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Opinion

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US Olympic Team

Are they ready to face other high-flying teams in the Olympics?



COUNTERPOINT

The Official Student Publication of De La Salle Santiago Zobel School
Member of the Alliance of Lasallian Campus Journalists and Advisers

EDUCATION IN PROGRESS. Students make use of the state-of-the-art classroom as part of the mPEARL Learning Program.

From pad paper to iPad

by Isabel Ilagan



De La Salle Zobel School is bent on innovating its facilities to enhance students' learning abilities. The traditional classroom setting with the individual right-arm chairs, teacher's corner, and desktop, has been reconfigured for the first year students. With new cutting-edge technology, DLSZ has used the Freshman F classroom as the new prototype setting for the rest of the school year. The entire classroom has been modified with better materials and equipment. *See Pad Paper, page 6*

Math Wizards rise to the challenge

by Veronica Suarez

The Goals for Excellence in Mathematics (GEM) Program showed abundant fruits from its labor when many of its students accomplished several noteworthy achievements last school year. The program provided more exposure to its students through training and participation in various Math contests.

See Math Wizards, page 3

Plastic goes invisible

by Nicole Tan and Veronica Suarez

In celebration of the International Plastic Bag-free Day, the DLSZ community has committed to reduce the plastic waste generated through the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment to Reduce Plastic Trash in the Campus last July 3, 2012. This document was formulated due to the observation that an acceptable level of

plastic utilized has not been attained by the DLSZ community.

Aware of the detrimental effects of irresponsible use and disposal of plastic bags to the environment, the school recognizes the need to emphasize the importance of practicing ways to reduce plastic trash in the campus.

See Plastic, page 3

DLSZ takes recycling to a whole new level

by Veronica Suarez

Why recycle when you can upcycle? In support of Project Carbon Neutral, which aims to lessen the effects of carbon dioxide-producing

activities, the Social Action Office (SAO) advocates the leveling up of the use of discarded materials through upcycling. The project aims to help

partner communities by providing training on how to make eco-friendly items using waste materials. Upcycling makes use of wastes and

turns them into something of equal or greater value and usefulness.

See Recycling, page 2

The DLSZ PEARL program was introduced this school year for the incoming freshmen and 4th grade students. From the time of the program's implementation until now, it has greatly affected the schools' primary stakeholders.

According to Sir Jeff Aromin, Head of Information System Technology Services (ISTS), "DLSZ implemented the PEARL program to allow students to bring and use iPads in school for educational purposes." The iPads will be replacing the textbooks as students will be using e-books instead; however, notebooks will still be brought to school.

Mr. Aromin further stressed that the PEARL program will be introduced to each of the batches beginning with the freshmen level this school year. However, this program will not be given to any of the upper batches above this year's current freshmen level. In jest he said, "I'm sorry guys, but you won't experience the PEARL program. You missed it by just a year."

The students seemed to be enjoying the program to the hilt due to the privileges of being able to bring and use the iPad in school.

Other than the advantage of minimized weight lifting, additional benefits include a broader expanse for students to gain knowledge and learn better in class.

When asked about her general opinion of the PEARL program, Claudia Liwanag of FH had this to say, "I think the PEARL program is very useful because there are more sources such as "Safari" and other applications that can help us in searching for topics and lessons."

Meanwhile, Mr. Red Padilla, a parent, shared his insight, "Monetarily, I feel that the PEARL program is more efficient because it costs less than the textbooks."

On the other hand, some teachers said that the iPads would allow students to be more interested and involved in what they are learning in school. Some also feel that since the iPad is new to most of the students, they will have more space to explore thus, increasing their capability to learn better.

According to Br. Lazaro Rodriguez FSC, Brother Animator, "When it comes to the benefits, I feel that the advantages of allowing the children to use iPads outweigh the distraction caused by playing games." He also added, "The teachers are there to guide the students anyway to stray from distractions, and since this is the new generation, the students also help the teachers allowing all to benefit."

However, as aptly put by Sir Jorge Baclor, Social Studies teacher, there are also disadvantages to it. While some people focus solely on the benefits, others notice the negative aspects of it. "It may be interactive but it is actually a cause of distraction in class. Many students have been found to be using unauthorized apps or playing games during class hours," Sir Jorge emphasized.

He further explained that it's not easy to teach using the iPads because teachers must first look for the right applications and doing so takes time. Another reason is that lessons must be redesigned/revised based on the available apps or whatever technology is at hand. Then, it can also be a cause of a lot of problems in terms of classroom management. There are instances when a

teacher would just be one or two apps ahead of her/his students.

It is evident that the PEARL program has posed a bigger challenge to the teachers. Furthermore, it becomes more difficult to control the class during discussions as it is impossible for the teacher to oversee the activities and applications opened by each one of the students.

Freshman student, Riah Padilla, stated, "I think that the PEARL program is a great idea. It's very efficient and useful, although for some students, it proves as a distraction, especially during class. It's a 50-50 situation I guess. It depends on the person using it."

As claimed by Mr. Red Padilla and Mr. Chris Fajardo, both parents, it's too early to tell whether the iPad is indeed advantageous or not. They have to base their conclusion on the outcome of their children's grades and scores for they do not really see them studying for upcoming exams.

Bro Lee: the new face of the Book Mobile Project

by Margarita Coronel and Raissa Lacsamana

"The end is just the beginning," stated Ms. Agnes Panaligan, the High School Vice-Principal, during the closing of the centennial celebration last June 15, 2012. As the celebration of 100 years of Lasallian Presence in the Philippines came to a close, a new beginning was personified in the introduction of Bro Lee.

Bro Lee is the official mascot of the Book Mobile Project of the Learning Resource Center (LRC) and the Social Action Office (SAO). The outreach program that started in 2009 aims to lend out 300 books per month to 25 partner

See Bro Lee, page 3

Br. Martin visits DLSZ

by Maita Coronel and Andrea Isaac

After leaving De La Salle Zobel School in 2002, Br Martin Sellner FSC once again set foot in our school on June 18, 2012. His visit coincided with the closing of the Centennial Year which recognized all foreign Lasallian brothers who made a mark in DLSZ.

The Philippines has been Br. Martin's second home for sixteen years. He spent eight years in Zobel in his capacity as a Chemistry teacher for the junior level. He also taught

Chemistry in De La Salle University - College of Science. Having contributed to the development of the schools' laboratories, he made such an excellent mark in the Lasallian community.

According to Ms. Evangeline De Peralta, Director of the Lasallian Mission and Formation Department (LMFD) and Br. Martin's former co-teacher, he felt "very, very at home" in Zobel. She also said that Br. Martin was well-loved by his students

and although he looked stern, they enjoyed learning Chemistry from him. Beyond the classroom, students would visit him in his office and bond with him.

He was part of the DLSZ community from 1994 to 2002. He returned to his hometown in the United States due to health concerns. Br. Martin currently lives in the US and is now a retired brother.

P-1 LS mentors exposed in the Lasallian Mission

To deepen the understanding of the Lasallian mission, new Lasallian mentors participated in the activity for Adult Volunteers Orientation and Formation held in Brgy. Sta. Mercedes, Maragondon, Cavite last July 13-14, 2012.

The event centered on the Probationary-1 (P-1) LS Mentors experiencing the Lasallian mission in helping the marginalized sector through the exposure. Invited as facilitators were Br. Lazaro Rodriguez FSC, the school's very own Lasallian Animator, Ms. Evangeline "Vangie" de Peralta, the Lasallian Formation and Mission Department Director, together with Mr. Jayjay Jacinto and Mr. Ben Sazon of the Social Action Office.

The facilitators gave an introductory session on the first day. Brolaz discussed servant leadership in order to help the participants deepen their understanding of the mission. Ms. Vangie de Peralta also

had a discussion about the Fundamentals of Volunteerism.

The P-1 LS Mentors went to different foster families on the last day of the formation activity. They were given time to interact and engage in different activities with their own family. A team building activity was also arranged in order to help the high school students interact with one another. Sir Allan Alveyra Jr., Counterpoint Moderator, gave a seminar workshop on *Campus Journalism*. to the faculty and school paper members of Bucal National High School (Annex). A story telling activity was also conducted by Mr. Darrel Marco.

by Nicole Tan

Recycling... from page 1

An example would be using rice sacks or juice packs to make handbags. In recycling, wastes are taken to plants to be broken down first before making a new product.

Last April 30 - May 1, 26 mothers from Villa Paraiso, Parañaque City were given proper training on how to make bags out of newspapers and phone directories. The purpose of acquiring these skills is not only to reuse paper wastes but also to better these people's lives. If they choose to continue producing more, then they may use this skill as an extra source of income. Presently, the SAO plans to hold a bazaar of upcycled products in December. By buying these as gifts, we contribute in preserving the environment and at the same time help communities.

DLSZ delegates attend first UP summer camp *by Nicole Tan*

The University of the Philippines Journalism Club launched its first Campus Journalism Workshop Summer Camp (CJWSC 2012) at the University of the Philippines Diliman. The event lasted for five days (March 29 - April 3, 2012).

The theme of the workshop was "Project Information: Troubleshooting Issues of Campus Journalism." The objectives of the event were to develop and nurture the skills

of students in writing, as well as to generate ideas through the various lectures and workshops prepared by the coordinators. The workshop also aimed to encourage young journalists to inform our nation about relevant issues.

The CJWSC 2012 offered several seminars and workshops related to the different topics of journalism such as the language of journalism, citizen journalism, environment

reporting, lifestyle journalism, and investigative journalism.

Some of the prominent speakers invited to conduct seminars and workshops were Adelle Chua, Professor Danilo Arao, Bernadette Reyes, and Dr. Jose Capili, who are experts in their chosen fields in media and journalism.

The workshop participants also took part in a candle lighting ceremony commemorating the occurrence

of media killings in the Philippines. The victims inspired young campus journalists to help shape public opinion by valuing the importance of providing others with relevant information.

The De La Salle Zobel delegation came from the High School students' publication, *Counterpoint*, and was accompanied by their moderator, Sir Allan Alveyra Jr.

Bro Lee...

from page 2

public schools in Muntinlupa City and Calatagan, Batangas. Certain percentage of the proceeds earned from the book showers and book fairs in the

school also goes to the funding of the project. Along with this, librarians and volunteers hold storytelling and puppet sessions for the students.

The name "Bro Lee" was conceptualized by Br. Dennis Magbanua FSC, who played around with the word "libro."

Math Wizards... *from page 1*

The freshmen level consisting of Nikki Cacanando, Carlos Echevarria, and Miguel Villar advanced to the NCR Finals. This was a huge step compared to the previous years when none of the participants passed even the Elimination Round.

Among the 13 GEM students who participated in the Mathematics Trainers' Guild (MTG) in Iloilo City were Carlos Echevarria, Miguel Villar, and Neil Vasay who advanced to the next phase where they had to undergo three days of mind-boggling training. The team composed of Miguel Villar, Joxx Perez, Neil Vasay, and Miguel Gutierrez also represented the school in the Sharp-MTG Mathematics Trail and Problem Solving Competition where they placed 3rd out of 18 participating schools and then advancing to the NCR Finals.

Other contests participated in by the GEM

students were the 6th Philippine Sudoku Super Challenge, Australian Math Olympiad, Ateneo Sipnayan, and the Philippine Math Olympiad. The school gives credit to Mr. Albert Pagilagan, Mr. Mark Mendoza, Mr. Gerald Ferrer, and Mr. Xyburst Rodelas for their tireless efforts in enhancing the students' knowledge, skills, and strategies in problem solving.

Currently, Carlos Echevarria is competing in the Asia International Math Olympiad Open (AIMO) from July 28 to August 1 in Hong Kong while Miguel Villar will be competing in the International Mathematics Competition (IMC) on August 3-6 in Singapore.

The program has truly provided a gateway to excellence for mathematically-gifted students. The school hopes to bag even more far-reaching achievements in the years to come.

The first Philippine Model Congress: A fresh take on student leadership

by Paul Sto. Domingo

The Philippine Senate opened its doors for the first Philippine Model Congress (PMC), the nation's first government simulation program, where participants listened to guest speakers engaged in debates, committee meetings, caucuses, and plenary sessions to experience the proceedings of the lawmaking process last July 28, 2012.

Organized by Filipino college students from different universities (both local and international) and accredited and sponsored by the Department of Education (DepEd) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED), this event was formed in the hope of giving the student population an understanding of the political process and a voice on current matters.

Over 350 high school and college students, including DLSZ's senior students Paolo Borjal, Simon Cuna, Miguel De Guzman, Francel Go, Francine Malantic, Paul Minor, and Paul Sto. Domingo attended the event, out of over 1000 applicants who were reviewed by the organizers.

Throughout the day, three guest speakers in the persons of Honorable Rexlon Gatchalian, former Senator Richard Gordon, and Ms. Maria Ressa gave speeches on the lives and duties of congressmen, the responsibilities of the youth as future leaders of the country, and the power of social networking as used in good governance.

Since none of the six chosen bills that were presented and debated on were passed to the plenary, during the plenary session, delegates passed on causes that they wanted the PMC to take a stand on the improvement of the education system, investment into renewable energy, the non-dissolution of the *Sangguniang Kabataan*, the upholding of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights, and the passing of the Reproductive Health Bill.

Plastic... *from page 1*

It aims to make members of the school community realize their moral obligation to commit and get involved in environmental programs so as to show their willingness and sincerity in caring for the environment.

With this document, DLSZ students will be properly guided in their efforts to follow up the school's programs and policies in line with the advocacy of protecting and conserving the environment, such as the Stryo-Free Campus Policy and the Project Carbon Neutral. By pushing further this campaign, the school

also shows its support and contribution to the Muntinlupa City's environmental protection programs such as the City's Plastic Bag and Styrofoam Ban. If members of the school community will make it a habit to transform the laws and policies into concrete actions, then the benefits of doing so will be more evident.

The document was signed by the school administrators, Br. Dennis Magbanua FSC, Ms. Agnes Panaligan, Ms. Evangeline de Peralta, and Ms. Ruby Ramos. The document has yet to be presented to the Muntinlupa City Council.

WE WANT YOU.

We want to know your thoughts about current issues. Come out and be heard!

COUNTERPOINT welcomes your insights and contributions. Send them to counterpoint1213@gmail.com.

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4 Pad paper... from page 1

The two chosen batches have four years to use the MLDs giving the school an opportunity to research on the success of the program for a longer period.

In this mobile learning environment, physical books take the form of e-books. This setup allows students to use smaller and lighter school bags. In addition to this, less paper is used because there is no need to print thousands of books, reply slips, and school announcements, consequently helping protect the environment.

According to Brother Dennis, "It is a mobile learning environment that we want to develop in our school where students can use online resources and educational applications more."

Today, students in DLSZ are enjoying this new change in their educational experience. One objective of the program is to provide teacher training to enhance the use of technology in the classroom as well as to blend it with the Understanding by Backward Design (UbD) approach to the curriculum. Apple Regional (Asia) executives recently visited the school to offer their full support for the success of the PEARL scheme through teacher training, creation of applications, and research. As soon as the pilot testing shows significant success, it won't take long before all levels will take part in the said program.

DLSZ continues innovation in education by



THE NEWLY RENOVATED FF CLASSROOM: FIT FOR IPAD NATIVES

using modern technology in and out of the classroom. "Our school is showing where the future of education is headed... and we can say that the students of DLSZ are ready for the future because of this Program... We do not want to wait for the future to happen; we are trying to create it now," Br. Dennis added.

Campus journalists get inspired by Isabel Ilagan

Various Lasallian schools participated in this year's annual Lasallian Schools Press Conference (LSPCon) held at De La Salle-College of St. Benilde last May 3 - 6, 2012.

This year's theme, "Creating the Future through Innovative Journalism," is especially relevant, as print media is slowly losing its readership. Throughout the years, people have become more



MEDIA ADVOCACY. The team of student journalists who joined LSCPCON 2012

dependent on the internet and gadgetry for news, while only people with limited access to such things are reading the newspaper. The topics discussed in the conference were: "Creating the Lasallian Brand of Campus Journalism," "Changing Media Landscape," "Injecting Humor Into Writing," "The Digital Life of Filipinos," "Free Flowing

Copyright," "Innovations in Print Media," "Knowing Your Audience," "Investigative Reporting," "Social Commentary Comics and Cartoons," "Creating and Maintaining a News Website," "Writing in Filipino for Today's Audience," "Fashion Photography," "The Art of Interviewing," "Storytelling

through Drawings," and "Social Media Advocacy."

The topic that caught the most attention was "The Art of Interviewing" with Boy Abunda as the guest speaker. The TV personality provided sound and sensible advice and tips about interviewing and achieving dreams.

The host of *The Buzz* pointed out a few tips on how to interview powerful people in the business. People are very fond of inquiring when they are interested in knowing more about someone or something, but they should know that there are also boundaries in asking questions. When it comes to controversial topics which may affect the feelings of others, the interviewer must figure out how to ask the interviewee without offending him or her. Body language is also a key factor in

knowing more about whom you are interviewing because there are times when people have the right to refuse answering a question. One of the best tips that he had given to the audience was to not follow the crowd, not to blend in with others, but to be themselves. Even though there

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NEWS FEATURE Looking back, moving forward

The Philippine Lasallian Family gathered in La Salle Greenhills last July 14, 2012 for the Centennial Honoring Rites. The said event recognized the Districts, Brothers, Chairs of the Board of Trustees, Visitors and Sector leaders, who served and ministered in our country for the last 100 years. Selected scholars from De La Salle Zobel and other La Salle schools around the Philippines were invited to take part in this ceremony as members of the stage crew.

Though most of the day was spent preparing for the awarding, an hour before the program, Brother Dennis "kidnapped" some of the DLSZ scholars to introduce them to

various important persons (VIPs). Most of them were foreign Brothers who seemed to be very young when the Lasallian education was introduced to the Philippines.

The event was a fitting celebration to remind us, students, to be proud of our Lasallian legacy, something that has been here for so many generations and will still be here for many generations to come.

The Centennial Year is over and so is the celebration of this milestone. Now it's time to look ahead and to the future, where hopefully the Lasallian spirit will continue to live on in everyone's hearts. *by Isabella Trinidad*

COUNTERPOINT

From the real to the unreal

By Bryan Acha

Despite a disagreement with her father over her career choice, Camille Dela Rosa still pursued her dreams of becoming an artist.

Dela Rosa has been known to enchant her viewers and collectors with her impressionist gardens, landscapes, churches, and beaches since 1998. To the amazement of her followers, she completely departed from those subjects to explore the surreal, the mechanical, and the unknown.



“My imagination moves more freely when I paint surreal paintings,” she said.

With torn flesh, body appendages, mechanical parts, and distorted faces, her art bleeds with the ever-different human expressions, thus recreating the meaning of beauty, imagination, and peace amidst chaos. To others these may seem gruesome, but they ooze with abstract and mystical symbolism.

Her exhibit, *Metamorphosis*, showed the change in her painting style and artwork throughout her life. It inspired artistically inclined students to hold on to their craft even as they grow older. All the artworks on display were on sale to be able to earn funds for the arts program.

The exhibit, which showcased her artworks since 1991 until 2012, was held last June 18, 2012 and was displayed at the CPA lobby by SparkMuseum. It is one of the biggest art exhibits this year in DLSZ.



Campus Journalists... from page 4

are “trends,” each of us must be original and know who we are.

It is no secret that Boy Abunda did not always live a glamorous life. He was a child who grew up in a rural area and then came to Manila without knowing a single person. He did not finish his education during that time, but he was still able to achieve something. He told the audience that there are people behind us who support the decisions we make. Having saved some amount of money, he was able to go back to school to finish his education. Determination is the value that achievers require in order to become successful. Boy Abunda’s talk inspired us, students, to pursue our dreams. The road to success is not a straight road; there will be bumps and challenges that everyone has to go through in order to achieve his/her goals in life.

As individuals, this experience clearly shows us that no matter what road we take or whatever circumstances we are in, it is our passion that will drive us to succeed.



The End Does Not Justify the Means

The debate amongst the Church in the Philippines and the lawmakers who push for the Reproductive Health Bill has been going on for quite a long time. The sensitivity of the matter has pushed groups of people to opposite sides. A *turno en contra* speech delivered by Senator Vicente “Tito” Sotto III during a recent debate in the Senate garnered a lot of attention from the public because of the controversy of plagiarism surrounding it.

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, plagiarism is the act of stealing by using another’s production without crediting the source. In his speech, he directly quoted an American blogger’s words in reference to Dr. Campbell-McBride’s book. In addition, he translated Robert F. Kennedy’s *Day of Affirmation* speech from its original language into Filipino as to block off any further accusations. Lastly, he lifted passages from a two year old post from another US-based blog.

Is this plagiarism? In effect, yes. The content he had taken from the two blogs was not the authors’ original ideas, but he had lifted their words *verbatim* without any credit. Though he had not used the original words in Kennedy’s speech, the idea was taken without any attribution to him.

In all honesty, the most appalling fact is not that he had plagiarized repeatedly, but rather how he, his team, and his fellow senators had acted towards it. The proper thing that he should have done after the first controversy was made public was to apologize for the honest mistake. Also, he should have cited Sarah Pope, the blogger whose words were used as part of his speech.

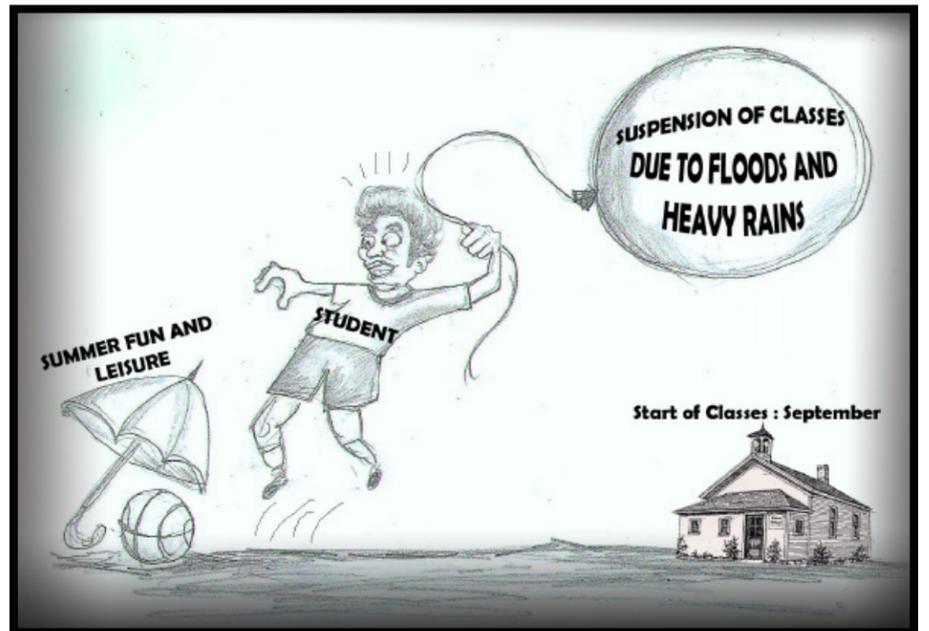
Since this was not done, how did the good senator react, then? Instead of taking the high road, his team vehemently denied using Sarah Pope’s blog. What’s worse is that they took this back and admitted to using her blog, but still did not see the gravity of what they had done. Senator Sotto himself had said in an interview, “Bakit ko iquo-quote ang blogger? Blogger lang ‘yon.” When his statement became sensationalized, his team explained that they did not credit Pope because they were using the words of Dr. Campbell-McBride, not hers. He shrugged off further criticisms, saying that this is just his opponents nitpicking. What Senator Sotto fails to see is that this situation is not a matter of politics, but of ethics. No one would want to come up with an amazing work and have someone else take credit for it.

Bloggers publish posts for the same reason journalists write articles—to inform the public, to invoke thoughts from readers, and to shape people’s opinion. To fulfill those objectives, strong ideas and firm words are needed. Isn’t it unfair to these authors to have their words taken *verbatim* and used to fit a point-of-view opposite of their own? Do they not have intellectual integrity that must be protected?

His fellow Senators hold little regard for the matter as well and see the situation as overly exaggerated. Senate President Enrile admits to not being tech-savvy and not knowing that a blog was like a published ‘book’ on the internet where one can put his/her dreams, opinions, ideas, knowledge, etc. Pia Cayetano says that what Sotto’s team had done was research, not plagiarism. Sotto’s chief-of-staff, Hector Villacorta, even stated that plagiarism is common practice in the senate. This situation, however, is only overplayed in mass media because it is downplayed in the Senate. Yes, it is a simple matter. It is merely giving credit where credit is due—is that really such a hard thing to do? Why must they make excuses, making an issue that could be easily resolved so complicated? Senator Sotto made an excuse, saying that plagiarism is not punishable by law in the Philippines. Luis V. Teodoro, a journalism professor of the University of the Philippines, puts it perfectly into words, noting the presence of the culture of impunity—one can get away with anything if there is no law. In that case, anyone then would be given the right to breach ethical standards in the lack of a law against it. Is that what they are teaching us?

What Senator Sotto had done right was to blatantly state the fact that the research was not from his own mind, but from different sources. However, what he had done wrong was to twist the situation where he played victim. The right thing that he should have done was to give credit instead of insisting that he and his team were right, and critics are just making an issue out of it.

Here’s to hoping that the Senate realize the importance of the matter at hand, and instead of trying to control or regulate the media, they would fight to protect freedom of speech and respect intellectual property.



A Question of Leadership: Bishop Jesse Mercado

by Niccolo Hamlin

The Philippines is no stranger to calamity. The country has fallen prey to countless landslides, typhoons, and floods. One of the largest providers of disaster relief is the Church. I’m sure you’ve had times where, at mass, second collections intended for disaster victims were taken. The collections made in the cities of Muntinlupa, Parañaque, and Las Piñas are sent to the office of Bishop Jesse Mercado before they are remitted to the intended recipients.

Rappler.com published an article entitled “Bishop Accused of Diverting Millions” written by investigative journalist Aries Rufo who reported that second collections intended for the victims of Typhoon Ondoy and Sendong, the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the 2010 Muntinlupa fire, along with other special donations, were substantially diverted. Of P7.4 million in donations, over P3.3 million was diverted.

Not long after, the bishop responded that all funds have been properly accounted for. However, there is no evidence of this besides his word. The bishop also refused to acknowledge any need for his diocese to be transparent with the accounting.

Unsatisfied with the bishop’s response, concerned laity of the Diocese of Parañaque sent a formal letter to the bishop signed by several hundred people requesting for an accurate accounting of the disaster funds, to which the bishop made no reply. An online petition calling for transparency and accountability was also ignored. Undaunted, the laity invited the bishop to share his side with them at a public forum. Instead of accepting the invitation, a circular was read at masses saying that the bishop did not recognize or endorse the public forum, essentially discouraging people from attending.

On August 27, 2012, the Public Forum on Transparency and Accountability in the Diocese of Paranaque took place at the Elorde Hall. No appearance was made by the bishop or his finance council. On the other hand, those who did attend showed great concern and were very vocal about the need for transparency.

Church law requires that money received from the faithful should be carefully observed and used for its intended purpose. It is only fair to people that their donations reach those they wish to support. And if that is not done, a proper explanation must be given.

A poor show of leadership was made by the bishop regarding this issue. A good leader shows concern for his people. Unfortunately, by continuing to ignore his people and their requests, more and more questions are raised regarding his character and moral ascendancy to lead. This sort of action does not unite the Church, but rather divides it.

Sources: www.rappler.com, www.asianpundit.com



IDIOSYNCRATIC

“That’s Very Filipino!” by Hannah Nolasco

Editor-in-Chief

“It is better to exercise cultural diversity, rather than to create one that is universal; after all, that’s precisely why there are many different countries.”

I have an almost involuntary habit of greeting strangers be it someone sitting opposite my table at a restaurant, or a clerk behind the check-out counter of a shop, or even a random person that I may come across along a corridor or hallway. I’ll give them a smile, a courteous bow, or even a full-fledged verbal acknowledgment a few times, and their response quite often mirrors mine. It’s very natural and very much common for Filipinos to exhibit a warm, friendly, and welcoming disposition, one that causes them to appear both approachable and kind. Respect and camaraderie are, after all, two of the most integral parts of our societal culture.

Nowadays, however, I find myself meeting eyes with strangers only to have them avert their gaze before I could even crack a smile. My greetings meet deaf ears, or garner hollow replies that hardly sound genuine or sincere. I could blame colonial mentality, a very much controversial concept that seems to be invading our current generation. It seems as if the influence and exposure to foreign cultures have begun to affect the entire Philippine society – instead of prioritizing respect and

camaraderie when interacting with other people, we prioritize age, position, gender, and relationship status. Slowly, gradually, we are becoming more and more westernized.

The structure of the Philippine kinship is much more personal, intimate, and family-oriented in comparison to western kinship. Relationships in the United States tend to have their boundaries – it is considered natural in the Philippines to address another person as “kuya” or “ate” if he or she were older than you, even though he or she may not be his/her actual sibling, as it is considered a sign of respect. However, in the U.S., calling an acquaintance your brother may not be taken very amiably. In the Philippines, the children are, more often than not, the passive ones in every conversation between them and their parents. They prefer not to argue; instead, they focus on understanding their parents’ point of view, as well as the reasons behind their decisions. Conversations between children and their parents in the U.S. are much more casual and engaging, and while this makes things more comfortable for the children, it blatantly disregards respect and becomes very

one-sided, as it neglects the feelings and views of the parents. Filipinos are more inclined to thinking about others while thinking about themselves, while in foreign countries such as the U.S., Americans prefer to prioritize their own feelings.

When put into consideration, the Filipino culture is much more flexible and comfortable than others. It is never selfish or erratic, and although it may be a little conservative and out-dated, it can still be easily modified to suit the modernized mentalities of the present generation. Even I am occasionally guilty of imitating the western societal norms, but I find myself more attracted to the ideologies of my culture than of others; isn’t it better to be a good speaker, but even better as a listener? Isn’t it better to exercise respect when interacting with others, rather than hierarchy? It is better to exercise cultural diversity, rather than to create one that is universal; after all, that’s precisely why there are many different countries.

So You’re *Baduy*? “One must not be swayed by what other people think.”

by Margarita Coronel
Managing Editor



WHITE WINDMILL

Bamboo. Bigbang. Budoy. Bleach. Boys Over Flowers. Boy Pick-Up.

If any of these rings a bell to you and you openly show to others that you like anyone of them, then you might have just been labeled as *baduy* by your Zobel peers.

There is this misconception that when something is not westernized, it is definitely “less classy” and therefore, inferior in quality. One might choose to listen to a bubbly J-pop song rather than to a Billboard chart-topping hit, or fall in line in the cinemas to watch a Filipino comedy film than a top-grossing Hollywood-made film, and we feel that it will

be too degrading for us to do so. It all boils down to that thing called “colonial mentality.”

Korean pop or *K-pop* having dominated the Asian music scene and with the Korean Wave hitting the shores of North America and Europe has become a worldwide phenomenon. Their looks, style, and music set trends in and out of the country. *K-pop* has gained worldwide acceptance. But still, it is not western, so, undeniably, it does not fall into the same tier of One Direction or Carly Rae Jepsen. But even if something originates from the West, and the masses develop a liking to it, it still is lame

to them. Remember when we were all connected through Friendster back then? Everyone was on it. But as the masses embraced it, its users soon migrated to Facebook, the cream of social networking. Whatever the masses prefer and take interest in erases exclusivity.

Some people may genuinely like something, while others may tell the world they abhor it. The majority are fencesitters who go where the tide turns. But those who happen to like it and are ashamed because of fear of ridicule hesitate to be open about it. Peer pressure exists and we feel as if we need to fit in.

We might be fond of something but are afraid to show our interest because of what others may think of us and for fear of being judged and criticized.

To each his own. One must not be swayed by what other people think. We must not seek the reassurance of others before we can say that we like something because after all, what others think does not and should not make you. So the next time someone labels you as one, do not be ashamed, because at the end of the day, that is one trait that is truly Filipino -- being *baduy*! After all, there’s nothing wrong with being one.

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COUNTERPOINT ECCENTRICITIES



Against the Norm

by Raissa Lacsamana
Associate Editor

"Is there something lacking in the Filipinos' value formation? If so, what is it? Where did the family go wrong? The school? Society? I do not have the answers."

Borrowing a pen and not caring enough to return it... asking for a piece of pad paper because you are too lazy to bring your own... passing around an item and realizing later on that you don't even know who owns such... These aren't necessarily grave sins, but they aren't the proper things to do, either.

I'm not a hypocrite; I know that I may have done some of these in the entirety of my school life here in Zobel. What I really don't understand, however, is why it seems that these actions are already considered acceptable. There's no denying that these situations can be considered

as 'everyday phenomena' in each classroom.

As a student, I am personally used to seeing (and experiencing) such things. One could simply say, "It's just a piece of paper or just a pen, it's not mine anyway." However, why don't we see the impact such loss would have upon those who are responsible or sensible enough to buy these school supplies or take care of them? They, the rightful owners, suffer the loss. Isn't the situation a bit foolish? It's not that we glorify such petty wayward ways, but we commit a more serious offense having ignored or shrugged them off as they

have already become the accepted 'norm.'

Thomas Hobbes sees man as inherently evil. While I don't personally agree with or believe in this statement, it is seen that society (with media playing a big role) dictates the perception of people on certain things, and more often than not, said perception is negative. We then adapt such interpretation of people. From these springs the fear of every man on the street because of the crime we hear and see on the news. Situations where a good and honest individual returns big sums of money are elevated to the level of sensational news, because they come as such a huge

surprise, for the expectation is that there are no longer enough honest people in the world nowadays. Whenever we see a politician trying to promote his or her advocacy, we disregard him/her immediately because we tend to equate politics with corruption.

The Philippines is a predominantly Christian country, and one of the values taught inside and outside the school is seeing the good in others. If this is so, how then did we reach this point where we always think of the worst? In plain language and more importantly, how did the negative become the accepted 'norm'?

Is there something lacking in the Filipinos' value formation? If so, what is it? Where did the family go wrong? The school? Society? I do not have the answers.

President Benigno "Noy" Aquino III has maintained a strong campaign against corruption in public office. With this, the "usual negative ways" should not be acceptable anymore. The question, so to speak, is what role do we play as individuals to stop the norm of negativity and restore the positive in our everyday lives?

This is our challenge. Are we ready to face and conquer this challenge? I pause for a reply.



CAKE VS. BAHAW

Si Juan at ang mga Aswang

By Allan G. Alveyra Jr.

"As long as we succumb to the naked truth that the court is run by money and not by the spirit of the blindfolded lady holding the scale of justice, crime will be a household dish for everyone."

Added to the 57 slaughtered lives in 2009 were six more witnesses who planned to testify against the alleged principal authors of the Maguindanao massacre. This is simply a pointblank message sent to those who are expected to shed a little light and provide the missing pieces of the puzzle --this, in my point of view, is an embezzlement of what elected officials blab as "social justice." That is why even the relatives of these killed witnesses live life the likes of a modern *Aswang* --they are sought after by bounty hunters mercilessly delivering constant threats --and to live even a nocturnal life is far-fetched.

It has been four years after the Maguindanao massacre, but it isn't the ghosts of the killed journalists and other victims that haunt the mourning relatives and rattling witnesses --the underlings of an unidentified puppeteer --the commandos of the "true *aswangs*."

Isn't it supposed to be the other way around? Isn't it supposed to be villagers against the "true *aswangs*?" No, it cannot be, and it appears to be next to impossibility, because the haunted are haunted persistently. How can the relatives of the victims and the witnesses take a good night sleep if they are aware that "Grendel" and its "mother" still lurk around the corners of their foxholes and enjoy jail immunity--

free from public persecution? The funny fact is that some of our "modern *aswangs*" have ironically shown faith in God and resistance to holy water and crucifix --leaving *Pepeng Agimat* amulet less. Metaphorically speaking, it seems that performing the common rituals won't do any help anymore. Salt and garlic will no longer be a great threat for these *aswangs*. We are owned by these monsters because it seems that no amulet can take them down.

The law is the only amulet that we need, but our government --especially its laws, has weakened and lost command to eradicate impartiality and protect the maltreated.

Would there still be a law that will provide security and equal rights to the ordinary man? Yes, there would still be a law that can assure the safety of the abused, but it will depend on the kind of authority/antagonist that the common people and the law will go against. It will depend on whose bull is being gored. It will depend on whose roof is being stoned.

"*Mali ka ng pader na binabangga!*" Is this familiar? This is a typical Filipino statement that we always hear whenever a formidable force bullies Juan Dela Cruz. It appears that in this country, there is no law to penetrate an impregnable wall built by

political warlords and filthy influential people, there is no David to take down Goliath, there is no *matuwid na daan sa matigas na piso*. Filipinos are sick and tired of this orchestrated political manipulation. This injustice is too much for us to handle.

There might come a time when there will be no laws to govern the state, no rules to arm the unprotected, and no locked prisons to detain outlaws because there will always be money to overshadow conscience, there will always be that monstrous authority to dampen human rights. As long as we succumb to the naked truth that the court is run by money and not by the spirit of the blindfolded lady holding the scale of justice, crime will be a household dish for everyone.

The truth is that we can never fight against the monsters of the government eye to eye, or tooth to tooth, because we are fangless without the law or constitution that has empowered us over the years. It is the law that can only provide the comfort cushion of the demoralized citizens, but sad to know, what we expect to bolster and hearten our spirit, has been prompted by the machinery of political impunity and social imbalance. How can the law be the amulet to help us vanquish the monsters if the law itself serves as the *aswangs*' main source of power?

Letter to the Editor

Dear Counterpoint,

I would like to personally commend you on the versatility of topics in the Counterpoint. The articles can easily range a number of topics, may it be about events in the school, poetry and even the different opinions of people on certain issues. This fits in perfectly with a number of students, like myself, who have different moods and such want to read different things. Thank you.

Yours truly,
Kino Sevilla, Sr. F

Dear Kino,

Versatility in terms of topic choice is integral to the success of any publication, and it is delightful to hear that we were successful in producing a well-rounded and flexible issue. Thank you very much for your honest and positive input. We will do our best to maintain the quality of our issues. We assure you that our next issue will be even better.

Sincerely yours,
DLSZ Counterpoint

self control

by Lyanna Parpan

Thomas and Caitlyn's feelings of contempt for one another began when the former's mother and the latter's father married. After this dramatic change in their lives, they started to become bitter.

As children, Thomas and Caitlyn always made it a point to bicker about something. As they grew up, not much changed. They still continued quarrelling.

You would find that when it came to getting under Thomas' skin, Caitlyn was just simply the best there was. The woman knew that Thomas had a pretty bad temper and that it wasn't very difficult to vex him. In fact, pretty much everything irritated him. Caitlyn was the type of person who found great amusement in doing this. She pinched his cheeks (even if he specifically told her not to), she teased him, and called him names. She even took a few of his things on numerous occasions.

At first, Thomas tried to fight back and let his anger out on her. Soon after, he found that this only humored her. Without knowing it, he had actually been egging her on this whole time with his resistance. This, of course, was Caitlyn's plan all along. Once Thomas realized this, he began to shrug off whatever insults she had for him and did his best to ignore her.

As he took on this stance, he noticed that Caitlyn stepped up her efforts to get a rise out of him. This was all a game to her. It sickened him. Not long after they both turned twenty, their parents got into a car crash and didn't make it. Unfortunately, their folks didn't leave much behind and this triggered a painful realization. Thomas and Caitlyn despised each other much, but in order to survive they would have to depend on each other.

Of course by this time, Caitlyn matured and had long since stopped playing her little "game" with him. However, they still continued to have their disputes over nearly everything.

Now both employed but still sharing a tiny apartment, Thomas made it a point to have as little to do as possible with his stepsister. It surely didn't help that when they did interact, it always escalated into a full-blown argument. What the arguments were about however, Thomas never really remembered. These heated encounters always ended with both angrily slamming the door of their respective bedrooms, much like when they were teenagers. It was not uncommon for them to receive complaints from their neighbors when morning came.

Whenever they fought, Thomas did try his best to control his anger. He honestly feared what would happen if his temper got the better of him. He had a tendency to hurl objects and if there was nothing left for him to throw, he would take to beating the other person. This got him in trouble way too many times when he was still in school. In his mind, he knew that this mean streak was wrong but he just could not control himself sometimes.

One day, when Thomas and Caitlyn happened to arrive home at the same time, yet another argument ensued but the intensity was unlike before. Again, what sparked the conflict totally escaped him. All he could remember was the stream of profanities Caitlyn spewed his way and that he had to muster every ounce of restraint to keep from chucking a vase at her.

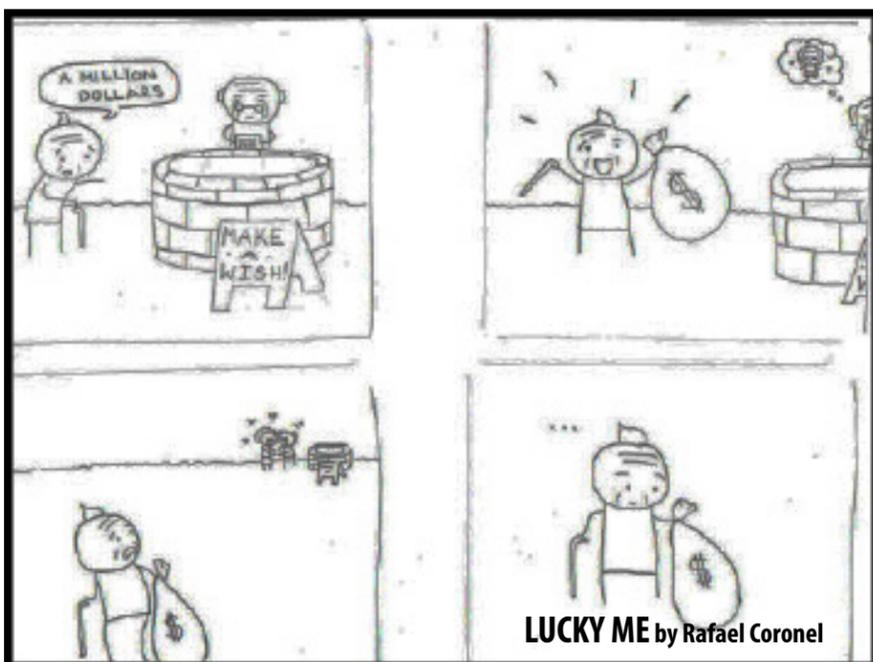
By then, he had made several promises to himself. He would never again let his temper have its way with him. "I'm more mature now. That just isn't right."

He would not let her get under his skin. "I need to show her that she cannot control me like she did when we were kids."

He also promised that he would never again beat someone up. "It's just too juvenile."

He broke every one of those promises that day. As Caitlyn stormed towards her room to end the argument, she uttered the words, "Your father never loved you." She may as well have stabbed him in the heart. Thomas couldn't take it anymore; he finally snapped. He grabbed the ceramic vase from the nearby table and hurled it at her with all his might. A chilling, dull thud came with its impact square on the back of her head. Caitlyn fell limp to the floor, her head bleeding profusely. She was unconscious.

Thomas strode over to his room and muttered, "You've crossed the line, Caitlyn."



HAZING by Elisabet Villaverde

The tangy, coppery scent of blood fills your nostrils as you take a deep breath in an attempt to calm yourself down. When that fails horrendously, you try to take a peek at your surroundings only to stop short as you suddenly remember the blindfold they've bestowed on you moments earlier. Inwardly releasing a stream of filthy curses, you simply decide to stand still and brace yourself for the impact. Honestly, randomly lashing out at the certified fraternity members isn't going to help your case. If anything, it will just make things worse.

The first blow makes a gigantic impact on you; the harsh, biting sting penetrates the blank haze your mind has taken and leaves you reeling backwards. You do not register the exact moment of your fall but rather the feeling of having the wind knocked out of you. As you lay there gasping for breath and wishing desperately to go home, you instantly



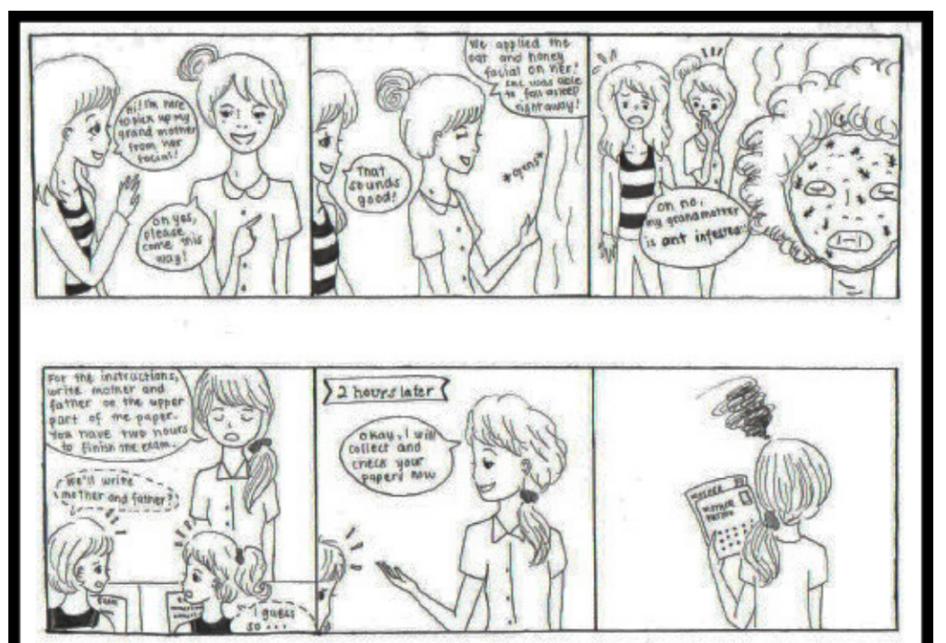
become aware of the rough hands on your body, jerkily pulling you to an upright position. You sway precariously, the blindfold slipping from its position on your head. You cast your gaze towards your surroundings, a sharp intake of breath escaping you as the predominant crimson becomes shockingly clear. Spots of black rapidly enter your vision, and soon the whole world is entrenched in darkness.

You faintly register the feeling of falling once more. This time, however, your mind is riddled with regrets, after all, you've never accomplished your purpose in your vain attempt to join this fraternity. Perhaps you've never gotten the chance to bid farewell to your loved ones, even if your goal was to save them from this terrible fate. Or, maybe this was all in a desperate attempt to become accepted by your peers. In which case, the point is moot as you cannot be welcomed into their social circle when you are deceased.

Overall, the reason for joining fraternities and sororities, to state it frankly, is pointless. Sure, you want to pursue your inner calling to be a part of their 'cult,' yet how can you enjoy its benefits if you are nothing but a mangled cadaver? Or, if you stubbornly insist, you will survive the hazing they will no doubt implement, then how can you when your body, soul, and mind are nothing but a remnant of its former self?

If the members of this aforementioned cult target you specifically and are persistent in forcing you to join (at the expense of threatening the lives of your loved ones), do not hesitate to immediately inform someone. Having a person who can help is better than becoming a martyr who will not be commemorated for his/her acts. The opinion of majority is, after all, that it would be your own fault for not speaking up.

At present, hazing has been considered one of causes of death among the young students. I believe that Filipinos need to be more responsible for their actions, as well as not being afraid to speak up and become their own individuals.



An Afternoon Chat with Ms. Agnes Panaligan



“I guess it just comes from the heart. I may not be the most academically intellectual person in school, but you can depend on me to really look after what is good for the students and for everyone.”

-Ms. Agnes Panaligan

by asking how her day was so far, to which she replied that she had just met with parents of students on academic probation. According to her the meetings were pleasant and she appreciated the fact that parents really wanted to come to school to find out how their children were doing. “This is one thing we really wanted to establish—collaboration with parents,” she said.

Looking back at her past, her first dream was to be a doctor of medicine. However, when she told her mother about her plans to take up BS Biology or Pre-Med as she was graduating from high school, her mother pointed out that she had five other siblings who still had to complete school. Thus, if she would take medicine, they may have to stop studying. She then decided to take up Bachelor of Science in Physics and this she never regretted.

Teaching in a Chinese school in Manila eight years before transferring to Zobel, she told me how her first day in La Salle was like. “As a teacher, I was so afraid. Firstly, I didn’t know if I would be able to meet the demands of teaching in a school like Zobel. And secondly, I had to adjust to students. The crop of students I had in the previous school was different from the Lasallians. The students here needed a lot more push from the teachers for them to excel, and since I came from a Chinese school, students there normally wanted to aim high. But I’m not saying students here are inferior, it’s just that you really need to motivate and inspire them. If you are able to do so, then everything goes on smoothly.”

As is already known, the Vice-Principal post was created only this school year, as Br. Dennis Magbanua was named as concurrent HS Principal. Since he is far too busy, Ms. Panaligan has been assigned to help. “Br. Dennis actually asked me if I was willing to work with him for the next school year and I agreed, since I was the HS Science coordinator at the time,” said Ms. Agnes. Given a choice she really wanted to go back to teaching Science after 6 years of being coordinator. But because Br.

Dennis is serving both posts as President and HS Principal, he told Ms. Agnes that there would be times when he would not be in school, so she had to be in charge. But their appointments, according to Ms. Agnes, are done yearly, so next school year there may be another one taking her post as Vice-Principal for such appointment is not a permanent thing. This year she will do anything in her capacity to serve as Vice-Principal.

When asked about one thing she could not stand as Vice-Principal, she said she still needed to get used to the pacing of things. She continued that the multitasking can be very stressful, and one is seldom given time to actually think. And then, looking things positively, she confidently said that she would get the hang of it some time. “It’s one of the demands I was not used to doing before,” she stressed. “I hope it will become routine in due time. When there are things you have to attend to, you have to think quick. I don’t know if there’s such a thing as mental exhaustion. Sometimes, you ask yourself, will I do this correctly?” she quipped.

Moving on to her plans for this coming school year, she talked about her one hundred percent support to the mLearning program. Since it is on its pilot implementation this year, she really wants it to succeed but it should be in consonance with correct pedagogy, meaning, correct teaching strategies; otherwise, the iPad just becomes a device. It needs to be useful in the teaching-learning process.

Ms. Panaligan strongly believes that the iPads will be effective alternatives to the traditional books, since quoting her words— “Our students are digital natives. They were born into this age, so it means they have inherent facility for technology. Therefore, we are trying to maximize their learning potential. We aren’t giving them something way above their heads. This is something they were born into, so why not use it to improve their learning? Of course we’ve had our initial bumps along the way, but they just help us become more prepared. Without these bumps we wouldn’t be able to find ways to improve the program. But there’s no way we’ll scrap it out. If studies show it’s not effective this school year, we will just keep refining it.”

We also found time to chat about her pet dog, Justin, a mongrel. “In our neighborhood,” she laughed, “most of the cats would gravitate towards our garage, since that’s where we place our leftovers. The cats would converge there like they are having a cat conference. I do not want to leave cats hungry because they are also creatures of God.”

As I commented on her being approachable and accommodating, she laughed more and thanked me for the

compliment. “Yes, I would not go for the ‘horror principal’ stereotype. I believe we should be approachable because the students and their parents are our partners. The school would not exist without students. They are the reason we are here. If God did not give us students, then we would not be in De La Salle Zobel. We really have to be nurturing the students entrusted to us by God.”

We stopped awhile at this point as I congratulated her for doing just very well for the interview. It seemed she was so naturally candid and ready with her answers. “I guess it just comes from the heart. I may not be the most academically intellectual person in school, but you can depend on me to really look after what is good for the students and for everyone,” she explained.

As a Science teacher at heart, she is very passionate about Science articles, as she uses them to enliven her classes and shares them with fellow teachers. She also finds it meaningful to serve in her parish.

When we were almost about to end, I shot the last question: “What do you think is your greatest responsibility at the moment?” And her answer was: “To find out how teaching can be tailored so that students learn meaningfully, and so they can engage themselves in the classroom. We normally see students sleeping in class. How do we make things work so students are really engaged and enjoying? We can group students according to their interests and learning styles. It’s actually a mix and match of these many things the teacher can do. There can be topics where you can group students according to how much they already know about something. For example, the teacher can say, ‘How many of you love the outdoors?’ and the students would be similar in the sense that they are very observant with nature. You then ask questions especially for each group. We’re talking about it right now with the subject coordinators. It’s called Differentiated Instruction, which we are going into besides the mLearning program. If teachers aren’t properly encouraged then they’re just complacent. They’ll do things the way they normally do. You need to motivate them to try new things so students will not just comply, but love what they are learning. They get interested and engaged.”

And that concluded our conversation. After I had put the recorder off and shooked her hand, she politely gave me tips on how to stop the sweating of my palms. A true science teacher indeed!

by Lorenzo Escobar

COUNTERPOINT
FEATURE



BATMAN COLORADO SHOOTING:

OH, THE INSANITY

By Paul Sto. Domingo

By now, most of us should have been aware of the "Batman shooter" James Holmes, who, on July 20, 2012, went into the Aurora Theatre, threw a smoke bomb and fired upon the audience with several high-powered weaponry, killing twelve and injuring five others. Some of us might have known already that police also found Holmes' apartment to be booby-trapped with homemade grenades and gasoline.

But, who, exactly, is James Holmes?

As the son of a neuroscientist and a registered nurse, Holmes was raised in an upper middle class community. He enjoyed football and strategy games, and his dream was to own a slurpee machine. He had always been known to be awkward, socially inept, and shy. Some of the people who had known him described him as eccentric, bizarre, and possibly trying to be as weird as possible.

He was also a brilliant student earning scholarships and internships as a high school science student, and graduated with highest honors for his neuroscience undergraduate course. He enrolled as a Ph. D. student in neuroscience at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora in June 2011 receiving monetary grants for his research projects which included mapping the neurons of zebra finches and studying the flight muscles of hummingbirds.

Unfortunately, in the months leading to the shooting, Holmes' academic performance declined, and



The USA has a rather high amount of one-man shooting massacres including the shooting in Columbine High School, which was also in Colorado, the same state as the Aurora theatre, or the well-known Virginia Tech massacre, another high-profile shooting. Both were covered heavily by news media, sensationalized on television, and eventually became part of the American vernacular as euphemisms for shootings, especially school shootings.

The media does have the tendency to push negative influences, bad news, and all kinds of disasters and display them all over the screens, since this is the material that most people find interesting. The problem is that all this 'blood and guts' tends to form negative mindsets in people. If someone who had an altered state of mind were to be exposed to this kind of material, it can lead to some highly unforeseen consequences such as random acts of violence.

This, then, begs the question: How many other James Holmes do we have out there?

Think about it: He was antisocial, secluded, and highly intelligent. Look around you, and it's likely that you'll find at least a few people who fit these criteria. Isn't there a chance that if the media were to give them the image that mass murders and related disasters would give them plenty of attention, they, too, might try to imitate the gruesome acts shown on their screen?

Overall, one could say that James Holmes was one very crazy man. His case, though not an isolated one, was a lethal mix of antisocial behavior, a dark background, and negative media influences. While it's sad that he did what he did, Holmes, himself, is a sad man in a sad world.



he was in the process of withdrawing from the university. Three days after failing a key oral exam at the university in early June 2012, Holmes dropped out of his studies without further explanation.

It could be said that Holmes' academic failure could have affected his state of mind. Many other Americans have committed suicide after a severe drop in grades. Psychiatrists say that such could have made dormant schizophrenia brought about by his antisocial behavior come out relatively quickly. It could have driven him insane.

However, if he did go insane, then why was there a method in his madness? It was shown that Holmes had taken months to prepare for the massacre as he was buying four different weapons and over 3000 rounds of ammunition for each. During the massacre, he forced people to stand up and then shot them, execution style. He had even sent a notebook detailing his mass murder plans to a psychiatrist who never received it.

Which leads to another vital question: What could have inspired James Holmes to do what he did?

Perhaps he was influenced by *The Dark Knight*. Batman paraphernalia was found everywhere in his apartment, and Holmes likened himself to 'The Joker' calling himself an 'Agent of Chaos,' and even taking Vicodin, the same drug that killed Heath Ledger, the actor who played the Joker in the previous film before entering the cinema.

Or perhaps he was influenced by other media.



FEATURES
COUNTERPOINT **11**

12 LITERARY COUNTERPOINT MOMPEL

by Katarina Cruz, FC

What if I were free? What if I'd wake up and I'd be home again? What if I could wrap my arms around Kiburi again? What if I didn't have to hold this gun? The quest for the answers became my priority. "What if?" became my companion. It was in the late night whispers shared between strangers. It was in the loud cries you heard in between the cracks on the

dark cement walls. "What if?" was the *mompel* that hung over our heads. Its soft tendrils curling around the tips of our tongues, giving us a taste of life. I spent hours letting my imagination run free, thinking of the different possibilities. So many "What if?" questions that you'd laugh at my absurdity. I never lost hope, I never stopped praying for my freedom. But sometimes questions aren't enough, and dreaming only gets you that far. I didn't realize that until my only companion left me.

I'm dreaming of my mother as she smiled at me, wiping the dirt off my arms. The sun was beating down on her showing the lines that webbed her face. I could see she was tired probably after her long day at the fields. She softly muttered to herself. My mother always muttered. Most of the time I never really knew what she was talking about, but this time I could almost make out her words. I leaned in, inching closer and closer. Her head snaps up and she whispers...

"It's time!"

I jump, momentarily hesitating. I'm in the in between. If I chose to, I could fall back into my dream state. But rough cold hands shook me from what was left of it. Blearily, I got up and looked around -- confused by the dark wall surrounding me.

"Otieno! We need to move fast. Iwu has ordered us to the cell," says Dimka, tapping me on the shoulder.

"Iwu? Since when did Iwu give the commands?"

Dimka shook his head. "After the raid last night, we lost Furaha and half the others. Iwu is in a bad state. He's afraid of the leader's coming tomorrow."

I hung my head, in sorrow for Furaha. He was the only soldier in command who still had peace in his heart. At least Iwu was not an unreasonable person.

SINKING SHIPS

by Jem Bernardo



The sun shone through the broken window across the bed I was lying in, reminding me that it was another day yet again, and I wasn't ready to face it. I've told myself countless times that I was okay, that I don't need him so much that at one point, I almost believed it. The truth was, I was lost without him and nothing could ever change that.

I pushed the sheets off me and stood up. Walking over to my dresser, I grabbed whatever was on top and started to get ready for school. Once I got down the stairs, I didn't even bother eating breakfast anymore. Instead, I decided to drive to school early and just wait for my friends at our usual spot by the tree just outside the cafeteria. The place was actually nothing special; it was just a place that we've been frequenting ever since we can all remember. There were no distractions, and unlike the rest of the places in school, only the soft breeze of the wind can be heard. I plugged my earphones in and pressed shuffle on my music player. The first song that played was one of those that I've been trying to avoid. It was a song that he made me listen to back when everything was okay. Back when I still had him.

I knew I wasn't enough for him; I knew he could've done much better. That didn't mean that I didn't give him my absolute best. He was my priority; he came first before anything and anyone else. That was probably unfair to my other friends, and I knew that. I barely made time for them but that didn't stop them from putting effort into understanding me. Every time they looked at me, they always had the same sad look and it was sickening. I didn't need their pity; it wouldn't bring him back. They tried so hard to get me out of this, to bring back the old me. I also knew that they did their best to console me, but it's not enough to have a million friends when none of them could ever understand you.

The sound of the bell pulled me out of the trance that I was in, shaking all the thoughts out of my mind. My friends were walking towards me, waving and smiling. It all just made me realize how weak I used to be and how much I abandoned them. It's over now, and I'm determined to show everyone that I can be better without him.

“Come, we must hurry,” Dimka said brushing past me.

I sped up, keeping a close pace behind him, shoving amongst the other people scrambling to get inside the cell. The people’s soft murmurs flooding the room with an unspoken grief.

The cell’s dark interior came to view as we approached it. We quickly filed into a single line. It became a routine for us. Whenever we were called into the cell, a line had to be made. It was like this for the past months I’ve been trapped here. Everything was a routine. We woke up at six, and then we slept at six. When the leaders came, we bowed, raising our hands in respect. On good days, when there is enough food for everyone, we ate our share, washed our plates and asked for nothing more. And at night when we start to hear the cries, we turn and we never ask.

“Do you think we’ll be picked today?” Dimka whispered, smirking.

I laughed, “I doubt it. I’ve been failing training all week. They would be stupid to choose me.”

Dimka rolled his eyes, “We all know your secret tactic, Otieno. Sooner or later, the command will start to notice.”

“I do not believe Iwu would be so cruel as to pick me. Remember he was very kind to us last time,” I replied softly.

Shaking his finger, Dimka said, “Ah, but with power, comes greed and cruelty. Remember that.”

We walked into the dimly lit room. Silence ensued as Iwu carefully paced back and forth, the creases on his forehead more prominent. Finally, he turned. “As you know, last night, the raid was unsuccessful. So, the leaders are coming tomorrow to reevaluate the plans.”

Iwu wiped the sweat off his brows before continuing, “Tomorrow, we will choose the next raid group-”

Groans escaped our lips, fearing to be chosen.

Iwu glared, “It is an honor and act of bravery to fight for the name of the LRA. We only want what is best for our people.”

He looks around waiting for signs of agreement. There were none.

“Anyone who fails to cooperate, well, you know the price you pay for rebellion. That will be all.”

He sighed deeply, and opened his mouth, wanting to say more. Then shut it quickly, contemplating. “Guards, lead them out onto the training fields”

Once again, we filed into our perfectly straight line, the sound of our feet synonymous with each other. We marched until we reached the big steel doors. The doors you cannot escape. The older children told me that some have died trying. When the escapees were caught, their heads were removed by the swift blade of a *panga*. I shuddered at the thought.

Others here choose to die. The attempts haunt me at night. Seeing the strips of cloth tied together, with a body on the other side, swinging four feet above the ground. The lifeless bodies that crumple to the ground during field training when they pull the trigger on themselves. I could not bear to die. Instead, I waited. Every night I hoped that someone would save us. Someone would come with a smile on their face as they heroically took us back home.

The orange sun hit hard as I walked out of the cement building. I quickly shaded my eyes, looking around at the fences that stretched far across the desert. I did not know for sure where we were. The children would often question Furaha, but he refused to answer. Sometimes we would take guesses for fun.

“I heard one of the guerrillas saying he was sick of the outskirts. He wanted to head into the city in a while. So, we must be in Uganda,” pointed a boy with yellowed teeth.

Dimka laughed, “How is that any proof of being in Uganda? The guerrilla never said that, *dom seuntji!*”

Embarrassed, the boy replied, “I am not the stupid one. You are! Uganda is the closest to our villages. Where else could they have taken us?”

We nodded our heads in agreement. Still, we could not be sure. Wherever I was, I wasn’t far from home.

That night I dreamt about my mother again. This time she had a gun to her head. She was weeping, begging me not to leave her. She kept telling me that everything was going to be alright. She said that no matter what, she’ll always be there. Only this wasn’t a dream. It was a memory.

I woke up on my own this time, drenched in cold sweat. I squeezed my eyes shut, pushing the memory of my mother away. I knew she was still alive, at home cradling Kiburi. Probably sitting down singing a song, wondering if her Otieno is ever coming back. I know this because I went with the guerrillas, promised that they would not touch my family if I joined them.

Dimka was still sound asleep beside me, so I waited. I could not tell what time it was, since there were no windows in this building. It shut the world, refusing to let our crowded and wronged souls out. I closed my eyes and listened carefully. I listened to the soft breathing of the bodies around me. I listened to the rhythmic tapping of heels down the narrow hallways. I listened to a girl’s pained screaming somewhere distant. I imagined the slight sizzle of sunrise, overlooking the blankets of green, gently folded along the hills. I waited to hear the soft gurgling sounds of Kiburi as my mother kissed her awake in her *kinderbedje*. I did this for a while, until it was completely silent.

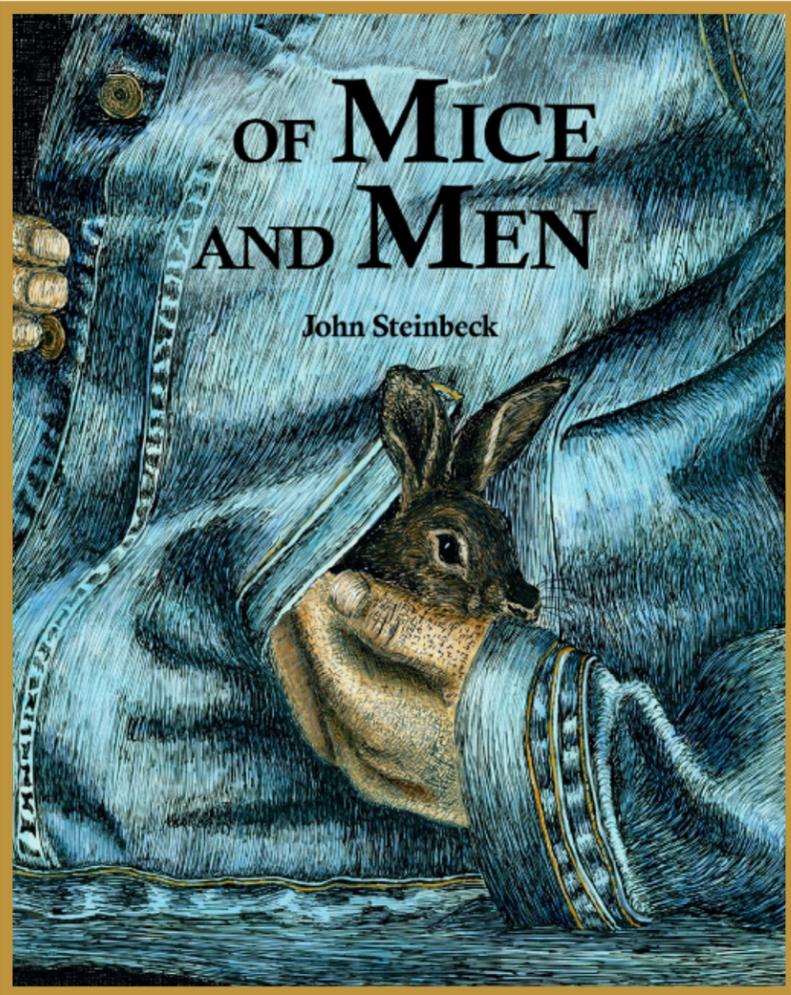
mompel- mutter

panga- An African weapon that resembles a sword

dom seuntji- foolish boy

kinderbedje- crib, cot

Of Mice and Men by Anna Joson



Of Mice and Men revolves around the friendship of two men and their adventures with the hope of finding job opportunities during the Great Depression in California, USA. Lennie Small is a man of huge build, but mentally disabled. Although Lennie is fond of soft things, such as rabbits and cotton dresses, he possesses brute strength which he is incapable of controlling. Lennie often relies on his best friend, George Milton, who looks after him all the time. He firmly believes that if they work hard together, they will be able to achieve their goals in life. Even though they are faced with financial problems, it does not stop them from wanting to pursue their dreams. They dream of owning a farm someday where they can grow crops and tend rabbits.

They long to live a fulfilling life, not having to worry about what tomorrow may bring. But once they find themselves one step closer to their dream, one wrong move may take out their chances completely.

Steinbeck's work aims to explain what it means to be human. Reality is reflected in the story through the situations the characters go through.

NOTABLE THEMES PRESENTED:

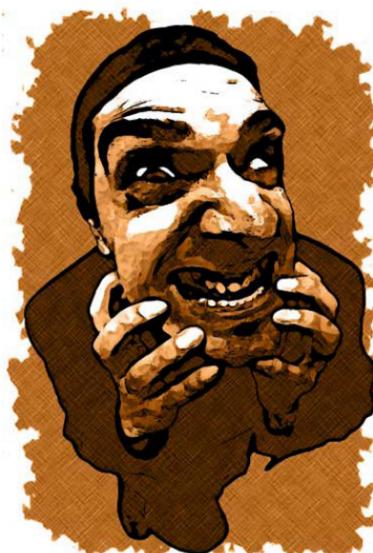
The American Dream

A well-known theme in American literature is the American Dream. This dream refers to one's longing for the qualities and things he or she can't have, no matter how close it may be. In the story, George wants to be his own boss, not having to work for anyone. For Lennie, his dream is to be able to be responsible for himself and for the rabbits he will tend. Although they had good chances of reaching their dreams, it is a fact that the American dream would never be achieved.

The Common Man

The characters in Steinbeck's work are often presented as having so much potential, and yet they are not able to fulfill their dreams. These dreams are attributed to living a meaningful life and feeling secured from the possibility of being alienated from society. These characters have no significant role in society; they are ordinary workmen moving from town to town just to get by.

When writing book reports, students must keep in mind the major themes surrounding the story. Being able to discover themes in a story is essential because the reader is able to have a deeper understanding of the story. The author is able to express his or her sentiments through the themes that are incorporated in the story, thus making the entire story more interesting for the reader.



Lunatic

By Lyanna Parpan

*I saw things
that can't be explained
No matter what I did,
in my thoughts they remained*

*Once, I tried telling someone
but the memory became hazy
My mind went blank
They thought I was crazy*

*Am I clairvoyant?
Or am I insane?
Maybe I should stop badgering people
with my questions so inane*

*I continued to see things
Everyday, there was something new
Why did this even happen to me?
I honestly have no clue.*

Lord of the Flies: Losing Civilization and Gaining Insanity

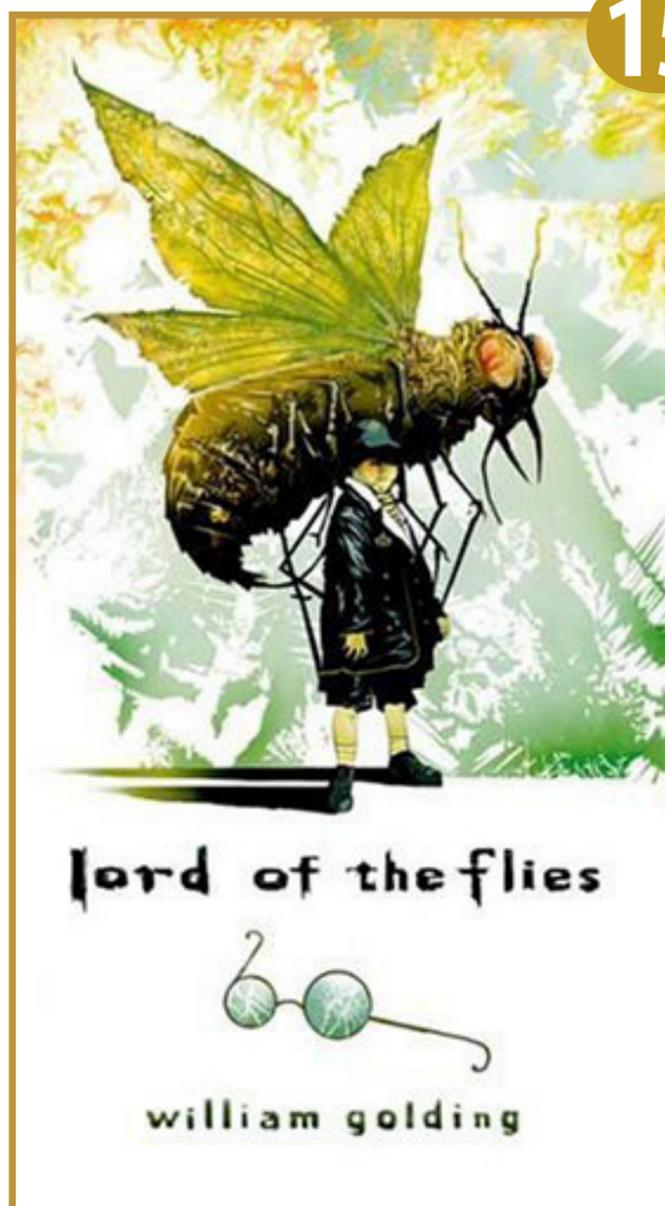
by Pia Aguas

The book, “The Lord of The Flies,” written by William Golding talks about man’s gain of insanity when a plane of school boys crash in a deserted island where there are no parents, no rules and no control. Soon, the boys turn into uncivilized children and soon find another side of them that is never revealed.

The book inspires young readers because it talks about how the boys try to gain their sanity but instead loses it. It also reveals how man can survive alone even without rules. Although some parts may be disconcerted to people due to the misuse of direct and indirect discourse, the book shows good signs of real life situations and moral lessons.

The book possibly has a relation to man’s downfall when he is faced with trials. In some parts of the book, the boys begin to mistrust each other and snap themselves out of insanity. But the other boys start to rebel against those who have gone back to being civilized.

“Lord of the Flies” is a great book for readers who love to see some hardships, betrayal, and survival. Surely, this book will give the reader a sense of what happens to civilization.



The Catcher in the Rye

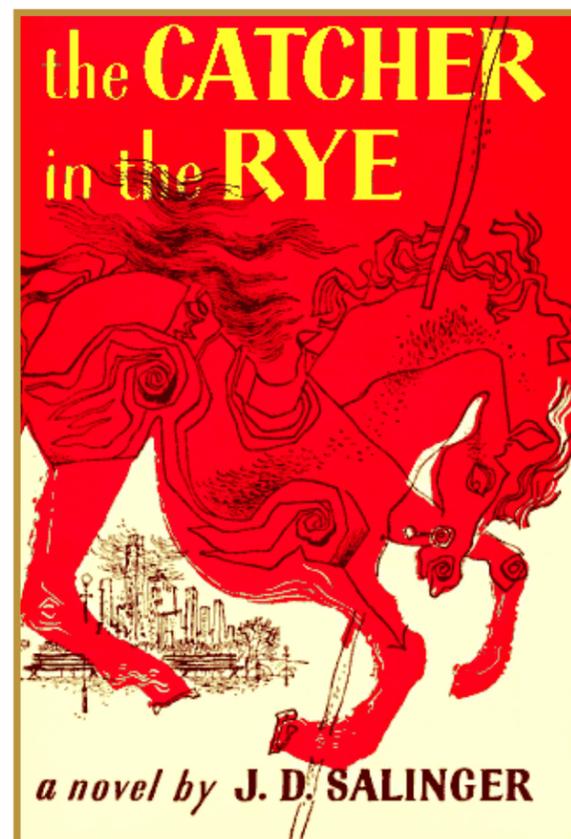
by Neil Vasay

This book has been steeped in controversy ever since it was banned in America after only its first publication. School teachers were fired for introducing this book to their students because of its perverse plot and writing style which includes prostitution and various curses. Perhaps the most controversial fact about this book is that Mark Chapman, John Lennon’s assassin, asked the former Beatle to sign a copy of this book the same day that he had a psychological breakdown and murdered Lennon. Many people attribute Chapman’s breakdown to the main character’s own nervous breakdown. This gave the book even more notoriety.

“The Catcher in the Rye,” narrated by the protagonist, Holden Caulfield, tells the story of his life after being expelled from Pencey prep school in Agerstown, Pennsylvania. Pencey was actually Holden’s fourth school; he had already failed out of three other schools. Holden was set to go back to New York where his family lived, but after a fight with his roommate, Stradlater, he decided to leave school two days early to explore New York before returning home interacting with teachers, prostitutes, nuns, an old girlfriend, and his sister along the way. Near the end of the novel, we pull out of the narrative and go back to the Holden of one year later, the one who was telling this story and we find that he is actually in therapy for getting “sick” in some way.

Many people criticize the book for its perverse, and to some, boring plot and the lack of evolution in the main character. But the thing about “The Catcher in the Rye” is that it is a novel that is not and has never been about the plot or dynamic characters. The book is, in fact, mainly about Holden trying to tell you about his inner demons. He obsesses over the loss of innocence, struggles to relate with

anyone his age, and thinks that all adults are “phonies.” For a guy who doesn’t want to grow up, not having any change in character or motion in the narrative, is the entire point of the book.



Poems

Reflections

by Jem Bernardo

*Surrounded by gold and lined with elegance,
A horrendous creature stands right in front of you
Full of malevolence and iniquity, it faces you without fear
With sharp claws, it reaches out to your heart*

*The haunting look in its eyes make you look away,
But it is something you cannot escape.
It sinks its teeth upon your flesh,
Say goodbye to that box that beats in your chest*

*It slowly fades away as the moon approaches its spot,
With piercing screams, it changes its appearance
Your eyes widen with much surprise,
Hands gripping your hair like you’re going insane*

*When you look in the mirror, do you like what you see?
I try but I can’t, when it’s a monster staring back at me.*



Ultimate Animo soars 2nd in PULL '12

“SOTG” --these four letters define the essence of playing *Ultimate*. Spirit of the Game is associated with mutual respect to the other team and places the responsibility for fair play on every player.

The Ultimate Animo Frisbee team bagged 2nd runner up out of 9 schools in the recently-concluded Philippine Ultimate Little League (Inter High School Open Division) last August 25 – 26, 2012 at Greenfield City Sports field, Sta. Rosa, Laguna. The DLSZ Ultimate Animo, headed by Mr. Oliver Matthew F. Caja, is the only team that has girls in the team roster. The key factor on the team’s performance was their fearsome cup defense and effective offensive plays.

Another feat that added to DLSZ’s victory was Anton Rafael V. Antonio of Junior H who received the Most Valuable Player and Callahan award; Antonio was also part of the league’s mythical seven. On the other hand, Sean M. Escanilla of Junior E also grabbed the Callahan award.



LET THE ARCHER FLY. Ultimate Animo player, Sean Escanilla, in green, runs for the disc.



USA TEAM BASKETBALL:

Better than '92 Dream Team?

SPORTS FEATURE

The London 2012 Olympics ended with a spectacular mash up symphony, a breathtaking display of fireworks, and the handover of the Olympic flag directed by Kim Gavin. The Olympic flag was handed to Rio de Janeiro, the next host city. Amid the amazing performances, hundreds of athletes who represented their own countries took pride in their respective accomplishments.

Of these athletes was the 12-man team of the 2012 Olympic Men’s Basketball team. Loaded with NBA stars like LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, and Kevin Durant, the team drew comparisons to the 1992 Dream Team for a reason: they were unbeatable. The 2012 champs went on with an 8-0 record, a 107-100 win over Spain in the finals, and their second straight gold medal.

Oh, and Durant just broke the US record for the most points with 156.

So, is the 2012 Squad better than the 1992 Dream Team?

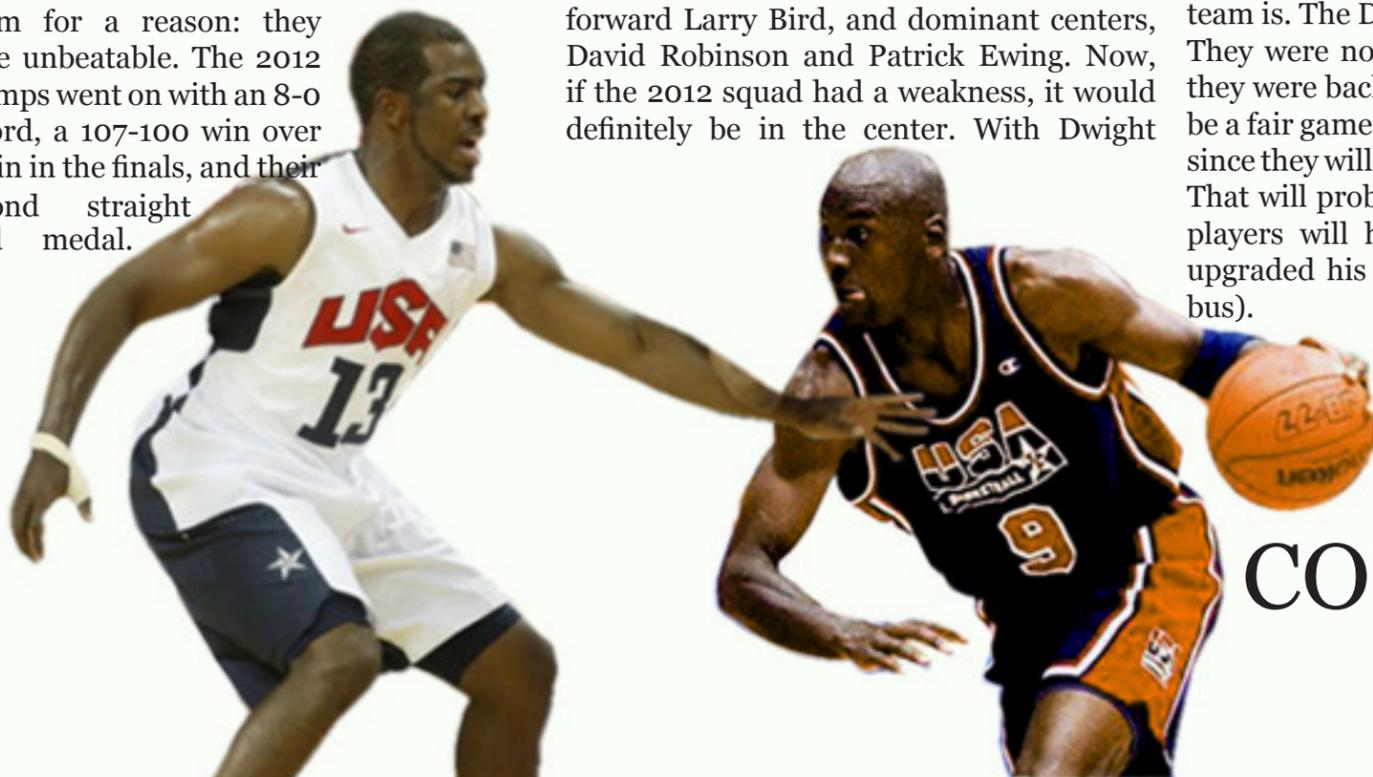
Bryant and James believed that the 2012 team would beat the 1992 Dream Team considered by some as the greatest team ever assembled. Bryant believed that the Dream Team was a lot older, less athletic. Dream Team members Michael Jordan and Charles Barkley disagreed that they might have been less athletic but they were smarter,

The '92 boasted arguably the greatest player of all time in Jordan, the greatest point guard Magic Johnson, not to mention forward Larry Bird, and dominant centers, David Robinson and Patrick Ewing. Now, if the 2012 squad had a weakness, it would definitely be in the center. With Dwight

Howard, Chris Bosh and Blake Griffin sitting it out because of injury, the team really lacks size.

The Dream Team averaged 117.3 points and won its games by an average of 43.8 points. The 2012 team averaged a close 115.5 points but won by only 32.1. Now, this may be seen as a proof that '92 team was a better squad, but since 1992 international competition has greatly improved. The 2012 squad fought a tough game against Spain which included 7 NBA players, including the Gasol brothers. Croatia back in 1992 had only 2 NBA players on their team.

It can’t be determined who the better team is. The Dream Team is a lot older now. They were not in the same shape like how they were back in 1992, so it wouldn’t really be a fair game. One could wait for NBA 2K13 since they will be featuring the 1992 vs. 2012. That will probably be the only matchup the players will have (unless Doc Brown has upgraded his DeLorean time machine to a bus).



by Ching Balina

SPORTS COUNTER POINT