



THE PUBLICATION OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT OF BAGO, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

THE CITY BRIDGE

10TH YEAR
ANNIVERSARY
SPECIAL

CJ MARIN:
OUR MISS PHILIPPINES-WATER 2015

TEN YEARS AND COUNTING

BY COUNCILOR BERNADETTE M. SOMCIO

It is surprising how time can pass by so fast especially when we do not consciously think of it. How fast a 24-hour day can be over especially when we are so busy to take note of the hours. So can months and years pass, when we sometimes ask 'where did they go?' That must be one of the reasons why some people keep a calendar of activities or a diary. In them they can look back and be reminded what transpired during the days, months or years that have gone by. For historians and forgetful people who need to remember day to day events keeping calendars and diaries is a must.

The Citybridge is ten years old. When I was reminded of this, my first reaction was, 'that long already?' It seemed only yesterday when we first talked about it at the Mayor's Office – I, trying my best to encourage the staff that there was a need for some sort of a publication that could communicate to the people (not only of Bago) what was happening in the City. I knew there were many that could assure people that the Local Government Unit (LGU) was doing something, and that there were many interesting people and beautiful scenes in Bago other people should know about.

There's much hesitation at first, not unlikely of many first unfamiliar tasks. The insecurity was troubling, 'can we do it?' Would Madam, the Mayor, give her blessings to it? Who will do it? How about this and that? It turned out then Mayor, Honorable Janet E. Torres was very receptive to the idea, and even came up with a column in every issue talking to the people of Bago of important things that were happening at the City and giving general advice to people on matters of concern.

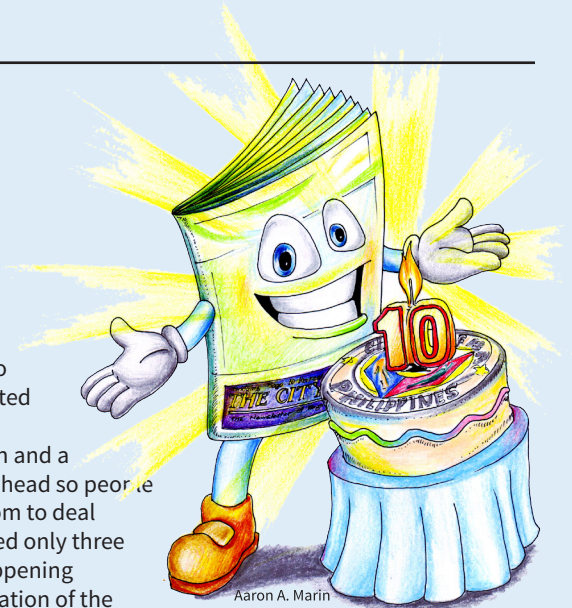
There was a general feeling of exhilaration when the first issue of The Citybridge came out for the May - June issue in 2005. It announced proudly under the masthead that it was "The Official Newsletter of the City Government of Bago." There was a general sigh of relief and satisfaction from the erstwhile staff as they beheld the finished newsletter – It was done!

The paper of that first issue was a coarse mimeo paper or news print, the pictures were in black and white. The first issue was an 8-page print out from the City press. In

the first issue two pages were devoted to introducing a Barangay Captain and a City Department head so people would know whom to deal with. It announced only three of the events happening then – the celebration of the 107th Independence Day, the turn-over of 16 Glo-carts by PNOC (now EDC) to the City for livelihood assistance, the Dengue Caravan and meeting of the Midland Inter-local Health Zone in Bago, and the surprise visit to the Balay ni Tan Juan Museum of some cultural literati including Madam Bea Zobel, Jr. of the Metropolitan Museum and Celia Anna M. Feria, First Secretary and Consul, Philippine Embassy in Madrid, Spain. There were also features contributed from the City Hospital, the Schools Division of Bago City, and many pictures of the Medical Mission conducted by some doctors from Memphis.

To the curious why the name, 'The Citybridge', the editorial of the first issue says: 'A bridge has always been a symbol of understanding, of coming together, of closing gaps – in age, in communication, in commerce, and in relationships. A bridge symbolizes sharing of resources from a place to another, of information from one group to the other. It facilitates linkages...' The editorial closes with a strong hope that the newsletter would survive the challenges around. It said, 'What an ambitious dream for such a small effort! We believe though that we should not be erecting walls of exclusivity around us but instead should be building bridges to reach out to others. After all, it is a bridge we should all be forging to our ultimate destiny which is God'.

Ten years later, The Citybridge is still here, making its appearance quarterly, doing its mission of informing, communicating, and linking Bago to its people and the rest. Thanks to the people whose commitment has been unflagging. Tricia has taken over as Editor-in-chief and Ace's diligence and tireless running after columnists and news providers keep The Citybridge coming regularly. Hopefully there will be others who would care enough to help so this endeavour can go on. The Citybridge has survived ten years. This calls for a celebration!



THE CITYBRIDGE
Bridging Bago to the rest
Est. 2005

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



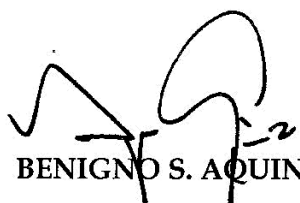
MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

My warmest greetings to **The Citybridge**, the quarterly publication of Bago, Negros Occidental, as you celebrate your **10th Anniversary**.

The Citybridge has been instrumental in the continued flourishing of your city: The past decade has seen you magnify the voice of your people, offering keener insight in examining and supporting Bago City's continuing tale of transformation. You now herald a brighter, more empowered future, one that is secured through the hard work and synergy of your government and the public. I congratulate you in this milestone.

Let your narrative be that of truth, clarity, and integrity: A force for social change, and a podium for your citizens' collective aspiration. May you continue to champion the message of renewed hope; may you rally your readership to take a more meaningful part in building a more equitably progressive Negros Occidental and a more inclusive, revitalized Philippines.

I wish you a happy and galvanizing anniversary. May the succeeding years write the greatest chapters for *The Citybridge* and for your beloved city.



BENIGNO S. AQUINO III



FROM THE EDITOR

What you are holding now is the 10th year special issue of the Citybridge. Through this issue, we celebrate the decade of existence of once a newsletter and now a magazine regularly published by your City Government. It is not easy to run a publication without the support of everyone. So this issue is also a tribute to former Mayor Janet E. Torres who without hesitation gave her approval to the idea of having a newsletter and to Mayor Ramon D. Torres, for all the support and encouragement and for allowing us to continue reaching greater heights. This is also one way of thanking you our dear readers for your continued patronage though we always came out short of copies for all who wanted to have one.

Coming up with this issue is an arduous task yet very fulfilling. This is not the typical Citybridge that we are publishing regularly. We need an issue with some “cream on the top” to serve you our dear readers and to celebrate this milestone. So, we decided to dedicate the whole magazine to celebrate triumphs of Bagonhons.

It all started when Christine Joy Marin won as Miss

Philippines- Water in the recently concluded Miss Philippines- Earth 2015 beauty pageant. She may not won the title, but arguably, we can say that as far as national beauty pageant is concern, it is our first claim to fame. So undoubtedly, she should be on the cover. We thank the management of Pata-an Mountain Resort for accommodating us during the location shoot and First Imprecion Beauty Salon of Imelda Precion for the hair and make-up of CJ.

We cannot just complete the whole issue because there are a lot of Bagonhons who deserve to be on the pages of the Citybridge. There are lot of suggestions. But in the end, we just did our best and rely on our judgment.

Since we are featuring stories of Bagonhons, we decided to invite Bagonhons who writes professionally or just for a hobby to sit down and interview our featured personalities. We thank them for doing us a big favour. You will get to know them at the end of every feature story they have written.

We wanted to come up with an issue we can proudly

present as crème de la crème. So we run down our list. I am sure most of you will be surprised with our feature stories or probably you will exclaim with excitement that you never knew that this person is from Bago City or you will be amazed with all his or her successes.

We had gone all the way to Cebu and Manila just to reach out to our kasimanwas. How we wish that they are all just here so it is easy for us to interview them and conduct photo sessions, yes we do, however their work and training schedules will not permit us to do so.

Our Associate Editor, Ace Balboa and our team composed of photographers and assistants were sent by Mayor Ramon Torres to Cebu to personally see Arthur Villanueva, our world champion from Bago, at the renowned ALA GYM for an interview and photo shoot. I would like also to thank personally, the management of ALA GYM for accommodating us. Ace told me that their day one started perfectly and they accomplished their mission smoothly until the time they have to meet CPT. Michael Manas of the Philippine Air Force, also from Bago City, on the second day.

Ace recalled that while they have already booked their flight to Cebu, CPT Manas informed him, that he is not certain with his schedule. CPT Manas was called for duty in Manila a week before the scheduled photo shoot and no assurance of his schedule going back home in Cebu. That was a big problem. A dilemma indeed. With high spirit, Ace decided to push through until the morning of the scheduled photo shoot on June 29. At around 7am, no sign of positivity for the group. Until they were in the middle of their breakfast when the Captain texted that we cannot push through with the shoot because he is still in Manila and will be flying to Palawan then to Cebu then back to Manila all in that day. Since Ace and CPT Manas were classmates back in the day, Ace told the Captain to give him 20 minutes so they can see each other after he landed in Cebu, all knowing that his plane will refuel. So cut the chase, they have seen each other and did the photo shoot in his plane, inside the cockpit, at the tarmac however with two Presidential Security details and some 6 to 8 members of Presidential Security Group all armed, in position around the nearby ready to depart Presidential plane. It was then at that moment you realized that you are interviewing somebody. We heard that next year CPT Manas will be promoted to Major rank. Kudos!

We also would like to give our thanks to Atty. Henry Yap of Farmville de Bago for welcoming us in his farm. His story, including that of his love life is very fascinating. We paid tribute also to our victorious boxers fresh from the South East Asian Games held in Singapore. Junel

Cantancio of Brgy. Busay clinched the gold medal and Rogen Ladon from Brgy. Lag-asan won the silver medal.

People often complain that Bago City has no place where one can dine or maybe enjoy some tête-à-tête over a cup of brewing coffee or a frappe, with this in mind, we decided to reintroduce Saffron Brew. We also featured the unbelievable 500 pieces mug collection of one of our City Government employees- Joseph Aunzo. We will also reveal the story of Major General Rafael Valencia, the first Bagonhon who graduated at the prestigious Philippine Military Academy. And lastly, the pride of Brgy. Calumangan, the Soyud siblings, Raul and Ely, who without much fanfare, created a name in their chosen field of sports.

For the interview and photo shoot in Manila, I would like to thank De La Salle University- Taft for opening the University gymnasium at the Razon Building for our purpose. Thank you also to the staff of Major General Rafael Valencia for accommodating us at the Philippine Army Headquarters, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig.

To make this issue more special, we are launching the "Throwback Issue" Contest. Five lucky winners will win a 16 pc Corelle set each. Mechanics and details can be found on page 40 of the Citybridge. We are also giving commemorative mugs for our 10th year anniversary! These contests are open not only to City Hall employees but to all Bagonhons.

This issue is a celebration of life. It is a compilation of success stories of Bagonhons who braved strong typhoons to emerge victorious in life. They painstakingly work hard for their success; most of the time they fell but they never faltered. They told us that sometimes they won; most of the time they lose but they never quit. It seems that quitting is not in our dictionary- one even has to endure physical pain for pride and honor of his family and hometown. These stories and more inside may serve as our inspiration so we can tell ourselves that if they can do it, surely we all can.

These are their stories. Our story.

The story of Bago City.

Read on.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "tricia". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase font with a prominent underline.

COVER STORY

HER JOURNEY TO THE CROWN



HAIR AND MAKE UP:
FIRST IMPRECIÓN SALÓN
PHOTOGRAPHY:
MARK PHILIP RUFIN &
ELLAINÉ TOLEDANO

Far more than anybody could have hoped and imagined was a dream come true!

June of this year brings a whiff of newfangled ambience that stretches away crummy experiences and offers brighter perspective when a Bagonhon beauty dazzled on stage during the 2015 Miss Philippines Earth, the 15th edition of the Miss Philippines Earth pageant held last May 31, at the Mall of Asia Arena.

The 20-year-old young, vibrant, sophisticated and stunning lady from Barangay Poblacion, Bago City once dreamt of becoming a beauty queen. True enough, she has gained discernment from that dream, bravely explored the immense arena, boldly faced thousands of people and modestly brought the crown back home as the 2015 Miss Philippines Earth Water.

CJ, as she is fondly called by her loved ones and friends was a playful child, full of life and curiosity as described by her mom, Mrs. Gertrude “Colly” Flores Marin. At her very young age CJ has shown interest at beauty pageants and would love talking with people older than her. As narrated by her father as well as her sole costume designer Mr. Jonathan Alvarez Marin, her obsession of making faces and gazing at the mirror most of the times, looking at her face while she cries were perhaps manifestations of her passion to be a beauty figure and could be attributed to her late grandfather, Mr.



MOMENT. CJ Marin is crowned as Miss Philippines- Water 2015.



VISIT. The beauty queen visits Bago City Mayor Ramon Torres in his office.

Erick Spencer Marin who was then a creative fashion icon of our city.

CJ's growing years were indeed a time where her life breathes the air of pageantry. From CJ's elementary years at Bago City Elementary School as Miss Kariktan, a school environmental activity search, unlocked her self-confidence and determination to venture to a more challenging beauty competitions.

CJ's high school life was

blossoming. Young, brave and adventurous, she bagged different titles such as Miss MAPEH, Miss Lakambini and Miss Rampa Kalikasan. Acting is something CJ has always loved. As a declaimer in Filipino, she had represented the Division of Bago City to the Regional Competition. Her progress in speaking and confidence on stage were influenced by her trainers Mrs. Susan Diaz and Mrs. Gemmalyn



MOTORCADE. CJ waves to elementary school children during the motorcade prepared by the City Government for her

Navas. In fact, CJ has many times shared her creativity by mentoring other students in singing, dancing and stage plays. As one of her high school mentors, I could vividly say that CJ's kindred spirit goes far beyond simple acquaintance. She has established deep connection and warmth. When coaching, one remarkable line she would always tell is "there is always room to get better in everything you do, so keep going and keep improving". Living her life with positivity, CJ has left a lasting imprint at Ramon Torres National High School.

Her collegiate days at Bago City College bestowed the crown as Miss Freshmen and Miss Campus Coed. Perhaps, it was because she was competitive that she ended up becoming very close to the pageant community. She had set her mind to just try her best and make the best of it.

As her face emanated a radiant

smile and her level of confidence increased, she continued to compete in various beauty pageants. She was a Finalist during the 2013 Sinulog Search, Finalist, 2014 Pasalamat Festival and won the Best in Gown, Best in Talent, Best in Swimsuit, Miss GMA Kapuso in the 2012 Lin-Ay sang Negros.

Her elegance and brilliance brought her fame and sustained to shine as the search for Miss Philippines Earth opened a new door of opportunities and challenges for her. Few Bagonhons has the chance to experience how it is like to be on a national competition; however, she has accepted the challenge and found a way to combine something she absolutely loves to.

In her journey, she never failed to appreciate the support of her family, relatives, teachers and friends especially her Tita Imee Precion who's been there throughout the search. Her siblings Philjune, Joric,

Patty and Christian as her forever avid fans, her Tito Aron as her Dad's creative partner, and her Tito Gil and Tita Maricel Flores who never gets tired of following CJs FB Funpage.

"And not to forget, without you my dear people of Bago City and the City Government of Bago, our dear City Mayor Ramon D. Torres and Vice Mayor Nicholas Yulo, Members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod, League of Barangay Captains headed by Hon. Sergio Piansay, Ma'am Tricia Matti and the rest of the department heads, my DepEd family headed by SDS Lorlinie M. Ortillo and ASDS Ma. Janelyn T. Fundal, my Bago City College family and to one and all. I may not mention all your names but deep within my heart, a big big thank you everyone", CJ appreciatively added.

Hitting the crown was in sync with a stimulating question: If you could take control of one environmental problem in our country, what would that be and why? "For me, it would be us-people. We have to face the fact that the biggest problem we are facing right now is us-our behavior. We are causing our own destructions; we are violating our mother earth, so we must help each other to understand and to have our hearts in serving our earth because we are her only chance"

Crowned as 2015 Miss Philippines Earth Water and nailed the Miss SM Markets Special Award. Miss Catherine Joy "CJ" Flores Marin is indeed a great source of pleasure and pride, a true Bagonhon in heart and spirit.

With such a head start in the national stage, there is no telling where CJ will take her dream next.



WRITTEN BY **GEMMA P. GUANZON**

A conceptual thinker, values commitment, work-driven and manages multi-tasking challenges.

FARMVILLE DE BAGO: FROM VIRTUAL TO REALITY



What was once a virtual simulation game for millions of enthusiastic Facebook users has turned into a reality for one family.

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Atty. Henry Yap with daughter Michelle and Moana the camel.



Farmville De Bago nestled amongst 16.6 hectares of natural landscape of fertile land and lush green vegetation in Barangay Atipuluan, Bago City. Secluded yet thriving with life, the rich and glorious surroundings at Farmville inspire everything we hope to do in a farm. Owned by Atty. Henry Sy Yap and his family, the place is a perfect getaway for nature lovers.

The farm started as a piggery and poultry farm in 2001 producing 10,000 eggs a day. It was the eldest son Charles Henry Sy Yap who introduced the idea to the family. From then, they traded the hustles and bustles of city life to the peace and serenity of a farm.

The place was in pursuit of his mission as an animal and tree lover. The choice of the locality was also through the inspiration of his mentor and the one he considered his best friend and a good elder to him, the former Ambassador Roberto Salas

Benedicto. The first plan was to transform the place into a family leisure and eventually started to find small horses to be residents of the farm. His first search brought him to Canlaon where a friend gave him a horse and the number increased because of the family's fondness for animals and their travels to Australia.

Their love for horse riding has inspired them to buy two horse-driven stainless caleza. Their frequent trips to the Land Down Under have provided them their birds and fowls collection, donkeys, ponies, camels, sheep, goats, avian, kangaroo, ostrich to name a few. They also have endemic animals around. Indeed the cherry on top of the Farmville De Bago are the animals that welcome visitors. Unlike the typical zoo, the visitors can get up close and personal with animals.

Today the farm is a house to 27 ponies, 70 sheeps, 60 species of birds and fowls. Sprawling over the

stretch of rural land are 90 varieties of endemic and exotic trees from other countries. The place was also developed with a scenic view and was organized just like the game Farmville.

Stay in place with fun and games with different lovely pets particularly Moana, the photogenic and kissing camel; Zoro, the cute and amiable donkey; Arrow, the blue-eyed sweet and cool pony and Coal, a friendly and mellow pony ready to pull a caleza to give you a tour on the property.

Blessed with wide range of natural offerings it is a perfect venue for family outings, educational tours or simply for leisure. It offers tour around the farm via a horse driven stainless caleza or a golf cart. It also features an 80 ft. diameter umbrella tent good for 300-400 sitters and an amazing cowboy inspired comfort rooms to please the visitors. The place is a real venue for city dwellers

HOW TO GET TO FARMVILLE DE BAGO

- Ride a bus from Libertad market bound for Ma-ao and get off in Crossing Mining.
- Take a tricycle bound for Atipuluan and head on Farmville De Bago.



BIRD FEEDING. Jerry Candido feeds the birds in the aviary.

to be closed to nature, and a sweet escape for those who want a complete change of scenery.

The man behind the farm

He is not your typical farmer. Clad in business suit as he performs his job as Senior Officer/AVP of Banco De Oro – Gatuslao, Henry Sy Yap contradicts his profession with his passionate interest and love of farming.

Henry was born on November 24, 1956 at Sagay, Negros Occidental. He is the 7th in the family of 11 children. Henry grew up in sugar planter, farmer and business minded lineage. He is a pure Chinese but he considers himself as an adopted son of Bago because he was the protégé of former Ambassador Roberto Salas Benedicto.

His first wife died leaving him four children named Charles Henry, Harmony Anne, Paul Henry and

Christopher Henry. He married his second wife with whom he has one child named Michelle Cristy.

His family orientation inspired his love of farming. He spent his childhood years helping his parents from which he learned much from their training on how to labor at an early age. The credit line of the family, goodwill and honesty are their biggest asset in their business and entrepreneurship. As a hardworking agricultural entrepreneur, his goal is to encourage the new breed of farmers to maximize their profit and help in their livelihood. Neighboring families in Atipuluan are their beneficiaries, giving them priorities to labor for sustenance of their children's needs.

He is the stakeholder and benefactor of Atipuluan Elementary and Secondary schools. "Don't be ashamed of what you are doing as long as you are not stealing" says Yap. He has advocated this to the

people he works with.

Aside from being a farmer, he also considers himself an environmentalist. His advocacy includes protection of the environment from global warming and climate change. He is an active partner of DENR and he was given an award as "Integrated Farming Practitioner" As tireless advocate of environmental reforms, he gives talks about the program of DENR, and issues about nature.

When asked why he was so eloquent in speaking, he boldly said that the late President Ferdinand Marcos was his inspiration. He blatantly mentioned his admiration to the former President of the Philippines.

As the city's stakeholder, Mr. Yap believes that everyone should work hard and be part of the energetic dimension toward a better city because Bago City is "Atin Ito!" Yap concluded.



WRITTEN BY **PRAXEDES T. DOLAR**

An outstanding teacher, strong and competent worker, goal and service oriented.



CHAMPIONS. Rogen Ladon (left) and Junel Cantancio (right) with Vice Mayor Nicholas M. Yulo

TRIUMPH AT THE

SEA GAMES

“Left! Right! Left! Right!” This is the most frequent lines that can be heard every time you pass by the Amateur Boxers Association of the Philippines (ABAP) gym of Bago City. The sound of the punching gloves and heavy moans inside is a proof of the undying vigor and determination of the aspiring boxers to succeed in their chosen field. Every drop of sweat signifies learning and every punch denotes stride toward victory. For many years, ABAP gym serves as the training ground of numerous

excellent boxers of Bago City. It has been producing many successful boxers and for this, the city stands as “The Home of Great Boxers.”

Last June 10, 2015, two Bagonhon boxers were added to the list of hall of famers after bringing home the honor to our country and particularly to our Mother City. Rogen Ladon, a 21 year-old lad from Brgy. Lag-asan won a silver medal during the SEA Games 2015 held at Singapore. He is a first timer in SEA games but he proved himself worthy even though

he wasn’t able to bring home the gold medal in the 49 kilograms Light Flyweight category.

Ladon finished his basic education at Lag-asan Elementary School and studied his first year high school at Ramon Torres National High School. The conventional ABAP gym became his haven and training ground as he paved his way towards the National competition. After winning the National Youth Competition, he became a member of the National Team and continued

his studies at Baguio City National High School and graduated last 2012.

Ladon never dreamed to become a boxer but his older brother Jogine Ladon became his inspiration to pursue his boxing career. According to him, the most difficult part of being a boxer is the training and diet. He does his training three times a day and he seldom takes rest. Despite these hardships, he still went on with his training. All his efforts were paid off when he won in the SEA games. For him, determination, discipline and hard work are the best weapons to succeed.

On the other hand Junel Cantancio- a 29-year old boxer from Brgy. Busay won gold medal in the 60 kilograms Lightweight Category against Vietnam. Cantancio finished his Basic education at M.L. Araneta Elementary School and spent his first year, second and third year high school at Ramon Torres National High School. He wasn't able to finish his studies at Ramon Torres National High School because he chose to pursue his boxing career. He was able to continue his studies in Baguio City National High School and graduated last 2004.

According to him, Isidro Vicera or his "Tatang Sid" became his first trainer. After winning the National Youth Competition, he became a member of the Philippine National Team last 2002 with the help of the former Coach Leopoldo Cantancio- his uncle.

While Ladon is a first timer in the SEA games, Cantancio had already joined several competitions and even won silver medal in Thailand (2007) and Myanmar (2013). Aside from boxing, he also joined the Philippine Air force for two years.

Just like Ladon, Cantancio never



TOP: SEA Games gold medalist Junel Cantancio of Brgy. Busay.

BOTTOM: Silver Medalist Rogen Ladon from Brgy. Lag-asan.

dreamed to become a boxer. Driven by the urge to surpass poverty, he tried his luck in the world of boxing. It later became his passion. He also encountered difficulties during his training but he never gave up. The throbbing pain he felt after the laborious trainings motivated him to go further. For him, prayer is still the best weapon.

Being a boxer is not a joke; it demands sweat and blood. One must have a strong heart to endure body pains and injuries.

Furthermore, one must have the skill, passion, patience, discipline and perseverance to survive in the boxing arena. Ladon and Cantancio have both experienced difficulties; however, they chose to continue what they have started, not just for themselves but also for the country. They are now preparing for the upcoming Asian games wherein they will represent our country again. For them, the difficulties they have gone through are just spices to a bitter-sweet victory.



WRITTEN BY **MARLYN P. BALBOA**

Marlyn is dedicated and hardworking when it comes to her job.



JOSEPH'S MUGnificent COLLECTION

He is a gifted artist who dabbles in almost every form of art and outdoes himself in many of it, like in photography where he captures the infinitesimal beauty of his subjects and magnifies it in pictures that will makes you smile, sigh and cry. He goes by the tag Joshua's Eye in this undertaking which happens to be a very apt reflection also of his knack of turning any material into an amazing creation. As told by a friend, he can transform an ordinary stone into a brilliant indigenous artwork.

He pronounces himself as simple and strongly identifies with the maxim, "Be the best of what you are", which somehow says it all as he always gives his best in his endeavours, as in art, in community service, in his work as a civil servant, in his relationships and in other aspects. In friendship, his being

selfless drives him to give everything notwithstanding the sacrifices and exhaustion that he may undergo. He is likewise deeply involved in youth development for more than a decade already being one of the founding members of TRY (Today's Responsive Youth). This afforded him the chance to form strong ties and to share himself further to noble causes in the community.

He is a fairly multi-faceted individual and unknowingly to all, he has this very fascinating hobby which he uncovers to The Citybridge and to the public for the very first time. He calls it his "MUGnificent Collection".

With 505 mugs in his cupboards at home and a bit of 20 in his office, Public Health Nurse – JOSEPH V. AUNZO of the City Health Office of Bago has been an avid mug collector since 1992. Displayed on

his glass encased wooden shelves are assortments of coffee mugs, tea mugs, beer mugs and even soup mugs. An eyeful of designs and colours, they are conversation starters in his receiving area.

He said that his passion for collecting various kinds of mugs started with one that was given by a special friend in the past. It is a simple white mug that is embossed with a little alarm clock and printed with a matching exclamatory statement saying, "Wake Me Up!" What is more, if you turn the cup upside down you can read at the bottom the sweet thought expressed in the words "My heart's been hibernating too long".

This is the ultimate reason why Joseph was then caught up in the madness of acquiring interesting companions for such token fueled

further by the satisfaction of seeing his collection grow.

Ever since then and during his travels, he always sees to it that he brings home a mug or two or even more. These range from souvenir mugs of his destinations to novelty mugs that may strike his fancy.

At times, he also goes for a mug shopping spree spending P 500.00 for just a single piece to the most of a thousand pesos for a bulk of it. He says that he can buy a ton of these items if he just got a lot of extra money at hand.

Currently, Joseph's collection has already built up to a hodgepodge of sentiments and treasure through the contribution of his friends too. In their knowledge of his fondness, they now give him mugs as *pasalubong* and gifts, making him an owner of mementos from the different parts of the country and of the world. Amongst his souvenir mugs are from Singapore, Thailand, China, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, UK, Wales, Barcelona and San Francisco, to name a few. From around the Philippines, he got loads of stuffs to boot and is even lucky to possess a mug memorabilia from the then famous Barracks bar in Iloilo City.

It is definitely a pleasure and an education to view Joseph's "Mugificent" collection. They are all eye candies. His Disney, Sanrio and other cartoon character design mugs are quite delightful, like his Mickey and Minnie pairs and Hello Kitty mugs. His Christmas themed mugs evoke thoughts of nostalgic Christmases and gingerbread houses. These include a Three Kings



COLLECTION. Joseph with some of his unique mug collections.

Christmas Carol set, a group of Santa's head figurine mugs and an extra-large Nutcracker Prince mug.

Among other interesting objects in his cabinets are his signature mugs, composed of a Starbucks collection of both regular and miniature cups and GUCCI bag mugs. He likewise owns a trio of Egyptian hieroglyph printed mugs, high-heel mugs, bikini body mugs and animal figure mugs. He hoards commemorative mugs as well, mostly from numerous celebrations that were held in Bago City.

When asked to pinpoint the most expensive piece in his collection, he immediately steered our attention to a mug that looks like it is made of fine bone china complete with gold tip lid and a matching saucer. Its design resonates an Asian vibe with its elegant oriental pattern of azure, ruby and buttery hues that are nicely trimmed in gold. He told us that a close friend thoughtfully bought it for him in Thailand.

Joseph places great value on his collection by treating them with utmost love and care. He has invested in sturdy display shelves with locks for their storage. He

further related that everything in it is his favorite no matter how simple or flamboyant the item is, like a parent to his children, you cannot make him choose one over the other.

Aside from mugs he also shared that he is into collecting miniature motorcycles and vehicles. Some of them are remarkably vintage reproduction models. There is also a building number of commemorative tumblers of Super Heroes in his cabinets. They are all displayed alongside his mug collection.

He opened up to us that he has now turned his passion into a business venture of designing and printing mugs. His various works included yearbook type mugs for his college classmates, souvenir mugs for their family reunion and symbolic mugs for the barangays of Bago City. Joshua's Eye is now a brand name for his mug prints.

Today with 505 mugs and counting, it can now be claimed that Joseph is undeniably the "MUGnificent Collector".

In parting, he importantly expressed that, "as long as I have space and there are still unique mugs I will still collect".



WRITTEN BY *MAE ANN B. FURTOS*

A Libran who values productivity, deeply loves her mother, brother, dogs and books, fosters an intimate circle of amazing friends and greatly believes in happy endings.



BREWING. Rene Jinon of Saffron Brew personally preparing the espresso.

BREWING THE LEGACY

Living up the legacy of his grandmother and laidback culture of the Bagonhons had contributed to Rene Jinon & Glenda Carmona's coffee business. The Buddhism inspired coffee shop located at the #56 Trinidad & Lopez Jaena Streets, Bago City is considered now as one of Bago City's best.

The passion for coffee and reviving concept of coffee houses as community centers were Renes' thoughts and goals for establishing this business. According to him, he grew up where coffee houses were once a venue, where people interact and share ideas and thoughts of anything under the sun. His grandmother once owned the biggest and foremost coffee house in Negros,

the La Corona Café along Lacson Street, Bacolod City.

Saffron Brew Café Gallery derived its name from the word "saffron" which means an orange-yellow color and flavoring from a crocus plant and it also signifies the color of the Buddhist Monk's robe. Buddhism for Rene has always reminded him of his inspiration of Buddha's teachings and principles of noble truths.

Aside from being a coffee shop, you can also find artifacts and authentic displays from various Buddhist countries such as Cambodia, Tibet, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Vietnam and Nepal, the years when he worked with International Red Cross as the only international



In Saffron Brew one can find a relaxing ambiance while enjoying an array of food from pasta to sandwiches, hot to cold drinks at an affordable cost. **TOP RIGHT** The owners, Rene and Glenda Jinon of Brgy. Taloc.

delegate from the Province of Negros Occidental.

Every piece has its story to tell, according to Rene. Here you can find hundred year old water pots and jars, brass Buddha statues displayed flamboyantly around the corners. Paintings from Cambodia hang elegantly upon the walls. Embroidered craft from Tibet marvelously laid for display.

Saffron currently employs only two (2) for its working staff, as he and his wife were very hands on to their business. Aside from the usual coffee, espresso and frappes they also offer pasta dishes, sandwiches and chocolates. His wife creates menus stirred from their various food trips abroad, thus got their personal taste. Raw derived from various imported beans from Kenya, Colombia, Papua

New Guinea, Senegal and delicately picked local Negrense beans as well, particularly in the Mt. Mandalagan area where you can find best variety of coffee beans and Patag in Silay City.

Doppio, Affogato, Medici, Espresso Machiatto, Zorro & Cortadito to name a few from their list of choices of espresso. Mint Mocha, Passion, Choco Mint, Mezzo, Coffee Almond & Tahitian Vanilla for their Frappe lists. Pasta dishes: Fettucine with Pesto and Cream, Spaghetti Bolognese & Fusilli with Pesto and Chicken are the best among it. And these all you can savor at a very minimal cost.

No need for expensive ads, as the couple believes that through the word of mouth and social media play vital role in their advertising campaigns. What they value most is when people share their coffee

experience to their colleagues and eventually experience the zen wunderkind haven. Even people from nearby towns and cities would visit and taste their distinctive menus.

What's unique about it? Well, Saffron is the only coffee shop in the island where it showcase eclectic inspired space, the only who offers wide array of espresso, almost 21 from the list and the only who serves Cuban coffee!

So, what are you waiting for? Feel and taste Saffron Brew's intrinsic taste of coffee goodness! Indeed, one of Bago City's best. Saffron is open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Mondays to Fridays. For more information about menus and reservations you can call up this number (034) 4540540 and look for Glenda.



WRITTEN BY ANNA GRACIA P. LIM

Endearing, engaging, smart and believes in doing everything with a smile.



**DESTINED TO BE
“KING”**

Living on his name ‘King’ Arthur Cordero Villanueva, the 26-year-old native of Bago City, Negros Occidental, Philippines continuously reigns in the sport of his choice – boxing.

Born on January 20, 1989, ‘King’ Arthur didn’t dream to become a boxer – much more to be a champion.

Second youngest of the 12 Villanueva siblings, Arthur was early exposed to household responsibility after his father died when he was 15. He started driving a tricycle – earning him as much as 100 pesos (\$2.50 USD) a day in order for him to help his mother and his family.

Despite the life’s challenges, he tried hard to finish his secondary education at the Ramon Torres Ma-ao Sugar Central National High School and his tertiary at Bago City College taking Bachelor of Arts major in Mathematics.

‘King’, as what his friends call him, is an active chess player during his school days in the primary and high school years – wherein he won several medals in the city-based tournaments. In fact, he even won over one of the best players in his home place – in which he considered as one of his greatest achievements.

At the age of 16, the ‘King’ started his boxing career as an amateur with a fight record of 50 wins and 7 defeats. And, at the age of 19, Arthur turned professional and currently with 27 victories alongside 14 knockouts and 1 defeat.

Just recently, Arthur’s attempt of the IBF Junior Bantamweight title failed. He returned home



BAGO’S PRIDE. King Arthur Villanueva of Brgy. Don Jorge Araneta

unsuccessful after he lost the bout against Puerto Rico’s McJoe Arroyo (17-0, 8 KOs) last July 18 at the Don Haskins Center in El Paso, Texas.

The 26-year-old Villanueva suffered his first career loss via 10th round technical decision following succumbed a cut on his right eyebrow caused by a head butt. Judges Larry Hazzard Jr. and Levi Martinez scored the fight, 91-98 while John Stewart has it 92-97.

As a professional boxer, although disappointed with how the fight turned out, the Bagonhon boxer believes that the title wasn’t meant

for him. For Villanueva, achieving one’s dreams and ambitions need not only hard work but, faith in God.

To recognize and honor his contribution to uplift the level of boxing awareness in Bago City, Arthur has been honored many times by the City Government of Bago as well by several other entities in the province and in the country.

For Arthur Villanueva, his loss shall not overcome his faith. He is destined to be one of the boxing royalties of the world and his majesty as “King Arthur” shall live on for many years to come.

WRITTEN BY **JEROME S. GALUNAN, JR.**

Teacher, Sports Editor, Host-Aksyon Isports (dyEZ), Media Officer for many international sports events, and president of Sports Communicators Organization of the Philippines-Bacolod from 2010 to present.





AYE, AYE, CAPTAIN!

In 1989, a five year old kid watching over his grandmother's piso-per-view Betamax business was glued in his seat watching scenes of maneuvering pilots and rustling fighter planes from the most celebrated Tony Scott's masterpiece Top Gun. It was the same inspiration for the little kid to declare with conviction in his obligatory when-I-grow-up speech to become a pilot someday. And somehow the fascination brought about by the subject of aircrafts and flying brought him to where he is now.

At 31, Michael Marlvín Manas

or Nok-Nok as fondly called by his peers is a bemedaled Philippine Air Force captain who graduated from Philippine Military Academy, the top-tier and most prestigious military institution in the country. Michael belonged to Maragtas Class of 2007 and completed his stint in the academy with a Cum Laude distinction, a feat only few are able to achieve.

Just as airplanes experience turbulences in-flight, Michael's journey to PMA was not easy breezy as he recalled. It was a far cry from what he had imagined. Back in 2000



when he was still a 4th year high student at Ramon Torres National High School – Main, he tried to take the PMA exam only to be disallowed because he was still under aged. But his unwavering interest led him to befriend fellow Bagonhon Glenn Pahilanga, one of the proctors of the exam and was also attending PMA that time. The kind gentleman offered him tips on the life in the academy and on how pilots are appointed to the Air Force. Eureka! It was the moment that inspired him to study Aeronautical Engineering in PATTS College of Aeronautics. Lady luck was somehow kind to him as on April Fool's Day of 2003 and on his second year in PATTS, Michael decided to give PMA another try and this time he succeeded.

He recalled the strenuous medical and physical examination. Overcoming them was just a rite of passage as he found the regimented

life in the academy as the hardest transition he had experienced his entire life. He poignantly narrated how the first two months or the beast barracks days almost break him to the point of wanting to go home. But being the funny man that he was, the thought that his family pulled off a festive despedida party made him feel embarrassed to return home. And most importantly he did not

want to be tagged as quitter and live in regret.

PMA life disciplined Michael to wake up before 4:30 AM, ahead of the reveille or the time the cadets are awakened by the sound of the trumpet. The cool morning breeze of Baguio is a temptation for ordinary citizens to remain in slumber but not for them, who needed to change into athletic attire, withdraw their 9.2



Captain Michael Marlvn Manas of the Philippine Air Force inside the Fokker F-27 cockpit.



Saturday parade with *mistahs*



Student pilot days with the SF-260



Michael receiving from former President Arroyo his medal for graduating Cum Laude at PMA



Capt. Manas with his lovely wife, Ayah and daughter Liya

lbs rifle and accomplish their 5 km or more morning road run routine. He was literally beating the clock as they were given only a limited time to accomplish bath and other essential preparations. They then proceed to the mess hall to have their meals. As featured in some television shows, the cadets eat in square meals as part of plebe traditions. After meals, they will return to barracks to prepare for the activities for the day which were composed mainly of lectures and demonstrations. Once again, they will perform exercises, eat lunch, attend classes, perform afternoon exercises, eat dinner, perform night exercises, study and retire at 10:00 PM. The sound of the bugle was the signal for taps or sleeping time.

Looking back, Michael related that life in PMA taught him to become a leader and not a boss. He also learned that setbacks are always part of life and instead of looking

at them as missed opportunities, those are actually stepping stones to achieve one's greater purpose. For him the motto of the institution "To serve God, country and people" is something for him to constantly live by. Furthermore, he happily shared that his being in PMA was no accident after realizing that aside from the prestige and important lessons he learned, he was able to meet there his future wife, Ayah. On his graduation, he had mixed emotions and was excited for the great things which lay ahead. He was overwhelmed that all his efforts paid off and the distinction he earned was another feather in his cap. More importantly, having his family attend and celebrate his graduation made it more meaningful.

Serving the Philippine Air Force for 8 years showed him the plight of the military servicemen in the country. There would always be emergency flights, supply supports, and other

call-of-duty transports and flights. His job may land him anywhere in the country away from his family, a sacrifice he has to make in the name of service. But the way he sees it, this is a lifelong dream, more than the fascination he felt when he saw Top Gun, more than the exhilaration he experienced when he got in PMA and more than the feeling of elation when he graduated. This is his passion. This is his calling.

As he sits in the cockpit while sipping his morning coffee, watching the dawn break and cruising at an altitude of 18,000 feet, Captain Nok-Nok is forever grateful of the job he keeps including its simple perks. He is an epitome of a persistent and disciplined person, a loving husband to Ayah, and a doting father to his daughter, Liya. He is a kind of person who soars high but maintains his feet on the ground. He is a role model exemplifying hardwork, determination, skill, and competence. He is Michael, proud Bagonhon, El Capitan.



WRITTEN BY **SHELLYN E. GOMEZ**

A licensed financial advisor and engineer who loves to eat, read and discuss topics from investments to breastfeeding.

THEY CALL HIM RAPRAP



THE MAJOR GENERAL RAFAEL C. VALENCIA STORY

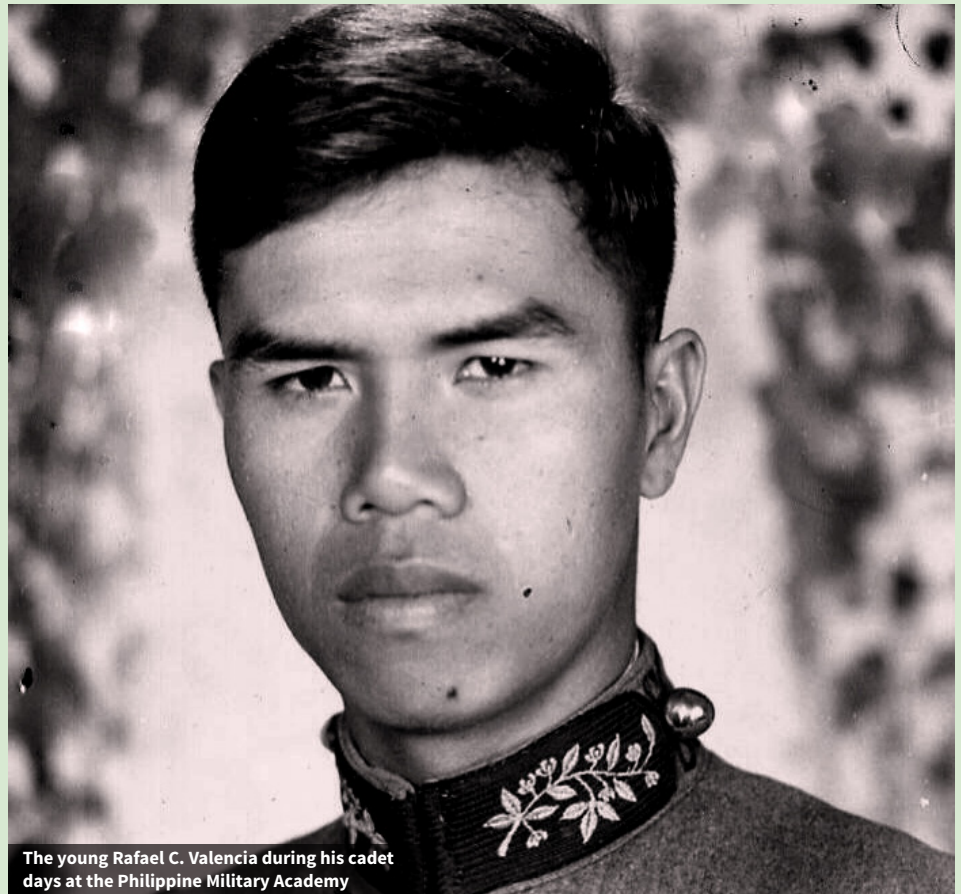
He never wanted to be in the military. In fact, when he was in Grade 2 at J.L. Araneta Elementary School in Taloc, he wanted to be a priest. But there was a change of heart when he was growing up. He attributed it from being the Corps Commander of Citizen's Army Training (CAT) at Sum-ag National High School, Midshipman officer at Visayan Maritime Academy and his father's wish to have a son who is a Philippine Military Academy (PMA) graduate.

So when the opportunity comes, he took the PMA Entrance Exam (PMAEE) as walk-in applicant after he was asked by his high school friend to join him and the rest they say is history.

This is the story of Major General Rafael Coscolluela Valencia; the young boy from Brgy. Taloc whom they called RapRap, now occupying the 3rd highest position at the Headquarters of the Philippine Army being the Chief of Staff of the Philippine Army (CSPA).

Early Childhood

He described his childhood being a farmer and "bolantero". He is the third child in a brood of five boys. They helped their father, the late Domingo Guzon Valencia, who was a tenant of a one hectare farm lot in Dangal, Para and Camingawan tilling their rice fields. They also scheduled some time to help their Nanay Raquel Magdalera Coscolluela



The young Rafael C. Valencia during his cadet days at the Philippine Military Academy

in buying fish at Pala-pala in Banago and sell it at Trece y Media. They also vend sugar, salt and other items in Ma-ao, La Carlota, Bago, Silay, Sum-ag and Murcia with their parents.

He recalled when he was a young boy, together with his friends and cousins, they used all the vacant lots and the farms around Bangga Trece y Media as their playgrounds. They would trail passing trucks hauling sugarcane to pull some stalks to savor its sweetness. He would always looked forward on

Sundays when they hear mass at the St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Bago City. Also, he vividly recalled joining the processions around the Poblacion during Holy Week. The boxing bouts and cultural presentation at the City Plaza were a sight to Gen. Valencia's childhood.

At young age, RapRap excelled in various fields. He joined the Boy Scouts of the Philippines and gone Boy Scout camping in Guintubdan and Buenos Aires. He was also the representative of J.L. Araneta



Elementary School in quiz or spelling competition in the whole Schools Division of Bago City.

Life at the PMA

His life at the Philippine Military Academy was a huge and sudden transformation. He described it as highly regimented and heavily pressured life which was miles away from being young and carefree teenager. They were trained to lead men in combat and to lead the armed forces to battle the enemies of the state. His education and training from PMA put him in good stead in his military career.

Cadet Valencia graduated from PMA in 1984 making him the first Bagonhon to enter and graduate at the said military institution. He excelled academically graduated among the top 3 of his class in Infantry Officer Basic Course; Infantry Officer Advance Course; PA Command and General Staff Course; and Military Intelligence Basic Course.

Family Affairs

Rafael Valencia met his wife, Ma. Teresa Leyva Cruz when he was a fourth year cadet. She was her kaydet girl. He married Tet before he left for

his combat in Sulu and Basilan as a Second Lieutenant. He narrated that on his first vacation from combat duties after eight months, he immediately proceeded straight to the hospital to see his wife delivered their first baby, Raquel Therese two days earlier. Their second child, Mikhael Tristram and their youngest Rafiel Timothy were delivered without him around.

Their eldest daughter Raquel Therese is a graduate of BS in Comparative Literature from UP Diliman and currently working at the Supreme Court of the Philippines. Meanwhile, the youngest, Rafiel Timothy is enrolled at UP Los Banos taking up BS in Computer Science.

When he was asked about the values that he would want his children to learn, Major General Valencia said that he wanted his children to value education and hardwork, the same values his parents taught them when they were young. He added that his parents were successful on rearing five boys, four of them became licensed Master Mariners and one Major General in the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

As an Army Officer, Major General Valencia is far away from his family most of the time. He said that if time

and situation allow, he let his family visit him on his field of assignment. In this case, his family would be able to catch a glimpse of his work and life in the field. In the early years of his military life, it was more difficult because his assignment in combat duty did not afford them the opportunity. So whenever he is on vacation, he made sure he spent quality time with his wife and children.

Military Life

Major General Valencia has been in the service for 35 years. He is presently the Chief of Staff, Philippine Army (CSPA). The CSPA, the 3rd highest position, is the principal staff officer of the Commanding General, Philippine Army who acts as the main orchestrator of all staff functions at Headquarters Philippine Army (HPA).

Prior to his present assignment, Major General Valencia was Chief, Armed Forces of the Philippines Resource Management Office (AFPRMO), the primary adviser of the Chief of Staff, AFP on resource management and budget development. Major General Valencia has distinguished himself as Commander, 802nd Infantry Brigade by sustaining the



Trooping the line at the General Headquarters after his promotion to Brigadier General (1 star)



Sending off President Aquino after he visited Southern Leyte



Briefing Congresswoman Lucy Torres-Gomez on the relief effort of the Philippine Army in her district

gains of the Internal Peace and Security Operations and proactively responding to Super Typhoon 'Yolanda' in the Provinces of Leyte, Southern Leyte and Biliran. He also served as Commander, 7th Infantry Battalion, 6th Infantry Division, which was involved in internal security operations in Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat Provinces in Central Mindanao. His other field assignments were platoon leader, company commander and battalion staff of the 5th Infantry Battalion, 1st Infantry Division in Basilan Province, Zamboanga Peninsula and Lanao Provinces.

Major General Valencia also served as Chief of Unified Command Staff of the National Capital Region Command which is responsible for the defense and security of Metro Manila; Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations, G3 and later Chief of Staff, 10th Infantry Division in Davao Region; Chief of Staff of 3rd Infantry Division in Western Visayas; Deputy of the Assistant Chief of

Staff for Intelligence, G2 of 7th Infantry Division in Central Luzon; and Operations and Training Officer of Combat Arms School and later Assistant Chief of Staff for Comptrollership, G6 of Training and Doctrine Command. At the General Headquarters, AFP, Major General Valencia served as Chief, AFP Command Center; Chief, International Affairs Division, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, J5; and Executive Officer of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, J3 which was responsible in crafting the Internal Peace and Security Plan (IPSP) 'Bayanihan'. At Headquarters Philippine Army, Major General Valencia served as Chief, Army Resource Management Office; and Deputy and Executive Officer of Army Management Information Center (AMIC). Major General Valencia also served at the Department of National Defense (DND) as Program Director of the Improvement of Intelligence, Operations and Training Capability

Program of the Philippine Defense Reform (PDR) Program.

He was promoted to Brigadier General (1 star) for his performance of duties as Brigade Commander and Chief of the AFP Command Center. For his promotion to Major General (2 star), it was for performing his duties as Chief of the AFP Resource Management Office and his present positions as CSPA.

Aside from being a PMAer, Major General Valencia is a graduate of Scout Ranger Orientation Course. He is also a graduate of the Systems Automation Course at the US Army Computer Science School and the Defence Management Seminar in Australia. He has a Masters degree in Public Administration from the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

His awards in the AFP include four Distinguish Service Stars, two Outstanding Achievement Medals (for his role in crafting the AFP National Military Strategy 2002 and IPSP 'Bayanihan'), Award of



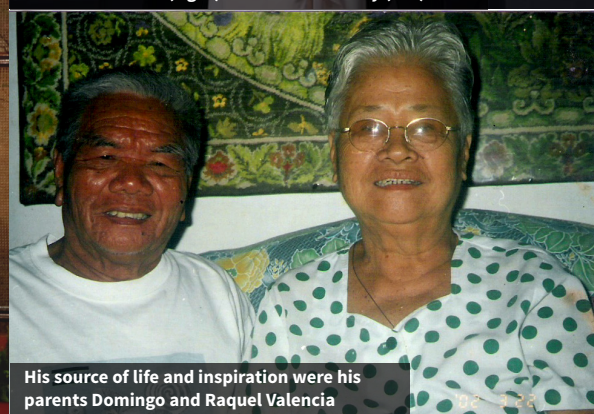
General Valencia with his wife Tet during the Armed Forces of the Philippines Ball



The children of the General. Raquel Therese (center), Mikhael Tristram (right) and Rafiel Timothy (left)



Family Picture with the President after the oath-taking as Major General (2 stars) at Malacañang Palace



His source of life and inspiration were his parents Domingo and Raquel Valencia

Gawad sa Kaunlaran (for personally supervising disaster relief and rehabilitation efforts for victims of Super Typhoon ‘Yolanda’), numerous Military Merit and Commendation Medals, and various Campaign Medals and Ribbons.

Bagonhon at Heart

He rarely visits Bago City now. But when asked what he missed most in Bago City, Major General Valencia said he missed the rice fields and his friendly neighborhood including his relatives and friends. He said he is looking forward to one day retire from service and live in Bago City again.

His Nanay and Tatay were the biggest influence in his life. He paid tribute to their parents for striving to earn a living to be able to send them to school. They taught him the value of hard work, discipline, service to others and love of God which served him well in his military career and personal life.

For Major General Valencia, there is no secret in achieving success. One has to work hard, work with the people around you, work for others, and work for the glory of God. He added that one has to look at every situation as an opportunity to prove his worth, learn new things, help others and give thanks to the Lord.

With the magnitude of work placed on his shoulder, Major General Valencia has only this secret to share -time management. For him it is important to balance his focus in his work, stay relaxed and take care of his health and his family.

Major General Valencia believes that there is no insurmountable obstacles and challenges in life. All these he said are opportunities to make one stronger and better person. He encouraged everyone; just like him and what his parents did to him; “strive to get an education which is the passport to success and be the best that you can be.”

WRITTEN BY *ACE A. BALBOA*

A fresh graduate from the University of the Philippines who lives by the credo of his alma mater- Honor and Excellence.





LIVING THE DREAM: SIBLINGS ON THE RISE

To where a player takes the ball is to where his doom is. The challenge between victory and defeat is always a shadow in the game. Although fate may be as tricky as a ball game, yet the Soyud siblings of Brgy. Calumangan, Bago City stood as a proof that life's dare could not thwart them in earning their wings.

As the eldest among the five, Raul, was once a dreamer who now plays as a rookie of NLEX Road Warriors of the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA). His journey started when his father's friend whose son happened

to be a varsity player of Living Heritage Christian Academy Bacolod noticed his towering height and his playing skills. He was introduced then to the coach of the basketball team of the said school and was invited to join their team. As the opportunity knocked, he continued his last year in high school at LHCA after Ramon Torres National High School.

His endeavor continued in college. He entered the formerly known as West Negros College (now STI-West Negros University)

and took up Bachelor of Science in Criminology. Considered as his first-ever training as a varsity player, he became a part of the Mustangs, the official basketball team of STI-WNU.

They have competed in various events such as the Philippine University Games (Unigames) and Negros Occidental Private Schools Sports Cultural Educational Association (NOPSSCEA) and beyond doubt hailed as champions for three consecutive years. One of which also was the Philippine Collegiate Champions League (PCCL) that gave



Raul Soyud of the NLEX Red Warriors

the 24-year-old athlete the biggest break he did not expect to happen.

It was during the PCCL when he was endorsed by some coaches to the prestigious universities in Manila after seeing his skill. This gave him the chance to enter the University of the Philippines (UP) June of 2010 but he wasn't able to play his first University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) game the following year due to a serious injury.

With heartbeat as thundering as the beat of the drums in every game and seeing the cameras rolling over the venue covering the entire event adds to the tension of the neophyte. It eventually marked as the ful-

fillment of his dream, to be able to play in his most desired venue, the Araneta Coliseum.

He is looking forward to stay longer in PBA in order to strengthen his career and to secure his family's future. He was drafted in the 3rd round, 31st overall by the NLEX Road Warriors in the 2014 PBA draft.

Positioned as the center/power forward of UP Fighting Maroons, Raul finally made it to UAAP Season 75 in 2012. The defensive minded bigman tallied an average of 8.74 points per game, 8.56 rebounds and 1.52 blocks for two seasons.

On the other hand, her sister also paved her way to success. Who

would ever forget that vigorous block a LaSallian lady spiker had against the reigning UAAP MVP Allysa Valdez during the UAAP Season 77 game between La Salle and Ateneo? A Bagonhon pride made that history.

Christine Joy Soyud, or Eli Soyud to many, is a spiker of the De La Salle University Women's Volleyball Team since 2013. Unlike his brother Raul, she doesn't have this dream of joining the professional league.

She attended RTNHS for three years and it was on her second year when her teacher in Physical Education (P.E.) encouraged her to join the school's volleyball team which also marked the start of her venture. She continued her 4th and last year at Doña Hortencia Salas Benedicto Memorial High School in La Carlota City.

The women's volleyball team of DHSBMMHS where Eli was a part competed at the Br. Ceci Cup held at the University of Saint La Salle Bacolod in 2012. Due to her exemplary performance during the game, she was spotted by a coach of Bacolod Tay Tung High School. The coach, who happened to be a friend of DLSU coach Ramil de Jesus approached her, asked if she wants to attend La Salle, and she was recommended.

Up, and she finally entered her dream school. Her first game in UAAP was last year, just in for the season 77 as a rookie and it is where she earned her instant fame. Bearing the jersey #19, Eli is now one of the most looked up to players in volleyball.

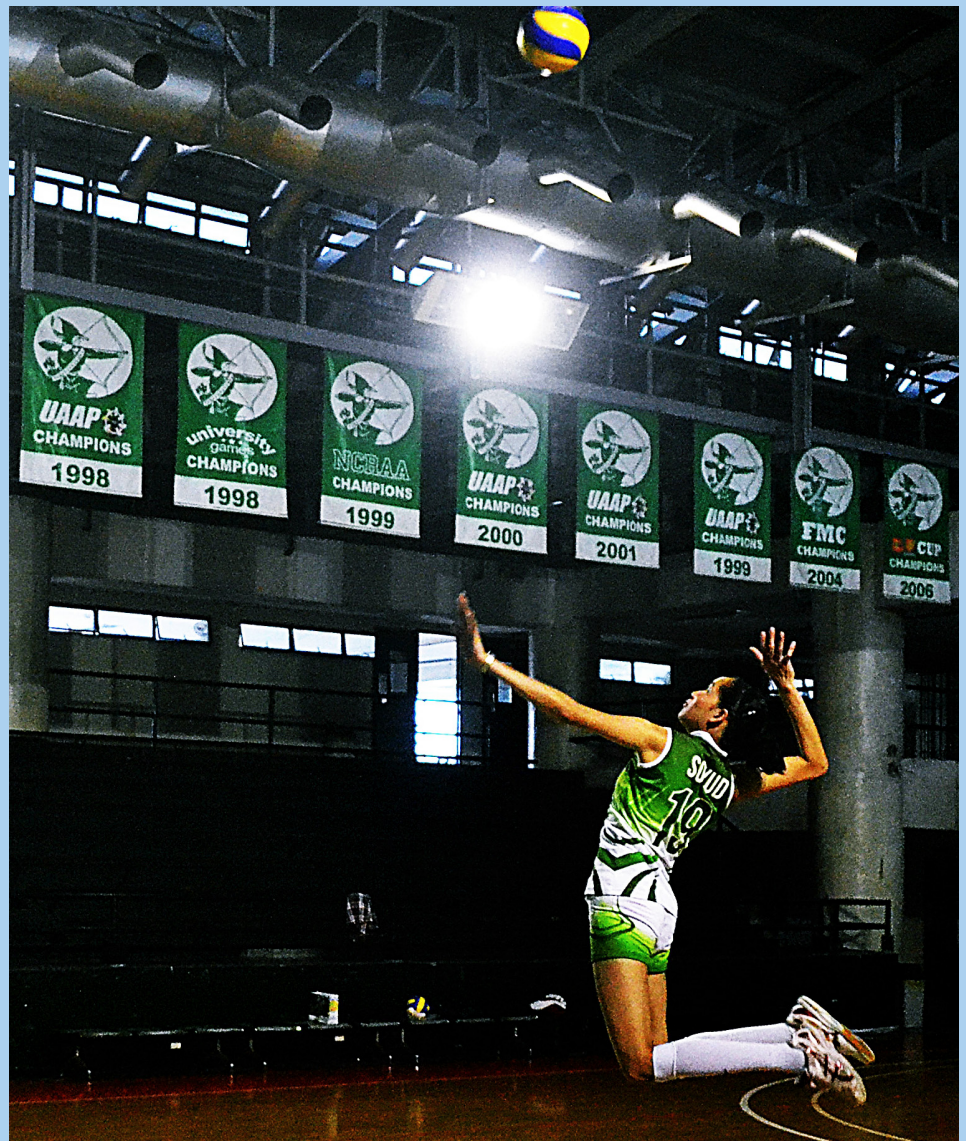
To wake up at 5:00 in the morning and to prepare for the 8:00

A.M. training is her daily routine. Out of her hectic schedule, she's still able to manage her time for practice and her studies at the same time. As an instant celebrity, Eli finds her appearance on the television as an additional pressure but this doesn't hinder her in giving the best game for her team for she also considers this as her motivation to perform well.

To be away from their family is one of the challenges they have ever faced. But Eli admitted that aside from her family, there's one thing that she missed the most – to celebrate the charter day of the city, February of every year. To join the crowd in the plaza with friends and to be one of those fans shouting, cheering and struggling to get near the invited local artists according to her is priceless because it is where she finds real happiness.

Taking up the course Bachelor of Arts in Sports Studies, Christine Joy is on her third year at DLSU while Raul is a Senior student of UP taking up Bachelor of Physical Education.

Meanwhile, there is a deeper reason why both Raul and Eli have this eagerness and determination of putting their dreams into reality. "Naninguha guid kami nga makasulod sa varsity kay indi kami makaya nga paeskwelahon sang amon nga ginikanan sa college," he said. Their father Raul Sr., is a carpenter while their mother Lisa is a plain housewife



Eli Soyud of the De Lasalle Lady Spikers

and they are their inspirations in fulfilling their dreams, together with their three other siblings Azil Mae, Ramona and Adonis Roy.

The fame that they both have is what they are grateful of. The blessing that they will not use to boast but the purpose of which is to help others in the future, they said.

"Mangin matutom guid sa pag eskwela kag indi pag-intrahan sang bisyo kay ang edukasyon guid lang ang maregalo sang ginikanan

ta sa aton nga indi mabakal sang kwarta," Raul added.

The Soyud's said that compared to a ball, our life is also in circles. Played by our fate yet dribbled by our own desires. We may fail to take a shot or earn points in our endeavors but amid the twists and turns, the day of never-ending victory will surely come our way.

Thus, life is a game. We must learn how to play it.

To Raul and Eli, Kudos!



WRITTEN BY **FRANCES DOREEN J. BALBOA**

She is a fun-loving person, with a creative mind - a dependable, risk-taker, field reporter of a local radio station and loves to make cake pops.



The present Editorial Board of The CityBridge together with Mayor Ramon D. Torres

How it all began... The CityBridge Story

AS RECALLED BY ACE A. BALBOA

Just like any story, it all started with the phrase, "In the beginning..."

In the beginning, there was a fad among government institutions all over the country to have a newsletter or magazine that will report or update its clients about what they are doing. The City of Bago was no exemption.

I can vividly recall it was summer of 2005; I approached Councilor Bernadette Somcio (Executive Assistant then to former Mayor Janet Torres), after a month of doing nothing being a casual employee, to start what I was initially hired for and that is to help the City in creating a publication other than Ang Bagonhon, the city yearbook published every November fiesta and February charter anniversary.

I and Daydet (endearment for Mam Somcio), together with Judee Lyn Lirazan discussed about the possible name for the publication. We need to have a name first! There were suggestions such as Bago City Times, Bago City Herald, among others. Daydet asserted that we need to have a name unique to Bago City. After several days of mulling the name for the publication, it was accepted that City Bridge was to be the name in honor of the new Bago City Bridge which plays a pivotal role in the City and

the province as well. Judee Lyn suggested that we should coin the word City to Bridge just like Main High School's The Trailblazer. Daydet, being an English teacher was not susceptible to the idea since CityBridge is not a compound word so we cannot group the two words together to make it one word thereby creating a new meaning. However, after deliberations the name The CityBridge was born. Nevertheless, we found excuse in coining the two words, in grammar, you call it as neologism.

The next issue we dealt with was the content. Who will be in-charge of writing, circulation, and how many pages are we going to print for the maiden issue? Daydet volunteered to be the Editor-in-chief (EIC) as well as head writer and critic. Judee Lyn also volunteered to write being a student journalist back when she was in high school. I also said I will do my part. Our EIC added that she will try to invite different offices to submit write-ups specifically Bago City Hospital and Department of Education-Bago City. Also, we decided a good 8-pager maiden issue will do. The idea was to feature a barangay captain and department head every issue so the readers will have a glimpse about their professional and personal life. We featured former Abuanan

Barangay Captain Raymundo Abuana and Miss Tricia Matti as our first interviewees. Also, a Mayor's Corner and Editorial was a must. At that time, Bago City Hospital was celebrating their 10th year anniversary so we have Cookie Apurado as our writer for the said event. The School Wise section was also launched for news in DepEd- Bago. Later, Mr. Rutchillo Ducay served as our correspondent for School Wise.

Lay-out was another issue. My experience as former Editor-in-chief of the student publication of Bago City College was not enough to do the lay-outing. I always rely with my artists back in the day. Then, Daydet invited Rodenie Rito to join us and assisted me in the lay-outing. The lay-out of the first two issues of the CityBridge was done by Dindin Rito.

Mam Somcio told me that we need a logo for our humble newsletter. Being a neophyte in the Mayor's Office, she said I will seek the help of Mr. Jose Mauricio Jumabong, the city photographer. I remember it well one morning when Nong Joe and I went to Barangay Lag-asan just down the Bago City Bridge to capture through lens the majesty of the bridge. That was the first time I felt I was already working at the City Hall. Nong Joe had to ride one of

the bancas just to capture the right angle of the bridge with our newly acquired digital camera. Before going down the river banks, Nong Joe needed to have the tire of his city issued motor bike vulcanized. With me as a passenger, it has to be.

Nong Joe has to be included instantly as one of the staff. He is our only source of photos other than the contributed pictures from our readers and writers. Because at that time, Nong Joe was still using the typical camera which uses film, I can still recall every time we need to ask budget from Mr. Ernesto Varrera (City Budget Officer) for film developing at the Kodak Manhattan Photo Lab inside the Plaza Arcade. Then the photos will be scanned and voila we can now have it pasted on the Bridge.

The next problem was the printing and printing materials. At that time before Ma'am Cleovel Gonzaga Villanueva, our Information Officer went to the US for a holiday, we asked her if we can use some of the papers in her cache which she gladly said yes. We thanked God that we already had a new computer set with printer prior to the first issue. It was very useful. The supply of ink for printing of the CityBridge was provided by the Mayor's Office. We occasionally borrowed from the HRMO or the Tourism Office without guarantee when we can return back the loaned cartridges of ink.

Another ordeal we survived was the number of copies we need to print. A cartridge of colored and black ink can only print a little 20 pieces if we set it at best quality. So initially, we were able to print a little above fifty copies. We distributed it to department heads and few employees, one copy each for the 24 barangay captains, and one each for national offices. I also remember having Judee Lyn's car as our service vehicle with her as the driver to distribute the newsletter from City Hall to various offices such as Bago City Hospital, Office of the City Agriculturist, Bago City College among others. But we made it. The first issue was sold out like hot cakes. That was the back story of The CityBridge Volume 1, Issue No. 1 (May- June 2005).

Branding

Being an editor when I was a student and a journalism instructor, I realized that the CityBridge needs to have a slogan which will encapsulate its essence. So in the issue of January 2007, I created "Bridging Bago to the rest" as branding for the CityBridge. In my mind, I am always reminded by

Daydet's definition of the name of the publication and that is "linking, connecting, a way of sharing information, resources, understanding, of closing gaps and of coming together."

During this time, "Bits and Pieces," the column of Atty. Brian Martir was launched.

New Milestone

After four years of manually printing in the office, we broached the idea to former Mayor Janet Torres if we can pull-out a nice issue for the 40th Charter Anniversary Fiesta of The CityBridge and additional copies to reach more subscribers. We were glad she said yes.

So, we have the CityBridge printed in the printing press. From not more than a hundred copies, we now have 500 copies to be circulated (not enough, but it suffice the needs at that time). Also, our readers were able to see a newsletter which was well lay-outed. At that point, we were able to convince more writers to submit contributions. It was also on this issue that Daydet started her series of "Along the Way" column for the CityBridge. Also, Ana Brenda Reliquias of the SP Office filed her "At Your Service" column which tackled about resolutions and ordinances passed by the members of SP; Senior Tourism Operations Officer Rosseni Mina wrote "Tourism Affairs Update"; former City Health Officer Dr. Pilar Mabasa updated us with City Health Office

with her "What's In?" column. Our readers also were able to read Jurie Vic Mesias' "KABAHIN KA" column and former College Administrator Dr. Ramona Lamo's "Eye Opener." That was our March- April 2006 Issue.

Shaking the Bridge

It was January 2007 issue. This was the time I felt that The CityBridge was faltering. Daydet told me that it was her last issue until all things will subside. Deep inside I told myself a strong earthquake will collapse the Bridge soon. I was a bit emotional. Daydet is the foundation by which the CityBridge was standing on. She was the stone wall whenever there are issues faced by the publication. Before I submitted the final lay-out to the printing press for printing, I went to see Daydet in her farm house in Pandan for proofreading. Just like in the past issues, I never gave a nod for printing until Daydet read or perhaps just saw the draft. Daydet at this point already resigned as Executive Assistant. She told me to give her the whole afternoon and night to go over the print-outs and that she will send the materials back to me the following day. She did ask somebody to give me the materials with an enclosed letter. Daydet in her letter told me to be strong, understand the situation and in her ending she said "this too shall pass." As always, she put her trust in me to



The CityBridge staff during the administration of former Mayor Janet E. Torres



The staff were able to bond while distributing copies of The Citybridge to the different cities and municipalities in the province. This photo was taken in front of San Carlos City Hall way back in 2006.

She has seen me at my worst whenever there were deadlines I need to beat. She was there to assist me all the time. She can be a writer, critic, photographer and a jokester most of the time. People don't understand how intensive and exhaustive lay-outing is. Doing it at night is the most perfect time for the artist and the editors to do it. That's how newspapers all over the world are done. In the morning, we will finalize all the materials (photos and write-ups) that needed to be brought to the printing press. At around 2pm, we will be at the press to begin with the lay-outing. Then, it will last depending on the completeness of the materials and the mood of the artist. If we are on our finishing touches it will take the whole night. Whenever we finished lay-outing around 12 midnight or 2 am we will rent a taxi cab going to Bago. However, if the lay-outing ended up around 4 in the morning, our routine would be Jollibee then wait for a PUJ at Libertad to Bago. We didn't have service vehicle by then. When we transfer to the other printing press in Talisay, it was more difficult. But travelling with Jam was

always light and easy. However, good times must come to an end when she decided to resign and work in Manila. The last issue we were together was the February 2010 CityBridge.

Contributors

In all the issues of the CityBridge, we have regular contributors who submitted their offices' respective accomplishments for every quarter. Our regulars would include Department of Education- Bago, DILG- Bago, Office of the City Agriculturist, Bago City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, Office of the City Social Welfare and Development Officer, Office of the City Accountant and Office of the City Cooperative Officer and TLDC. Occasionally we get updates from CMO-ICE, Office of the Senior Citizens Affairs, Office of the City Planning and Development Officer, Local Civil Registrar, Bago City College, Office of the City Assesor, City Health Office, Office of the City Veterinarian, Bago Showroom, Tourism Affairs Office, PopCom Office and Office of the City Engineer.

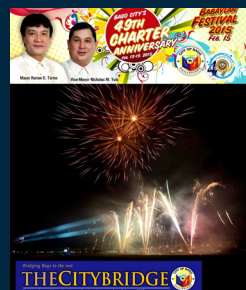
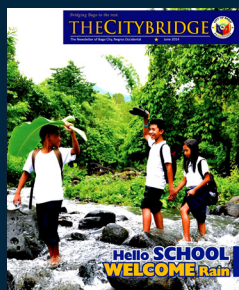
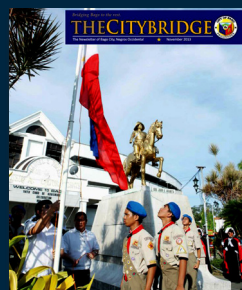
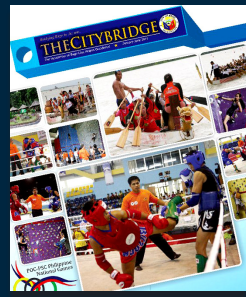
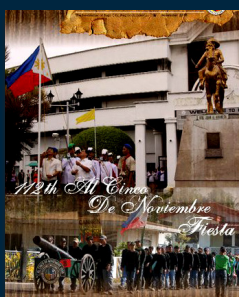
Personally, I believe that their updates were very important because there are events happening in their respective offices that are considered newsworthy. As we are only few we cannot cover the whole Bago City so we always appreciate contributions.

Also, the contributions of casual employees (including past) of the City assigned at the City Mayor's Office helped me a lot in collecting news and features from different offices. They are Dojie, Jushwa, Keneth, Courtney, Violy, Ruel and the rest.

Present State

The CityBridge once known as a newsletter, now by its physical condition is already considered a magazine. From a modest 8 pager newsletter, we are now running 24 pages in book paper and 4 pages glossy for the full-colored covers.

As of press time, we circulated with over a thousand copies including the free copies given by the printing press to all the barangay captains and barangay halls, 24 health centers, elementary school principals, high school principals and



their libraries, national and local offices, different business establishments, NGO's, in all the municipalities and cities in Negros Occidental, the Provincial Capitol and members of the League of Cities of the Philippines. We knew this is a very mediocre statistic but compared to what we were in 2005 we can say we had a great leap.

Also, with the regular publication of the CityBridge, we decided to release the Ang Bagonhon only once a year and that is every February Charter Anniversary fiesta. Ang Bagonhon served as a souvenir program and a yearbook for the fiesta.

Influences

Before the CityBridge, there were only few publications from local government units being circulated that is the Makati Mirror of Makati City and Mangkas Tribune of La Carlota City. Kabankalan Today of Kabankalan City came first before the CityBridge but its publication is not as regular compare to the newsletters of Makati City and La Carlota. Arguably, the CityBridge has inspired other LGUs to follow suit. In Negros Occidental, San Carlos City published Tribute (in existing), Valladolid has Ang Dolidnon (Mayor Ricardo Presbitero administration), Bacolod City created The City Smiles (Mayor Evelio Leonardia administration), Cadiz City with Cadiz Bulletin (in existing), among others.

In the other side of the country, when we started sending copies of our publication, several months or years later, the following LGU's started to exchange paper with us; City of Manila, City of San Fernando- La Union, Angeles City- Pampanga, Lipa City, City of Tabuk, Kalinga, Roxas City and Iloilo City.

Columnists

In total, we were able to print 9 issues of The CityBridge under former Mayor Janet E. Torres and 24 issues under the administration of Mayor Ramon D. Torres. The table to the right, shows our columnists arranged according to appearance in the CityBridge.

The Future

The CityBridge continue to evolve as time passes by. We sometimes commit errata in spellings, data, or missed a department or a name of a VIP in one of our issues, but we are still proud of our every issue. After all, even the bigwigs in



President Fidel V. Ramos



President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Column	Columnist	First Read
Mayor's Corner	Mayor Janet E. Torres	July- August 2005
Along the Way	Bernadette M. Somcio	March-April 2006
At your Service	Ana Brenda A. Reliquias	March- April 2006
Tourism Affairs Update	Rossen G. Mina	March- April 2006
What's In...?	Dr. Pilar F. Mabasa	March- April 2006
Kabahin Ka	Vicente D. Mesias	March-April 2006
Eye Opener	Dr. Ramona C. Lamo	March-April 2006
Point Blank	Dr. Juliet Jeruta	May- June 2006
The Psyche	Dr. Deborah Natalia E. Singson	May-June 2006
HealthWise	Dr. Pilar F. Mabasa	May-June 2006
Bits and Pieces	Atty. Brian N. Martir	January 2007
Mayor's Desk	Mayor Ramon D. Torres	August 2007
Vice Versa	Vice Mayor Nicholas M. Yulo	August 2007
Earth Saver	Vicente D. Mesias	October 2007
Focal Points	Tricia Y. Matti	November 2008

the publication industry in the country commit huge blunders. We don't make this as an excuse. However, we always tried our best to achieve perfection. As always, every suggestion to make The CityBridge sturdy is welcome.

We thank all our readers for being with us since the maiden issue. We hope you will still join us in another decade of journey so we can celebrate again another 10 years in the age of the Citybridge.



FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

MAYOR RAMON D. TORRES

Isa ka mainit nga panamyaw sa inyo tanan sa sini nga maulanon nga panahon! Kamusta kamo taga Bago?

It has been several issues now that the Mayor's Desk is out of circulation however we arise from hiatus for this special issue of The Citybridge. I would like to personally greet the men and women behind our magazine on the occasion of its 10th year anniversary. Indeed time flies swiftly but thanks to the Citybridge which served as our memory collector in the almost 9 years of our governance.

We begin the Year 2015 with the crowd drawer Lights of Bago at the Manuel Torres Sports Complex. Year after year, we are humbled by the presence of thousands of spectators from all over the Province to witness our synchronized musical fireworks display. Let me take this opportunity to invite again all of you to join us this January 1, 2016 as we usher in the New Year with a grand musical display of fireworks. It will also serve as a kick-off to the 50th Golden Anniversary of Bago City.

Talking about our 50th Charter Anniversary, if you enjoyed the line-up of activities we in the City Government prepared for you during our celebration last February 2015, I am sure you will not miss our golden anniversary. This early, I already delegated responsible and diligent members of the committee to spearhead our celebration. Councilor Bernadette Somcio, Senior Tourism Operations Officer Rosseni Mina, and HRMO IV/ City Administrator- Designate Tricia Matti were at the helm of the preparations.

We already launched the website for the 50th Fiesta (bagocity50.com). You can visit the site and be updated. We are also in all platforms including Facebook and Twitter. It only means that we are worldwide in scope and extending our invitation to all Bagonhons all over the world to "Balik Bago." Our theme, "Bago City @50: Great City. Greater Bagonhon." is a fitting tribute to all outstanding Bagonhons who had contributed to the success of our City. Your success is our success. Let our event this February 2016 be the celebration of your success stories.

Last June 5-7, we held the very first Local Executive Conference and Team Building



Mayor Ramon Torres blows the candle on his birthday cake last May 26 (TYM).

Activity of our department heads at Nabulao Beach Resort. It was for me a very fruitful activity for the heads of our departments. We were joined by speakers from the Civil Service Commission Region VI. The topic about the golden anniversary were also discussed in the presence of Tourism Officer Rose Mina. I am looking forward for another activity such as that so we can re-energize and re-fuel from the usual office works.

It is also important for you to know the support of the City Government of Bago to our Out of School Youths and beneficiaries of the Alternative Learning System (ALS). Last July 13, 14 and 16, together with DepEd Officials led by SDS Ma. Lorlinie Ortillo and the ALS Coordinator, the ever dynamic Dr. Avelino Claud, we conducted an updating of the Abot Alam implementation by school's district. At the same time, we distributed school supplies to over 3,000 ALS beneficiaries of Bago City. This updating is very important so we can keep track of our beneficiaries with regards to their studies. One time, during the scheduled updating with District II, we were joined by Senator Teofisto "TG" Guingona III.

One of the important elements which keep our City alive are the achievements of our fellow Bagonhons in their respective fields. For this year, we were blessed with the achievement of CJ Marin, Miss

Earth- Water 2015 in the Miss Philippines-Earth beauty pageant held in Manila. We supported her from the very beginning until she went home after winning the crown. In the field of sports, in the staging of the 28th South East Asian Games, our Bagonhon boxers, Rogen Ladon from Brgy. Lag-asan won the silver medal and Junel Cantancio of Brgy. Busay was a gold medallist. Truly they epitomize the moniker given to Bago a long time ago as the Boxing Capital of the Philippines. I instructed the concerned agencies to prepare also a grand welcome to our boxers and allot cash incentives for them and their coaches.

On a very personal note, I would like to thank the personnel of the City Mayor's Office, HRMO, Tourism Affairs Office, Nutrition Office, POPCOM Office, Bids and Awards, ICE, Sports, Traffic, Library, Showroom and the City Budget Office for the birthday treat last May 26. The same to all who came and greet me on my special day. I am humbled by all your love and support. Let us continue to be partners so we can deliver the best to our Kasimanwas.

Our congratulations once again to the Citybridge for a decade of existence. May you continue to flourish so Bagonhons will know what we are doing in the City Government for their benefit. God bless you all!

Go, Bago!



VICE VERSA

VICE MAYOR NICHOLAS M. YULO

"Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat."

-Mother Teresa

Bago City Development Strategies

The Philippines has been heralded as the fastest growing economy in Asia for the past 5 years partly due to the promise of a new administration whose stance against corruption attracted the attention of foreign investors looking for alternative havens of investment. The so-called "boom and bust" cycles, which characterized many past Philippine administrations, seem to have eluded this present government. At least 16 consecutive quarters of high economic growth seals this present dispensation's achievement as one of the most progressive economies in the post EDSA era.

However, much has to be done. Increases in Gross National Product (GNP) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) have hardly made a dent on the poverty incidence in the country. Given that our population is increasing at a rapid rate of 1.7% per year, this can be translated as an increase of more than 5,000 people daily in a country that already has an increase of more than four million poor people since 1985. In that year, the absolute number of people living in poverty was 26.5 million. This increased to 30.4 million in 2000 and from 2006 to 2009, increased by almost 970,000 Filipinos from 22.2 million to 23.1 million.

As our nation has financially limited resources and a high poverty rate, the rapid increase in population has become a problem because there is an insufficient resource to support the population, which leaves much fewer resources to improve the economy. From 2003 to 2006, even though the Philippines experienced above-average economic growth, the poverty incidence increased as a result of its population growth rate.

Poverty reduction has not kept up with economic growth rates, largely due to the high unemployment rate, high inflation rate and wide income inequality. The official rate of unemployment for 2012 in the

Philippines was 6.8 per cent. As 2012 was a census year (census happens every 3 years), the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) declared that "more than one-quarter (27.9%) of the population fell below the poverty line the first semester of 2012, an approximate 1 per cent increase since 2009."

It is therefore important that our LGU supports the direction with which the national government pursues the national agenda as reflected in its fiscal, monetary & development strategies. The purported "trickle-down effect" can no longer be relied on, as more direct intervention has to be implemented to help the lower half of our population attains economic prosperity. Improvement in taxation, infrastructure, education, health and agriculture are but a few of the national priorities that our city government gives importance to. It is a careful study of the needs of today and the future.

BASIC NEEDS OF TODAY.

HEALTH. Benjamin Franklin's oft repeated quote "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" remains a truism these days. Illness and its medical needs continue to be the most costly expense that a family endures. Often, out of reach by the masses, the city continues to invest in the improvement of its front line services in the barangays. Upgrading of barangay health centers is a worthy investment that the city pursues for the health needs of its populace. They are regularly asked to visit health centers for regular checkups in order to address any health malady at their early stages. The reminder for them to eat properly and nutritiously is an important step towards maintaining good health. One of the more meaningful attainments of the city is its zero infant mortality in the last 3 years. This is an achievement that defies the national statistics.

The city also pursues to build level III water systems in the barangays. Availability of clean and potable water aids the citizenry to avoid potentially fatal water borne diseases. Common among thickly populated rural communities, the city government sees this basic service as vital to the general health of the people especially in susceptible young children. It's attainment of the national government's "Seal of Good Housekeeping", has enabled our city to expand its service by availing of the DILG's "Salin Tubig" and Constuction of Potable Water Supply Level III funds.

AGRICULTURE. The city's economy remains largely agricultural and it is no surprise that it is this sector that gets much attention from the city government. Agriculture includes marginalized farmers and fisher folks. It is to them that much of the Bottoms-Up-Budgeting program is dedicated to. The continuing rice seeds subsidy for rice farmers help to ensure better income and yield for them who contribute to the city's 50% share in the rice production of the province. Fishermen with meager incomes have been provided with fishing gears and equipment in order to help them with bigger catch and therefore improved incomes. Needless to say, years of vigorous implementation of integrated coastal management, awareness and involvement of coastal communities to coastal resource management and the strict application of the Fisheries Code all helped in the development of coastal resources which redounds to the benefit of the fisheries sector and to the populace as a whole. The soon to be inaugurated double A standard slaughterhouse will greatly improve the quality of meat & meat products of the city. Designed and approved by the National Meat and Inspection Service (NMIS) the edifice boasts of mechanical gears that not only improves swiftness and

BAGO... //PAGE 39



ALONG THE WAY

COUNCILOR BERNADETTE M. SOMCIO

Milestones

I do not know what there is on long land trips that make me happy. While many grumble on the prospect of hours of sitting on buses in order to reach a destination, I am always thrilled by it. I love especially buses with very large windows that give me the possibility to see from a wider perspective the scenery along the way. I am very watchful for churches especially very old ones that are constantly appearing. I also watch out for town and city halls which for me are representations of the place. I look at the houses we pass by and silently in my head I admire the big colourfully painted abodes, awed by the sizes and architecture of many or the aged residences that surely breathe history. Curiously I feel some sort of empathy for the shack along the way. To add to the excitement, I often find myself thinking of the people who live in these houses.

Nature and its beauties that fill the places passed by give the rarest pleasure ever. The glimpses of mountains or hills, rivers, lakes or seas that maybe far or near never fail to impact on my consciousness, make me connect immediately with the awesome Mind that thought of these wondrous spectacle around us. I appreciate very much the greenery that flank the roads, like old shade trees or fruit trees that seem to make the atmosphere cooler and fresher, a perception present even in air conditioned buses. Further, I appreciate the flowers that show varied colors and never fail to lift the spirits as they bloom in gardens or along the fences. Yes, so many hours of pleasure have been given me by long road trips like no other. Of course, there is also the feeling of sadness and anger at the conditions of many mountains and hills devastated and deprived

of trees and other growths, of rivers that have become parched and dry.

There is the feeling of anticipation and expectation that make me wide awake on long trips even when tired or sleepy. I feel on edge ready to be surprised at the next bend or in the next place to be reached. I also am watchful for the milestones along the way that tells how far it is to the next significant place. I always feel authoritative as I pronounce that there is just a few kilometres or many more before the next town or city. Of course this is due to watching the markers or milestones that regularly appear at the roadsides. I always feel so accomplished and proud when we reach the last milestone that proclaims we have arrived.

Milestones also mean a different thing. The word is used to mark a certain significant or important date or event in a person's life. Birthdays especially the first, the seventh, the eighteenth, the fiftieth, the seventy-fifth birthdays and thereafter are mostly very significant and call for big blow outs or celebrations. Christenings and other sacramental events especially weddings and their anniversaries, death anniversaries, first jobs and promotions, clinched deals, graduations, engagements, the first million are just a few of the many milestones we observe in life. For some the anniversaries of the first kiss, the first date and all other firsts call for big celebrations. There is the heightened feeling of accomplishments, of 'having arrived' that naturally makes us want to celebrate.

And so it is with these same feelings of accomplishments and pleasure that we celebrate the tenth year of The Citybridge. Indeed, it seems only yesterday that we felt very elated over the permission of then

Honorable Mayor Janet E. Torres that we come up with this newsletter. We felt so happy that she saw the need to communicate to people around what is happening in the City of Bago, and the need to record important events for posterity. Ten years ago we struggled with giving birth to this publication which with sincere commitment of the first staff has reached this milestone.

Significant people have been very helpful in providing the Citybridge with articles and write-ups. They deserve our thanks and appreciation. Mayor Janet then was a very good copy as with our present chief, Mayor Monet, who always give The Citybridge something to write about. The department heads, the national offices especially the DepEd, and the columnists have proven to be good sources of articles for the newsletter. They never fail to submit articles of interest for our Citybridge. Indeed, this magazine has proven to be a bridge of communication, information and enlightenment to those who take hold of it. We also are most grateful for the original staff – they who started very reluctant and insecure of their talents and abilities.

The Citybridge is marking a milestone in its life. It is still very young and can still do so much in order to accomplish its mission. More young people should take interest in it and lend a hand so that it continues to exist and have a more meaningful life with worthwhile contents in each issue. It would be another milestone if the Barangays can send articles of interest and information about them. It can be a good tourism tool to get other people to want to know and see our City closely. The Citybridge should be a voice that would stir and sustain interest in our City, our people, and our way of life.



BITS & PIECES

ATTY. BRIAN N. MARTIR
SP SECRETARY

The road to victory had always been littered with hardship brought about by the challenges, trials, we have to face in order to survive and achieve what we had set ourselves to do- to accomplish the goals we have set upon ourselves for our fellowmen and for the glory of God.

The price of victory is always sweet for the victors to have toiled without ceasing despite of the barriers and problems that came which insurmountable as they maybe have not weaken the resolve and commitment of the heroic struggle to move along persistently, dodging along the way vicious criticisms that seeks to uproot and destroy rather than aid to which the noble seed ardently sowed along the path of life, so that people may prosper and commit to grow under a healthy atmosphere of peace and harmony in the spirit of brotherhood as God intend us to be.

In many instances attaining victory needs patience as gainsaid, "Everything comes to those who can wait" and "He who waits for another man's platter has a cold meal" but waiting is acceptable when it is wise waiting. There are also times when we should be decisive and have to act as circumstances present are profitable for us to act immediately or sooner as required.

In almost any circumstances, patience as a virtue is needed, for like in planting there must be a waiting period before the harvest. Impatience will not cause the seed to sprout and grow faster. It takes time to grow not only for trees but likewise and more so for man. Let's learn to wait.

"Learn to labor and wait."- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Though the road may seem endless and long, and the seas to cross are stormy we must never despair or lost hope. Let us with strong spirit journey onward and never surrender, for victorious life awaits only those who persevere and knows how to survive despite the tests of times.

The most important part of is that we

You've been with us since January 2007 and since then you never miss an issue. You always gave us, your Palanggas, important lessons in life through your column. Now that you retired, allow us, your Citybridge family to share some bits and pieces especially for you.

**ATTY. BRIAN N. MARTIR
RETIRED**

**GOODBYE TENSION,
HELLO PENSION!**



must sustain and maintain the growth of our spiritual well-being. "For out of it are the issues of life." A good heart is a God fearing heart, a bad heart is a worldly heart. It is what lead us to follow God and to follow the world. The choice is only ours to make- to follow eternal defeat or go for eternal victory with and in God.

"My strength is as the strength of, ten because my heart is pure."- Alfred Lord Tennyson

Though seemingly outnumbered and few, we should fight for what is right in order that truth will prevail. To do so, we must not allow our idealistic dreams of today to become the broken dreams of tomorrow nor for us to suffer the agony of defeat, when we can be victorious. "It just need one little spark in the dark to lit this whole wide world to wake up to face a bright new day, for it takes us only our complacency for evil to survive.

Victory is well guarantee when good men

bonds together and unselfishly convictions in their hearts not to yield to the lures of the world ensuring that no evil of all sorts would be exposed for all men to see.

It is through dedicated hardships that victory can gain the mileage it would need to beat the evil system in this chaotic world today. It is sweetly gained through the sweat and blood of people who are brave enough to offer the supreme sacrifice of unselfishly dying for other to ensure freedom and liberty to abound for democracy to flourish in order that justice would prevail.



The CityBridge family has positively portrayed Bago City as it was and is today. Truly indeed, The CityBridge have gone long and far to be the information bridge of the Local Government to its people. Congratulations to the CityBridge family and happy 10th year anniversary.

Till then.



FOCAL POINTS

TRICIA Y. MATTI, MGS
HRMO IV/CITY ADMINISTRATOR - DESIGNATE

The Nabulao Experience



Department heads pose with Mayor Ramon D. Torres and Vice Mayor Nicholas M. Yulo together with Civil Service Commission personnel.



One of the activities conducted by CSC personnel participated in by the department heads

It was a sunny Friday morning when I arrived at the City Hall, a bit surprised seeing some department heads already there at the meeting place. We were gathering for the Team-Building Activity and Local Executive Forum. This activity has been in the planning stage for quite a while already and due to the varied schedules of our officials and department heads, this remained a plan for a number of years. However, last June 5-7 with the leading commitment of Mayor Monet and that of the department heads, what used to be a plan turned-out to be an enriching and significant experience.

It was a long drive to the venue and everyone seemed excited as to the specifics of this activity. Our Office, to a certain extent, “intentionally” kept secret the details of the activity hoping this will provide more interest and excitement for the participants. However long the drive was, it was never boring. I couldn’t remember any dull moment during the travel. The 3.5 hour drive itself was an opportunity for department heads to share updates on the existing operations of their respective offices. Upon arrival at the venue, everyone admired the serenity and simplicity of the place. I know most, if not all, agreed with me that the place was indeed conducive to planning, learning and bonding. The day continued with the lectures of 2 very competent resource persons, Mr. Jerome

Eslabra and Mr. Bethoven M. Tiano of the Civil Service Commission. Though the sessions ended around 10:00pm, our department heads remained attentive and participative considering the essential and realistic sharing of both speakers. Our thanks to Sir Jerome and Sir Beth for their time and expertise.

The succeeding day was allotted for planning for the 50th Charter Anniversary of the City in 2016. Plans, including committee assignments and priority activities were initially laid out. Following that activity was the Executive Forum with Mayor Monet, Vice Nikko and the department heads. Various issues and concerns relative to the affairs of the City Hall were raised and discussed. It was another uplifting moment for the department sharing exclusive moments with the top two Bago City Officials. That day provided some of the department heads more precious time for bonding. We managed to squeeze into the schedule the unplanned “joy ride”, thanks to Doc Fely and ‘Nong Edmund. It was indeed a short exploration trip filled with laughter and sharing. The second night of the activity was on the lighter side, aiming to provide the officials and department heads a time to unwind and strengthen working relationships among them. During that fellowship night, the attendees willingly contributed their share to make the night fulfilling. From the singing prowess of Mam

Ruby, to the stable dancing skills of Doc Fely, to the graceful movements of Nang Elena in her floral/Hawaiian outfit, made the night really extraordinary. But there’s Doc Eli too, making the fellowship even more lively with him on the drums as the band continued to fill the night with music. Adding to the sparks of the night was the suave cha-cha moves of ‘Nong Kotok and of course, the priceless dance moves of Engr. Go, ‘Nang Rebecca, ‘Nang Nenit, Doc Parroco, Engr. Joenil and Atty. Lirazan. All these under the observant eyes of Sir Ruben Balboa.

Amidst all these activities and fellowship, I guess what made it enriching was the unselfish willingness and heartfelt involvement of those who attended. Despite other equally important commitments and priorities, the department heads readily made themselves available on these dates bringing with them their passion to continuously be of service, their desire for continued learning and their collective objective of continued progress for Bago City. Sir Edwin, Doc Mayoga and Doc Pacilan, although with conflicting commitments on those same days, somehow managed to juggle their schedules to be there for the activity. It was indeed a first of its kind experience for all attendees that hopefully opened more opportunities for

THE NABULAO...//PAGE 39



EARTHSAVER

VICENTE D. MESIAS
SUPERVISING ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST

Happy 10 years of existence to the Official Publication of the City Government of Bago, the Citybridge. A decade hence, then Former Mayor Janet E. Torres, in the last years of her incumbency and of her life, dreamed of bridging the gap between the need of the constituency to be informed of the issues and activities in local governance and the many interventions your local government had been pursuing through the years. Modesty aside, I believe that, the same objective had been reached todate, in fact, we can claim that we even gone beyond informing our constituency and have made Bago City and its various government interventions known to other parts of the Province, in some national offices, to dignitaries and individuals with whom copies of the said publication had been given.

To my recollection, the Citybridge and the KABAHIN KA Program were born on the same year ten years ago. It was in February 2005 when the task of facilitating the implementation of Republic Act 9003 otherwise known as the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 was assigned to me by then Mayor Janet E. Torres. It was in June of that same year when I, together with then CPDC/City Administrator-Designate Engr. Edwin V. De Nicolas, was sent to Linamon, Lanao Del Norte to participate in the DILG GO-FAR Project where we coined the KABAHIN KA Program as the City's solid waste management intervention. In November of that same year, the City Government promulgated City Ordinance No 18, series of 2005, otherwise known as the Comprehensive City Solid Waste Management Ordinance. The said legislation was passed by the Sangguniang Panlungsod under the stewardship of then Vice Mayor, now Mayor, Ramon D. Torres and signed by then Mayor Janet E. Torres into an Ordinance in front of the Gen. Juan A. Araneta Monument, in the presence of barangay and city officials, heads and employees of national and local

functionaries, and ordinary Bagonhons who witnessed the annual Al Cinco de Noviembre event. Also, a Commitment to the Environment was signed thereafter, making the effort of conserving, protecting and rehabilitating the environment an important aspect of local governance in the City of Bago. Five years thereafter, under the administration of Mayor Ramon D. Torres, efforts of consolidating environmental governance was initiated, and with the support of the University of St. La Salle - Bacolod, the City Government passed City Ordinance No. 11-02, otherwise known as the City Environment Code, leading to the designation of some personnel to compose the Information Center for Environment/ City ENRO.

Ten years hence, I must say, we have been humbly doing our share as a City and as a people in ensuring that environmental governance in this part of the Province is one of the best practices looked upon and visited by other LGUs. The many recognitions, awards and citations we have received and continue to receive from the provincial, regional and national partner-stakeholders, more than ever provide a euphoric fulfilment that indeed we have achieved something worthy of pride.

To name the most recent ones, allow me to share to our readers some of the most notable recognitions your local government had garnered in the Awarding Ceremonies held during the culmination of the Provincial Environment Week last June 26, 2015 at L' Fisher Hotel. We have been adjudged as among the LGU recipients of the Silver Seal of Good Environmental Governance. We were also recognized as a recipient of a Special Award for having the Best Solid Waste Management Program in the entire province. Our schools were likewise recognized. Lagasan Elementary School and Ramon Torres Dulao National High School were awarded the Silver Seal, and Ramon Torres National High School and, our latest entry, Mailum

Elementary School with the Bronze Seal. A special award as the Best Elementary School for the Environment was bestowed to Mailum Elementary School for besting all other elementary schools in the Province.

Our environmental governance efforts had been anchored on the importance of good information and education campaign as a tool in encouraging the support of stakeholders. For us, a well-informed constituency is a supportive populace, and no intervention may turn into a sustained best local government practice without the support of the constituency. The success of our environmental governance efforts could not have been made possible without the support of all stakeholders as a result of good information and advocacy program implemented by the local government - the coming up of the Citybridge, among others. The Earthsaver Column was and continues to be the gateway of information for the Bagonhon constituency as regard environmental governance events and activities that were and will be implemented by the City Government.

KABAHIN KA Program, the city's solid waste management intervention, has evolved into an institution in the City of Bago for the past ten years. Its celebration of ten years of existence together with the Citybridge might have been a coincidence, but it is my most humble prayer that with the success these initiatives gained through the years, and their evolution into becoming among the pillars of good governance of the City, their partnership in continuously working for a Bagonhon legacy of good governance will make them institutions that will transcend administrations and leaderships.

Again, Congratulations to the Citybridge and thank you for making the Earthsaver a part of this worthy endeavor. Let us continue to count years into decades and make a difference in the lives of our people.

efficiencies in handling various animals but also significantly upgrades the sanitary condition of the finished product. All these improvements may mean value added to both farm animal growers as well as traders.

The Carabao Development Program continues to make in roads and help housewives and carabao owners improve their income. Three (3) farmers associations and cooperatives have shown that carabao milk is one of the most profitable alternative livelihood programs. The encouragement and introduction of milking techniques coupled with proper animal care help to increase milk production. To this end, the Veterinary Office, which spearheads the program, recently conducted its citywide Carabao Milking and Dairy Products Processing Seminar in three batches. It aims to create further awareness and knowledge to individual owners of carabaos on this particular program by the city.

FUTURE NEEDS.

EDUCATION. The most important preparation for the future is to train & equip our children with the basic knowledge to help them address future needs. That is why the national government gives education the biggest share in its budget. The Philippine Statistics Authority places the population

of school age children at thirty percent (ages 5-19) or 31,053,000 in absolute numbers. This is a staggering volume given the backlog of classrooms and teachers. To this end, the city, through the Special Education Fund (SEF), help to improve classroom and teaching facilities for the advantage of our young students.

We salute the Department of Education for their unceasing quest to offer educational opportunities nationwide. Their various programs under the Alternative Learning System (ALS) include Accreditation & Equivalency, a variety of Skills Training Program and the just implemented Abot Alam Program. Purposely planned to target out of school youth, the Abot Alam goes to where these out of school youth reside and offer them learning activities designed to help them achieve either elementary or secondary levels. At the end of their learning modules the learners are given a test to determine their educational level. Regular Elementary and Secondary diplomas are then given to passers. Not only does this elevate the self-esteem of the learners, it also gives them an opportunity to pursue higher learning or move on to more lucrative endeavors.

To this end, the city government supports and aids these educational programs not only through financial support but also

in manpower and other facilities. It is a worthwhile program that rightfully deserves backing from the host LGU and its officials.

INFRASTRUCTURE. In all the efforts above, infrastructure plays a major role. It is both a basic need as well as a forward looking tool that helps propel the city's economic outlook and immediate necessities. Construction of basic facilities like health centers, school buildings and classrooms, roads and bridges, pathways and footwalks play a vital role in pump priming the local economy as well as create job opportunities. It is a fundamental role that the local government has wisely undertaken.

These are but some of the local developments that your Vice Versa has determined as worth writing about. The local commercial scene has seen the sprouting of various establishments which has got the populace, especially the urban barangay populace excited about recently. We welcome their entry in our city. But it is the intangible and the unseen which Vice Versa has reported here that are equally important to the growth of the City.

It is for these reasons and more that we celebrate with a joyous heart the 10th Anniversary of our own CityBridge! Happy Anniversary and more power to the men and women who run this magazine.

FOCAL POINTS

The Nabulao...

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better working relationships, enriched friendships and expanded capabilities. I felt in that activity that regardless of personal and professional differences among the participants, each eagerly contributed their share to meet the "demands" of the different sessions making it more productive and valuable. Age, physical conditions nor beliefs didn't hinder anyone to be actively engaged and competently participative. Seeing the positivity of the participants is inspiring for us, the activity organizers. The long period of wait has indeed turned into something precious and unforgettable. Activities like this couldn't happen often considering the need for these civil servants to be in their offices most of the time but I guess the need to have this again in the

near future will definitely be one main consideration of our office, of course praying for similar reception from our officials and department heads.

Although I share the same position level with the department heads through only a designation, the "Nabulao Experience" has given me an invaluable opportunity to be equally among these women and men. It was a time spent with oneness amidst competition, with respect despite disagreements and with childlike laughter in the middle of work. I just hope that the activity has provided another inspiration to the participants towards becoming better individuals in their personal lives and more competent officials in their professional capacities. My sincere thanks to Mayor

Monet, Vice Nikko for allowing this activity to happen. Likewise, my special appreciation to our department heads for creating such an amazing and enriching experience that I can always cherish.



Our The Citybridge is 10 years old! I remember, I was the first department head to be featured in the first issue when it came out in 2005. From the time of former Mayor Janet Torres, it has gone a long way since then. Congratulations to all our writers, contributors and staff. Hopefully this publication has indeed "bridged" vital information to the Bagonhons relative to the affairs of its local government.

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is on or before **September 15, 2015**

THE BAGO CITY BRIDGE

**DRONE-CAPTURED
COURTESY OF LEO VISION**

FAST FACTS

**YEAR STARTED:
1980**

**COMPLETION YEAR:
1981**

**LENGTH:
270 METERS**

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