

# TERRAPINOISE

*Putting the “know” back in Filipino.*

## An Afternoon With Mr. PNoy

On September 21, the Embassy of the Philippines held a “Filipino Community Gathering with His Excellency President Benigno Simeon Aquino III, President of the Republic of the Philippines.” In a lavish ballroom at The Fairfax at Embassy Row, a room of about two hundred guests, press, secret service, and government officials gathered to hear the words of President “Noy” Aquino, or as he has come to be known: PNoy. Three of FCA’s executive board members received exclusive invitations to attend the gathering and represent FCA, the University of Maryland, and the greater Washington-area, Filipino American college community.

After the singing of The Philippine National Anthem by the Ateneo Alumni DC Choir, Ambassador Jose L. Cuisia, Jr.’s reported to the president about the status of the Filipino American community in the Washington, D.C. area. President Aquino then took the podium and, surprisingly, handed his prepared speech to an aid behind him, saying that he would speak from his “puso,” or heart. Speaking in Tagalog, then transitioning to English, he listed the progress that his administration has made and the plans that it has for the rest of his term. He mentioned the 9-billion peso surplus for the month of August, indicating that it might mean the government was not

spending enough in certain sectors in order to best drive the Philippine economy. He lauded his administration’s efforts to address the poverty in Manila and provide better access to education for children in these poorer areas. Aquino also gave examples of how he has been battling corruption and government waste, one of them by cancelling the Laguna Lake Rehabilitation Project, an 18-billion peso expenditure that in his words would just move silt from one part of the lake to another and not solve the issue of erosion and slum communities along the shore.

President Aquino finished by thanking the Filipino American community for its continued support of efforts for a better Philippines. Aquino said that Filipinos move away from their homeland for better economic and personal opportunities, but there will always be a part of them that stays tied to their native land. Aquino promised to work for the betterment of Filipinos who are not as lucky as their American counterparts, because they all share the dream of a better Philippines that gets closer every day.

*-Andrew Aggabao*

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*Pres. Benigno Simeon Aquino III  
(photo by Nicole Calaro)*

## Philippine Lawmaker Proposes Anti-Planking Law

The online encyclopedia Wikipedia defines “planking” as “an act consisting of lying down in an unusual or incongruous location.” The term “planking” comes from the fact that one is simulating a wooden plank. Since early 2011, planking has become an Internet sensation that has not only produced some rather unique pictures, but inspired other creative Internet memes such as “owling” and “horsemanning.” However, it appears not everyone is down with the plank-ness.

In the Philippines, Quezon City Congressman Winston Castelo has filed legislation to ban planking as a form of protests, saying the act puts “life and limb pretty much at risk.” The move by Castelo comes after members of the League of

Filipino Students, a militant youth movement, staged a “planking” protest in the middle of Espana Avenue to express their opposition to rising oil prices in the country. The incident disrupted traffic and public transportation in the area.

Castelo says the protest put participants at risk and said banning the practice was the best solution. Under Castelo’s bill, a universal code of student conduct would restrict planking “as a form of redress of grievances.” Violators would face “appropriate sanctions,” which were not explained.

Critics have assailed the bill as an attack on freedom of expression. On Twitter, “Anti-Planking Act of 2011” became a worldwide trending topic as netizens took to the social

blogging website to ridicule the bill.

Chuckie C. Chavez tweeted this tongue-in-cheek response to the bill: “The Anti-Planking Act of 2011 is even more useless and absurd than the act of planking itself.”

-Jason Newton



*Plankers outside the Philippines' House of Representatives (photo from globalvoicesonline.com)*

## Defining Filipino American

To me, being Filipino American is the amalgamation of both cultures, rising from the attempt to retain Filipino culture while adapting to American culture. As such, it's a different concept for each Filipino American - a different product of each person's struggle to find a cultural identity. When I first moved to the States when I was five, I felt torn between two different worlds. In the morning and at the night, I would be with my parents, who would speak to me in Tagalog, feed me Filipino food, and teach me our culture's values. But all other times, I was with my American friends, being exposed to American ideals, and slowly making English my

primary language. It was confusing being taught differing things and wanting to fit in but also wanting to respect my family. There were definitely times where I felt like I could never exactly relate to my American friends, but there were also times where I felt embarrassed for my parents for being ignorant to American idioms or traditions. When I look back at my childhood, those are my deepest regrets. I let myself be ashamed of the people who love me the most. I wanted to fit in so badly that I forgot how to speak my native tongue. But as I grew older, I realized that I should never try to suppress who I am for the sake of others. I think that as I accumulated Filipino friends through my youth group in high school, and later through college, I was able to be fully comfortable with my heritage and even proud of it. I also realized what exactly

my culture was offering me and what I was taking for granted.

As I grew older, I learned that I shouldn't consider being Filipino American a struggle or a burden, but an opportunity to take the best of both worlds. I'm extremely grateful for the opportunities that I've been given in the U.S., and I definitely enjoy the benefits of a first world country. On the other hand, I love everything about Filipino culture - the food, the dancing, my religion, the singing, and just the general pride that seems to be instilled in all of us. Writing all this almost makes me feel culturally spoiled, actually. I know I'm beyond lucky to be at a point in history where my people aren't being as discriminated or exploited - a point where I'm reaping the benefits of my parents' hard work and commitment to our

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## Anthony Bourdain and the Filipino American Identity

For me, this past summer was marked by repetition. Soon after the excitement of the end of school wore off, the majority of the summer's days followed a predictable schedule: wake up, go to the gym, turn on the television, and vegetate on the couch. I often found myself watching the Travel Channel; it presented me with visions of tropical islands and bizarre foods, vicarious escapes from the mundaneness of my daily life.

One day, however, the channel presented me with something much more than that. While watching the episode of *Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations* during which Bourdain visits the Philippines, I was surprisingly faced with a question that has often been at the heart of the Filipino Cultural Association: what does it mean to be a Filipino-American?

During one segment of the episode, Bourdain is joined by Augusto, who, in more ways than one, reminded me of myself. Despite having only visited the Philippines once, Augusto, a recent college graduate and, like me, an American-born Filipino enthusiastically petitioned Bourdain to take his camera crew to the Pacific island nation. However, when Augusto and Bourdain finally meet, Bourdain asks, "Do you feel like an outsider when you come here [to the Philippines]?" to which Augusto replies, "Yea, definitely." And if the same question was asked of me, my response would also be the same.

Augusto describes himself, saying, "I'm not entirely American, I'm not entirely

Filipino, I'm kind of stuck in the middle, and that's a hard thing, I think, for a lot of Filipino-Americans." This is exactly where I see myself as a Filipino-American, somewhere between the Filipino and American cultures. The difficulty in producing a concrete definition is the fact that both cultures are, by themselves, indefinite amalgamations. On one hand, America is a "melting pot" of cultures, and on the other, the Philippines is influenced from



*Bourdain and Augusto enjoying lechon in the Philippines. (photo from pinoylife.com)*

Spanish, Malaysian, Polynesian, and other cultures.

At one point in the episode, Bourdain and Augusto go to a dinner at the home of Augusto's relatives. Here, Bourdain notes that, "however badly he [Augusto] wants to be a Filipino, to reconnect with his roots, however hard he's worked to make that happen, practicing the language, reading up, cooking the food, digging up family memories, he's

still American. And to some extent, still new to this part of the family. Not a stranger, like me, but an outsider of sorts, just the same." Once again a description that fit me almost perfectly. Each of the many times I have visited the Philippines, I have always felt like a stranger, an outsider. Perhaps it is because of the language barrier, the American environment of my youth, or a combination of some other factors, but I can firmly say that I have never felt fully Filipino.

So, to me, being Filipino-American is embracing and combining the cultures of both the Philippines and the United States. It is being exposed to the food, language, and lifestyles of the Philippines while being raised in an American environment. It is pursuing a deeper knowledge of the culture of my ancestors while forging a new path for myself in the opportunity-rich land of the United States.

*-Jonathan Reyes*

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family. At the same time it inspires me and encourages me to not let our history go to waste. While I can't speak for all Filipino Americans, I'm certain that this feeling is present somewhere in all of us and that's what makes us a proud and happy people.

For me, being a Filipino American is to hold close the culture that my parents were raised by in the Philippines - the culture that has nurtured me and raised me to be the person that I am today. Even though I am a Filipino in America, home is, as they say, where the heart is.

*-Mariel Bartoome*

## What Does It Mean To Be Filipino American?

What does it mean to be a Filipino American? I have come across this question a few times and I seem to find myself answering it all the same. What it means to be a Filipino American is the pride and commitment I have for my heritage. It is the resilience of the Filipino spirit. It means that I will never take advantage of the life my parents gave me. It means that I will always hold the greatest respect for other Filipino Americans and for the manongs. Also, it means that wherever I go, the Filipino heritage that I have known to acknowledge will always be

behind me.

Never have I ever distinguished the idea that I am only an American. I always took pride with the fact that I had Filipino blood in me. The history was another thing that I took pride in. The struggles, the hardships, the ongoing criticism, and the ideal belief that some looked at my heritage with no great importance only made me a strong believer of who I was.

Growing up, it was difficult for a Filipino American to be conceptualized into a society where one culture or heritage dominates over the other. I grew up in San Antonio, Texas, and my most vivid memories of growing up were the ones in school where I was the only student who was of Asian decent. It was a difficult

period in my life, but I never looked at that part of my life as a setback for me. It was the opposite of a setback. It was the ability to look at myself and still be proud of the color of my skin and qualities of being a Filipino American. That difficult part of my life I took it as motivation to learn about my heritage and to take pride that I was different and there was nothing wrong with being different.

The Filipino American culture lives in me, lives within my family, and will also live within my future family. The idea that our culture can impact others is what makes me proud to be a Filipino American.

-Ariana Garcia

## FCA's Good Life

*This column covers all facets of life - food, music, movies, Jersey Shore episodes, presidential debates, reader questions, anything as per request.*

*Today's column answers questions that readers left in TerrapiNOISE's question box at the last GBM.*

### Why should people join FCA?

I don't know. I guess you could make some really great friends, learn about Filipino culture, express your talents, and have a lot of fun. But only if you're into that sort of thing.

### Were your parents ever overprotective/judgmental with you growing up? Do they still try to intrude your personal business in your college life?

Oh yeah. But with good

intentions. Even though it was (and still is) a real bummer sometimes, I owe the person I am today to them, and that's a bigger debt than school loans.

### What is love?

BABY, DON'T HURT ME.

### How do you make rice properly without a rice cooker?

I honestly don't know. For further information, contact Uncle Ben.

### Will the Redskins make the playoffs?

Probably not.

### Who is winning the Superbowl?

Ravens all day.

-Mariel Bartolome

Have a question for Mariel?

E-mail her at

[marielbartolome@gmail.com](mailto:marielbartolome@gmail.com)

## Upcoming Events:

October 1:

### District VI GBM

4PM @ George Washington Univeristy

### Semi Fundraiser Dinner

7PM @ Thai Place (near Foggy Bottom Metro)

October 2:

### Turkey Bowl Practices

10AM @ Chapel Fields

### Cultural Practice

4PM @ Chemistry Atrium

October 9:

### Turkey Bowl Practices

10AM @ Chapel Fields

### Cultural Practice

4PM @ Chemistry Atrium