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Texans are stereotyped as “big, proud and arrogant” which is more myth than real. From more than 30 years that we have lived in this sprawling state that is almost twice as big as California, I can say that only one of the three stereotype descriptions of Texans is accurate.

Texans are not any bigger or more arrogant than other Americans. What is true is their inimitable if sometimes perplexing pride in their home state. Most residents of other states do not even know or care what their state flags look like, but in Texas, the omnipresent lone star on

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Saturday, 13 November 2010 23:11 -

red, white and blue is proudly displayed in front yards, schools, churches even on cars, shirts, beer cans, pencils and lunch boxes. Bookstores in Texas carry buttons and magnets warning "Don't mess with Texas!" and bumper stickers that proudly proclaim: "I was not born in Texas, but I got here as fast as I could!"

By and large, Texans have good reasons to be proud of their state, with its robust economy, healthy business climate, low taxes and low unemployment. Disgruntled with Washington, even the politically savvy governor Rick Perry does not discourage talks of possible secession of the state from the Union if things don't change in the Federal government. As ludicrous as the idea may be, Texas which was once an independent Republic, is the only state in the nation that is allowed by the Constitution to secede from the Union if and when it ever so desires. And in the unlikely possibility of Texas deciding to become an independent country again, it would be a very rich country, indeed. It would be the second biggest producer of oil in the world, second only to Saudi Arabia. And it would be the biggest exporter of electronics, computers and semi-conductors in the world, cotton and beef, among other things. And its residents would have the highest per capita income of any state.

Texans are also very proud and protective of their sports teams. After breathing the Texas air for almost four decades, and having easy access to both amateur and professional sports figures from the state, this author has admittedly joined the hordes of avid fans of local sports teams. Football dominates the lives of Texas families from kindergarten through high school and college. Life as a student would be incomplete without involvement in state sports, especially football. We follow the college teams and quickly adopted the once supreme Dallas Cowboys, the so-called "America's Team" because they sell out more stadiums and souvenirs than any other football team in the country. Unfortunately, after tasting more than their fair share of glory with multiple Super Bowl appearances, the Cowboys are now down on their luck and seem to have forgotten how to win games. Nonetheless, even through their worst years, we continue to watch them and love them, hoping against hope that they would soon reclaim their former glory.

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As an avid golfer, I support, idolize and rub elbows with local Texas golf champions, including Ben Crenshaw, Lee Trevino, Justin Leonard, Rory Sabbatini and my fellow country club member Paul Stankowski. We also follow the careers of the new young champions like Anthony Kim and half-Filipino Jason Day who are now giving Tiger Woods a run for his money.

I never have the patience to watch regular season baseball games for 3 to 6 hours, but when the Texas Rangers are in the running for division pennants (and especially the World Series), our interest in the game suddenly resurfaces and we wildly cheer Nolan Ryan's boys on. This year when the Texas Rangers demolished the mighty perennial winners New York Yankees for the division title, the Texans were so overwhelmed by the euphoria which took away a lot of excitement from the ensuing World Series against the SF Giants. So much so that when the Giants upended the suddenly cold Rangers in the World Series 4-1, the Texas fans took it well and did not lose any sleep over it. To them, the better team did not win, and the Rangers had already won their World Series -- their impressive victory against the evil empire (the erstwhile-favored NY Yankees), who were statistically a better team than both the Giants and the Rangers. And we the Filipino fans of the Texas Rangers took solace in the fact that the Giants' winning ace pitcher -- Tim Lincicome -- is a half-Filipino who is coming to Dallas this weekend to watch the Pacquiao fight with his Filipino relatives and friends. When I lost a friendly \$40 bet in the World Series to my company Datalogix's West Coast G.M. Ramon del Rosario, I did not mind it one bit.

After giving up on football and putting baseball behind us, at least for this year, our fascination has now turned to the Filipinos' all-time favorite sport -- basketball. Texas is fortunate to have three excellent teams: The Dallas Mavericks with Dirk Nowitzki, the San Antonio Spurs with Tim Duncan and the Houston Rockets with the recovering Yao Ming. It is a sweet feeling to see the Mavs eke out a victory against stronger teams like the Boston Celtics the other night.

Then finally and dramatically, in comes the best pound-for-pound fighter of all time, the

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Honorable Congressman Manny Pacquiao, the pride of the Filipino race. It is said that the only day of the year when streets throughout the 7,100-island nation are completely deserted is when Manny Pacquiao has a match going on. Ninety-nine million Filipinos are glued to their TV sets or their radios or packed like sardines inside movie houses watching Pacquiao vanquish yet another opponent. We Filipinos in Dallas are doubly proud in that Pacquiao's latest (and most likely his last) fight is held in the majestic 120,000-seat Dallas Cowboys Stadium.

We might as well savor the Filipino champion and his unprecedented eight different weight-class victories while we still can. It is obvious from the media conferences that I attended in Dallas this week that both promoter Bob Arum and personal trainer Fred Roach are resigned to the possibility that this will be Manny's last fight, win or lose, so he can retire from the ring and concentrate on his other love – Philippine politics. It was also a pleasant surprise to see that at least half of Texas' massive Mexican-American population are still rooting for the widely-adored Pacquiao even if Margarito, his opponent this week, is Mexican and vows to avenge his many countrymen who were victims of Pacquiao the "Mexicutioner". As the humble, funny and unassuming champion who shares his millions with thousands of poor families in the Philippines, Manny Pacquiao has earned the respect and adulation of boxing fans everywhere – in the U.S., in Europe, South America, Asia, China and Africa. He has been on the cover of national magazines including the current issue of the American Airlines flight magazine.

Just like in life and in business, fascination with sports and home teams offers valuable lessons: Honor the past but never dwell on past glories, instead learn from past mistakes and have a firm resolve never to repeat them. Always be on top of the present and build on it. Look to the future with a re-energized spirit, better and wiser than ever before. And lastly, groom and bet on a winning horse, and give it the best that you can possibly give. # # #