

# Philippine News TODAY

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## A weakened Putin may be a more dangerous Putin

How does one describe the events that took place in Russia over the weekend? Was it a failed coup? A putsch? A mutiny? An internal challenge to the rule of Vladimir Putin where neither side emerged victorious?

Whatever it was, one thing became clear as a result. The Russian leader has emerged weaker than he has ever been at any time in his lengthy rule over the heartland of what was once the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Outwardly, it seemed that it was little more than a case of a protégé seeking to overcome his master.

Warner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin, who had been verbally assaulting the military leadership of Russia practically since the start of the invasion of Ukraine, had taken the big step of going after Vladimir Putin himself. Not just with words, but with an actual military action that would have taken his forces all the way to the Kremlin.

Had he not changed his mind almost at the last minute, Prigozhin's forces would have turned the streets of Moscow into a warzone. With enough popular support, the Wagner fighters could have forced the tide to turn in their favor.

After all, ordinary Russians had been made to believe that Prigozhin's Wagner group were fighting for them. They may have even been led to believe that the biggest successes in the "special military action" in Ukraine could be credited to Wagner and not the formal Russian armed forces.

It is clear as day that Putin's invasion of their neighbor has been a dismal failure. In so doing, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has become a global hero, often compared to the great British leader Winston Churchill in how he has inspired his people to fight to the death for their beloved homeland. Putin, meanwhile, has become a global pariah, a modern-day Adolf Hitler.

Recall that Hitler was also the subject of a failed assassination attempt from his own close circle.

With his war going badly and with his most trusted military ally turning against him, Putin could be even more dangerous, as he continues to talk of using some form of nuclear weapon against his perceived enemies.

This does not only mean Ukraine, but also the entire NATO alliance, the US included.

Indeed, with Putin disappearing from the public view in recent days, no one really knows what he is thinking, and what his plans are following the most serious challenge yet to his leadership.

The mere fact that Putin somehow had to negotiate with Prigozhin to end his crisis can only mean that he himself may be feeling more vulnerable than ever.

This must be taken to mean that he may no longer be thinking rationally.

What moves he is willing to take are almost impossible to guess. But like a wounded tiger, he may well be at his most dangerous.

It has often been said that Russia has the world's largest nuclear arsenal. With a leader who may no longer be of sound mind, the rest of the free world should rightfully fear what could become an existential threat to the human race.

That threat goes by the name of Vladimir Putin.

## Inspiring volunteers everywhere

FORMER Philippines Vice President Leni Gerona Robredo was on top of my list of keynote speakers for the first of the two major events to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the all-volunteer team of community educators called ALLICE. She lives on the other side of the planet, for one. Wasn't the idea overly ambitious?

Where would she be in June, after trotting all over the globe to see to her daughters' schooling while speaking at world-renowned institutions about her efforts to elevate the lives of her country's underserved?

We – 14 of us who call ourselves Kumares & Kumpares (that's co-parent, literally, or confidante, figuratively, if you do not speak Filipino) – always try to practice what we espouse in our mission to promote healthy relationships: diversity, equity and inclusion. In team interaction whether verbally or otherwise and in presentations, we aim to be the change to which we aspire.

Our 14th annual Our Family, Our Future elder care/abuse prevention event was less than half a year away when my dear classmates from 49 years ago began peppering our Viber group with chatter about a meeting with the widow-lawyer who painted the Philippines pink during her 2022 campaign for president. Rivers of all hues of the color of love and kindness cascaded through the nation's metropolitan areas where her supporters marched in her name before pouring out into rallies where goodwill pervaded.

"Leni," as most of her compatriots familiarly refer to her, was not declared winner of the election but was stoked to redouble public service with the private organization she consequently formed to spark volunteerism as a way of life. Because isn't that intrinsic to all Filipinos? And, more importantly to my search for a speaker, isn't volunteerism and sharing resources to stage free education activities the soul of ALLICE?

We were elated that longtime champions Consul General in San Francisco Neil Frank Ferrer and San Mateo County Supervisor David Canepa had already committed to keynote from the Philippine and U.S. perspectives. But for our team dominated 11-3 by women serving a community where women outnumber men, representation clearly was unfulfilled.

Would the current darling of western media find our grassroots movement worthy? Only way to know was to ask her.

Thanks to my classmates Millie Santamaria Thomeczek and Angge Pacifico, a personal invite arrived at the intimate Manila meeting with the founder of Angat Pinas, or Lift Philippine Lives. Faithful Maryknollers, Thomeczek is a retired PH Ambassador to Berlin and Pacifico is fiercely devoted to her homeland despite living and leading organizations for peace in her homebase Zurich. Advocacy is a hallmark of our alma mater which strives to "build a culture of peace, upholding gender equality, and helping save the environment through our advocacy centers whose programs are integrated in curricular and co-curricular activities."

Thomeczek, 2023 Chair of the Maryknoll/Miriam College Alumni Association, wrote Jaycee Belmonte, Angat Pinas Partnerships & Linkages Manager, to introduce a fellow Communication Arts major without mentioning our request, deferring to me to make the pitch for a video message.

We sent the link to our website www.allicekumares.com, followed by newsclips from previous events, my self-introduction and detailed summary of who we are and why this year is especially significant as it would be our first in-person get-together since October 2019, and our 20th anniversary.

Soon we were emailing talking points, timeline and tech specs.

In late April we released the beautiful flyer our founding president Bettina Santos Yap designed, little expecting that before the end of May we would receive the coveted video message filmed to match our spring floral motif reflecting enlightenment and renewal.

"Will Leni Robredo be at your event," was a recurring question from excited folks who picked up the flyer at Bay Area community fairs prior to the event. (Continued on page 26)



CHERIE M. QUEROL MORENO

## A grammarian's frustration

Although English is just the second language in the Philippines, I grew up during the American regime, speaking the language and thinking in it.

My late father, Dean Jose Ma. Hernandez, and Jean Garrott Edades co-authored a book entitled "English for Filipinos", and I was tasked to proofread it before its publication. After my college graduation, armed with a BSE degree, I taught English to high school and college students.

Coming to America, I am continually frustrated when I hear Americans speak ungrammatically in everyday life and on TV and the movies.

Have you ever wondered why the winners of the annual National Spelling Bee are usually Americans of Asian descent? This year's winner is surnamed SHAH.

I cringe whenever I hear people in America say "between you and I" instead of "between you and ME". Between is a preposition and must be followed by the pronoun in the objective case.

Then there is the common error of the misuse of the past tense. People keep saying "I should have WENT", "I should have SPOKE", "I should have TOOK", when the correct grammar is to say "I should have GONE", "I should have SPOKEN", "I should have TAKEN".

Repeating a grammatical error NEVER makes it right. To say that such is just slang is not so, for "slang" is defined as "short-lived informal language".

I feel that I irritate people that I correct, who call me the "grammar police", but I can't help it.

Grammatical errors are propagated by television and the movies, where one can hear "Everyone are" and "one of the things are," (Continued on page 27)



## PG&E Encourages Customers to Prepare Homes for Warmer Weather, Explore Resources to Help Manage Energy Bills

### Taking Action Today Can Help Customers Reduce Energy Usage and Save on Energy Bills

OAKLAND, Calif. — Summer months are typically when customers use more electricity, primarily for cooling their homes and businesses. Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) is encouraging customers to consider no- and low-cost actions today to improve energy efficiency at home and at work to help reduce energy costs.

PG&E offers resources all customers can use to help manage energy bills, as well as assistance programs for income-eligible customers.

“The summer is historically a period when customers use more energy and experience higher energy bills, especially in warmer climate zones where air conditioner (AC) units provide relief from the extreme heat. We’re here to help our customers prepare and raise awareness of ways we can all use energy more efficiently and reduce costs,” said Vincent Davis, PG&E’s Vice President of Customer Operations and Enablement.

#### Air Conditioner Checklist

The air conditioner accounts for more than 40% of summer energy use. Three simple steps will ensure the system works more efficiently ahead of extreme temperatures and reduce energy costs:

Schedule an annual safety and maintenance check by a licensed technician, and clear vegetation and debris near the AC unit so it can receive proper air flow. Cleaning the area around the AC unit could help save up to \$15/year.

Replace air filters, and make sure air vents and registers are not blocked by furniture, curtains or rugs. Cleaning or replacing dirty air filters monthly will make it easier for the AC unit to circulate air, which could save up to \$15/year.

Set the AC thermostat to 78 F degrees or higher when home, health permitting. Every degree above 78 F could save 2%.

#### Indoor Summer Prep

Make sure ceiling fans are rotating counterclockwise to push cooler air down into living spaces. Using fans to help keep air circulating can help save up to \$15/year.

Make sure windows open properly to let cooler air flow into the home in the morning and at night. Also, maintain blinds, drapes and curtains to help shade living spaces from the sun and keep the home cooler. Keeping blinds or drapes closed on sunny days can help to block the heat and save up to \$30/year.

Remove any dust from refrigerator coils or consider replacing an old fridge made prior to 2001 with a newer, energy-efficient model. Upgrading to an energy-efficient refrigerator could save up to \$40/year.

Make sure light fixtures are equipped with LED bulbs, which emit less heat, use less energy and could help save up to \$260/year.

Apply weatherstripping to doors, caulk around windows and doors, and install a door sweep on the garage door(s). Sealing these gaps can help to limit the flow of warm outside air into the home, keep the cool air inside, and help save up to \$120/

year.

#### Outdoor Pool Summer Prep

Limit the amount of time the pool pump runs, and consider investing in a variable speed pool pump, which could help save up to \$625/year.

Use a pool cover to help keep your heated pool warm and reduce the amount of energy needed for heating. This could help save up to \$1,300/year.

For more information on ways to improve energy efficiency, visit [pge.com/summer](http://pge.com/summer).

#### Resources to Help Customer Manage Summer Energy Bills

PG&E customers can benefit by participating in a variety of programs to prepare for higher summer energy costs:

Personalized Rate Comparison supports customers by providing the best rate plan options for their household, which can help save money on energy bills.

Budget Billing averages out energy costs for more predictable monthly payments and helps customers avoid seasonal bill peaks.

Bill Forecast Alerts are notifications sent by email, text or phone notifying the customer if their monthly bill is expected to exceed a specific amount set by the customer, based on how they are using energy.

Home Energy Checkup helps customers assess their energy use and gives customized savings tips.

HomeIntel is a free energy saving program that includes a Smart Audit and a personal energy coach. Customers who have lived in their home for more than a year and have a smart meter installed are eligible to participate.

Power Saver Rewards is a free program that rewards participants for temporarily reducing energy use on select hot summer days when the demand for electricity is high.

SmartAC is a voluntary program that offers participants \$120 off a new smart thermostat or \$75 to enroll in the program in addition to a \$25 annual incentive.

Eligible customers are encouraged to take advantage of income-qualified assistance programs including:

California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) Program offers a discount of 20% or more each month on energy bills.

Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) Program offers a monthly discount of 18% on electricity bills for households with three or more people.

Medical Baseline provides a lower monthly rate for customers with special energy needs due to certain medical conditions.

#### 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 [www.pge.com/](http://www.pge.com/) and <http://www.pge.com/about/newsroom/>.

## Upside...

(From Page 11)

Surely the 150 people who attended our 14th annual “Our Family, Our Future” co-presented by Philippine News Today, Positively Filipino, San Mateo BHRS and the City of South San Francisco had various reasons for being at the SSF Municipal Services Building that sunny June 17 afternoon.

Supervisor Canepa fired them up with a call to action against anti-Asian hate and San Mateo County Behavioral Health & Recovery Services Director Jei Africa unlocked safety tips for people experiencing and witnessing hate attacks. Peninsula Family Service Filipino Peer Counseling coordinator Tessie Madrinan listed simple ways to empower older adults. Aurea Cruz, Conrad Domingo, Cynthia Bonta, Perla Ibarrientos, Peter and Estrella Chan proved aging is “grand.” Food flowed from Lucky Chances, Moonstar, FilAm Cuisine 2, and Fort McKinley, raffle prizes teemed. Everyone received a backpack from PFS and the “A-List” resource guide sponsored by the Town of Colma.

The positive tone was set by the Angat Pinas founder who harked back to our ancestral values, our sacred duty to care for family especially our elders, our gratitude for their sacrifice in their prime.

With us Kumares & Kumpares and particularly the 25 resource providers addressing questions about their programs, Leni Robredo’s words (see Philippine News June 22, 2023 issue) resonated, affirmed her as the ideal representation of the Filipina, yes, and the Filipino too - resilient but resolute, caring and courageous.

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(Philippine News Today Executive Editor Cherie Querol Moreno is founder and executive director of ALLICE Alliance for Community Empowerment.)



Angat Pinas founder Leni Robredo urges unity in fulfilling Filipinos’ collective duty to protect and provide for elders. ANGAT PINAS



ALLICE Resource Provider chair Malou Aclan (standing left) thanks Kaiser Permanente Filipino Association volunteers Christina Taylor, Elsa Agasid, Vicky Palomar, Maureen Crehan, Irma Hong, Lucille Nicodemus-Pinlac and Danielle Gonzalez (seated) for administering bp tests. VOLTAIRE YAP photo



SSF Women’s Club president Corinne Burgess (seated) and vice president Angela Rodriguez (standing right) explain their mission to promote educational, civic and social wellbeing to prospective member Juanita Saucedo. VOLTAIRE YAP photo