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GENSAN GAZER

General Santos City's First Lifestyle, Trades & Travel Magazine • November-December 2010



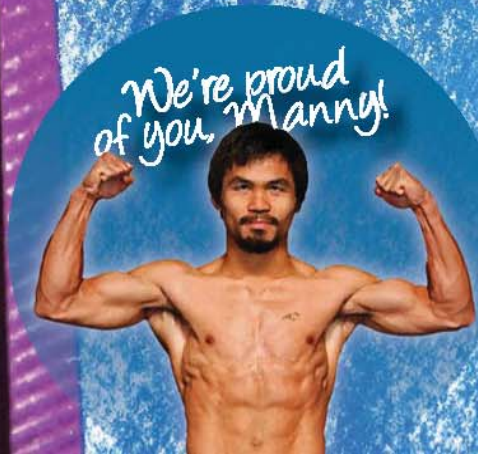
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Manny Pacquiao: Good Son, Great Fighter

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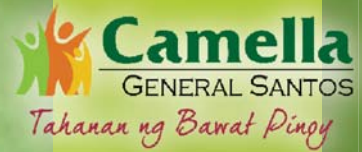


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editor's note

First of all we thank everyone for waiting it out with us as we lumped together the November and December months into one issue (we did the same thing with April and May) -- our way of giving ourselves a much-deserved break at least twice a year -- until we get around to hiring extra brains and hands, that is.

We (and the whole wide world!) were thrilled no end by **Manny Pacquiao's** amazing Arlington action; he graces our *Profile Focus* spread this time.

This issue we also *hear* about **Donna Mae Congson's** civet coffee, **Romarie Ivy Cunanan's** curls, **Egai Cadiente's** *Ninong*, **Bing Cariño's** list of ancient Gensan stores, **Avel Manansala's** report on Mayor Darlene's first 100 days in office, and a little something about vampires.

Happy reading and happy holidays!


Armando Nicolas PJ

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our cover story

Our Christmas stories in this year-ender issue -- the truth about Christmas, being nice to yourself this holiday season, Philippine Christmas cuisine, holiday stress, having a happy Christmas celebration -- all tread on familiar ground, and despite being light, collectively they shed new illumination on probably the world's favorite time of year. Or not. *I Don't Want to Do Christmas*, on that note, puts personal loss and grief in perspective. In the end, even if you can't say unreservedly and with cheer -- 'tis the season to be jolly -- how the Yuletide season fits in your life, however tragic it may have become, is all up to you. For all it's worth, have a happy Christmas!

Club der Visionäre in Freischwimmer, Berlin

I've always wanted a riverside café-bar of my own, and lounging on one of two 3-square-meter wooden platforms anchored off the River Spree in Freischwimmer, Berlin one fine evening in August 2004 made that dream official. (No such strategic rivers in Gensan, sad to say, so I started a magazine instead. I get to write about it and other travels, so maybe all is not in vain?)

Back to the floating structure, my friend Leonie and I eased onto our small space on the platform, 2-euro beers in hand, all around us a hip crowd of young people from different countries, willow trees touching the water in the moonlight, the drone of a multitude of languages and the faint mix of wine,

weed, and wax in the air.

I'd go back there any fine night in a heartbeat, but last I checked, tele-ports are still a utility in science fiction. But do go there whenever you're in the region.

If you want to mingle with local hipsters or just enjoy a refreshing, unpre-



tentious night out, jump off at Schlesisches Tor, and stroll about a quarter-mile down Schlesische Strasse, where restaurants and bars mirror each other across a tiny canal fed by the Spree. On the way there you'll pass inexpensive eateries and watering holes, and there behold my dream bar **Club der Visionaire** and **Freischwimmer** across from it -- both cool hot spots in the summer since they're green and fresh and *al fresco*. (ANPJ)

Got 24 hours in Gensan. Where should I go?

No doubt about it: this is the one question most often asked by friends (and friends of friends) coming or contemplating to come to Gensan for the first time.

So being the well-informed and well-meaning Gensan friend that you are, what do you say? This just might be the full day's itinerary you could recommend:

Gensan Fish Port. Head to the port complex around 5 am to see local handlers manually unload the day's tuna catch, and the ensuing organized



frenzy at the market. (No shorts, slippers, or singlets allowed. Inside the market area, white rubber boots are required.) Don't forget to enjoy the sunrise! (0430-0730 hrs)

Sarangani Highlands. On the way back to the city, drop by this hilltop resort for garden-style breakfast. Enjoy the views of Sarangani Bay and peaks Mt Matutum and Mt Parker. (0730-0930 hrs)

Manny Pacquiao's Residence. You may not be able to step inside his mansion, but what's wrong with a photo or two by his front gate? (0930-1000 hrs)

Lake Sebu. A full weekend in this lakeside paradise is preferable, but who says you can't swing by for lunch by the lake and the zip-line ride over forests and falls? (1000-1500 hrs)

Shopping. If you haven't already

started the buying frenzy (fruits and handicrafts along the highway, local delicacies at the stops, etc.), head to **Gaisano**, **KCC**, and **Robinsons Place** for best bargains. Don't forget: the **Team Pacquiao** store is a Gensan original. (1500-1830 hrs)

Dinner Options. This will be tough as there are plenty. Aperitifs at **Pacman Sports Bar** perhaps? Crabs in coco-milk at **Red Trellis**, steak at **Ranchero**, pasta at **Bigby's**, Filipino classics at **Piyesta**, kebabs at **Little Dubai** -- spoiled for choice yet? (1830-2100)

Nightcap. You had a long day, but before hitting the sack, why not a drink or two at **Robinsons Place Al Fresco** or **East Asia Royale Hotel** complex?

There's plenty more to discover and do in Gensan, and 24 hours is not a bad place to start! (All hours indicated include travel time. Best to hire a car and driver to better manage the itinerary.) - ANPJ

General Santos named *Most Business-Friendly City* by International Finance Corp.

General Santos City is once again basking in the limelight, and for very good reason.

The Tuna Capital has just been proclaimed as the Philippines' **Most Business-Friendly City** by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), an affiliate of World Bank, after a study they had recently conducted with regard to doing business in 25 cities in the country.

According to the study, General Santos ranks as the best city in the Philippines to do business in for the reason that it takes only 22 days and 17 procedures to set up a business in the dynamic urban center; this fares way faster than the national average of 33 days and 18 procedures.

At the bottom of the 25-city list is San Juan City, where it takes 31 days and 21 procedures to set up shop.

The country's richest cities, Quezon City and Makati City ranked 12th and 20th, respectively. Here is the ranking of all 25 cities in terms of ease in doing business.

1. General Santos City

2. Davao City
3. Taguig City
4. Valenzuela City
5. Lapu-Lapu City (Metro Cebu)
6. Zamboanga City
7. Cebu City
8. Marikina City
9. Mandaluyong City
10. Pasay City
11. Caloocan City
12. Quezon City
13. Mandaue City
14. Cagayan de Oro City
15. Navotas City
16. Malabon City
17. Manila City
18. Batangas City
19. Parañaque City
20. Makati City
21. Iloilo City
22. Muntinlupa City
23. Pasig City
24. Las Piñas City
25. San Juan City

Doing Business in the Philippines 2011, the name of the IFC study, says that "new firms are created and job opportunities multiply when starting a business is made easier.

Research shows that when registration becomes faster and costs are cut, more firms enter the market."

It's no wonder that national giants **Robinsons Place Gensan** and **SM City Gensan** are setting up shop here, pouring in billions of pesos in investments and local spending, and in the process generating tens of thousands of job opportunities for locals and transients alike.

The study, which was commissioned by IFC together with the **Asian Institute of Management Policy Center**, with funding from the **Canadian International Development Agency**, the **USAID**, the **AusAid**, and the **Investment Climate Advisory Services** of the **World Bank Group**, takes note of the various procedures in business regulations all throughout the country.

From it came the conclusion that the biggest challenges for local businessmen and entrepreneurs in the Philippines are the long list of application procedures, high fees, and steep requirements.

Not so much the case in General Santos, as this recent distinction indicates.

Earlier the local government of Gensan established the *one-stop-shop* concept for business registrations, which is continually enhanced year after year, capped with the **PBA Lounge** (manned by personnel of the **Permits and License Division** to assist new applicants for business permits) during former Mayor **Jun Acharon's** tenure.

The World Bank is an international financial institution that provides loans to developing countries for capital

programs. Its goal is to reduce poverty worldwide. By law, all of its decisions must be guided by a commitment to promote foreign investment, international trade, and facilitate capital investment. The World Bank differs from the World Bank Group, in that the former comprises only two institutions: the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** and the **International Development Association (IDA)**; the latter incorporates these two in addition to IFC, **Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)**, and **International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)**.

(Condensed from the post, "Gensan is the Most Business-Friendly City in the Philippines" by Avel Manansala on www.GenSantos.com, 9 December 2010)



Transforming a part of your home in the city into a mini farm is something simple that you could do on your own. Imagine having all the seasonal vegetables and fruits in your backyard ready for picking and eating. Ain't that amazing? So here are some tips, which hopefully could help you on how to start your own farm at home.

The first thing that you have to do is to find a space to build your homestead. It could be your backyard, frontyard, garage, empty lot, window boxes or even your rooftop. You don't necessarily need a very large space for your mini farm. You could actually grow different types of plants in a small space. So the size of the space is not a major issue. As long as you have space then that's okay. The next thing that you have to do is to buy your containers. If you're

How To Start Your Own Urban Farm

by Michelle Ching

planting on a balcony or a garage then you will need pots or tubs. But if you're planting in your frontyard or your backyard then you could just dig up the ground. You could also use pots or tubs though if you don't want to dig your lawn. The next thing that you have to do is to acquire seeds. If you're a beginner though it would be advisable to start with simple plants, meaning plants that don't require a lot of maintenance. Herbs, tomatoes and chilis are great to start with. Once you have planted your seeds,

all you have to do is to water and tend them everyday until they grow. Try to read books on farming and gardening also to know more about the fruits and vegetables in season, as well as how to maintain them.

Urban agriculture is not only a hobby or an activity for leisure. It also reconnects us to mother nature and it also serves as an inspiration that on our own, we could do our share to help the environment. So what are you waiting for? Start your very own urban farm now!

About The Author

AeroFarms delivers aeroponic technology and comprehensive business expertise to help you grow your bottomline and pioneer the future of vertical farming and urban agriculture. Visit www.aerofarms.com for more.

Five Simple Ways to Go Green

by Noel King

As a citizen of the globe, we have responsibility to start making changes in our life to protect the environment. This will not only save the green, but also save us some money as well. Below, 5 ways show you how.

1. Reusable Water Bottles. Bring your own reusable water bottle. It's a known fact that water in plastic bottles you buy outside will leak chemicals into water if the plastic gets too hot. So it's better to use your own water bottle -- not only more green, but will also save you money.

2. Environ Bags.

Instead of using plastic bags for shopping, you can save the world by carrying your own reusable bag. Just browse around and you will find a lot of options from cloth to canvas in some cool design, which makes you stylish while going green.

3. Cloth Napkins. You only use paper napkins once and will throw them away. This is pretty wasteful and an expensive habit. Why not use cloth napkins, which are a much greener way to go, and not only that, every meal will feel like a special occasion, too.

4. Say No to Toxic Cleaning Products. Green cleaning is the new beautiful. Vinegar, salt, baking soda and lemon are natural ingredients, which can clean almost your entire house. For laundry you can choose an environmentally friendly detergent, or make your own with soda flakes and a drop

or two of essential oils for a lovely non-toxic fragrance.

5. Recycle, Recycle, Recycle. Yes, you've heard it all before, but how often do you really think whether every item you throw in the bin can be recycled? Recycling is usually the first step in the journey to going green, and you need to evaluate every aluminum can, plastic bottle, and cardboard box before throwing it in the garbage because it's likely that it can be recycled.

We should not underestimate the small changes in our life. These little tweaks can make a big difference in saving our environment. Besides, it saves us some bulk, too.

So come and join the green fun!

About The Author

Noel is a sports lover who currently review Westport Folding Tricycle. You may check out his new website Tricycles For Adults at tricyclesforadults.net.



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FAIRY GODFATHER, MERRY GODCHILD

I wouldn't really know the delight of receiving a present from a godparent. I was only two years old when the only Ninong or godfather I had died. Well, I didn't receive any from him prior to his death so there's no point of reference anyhow. Add to the fact that my biological father also died when I was at that age. How it is to have a father is an experience alien to me, let alone a godfather giving gifts.

Growing up fatherless, I have developed fondness for my friends' fathers. I call their fathers Daddy, *Tatay*, Papa, the way respective friends call them. Every time I utter the filial term of endearment, it's as if they are my own. I am not expecting that one of these fathers will give me a gift though; just affording me the experience of calling them my father is gift enough.

Forgive my nostalgic sentimentalities. I'm just remembering how hollow it felt as a child to see kids like me receiving gifts from their godparents on birthdays, Christmases and such occasions. As I grew up, perhaps I have unconsciously forgotten the void.

Or maybe not. Because every time I receive a present, there's a heavenly surge of euphoria coupled with a teary-eyed, childlike awe. A feeling that, I think, comes from that sense of wanting, from that psychological concave carved in my tender age. You can just imagine the price-less joy when I am handed a gift box generously shared as token of love. So along this vein, I do not necessarily regret the fact of not having a godparent.

While I'm certain I'm not a solitary *gift-less* godchild, having

godparents is a permanent fixture in the Filipino social culture. It is in fact, a necessity, especially in the Christian tradition. Culture dictates that godparents upon christening are a must-have. Usually, the child's parents enlist close friends and relatives. I don't know if parents deem the *gift-giving* capacity a prime qualification in choosing a Ninong or Ninang over an indispensable consideration that godparents are second parents of their child. Mind you, there are parents who deliberately consider economic status and stature as essential criteria.

Which means, for these parents presents are necessarily expected during the child's special celebrations. I am a godfather myself to at least five or so children. And the guilt would haunt me always whenever a parent -- take note, not the godchild -- would demand for the supposed debts of gifts you missed to give to your *inaanak*. Normally, I'd assuage the guilt by employing a self-excuse -- that, maybe I haven't imbued this Filipino feature because it's peripheral to me. I mean, gift-giving to a godchild is an experience not akin to giving presents without dutiful attachment.

And that's the thing that amuses me. The cultural construct of giving gifts to your godchild

is seen as obligatory as opposed to voluntary. I lost count of how many godchildren I have through the years. In my whole life as Ninong, I think I have only given a present to at least three in their childhood, all of them are in college now. On several occasions, I would be surprised to be greeted by a mother, child in tow, prompting the kid to kiss my hand. "O, bless sa Ninong," followed by "Dami mo nang utang sa inaanak mo" (your debts to your godchild have accumulated) repartee. I would often retort, "Sa Christmas na lang regalo mo ha?" (You'll have your gift on Christmas, alright?)

As always, the child's Christmas stockings would just hang there, empty.

Admittedly, I am not conscious about fulfilling my duty as godparent. How often does a godparent really, actually function as one anyway? How many of us are actually, dutifully doing the task? Second parents. That's what being a godparent is about, I suppose. Or are baptismal godparents for presents and gifts only?

It is interesting to note that this custom is so fixed in our socio-cultural fabric and yet it's so loose. What does it truly mean to be a godparent? Good for those who really listen and internalize the preacher's template homily during the christening ceremony. Maybe they do function as lectured. In some instances, only proxies attend. Well, for as long as the child is christened, that's what matters to parents, anyhow. And well, yes, the presents.

At some point, everybody becomes a godparent. Friends get married and procreate sooner or later. And who else would they sign up but those within the circle? All of us have to give a present or two, voluntarily or otherwise. The thing is, there's nothing more delighting to a child's heart than holding a nicely-wrapped package in his or her hand. We may fall short of our duty as second parents, it's not too late though to fill a heart or two with joy and awe. Your godchild's stockings will always have space for a toy or a doll.

Your godchild is waiting all along to feel that heavenly surge of delight. He could be one less child in the world, who will not wonder anymore in his adult life how it feels to receive a present from his Ninong.

Comments are welcome. You may send an email to the author at my_eyevue@yahoo.com.



Mayor Darlene's First 100 Days

Condensed from actual report as posted in GenSantos.com -- Characterized by both change and permanence, the First 100 Days under the new administration unraveled challenges and opportunities. Changes are being instituted by enhancing existing programs and/or eliminating non-responsive ones. The initiatives discussed here are a starting point for improving service delivery and resource utilization efficiency. (This report presents neither the state of affairs of the local governance nor the state of the city as a whole, but a partial account of Quarter 3, 2010 accomplishments.)

General Policies On Good Governance.

Executive Order (EO) No. 22 (Series of 2010) formed the GSC Anti-Drug Abuse Council; it effectively partners with barangays in setting up anti-drug abuse committees.

EO No. 23 (2010) declared the city a no-fire-arm zone; it seeks to fully achieve a gun-free city in the interest of peace and order. The city will formulate a city ordinance to this effect.

We amended 16 existing executive orders, including EO No. 25 (2010) that amended EO No. 001a (1999); it provides for enhancing *City Hall sa Barangay* (CHB) by setting service delivery procedures before, during and after every CHB conduct.

We initiated austerity measures by: 1) suspending all requisitions for procurement of all IT and IT-related equipment; 2) suspending all applications for monetization of leave credits; and 3) conserving energy in the workplace.

The city began filing cases against unscrupulous claimants of public lands. We revoked the business permits of all gambling establishments, and closed nightspots with lewd shows. We also reviewed the 2011 PHP 1.3-billion budget to ensure a rational prioritization of funds for education and social services.

Social Services and Condition of Livability. We continue to find ways to raise funding for the delivery of social services. We need long-term strategic planning, coordinated solutions, and capacity strengthening; these enables the city to reach its vision of livability norms at a global scale.

Peace and Order. A total of 22 anti-drug operations resulted in 31 arrests, confiscation of illegal drugs cache, and prosecution of 22 cases. The Police busted the operations of a sugar smuggling syndicate; the campaign against illegal gambling resulted in 105 arrests and prosecution of 59 cases. In response to making Gensan a gun-free zone, the Police conducted 17 operations resulting in the confiscation of short and high-powered firearms, and prosecution of 10 cases.

Health. Through a local health

board resolution, the merger of lying-in and barangay health centers is under way; this will increase the capability of health centers in handling maternal and neo-natal care, minor surgery, and conduct of daily medical consultations.

Five lying-in centers are now accredited under PHIC maternal package. PhilHealth holders pay only PHP 1,800 (average) for the entire length of admission instead of the PHP 5,000 maternity package at private clinics.

We negotiated with PhilHealth to open an out-patient package for lying-in centers; this will enable PHIC-member patients to avail of medical services like minor surgery for free.

Environment. We raised garbage collection efficiency from 51% to 65% by providing dump trucks and rehabilitating the collection fleet. We diverted 59,564 m³ of total waste. Biodegradable waste are brought to the city demo farm for composting/conversion to soil enhancers for public parks.

Our most important campaign is waste segregation: this is where our people can substantially contribute to environment protection.

Fiscal Management and the City's Bankability. Actual collection derived from business tax reached nearly PHP 25-million against target of PHP 20-million; collection from real property tax also almost PHP 25-million against target of PHP 16-million.

Investments, Jobs, Economy and Competitiveness. We are reviewing our business facilitation process. Recommendations are expected early next year, in time for the annual renewal of business permits. The goal: to reduce permit processing time significantly.

Building permits issued July-September reached 252 at PHP 243-million. We registered and issued permits to 276 new businesses with total capital of PHP 139-million that generated 882 jobs.

The entry of SM Prime Holdings, with capital of PHP 1.253-billion for the construction and operation of SM Mall of Gensan, will enliven the local economy.

Our public employment service office solicited 3,000 vacancies from businesses and placed 1,366 individuals for local employment; 78 applicants were hired on the spot at Yaman Gensan's job fair.

Continued on page 11 >>>





Where Gensan Went Shopping in the Last 75 years

It's that time of year again when all roads lead to the same place -- the store. Gensan's shops have come a long way over the years.

December is the heyday of every shopaholic, the merry month when they can shop till they drop without guilt. The stores grew as the city burgeoned in size and wealth. Next year the city becomes the undisputed shopping capital of South Central Mindanao with the opening of the fourth mall bringing Christmas shoppers enriched by agro trade and fat bonuses. Not bad for a city that grew from a settlement seventy plus years ago with just one store.

The settlement carved from the province of Cotabato had only one Christmas in the first five years of its foundation. That was Christmas 1939. Back then, the holiday was celebrated with a mass celebrated by a *borrowed* priest, later followed by a dance with a performance from a *borrowed* band from a ship that happened to be on port *en route* to its next destination. That was how it was during those days; my grandfather was also a *borrowed* engineer from the Bureau of Highways in Manila to assist in infrastructure projects in the newly established settlement district. When the fuel that lit the *petromax* lamps ran out the simple gathering dispersed, went home, and had a quiet *Noche Buena* bought from the two stores during that time, **Suikichi Kuruda's General Store** in the area now known as Silway, or from the general supplies

store established by the government, called **Cantina**, in the settlement district of Lagao. War broke out the following year, and it was only after liberation when the settlers, rebuilding the settlement from the ravages of war, celebrated Christmas.

The era before the war was commonly referred as *pistaym* (peace time). Pistaym in the settlement lasted only a year but it was enough to jumpstart trade and commerce in the district. Shopping at that time had no frills as the economic activity was limited to farming; come time to fill up on supplies, they either troop to Kuruda's store, procure government stacked basic needs from the Cantina, or on weekends buy farm-grown vegetable, meat and poultry from the Sunday market at the landing site. When war broke out the following year, Cantina closed and Kuruda's sales dropped as the settlers evacuated to Kiamba and Buluan.

Cantina reopened briefly to support the settlement recovering from the devastations of the war, and Suikichi Kuruda, a Japanese, had not been heard of since. The area where Kuruda's shop became the center of commerce as the vessels of two shipping companies, **Compañía Marítima** and **Philippine Steam Navigation Company** docked a few meters from the bay. The area was busy with people going on trips;

the natural rise in demand for goods was inevitable. Silway at that time became the center of entertainment and commerce. There was **Maliwanag Billiard Hall** and a movie house. The public market was established in the same area, where stores sprouted like mushrooms. The first merchants were Chinese, Moro and Moro-Chinese traders. General stores like **Lee Tay Commercial** and **Asia Commercial** filled the commercial void when Kuruda closed shop. It was also during this time that private trading began with the establishment of **Mar Tan Buy and Sell**.

The 50s saw the coming in of foreign traders like the Indian-owned **Ram's Bombay Bazaar**, the Palestinian **Shurafa's** and the Middle Eastern-descended **Bajunaid** stores. Consumers acquired the taste for fine imported goods, ready-to-wear (RTW) garment and high-quality shoes, changing the local culture accustomed to the basic goods sold by Kuruda and army surplus available at Cantina.

In Lagao commerce had been made vibrant by the establishment of **Longlife Pharmacy**, which also doubled as general store. **Catolico's** and **Pacheco's** store became the after-church shopping heaven for Sunday breakfasts, lunches and afternoon snacks. **King's Store** provided

Continued on page 32 >>>

>>> Continued from page 9

We started an inventory of our labor capacities and needs. With the Labor & Employment and Education departments, we seek to raise workforce competency levels to global norms and address gaps in local employment.

Infra Projects Updates. The expansion/renovation of GSC Airport at PHP 20-million completed; more infusion of budget from national/local agencies will come in to further upgrade the facility. Engineering projects completed within the first 100 days at nearly PHP 30-million include:

- Road concreting, Nuñez St extension
- Continued road concreting/drainage, Mabuhay Rd
- Rehabilitation of Guadalupe-Nopol farm-to-market road, Conel
- Construction of 1 training center, City Hall
- Rail installation and roof repairs, city public market
- Construction of median island, P. Acharon Blvd

The 12th Tuna Congress produced Resolution No. 5 (Series of 2010), requesting the Department of Agriculture and

Department of Transportation & Communications to harmonize and rationalize fishing vessel registration and licensing. (The tourism office reported full occupancy of all hotels during the event.)

Awards and Citations. We garnered 2 major awards from the Association of Tourism Officers of the Philippines during the 11th ATOP National Convention in Subic: the 3rd Eco-Karera as best tourism event (sports/adventure category), and the 5th National Tourism Week as best national tourism week celebration.

The city was also cited in the Asian Institute of Management policy forum in July as the only city (growth center category under infrastructure driver) with high marks in the availability/condition of road networks, and coverage and reliability of utility services.

New Initiatives as Global City. The Magandang Gensan website (magandang-gensan.com) features the *Faces Facets Places™* initiative.

We successfully staged the 1st Regional Tourism Summit during the 6th National Tourism Week; it produced collective resolutions, including a draft of an integrated Region 12 tourism develop-

ment plan with Gensan as port of entry.

All 26 barangays now have digitized maps, making it easier to re-trieve such data as identification of actual use and classification of real property.

We proposed an ordinance prescribing to calibrate and seal dispensing pumps of petroleum retailers, impose registration fees, and provide penalties for violation. Endorsed to the Sangguniang Panlungsod by the city administrator and is now at second reading, the proposed ordinance is the first of its kind among the country's LGUs.

We implemented *Greening Gensan*; it marries proper agri practices and good waste management, and encourages city folk to use disposable household containers to grow plants and vegetables.

Many projects and programs are in the pipeline, to be implemented in 2011. The global journey has just begun. The administration vows to continue building on the strong foundation of the past administration, and to bring the city and its people to greater heights of growth and prosperity. (See the full report in *GenSantos.com*)

pixbriefs

Anthony Pangilinan was guest speaker during the **PlantersBank SME Speaker Series** (SME Ethics: Adding Values to Your Business) at the Family Country Hotel and Convention Center on November 25. It was held in partnership with the General Santos City Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Inset photo, from left: **Ma. Theresa Pacheco** (Planters-Bank), **Pilar Afuang** (GSC Chamber of Commerce), Anthony, and **Doris Delima** (Department of Trade and Industry Region XII) ►



◀ **Digital Interface** formally opens its General Santos City branch at SunCity Complex on December 8 to cater to the city's growing needs for computer products and services. From left: **Nelly Agabin** (Digital Interface), **City Councilor Meg Santos**, and **Angelito Sta. Ana** (Digital Interface) at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

At least a dozen personalities spoke on different topics before more than 100 bloggers at **BlogFest 2010 SocCKSArGen**. (For more details, visit www.SoxBloggers.com.) ►

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Healthy Bones

by Robert D. Franklin

It's just about every day that we hear something new or *discovered* on osteoporosis, and how neglecting our bone health can bring us serious consequences, such as deformity and pain. We must know our current state to best protect bone quality as well as ensure that we age as slowly as possible.

There are a few tests that will give us a good indication of our bones' current condition, one being the DEXA test. This is an x-ray of your hip and lower spine, which will give you a T-score. Your doctor can then devise a plan to maintain your current state or improve your bone health.

Japanese women have the lowest incidence of osteoporosis and fractures in the world, as well as the naturally beautiful skin, fewer wrinkles, and are



almost never obese. Some credit this to vitamin K2. Vitamin K2 is usually made naturally in our bodies, however, aging bodies make less of it. To slow the aging process, supplementation is suggested.

Some herbals such as horsetail stimulates the growth of connective tissue. Stress can be reduced by oat, which is also good for bone health.

When bones are subjected to resistance such as weights, which actually stresses the bone tissue in a good way, it causes new bone tissue to grow. If weight resistance exercise is just not part of your routine, then jogging, cycling and aerobics are good for bone and overall health also.

Osteoporosis is not an inevitable part of aging. While women over 50 account for a large number of cases, osteoporosis can affect any age group, particularly asthma sufferers who can be more susceptible.

Weak bones can lead to serious injury and even death so good bone health is vitally important to maintain an active and pain-free life. With a diet of fresh vegetables, fruits, moderate amounts of dairy and protein, plenty of vitamin K2 and exercise, your risk should be minimized.

Get into the habit of practicing good bone health as soon as possible, feel great, deceive that aging process, and look younger in the end.

About the Author

Robert D. Franklin is a fitness adviser and health specialist. Read his health and fitness insights at www.myfitlife.info.

***He who enjoys
good health is
rich, though he
knows it not.***

~ Italian Proverb ~



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Of Vampires and Werewolves

Text by Armando
Nicolas P J

Photos of Dallen
Baldonado by Apple
Greatson Francisco

Set/props by Marthin
Millado, set/props/
makeup by Donna
Mae Congson

First of 2
Parts

Creatures of darkness such as vampires and werewolves who exude otherworldly beauty, are strangely wise, and possess strong self-control -- a fictional evolution -- have become a pop culture phenomenon that captivates the young and old alike. The once-sinister vampire is no longer a slave to the desire to feed, and is more atuned to our humanity.

Thanks to popular literature, film and television, today's vampire is no longer all evil, but a complex being capable of empathy, and with a sense of purpose. *Buffy* and *Blade* saw this in their battles; *Twilight* and *True Blood* exploited similar themes in each sequel and episode. And audiences thirst for more!

This renewed interest in the *reformed undead* arose when the darker personality became fashionable. Perhaps the cheerful, perky types have gone out of style, and we have now taken on the somber, more emotional psyche? *Goth* and *emo* trends could be a manifestation -- with players brooding and introspective, and longing for life's less mundane and more mystifying.

Pop culture and myths molded vampires as misunderstood supernatural beings that feel and long and love. Our fascination with vampires, in turn, spurs creative release, emotional catharsis, and ironically, a desire to prevail over evil. The same evil, which no longer defines vampires. It had to, or we're stuck with our mortality.





GARY/MARTIN AS ONE

Album: *AS 1* (2009) | **Artist:** Martin Nievera and Gary Valenciano | **Abstract:** A once-in-a-lifetime musical partnership of two of the Philippines' greatest veteran studio and concert stage performers, the twist being, each artist's hit song interpreted and recorded by the other in one power album, and the seemingly endless series of live concerts it spurred in 2 continents (so far). *Concert King* Martin Nievera and *Mr Pure Energy* Gary Valenciano together after nearly three decades of *rivalry* in the local music and entertainment industry -- that's a dream collaboration we won't see again in a while.

DREAM
COLLABORATIONS SUCH AS MARTIN & GARY'S *AS 1* CAN ONLY MERIT AWE FROM FANS.

AMAZING INDIA

Title: *Interpreter of Maladies* | **Author:** Jhumpa Lahiri | **Abstract:** Literature

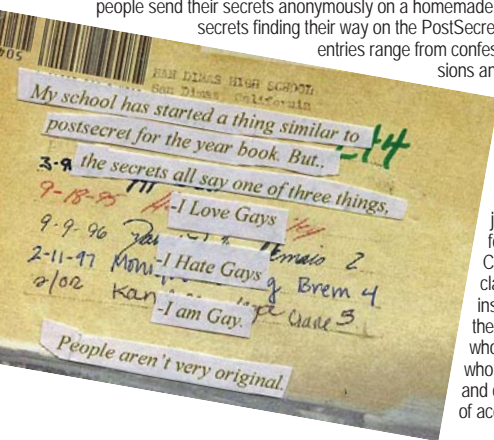
Pulitzer Prize-winning collection of nine short stories that look into the lives of Indians and Indian Americans who are caught between the culture they have inherited and a way of life in the New World that's often incongruous to the characters' fictional circumstances and real-life psyche. The collection's nine stories are: *A Temporary Matter*, *When Mr Pirzada Came to Dine*, *Interpreter of Maladies*, *A Real Durwan*, *Sexy*, *Mrs Sen's*, *This Blessed House*, *The Treatment of Bibi Haldar*, and *The Third and Final Continent*.

"THERE ARE TIMES I AM BEWILDERED BY EACH MILE I HAVE TRAVELED, EACH MEAL I HAVE EATEN, EACH PERSON I HAVE KNOWN, EACH ROOM IN WHICH I HAVE SLEPT."

TOP BLOG OF THE MONTH

Post: *Sunday Secrets* (28 Nov 2010) | **Author:** Frank Warren (PostSecret.com) | **Abstract:** PostSecret is a continuing community art project, where people send their secrets anonymously on a homemade postcard, with selected secrets finding their way on the PostSecret website. Submitted entries range from confessions of secret obsessions and embarrassing habits,

to admissions of sexual misconduct, even criminal offenses. The blog does not carry a comments section -- a testament to its being open, free and non-judgmental -- though a related forum is hosted at PostSecret-Community.com. Frank Warren claims that "the postcards are inspirational to those who read them, have healing powers for those who identify with a stranger's secret, and create an anonymous community of acceptance."



HEALTH SOUP

Soup: Lentil Soup |

Maker: Little Dubai |

Abstract: Little Dubai's

Lentil Soup is 100% vegetarian and highly nutritious, particularly as a good source of protein, dietary fiber, iron, and potassium. If you're looking for the perfect dinner starter, this healthy concoction is your perfect choice.



Shirt: Glean Hooded Shirt

Maker: Fat Face (FatFace.com)

Abstract: This soft feel shirt (in a subtle tweed check, with double chest pockets and drawstring hood) is simply great layered as a lightweight jacket when it's cooler than usual and/or wet outside (like it is now in in Gensan). 100% cotton, machine washable.

HIP HOOD





The Truth about Christmas

by Ray Burton

In modern day thinking we have made truth relative to our circumstances and desires. As Christmas approaches you may hear or get asked the question, "What does Christmas mean to you?" Would your answer be based on your circumstances and desires or the facts?

Your past experiences of the Christmas season will give you memories, feelings and hopes that will determine how you feel about this coming Christmas. They may be experiences of joy and peace, drunken parties and the like, or loneliness, fear and sadness. Christmas may be something you look forward to or dread the thought of. It could be a time when you have plenty of family around but wish you didn't, or a time when you spend money you can't

afford. It could be a time when you enjoy spending money on gifts for the family, or simply wish you had money or family.

All these dynamics come into play centered on our experiences, our expectations, and the ever-present commercial drive around us. The sad part about this is simply that in our efforts to enjoy or get

through the Christmas season, we are prone to neglect the truth about Christmas.

You may be tempted to think this is some religious junk. Nothing is further from the truth. Christmas is about "Emmanuel," which means "God with us." The essence of Christmas is not religion, parties, families, gifts or spending money, although all may be quite legitimately involved. The true essence is about God coming to mankind so that He could be with us, and have a relationship with us.

birth, you have to put it into the context of his death at Easter. He was born for the purpose of dying in our place on the cross for the cost of our wrongdoing. The point of his birth, life, and death was so we could have a relationship with him now and on into eternity after we pass from this life.

Some people ask, "What's the point of life?" The point of life is for the purpose of relationship with God. Have you got the point yet?

About the Author

Ray Burton attends Celebration Christian Fellowship in Havelock North, New Zealand, and enjoys writing, counselling and evangelism. He has recently started a website valleyministriesnz.org where more of his work can be found.

***"What does
Christmas
mean to
you?"
Would your
answer be
based on your
circumstances
and desires
or the facts?"***

We can do something religious like go to a church service, yet still miss the point. It's not about religion; it's about relationship. To understand the full meaning of Jesus's



Fly- Weight

December 4, 1998
Tonsuk College
Ground, Phuttham-
onthon, Thailand

Defeated **Chatchai Sasakul** (Knockout: 8th of 12 Rounds) to win the WBC Fly-weight World Title

Super Bantam- Weight

June 23, 2001
MGM Grand Garden
Arena, Las Vegas,
NV, USA

Defeated **Lehlo-
honolo Ledwaba** (Technical Knock-
out: 6th of 12
Rounds) to win the
IBF Super Bantam-
weight World Title

Feather- Weight

November 15, 2003
Alamodome, San
Antonio, TX, USA

Defeated **Marco An-
tonio Barrera** (Tech-
nical Knockout: 11th
of 12 Rounds) to win
The Ring Feather-
weight World Title

Super Feather- Weight

March 15, 2008
Mandalay Bay, Las
Vegas, NV, USA

Defeated **Juan
Manuel Márquez**
(Split Decision: 12th of
12 Rounds) to win the
WBC and The Ring
Super Featherweight
World Titles |

September 10, 2005
Staples Center, Los
Angeles, CA, USA

Defeated **Héctor
Velázquez** (Techni-
cal Knockout: 6th of
12 Rounds) to win the
Super Featherweight
International Title

8 WEIGHT DIVISION

WE STOPPED COUNTING at 7. Whatever it was Manny had to prove he already exceeded sevenfold. With this eighth world title in an eighth weight class, Pacman the phenomenal pugilist (and politician) only etched his legend in a far bigger stone.

We haven't really forgotten how it all began for Gensan's favorite son. **Emmanuel Dapid-ran Pacquiao** is a man who spent most of his childhood hungry and

without shoes on his feet. His father left home when Manny was just learning to walk. He didn't finish school. In his teens he took off for Manila not so much to fast-track his fledgling boxing career as to lessen the number of mouths his mother had to feed in their tin-shack of a home in General Santos.

Once in Manila Manny juggled working at construction sites, selling doughnuts, and training in a gym to hone his craft and

somehow eke out a living. He's not unfamiliar with back-alley fights for measly pocket money and grave homelessness. He's seen the bottommost depths of poverty. Through it all, he single-mindedly worked at hitting it big -- mostly to make things better for his mother and his family.

Nearly 20 years later, Manny has emerged as boxing's, and the entire sport world's poster boy for dogged determination and sports excellence. All this, first of all, out of being the good son that he was, is, and always will be. -ANPJ

Good Son, Great Fighter

Light- Weight

June 28, 2008
Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas, NV, USA

Defeated **David Díaz** (Technical Knockout: 9th of 12 Rounds) to win the WBC Lightweight World Title

Light Welter- Weight

May 2, 2009
MGM Grand Garden Arena, Las Vegas, NV, USA

Defeated **Ricky Hatton** (Knockout: 2nd of 12 Rounds) to win the IBO and The Ring Light Welter-weight World Titles

Welter- Weight

November 14, 2009
MGM Grand Garden Arena, Las Vegas, NV, USA

Defeated **Miguel Ángel Cotto** (Technical Knockout: 12th of 12 Rounds) to win the WBO Welter-weight World Title and WBC Diamond Belt

Super Welter- Weight

November 13, 2010
Cowboys Stadium, Arlington, TX, USA

Defeated **Antonio Margarito** (Unanimous Decision: 12th of 12 Rounds) to win the WBC Super Welterweight World Title

IS, 8 WORLD TITLES

This Christmas, Be Nice To Yourself

by Amy Twain

It's Christmas season once again, and it's time for a breather since the past 11 months you've been working hard. It's the season to be merry and for gift-giving. And speaking of gifts, you give your family, friends and loved ones gifts in the spirit of Christmas.

But have you ever realized that you might be giving some gifts to others that you forgot to give one yourself? This holiday season, give yourself something effortless -- the gift of being nice to yourself, what else?

Think of some of the nice things to do for yourself.

[1] You can choose to live a healthy lifestyle by watching what you eat, and that includes going easy on the junk food, or removing it completely off your system. Instead, just eat some healthful stuff like fruits and veggies (if you want your veggies tasty, bring some mayo dips to go with it).

Then, drink more water as much as you can. If you want to be nice to yourself, you know that your health always comes first.

[2] Cheer yourself up -- buy some flowers for yourself. Yes,

you read it right -- why wait for other people to get you flowers? Any bunch of flowers brighten up someone's day, so don't forget yourself. Instead of waiting for others to cheer you up, you can have the initiative of having a quick fix-me-up.

[3] In connection with this, enjoy a spa day. Yes, this is the ultimate *me-time*, where you get to pamper and relax yourself at the hands of the experts.

There, it's just you, yourself, and well, the masseuse to bring you some rejuvenating glory.

[4] Maintain a journal. Now, you have more time off work and more time partying and relaxing, you can record all your activities in your journal. There you can be yourself, uninhibited and revealing. You've all the liberty to edit, censor, or disclose all your personal thoughts and feelings.

In the end, you know your best Christmas gift is to be nice to yourself. Enjoy your happy holidays everyone!

About the Author

Amy Twain is a Self Improvement Coach who has been successfully coaching and guiding clients for many years. Amy recently published a new home study course on how to boost your Self Esteem. More info about her Quick-Action Plan for A More Confident You at <http://www.innerzine.com>

The Philippines, the only predominantly Catholic country in Asia, has its own, not necessarily European-influenced, beloved Christmas traditions.

As early as October Filipinos are starting to ask and crave for these Christmas specialties, such as *bibingka* and *puto bumbong*.

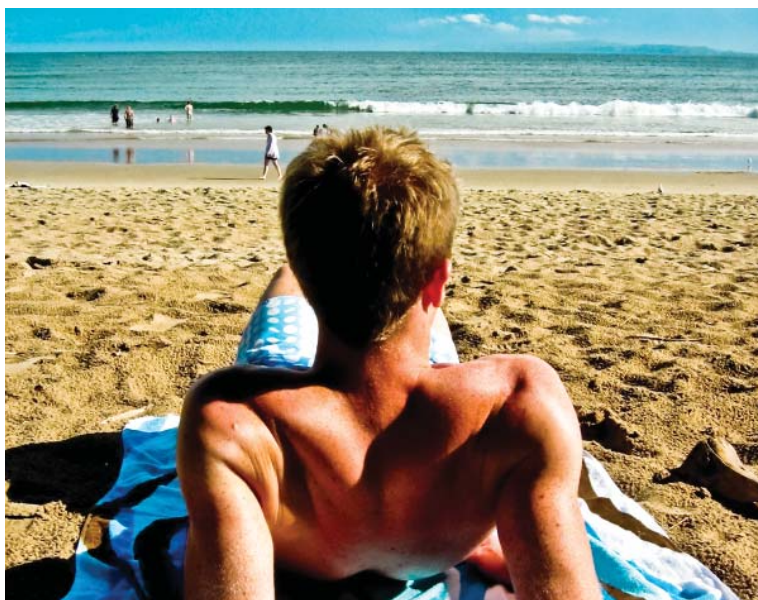
Beginning December 16, when the *Misa da Gallo* or *Simbang Gabi* (Masses at cock's crow) begin, the early church visitor awaits the sweet smell of freshly grated coconut flesh sprinkled over piping hot bibingka or freshly steamed puto bumbong. With it, usually free of charge, a hot cup of *salabat* (ginger tea) is being served, to strengthen and warm the body.

Different regions or provinces in the Philippines have different food specialties on Christmas, but they all have one thing in common: they are always rice-based cakes, baked or steamed, and prepared in the old traditional charcoal ovens built of clay.

The rice cakes have different shapes and sizes; round or long, large or small, thick or flat, steamed or baked.

Other than Christmas, Filipinos also celebrate Thanksgiving and the end of the fasting time, traditions from the time before the Spanish rulers reformed the country to Catholicism.

The batter for the rice cakes or bibingkas, is poured into a banana leaf lined flat clay dish over charcoal,



Christmas Cuisine in the Philippines

by Thomas Wenge

similar to an open face omelet. Just as soon the mixture begins to harden around the edges of the clay dish, half a salted duck egg is sliced into the soft middle of the bibingka. A second clay dish of the same size, filled with charcoal, is placed on top of the one with the baking cake, to provide the upper heat during the baking process. Just before the bibingka is fully cooked, slices of *carabao* (water buffalo) milk cheese are placed on the cake and slowly melted over the now golden brown crust of the bibingka, to give flavor and moisture to the finished product. The bibingka is removed from the clay dish with a spatula, and sprinkled with freshly grated coconut flesh.



Galapong is the rice flour for the production of the batter to make *kakanin* (rice cakes).



Galapong is made by soaking rice overnight in water, and then grinding the wet mixture to a coarse flour before straining it through a cheesecloth.

Making the violet colored puto bumbong requires a lot of preparations and know-how. The ground, naturally purple glutinous rice is mixed with polished, white glutinous rice powder, brown sugar, and vanilla for flavor.



A bamboo stick approximately 10 cm long is being wrapped with a cloth on one side, and the mixture is sprinkled into the other opening.

A kettle with boiling water over charcoal is used to produce the steam. On top of the kettle are one or two round openings, where the filled bamboo stick is fitted tightly.

Timing the steaming process is very important to achieve a good result and a moist and succulent puto bumbong. Once cooked, the sticky rice delicacy is thumped out of the bamboo stick by beating the hands into each other so the finished rice roll glides out of the bamboo stick.

Fresh margarine or butter and freshly grated coconut flesh are

sprinkled over the puto bumbong to finish the dish.

...No bibingka or puto bumbong eaten at any other time of the year tastes so festive, and brings out the spirit of Christmas so well.

There are no instant mixes or wheat flour substitutes, and no ovens being used for these rice specialties. Like in the old days, one needs to fan the charcoals and grind the rice for the *malagkit* (glutinous rice) in order to appreciate a vendors' work. After all, it is high business time at 5 in the morning, but somehow the scent of freshly baked bibingka or puto bumbong never fails to excite the early church visitor, and no bibingka or puto bumbong eaten at any other time of the year tastes so festive, and brings out the spirit of Christmas so well.

About The Author

Thomas Wenge is a professional Chef and has worked and traveled all over the world. As well as working full time as a senior Chef, Thomas regularly writes interesting articles such this one on Philippine food culture, and also contributes frequently to Chef's Pencil at www.chefspencil.com.

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eral Santos City
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Davao City (OPENING
SOON!)

As we start to move into the holiday season we will start hearing about how stressful the holidays are. This all comes from our distorted belief that *stress* is somehow *out there* in the world and not a result of our thinking processes. Stress is a word that supposedly reflects a physiological state whereby certain hormones are kicked into the system affecting certain organs. Nowadays stress is this nebulous force out there in the world. We are *under stress* and *coping with stress* and dealing with *stressful jobs* and *stressful holidays*.

Stress isn't out there. All that is out there are situations. They might be situations we like or don't like, but whether we have stress happening in us depends on how we think about those situations.

Now I know you've heard this before. There are a lot of writers and speakers who sort of talk this talk -- that we must be responsible for our lives, etc. But when push comes to shove they still talk the talk of victims. "How did that make you feel?" is a favorite question of parents and counselors. It sounds like you're really encouraging the person to talk about his or her feelings. The only problem is that it implies that an event totally controlled your reaction, and you are in essence a victim. Wrong.

"He drives me nuts." Same idea. Victim thinking.



**The Holidays
aren't Stressful.**

**Just Because
You're Screwed
up, don't Blame
Christmas!**

by Scott Sheperd Ph.D.

about choices. If you don't see the choices, you don't see the power.

If you are going crazy around the holidays, the odds are you are trying to meet some type of expectations either from others or from yourself. Don't get me wrong. If you start defying those expectations, you will get some flack. Count on it. However, if you don't make changes you will be a reflection of B.B. King's song, *The Thrill Is Gone*.

I have worked with people in all types of tragic circumstances including people having their children murdered. Some people stay angry and hateful and bitter, and they obviously can make a good case for that. Others, however, choose not to go in that direction. One person told me and a group I was talking to that it finally dawned on him, after waking up every day for ten years and hating the person who killed his daughter, that she deserved better than that from him. He said that she hadn't lived all those years just for him to hate someone.

Personal Power is

I guarantee you though, that if you keep blaming the holidays or seeing the holidays as stressful you will be stuck until you die. However, if you start to accept some responsibility for your inner life, you will begin to see that the way you think is triggering most of your stress response.

This is hard to change. People like to say, "Easier said than done." Well, duh! It is easier said than done. But difficult is not impossible. It's just difficult.

***Stress isn't
out there. All
that is out
there are
situations.
...Stress
...depends
on how we
think of those
situations.***

If you are tired of your holidays being a mess, make different choices. The first time you do this your holiday still might not be great, but you will start to feel a certain sense of power coming back. Take back your holidays. Take back your life.

About the Author

Scott Sheperd Ph.D. published 6 books including "Who's In Charge? Attacking the Stress Myth" and "Powerful People Create Powerful Organizations," a primer for leaders. He has spoken to more than 100,000 people from Alaska to Florida. Visit www.mystresscoach.com.

How to Have a Happy Christmas

by Janice Elizabeth Small

1. Forget Perfect.

Don't tie yourself in knots trying to have a Christmas like you see on the pages of a magazine. These are stage-managed by a team of people and shot in August. You have a real house and a real family living in it, not a stage set full of models who only have to look good for a photograph. Real families argue and burn the gravy -- so don't try and live up to a media image you have in your mind.

2. Live in the Moment.

Sometimes there's so much to do that you spend the whole time feeling anxious and planning ahead. Take time to enjoy the delights of the festive season otherwise there's no point. If you

don't make space to enjoy the company, the food, the decorations and the carols you lose the chance of sharing the magic that makes Christmas special.

3. Avoid overwhelm.

Make a list of all you have to do and cross off anything that does not make you smile (or which others would not miss). That should get rid of a lot from your list. If you have too much to do then ask for help. No one says you have to do it all. Do a little each day of whatever you have left on your list to avoid getting in a panic at the last minute.



4. Budget Wisely.

Everyone spends more than usual at Christmas

but make sure you stick to what you can afford. If you will have to spend the next 6 months paying for the extras, then you are better off without them. Do the best you can with the money you have.

5. Halve the Cost, Double the Fun.

Christmas has become very commercial in some respects but it doesn't have to be. You can cook great food without spending a fortune. You can have fun with your family too playing old-fashioned games such as charades or cards. You can bake or make decorations together to get in the spirit of the season and enjoy all the old family movies they put on at this time of year.

Presents can be a problem if you're low on cash. Suggest a *Secret Santa* present swap where everyone draws lots and buys for only one adult or agree a low spending limit for gifts so you buy each other something fun rather than a costly item.

6. Find the Meaning.

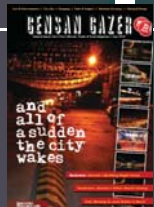
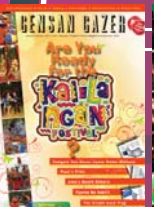
Christmas is about togetherness, having a good time, peace and goodwill to everyone, being loving and joyful. It's not about spending so much you go into debt, eating so much you put on 5 pounds, or decorating your house with more lights than everyone else. Decide what Christmas means to you, and don't lose sight of that when you're immersed in the pressure to buy and eat!

7. Show the Kids.

Today most kids over 6 think Christmas means getting stuff. They have lists of toys and games and designer gear they want -- and yet they are also open to enjoying other aspects of Christmas. Help them experience the true meaning by sharing special moments. Bake cookies with them. Decorate the tree together. Sing carols and collect money for charity. Let them parcel up their outgrown toys (or buy some items together) for the needy. >>>

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8. Give Yourself. Give in ways other than buying presents to experience the magic of Christmas. Offer to baby-sit so parents can go and buy gifts for their offspring. Take an old lady shopping at the supermarket in your car so she can stock up for her family coming instead of struggling on the bus. Be kind to those serving in shops -- it's a busy time for them and they often receive the brunt of others' stress and bad temper. You'll get back as much joy as you give.

9. Consider Yourself.

When buying gifts for everyone else, buy a few things for yourself. Wrap them up and share the fun on Christmas Day. Make sure that



you take your wishes into consideration about how you would like to spend Christmas, too. If you don't want to spend the whole time traveling between relatives, plan to stay at home next year. If you want to make something other than traditional food, make it! No one creates a rule that says Christmas has to be this way or that.

10. Communicate. If you decide to change things let everyone know ahead of time. You don't want any sulking on the day. You may not know how important a particular tradition feels to someone until you try and change it. Ask what everyone likes about Christmas and try, and accommodate as many wishes as possible without compromising your own happiness. You may find you can drop some old traditions without a qualm, and you may start to feel great about others once you know how much they are appreciated.

About The Author

Janice Elizabeth is a weight loss coach and author of *The Diet Exit Plan*. Get her free eZine *No More Diets* and 24-page special report *How to Have a Great Christmas without Piling on the Pounds* at www.SimplySlimming.com/Christmas/ today!

I Don't Want To Do Christmas!

by Marcia Breitenbach

Marianne sat on the edge of her seat, leaning towards me and, through her sobs and hiccoughs, stated very clearly, "I don't want to do Christmas! I can't, I just can't."

Marianne was one of my clients, a middle-aged woman whose husband had died the previous year. She had gone through the first holiday season, one year ago, in a state of numbness after the unexpected death of her husband in November.

As she looks back at that time, she realizes she had a kind of protective cushion around her, with all the paperwork taking up much of her time, as well as having a lot of family and friends around to distract her from the silence and stillness.

Now, one year later, there are no more protective buffers keeping her at bay from the intense feelings of grief and the loneliness. She, like many others, approaches the holidays with anxiety and dread.

What You Can Do

First of all, you have more than two choices here. If you are having a hard time facing the upcoming holidays, whichever ones you celebrate, there are some guidelines to lessen your anxiety and to make things easier on yourself.

You can choose to avoid the holidays altogether. This is difficult, as there may be family and friends who become burdensome with their need for more and more explanations regarding your decision. However, if you de-

cide you are going to choose this route, plan something for yourself that will at least have the potential for enjoyment. This could be holing up in your house for a week, with your favorite foods, some rented movies, and walks in the woods; it could be a trip to an exotic land where you will have the distractions of foreign language, foods and locale.

Be sure to alert your family and friends to your decision, requesting that they give you the space to be alone and do what you need to do. If, however, you are clinically depressed, and/or suicidal, this option is a bad idea. Seek professional help immediately. You deserve to feel better.

Option two is to do the holidays, but to do them differently. Facing the approaching holidays when you are grieving brings on a feeling of heaviness, and to some, even suffocation. Partly, this is due to our expectations about what the holiday should look like, based on past events. We remember all the things we usually do, the preparations that take lots of enthusiasm, thought, and energy, things you may feel short of at the moment.

What has worked for many people over the years is changing the holiday expectations by changing the rituals involved. Instead of getting a tree and trimming it in the usual way, someone may choose instead to buy a small table tree, and just do minimal decorations. This requires much less energy and still can bring the beauty of the holiday into the house.

Others decide to do away with trees and decorations

altogether. They may decide to have a family dinner and go out to a movie instead. Another person may decide to ask family or friends to bring a tree and decorate it for them.

One of the most difficult things for many women is thinking about planning and preparing big traditional meals. No problem, don't do it. Ask someone else to be in charge of this and your job is just to show up, that is, if you decide you want to. You can prepare a side dish if you really feel like you want to contribute.

If you decide to choose option two, you will need to consult with others in your household. If you have children, give them an opportunity to offer suggestions. They may have some better ideas than you!

Option three is to keep things the same, and to prepare the way you normally would. Many people who choose this option find that they wear themselves out and end up disappointed with the results. If you choose this option, be flexible, as you may find that you have less energy than you thought you did. Be prepared to accept alterations, when necessary.

What Did Marianne Do?

Marianne listened as I told her about others who changed their holidays to suit their inner needs. She realized that because she was changing inside with the grief, that it was appropriate to have a different holiday as well.

1) First of all, she decided to *play it by ear*. She realized that she didn't have to stick to her plan, but could make last minute changes if needed.

2) She gave herself permission to simplify. Even if you're not grieving, this is a good idea. In her case, she decided not to send out holiday cards, to ask her friends to cook the holiday meal, and she ordered just a few gifts online, thus avoiding the holiday shopping frenzy altogether.

3) She gave herself permission to say *no*. This was not easy for her, but she did it anyway, and avoided going to some holiday functions that she really didn't want to attend.

4) She created a new holiday ritual to honor the memory of her husband. She asked her family to donate money to her favorite charities instead of giving her gifts. She also asked for friends and family to take time to create a *memory card* that she then hung on her tree. The memory card was simply a handmade card that held a handwritten memory about her husband.

5) She decided to create some special times for herself during the holidays to commune with God. In her case, this was by setting up a few hikes with a friend, in the desert near her home. She knew that nature was healing, and felt that it was important to give herself some special healing time.

6) Marianne knew that the holidays would go better if she stayed in touch with herself and her feelings. She was wise enough to know that if she tried to push away the grief, it would only grow and push out in another direction. So, she decided that when sadness came up, she'd take a breath, acknowledge the feeling, and allow it to sweep through her. She realized the tears could come at any

time, and she was willing to let them flow. She'd had enough experience to know that when she did this, she felt better quicker than when she tried to control the flow.

7) She also knew that helping someone else would help her with her grief. She chose to donate some time at a women's shelter, and found that this not only took her outside of her own situation, but it also did someone else some real good. She knew this was another way to honor her husband's memory, by giving to someone else in need.

Remember, grief is a normal response to loss and change. It is a natural healing process that takes time. We are forever changed by the losses, especially deaths, in our lives. Our goal should not be to *get over grief*, but rather to allow ourselves to be moved and changed by the grief, learning how

to incorporate the loss in our hearts and lives as we re-define our lives.

It's okay to grieve during the holidays because it is an acknowledgement of the change in your life, and it will aid you in your healing journey. Be gentle with yourself, surrounding yourself with people who love you, and who will allow you to be just where you are in each moment. Find the courage to move forward, one step at a time, and to choose to be grateful for the good things in your life.

About the Author

Marcia Breitenbach is the author of *The Winds of Change: A Guided Journey with Healing Music through Grief, Loss & Transformation*. She is a speaker, musician and licensed professional counselor living in Arizona. Visit her at www.griefandlosshelpsongletter.com, and get your free downloadable inspiring music and proven strategies for living your best life.



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bars

GGPick Babes Bar - One of East Asia Royale Hotel's watering holes, with discotheque, live music Thu-Fri (2nd Flr, Arcade 1, East Asia Royale Hotel, National Highway, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5534123 ext. 106)

GGPick Cassado Billiard Bar - Pool tables, ice-cold beers (Grd Flr, Arcade 1, East Asia Royale Hotel, National Highway, Gen. Santos, +63-83-3028389)

Red Rocket Sports Bar - Warm meals and ice-cold beers (Grd Flr, Arcade 2, East Asia Royale Hotel, National Highway, Gen. Santos)

GGPick Pacman Sports Bar - Five pool tables/dart boards, The Pacman himself if you're lucky, lots of lounge space (JMP Bldg 2, Aparente, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5528880)

GGPick Q Bar - Great place to be seen in, for chilling and dancing, with superb music and yuppie crowd (SunCity Complex, Gen. Santos)

cafés

GGPick BluGré Cafe - Next best thing to Starbucks, designer coffees, hot/cold mixes, filling meals (Robinsons Place, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5542177) [wi-fi]



insons, same great drinks/eats (South Osmeña, Gen. Santos, +63-5521111) [wi-fi]



GGPick Cafe Amoree - Local gem, great drinks / eats, off city center but worth a visit (Mabuhay Rd, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5542173) [wi-fi]

Cafe Paulino - Unpretentious coffee place, central yet a quiet retreat from the crowd (Gaisano Mall, Gen. Santos)

Caffe Firenze - Gourmet coffees, desserts, sandwiches, pizza and more (SunCity Complex, National Highway, Gen. Santos) [wi-fi]

Coffee Club 101 - Coffee, pasta, desserts, free PC stations for patrons (Laurel East, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5535430) [wi-fi]

GGPick Coffee Club 101 - Great place to people-watch and be seen in, perfect chill after shopping (Robinsons Place, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5534878) [wi-fi]

Coffee Dream - Coffee and sweets for after shopping or

while waiting for company (2nd Flr/Basement 1, KCC Mall, Gen. Santos, +63-83-3018263) [wi-fi]

Fagioli Coffee Shop - Great after hours haunt, tends to get really crowded at night (Petrion Station, Lagao, Gen. Santos, +63-83-552749) [wi-fi]

GGPick Fagioli Coffee Shop - Private yet accessible, perfect chill after shopping (Grd Flr, KCC Mall, +63-83-5542384) [wi-fi]

Generals Brew - Fine gourmet coffees, sandwiches, combo meals (Pioneer, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5526559) [wi-fi]

The Porch | Joe Black - Fine gourmet coffees, sandwiches (SunCity Complex, National Highway, Gen. Santos) [wi-fi]

Red Ribbon Bakeshop - Cakes, pastries, sumptuous Filipino/Western meal combos (Lower Grd Flr, KCC Mall, Gen. Santos, +63-83-3018388)

hotels

CBHL Garden Rooms & Dormitel - Central location and tasteful guest rooms at budget rates (Laurel, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5546336) [wi-fi]

GGPick East Asia Royale Hotel - Stone's throw away from the financial district, shopping malls, convention/exhibition centers, with function rooms/

restaurants/bars (Grand Royale Ballroom, Babes Bar), business center, 24-hour room service (National Highway, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5534123) [wi-fi]

GGPick Family Country Hotel & Convention Centre - Guest rooms, meeting/banquet halls (up to 1,000 heads), pool, in-house Cafe Leticia amidst greenery (Mateo Rd, Lagao, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5528895) [wi-fi]

GGPick Ice Castle - Modern, centrally located, offers excellent accommodations, in-house bar and restaurant (Provido Village, City Heights, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5544423, +63-83-8269026) [wi-fi]

Phela Grande Hotel - Basic to luxury guest rooms, in-house Meilih Restaurant/Cafe Eduardo, offsite Phela Convention Center (Magsaysay cor. Atis, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5524220) [wi-fi]

GGPick SunCity Suites - Hotel at the heart of upscale and trendy SunCity Complex (National Highway, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5523333) [wi-fi]

Sydney Hotel - Centrally located, offers comfortable accommodations and excellent restaurants, professional banquet/conference facilities (Pendatun cor. Pioneer, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5525479) [wi-fi]

PLAYBILL

OGIE ALCASID, debonair singer and talented songwriter, made a mall appearance at Robinsons Place Gensan on November 27. The **Ogie Alcasid: Ngayon at Kailanman** album tour had him singing cuts from master composer **George Canseco's** love classics, such as **Hanggang Sa Dulo Ng Walang Hanggang**, **Kung Ako'y Iiwan Mo**, **Kastilyong Buhangin**, and title track **Ngayon At Kailanman**, among others.



THE ROCK ON MANILA CONCERT IN GENSAN on November 19 featured 5 of the country's top bands, making the event one of the biggest and most attended in Gensan's live concert history. **Parokya ni Edgar**, **Kamikazee**, **Gloc-9**, **Sandwich**, **Franco**, and **Centerpoint** wowed an estimated crowd of 10,000 at the Oval Plaza Stage, including **Mayor Darlene Antonino-Custodio**. **Manila Beer** sponsored the free concert, with the support of **K101-FM**.



MARTIN NIEVERA, veteran crooner and international artist, performed live on November 13 at the KCC Convention Center. The Concert King Martin Nievera is a name every Filipino all over the world knows. He appears on the weekly ABS-CBN's **ASAP XV** (Sunday concert show), and regularly holds sold-out concerts in major cities around the Philippines and the world. The free live concert was sponsored by KCC Mall of GenSan.



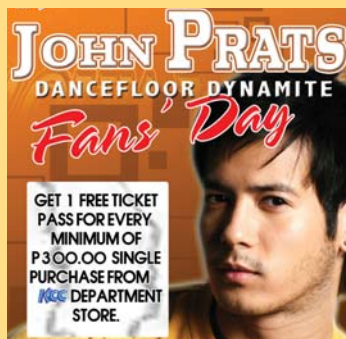
COCO MARTIN & RON MORALES, a pair of indie hunk turned television star and a handsome character actor, respectively, visited fans and topbilled a free show on October 31 at the KCC Convention Center. The free show was sponsored by KCC Mall of GenSan for its patrons.



JURIS LIVE IN GENSAN FULL CONCERT on October 30 had one of the country's most sought-after acoustic performers performing solo to an SRO crowd at the Anchor Driving Range in General Santos. Formerly the vocalist of the acoustic duo **MYMP**, Juris reprised her recent show with the **ASAP Sessionistas**, this time performing her acoustic covers all by herself. The live concert was brought to Gensan by Crocodillos and Macline Adverstising.



JOHNN PRATS, Dancefloor Dynamite, gag show **Banana Split** host and comedian, graced the KCC Convention Center on October 23 for his very own Fans' Day. The actor, who dances up a storm on **ASAP XV**, met with and greeted fans from Gensan and SoCCSKSarGen on his first ever visit to the Tuna Capital.



JERICO ROSALES, heart-throb model, actor and singer, performed live at Anchor Driving Range in General Santos to a sold-out crowd on October 22. Gensan's party crowd were treated to **A Night of Party**, replete with a live band and first-rate vocals from Jericho. The live concert featured one of his greatest hits, **Pusong Ligaw**.



SABRINA, MCA Music's Asian Acoustic Sensation wowed fans at the KCC Convention Center on October 16 at the free live concert sponsored by KCC Mall of GenSan. The UP Los Baños grad and the voice behind the hit acoustic versions of **Umbrella**, **Ir-replaceable**, **A Thousand Miles**, and more, already has three best-selling albums to her credit: the self-titled **Sabrina**, **I Love Acoustic**, and **I Love Acoustic 2**.



ROCKSTEDDY topbilled the 24th incarnation of East Asia Royal Hotel's much talked about Foam Parties, an early soaking for Oktoberfest on October 15 and 16. In cooperation with San Miguel Beer, **EARH's** 2-night bash featured **D-Base** (Davao) and **Gingerfeet** (GenSan), with **DJ Moko** and **DJ Yancy** providing dance fillers. Rocksteddy played the main gig on Night 2, with **After Six** (GenSan) fronting.



(These and more events are listed at www.GenSantos.com.)

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Tierra Montana Hotel - Air-conditioned guest suites/function rooms, pool, restaurant (National Highway, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5538553) [wi-fi]

resorts

Davak Ridge Resort - Sun, sky, and all-year-round beach fun (Gumasa, Glan, Sarangani, +63-83-5524492)

GGPick Gensan View Resort - Sun, sky, swimming pool (Nursery Rd, Lagao, Gen. Santos, +63-83-3028237)

GGPick Le Jardin Arnevel - Convention halls, swimming pool, 2,000-sq.m. garden, spacious parking area (Mabuhay Rd, Gen. Santos, +63-83-3012513) [wi-fi]

GGPick Lemlunay Resort - Clifftop seaside resort with excellent villas, restaurant and bar, pool, and worldclass dive site (Tinoto, Maasim, Sarangani, +63-920-914 9259 | South Point Divers: www.southpoint-divers.ph) [wi-fi]

GGPick Merl Garden Spring Resort - Zip-line ride, pool, horseback riding and more (Lahit, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, +63-919-4577221)

Olaer Spring Resort - Natural springs, lasting city icon (Apopong, Gen. Santos,

+63-83-3802345)

GGPick Rosal Beach Resort - Sun, sky, and all-year-round white sand beach fun (Gumasa, Glan, Sarangani, +63-920-9212203)

restaurants

Andrea Ticia Family Restaurant - Green, homey setting for a relaxing dining experience (Mateo Rd, Lagao, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5528896)

GGPick Big Ben Steaks & Grills - Steaks you can always rely on in a homey, central setting, you'd wanna hang out long after the plates are cleared. (Robinsons Place, Gen. Santos, +63-83-3030315)

GGPick Bigby's Cafe & Restaurant - Great coffees and sumptuous food platters. Try *Pescado Al Fresco* -- dory in onion sauce! (Robinsons Place, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5520111)

Cookie Factory - Home-style restaurant (J. Catolico Sr, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5522035)

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GGPick Grab-A-Crab - Exciting seafood, crab specialties (Laurel East, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5535430) [wi-fi]

GGPick Grab-A-Crab - Same Grab-A-Crab vibe, only smaller (Robinsons Place, Gen. Santos) [wi-fi]

Gusteau's Restaurant - Fine crab and seafood delicacies (SunCity Complex, National Highway, Gen. Santos) [wi-fi]



GGPick Little Dubai Kebab Grills - Taste of exotic Middle East at half

the price (SAFI Arcade, Bula Rd, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5520140, +63-922-8141010)

GGPick The Little Kitchen - Serves European (pizza, pasta, chicken *cordon bleu*), Oriental (*kalbi chim*, *ebi tempura*, *chao fan*), and Filipino (sizzling *bangus sisig*, *buco pandan* with lychee) in Mediterranean-inspired and Filipino-warmed ambience. (Cor. Quirino and Zapote, Gen. Santos) [wi-fi]

GGPick Mandarin Tea Garden Restaurant - Amazing dimsum, Chinese/Filipino delicacies (South Osmeña, Gen. Santos, +63-83-3013333) [wi-fi]

Ocean Cave Restaurant - Fine seafood and Filipino specialties (SunCity Complex, National Highway, Gen. Santos) [wi-fi]

GGPick Pablo's Steaks and Crabs - Pablo's of Paseo Del Sol has perfected the art of preparing steaks (certified US Angus) (National Highway, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5539298)

GGPick Paseo Del Sol - Hacienda-style haven, catering to theme/special events, serving Pablo's/Ranchero fare, as well as exclusive dishes for private functions/catering service (National Highway, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5539298)

GGPick Ranchero Grill - Paseo Del Sol's old-timer Ranchero takes native/Filipino/ranch-style food to the next level (National Highway, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5539298)

Razon's Restaurant - *Halo-halo* and *pancit palabok* preparations renowned nationwide (SunCity Complex, National Highway, Gen. Santos) [wi-fi]

Razon's Restaurant - Same *halo-halo* and *pancit palabok* specialties, more accessible locale (KCC Mall, Gen. Santos)



GGPick Red Trellis Seafood Garden - Asian fusion-inspired, gives Singapore-style chili/black

pepper crab places a run for their money (Across NDDU-IBED, Tiongson, Lagao, Gen.

Santos, +63-83-3022722)

Rooftop Grill Ihaw-Ihaw - Seafood/grill, great view of Plaza Heneral Santos (6th Flr, Sydney Hotel, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5525479 ext. 103) [wi-fi]

GGPick Royale Lounge - Relaxing café with minimalist décor, acoustic music Wed-Sat (East Asia Royale Hotel, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5534123) [wi-fi]

GGPick Sarangani Highlands Garden & Restaurant - Hilltop joint with views of Sarangani Bay, downtown Gensan, Mt Parker/Mt Matutum. Nature, fresh air, good food, great for private parties or company events (Tambler, Gen. Santos, +63-83-3040752)
Wanchin Dimsum Restaurant - Good food, pool table, piano, great view of Plaza Heneral Santos (2nd Flr, Sydney Hotel, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5525479) [wi-fi]

resto-bars

Crocodillo's Resto Bar - Occasional expat haunt, laid-back crowd, cheap beers (Laurel East, Gen. Santos)

Drill Shack - Aussie staples as salads, steaks, burgers and properly condom-wrapped beers (Grd Flr, Arcade 1, East Asia Royale Hotel, National Highway, Gen. Santos)

GGPick Grab-A-Crab - Same Grab-A-Crab vibe, more intimate dining/wining (Robinsons Place, Gen. Santos) [wi-fi]

GGPick Jmix Resto Bar - Great food, great music (JMP Bldg 2, City Heights, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5542368)

GGPick Piyesa! KTV and Resto Bar - Value-for-money combo meals, inventive dishes, novelty drinks and cocktails, tower drinks, intimate KTV rooms, friendly staff, *al fresco* heaven (Robinsons Place, Gen. Santos, +63-83-5542139)

Please call +63-83-8269221 to be included in this listing.



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Romarie Ivy's Curls & Cheers

Whenever you think about lifting your looks and spirits, nothing compares to getting a new haircut and hair color. We girls always want a great makeover by changing our hairstyle and hair length. In my case, since I have curls, I can't do all the styles with my big hair. But my big hair is unique; it makes me stand out in the crowd.

Speaking of hair, I was invited to join the grand regional event on beauty, wellness and trends, **Cosmetologie in SOCKSARGEN:**

Celebrating Beauty Inside and Out, at Robinsons Place Gensan in October. *Cosmetologie* is the first regional gathering of the **Philippine International Cosmetologists Association (PICA)**; Gensan is the first city to host the said event. It was founded in 2008 and currently led by **Fanny Serrano (FS)**.

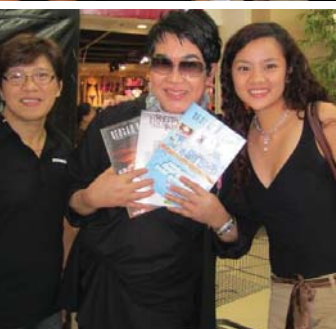
FS, an icon in the fashion and beauty industry, is a constant inspiration to hairdressers and stylists all over the country. *Cosmetologie* was sponsored by **Wella, Clairol, Natasha, and Beauty Lane**. The event was led by one of the recognized beauty salons in Gensan, **Sophisticut by Savannah**. Thanks to **Elvira Ng Tan, Jun Camposivo** and **Michael Sanchez** for assisting me at the event.

They prepared many activities, such as correct hair coloring, proper hair cutting, and the different techniques in doing hair styles and makeup. Congratulations to the organizers, as well as the participants -- the event was indeed a success!

Here are some common TLC habits to adopt for curly hair:

- Avoid hot water on your hair. Use only lukewarm or cool.
- Wait as long as possible between shampoo sessions to give hair time to build up natural oils. Spot clean with dry shampoo products to remove oil from fringes or top of hair.
- Allow hair to air-dry, when possible.
- Apply a good leave-on conditioning product, and *plop* hair to allow a beautiful curl pattern.
- Use oil treatments that are not heated or cream conditioners for restoring moisture.

I hope the tips I shared will work for you, girls, and watch out for my new hairdo next year! I hope you'll have a fabulous hair this holiday season, everyone! Merry Curly Christmas and Happy Curly New Year!



Masthead photo by Brian Congson

Donna Mae's Civet Coffee

Once in a while we have to unwind, leave the hustle and bustle of city life, and enjoy the fresh air and green scenery of Mother Nature. The perfect timing came when our one-year-in-the-making trek to Barangay Kinilis in Polomolok, South Cotabato finally pushed through, incidentally to see a civet coffee plantation as well.

My blogger friend **Sheng Dumalay** coordinated the visit with **Fred Fredeluces**, the man responsible for **Kape Balos** and the coffee industry there. Fred worked with Mahintana Foundation before he educated the B'laan community of the importance of preserving the forest and the civet. He further widened their outlook in life by buying their coffee beans and selling it on their behalf. He taught them about civet

coffee, which is more expensive than regular arabica. This way the civet cat (locally known as *musang*) is protected by the community instead of being hunted for food. They call their coffee **Kape Balos**, *balos* being the B'laan term for the civet cat.

Kape Balos is expensive because of its very distinctive taste and the way it is processed. Civet cats, which are nocturnal, love to eat coffee beans whole; having an excellent palate, they are known to eat only the sweetest coffee bean. After leaving their poop in the forest, farmers hand-pick the excreted beans, and carefully check them for quality. They're then washed and sun-dried. The process is not over yet: the beans are roasted to perfection, ground, packed, and then sent off to cafes, which serve it for as high as PHP 300 per cup.

The experience was eye-opening; it made my heart smile with gladness. As attested to by this community together with Fred, we can do it: preserve the forest, protect the civet cat, and earn a living at the same time. This coffee is 100% organic. It's cross-planted in the forest together with the giant hardwood trees.

My golden knowledge for the day: civet coffee is decaffeinated because the coffee beans go through a process inside the stomach of the civet cat; the acids inside the cat's stomach rip away the caffeine. Freshly roasted **Kape Balos** has a milky taste, without the rough and sour flavor common to most instant coffee. Not only

is it very healthy, but it's also a great way to perk you up and start your day. (This article also appears in my blog at kikay-much.me.)



We want our Gensan Gazer... at the magazine stands!

We welcome the proliferation of local magazines in Gensan, but to say what a magazine should or should not be would be like asking a breakdancer to use up a whole acre of dancing space. Or requiring all bloggers to pass a grammar test and master *The Elements of Style* by Strunk & White even before doing their *Hello World* page. (As for plagiarists, well, they can look up *shame* in the dictionary.)

But I digress. Avid and

faithful readers of Gensan Gazer resent that getting their hands on a copy is like winning the lotto (almost), and only wish that they could just head to the magazine stands or any shop counter, and buy a copy or two as they please.

Which again brings us to a nearly one-year-old question: to sell or not to sell.

We're now seriously working toward that end -- see if we can keep the branding and the concept in the paid



Fanny Serrano during the *Cosmetologie* show in Gensan last October

Photo by Romarie Ivy Cunanan

magazine, or expand it, maybe even take on a different name and format altogether.

A good/bad thing about Gensan Gazer (in print and on-line) is it's run by one person (others see that as plain liability) -- publisher, editor, writer, artistic director, graphics designer, layout artist, photographer, the works!

Perhaps another good thing would be to get a full-time sales and marketing person, so logistics would not get in the way of *creating*. -ANPJ

>>> *Continued from page 10*
supplies needed by students from Lagao Elementary School and Notre Dame High School.

The next holiday seasons were made merrier by **Sincere Grocery**, which sold treats not coming from the home kitchen: Marca Piña balled cheese, Chinese hams, apples, nuts, grapes, and the now extinct Serg's chocolate. **Deling's Dress Shop** became a must for dresses to wear on Yule and New Year soirées, **Plateros Store** and **La Nueva General Merchandising Store** for toys and gifts.

Fong's, which sold Chinese confectionary, became a novelty as it was the first establishment with a chiller. **Alice Grocery** gave Sincere a run for its money as it joined the competition as grocer. Since RTW offered limited styles and sizes, **Rey's Store** and **Novelty** (now **Sarangani Commercial**) provided fabrics for a growing industry of dressmakers and haberdashers. **Deling's**, **Mia Fit**, **Debonnaire**, and **Avelman's** are the expert hands in the then municipality of Gensan that locals go to for well-made suits and dresses.

When **George Royeca** was municipal mayor, the public market was moved from Silway to its present site. The once vacant area of cogon and dust became a commercial hub, stretching the shopping district and energizing the economy of a soon-to-be city. From the old market, **Pauline's Store** (which sold everything, including reading materials), **Ibag's Flower Shop** (funeral bouquets), **Dadiangas Majestic** (electric gadgets, radios and phonographs), and **Kimball**, which later modernized Gensan shopping, lined the shop-

ping lanes of Morrow Boulevard (now Acharon) and Pioneer Avenue. Save for seasonal items, you could buy almost anything in Gensan in those times, even guns. Before private gun ownership was banned during Martial Law in 1972, one could buy guns and ammo from either the **Leyson** or **De Leon Gunstore**.

When Gensan became a city in 1968, as old commercial institutions, banks and schools grew, new players also set up shop, making the city an investment opportunity. They also became a haven for shoppers. **Grocerman**, **Golden Silangan**, **Joan's Bakeshop**, **Rollee's**, **Universal Grocery**, **Ker Shoe Emporium**, **Shoe Earth** and **Dadiangas Bookstore** enriched the inventory of Gensan shopping destinations. As Pioneer Avenue became congested with banks, shops and hotels, commerce overflowed to the minor streets. Cagampang and Salazar Streets became shopping highways; **ABCD** and **Do Re Mi** stores, **Everlast**, and **Magpantay Store** dotted these side streets.

The burning of the public market in the late 70s did not slow things down. This became the era of the boutique and giftshop craze. **Dadiangas Gift Shop**, **Sonia's Gift Shop**, **The House of Ramie**, **Mama's Gift Shop** and the hole-in-the-wall store of the **Javiers** became the habitué of Gensan shopaholics especially during the gift-giving season of December.

Gensan's shopping experience became cosmopolitan as department stores came with new tricks to lure shoppers. **Rengel Mart** is the first to mix the supermarket and dry goods section. The one-roof shopping concept was introduced. **Datu Complex**

came a few moons later with a more elaborate plot: an escalator, department store and fastfood hall to boot. Then came **Kimball Plaza's tour de force**: complete shopping experience combining branding, visual merchandising, packaging and interior design. Kimball would have inspired the local brands to join the competition and earn a slice in the big pie of retailing but it burned down somehow. KCC came as a wholesale club that reincarnated as a mall, signaling to the Philippine retailing industry that the Gensan market is now in full bloom.

It will never be the same from here on. The mall era invaded and rocked the small players. Some have weathered the storm, albeit struggling to move on, while others closed shop. With Kimball around, it would have been interesting to see a local brand elbowing Philippine retail industry giants, but with its demise, the now bit players are slowly dying. Surviving now would be like the proverbial getting in between *nag-uumpugang bato* -- **Gaisano**, **Robinsons**, and next Christmas season, **SM**. It's inspiring to hear stories of local enterprises making it big, like local artists making it in the national scene. Will the stores that shaped our culture, the shops that defined our becoming a people, go the way of the defunct Kuruda's?

Maybe not, if this season we make their cash registers ring once again.

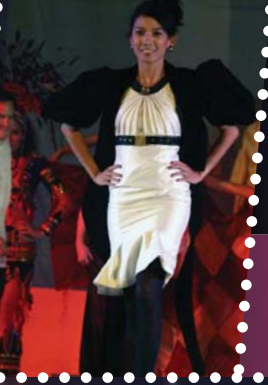
This article is a reconstruction of the memories of Gensan shopaholics Sufragia Salazar (original Kuruda's shopper), Paz Salazar (now sharpening her Christmas shopping skills) and Noromita Ging Go-Gonzales, who lived as a child in Old Silway.

Postcards from Sarangani

Sarangani's Munato Festival closed with Postcards from Sarangani on November 27, a cultural spectacle showcasing the story of Sarangani and its people, culture, and heritage. The show seamlessly interwove a presentation of its traditional and contemporary arts with a fashion show of Sarangani's adopted and one of Mindanao's most prolific fashion designers, Emi Alexander Englis. It featured the region's foremost performing artists and models in a sinuous display of craft

and proficiency. One highlight was the participation of the provincial government's officials led by Gov. Miguel Dominguez in the Contemporary Sarangani segment. The show, co-presented by the Sarangani Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was written and directed by Egai Cadiente and Bing Cariño.

From top: 1--Era of Migration, blending of Sarangani's tri-people culture: Sarangani, lady in white, is being dressed in the fineries of the province's material culture, the hammock a metaphor of migration's movement. 2--Tribal Sarangani, featuring the 2010 Pearl of Sarangani festival outfit competition collection, as worn by candidates representing Sarangani's 7 municipalities. 3/5--Contemporary Sarangani, featuring the business and government sectors, with **Michelle Solon**, (Provincial Tourism Board), **Cherry Espinosa** (Chamber of Commerce and Industry), and **Gov. Dominguez**. 4--Prehistoric Sarangani, featuring *Emi Englis Square Collection* (Mega Magazine Young Designer's Competition entry). The experimental qualities of the collection highlights the status of the province's cultural heritage as one of the nation's most important. 6--Postcards from Sarangani finale





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