

# People and Events

## Cycling to rebuild a nation

IF you were a teener during the Marcos *Bagong Lipunan* years, you may recall a story about then hot shot TV host Ariel Ureta ending up cycling around Camp Crame in atonement for one grievous sin. He supposedly mangled the regime's slogan: *Sa Ikaunlad ng Bayan, Disiplina ang Kailangan*. With a naughty word play, the phrase *Sa Ikaunlad ng bayan, bisikleta ang kailangan* soon caught the fancy of the population. While Ariel claims that the Crame penalty part of the story is an urban legend, he nevertheless credits that famous line to an unidentified boy. Considering today's skyrocketing gasoline prices, that boy was way ahead of his time. But that digresses from our story. Fastforward to 2006.

A group of cyclists, all teens in the 70s, probably took to heart Ureta's teaser and turned a weekend hobby into a nation building tool. A motley crew consisting of a detention officer, engineers, a doctor, architects and computer geeks who in self ridicule called their bike gang, Lucky Chan, bulging bellies being their common denominator, started the weekend biking outings for recreation and health reasons. Aside from a shared love for biking, the members also belonged to Couples for Christ and were all Gawad Kalinga (GK) volunteers. GK's mission is to transform slum areas into decent, productive communities through a holistic program that includes shelter, values formation, education, health and productivity and environment protection.

The Lucky Chan group would inevitably cross bike paths with other cyclists and found themselves chatting at rest stops about the Philippines and all that ails their country. Such talks led to discussions about GK's approach to the vicious cycle of poverty. It was during one of these that Lucky Chan decided to add a social dimension to their rides by using it to spread awareness about GK. Thus, *Sikad ng Bayan* bike ride was born. The goal was pretty straightforward and simple: To build a school desperately needed by a GK Village in Calabanga, Camarines Sur which saw completion in 2006. In 2007, another school in Gravahan, Davao was erected.

This simple initiative is now on its fourth year and has become a fun ride for individuals and families alike. Last year's youngest rider, Andrew Tolentino, pedaled with his parents and three siblings. The 2008 *Sikad ng Bayan* Bike Ride, also drew various cycling groups, among them:

Adobo Velo, the biggest Fil-am cycling group in the US, Whittier Flyers, a group of competitive cyclists, with Hispanic and Caucasian members, a team of Korean nationals competing in US wide triathlons, San Diego based Mira Mesa Cycling Club, the predominantly Visayan Dausa, LAPD Jail Division employees, River Velo cycling group comprised mainly of medical practitioners, and others. This year, a group of senior citizen cyclists will also participate.

Help rebuild a nation by supporting this years Sikad ng Bayan on April 25, 2009 at 7 am. There will be 22, 44 and 70 mile rides from Yorba Regional Park to Seal Beach. Pre registration is \$60.00 and onsite registration is \$70.00. This fee includes lunch and a free jersey. Families registering are entitled to special rates. For more information, please visit [www.ancopusa.org/sikad](http://www.ancopusa.org/sikad) or call Red Sioson (562) 8576494, Benjo Villanueva (714) 9061576 or Robbie Villanueva (949) 3518344. ■



Sikad school



Sikad kids

## LOWELL ORIEL PALACPAC

# In Quest for the Eagle



Photo shows Lowell at his Eagle Board of Review accompanied by Glenn Askland, former Scout Master Troop 1005, Rulan Miao (BOR member), Richard Brown Board of Review (BOR) Chair, Gary Singh (BOR member), Eric Wu, current Scoutmaster Troop 1005 and Mark Pulido (Guest Board member, who was the President of AABC School Board in Cerritos at the time) at the High Council Room of Church of Jesus Christ of LDS.



Photo shows Council Members John C. Martins, Tony Lima and Larry R. Nelson; (front) Council Member Victor Manalo, Louis (father), Lowell Oriel Palacpac, Imelda (mother), City of Artesia Mayor Sally Zuniga Flowers, Lowell's former Scoutmaster Michael Choi, Lowell's Gahr High School teacher, Miguel Canales at receiving a Certificate of Recognition at the Artesia City Hall.

IN 1908, Lord Robert Baden-Powell founded Boys Scouts of America, an organization committed to developing character, citizenship, personal fitness qualities and an appreciation for the outdoors in young boys around the nation. Those who have participated in this organization have come out of the experience learning the importance of teamwork, social consciousness, and volunteerism, making them better prepared to become future leaders and responsible citizens actively participating in their communities.

Lowell Oriel Palacpac first joined the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Troop 1005 when he was 11 years old. Now at the age of 17, he achieved the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout on Nov. 12, 2008. The Eagle Scout is one of the highest ranks attainable in the Boy Scouting program of the Boys Scouts of America. The prerequisite to be eligible for the Eagle Scout rank is to earn at least 21 merit badges demonstrating Scout Spirit, service, and leadership. Frequently, Lowell earned his badges in Swimming, Citizenship in the Nation and Community, Environmental Science, Emergency Preparedness, Personal Management, Personal Fitness, etc., at Summer Camps. He was also required to plan, develop, and organize a service project that would benefit another organization.

"I was born in Artesia, and I always wanted to give back to the community," he said so he eventually decided to execute a project for the benefit of his community, more specifically the Artesia Public Library, where he frequented as a child growing up.

"I researched and visited churches and schools and met with parish priest, city council members and other elected officials before deciding to landscape the garden near the entrance of the library. Later knowing that I had the support of my neighbors and the city residents, I was motivated to fulfill the tasks I set out for myself and to exceed their expectations," he shares.

He underwent hours upon hours of planning and conference calls with the City Manager and his Scoutmaster in addition to raising funds for the tools and supplies that were key to the execution of his plan. In fact, the plants he used to landscape the library's garden came from the Palacpac residence and were planted and cared for by Lowell since he was 8 years old.

"I quickly learned that to be the most effective leader, I had to rely on the discipline and patience instilled in me by my parents (Louis Nafarrete Palacpac from Bani, Pangasinan and Imelda Oriel Palacpac from Binalonan, Pangasinan). I saw myself taking more initiative in recruiting volunteers, collecting donations and tools, and educating the neighborhood. In addition, my experiences helped

me to grow as a leader and gain self-confidence. I am humbled and proud that my community is able to appreciate the completed project," he adds.

But the project was not without its setbacks and there were times when he got frustrated.

"I reminded myself of how the community would benefit. My hope was that the beauty of the garden would encourage them to utilize the library, a beautiful and safe environment for learning. This accomplishment has encouraged me to keep pushing myself in my new endeavors and to never lose sight of the bigger picture and rewards that would come at the end. As I end high school and my dreams of college take flight, I look forward to the bigger challenges that await me, which can only allow me to grow into a more confident, stronger person and to realize my full potential," he says.

All his hard work and dedication paid off as Lowell was given a special certificate of recognition twice for beautifying the Artesia Library and also for achieving the Eagle Scout rank. Lowell, on the other hand, insists he could not have succeeded without the help of some people.

"I would like to thank the City Council of Artesia and staffs for all their help and for giving me the opportunity to be do a community project: Mayor Sally Zuniga Flowers, Mayor Pro Tem Tony Lima, and Council Members Victor Manalo, John Martins and Larry Nelson, City Manager Maria Dadian, Public work and Consultant Chuck Burkhardt, Communication Specialist Andrew Perry, and Ms. Amelia Nacu; Boy Scout of America Frontier District, LAAC, Advancement Chair Y. T. Chung, Council Advancement Committee Members, Dianne Culton and Diana Fournier; Eagle Character Board: Richard Brown, Gary Singh, Rulan Miao, Glen Askland and Mark Pulido; Troop 1005 Scoutmasters Eric Wu, Michael Choi and Glenn Askland; Nar Boribon, Nish Choksi, Scouts and parents of Troop 1005. Also to those that have given me recommendation: "Guro" Annalynn Catalasan of Team Intense, Scoutmaster Michael Choi, Tony Manrique of All American Boys Chorus and Father Johnny Zulueta of Holy Family Church. Thank you for all their support."

These days, although he is already an Eagle Scout, he still actively participates in Troop 1005. He enjoys teaching the younger kids and is willing to help fellow scouts achieve the Eagle Scout rank. He further challenged himself by achieving the next higher rank, earning the Bronze Palm rank in February 2009.

It is true that Eagle Scouts go on to accomplish even greater feats in their future, which is also the case for Lowell. In the Fall of 2009, he plans to attend the University of California, Los Angeles, receiving scholarships and majoring in Electrical Engineering. ■

## Earth Day in Carson on April 22

THE Earth Day celebration in Carson will be held at Dolphin Park, 21205 Water St on Wednesday, April 22 at 3:30pm. Led by the Environmental Justice Network, the event will have art activities, multicultural performances and educational materials about global warming, air pollution, clean water and recycling.

Seth Salonga, EJN coordinator said that Carson residents are invited to participate in the Earth Day event. Salonga added, "The EJN is a coalition of Del Amo elementary parents and teachers, Carson High students, People's CORE, Philippine Action Group for the Environment and CBE.

The event is a fun day for the family but we also want to remind the community members about the importance of being vigilant about air pollution, saving energy and doing their part about sustaining the environment around us."

Salonga also expressed gratitude to Seafood City which is a sponsor of the Earth Day.

"Seafood City donated gift certificates for the event. We are thankful to them for giving back to the community and supporting our efforts to promote awareness about the protecting the environment."

Patricia Pascual, a concerned

parent from Del Amo Elementary School stressed that parents and families need to be involved in recycling and saving energy. "Many of us have to change our ways to

protect the environment. After all, it is our children who will be the future generation. Our lives are also at stake, that is why we need to act now to save the planet."

The Earth Day at Dolphin Park is sponsored by People's CORE, BREATHE, Seafood City and Philippine Action Group for the Environment. For more info, call Seth at (424) 222-6035 or Fe at (310) 513-1030. ■

## Turning the corner...

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learn English and eventually become citizens.

The President can not reform the immigration system in a vacuum. While comprehensive immigration reform may no longer be the administration's number one priority amid these economic times - these economic times are changing. For sure there were still be significant obstacles to comprehensive immigration reform to come. However, everyday there are more and more groups and organizations; friends and family; neighbors and co-workers who think comprehensive immigration reform is a good idea. Just last week, two national federations of labor, the AFL-CIO and Change to Win, have jointly endorsed a proposal for such a reform.

Over the past year, immigrants and their families have seen hard times - both economically and by the way of an increase in immigration raids in their communities. Yet in the past, politicians have failed to deliver promised reform. As such, the American electorate embraced change,

and they voted for change. If recent reports are any indication of times ahead, then immigrants and their families can also expect much needed change, but first we must get through this year of hard economic times. Reeves & Associates continues its commitment to providing its clients with accurate and reliable immigration advice not only during the difficult times, but also during the changing times ahead.

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(Advertising Supplement)

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- All States

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