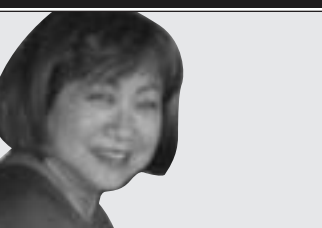


**IMMIGRANT LIVING:
101 AND BEYOND**



MONETTE ADEVA MAGLAYA

Log off and enjoy your hot chocolate

"The happiest people don't have the best of everything... They just make the best of everything that they have."
— Author Unknown

the time? I am probably one of a vanishing breed, always itching to get out of the virtual world and into the real world of doing things, creating, fixing, cooking, gardening, making memories and connecting personally and laughing until my sides are nearly split. By choice, I am offline and often unwired on the weekends. My personal motto these days: LOG OFF AND LIVE.

There's so much living yet to do: so many recipes to try, seeds to plant, topiaries to shape, weeds to pull, walls and blank canvases to paint, places to see, photos to shoot, plays to watch, games to play, puzzles to solve and mysteries to unravel, books to read, people to meet, goals to achieve, skills to learn and courses to take, stuff to give away, stories to write, naps to take and a thousand and one more things to feel, see, touch, taste, hear and soak in before the end game. With all that's in the past, life still feels like a tabula rasa - lots of living to do, so little time. Sigh.

It doesn't help that the virtual world encroaches. If you spend even only a few hours on the internet each day, then you are a de facto active, living, breathing denizen of Cyberville, part of the audience of the world stage.

Witness Susan Boyle's instant global fame in the audition of "Britain's Got Talent," which has over 50 million hits on youtube in a matter of days. What we see is a frumpy, dowdy old maid from Scotland who lives alone with her cat, a complete unknown, wowing the judges, even snarky Simon Cowell and pretty much the skeptic audience and the rest of us in Cyberville. By her plaintive song, her magnificent singing and just by being true to herself, the world sat up and took notice. How many can do that these days? Boyle has become somewhat of a phenom for our times, which prompted one wag of a British publication, to ask the question of our obsession with sexy, good looks: "Is Susan Boyle ugly or are we?"

Personally, I am rooting for her and every Charisse Pempengco, every Arnel Pineda and every phenom who whacks us out or our smug ways and wows us via the great equalizer and media decimator - youtube. I am hoping fame and fortune don't change their core beings overly much.

If we permit it though, the virtual world can usurp reality. We tend to spend inordinate number of hours glued to the screen. We've seen how

► PAGE B3

The Voice of FilAmerica

Political empowerment is still a treasure that eludes us as a community here in America. While we are the second largest Asian American community in the United States, we have yet to harvest the power that comes from our numbers. The Voice of FilAmerica features elected and appointed officials - regardless of political affiliation - in the different US states who are of Filipino ancestry. As your Filipino American community newspaper, the Asian Journal recognizes the fact that we all have a responsibility towards bringing political empowerment to fruition, especially for our future generations. It is our hope to have our voices heard all over America.

Lieutenant General Edward Soriano Highest Ranking Filipino-American in the US Army

by CYNTHIA DE CASTRO
AJPress



for operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Because of his good performance record, Soriano became the director for operations, readiness, and mobilization at the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans. In

IN the US Armed Forces, the generals are predominantly white males at the bottom of the totem pole in the military ranks. In the US Navy, US Air Force and in the US Marines, there is no flag officer of Asian descent. However, in the US Army, a lieutenant general who is a Filipino-American, Army Lt. Gen. Edward Soriano, became the highest-ranking Filipino-American in the history of the American military.

Edward Soriano was born on November 12, 1946, in Alcala, Pangasinan, Philippines, to Federico Soriano, a military officer, and Encarnacion, a homemaker who raised Soriano and his sister Blez. Federico was a corporal in the 57th Infantry Regiment of the Philippines Scouts who was part of the infamous Death March and was forced to stay at an internment camp for three years. He inspired his son, Edward, to join the military as well.

In the 1960s, the Sorianos moved to Salinas, California. Soriano's father joined the United States Army as a corporal, and eventually retired as a major.

Edward Soriano graduated from Salinas High School, and from San Jose State University graduated with a degree in management. He went on to get a master's degree at the same school. Then, he joined the Army as Second Lieutenant.

Throughout his career, Soriano attended several military schools. In 1989 he graduated from the Army War College. After his initial training, in 1973 Soriano commanded Company C, 3d Battalion, 47th Infantry of the 3d Brigade of the US 9th Infantry Division. He held that position until 1975. Soriano was next given the position of assistant commander of the 1st Infantry Division of American peacekeeping forces in Bosnia. He also served in the Gulf War, becoming the chief of a liaison team to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force sent to Saudi Arabia. In 1992 he was sent to be the Army Section chief of the Secretary of Defense Gulf War Report team

that position he made certain that Army units were prepared to be instantly deployed on missions around the world. He was specifically in charge of troops in Haiti, Bosnia, Somalia, and other areas of tension around the world.

After September 11, 2001, when the World Trade Center buildings were destroyed by terrorists, the US government set up a homeland security department under the Joint Forces Command. Soriano was given the office of the second director of homeland security in the military in November of 2001. He held the position for ten months before he was made, in 2002, a commanding general of I Corps and Fort Lewis in Washington, a position he held until his retirement in 2004.

When he retired, Soriano was a three-star lieutenant general. The day he attained that position he became the highest-ranking Filipino-American in the United States armed forces, and only the second general ever to have Filipino roots.

Soriano is married to Vivian Guillermo, and they have had two children, Melissa and Keith. He has been given many awards over the lifetime of his careers, including the Distinguished Service Medal, two awards of the Defense Superior Service Medal, four awards of the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, three awards of the Meritorious Service Medal, and several Army Commendation and Achievement Medals. He has also received many badges over his career, including the expert infantryman's badge and has been ranger and airborne qualified. ■

MINDING YOUR FINANCES



ATTY. RAYMOND BULAON

Bankruptcy: Plan your own financial recovery now

while for the economy to improve. As a bankruptcy attorney, the questions that I am often asked are: "Will my family's increasing debt load result in bankruptcy?" "What happens if I lose my home in foreclosure?" A lot of people are overwhelmed with the difficult choices and situations that they face. If you are going through a bankruptcy or foreclosure, you may be feeling a lot of anxiety and depression at the moment. But life is sometimes full of unexpected events and the most we can do is to deal with our current situation and remain positive that eventually things will turn around for the better. What's your personal financial recovery plan?

If you find that bankruptcy is your only option, remember that you are not alone. Last year, over 2 million people filed for personal bankruptcy. These people are just like you - average, hard-working individuals who are

doing their best to pay their bills but came to a realization at some point that they needed help in order to get a fresh financial start. When appropriate for your situation, bankruptcy can be a positive solution that can help you rebuild from scratch. Think about it: If you are at a point where you can't pay your bills and your very livelihood is at risk because creditors are threatening to sue you and garnish your wages, what do you do? Things don't have to go from bad to worse, unless you let them - by doing nothing. Bankruptcy protection can provide you immediate relief from all creditor actions so that you can regain financial footing. That's all it really is - a legal remedy that allows you to regain control of your finances so that you can start over. In life, sometimes all you need is a second chance.

When financial disaster strikes, ► PAGE B3

ARE you worried about how the worsening economy may personally affect you and your family? Worried about your job and your dwindling income? If your expenses are out of control and you are living paycheck to paycheck, you may have a good reason to be concerned especially if you don't have an emergency fund. As we go through turbulent economic times, I am also seeing that debt has become a major concern for families and small business owners. Is your current financial situation causing you to have sleepless nights? Experts predict that it may take a

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