisco,

CA

, last Nov. 19-21, 2010, has not produced any financial report for the event – almost six months after it was held. He also said that the convention actually was held in the name of another 501 (C)-3 entity and not under the auspices of the NaFFAA. This revelation stunned many of the delegates and it led many to think the allegation made by Bobby Reyes that the controlling criminal clique in the NaFFAA actually organized other public-benefit corporations to receive the income(s) from several NaFFAA events such as the nearly-annual Filipino Global Conferences, to which the NaFFAA is listed only as a corporate

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sponsor. Mr. Reyes said that it would be easy to prove – using the legal doctrine of “Piercing the Veil of Corporate Fiction” – that the same events were also organized by the same NaFFAA NEOs, so as to divert the income from the NaFFAA. The NaFFAA of course spent for the said events but did not receive any of the income.

Mr. Menor and Atty. Rodis were the co-chairmen of the now-infamous NaFFAA convention in San Jose, C A , in August 2002, after which Mr. Menor was accused in court by the City of San Jose of diverting city funds to bankroll the said convention. Mr. Menor was also charged criminally by the District Attorney of Santa Clara County, to which he made a “No Contest” plea and agreed to a plea bargain to avoid jail time. “Bin” Menor made financial restitution to the City of San Jose

in both civil and criminal cases.

The Wells Fargo Bank Foundation actually donated \$100,000 to bankroll the said August 2002 NaFFAA convention but the then NEOs could not explain how the funds disappeared and where was it spent. Mr. Gange also has inquired what happened also to a \$100,000 donation made by Bank of America to the NaFFAA also in 2002, which has not been accounted for in any of the financial statements made by the federation to date.

Former NaFFAA National Treasurer Puts Up a Defense

In the meantime, former NaFFAA National Treasurer Lourdes Corrales of Jersey City, NJ, has sent word to this investigative reporter that she has never had custody of the financial records and check books of the NaFFAA. According to a mutual friend who relayed Ms. Corrales’ message, it was the NaFFAA’s National Assistant Treasurer Lourdes “Luly” Esclamado who was in possession of the said federation financial records and check books from the first day that the NaFFAA was formed in 1997. There is a good chance that Ms. Corrales may turn state witness, should the Feds indict the members of the “ELM Criminal Clique” for violation of the Income Tax Law and the RICO Act.

Ms. Corrales allegedly said that it was the same case with her predecessor, Klaus Buntua, CPA, who resigned, as he claimed also that he was merely a decorative figure in the NaFFAA headquarters. Mr. Buntua said that no financial records or even a single

check book were turned over to him during the months of his tenure as the NaFFAA national treasurer.

Both newly-appointed NaFFAA National Treasurer Bart SG Tubalinal, Jr., a Chicago-based CPA, and Mrs. Esclamado attended this week’s NaFFAA conference in Las Vegas. There is, however, no truth to the report that Mr. Tubalinal said, “Luly man daw at magaling, maiha-habol din,” when another delegate inquired if indeed Mrs. Esclamado would turn over the complete financial records and check books to him as the new NaFFAA national treasurer. # # #

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