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VOL. 13 NO. 4

PCSO Optimistic About STL in 2017

Goodbye, jutting lords. Hello, partners for progress.

Learning from the past, PCSO (Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office) general manager Alexander Balutan expressed optimism about the reinvigorated (STL) Small Town Lottery system. He said this would present a real solution to the country's long-standing problem of illegal gambling, particularly the underground numbers games such as "jueteng," two-ball and "masiao." Balutan, however, admitted that the expanded STL operations may not totally eliminate illegal gambling in the country.

"We cannot stop illegal gambling 100 percent because there is still corruption. But it would definitely reduce corruption," Balutan said. 56 AACs (Authorized Agent Corporations) have been allowed to conduct STL draws nationwide, when before only 18 gaming firms operated in 14 provinces, according to Balutan.

Balutan stressed that suspected jueteng lords Ramon Preza, the

incumbent mayor of Tiaong, Quezon, and a certain Eddie "Kabayo" Gonzales, had invited gambling operators to apply for legitimate STL franchises in the provinces of Quezon and Laguna.

Meanwhile, PCSO chair Jose Jorge Corpuz said the implementing rules and regulations in the STL operations would deter unscrupulous individuals from utilizing the legitimate lottery games as a front for illegal numbers rackets.

"STL will be the only legal numbers game in the country," Corpuz said. "If there is STL in the area, there is no corruption. But if there's no STL in an area or in the provinces or cities, there is corruption because there is illegal gambling."

According to Corpuz, STL operations are estimated to rake as much as Php30 billion this year. The revenues generated will be used to fund the government's charity and medical programs.

Food Finds: Casa Roces

For those who prefer the quaint and classic, and don't really need an elaborate, fancy ambience to dine, but just nice and quiet, good food, and amiable company, easy contentment can be found in Casa Roces in Malacanang.

The ground floor of Casa Roces features **Kape Chino**, a coffeehouse with an outdoor wooden deck, a dessert bar, and a memorabilia and accessories shop.

A satisfying, early dinner suggestion: **Lengua in Mushroom Sauce**, **Pork Stew Binagoongan** and a couple of glasses of **Mojitos** by flickering candlelight at Kape Chino's al fresco.

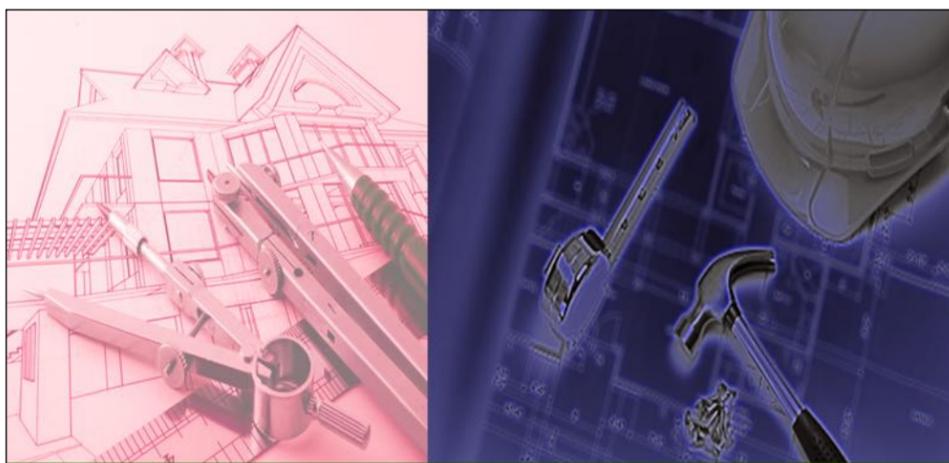


Continued in **FOOD FINDS, Page 5**



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EDITOR THINKS



Living an Adventure

-by Jo Chanco

Travel, I think, is not only about the destination. It's also about adventure, growth and life, all of which can be experienced in the journey itself.

By no means, however, am I suggesting that we be less awed at the journey's end—whether it be among the few sanctuaries that remain untouched even after the dawn of Google Earth, or the myriad emerging tourist hot spots

loaded with potential to become truly the best in the country, or even the world. For, no doubt, the many travel destinations our country offers are really our treasures, each one a face of a unique multi-faceted gem that is the Philippines. To be in any of our 7,107 islands, amidst pastel-colored skies, white sand beaches, and turquoise waters can indeed be so overwhelmingly enchanting, one can easily forget about all other luxuries the world has to offer. And perhaps this explains why despite the difficulties we sometimes encounter in our quests to find the most secret, the most tranquil place for a vacation, we get the urge to “shout out” its existence in social media, or “check-in” its location on some online map.

Ultimately, we like to share our trips, not only the aesthetic aspect, but the insights that we beget from them as well. We like to share our excitement on our way to our destinations, regardless of where this is. A company of commuters often tend to discuss topics related to the moving scenery they see along the way, the hectares and hectares of tropical land, hedged by hills that dive on vast rice fields at one end, and into the sea at another. Instagram-ers post snap shots of their discoveries en route places of interests, and in the process multiply exponentially the number of places to explore in the future. No matter how bumpy the road, a sense of life seems to take over our hearts while we ride out an adventure, and somehow we want others to feel this, too.

People travel for all sorts of purposes—for work or play; for self-gratification or for outreach; to stoke their own egos or to do some good while on vacation, as in the case of an emerging new trend termed “volun-tourism”. But sometimes, particularly in the case of explorers, the travel is enough reason for travelling. The journey in itself is the purpose.

We become more aware of life as we travel. It is often in journeys that our minds, too, get to wander from usual routines and, ensuingly, probe life's deeper meaning. While aboard a train or a boat, while driving a car, or riding a bus, we usually get into some kind of introspection and toy around questions such as: why are we here? what do we really want in life? what must we do while we are here?

Consequential to this introspection, something we really should not take for granted at the end of any trip, is a narrative, the story which we bring home. This narrative, to whatever mind it touches, bestows an increase in awareness, or a sort of leveling up of consciousness, and can be as powerful a learning experience as any classroom lecture. In both disseminating and absorbing travel's lessons, there's no right or wrong person to reach. For as long as the message is conveyed—of life, and of learning through our wanderings—adventure in itself, minus any misfortunes on the way, should be a gainful experience.



Here are a few inspiring thoughts from some renowned lovers of adventure:

“Adventure is worthwhile in itself.”— **Amelia Earhart**

“One way to get the most out of life is to look upon it as an adventure.”
— **William Feather**

“We live in a wonderful world that is full of beauty, charm and adventure. There is no end to the adventures that we can have if only we seek them with our eyes open.”
— **Jawaharlal Nehru**

“Life is either a great adventure or nothing.”— **Helen Keller**

“It is only in adventure that some people succeed in knowing themselves - in finding themselves.” — **Andre Gide**

“It is in the compelling zest of high adventure and of victory, and in creative action, that man finds his supreme joys.”
— **Antoine de Saint-Exupery**

“The very basic core of a man's living spirit is his passion for adventure.”
— **Christopher McCandless**

In light of this, perhaps we should deem as important the act of emphasizing the travel experience in itself, the excitement and enlightenment begotten from journeys that help unravel the unknown...adven-tourism. And so I urge herewith that everyone explores our beautiful country, for us to grow in awareness as Filipinos. Live. Grow. Travel. Adventure.

WhozUp?

Josemari Cuervo

With the Philippine economy still registering strong growth, the real estate industry, which consistently posted as one of the fastest growing in the past years, is definitely in investors' focus. The upward stroke in the industry, needless to say, has broad effects. The boom in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and the expansion of multinational corporations is fuelling high demand for office spaces. Growth in manufacturing is pushing the demand up for industrial spaces such as warehouses and manufacturing plants. And the growing high and middle-class income earners, together with the increase of remittances from Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are bringing up residential property values.

The southern greater Manila has a great potential for growth. Various infrastructure projects and real estate developments make provinces south of Manila a viable alternative to Makati, Mandaluyong and Ortigas. Currently, developments in Muntinlupa and Santa Rosa City are at the forefront of this expansion in 'the South'.

To have a better picture of the real estate industry's situation today, and where it might be in the coming years, we interviewed Mr. Josemari Cuervo, **Vice Chairman and CEO of Cuervo Appraisers** and **President of Cuervo Far East**, who, apparently, seemed quite optimistic about industry prospects down south.

VOTS: There's a trend of thought that says moving to the South is not only a good way to decongest overpopulated Metro Manila, but also lays down a perfect platform for real estate values to appreciate here. Is this just some hype?

Cuervo: We definitely have been seeing land values continue to rise in the peripheries of the major business districts...in fact what we are seeing is pocket business districts forming which create its own self-contained 'live-work-play' convenience.

Traffic has led developers to create a new model - convenience developments. You need not travel too far to get what is available in your own backyard. This is clearly seen by the rapid increase in commercial development in cities that usually were 'pass-thru' areas like Sta Rosa, Laguna. Santa Rosa has changed from an Industrial and low-end residential pocket to a thriving, full-service city. Sta Rosa now offers high-end residential products, commercial establishments for low-mid to high-end market. The thriving BPO phenomena has also brought more money in the area for spending.

VOTS: What's your take on this emerging trend among developers wherein they design and build whole 'townships'?

Cuervo: I personally believe that township development is a natural direction when demographic growth have become too aggressive and real estate values have reached levels only for the affluent few. We have seen many Agricultural land converted for Industrial use during the 80s to 90s but when China opened its doors, our manufacturing sector has had to take a back-seat whci led to a stagnation in Industrial land valuation for many years.

As our population continued to grow, one sector which is constantly playing catch-up is our Residential sector...especially for the low-mid income wage-earners. We continue to see low-cost condos being developed within the CBDs and housing developments in peripheral cities of the Metro.

This is definitely not a trend... this is our reality.

VOTS: So you think townships are going to be the new way developers are going to design their projects, since they encompass the residential, commercial, industrial and, increasingly, the agricultural?

Cuervo: We have no choice...Land values for residential property in Makati have breached 200,000 per sqm.. Ayala Alabang is at 60-75,000 and rising....places where water services were unavailable have now doubled in value since the water companies have provided their service. Areas like Better Living and BF Homes have enjoyed this. Values that used to be 3,000 to 6,000 per sqm are now at over 12,000 per sqm.

VOTS: The gridlocked traffic in Manila is already demonstrating how the Metro could fail drastically as it reaches the category of Megalopolis. Do you think Metro Manila will collapse as the prime growth center in 5 years or so, given its grossly unsustainable set-up at present?

Cuervo: Correct...sadly people can no longer 'commute' to work as efficiently as before....population grows, car sales over 20% year-on-year and yet no Infrastructure Government spending to provide new roads and highways is causing what the city is now experiencing. So given a choice to 'Live-Work- Play' in an area where travelling is no longer required...is becoming a norm.

VOTS: So bad as it is for the metropolis, it could be good for regions like CALABARZON and MIMAROPA, with the land values there poised for a big rush. Do you agree?



Cuervo: Developers have created new companies to address needs in differentiating their products. Ayala for one has Ayala Premiere and also has Avida to segment the products that cater to different market segment. In Retail you will also see this where PureGold for example have also created their Jr stores...Ayala and the Nuvali development is another example.

You are right, the CALABARZON is about to witness a demand like it has never felt since the agri 'land conversion' days of the 90s.

VOTS: How powerful a force is this reverse- migration from the capital? Would it push far down the coasts of Batangas, for example? Do you see a lot of coastal towns included in this supposed coming boom?

Cuervo: The coastal towns will take some time. Look-out for areas that are affected by the MCX, CAVITEX, STAR, CALAX. Those are the main arteries that will affect short - term development.

VOTS: And the Laguna Lake Dam/ Circumferential Highway...which sadly was deferred.

Cuervo: One move that will decongest traffic in Metro Manila is the relocation of the Port from Manila to Batangas. The Trucks plying SLEX C5 are all causing most of the traffic all because of their ingress and egress Manila Ports.

Yes that Laguna highway was a welcome but sadly shelved.

VOTS: Of course, unbridled conversion of our agricultural lands to residential cannot be good. Surely it would take an intelligent- enough leader to correct and balance all ill consequences that will be brought about by these tremendous shifts (including the onset of the ASEAN Integration). Do you think there's enough political will out there, and enough brains to understand these events, so that it could be dealt with in the best possible way?

Cuervo: Thats a tough one...haven't really heard much from any government programs on Urban Planning, Urban Renewal and Rural Development. It seems that the more pressing issues like corruption and poverty alleviation are the main issues most of the populace is looking to address at this time.

What the leadership must take note of in any program that would affect the real estate industry are these points:

-High-end Residential Land values are seen to increase from 10% to 15% annually, provided all infrastructure projects and other developments are completed on time.

-Smaller lot cuts will have a higher price per square meter compared to larger lot cuts.

-The profile of the market has matured. Buyers take into consideration factors such as geohazards, accessibility, and availability of support services when making an investment decision.

-An expected increase in Zonal Values in the near term will affect the cost of sales for land which will result in higher asking prices.

-Due to the lack of available supply in this sector, demand forces in the market will greatly affect capital values in the next five years.

VOTS: Well, thanks so much for the inputs.

Cuervo: Cheers.



Pansol is a barangay in Calamba City, Laguna that is situated quite perfectly at the foot of the province’s long dormant volcano Mount Makiling. Less than forty miles from Manila, and accessible via the South Luzon Expressway, the place makes for an excellent vacation destination, not only for the charming country scenery it is bestowed with, but particularly for the numerous hot springs sprouting from the “veins” of Makiling.



Realizing that having a hot water pool was almost as simple as digging a hole in the ground, more and more enterprising Pansol residents were prompted to put up mini-resorts and vacation homes for rent. From just a few hot spring resorts during the 1970s, the town now has about a thousand of them. Today, Pansol is dubbed “The Resort City of the Philippines”, drawing numerous foreign and local tourists each year. And, making things even better, a



resort emerges in the area to offer the ultimate relaxation and enjoyment.

Nestled high along the slopes of Mount Makiling, Sol Y Viento Mountain Hot Spring Resort is truly a cut above the rest. Presenting breathtaking views of Laguna de Bay on one side and Mount Makiling’s Forest Reserve on the other, Sol Y Viento, with its array of enchanting therapeutic pools and cozy cabanas, is an ideal escape from the maddening rat race.

Appropriately named, Sol Y Viento, which means “sun and wind” in Spanish, is a place where sunlight and breeze strike a unique equilibrium which, in turn, guests find soothing to the soul. Water from a hot spring is said to revitalize, and Sol Y Viento has lots of it flowing from several variously shaped pools. Here, amid these healing pools, the panoramic landscape, and the splendid balance of hot and cold, many a guest have found the “sweet spot” to true rest, rejuvenation and revitalization.

Sol Y Viento has 51 newly appointed and well-designed hotel rooms provide an appealing holiday option. On the other hand, 16 Cabana Suites with indoor natural hot spring Jacuzzi make “dipping” a more private and fairly cozy experience.

If guests prefer to come in packs, however, 36 team rooms allow several guests to put on that laid back attitude in comfort...all at the same time. Moreover, the resort has teambuilding facilities and a camp site to augment camaraderie among group guests in relaxing natural surroundings. And for the guests who prefer a bit more thrill, Sol Y Viento has a zip line facility as a readily available extreme activity.

Sol Y Viento can also be a suitable venue

for corporate events, permitting executives to loosen up and bring down stress levels in the peace and quiet of the mountains. The resort has eight function rooms that can be used for group meetings, seminars, trainings that typically accompany corporate outings and whole family trips.



A warm respite, a cooling comfort, and relaxation at whatever pace is sometimes all we need to restart ourselves from weariness and increasingly manic times. And in that “secret spot” between warm and cool, Sol Y Viento teaches us, we can, if we look smartly, indeed get the best of both worlds, no matter what our personal druthers.

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of sizzling plate favorites like *sisig* and the sizzling *bangus*.

Bacolod Chk-N-BBQ House's value meals comes with garlic rice, *achara* and choice of regular iced tea or lemonade for drink.

For many who, after a hectic day, find themselves standing in front of an open refrigerator five minutes before lunchtime or dinnertime, wondering what to cook, Bacolod

Chk-N-BBQ House can actually be a heaven-sent solution. Located at **Crosstown Mall** by the Santa Rosa-Tagaytay Road, not very far from the Coca Cola plant or the Eternal Gardens memorial park, Bacolod Chk-N-BBQ House is comfort food that's truly packaged in convenience.

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 <p>VALUE MEAL 5 Pork Liempo P195.00</p>	 <p>VALUE MEAL 6 Pork/Chicken Sisig P209.00</p>	 <p>VALUE MEAL 7 Sizzling Boneless Bangus P190.00</p>	 <p style="font-family: cursive; font-size: 1.2em;">Busog ka na Tipid pa</p>

Henann Regency Boracay



When in Boracay, check out the **Seabreeze Cafe** buffets at the **Henann Regency Resort & Spa**, formerly the Boracay Regency Beach Resort & Spa. This place regularly hosts what is perhaps the most extravagant buffet in the island, and is also known for its "dancing chefs".

However, don't let the pervading gaiety and the grandiose architecture sidetrack you from the real mission: the feast. Seabreeze

Cafe's international buffet offers a plethora of food that'll surely satisfy anyone. And topping the selection is the regular grill, where soft, juicy beef morsels are generously apportioned...enough to bloat stomach's with meat...solely with meat.

You can even have these delicious steaks with clams and scallops and beer while enjoying a breath-taking view of the sea.

It's a steak lover's delight, and something that shouldn't be missed when in this festive island paradise.

Romulo Cafe

Romulo Cafe, at the lobby of **Azumi Hotel in Alabang**, features food that's fab. Dining here is always a pleasure as the menu itself seems like a glaring tribute to an ingenuity that's solely purposed for the palate.

The restaurant was put up by the heirs of **Carlos P. Romulo**, the illustrious statesman and author, as they hoped to share to the public some preserved mementos that tell of the many facets of the great

man, particularly the aspects of home, kitchen and comfort food. It does raise curiosity...like, "*What was the favorite lunch of the guy who played a critical role in marshaling our country through its full independence?*" One will find quickly that it's Filipino comfort food made fabulous.

Ginataang Kohol, the Pinoy-style escargot cooked in coconut milk and served without shell,

is a heart-warming winner. The **Crispy Pork Binagoongan** (crispy deep-fried pork cooked with tomatoes and bagoong) and the **Mixed Bicol Express** (pork, squid, shrimps, and clams cooked in coconut milk) are unforgettable. Also try the **Pomelo Salad** (green salad with pomelo and salted egg, drizzled with Baguio-strawberry vinaigrette).

www.romulocafe.com



TIPS FOR NEW PARENTS



To parents, kids are a delight. And perhaps for them, no feeling can top the ones generated by a genuine hug from their child, or by the soft utterance of mama or papa from a toddler's clumsy tongue.

But all parents should know that parenting, like life, isn't exactly a bowl of cherries. We'd actually be failing to honor parents everywhere and neglect to acknowledge the real essence of parenthood, if we only talk about the cheerful stuff of child-raising, and omit the difficult realities. It's actually helpful to realize that parenting has a hard side, as this knowledge can act like a cushion from the shock, the exasperation, and the inevitable pains that come with the role. It's also somewhat reassuring to know, you're not the only one suffering from the downside of parenthood.

Here are some blunt pointers:

You'll never perfect it. You'll never feel you're absolutely on top of things. There's no learning curve to chase. It's all going to zoom past you, that by the time you're a master at burping a baby, it's a done

phase. All your expertise on diaper-changing suddenly becomes meaningless in a flash. Even after you're first child, the next one is usually so different in character or development pacing that whatever you've learned won't necessarily apply.

It's best that you treat it all as an experience, an adventure, an expansion of your consciousness.

Let it be a hands-on training on human behavior. Make it an immersion on the art of writing children's books or listening to kids' music. Treat it as a crash course on first aid or how to cook really fast, and under pressure.

Get used to multi-tasking. The demands of a child will make you run in circles, squares and octagons. Once you have one thing done, here comes another. It's an unending cycle of feeding, diaper-changing, bathing and bedtime. Parents holding careers or are caught up in a business project will find it impossible to "finish" parenting tasks first and then shift to their career tasks. To transcend the mind-boggling overlap of schedules, one will find the ultimate solution: multi-tasking. Write down an itinerary while feeding the baby cereals, literally jotting down items on a pad in between spoonfuls. Go for errands to the hardware or specialty supply shops while taking the baby on a stroll. Pick up the materials of your kid's science project on the way home from work. Once you realize you can't truly segregate your time, you'll learn to be resourceful with it. Then you learn to go with the flow, like swimming with interchanging styles every three or four strokes. To be a parent, and insist on having a one-track mind will be the end of you.

Helplessness as a parent is normal sometimes.

Every parent, of course, has the safety and happiness of their child in mind. But sometimes, it just can't be helped. You can't have a direct iron-clad control over every circumstance, whether at the playground or at home. Your kid can be bullied or ostracized by a peer group, or saddened by a show on TV. And sometimes, you can do little about it.

You'd be amazed, however, at how resourceful you can be in finding solutions.

From searching through threads in the internet to chatting with a friend who's had a similar experience with his or her child, acquiring more information on the matter is always a good first step. Also, putting up a communications group between parents and teachers, or neighbors, so as to alert concerned parties on kids' problems, or to

inform on their programs and schedules, is one proven course of action that's kept many bad elements in check.

We're people. We'll find ourselves helpless in situations sometimes. And so we look for help...from others.

You can't erase and rewind. There are no replays to parenting. There'd be times you'll say and do the wrong things. It's like this in life, but particularly in parenting a child with whom you're making a lot of decisions in a snap at any given time, and the consequences of which could be big or small, forgettable or permanent. We simply have to train ourselves to meditate before we commit to anything. We should learn how to filter what we tell our children, not letting anger or work stress get in the way of our responses to them when they ask us things. It's a humanizing experience, so it's quite in order to apologize for our mistakes if an apology is appropriate, and then move on, because your child, too, will grow and move on.

Bye Bye, privacy. Face it...your kids will see catch you with your pants down, or see you dispose a tampon, sooner or later. You will lose your privacy to your kids. What you can do though is teach your kids patience, self-sufficiency and the importance of privacy as they grow. This way, you can eventually start locking the bathroom door, or make them respect a request not to barge in.

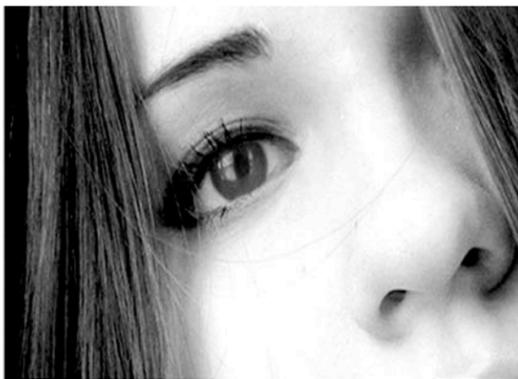
Overall, there's really no certain way for you to know whether you did a good job as a parent, until maybe 20 or 30 years after. So perhaps it's best to just take the whole parenting thing with a grain of salt. Just remember that every decision you make, whether for disciplining your child, or to have a fun family bonding, has a corresponding consequence, though not usually as momentous as many would think.

You might be able to have an idea as to how things are going while you raise a child, but you won't really know what sort of person you helped mold until your offspring's already an adult. And maybe that's what's great about parenting...the mystery, the suspense. Parenting, for the most part, is winging it, with all your time, hope, love and money, on someone who isn't really you, and can't really be you, but then will always have a part of you.

Crystal Ball

2017 Trends

What'll be "in" this year? We consulted our "crystal ball", and saw this:



LOOKS

This year will give emphasis to the tall and elegant. Blue eyes, fair skin, brown and fine hair, good teeth and fancy finger nails are all going to be in the spotlight. Tip for men: Part your hair in the middle.

MENTALITIES

Genial and kind-natured minds will be more influential this year, along with a generally happy disposition and a fondness of show and approbation. The minds of the just, the persuasive, the artistic, the neat and orderly will prevail in terms of popularity, but also the imitative, and the amorous but fickle.

BODY PARTS

Kidneys, ovaries and the veins will be emphasized this year. Also, love handles, the loins in general. Some focus will be spent on the internal generative system.

TEMPERAMENTS

The gentle, peaceful, graceful, warm, passive but fruitful will be the winning temperaments this year.

FLAVOURS

Businesses in the field of food will experience expansion in what is sweet and warm.

FORMS

Curved lines and rhythmic scrolls will be the in-thing in design, architecture and engineering.

COLOURS

2017 is shaded lemon yellow, pale blue, or mixing these two to come up with Pantone's "Color of the Year": Greenery 15-0343. Though "art tints" in general will be predominant hues.

MUSIC

What will strike a chord most in 2017? "A"

METAL

It's Copper this year.

OCCUPATIONS

Musicians, painters, singers, poets, actors, artists of all kinds, makers of toilet accessories, those who deal in scents, florists, makers and dealers of ornaments, silk mercers, embroiderers, makers of gloves and bonnets, dealers of women's apparel, linen drapers, clothiers, dealers of fancy jewelry, pastry cooks, sweet-makers, confectioners, maid-servants, and butlers—will all get a boost this year.

ISSUES

Gay statesmen; Senators in love; Judges with mistresses; Councillors and their amours; Clerics and marriage; Homosexual priests; Hedonistic doctors; playboy lawyers; Ultra-successful bankers; wealthy collegians; cultured clothiers; merchants of sensuality—will be the year's "talk of the town".

GENERAL

Trending subjects will be about men becoming better husbands; huge mergers; grand weddings; rivals becoming friends; love for music and the drama, the fine arts and artistic pursuits; patrons of beauty and the good life; supporters of peaceful measures and projects; and developing a gentle disposition and a cultured intellect.

* This forecast is good up to October 10, 2017, until Jupiter transits from Libra to Scorpio.

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Heed this prophecy:

Shameful Narcissism



Early March 2016 up to early November 2018, from a general optimism, the leadership covers up because of the religious that hold the treasury.

Supporters become too encouraging, but the ambition is forced to heed the perils. The drive to attain the target enables all endeavors, while right minds ensure that things will turn out as they wish.

A danger of overreach and biting more than one can chew. Expecting too much will cause one to be out on a limb.

The head grows more arrogant and overbearing, self-righteous and insolent, seeing personal aims and goals as more important than the people. The plea to compromise and understand gains ground, but if the blind and deaf rule, others will strike.

Some will not stand to be dominated by callousness, but only by the rationale to cooperate will things get better.

OTHER NEWS

Laguna solon refutes charges of involvement in bribery attempt



Biñan City mayor. She ran and won as representative under the Liberal Party but joined the administration Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Laban ng Bayan (PDP-Laban) after the 2016 elections.

Aguirre said Lalaine Madrigal Martinez, wife of convicted kidnapper Noel Martinez, told him about the bribery attempts. The inmates supposedly rejected the offer.

"I don't even know any of the inmates. I have never gone to Muntinlupa (New Bilibid Prison) myself," Alonte-Naguiat said.

Alonte-Naguiat did admit she was close to actress Kris Aquino, a sister of former President Benigno Aquino III, however she emphasized that she only knew De Lima "through the party," referring to LP. She said she was not even close to Madrigal.

Alonte also expressed that she "felt bad" that Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez wanted an investigation into her alleged involvement.

"I think it's unfair but at the end of the day, my conscience is clear and I am on the side of truth," she said.

In Biñan City, Duterte partymate Biñan City Representative Marlyn Alonte-Naguiat denied she is involved in the alleged attempt to bribe high-profile inmates so that they to retract their testimonies against Sen. Leila de Lima.

"I strongly deny that," said Biñan City Rep. Marlyn Alonte-Naguiat.

Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II tagged Alonte-Naguiat and former Senataor Jamby Madrigal as those behind an attempt to offer P100 million to inmates in the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) who testified against De Lima.

Alonte-Naguiat was a former

Revive Anti-Drug Campaign —Laguna Villages

In some areas in Laguna, like San Pedro, village managers are asking President Duterte to revive the government's antidrug campaign as reports that syndicates have resumed their illegal activities.

Launching MASA MASID (Mamamayang Ayaw sa Anomalya, Mamamayang Ayaw sa Ilegal na Droga) in Laguna, Lorenzo Zuñiga Jr., president of the Liga ng mga Barangay in the province claimed village officials feared for their safety now that the Philippine National Police had a pause in its war on drugs. The league has

come up with a resolution, to be submitted to PNP Director General Ronald dela Rosa, that formally pleas for President Duterte to "reconsider" his decision of stopping for the meantime the war on drugs.

"Our contention is that in any organization, even in our ranks, there really are bad ones. But if we are to lose hope just because of these few rotten ones, where will this bring us?", Zuñiga said.

There was an evident decline in the drug problem of Laguna during the past six months of the anti-

drug campaign. But now, concerned citizens claim drug syndicates are gaining grounds once more and becoming more bold.

Zuñiga also pointed out that there's much apprehension about the fact that some village officials helped the police identify drug pushers in their communities, and now might be targets of vendetta. The PDEA (Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency) apparently lacks manpower, with only 10 agents assigned to cover 674 villages in Laguna.

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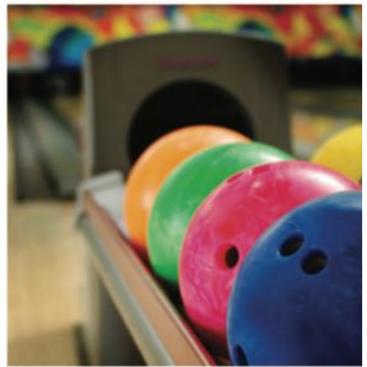
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