

# 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 ikauunlad ng bayan, bisikleta ang kailanga" 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 teeners 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, ar-

chitects 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 Sison (562) 8576494, Benjo Villanueva (714) 9061576 or Robie Villanueva (949) 3518344. ■

## Newport Beach Film Festival announces call for volunteers

NEWPORT BEACH – The Newport Beach Film Festival is looking for enthusiastic film lovers to volunteer for Orange County's most exciting event. The Festival runs from April 23rd – 30th, 2009 and will spotlight over 350 films from around the world, offering an ambitious and international selection of features, shorts, documentaries and animation. Screenings, events, and galas will take place at various venues throughout Newport Beach, including the Edwards Island Cinemas (999 Newport Center Drive, Newport Beach) and the Lido Theater (3459 Via Lido, Newport Beach).

Volunteers will have the opportunity to fill many fun positions at the festival, including guest relations, merchandise sales, theater ushering, office reception, and gala and special events staffing. Three to four hour shifts are available in the mornings and evenings. Volunteers must be at least 18 years old. College students and seniors are welcome.

Interested volunteers should attend one of the mandatory orientation sessions:

Saturday, April 11th at 11:00 AM - City Council Chambers in Newport Beach City Hall, 3300 Newport Blvd. on the Peninsula.

Monday, April 13th at 6:30 PM - Friend's Meeting Room of the Newport Beach Public Library, 1000 Avocado Ave.

Please RSVP to [volunteers@newportbeachfilmfest.com](mailto:volunteers@newportbeachfilmfest.com) ■

## MTLA Wins 2009 Environmental Achievement Award

*For exceptional work and commitment to protecting the environment*

LOS ANGELES – Million Trees LA (MTLA) received the 2009 Environmental Award today from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for its "exceptional work and commitment to protecting the environment."

Each year, the EPA honors outstanding environmental advocates making significant contributions towards enhancing and protecting the quality of the environment. Winners were selected based on numerous criteria, including: ability to address an environmental problem or need, accomplishment of stated goals, ability of the program/activity to be replicated or widely shared, collaboration with others, clarity and effectiveness of the presentation and long term benefits for the environment.

"I am thrilled that the EPA has bestowed this honor on Million Trees LA," said Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. "MTLA is a significant part of our efforts to make Los Angeles a greener, cleaner, and healthier city for everyone to enjoy. The trees we have already planted are growing beautifully and we are planting more each day."

MTLA received the award for Region 9, representing Califor-

nia, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, Pacific Islands and tribal lands. Forty groups and individuals were selected from over 200 nominees - the most ever - this year from businesses, government officials, tribes, media, environmental organizations and community activists.

"It is a great pleasure and honor that we can recognize the innovative and important environmental work achieved by this year's impressive group of organizations and individuals, and the example they set for all of us to follow," said Laura Yoshii, the U.S. EPA's acting administrator for the Pacific Southwest region. "This year's winners and nominees have made superb efforts to protect and preserve our air, water and land, and increased awareness of the environmental challenges we all face."

### About million trees LA

Million Trees LA is a cooperative effort between the City of Los Angeles, community groups, businesses, and individuals working together to plant and provide long-term stewardship of one million trees planted where they are needed most.

For more information, visit: [www.MillionTreesLA.org](http://www.MillionTreesLA.org) ■

## High school freshman preaches Easter sermon

*Joanne Pijano, a 9th grade student from Burbank, California preached the Easter Sermon at FilCom Presbyterian Church*

EAGLE ROCK – Joanne Pijano a 14 year old Burbank student gave a dynamic motivational sermon at the Sunrise Salubong Easter Service at the Filipino Community Presbyterian Church in Eagle Rock CA. To shouts of "Amen" "Keep It Going" and spontaneous applause, Ms. Pijano moved, touched, and inspired the Easter morning Congregation and their guests at the Filipino Community Presbyterian Church in Eagle Rock. Ms. Pijano's sermon was titled: "Step Boldly into the Future" and gave a personal account of moving through negative situations and moving into the potential God has for each of us. It was an exciting and encouraging time for each person present.

The Filipino Community Presbyterian Church has been conducting the early morning sunrise service for the past 10 years. The service is modeled after the Salubong Service originally presented at Ellinwood Malate Church back in the 1940's. It is a drama of the resurrection story from Matthew's Gospel and includes lots of contemporary music. Mrs. Mai Nario, a deaconess and founding member of FilCom Presbyterian commented that "This was the Best Holy Week and Easter service so far! Our church is dedicated to youth ministry and the raising up of Christian children to be re-

sponsible citizens in this country. Our Kids are very gifted and by the grace of God have remained free from some of the tragedies of drug abuse and gang membership. We have been blessed to have pastors who work with our children and have experience as High School teachers. This is a great church to raise your family."

The Salubong was the grand finale of all the Holy Week services. FilCom began with a full Passover Seder dinner which included foot washing and a Tenebrae service led by the Youth of the Church. Good Friday was marked by participation of 8 Churches and ministries from as far away as San Jose, CA and included the participation of Hip-Hop Artist/Musician J-RICZ, an international celebrity. The Easter Service began as the sun started to rise with the singing of an ancient prayer called the *Exsultet* by Ms. Christina Jensen a seminary student from San Francisco Theological Seminary and then proceeded to the drama presented by the youth. The entire service was led by the youth. Every Easter, FilCom collects food baskets filled with the ingredients of an Easter Dinner for indigent families in Eagle Rock. This year the proceeds were given to Eagle Rock Presbyterian Church's "Sunday Dinner" program. ■

## Dennis Apuan

**PAGE A9** ◀ jobs in clean energy and reduce business tax cuts as his priority while in office.

His vote against House Bill 1317 in Colorado has already made an impression on some of Colorado residents.

"I am writing in to thank my state representative, Dennis Apuan, for supporting the troops at Fort Carson by voting against House Bill 1317," wrote Calvin Morris of Colorado Springs in the Colorado Springs The Gazette newspaper. "That bill would prohibit the sale of public lands for

the expansion of the Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site. The Army uses that area for important military training exercises before sending troops into battle. The bill is bad for our troops, and I'm glad our representative understands why. As a veteran, I can speak to just how essential it is to get the proper training before going into war... I applaud Apuan for breaking with his Democratic caucus to support the troops at Fort Carson, and am thrilled that we have a strong representative willing to stand up for his district." ■



# ATTENTION HOMEOWNERS

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