

OPINION & FEATURES

Going digital

WITH the onset of new and more portable technology like laptops and cellphones with wireless internet, almost everyone is capable of getting information off the net, engaging themselves in intelligent discussions through blogs and social networking sites and doing it all singlehandedly with a push of a button.

EDITORIAL

For kids and teenagers, this new technology is practically indispensable. Toting PSP's, iPods and iPhones, these kids were born at a time when clicking a mouse is a mere part of their play-time.

When it comes to education, This accessibility to up-to-date information is quick, easy and best of all, light to carry in their bags or pockets, compared to lugging around antiquated, heavy and expensive textbooks.

That is why Governor Schwarzenegger has decided to tap this resource for two reasons -- he believes that digital textbooks can change the way our children learn, at the same time, it's cost-effective and will help the state with its \$24-billion budget deficit.

The State currently spends about \$330 million on instructional materials each year. The Digital Textbook Initiative would save California hundreds of millions of dollars by eliminating all funding for regular textbooks and other materials.

The initiative will pave the way for easier access to free digital texts in California's schools, and will continually be updated as they develop. Students will have access to the most up-to-date information, rather than settling for outdated print materials.

California is home to the Silicon Valley and to software giants and first-class university systems known around the world. The State must take the lead to use these technological resources to develop learning to serve the students,

parents, teachers and schools better.

"As the music and newspaper industries will attest, those who adapt quickly to changing consumer and business demands will thrive in our increasingly digital society and world economy," said Gov. Schwarzenegger and added, "Digital textbooks can help us achieve those goals and ensure that California's students continue to thrive in the global marketplace."

Some educators, however, argue that the initiative will be more costly than economical. Equipment costs money and teacher training would require more working computers and online access.

Would it risk the quality of education? The clamor for digital music, online social networking sites and other tools



AP Photo by Nick Ut

used to surf the information highway, shows that young people can easily adopt the system and will embrace it.

And environment-wise, just think of the millions of trees that will be saved. (AJPress)

Celebrating our freedom

HALFWAY through the year, the month of June signals many beginnings — the start of the rainy season, the beginning of classes, the new life of newly married couples. Next year, as in previous election years, June will be a new administration under a newly-elected President. More importantly, Filipinos must not forget the importance of June as the month when Filipinos declared their independence from Spain after more than four centuries of Hispanic rule.



ROSES & THORNS
Alejandro R. Roces

The whole nation celebrates 111 years of Philippine Independence. Our people, especially the youth, must not forget the birth of the Philippine nation on June 12, 1898. After many months of struggle and resistance, an immense and jubilant crowd of Filipinos led by Emilio Aguinaldo, gathered in Kawit, Cavite, to proclaim their independence. This was when the Filipino Flag was first hoisted up. It was also during this historic moment that the public first heard the national anthem, majestically played by a marching band.

Few people know that our anthem, composed by Julian Felipe, had no lyrics at first,

influenced by the Spanish anthem which, to this day, has no lyrics. It was only after the Filipinos saw the Americans singing their national anthem that Spanish lyrics were added the following year, culled from a poem entitled *Filipinas* by poet and soldier Jose Palma (*Tierra adorada, hija del sol de Oriente...*). The original title of our national anthem was *Marcha Filipina Magdalo*, later changed to *Marcha Nacional Filipina*. Because of its stirring music, the

spirit of nationalism was even more enkindled among Filipinos to the point that Americans interpreted their stance as seditious. Hence, singing the anthem and display of the Filipino flag was banned. Five years after the Philippine Commonwealth was established in 1935, an English version was commissioned, the *Philippine Hymn*, written by educator, Senator Camilo Osias and an American named Mary A. Lane (Land of the morning, child of the son returning...). Such was the fervor and fire of nationalism expressed throughout various generations thereafter. During the Japanese occupation in World War II, the first Tagalog translation sung was *Diwa ng Bayan* (*Lupang*

mapalad, Na mutya ng silangan...). After this, *O Sintang Lupa* (*O sintang lupa, Perlas ng Silangan...*) by Balmaceda, Santos and Caballo was used from 1948 after the US declared our independence in 1946 up to 1956. Finally, under President Magsaysay, a version in Tagalog was made official and this was entitled *Lupang Hinirang* by Ildefonso Santos & Julian Balmaceda, 1940 (*Bayang magiliw, perlas ng silangan...*). The various versions in three different languages attest to a strong spirit of nationalism and love for freedom among our race emblazoned in the pages of our history. No wonder there were such loud protest when the national anthem was sung avant-garde during a famous Filipino boxer's recent matching event recently held in Las Vegas.

Not long after, following the victorious year in 1898, the United States aggressively pushed its rule over the new republic and was quick to smother the flames of new-found Filipino independence. It was then set on launching and expanding its imperial conquests in the attractive strongholds of the Pacific region, and the Philippines was a perfect strategic point to do so. In 1941, when the Philippines was occupied by the Japanese, General Aguinaldo would again lead the people to unite as one and cooperate

wholeheartedly with the United States in order to save our democracy. After combined Filipino and American forces defeated the Japanese in 1946, former US President Harry Truman recognized our impotence, and declared this on July 4, the same day America celebrates its independence. But President Diosdado P. Macapagal officially changed the date of Philippine independence from July 4 to June 12 with a grand celebration in 1962, with Gen. Aguinaldo, then 93, as Guest of Honor. As his Cabinet member, this columnist had the privilege of recommending this change. I believe that countries are supposed to celebrate their independence on the day they declared it, and not as other governments, especially colonizers, recognized it.

These great deeds are more than enough reason to celebrate in June; but sadly for many, June 12 is just an ordinary holiday. We should think how our nation and its democracy have progressed from that time our brave heroes have first declared independence. This should make a good topic for our young students to reflect on, one way in which they and the future generations will retain in their memory the sacrifices made by our forefathers more than a century ago. (*Philstar.com*)

The plebiscite scorecard

I PUT together this chart, which lists the plebiscites on constitutional amendments that took place from 1935 to 1987. As a kind of frame of reference, I have also included similar data concerning presidential elections that took place soon before or after these plebiscites. And then, the figures (when available) for total registered voters and the figures for our national population as a whole.

Our national experience with constitutional plebiscites has been one of public involvement. Our current, and rather well-developed and fairly extensive, constitutional evolution since 1935, when the Philippine state was finally fleshed out, also has a high batting average for administrations: only once, in 1967, did the electorate reject plebiscite proposals.



THE LONG VIEW
Manuel L. Quezon III

In broad strokes, the various proposals to amend the Constitution can be described as either evolutionary, that is, to reform and improve the existing setup, or to make as clean a break with the previous constitutional order as possible or mark a distinct new chapter in our national life by means of promulgating a new constitution.

There are some trends that affected the ability of officialdom to propose changes, and the responsiveness of the public. The two most important, to my mind, are the acceleration of the expansion of the electorate that took place after 1935, and (a contemporary development) innovations in evaluating and reporting public opinion when, in 1933, surveys began to appear on the scene.

If you look at the chart, you will notice that after 1935, the elector-

ate expanded substantially, so that in a mere five years, it basically doubled. You will also see, however, the relatively low participation both in plebiscites and elections by those registered to vote (particularly by today's standards, but remarked on even by contemporary observers). Contemporary observers attributed this mainly to the predictable outcome of elections, because of the essentially one-party nature of politics at the time, and the decades-long dominance of national leaders. Since the electorate was still rather limited during the prewar period, it also suggests greater cohesion between the electorate and their leaders; having more in common, there was much less to be controversial enough to excite the electorate and drive them to the polls.

World War II and the rise of a new generation of leaders during that time changed that; and then population growth accelerated to the extent that within 20 years after the end

of the war, the electorate basically tripled; and in the 20 years of the Marcos administration the electorate then basically doubled; and since the fall of Marcos, the electorate has nearly doubled again.

From 1935 to the present, the population has quintupled, and the electorate, which was 45,029,443 in 2007, has increased 28 times in the same period. This is a massive increase that the political class, much as it is almost unrecognizable today from the one in power in the 1930s (decimated by the influx of middle-class challengers in the 1950s and 1960s, and guerrillas, warlords, and former rebels in the same period and to date), has had great difficulty coping with. One answer has been to engage in gerrymandering, atomizing the constituencies to keep them manageable. Another has been to learn mass media methods, as well as wholesale fraud instead of the traditional retail kind. And still another has been to propose revising the

rules of the political game by means of constitutional amendments.

But as a percentage of the public, and of the electorate, I wonder if we have a bigger per capita population of politicians than, say, in the 1970s or 1930s, but even more isolated today than it was during past periods of constitutional experimentation.

Whatever the political class (composed of politicians from all the provinces and cities of the country) wants, the chances are high that their desires are not in keeping with what the national electorate wants. And that's because, for all intents and purposes, the national electorate is heavily skewed, by force of numbers, towards what the electorate in the National Capitol Region and Regions III and IV-A want.

I have tackled what I believe are the requirements for success in proposing constitutional amendments in my Nov. 26, 2008 blog entry, "The worm within." You may want to review that. (*Inquirer.net*)

ASIAN JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

Main Office:
1150 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90017-1904
Tel: (213) 250-9797 • Fax: (213) 481-0854
e-mail: info@asianjournal.com
http://www.asianjournal.com

Manila Office:
Suite 208, The Manila Bank Corp., Bldg.
6772 Ayala Ave., Makati City 1226
Tel.: (632) 893-1720 • Fax: (632) 813-8746

New York and New Jersey:
5 Penn Plaza, Ste. 1932, New York, NY 10001
Tel.: (212) 655-5426 • Fax: (212) 655-9241
2500 Plaza Five, Harborside Financial Center,
Jersey City, NJ 07311
Tel.: (201) 4 84-7249 • Fax: (201) 484-7201

Las Vegas Sales Office:
3700 W. Desert Inn Road
Las Vegas, NV 89102
Tel.: (702) 792-6678 • Fax: (702) 792-6879

ROGER LAGMAY ORIEL
Publisher & Chairman of the Board

CORA MACABAGDAL-ORIEL
President & Executive Editor

BELLE M. SISON
Executive Vice President
Los Angeles Asian Journal

MONETTE ADEVA MAGLAYA
Senior Vice President
Los Angeles Asian Journal

IVY MANALANG
Vice President - Marketing

MOMAR VISAYA
Editor-in-Chief

JOSEPH PERALTA
Associate Editor

SHARON ANN BATHAN
Features Editor

MARIA LOURDES HALILI
Advertising Editor

DANTE SAMBILAY
Art Director

ANDY TECSON / TED TALAG
Photographers

BANDER LAW FIRM, LLP
Legal Counsel

ADVERTISING AND ADVERTORIAL POLICIES

Asian Journal Publications, Inc. ("AJPI") reserves the right to refuse to publish, in its sole and absolute discretion, any advertising and advertorial material submitted for publication by client. ("Client's Material")

Submission of an advertisement or advertorial to an AJPI sales representative does not constitute a commitment by AJPI to publish a Client's Material. AJPI has the option to correctly classify any Client's Material and to delete objectionable words or phrases. Client represents and warrants that a Client's Material does not and will not contain any language or material which is libelous, slanderous or defamatory or invades any rights of privacy or publicity; does not and will not violate or infringe upon, or give rise to any adverse claim with respect to any common law or other right whatsoever (including, without limitation, any copyright, trademark, service mark or contract right) of any person or entity, or violate any other applicable law; and is not the subject of any litigation or claim that might give rise to any litigation.

Publication of a Client's Material does not constitute an agreement to continue publication. Client agrees and covenants to indemnify AJPI and its officers against any and all loss, liability, damage, expenses, cost, charges, claims, actions, causes of action, recoveries, judgments, penalties, including outside attorneys' fees (individually and collectively "Claims") which AJPI may suffer by reason of (1) Client's breach of any of the representations, warranties and agreements herein or (2) any Claims by any third party relating in any way to Client's Material. AJPI will not be liable for failure to publish any Client's Material as requested or for more than one incorrect insertion of a Client's Material. In the event of an error, or omission in printing or publication of a Client's Material, AJPI shall be limited to an adjustment for the space occupied by the error, with maximum liability being cancellation of the cost of the first incorrect advertisement or republication of the correct advertisement. Under no circumstances shall Asian Journal Publications, Inc. be liable for consequential damages of any kind.

ASIAN JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS, INC. publishes the Los Angeles Asian Journal, published twice a week; the Orange County and Inland Empire Asian Journal, Northern California Asian Journal, Las Vegas Asian Journal and the New York / New Jersey Asian Journal which are published once a week and distributed to Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange Counties, Northern California, Las Vegas and New York and New Jersey respectively. Articles published in this paper do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publisher. Letters to the Editor are welcome. Letters must contain complete name and return address. The materials, however, are subject to editing and revisions. Contributions and advertising deadlines are every Mondays and Thursdays. For advertising rates and other information, please call the L.A. office at (213) 250-9797 or the Las Vegas Sales Office at (702) 792-6678 or send us an email at info@asianjournal.com