

Part One of a "Butanding Brouhaha" Series

Loida Lewis Has Been Changing Her Story

on What Happened to the Political Contributions

Raised by Her NaFFAA Clique

It seems that the national executive officers (NEOs) of the National Federation of Filipino-American Associations (NaFFAA) continue to act in pursuit of the perception (and reality, as critics point out in this website's Naffaagate section) that they are a bunch of crooks.

{xtypo_quote} **Editor's Note: To read the various exposés on the NaFFAA NEOs' financial scams, please visit the <http://www.mabuhayradio.com/naffaagate/>** {/xtypo_quote}

Written by Bobby M. Reyes

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The fundraising efforts by Loida Nicolas-Lewis and Company for the-then presidential campaign of Noynoy Aquino have been reported extensively (and almost exclusively) by Joseph G. Lariosa. He is the Chicago-based dean of Filipino correspondents in America and a co-founding former president of the National Philippine Press Club-Chicago Chapter. Mr. Lariosa wrote for many years for the

Manila Bulletin

until he migrated to the United States. He continues to be the

Manila Bulletin

's correspondent in America

. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of Mr. Lariosa's reports, as he has been known to quote accurately the statements of personalities and celebrities that he has interviewed.

Please read the inconsistencies of the statements of Atty. Loida Nicolas-Lewis, as told to Mr. Lariosa in the following summaries of events (reports):

On Dec. 1, 2009, Mr. Lariosa reported initially about the fundraising by Filipino-American community leaders headed by Attorney Lewis, her fellow NaFFAA NEOs and friends. Readers may browse Mr. Lariosa's report in this hyperlink:

[Rally for Noynoy-Mar Set in Bay Area Dec. 12](#)

Mr. Lariosa wrote in the said article: "Attorney Lewis said the 'U.S. Pinoys for Noynoy-Mar' fundraising will kick off on Dec. 12 simultaneously in the East Coast (New York), West Coast (San Francisco), Houston (Texas) and Midwest Chicago (Illinois). The fund-raising ends on May

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. 'We will make public whatever amount we collected and whatever we turned over for transparency.'"

However, Mrs. Lewis, et al, have never published the list of contributors in its website, www.NOYMAR2010.COM

. And you will read this note at the top of its Front Page, "The website you are trying to view is currently experiencing difficulties, please try again later."

On Jan. 26, 2010, Mr. Lariosa wrote this report about the fundraising efforts by Lewis, her fellow NaFFAA NEOs, et al, in this article:

[OFWs Cannot Run But Can Raise Funds](#)

Mr. Lariosa reported: "Mrs. Lewis said the initial goal of the fund-raising is \$2-million. She said there are an estimated three-million Filipino Americans. If 100,000 Fil Ams will donate at least \$25, it will generate \$2-million, less the \$5-service fee by Pay-Pal, an online remittance company."

Joseph Lariosa also said in his report: QUOTE. She paid tribute to organizers of the "U.S.

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Pinoys for Noynoy-Mar” in Chicago, Illinois, for collecting \$1,825, the highest amount so far during the first-day launching of fund-raising in any U.S.

city. The event was spearheaded by the

Fil-Am Weekly Megascene

publishers Bart and Yoly Tubalinal and community organizers Marlon L. Pecson and Ting Joven.

Among the big donors to the event were Doctors Nunilo and Elenita Rubio, who gave \$500, and Mrs. Maria Smith, a registered nurse, of Indiana, \$250, and Jun Delfin of Unlimited Agency, \$150.

Last Friday, the U.S. Pinoys for Noynoy-Mar in Detroit, Michigan, hosted by Fuji Japanese Buffet restaurant and community leader Willie Dechavez collected \$1,063.

An earlier fund-raising by the U.S. Pinoys for Noynoy-Mar in New York collected \$1,600 while those in Los Angeles, California, raised \$1,500 and San Francisco is yet to turn in their collection. UNQUOTE.

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On June 24, 2010, Mr. Lariosa wrote this article, which this website published under this hyperlink:

[U.S.-based Filipinos Volunteer for Good Governance](#)

In it, Mr. Lariosa wrote: “When the U.S. Pinoys for Noynoy-Mar raised \$110,000 (5-million pesos), it wanted to make sure the campaign contribution went to the Liberal Party, which has a free hand to spend it in the campaign. Atty. Loida Nicolas Lewis sent thru telegraphic transfer the \$100,000 to Mr. Jaime (**Rafa?**) Lopa, the treasurer of Senator Aquino, and handed the \$10,000 personally to one of Aquino’s sisters.”

On Aug. 20, 2010, Joseph G. Lariosa filed another report, which we published on the same day. Here is its hyperlink:

[Filipino Americans Should Keep Political Donations Flowing](#)

Mr. Lariosa reported the following developments: QUOTE.

But the U.S. Pinoys for Noy-Mar feel betrayed that after contributing nearly \$100,000 to the Noynoy Aquino and Mar Roxas campaign last spring, their contributions did not even register in the radar of Messrs. Aquino and Roxas, the Liberal Party or the Philippine Commission on Elections. The U.S. Pinoys used the U.S Internal Revenue Service’s “Section 501 (c) (6)” in

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their fund-raising.

It turned out that the \$111,443.46 became a personal contribution from U.S. Pinoys convenor Atty. Loida Nicolas Lewis although she merely personally donated \$5,000 to the pot. It was not credited at all as coming from U.S. Pinoys for Noy-Mar, which ceased to exist after the May 10, 2010 presidential elections.

{xtypo_quote} Atty. Lewis was reported to have told attendees in the Noynoy-Mar fundraisers that she would match dollar-for-dollar any contribution that donors would give. Obviously, she was telling another white lie. {/xtypo_quote}

The reason is simple. Under the Philippine Omnibus Election Code of 2007, “foreigners and foreign corporations” are not allowed to contribute to any political campaign in the Philippines.

{xtypo_quote} Editor’s Note: As confirmed by COMELEC Commissioner Velasco during his public forum at the Philippine Consulate in Los Angeles, dual citizens can validly contribute to political parties and candidates in the Philippines

. Atty. Lewis and many of her NaFFAA colleagues are dual citizens.

{/xtypo_quote}

BECAME PERSONAL DONATIONS

If Mrs. Lewis would list down “U.S. Pinoys for Noynoy Mar” as source of political donations to the Liberal Party, it will be a violation of the election code that could mean the disqualification of Noynoy from holding the office of the presidency.

So what Mrs. Lewis did with the U.S. Pinoys contribution was to channel the contributions to the “Pnoy-Pinay,” a non-partisan group that is sympathetic to the Noy-Mar campaign. She told me someone from the “Noy-Mar” campaign directed her to course the U.S. Pinoys donations to “Pnoy-Pinay.”

The “PnoyPinay” used the donations from the U.S. Pinoys for meals and other needs for poll watching (bantay balota) and education voting outreach in 16 cities and one municipality in Metro Manila.

According to its website, PnoyPinay’s mission is to help in rebuilding a nation that is founded on

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the principles of equity, environmental sustainability, peace and social justice; dedicated to economic development that ensures the uplift of the poor; governed by ethical leaders who serve an empowered and responsible people. UNQUOTE.

Here is a June 17, 2010, article from the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* that contradicts some of the allegations of Atty. Lewis. Please note that the contributions made by Filipino-American donors were never reported to the COMELEC.

‘Tonyboy’ gave P100M, leads Aquino’s 96 big campaign donors

By Kristine L. Alave

Philippine Daily Inquirer

First Posted 02:27:00 06/17/2010

Filed Under: [Eleksyon 2010](#), [Elections](#), [business](#), [Family](#)

MANILA, Philippines—Wealthy relatives and businessmen, led by Antonio “Tonyboy” Cojuangco, bankrolled the election campaign of Sen. Benigno Aquino III, who spent more than P400 million to get elected president, according to documents from the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

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Cojuangco, who built his business on telecommunications and media, gave the largest contribution—P100 million in cash—to the Aquino campaign.

Cojuangco, former owner of TV5 and PLDT, is Aquino's second cousin and his donation accounted for a fourth of the total contributions to the Aquino campaign.

Unlike Aquino, defeated presidential candidate Sen. Manuel Villar said he received no financial help from others for his campaign.

In his expense report, Villar said he spent P431.55 million for his campaign. The Nacionalista Party standard-bearer emerged third in the nine-way presidential race.

Villar's report said all his expenditures were "paid by [the] candidate out of personal funds." There was no list of contributors to his campaign.

The spending limit for a presidential candidate is P10 per voter or a total of about P510 million.

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The same limit applies to a vice presidential candidate.

Unbelievable

Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez said some assertions by candidates in the May 10 automated elections who filed their expense reports were unbelievable.

“So far, the declarations of some candidates in their campaign expenditure filings were outright questionable or even ridiculous in some cases,” Jimenez said in a recent media interview. He refused to name candidates.

He said some of the candidates claimed expenses that were “far less than what you would expect considering what you saw.”

Cash-rich family members also helped Sen. Manuel Roxas II, Aquino’s defeated running mate, whose campaign cost about P280 million. (See list of donors)

Both Aquino and Roxas came from well-connected political families, with former presidents and politicians in their family trees.

96 Aquino donors

Aquino's statement of contributions covering the Feb. 9-May 8 period showed that the President-elect received a total of P440 million in cash donations. There were 96 donors to the Aquino camp. (See [list of donors](#))

Aquino was not able to spend all of his P440-million campaign kitty as his expenditures amounted to P403 million, his expense report to the Comelec said.

The report noted that all payments for his expenditures during the campaign came from the cash donations. He did not use personal funds in his campaign.

Sisters, too

Aquino's sisters—Ma. Elena “Ballsy” Cruz, Aurora “Pinky” Abellada and Kris Aquino-Yap—gave a total of P23 million. Aquino-Yap, a popular television host, donated P15 million, Abellada P5 million and Cruz P3 million.

Former government officials and businessmen also figured prominently in the Aquino campaign finances.

Former Environment Secretary Fulgencio Factoran, who served under Aquino's mother, late President Corazon Aquino, contributed P20 million.

Former Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima, a member of Hyatt 10, a group of top government executives who resigned in 2005 amid allegations that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo stole the 2004 election, gave P10 million.

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Philip Juico, an agrarian secretary of the first Aquino administration, gave P5 million.

Hardware owner

Howard Dee, a former ambassador to the Holy See and father-in-law of Aquino's sister Viel, gave P3 million.

Chiong Bu Hong, owner of the biggest hardware in Ozamiz City and a contractor, gave P20 million. Martin Ignacio Lorenzo, of the Pancake House food chain, shelled out P20 million.

The couple Elena and David Lim, of Solid Group Philippines and Destiny Cable, the company that manufactures mobile phones, gave a total contribution of P20 million.

Roxas spent P280 million for his campaign.

Comelec documents showed that Roxas received P246 million from various individuals, mainly from the influential Araneta-Roxas-Fores clan.

Roxas said he spent P33 million out of his own pocket for the campaign.

There were 33 donors to the Roxas campaign. The largest were his mother, Judy, and uncle, Araneta Group chief Jorge Araneta. Each shelled out P50 million to help the senator. The Fores clan contributed nearly P70 million.

Loopholes, fine

Jimenez acknowledged that the laws on campaign finances were weak and full of loopholes.

“The law has been defanged. In previous elections, if you failed to submit an expenditure report, you could not assume office. But now, that provision is not in the law anymore,” he said.

“In fact, if you don’t submit an expenditure report, the worst that can happen is that you get slapped with a fine and it’s less than P100,000,” he said.

No cap on donors

Although there are limits on how much a candidate should spend for the elections, there is no cap on how much a donor can give to a campaign.

Because there is no law limiting contributions from donors and the accounting is only limited to the campaign period, the official amount submitted would be less than the actual amount spent for promoting the candidates, Pera’t Pulitika executive director Roberto Cadiz said in a recent interview.

Pooled donations

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Cadiz said candidates usually pooled donations under one name to protect some contributors who did not want to be known.

The Comelec said candidates must file a record of their expenses to the poll body not later than June 24.

Candidates who fail to submit stand to face administrative charges. # # #

E ditor's Note: By the next installment of this series of article, we will discuss reports that actually parts of the political contributions for the Noynoy-Mar political campaign were used for travel expenses of, and by, the NaFFAA NEOs and big wigs for their Overseas-Filipino convention in Manila on July 1-2, 2010. This writer penned an earlier article about it, [NaFFAA's Leaders Cannot Help the RP Since They Cannot Even Save Themselves and the Federation](#)

(To be continued . . .)

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