

EAST AVE.

MATALINO

# The PHC Christmas Newsletter

What the employees tell us about the 2015 Christmas Celebrations (and what we say back):

- Forty years na ko sa Heart Center, ngayon lang ganyan kasaya ang Christmas program (Awww, thank you po.)
- Blockbuster! Ang saya-saya! Grabe! (Thank you po talaga!)
- Ok ang Rakrakan / jamming with live bands! (Rock on lang po.)
- Ang galing ng Christmas Committee! Kayo na ulit every year! (Naku po, sorry. One time big time lang ito, kaya masipag kami. Hindi na po kami uulit! Sorry po.)

## “Street Party @ PHC” Rocks!

By HERWIN JOHN M. AYCOCHO, MD

Christmas morning arrived early this year with the start of the “Paskuhan sa Kalye, Ika-Apatnapung Pagdiriwang sa PHC”; Street party @ PHC held on 18<sup>th</sup> of December, 2015 at the Dr. Avenilo P. Aventura Hall. Everybody was captivated with the yuletide atmosphere as most of the employees took “selfies,” on the stage and parody-kiosk-establishments of street-dubbed ambiance as they entered the hall. The stage was set, house was packed, musical instruments were tuned, and masters of ceremonies were all fired-up for a night of merriment.

Seemingly, the entrance of the Aventura hall was likened to a cinema booth where lines of people reached the Development Bank of the Philippines ATM in procurement of the raffle and food stubs for the program. The pre-program was candidly started with Dr. Gilbert S. Vilela, chairman of the socials committee calling out birds. Yes, early birds with prizes of 2,000 pesos each. The crowd transformed into a choir of counting backwards, chanting and rejoicing until each called early bird was of no avail, granting the crowd more chances of winning the said raffle.

The culmination of this year’s Christmas program started out in a curious pitch black slate, with rumbling of dance antics from PHC’s versions of *Lola Nidora*, *Tinidora* and *Tidora* sweeping the aisle and making it to the stage in the tunes of Mambo number 5 and Fantastic baby. And who could forget the literally splitting action of *Yaya-dub* as she entered the stage playing to the background of Dessert followed by the serenading Alden and the grinding solo dance number of “Joey de Ribu,” incessantly twerking it like Miley. The crowd burst into laughter and applause as each host made his way to the stage, and as the audience roared in the night with awe and merriment, one might say this is yet the very best if not, most memorable Christmas program. Consequently, the Overall Chairman of the Christmas committee, Dr. Jerry M. Obaldo, gave welcome remarks and presented all the Committee members. Judges for the “KalyeSerye,” and “Your Face Sounds Familiar,” were introduced and duly acknowledged by the chair of the competitions committee, Ms. Cleopatra Palencia with a thundering entrance of a mambo number 5 dance number.

Continued on page 2



... Street party @PHC (from page 1)

The program soared even higher heights as services performed their take on “KalyeSerye,” with a twist of skit playing, flash mob dance routines and occasional song numbers in between. The Administrative then Medical services clashed in a battle of talents and productions. They aren’t kidding when they said that the Philippines is a fruit basket of talents, because here at our institution, we’ve witnessed the heart of that talent. Your Face Sounds familiar boasted not only likeness in voice but simile in appearances with impersonation of Gary Valenciano from the Medical service, Martin Nievera from the Administrative service, and Regine Velasquez from the Nursing service. Intuitively the program would have a fluctuating level of excitement but vigor was sustained with intervening door prize and 40<sup>th</sup> Christmas raffles. Again, the crowd went nuts with the chanting of countdowns, with intermissions of applause for those raffles needing physical presence. The interim was then hit-off by a special video shout-out of none other than Mr. Alden Richards, wishing our community a merry Christmas. This was followed by announcement of winners among the previous contests (i.e. *Istambay*: street mime contest and street dance completion), and announcement of the “KalyeSerye” and “Your Face Sounds Familiar.” A tight score separated the two competitors in the “KalyeSerye,” in which the Medical service (mostly staff from the Division of Laboratory Medicine) emerged as the victor. Upon announcement, victors and their supporters all shouted and crazed as they accepted the honor and of course their cash prize. Next are the winners of the “Your Face Sounds Familiar,”-contest. All were at awe with the “diva-ish” transformation of Ritz Michello A. Tan, RN from the Nursing service, and proving worthy of his transformation was the breath-taking rendition of Asia’s songbird’s hit single “Dadalhin,” hitting high notes and high hills,



which garnered majority of points from the judges and securing the first prize. Similarly all were wowed by the holistic performance of Mr. Pure energy rendered by Mr. Godfrey Caccam from the Medical service, giving justice to the song “Warrior is child” entitling him 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Last but not least, was a rendition of all-time favorite and classic “Be my Lady” by the Concert King, impersonated by Mr. John Kenneth P. David from the Administrative service.

After rigorous set-up and sound-check routines, the “RAKRAKAN” - battle of the bands commenced with an opening song from the administrative band contenders, “Chaos”- giving a rendition of the Madonna hit single “Crazy for you.” The intonation and reverberation of the guitars were at high and so was the crowd giving applause and cheer at every beat of the drums. Next was the performance of the Medical service band competitors—“6 feet away” giving a “jam-in” beats of home-grown Moonstar88’s single, “Migraine” (radiology technologists from the Division of Radiology). Again supporters were thrown into frenzy with the band’s “clean” rendition and almost perfect cover with the crowd stomping in rhyme with the song. The latter band won 1<sup>st</sup> prize with great excitement.

The air-conditioning was getting colder and time wasting away, yet a feat of attendance was still displayed. The house was still packed with spectators. The program is still adolescent and was now entering the street

party proper with a guest band “2 Years Apart,” playing tunes of mainstream alternative and daft punk of classic songs like “Buttercup.” The PHC community even enjoyed their hit single “XMAN” which is a catchy tune themed on modern courtship. The band was even nice to give away their album to those who were willing to “jam-in” with them. Even the co-chair of the completions committee, Dr. Raniel Joseph Bautista, threw some vocal prowess in singing cover of “Wherever you will go” by “The Calling” with the band. It was indeed a night of street partying. Band singing with crowd as its backup and congenial claps and/or feet stomps to aid the drummer and monosyllabic repetitions to accentuate the vocalist. The street party was even spiced-up by local kiosks namely Dol-libee, Starchucks, Cora-cola and Saisakai to name a few, offering street munchies of buffalo wings and *ensaymada* to bat with assorted beverages.

Nearing the end of the program, the 40<sup>th</sup> Christmas raffle grand prize winner of 40,000 pesos was drawn to be Ms. Anna Katrina Razon, RN, from the Department of Education, Research and Training. Much excitement and anticipation was held to this point as all the spectators were all ears. The party continued with a few more songs from the guest band with intermissions of raffle draws of 22 gift certificates worth 500 pesos and two appliances (turbo broiler and a stand fan) care of the social service.

Yes, the program ended, but the spirit of the season was practiced at its fullest with merriment, sharing and celebration. Again from the Newsletter and Publications Committee and from the Christmas Committee entirely, we wish each and every one a very Merry Christmas and a Fruitful New Year and Thank you for the celebrating with us-- “Paskuhan sa Kalye: Ika-Apatnapung pag-diriwang sa PHC”, “Street party at PHC: 40<sup>th</sup> Christmas Celebration @ PHC.



### CHRISTMAS COMMITTEE INVADE EAT BULAGA III

The Secretariat braved inclement weather and very tight security to watch TV’s current hottest stars in *KalyeSerye* live. Three members managed to make it (left, from left) Edith Mamaradlo, Dr Jerry Obaldo, and Dr Danieson Lampano. The real “AIDub” Alden Richards and Maine Mendoza (below middle and left) with Pauleen Luna and Pia Guanio at the show opening; and with Bossing and the *Lolas Nidora and Tinidora* during the *Kalyeserye* segment. (Below, right) “*Palaliman ng Dimples*” contest. And the winner is . . . a star-struck Edith (*tago nga lang ang dimple*). Alden gave his personal greetings to PHC on its 40th Christmas Celebrations.





“Dine and be merry”: The Filipino holiday feast

# CHRISTMAS FOOD TRADITIONS FROM ACROSS THE PHILIPPINES

By CAMILLE FRANZ B. MERCADER

The *Pinoy* Christmas, aside from being the most anticipated and revered holiday season, is a feast worth celebrating.

Distinct *Pinoy* Christmas traditions stand as the hallmark of the longest holiday season in the world. The Christmas Eve festive celebration, simply known as *fiesta “Noche Buena,”* a time for social gathering with food decorating the center table, is specifically made for the Christmas time. It depicts a culture of Filipino value, being family-oriented to the fore as families gather together to partake of the Christmas feast. The breadth and variety of the Filipino cuisine as exemplified by festivity, forms an intrinsic part of the celebration.

Dishes retaining their classic familiarity to the Filipino culture signified through a festive yuletide *Noche Buena*. The Filipino food delicacies associated with the former include whole roasted suckling pig or *litson*, *queso de bola*, *bibingka* and *puto bumbong*; *leche flan*; *ensaymada*, a sweet bread; cured ham known as *hamon*; and hot *tsokolate*, a native chocolate drink.

The whole roasted suckling pig or *litson* is a Filipino culinary masterpiece that depicts a part of Filipino history, during the Spanish era.

*Lechon* in Spanish means “suckling pig”, a whole pig roasted over charcoal.

*Puto bumbong* and *bibingka* are definitely two things Filipinos look forward to after attending the “*Simbang Gabi*” and “*Misa de Gallo*”. A purplish-colored glutinous rice steamed in bamboo tubes served with butter, a mixture of brown sugar and grated coconut. The *bibingka*, mainly made of rice flour, and traditionally baked in containers lined with banana leaves over live coals. The smell of sweet rice and coconut fills the early Christmas morning air.

*Ube haleyá* and *leche flan*, a mouth-watering Filipino *kakanin*. *Ube haleyá* is a velvety and creamy dessert made mainly of purple yam. *Leche flan* is another dessert made of milk, eggs and sugar.

*Tsokolate*, the *Pinoy* version of hot chocolate, made of pure choco-

late, commonly called *tableya*.

*Hamon* is whole meat marinated in pineapple juice and spice including star anise; glazed with brown sugar.

*Queso de Bola* which literally means “ball of cheese.” It is a semi-hard cheese (edam) coated with red wax. Its festive appearance makes it a favorite at Christmas time as gifts and as part of *Noche Buena*.

A taste of all-time “fiesta” *Noche Buena* foods, enriching the taste buds as the holiday season whips up traditional Filipino specialty recipes to an exquisite and distinctive Filipino cuisine.

A *Pinoy* Christmas speaks of the Filipinos with a distinct culture and spirit; uplifting native customs and traditions; celebrating Christmas through the unique Filipino way as it is always said with pride – only in the Philippines.





(Above left and middle) The Secretariat take a quick photobooth shoot before tackling the massive queues that have formed starting at 10 am, even though registration was scheduled to start at 12 noon for the 1:30 pm program.

(Right top and bottom) Blockbuster! Like a Star Wars movie opening, the queue extended from the DAPA Hall lobby to the OPD, snaking in front of the DBP, to the MAB lobby, and to as far as EDSA corner Aurora Blvd (according to the signage), two hours before the program start!

(Below left and middle) Members of the Organizing Committee (including most of the committee chairs) pose for posterity before the start of the program. The backdrop was a very popular photo-op spot with the employees too, helping to make the 40th Christmas Celebration the most memorable ever.



Unprecedented! DAPA Hall was SRO even before the program started! (Above left) Dr Gilbert Vilela whips the audience into a frenzy with the Early Bird Raffles, giving away P40,000 in the 15 minutes before opening time. (Above right) There was literally hardly any elbow room once the program began in earnest.

*Showbiz-na-showbiz.* (Below) The emcees, from left, Dr Jason Roy Bacani, Dr Benedicto Caballero, Dr Lala Ann Bambico, and Dr Celedonio Principe Jr, put the crowd in stitches with their version of *KalyeSerye*. Some names on their *okray* list include a certain Gerardo and Chuck, risking dismissal from PHC in the name of fun.



The *KalyeSerye* portions are nothing less than full-blown production numbers. The Administrative Services group give a crowd-pleasing performance (left). But Medical Services squeak by on points and win the *KalyeSerye* contest (below).



(Above left to right) "Your Face Sounds Familiar" winner Ritz Michello Tan of Nursing Service before and after transformation to Regine Velasquez; Godfrey Caccam of Medical Services mimics Gary V. for second place; John Kenneth David channels his inner Martin Nievera for third place.



(Above) Overall Co-Chair Dr Allanbert Sampana supervises the draw for the 40th Christmas Raffle unparalleled Grand Prize of P40,000. First there was a stunned silence, followed by wailing and gnashing of teeth, as Overall Chair Dr Jerry Obaldo shows his empty hands, then fishes out his own stub from the clear glass *tambol*, hands it to the incredulous emcee Dr RJ Bautista, who announces that the "winner" was none other than the chairman himself. It was of course a magic trick meant to add excitement to the raffle. Wild cheering followed when Dr Obaldo "donates" the prize back as his "Christmas gift" to the employees. He then picks the real winner, Anna Katrina Razon of Nursing Services. You know where to find her for your *balato*.



(Left) The food kiosks were decorated as parodies of popular restaurants or food items using names of the PHC high command. The Food Committee not only served tasty and filling snacks and drinks for everyone during the Street Party (a first for Christmas programs), but also surprised us with a secretly prepared off-menu *pulutan* item for those who stayed to the end of the post-program *Rakrakan* session. Like all sinfully delicious food, the *pulutan* was not necessarily heart-friendly, but was perfect for washing down with the ice-cold beer. Rock on Ma'am Dolly and Camille!



## RAKRAKAN

PHC employees show that they can rock and roll with the best of them.

The "6 Feet Away Band" from the Medical Services (Division of Radiology, left) and "Chaos Band" from the Administrative Services (left below) battle it out, with the former coming out on top.



(Right) It was already well past 5 pm bundy-out time, but DAPA Hall was still standing-room-only, much unlike the Christmas programs past. Was it because of the raffles or the bands? Probably both as the audience obviously enjoyed the *Rakrakan* all the way to the end.



In true street-party style, the "2 Years Apart" Band enjoy their beers not only backstage between sets, but also on stage (left and below)

(Right) It's not a *Rakrakan* until somebody passes out (joke).





It was a festive day as the crowd started to multiply inside the DAPA Hall. The children of PHC employees filled the place with cheerful noises while sporting their *KalyeSerye*-inspired costumes. The venue was richly adorned with colorful balloons and cute animal and clown figures. Real food stalls serving popcorn, hotdog, ice cream and French fries were everywhere. The DAPA Hall was turned into a carnival, reminiscent of AlDub's date in Enchanted Kingdom.

The vivacious hosts, Nurse Zhendell and Nurse Ethena, kept the party moving. As always, the kids and their parents/guardians enjoyed the bring me game *a la* "Juan for All, All for Juan." Giggles and applause resonated as they were entertained by the magic tricks

of Marvin the Magician and the breathtaking stunts of the Neutron Acrobats. The McDonald's mascots Grimace and Birdie the Early Bird came out to dance and have a photo op with the guests. The children also showcased their talents in singing, dancing and "dubsmashing."

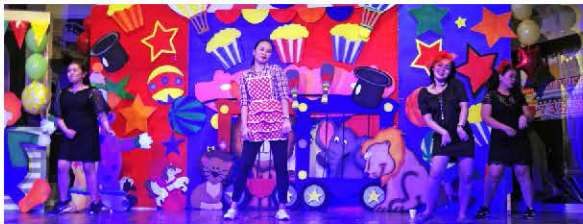
Before the Christmas party ended, the judges, Ma'ams Cleo, Menchu and Pearl, dressed as the *lolas* in the hit *KalyeSerye*, announced the contest winners. Declared best in costume were Nathaniel Mel Cruz and LJ Evangelista. Trisha Mae Lipago and Justine Melle Saullon were the winners in dance/dubsmash and Your Face Sounds Familiar contests, respectively.

It was indeed a fun-filled event not just for the children but for the young at heart as well.

McDo, mascots, hotdogs, French fries, dirty ice cream, loot bags, AlDub, raffles and games galore! Magicians and acrobats!!!

# PHC CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

By DANIESON R. LAMPANO, MD



(Counter-clockwise from left) *KalyeSerye* intermission number from Ward 3C Pediatric nurses; fun activities expertly hosted by Zhendell Hilario and Ethena Acedillo of Nursing Services; all aboard the Biyaheng PHC jeep; the kids mesmerized by the Neutron Acrobats; Children's Party Co-Chair Criselle Galang and her elves Jean Wong, Vilma Amil, Edith Mamaradlo and Daisy Algenio manning the registration booth; Marvin's magic; the three young *lolas* Perla Esguerra, Cleopatra Palencia, and Ma Carmen Buenaflores take their duties as judges seriously.





The *Simbang Gabi* is a centuries-old cherished Christmas tradition in our country. But this nine-day novena, practiced by many in their belief that they will receive special intercessory graces, certainly seems strange to some cultures. The name itself is a misnomer as it is traditionally held at dawn, not at night. During the Spanish era, it was called *Misa de Gallo* or “Rooster Mass,” the crowing of the rooster summoning parishioners to the church. In countries like Colombia, the practice is literally conducted at night although sometimes only novena prayers are held at home. At the PHC, we have a quaint twist on the tradition by having an “anticipated” *Simbang Gabi* held at 5:00 pm (*Simbang Hapon?*), just in time for bundy-out.

Around the world, bizarre (for us anyway) customs are held during the Christmas season, and here are just a few of them.

Christmas is a time for families, but in Finland they take it to the extreme and include dead relatives in their celebrations. On Christmas Eve, entire families troop to the cemeteries to light candles, sing, and share meals, including leaving food for their dear departed (photo top). Actually, these practices shouldn't be that weird for us Filipinos as we do exactly the same things, but on November 1.

At night, families sleep on the floor so the dead may have the beds for themselves. While children in the rest of the Christian world sleep happy on the night of December 24 in anticipation of the morning after, Finnish children are probably perpetually traumatized with recurring nightmares of great-grandpa or some other dead kinfolk visiting for the night. By the way, the families start the day with a sauna session in the buff, potentially adding further psychological damage to the kids.

If you think preparing and giving *barya* for children caroling your homes or cars is annoying, you may want to stay away from Puerto Rico. That country has a tradition called *parranda* where friends form groups spontaneously to sing from house to house, all the while the group growing in size. The

group may randomly visit any home throughout the Christmas season, and at all hours, so everybody always prepares food for the guests to avoid embarrassment.

We usually associate Santa Claus with snow, but in the southern hemisphere Christmas happens in summer. So we see confounding images of St. Nick frolicking in the beach with girls in bikinis, or surfing even, on Christmas Day in cities like Sydney and Rio de Janeiro (below A).

his business) added to a less conspicuous corner of Nativity scenes, or *belens* (below D). The reason for the tradition? What else but to symbolize “fertilizing the earth.”

Desperate women use the holidays to do some fortune telling on their future marital status. On Christmas Eve in the Czech Republic, single women stand outside their house porches with their backs to the door, and throw shoes over their shoulders. If the shoe lands with the toe pointing to the door,

## Christmas Practices Around the World That Make You Go “What The . . . !?”

# WACKY CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

By JERRY M. OBALDO, MD MHA

The concept of a father figure dispensing goodies during the holidays seems to be universal. Ded Moroz or “Father Frost” is the Eastern European (including Russian) equivalent of Santa Claus, being present in folklore as far back as the 17<sup>th</sup> century as a gift giver to children. Christmas is of course not officially recognized in Communist Russia, so Ded Moroz was reinvented as the symbol of New Year, together with “Snow Maiden.” Christmas may be celebrated on January 7<sup>th</sup> in Russia, on which day a grandmotherly Babouschka brings gifts to children.

As a part of celebrations in Germany and Austria, St Nikolaus has an alter ego named Krampus, a hairy goat-beast who looks like it came straight from a horror movie (below B). It serves as a warning to children to stay good, as naughty kids get abducted and thrown to hell by Krampus.

In Italy, a witch-like, but nice old lady named *La Befana* goes to houses where she drops gifts for the kids on the eve of Epiphany (below C). Like Santa, *La Befana* enters homes through the chimney, but unlike Santa (who somehow manages to stay soot-free), she is depicted as haggard and dirty.

Talk about dirty, there's something about doing Number 2 that seems to resonate in Spain, particularly in the Catalan region, which includes the city of Barcelona. The *Caganer*, is a small figurine (usually of a man in a red beret with pants down doing

it means that they can finally upgrade their relationship status from single or NBSB, to engaged or married, within a year.

Lastly, my favorite quirky Christmas traditions are in predominantly non-Christian Japan. It appears that many Japanese were somehow brainwashed into thinking that Kentucky Fried Chicken is a traditional Christmas dish for westerners. This explains the two-month ordering period and the long queues in KFC to procure Christmas barrels during the day celebrating the birth of Christ (below E), which by the way is not even a holiday in Japan. McDonalds is trying to break into the holiday market with their own Christmas meal packs. Good luck with that since KFC has a built-in advantage – dress up Col. Sanders in a red suit and guess who he looks like?

But that's not all the yuletide quiriness in the Land of the Rising Sun. Christmas cake (sponge cake topped by whipped cream, chocolate and strawberries) is a popular item ordered weeks ahead of the big day in Japan (below F). The cakes obviously become hard to sell after December 25, and are often peddled at a discount. Which leads us to the offensive joke about unmarried Japanese women being referred to as Christmas cakes – they are difficult to dispose (marry off) after the 25<sup>th</sup> (birthday), even discounted. Maybe they should just follow the Czechs and start throwing shoes to see if they're going to get lucky.



# CHRISTMAS AROUND THE PHC



*Simbang Gabi* 12.18.2015. The Chapel seems like an oasis of calm and spirituality, oblivious to the Street Party and *Rakrakan* raging inside the DAPA Hall just next door.



*Sa may bahay ang aming bati* . . . Adult Cardiology fellows serenaded hospital units and clinics for a touch of Christmas spirit, and some cash. Carolling at the Division of Nuclear Medicine building lobby.



Community Outreach Committee ready to roll with bags of goodies. (Left, from left) Mikee Llorca, Aisha Mari Uddin, Mylene Baje, Committee Chair Emilia Olbes, Imelda Felebrico, Jean Wong, Boyet Torneros, and Rosalinda Cerezo.



The outreach project is conducted annually as part of the PHC's corporate social responsibility program. Following the Street/Kalye theme of this year's Christmas Celebrations, street children around the vicinity of PHC received loot bags.



Best decorated unit contest for that Christmassy feeling. Below from left: First Prize—Ward 3F; Second Prize—Laboratory Medicine; Third Prize—Switchboard. Wow effort!



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