

Philippine News TODAY

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EDITORIAL

BBM's folly

It is odd that President BongBong Marcos has kept silent over the Maharlika Investment Fund bill now pending in the Senate, even after he had certified it as urgent.

Earlier, the House of Representatives passed its version of the bill, but only after replacing several of its earlier provisions which were downright questionable. What followed was a moro-moro, where the lower house of the bicameral Congress fast-tracked its approval.

This was despite many questions over numerous provisions still being left unanswered. Now, it appears that the Senate is pretty much doing the same thing. The Senate majority wants nothing more than to pass their version of the bill, with high expectations that the House version will have further amendments to jive with the Senate version.

Marcos reportedly wants to claim the bill as one of the accomplishments of his first year in office, even though it will remain nothing more than promises which may or may not be fulfilled.

It's almost comical how some of the bill's supporters are promising impossible-to-attain results. For one, they say the Maharlika fund will end poverty.

Sounds nice, but they do not say how this miracle will be achieved. After all, the funds for Maharlika are the same funds that are already existing in several government financial institutions.

They will just be placed in one pool, which will then be invested in big ticket projects. Or so the defenders and proponents say.

We ask, can't those existing funds now be pooled together without the presence of a new organization, one which adds yet another layer to the already bloated government bureaucracy?

In creating a new body to administer the Maharlika fund, a number of government appointees will be tasked to handle it, and it is no secret that the government bureaucracy is already bursting at the seams with appointees, most of whom are of dubious ability or clean reputation.

During this week's interpellation of the proposed bill, one question that was asked did not get a proper answer. What happens if the Maharlika Fund fails?

Such is not an impossibility, or even an improbability given the government's track record with other seemingly worthy financial organizations that failed because of mismanagement.

Mr. Marcos is bent on following in the footsteps of his father, the late dictator who is also his namesake. During the regime of the now departed Marcos Sr., there were countless government-funded organizations that disappeared, but not before they became milking cows of favored friends, AKA cronies.

Even now, Marcos Jr. has made a number of dubious appointees to government owned and government-controlled corporations. He has also given the now useless title to undersecretary and assistant secretary to scores of friends who would not even be considered as middle management quality workers in the private sector.

We feel that the Maharlika fund will meet this same fate. It will be a milking cow for favored friends and relatives who will then feign illness once they get caught with their hands in the symbolic cookie jar.

The Maharlika fund has no reason for being, but it will almost certainly come into existence in the near future. All because somebody put it into Marcos Jr's economics-challenged head that it is a grand idea. It's not.

If a person had 10 bank accounts and merged it into one, would it make him richer, more successful? It won't, of course. But Marcos Jr. seems to believe that combining funds from various GOCCs will magically transform the country into a First World nation.

We can only pity the fool who thinks in such simplistic terms.

Gathering of resource providers

For 40 years, Malou Joson Aclan tended to the sick as a registered nurse.

Three years ago she retired as care manager at Kaiser Permanente Hospital in South San Francisco to join her husband Danny who had ended his engineering career a few years earlier. Together they are now fulltime caregivers to their two grandchildren by their son Kristian and his wife Thymai, both registered nurses.

As if driving back and forth between their homes in Daly City and across San Francisco Bay in Castro Valley were not challenging enough, Malou still finds time and energy to volunteer with organizations that fulfill her desire to help.

She is a founding officer of Kaiser Permanente Filipino Association, health professionals who raise funds to give annual scholarships to gifted students. Every first Friday of the month until recently she attended Mass and fellowship devoted to the Padre Pio, her patron saint.

The daughter of an attorney in her original hometown of Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija in the Philippines, Malou comes from a family steeped in filial devotion and community service. In the last six months, for example, she has traveled at least twice to the Philippines to visit her mother, who is 95 and an inspiration to her entire brood.

In less than a week, Aclan will usher in 25 community-based family resource providers at the 14th annual Our Family, Our Future, the spring education program and resource fair staged by ALLICE Alliance for Community Empowerment, the all-volunteer nonprofit dedicated to promoting safe and healthy communities.

““This is our first in-person event and we're grateful to be hosted by the City of South San Francisco, whose Mayor Flor Nicolas, is 2023 co-president of ALLICE,” said Aclan, who is ALLICE 2023 secretary. The event is co-sponsored by Positively Filipino, Philippine News Today and San Mateo County Behavioral Health & Recovery Services.

The event takes place 2-4 pm, Saturday, June 17, at the South San Francisco Municipal Services Building. It headlines San Mateo County Supervisor David Canepa as keynote speaker. Former Philippine Vice President Leni Robredo, founder of Angat Buhay, a PH-based nonprofit volunteer movement to uplift Filipinos, will deliver a message encouraging the bayanihan system.

Dr. Jei Africa, Director of San Mateo County Behavioral Health & Recovery Services, will present safety tips for people witnessing or directly experiencing hate attacks against Asian Americans. Tessie Madrinan, coordinator of Peninsula Family Service Peer Counseling program, will present the 9 Acts of Kindness to Empower Older Adults.

Refreshments will be served. A free raffle will be drawn immediately at the end of the program.

As one of the 14 Kumares and Kumpares, as ALLICE members call themselves, Malou keeps in touch with the team throughout the year planning outreach events to grow their movement. They attend community fairs to talk to the public about the dynamics of healthy, unhealthy and abusive relationships and how to distinguish among the three.

Aclan joined the team in 2008, immediately engaging her(Continued on page 26)



CHERIE M. QUEROL MORENO

Let's talk about beauty

William Shakespeare once wrote: “Beauty lies in looker's eyes, which lies and lies and lies...” Centuries later, I am inclined to agree with him.

Different cultures have different standards of beauty. For example, nose rings and lip rings are considered beautiful in the continent of Africa, a practice that is increasingly seen in other continents, like North America.

Fair-skinned people think darker skin is beautiful; dark-skinned people aim for lighter skin, which THEY deem beautiful!

I have often wondered how judges of beauty contests are able to select the “most beautiful” among the candidates, considering their varied subjective points of view.

How is beauty measured? Is it in terms of inches, pounds or kilos, proportions or what? Is there a certain inexplicable quality found in one woman and not in the others?

There are people who find a slim figure beautiful; there are people who think a plump figure is more beautiful.

What YOU consider beautiful may not be so to me; what I consider beautiful may not be so to you.

External beauty, to be sure, can be gauged through measurements and proportions. Face and figure must conform to the desired measurements and proportions.

Advances in science and medicine have made it possible for natural beauty to be enhanced. How long such beauty will last is debatable.

Physical beauty fades in time, but inner beauty that comes from a loving heart does not. Indeed, beauty lies in looker's eyes. How right the Bard of Avon was!



Global Peace Movement Marks a Decade of the Citizen-led Peacebuilding Efforts



should be taught at home and at school and that everyone should become messengers of peace. I went to the battlefield in Mindanao, Philippines, to raise the voice of peace, and they promised not to begin war again." He also emphasized, "Everyone should be one under the title of peace and work together to create a good world and make it a legacy for future generations. This is what we need to do in this era in which we live."



Peace events that commemorate citizen-led peacebuilding efforts for a decade are organized in 89 locations across 59 countries in May. On May 25, 5,000 participants gathered at the Peace Gate of Seoul Olympic Park in South Korea, and other thousands of individuals around the world, including the United States, the United States, China, Japan, Australia, and Germany, are expected to join the events until the end of this month.

"HWPL's 10th Annual Commemoration of the Declaration of World Peace and the Peace Walk", the global events are held by an international NGO called Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light (HWPL) affiliated with the United Nations Economic and Social Council with the joint auspices of public and private organizations in different countries.

Recalling HWPL's peace activities for the past 10 years, Chairman Lee Man-Hee said, "Since we pledged to work together for world peace 10 years ago, we have been calling for peace all over the world. We have advocated that peace

"The Statement on the 10th Annual Commemoration of the Establishment of Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light and the Declaration of World Peace" was unveiled. The statement said that the Declaration developed into the "Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War" (DPCW) to pursue "a transition from the rule of power to the rule of law" based on principles of "democracy, justice, civil liberties, and equality, religious freedom, and responsibility." It further said that the decade of peacebuilding achieved millions of participants joining inter-religious dialogues, peace education, peace advocacy to national leaders, and networks of youth in over 120 countries.

Through this statement, HWPL and participating organizations affirmed their commitment to institutionalizing peace through international cooperation, aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 16, "Peace, justice and strong institutions." They pledged to engage in mediation efforts, raise awareness, provide education in conflict areas, empower

youth and women, and promote best practices for civil society participation.

In USA, several states are celebrating the anniversary. In San Francisco, the event was also held on May 28 at Crissy Field Park with about 100 attendees under the theme "New Decade, Making Institutional Peace Take Root."

Various activities, such as a flash mob by the International Peace Youth Group (IPYG), promotional booths for HWPL and the DPCW, and peace walks, were held to have citizens from all walks of life participate and support the DPCW.

HWPL announced its ambitious goal to garner the support of 10 million citizens through their signatures to advocate for the establishment of international law for peace. Additionally, they have organized various overseas commemorative events to foster peace within local communities worldwide. Membership registration, information about peace projects, and reading the full text of and supporting the DPCW are available on HWPL's official website at www.hwpl.kr.

PG&E and California Fire Foundation Seeking Applications for Wildfire Safety and Preparedness Grants

More than \$1 million in grants, public education, and outreach funded in 2022; Applications Accepted Through June 30

SACRAMENTO, Calif.— Today, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and the California Fire Foundation (CFF) announced grant opportunities for California-based fire departments and community-based organizations focused on wildfire safety and preparedness. The grant program continues a successful partnership between PG&E and CFF. Applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on June 30, 2023, through the CFF website. Award notification will begin July 31, 2023.

PG&E and The PG&E Corporation Foundation (PG&E Foundation) are providing a total of \$1.4 million to CFF's Wildfire Safety and Preparedness Program (WSPP). Joining forces for the sixth consecutive year, the program's objective is to raise public awareness about wildfire safety and deliver resources to underserved communities in high fire-risk areas. It includes a grant program that last year awarded 66 local fire departments and community groups \$730,000 in funding.

Since 2018, CFF, which administers and manages the WSPP, has awarded 265 grants to fire departments and community organizations statewide, focusing its efforts in Northern and Central California. Funding targets communities identified as having extreme or elevated fire risk as identified by the California Public Utilities Commission.

"While the unprecedented storms of this past winter helped lift the majority of California out of the decades-long drought, the unfortunate flip side is the increased potential for a later but more robust wildfire season," said Rick Martinez, Executive Director of the California Fire Foundation. "The Wildfire Safety and Preparedness Program is a partnership with PG&E that was created to address the increasing wildfire risk. Our collaboration over the last six years has played an important role in helping local communities mitigate their wildfire risks and enhance the public's safety."

"PG&E and the California Fire Foundation share the same goal of ensuring that our hometowns are doing everything possible to prevent wildfires from starting. Local fire departments, agencies and community groups play such a key role in prioritizing and executing the projects that protect communities and in raising awareness about wildfire safety. We're grateful for our ongoing partnership with the CFF as it provides real-time benefits such as defensible space and fuel-

reduction programs as well as crucial awareness to customers in underserved communities," said Mark Quinlan, PG&E's Senior Vice President of Wildfire & Emergency Operations.

How the Grants Help Communities

From 2018 to the present, PG&E and the PG&E Foundation have provided \$7.4 million in total support for fire safety awareness through the WSPP. The charitable contribution is shareholder-funded, not paid for by PG&E customers.

Since 2018, WSPP has funded:

- Specialized fire equipment and personal protective equipment

- Defensible space and vegetation management efforts

- Fuel/hazard reduction programs

- Fire prevention and emergency preparedness education, including senior citizen wildfire preparedness programs

- Fire safety outreach campaigns, including 12,000 multi-lingual brochures targeting under-resourced communities in English, Spanish, Chinese, Hmong, and Vietnamese

- Partnerships with community groups in high fire-risk areas to distribute fire-safety information

The WSPP develops and distributes in-language fire-safety messaging targeting Spanish, Chinese, Hmong, and Vietnamese communities. These efforts include a comprehensive media campaign consisting of outdoor billboards and in-language television, radio, and digital ads.

The California Fire Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, aids firefighters, their families, and the communities they protect. CFF's Firefighters on Your Side program, also supported by PG&E, provides multi-lingual, culturally relevant fire safety messaging in both digital and print forms to assist the public in staying safe.

About PG&E

Pacific Gas and Electric Company, a subsidiary of PG&E Corporation (NYSE:PCG), is a combined natural gas and electric utility serving more than 16 million people across 70,000 square miles in Northern and Central California. For more information, visit pge.com and pge.com/news.

About The PG&E Corporation Foundation

The PG&E Corporation Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, separate from PG&E and sponsored by PG&E Corporation.

Upside...

(From Page 11)

co-workers at Kaiser Permanente to attend ALLICE twice yearly major events to take blood pressure checks for free. Soon she embraced the invitation to chair the Resource Provider Committee responsible for keeping tabs of helping agencies and growing their network of contacts.

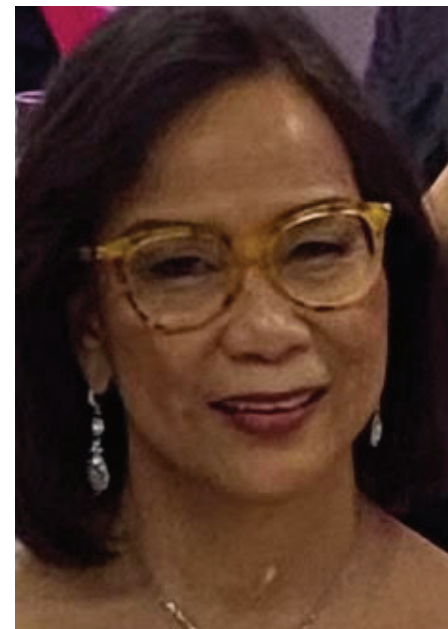
The team noted that although resource guides were plentiful from state and county human service agencies, none was developed expressly for linguistic and cultural competence in helping the underserved sector such as immigrant communities, populations of color and the LGBTQ+.

Out of that concern came the ALLICE resource guide or the "A-List," a directory of over 50 public and private organizations rated for availability of languages most spoken in California and understanding of the diverse cultures within.

"The A-List is a passion project of our team," Aclan says. "We thank the Community of Colma, especially City Manager Brian Dossey, the City Council and last but certainly not least Mayor Joanne del Rosario, who is also a Kumare."

For more information, visit www.allicekumares.com or see the public service announcement in this issue.

Philippine News Today Executive Editor Cherie M. Querol Moreno is founder-executive director of ALLICE.



With strong family support, Malou Aclan coordinates ALLICE Kumares & Kumpares' A-List and resource providers.