

THE FILIPINO E-MAGAZINE IN EUROPE

Roots & wings

CULTURE PEOPLE PLACES

-on this issue-

FAAS EXHIBITION

YOUNG SOCCER STARS

PUMPKIN PATCH

CINE EUROPA 2018

October of 2018

Dear Kababayans



Of all the four seasons we have in Europe, autumn is a favorite. The glorious colors, the bountiful harvests, the balmy breezes, help us prepare for the next season which is winter. But even the Nordic winter with its dark and dreary days has its own charm and challenges which we have learned to accept. For we know that after winter comes spring. And after spring, comes summer.

Last September 14-20 in Stockholm, Sweden, our community was treated to a most spectacular and unforgettable art exhibition that ever happened in our midst. "En konstutställning med tre kvinnor av filippinska rötter" or An Art Exhibit with Three Women artists with Filipino roots.

These three incredibly lovely ladies are founders of FAAS or the Filipino Artists Association of Sweden. At the iconic Galleri Bellman located in a cozy cobblestoned street, Aya Sunga Askert presented her series of sculptures named "Metamorphosis", Helen Svendgaard showed us her paintings and photographs entitled "Heaven & Earth" and Mary Grace Svensson's aptly named her works "Colors". We are thankful and grateful for these amazing ladies for sharing their wonderful gifts with us.

On pages 4 to 13 we proudly share with you a collage of the magnificent and marvelous artworks as well as photos of the many guests who came to enjoy the above art exhibit while relishing the sumptuous spread of wine and finger foods.

If you are looking for a fun formula for Soccer Success, then you are on the right track. "Pinoy Power on the Pitch" by veteran writer Jenny

Syquia Skarne is a story of an epic journey about how the dream team of Djursholm F07 with two adorable 11-year old girls with roots from northern Philippines, plus their supportive parents, a nurturing caring community, elite coaches, the coolest attitude - then winning the World Youth Soccer Cup 2018 is probably not a big surprise. This article is also a fascinating story about these two young girls and their Pinoy background which spans over continents and generations. We cannot really thank Jenny enough for such a vivid and enjoyable write-up! We admire, salute and congratulate Babes and Abi and their parents and the rest of the team and we look forward with great excitement to more such games.

We also have practical cultural lessons to learn from our regular guest writer Lily C Fen, Manila-born, Zurich based and former Prague resident. Lily generously shares with us a series of her Strange Spaces articles. Many thanks Lily for giving us fun and fresh perspectives about beer drinking, public transport and language attitude.

And soon it is Halloween. As we remember those who are gone before us, let us enjoy Lorna Real's Pumpkin Patch story, which is a part of her colorful Euro-Pinoy sojourn in the U.S.A.

We are always on the look-out for all kinds of articles about Euro-Pinoys - travels, adventures, careers, community projects, artistic, academic achievements etc, that may inspire and motivate the rest of us. Just contact us anytime. We are here for you.

We at Roots&Wings wish you a wonderful autumn.

Mabuhay tayong lahat!

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Roots&Wings Filipino Magazine in Europe



*Aya Sunga Askert (left,
Mary Grace Svensson (center,
Helen Svendgaard (right) come
together for a one-of-a-kind celebration
of Filipino talent in Europe.*

A FAAS EXHIBIT

*Three
Women
at the Galleri
Bellman*

words by **Marthy Angue | Manila**
photos from **the friends of FAAS | Stockholm**

What had began in casual conversation had developed into something much more: Filipinas in Stockholm Aya Sunga-Askert, Mary Grace Svensson, and Helen Svendgaard had individually sought for an environment to explore their creativity and found that environment in each other. Soon enough, they would draw other Filipino artists to them, leading them to establish the Filipino Artist's Association of Sweden (FAAS) in April 2018.

Perhaps it was fitting the the Association's first collaborative show would highlight the works of its three founders. Held at Stockholm's celebrated Galleri Bellman on

Bellmansgatan from 14 to 20 September 2018, the exhibition in fact comprises three distinct collections: Aya Sunga Askert's *Metamorfoses*, Mary Grace Svensson's *Colors*, and Helen Svendgaard's *Himmel och Jord (Heaven and Earth)* each one reflective of their respective artist's style, personality, artistic philosophy, and body of work.

THREE WOMEN, THREE VOICES

Metamorfoses (meaning *Metamorphosis* or *Transformation*) was a collection of assemblages, an artistic technique that collects, arranges, and adds onto found objects turning them into works of art. Aya Sunga-Askert's works seemed to whirl and

flail in all directions at the gallery space: black paper butterflies took wing and filled a room, white and gold faces projecting shiny metal tendrils, sculptures of black hands leaving silver trails that looked both alive and frozen in time.

Colors, on the other hand delivers exactly as the title promised: vibrant bursts and splashes of color ordered into bold and playful geometries. Mary Grace Svensson's paintings displayed stunning emotional intensity in diverse ways - some almost childlike in their whimsy, others evoking the abundance of the natural world, and still others are deeply intimate depictions of passion, womanhood, and motherhood.

Last but by no means the least, Helen Svendgaard's *Himmel och Jord* collection of paintings and photography was no less vibrant but utilised color in subtler ways. Straddling the line between Impressionism and Expressionism, the artworks in the collection seemed to draw the spectator inwards into the canvas. The collection depicts dream-like landscapes and waterscapes, the features almost but never quite melting into each other. This and the stark use of texture in many of the pieces give the paintings a kind of motion and rhythm.

THREE VOICES, ONE SHOW

Despite their differences in style, approach, and chosen mediums, the collections came together well as a single exhibit. Aside from celebrating the three artists who founded the

FAAS, the exhibit also serves as a celebration of the diversity of creative ways Filipinos can and have expressed themselves outside their home culture. The exhibit met guests from all over the cosmopolitan Swedish capital and introduced many to the rapidly developing arts scene among Sweden's Filipino community.

FAAS FORWARD

The exhibit, of course, is only the tip of the iceberg for the three women and the organization they started. FAAS, in its mission to build an active community out of the visual, performing, and literary artists residing in Sweden with Filipino heritage, is engaged in a variety of other activities beyond the conventional exhibits and auctions. FAAS offers assistance for its members' personal projects; teaches the Filipino language to children; engages in translation work and conducts workshops.

Its mandate, as it stands today, is to cultivate the growing interest in arts among Filipinos in Sweden by providing them exposure, mentorship, patronage and support, empowering aspiring artists to build careers out of their talents and passion.

FAAS hopes that, in building a community in Sweden and in celebrating Filipino art and artists as it has at Galleri Bellman, it would be an example for Filipino expatriate communities in Europe and around the world. To discover more of what FAAS is up to, visit their Instagram account @ [filipinoartists.sweden](#). **R&W**





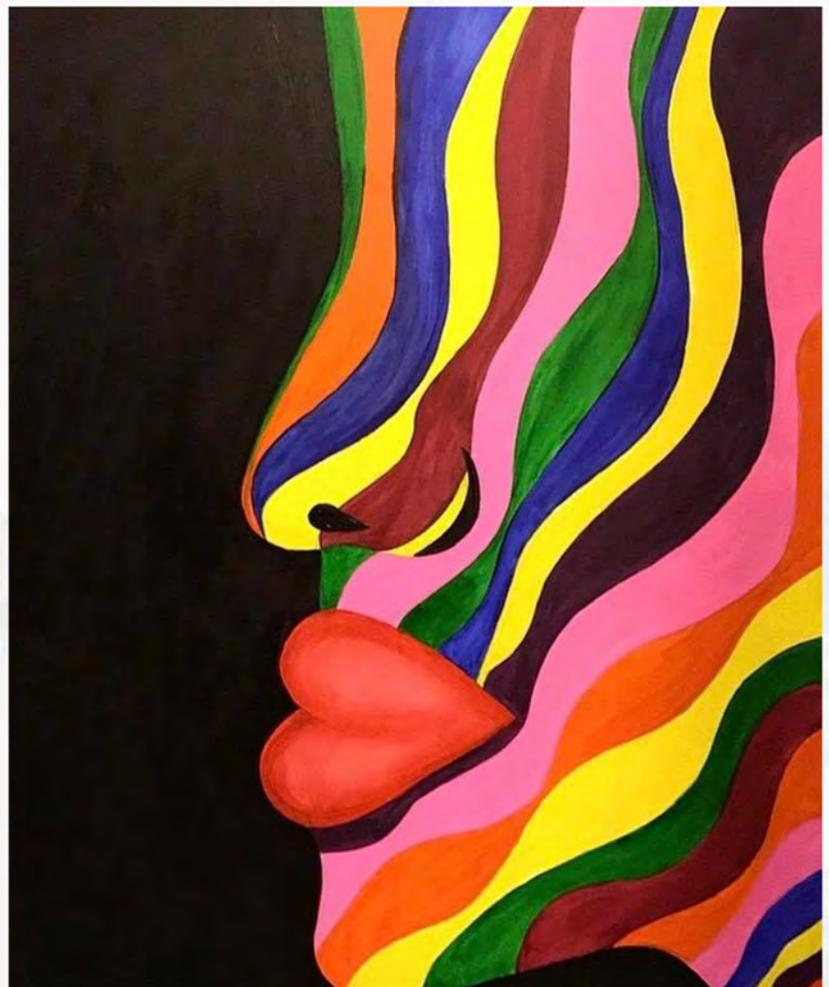
Aya Sunga Askert's assemblages are notable for their whimsical flights of fancy.

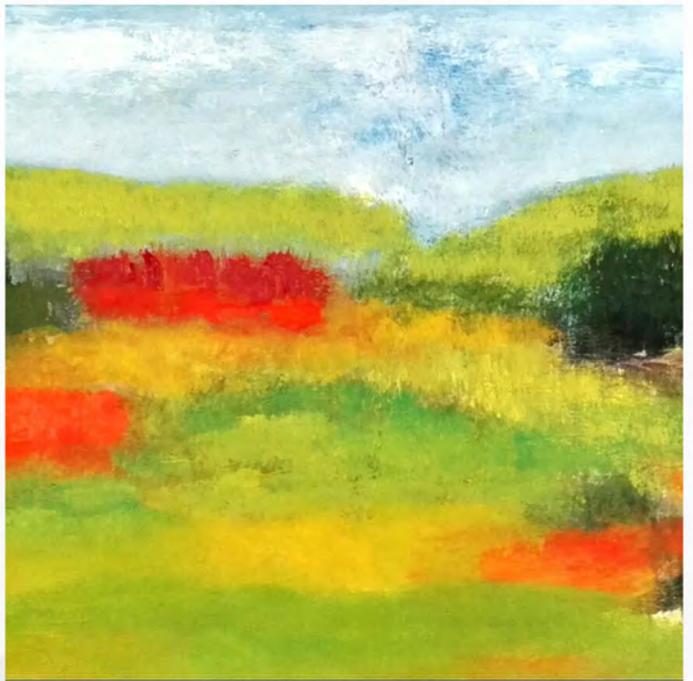
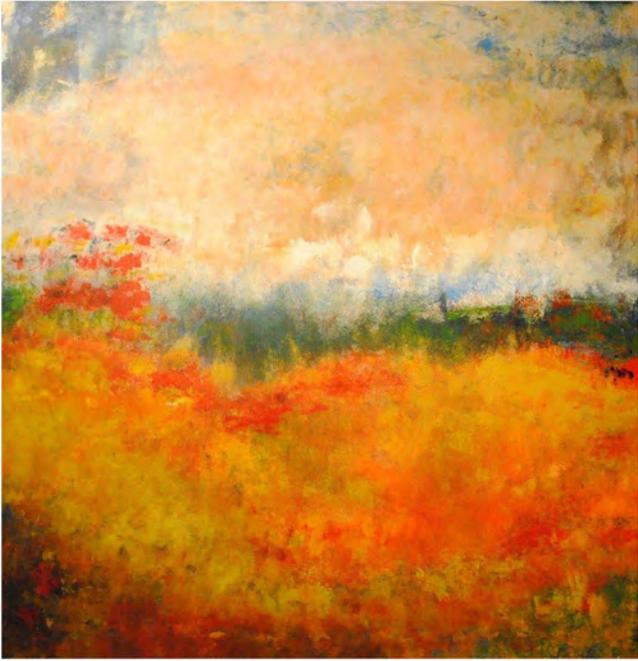






Mary Grace Svensson creates with vibrant splashes of color and bold, playful geometries.





Helen Svendgaard's paintings are vibrant studies in mood and texture, often straddling the line between expressionism and impressionism.





PINOY POWER ON THE PITCH

words by
Jenny Syquia Skarne | Stockholm

edited by
Stephanie Lindqvist

Two Filipina-Swedish soccer players pack a punch on the pitch and help their team to a first-place finish in the World Youth Soccer Cup!

There’s something incredible about watching the remarkable change that occurs in children when they play team sports. One moment my daughter is lying contentedly in bed, studying YouTube videos incessantly to improve her slime-making formulas and squishy-repair capabilities, then, the call to arms is announced: “Time to get ready for the game!” and with a yawn and a stretch she’s up and starts getting ready for battle.

Like a miniature Gladiator she adorns her “armor” of cleats, shin-guards and fiercely colored uniform, and rushes out onto the battleground where the transformation is complete. The team, pint-sized spitfire packages of energy, on the frontline of the dewy/snowy/frozen pitch (depending on the season in Sweden), allied in challenging foes and crushing enemies. Their individuality disappears and they morph into a single organism, moving in tandem, in a coach-choreographed dance toward, hopefully, victory. The transformation comes full circle only forty minutes later as she rests in the backseat of my soccer mom car, peaceful once again, feeding carrots to her Minecraft farm animals.



Opposite Page: Eleven year-olds of Filipino heritage Filippa Babes Skarne (left) and Abigail “Abi” Fallenius (right) at the soccer pitch.

Above: The World Youth Soccer Cup winning Djursholm’s Soccer Club team F07 with their coaches.

The story of the Djursholm Soccer Club girls team F07 (born in 2007 and aged 11) is a modern-day David vs Goliath.

All the girls on the team come from the unique community of Djursholm (pronounced Yersh-holm), a small town with a population of just 8,800 people that lies twelve quick minutes north of Stockholm. This small team from the very small town is exceptional, and in their short career, they've had remarkable success against clubs from huge cities. Behind these results is the combination of a unique set of circumstances brought together to create a dream team: a physically extraordinary batch of players, each with specific expertise and natural talents in certain positions; outstanding, dedicated coaches; overwhelmingly supportive families; and a nurturing community environment.

Sweden is unique in that the soccer association does not allow official scoring to be published until players are 12 years old. However, that doesn't stop people from counting and in the end everyone still knows the victorious and vanquished team. At the 2017 unofficial National Championship Halör Cup, Djursholm F07 emerged as the best team in Sweden (although they lost the final to Denmark). Regardless, the team bullishly left the tournament scoring a total 29 goals and conceding only 1. Pretty phenomenal. Djursholm F07 was also awarded Team of the Year in 2016 by their soccer club when they won the St Erik's Cup (the largest soccer cup in Stockholm) for their age group AND for the year older than them (they competed in both age groups at the tournaments simultaneously). In 2018, they

claimed the ultimate achievement - first place at the Gothia World Youth Cup, tied with China.

The Gothia World Youth Cup, most recently held in July 2018, is the world's largest junior soccer championship and was attended by 1750 teams from 80 countries. During the week-long tournament Djursholm played against many teams but certain matches were more significant because of the magnitude of the competition.

The Djursholm girls met fierce opposition in the game against JSSL Singapore, a club that is affiliated with the famed Arsenal and that hosts Asia's largest youth soccer championship. Singapore also has the advantage of sourcing their team from a population of 5,600,000 people. Result? Little Djursholm won.

Djursholm also competed against a team from Qiongzong, China, a mountainous region known for cultivating soccer players for five generations. Apparently, years of climbing the mountains have made them incredibly fit, and their reactions and reflexes are supposed to be razor sharp. At the end of the contest Djursholm emerged victorious.

Next, Djursholm met their toughest competitors so far: Shanghai's Jinshan Xingsta, an "academy" team, which means that their school focuses strictly on soccer training and producing elite soccer athletes. They can draw on an enormous Goliath-sized population of 24,000,000 people to source the best of the best players. In complete contrast to the tiny Djursholm Soccer Club which has just one large and one small field where the team practices for 4.5 hours every week, Shanghai's team, which trains for two hours EVERYDAY, has

dozens of soccer fields at their disposal.

As mentioned earlier, the Gothia Cup and the Swedish Soccer Association do not allow results to be displayed at the girls' age, but anyone who can count can add up the points of the matches and Djursholm emerged triumphant in a shared first place position with Shanghai's Jinshan Xingsta. At the tournament's close, both FC Djursholm and Jinshan Xingsta each won six matches and lost one finishing with 18 points each, an outstanding achievement against the toughest possible opposition. The final results of the 2018 Gothia World Youth Cup for girls aged 11: 1) FC Djursholm, 18 points (out of 21 possible) together with Jinshan Xingsta, 18 points, 3) JSSL Singapore, 16 points.

Apart from being endowed with unique abilities, the Djursholm F07 team is also partly driven by two Swedish-Filipina players, Abigail (Abi) Fallenius and my daughter Filippa Babes Skarne, both aged 11. Abi started playing soccer at the age of 6 because her big sister Hana played and she accompanied her. Abi's favorite thing about soccer, in addition to winning, of course, is the team spirit and the rewards that come from her physical and mental efforts including happy endorphins!

Abi is the daughter of Swede Peter Fallenius and Filipina Juliet who hails from Banaue in Ifugao Province, Luzon - which is famed for its rice terraces. Juliet has lived in Sweden for 17 years and maintains Filipino traditions with the Filipino



Abi practices her powerful kicks.

Cultural Association of Stockholm, food, music and traditional dances. Peter has been to the Philippines several times, at first for work and then with family, and has fond memories of a friend's wedding in Nasugbo and a New Year's Eve in Baguio.

"It is a big country, a beautiful country. Lots of opportunities thanks to nice, hard working people," says Peter.

Filippa Babes started playing soccer at the age of 7, a few years after most of her teammates, but took to the game immediately. She inherits her athletic and muscular frame from her father, Filip Skarne, as well as her speed and stamina. She plays the role of striker, responsible for hammering the ball into the net. Filippa has been to the Philippines a handful of times for family occasions, most recently to watch her big sister Cloie represent Sweden as Miss Earth Sweden in the international pageant, and of course Filip was there too. Filip's favorite place in the Philippines is a tie between the enormous private island in El Nido of our recently deceased friend Eduardo Vaca, who, when not using it privately rented it to networks worldwide to film "Survivor", and my family's ancestral home in the Spanish colonial town of Vigan, The Syquia Mansion, now a museum and a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The magic of the team is not only in the players of course: if the players are the ingredients, then the coaches are the chefs. The secret sauce of

Djursholm F07 lies in the fact that it is coached by three amazing individuals, two of whom are volunteer dads: Jonus Bartholdson (father of player Fabienne), Martin Roos (father of player Mathilda) and Robert Assadkhan, who works at a bank full-time and coaches because of his love for the game. There's a passion from these three that you can't put a price on and a dedication that goes beyond anything you could ever find in a 9 to 5 job. I'd say it's like having your own business: it's

a labor of love and personal pride that is with you 24-7.

Coach Robert played at the elite level until he was 18 years old when he started taking coaching courses. He's now in his 11th year as a youth coach. Robert wanted to work with children and to develop young players.

"I had very good coaches myself and wanted to pay

it back in a way. I knew it would develop me as a person also," says Robert. He also shed some light on what makes this team so special. "I came back to the Djursholm club after my session in Djurgården (a prominent Swedish soccer club) and had a few offers on the table. I was offered to coach 16 and 17 year olds at the elite level, both girls and boys, but I wanted something else. I didn't feel the thrill and motivation that I had earlier. When F07 turned up as an offer, I immediately felt my motivation come back! To work with the girls from an early stage and be able to develop and prepare them for 11-a-side games and higher levels of soccer was really appealing to me. This was a good choice as these

The magic of the team is not only in the players of course: if the players are the ingredients, then the coaches are the chefs.



Filippa continues to sharpen her skills.

girls are fantastic! Not only are they very talented, some of them easily the best in Sweden, but they have also given me the joy and happiness of coaching soccer again. Of course, we win a lot - and it's fun to win - but it's not only that: the feelings of friendship, support and always wanting to make progress and learn new things are fantastic!"

Dad coaches Jonus and Martin decided together to take over the responsibilities of coaching when they saw their daughters' team. They both volunteer their time after work and during weekends to train and coach the team. The F07 is

the only team at the Djursholm Soccer Club that is being coached by dads.

Coach Jonus played professional soccer as a forward in the Allsvenskan (Premier League in Sweden) for three years.

"I have had many coaches during my soccer career, some really good ones, some bad ones. I am genuinely interested in helping people to grow, more than just the game itself, so when my daughter started playing matches four years ago, I offered my services to the club to take responsibility for the team. I felt I could help

develop them not only as players but also as people,” says Jonus.

Coach Martin Roos started his soccer career at the age of 6 and by the time he was 12 was recruited to play for Sweden’s biggest club - AIK. He played in the Junior Swedish Premier League until he, unfortunately, injured both knees at the age of 18 which was sadly the untimely end of his soccer career. He had no plans of being a children’s coach until he saw the team at their first training session and recognized their talent and potential. He and Jonus decided that they wanted to be a part of it.

“First and foremost, this batch is exceptionally talented, but they also have fantastic cohesion

and respect each other as individuals. Last but not least, they undoubtedly have the best coaches one can find,” Martin says with a wink.

The familiar saying goes, “It takes a village to raise a child” and Djursholm, with its sleepy one-block-long main street, is a small village. In the US where I was raised, to emphasize the smallness of a place, we call it a “one traffic-light town”. Djursholm doesn’t even have a traffic light in its town center (there are a couple scattered near schools to slow cars down). People often wonder if there is something special in the water in Djursholm or is it true what the recent best-selling Swedish book about the suburb titled: “Djursholm - Making of Leaders” (Mikael Holmqvist) hypothesizes: even though the town is small,

Not all serious training:
the girls have some fun
on the pitch!



the population is mainly made up of successful industry leaders, movers and shakers – many whose families have lived there for generations – that sustain a community that raises its children to be like them, quite simply put: to be winners. Djursholm is to Stockholm what Greenwich is to New York City, and Beverly Hills is to Los Angeles: a small, tight-knit enclave of leaders that through hard work, networking and a sense of togetherness, help their children thrive.

The cherry on top of the team’s remarkable success is an extraordinary level of parental involvement. Parent meetings are standing-room only events that at first occupied a conference room in the clubhouse, but now have had to move into the cafeteria for lack of space. Sidelines at away games are well represented with cheering parents, siblings and grandparents and home games, of course, even more so. The world’s greatest athletes come from very different socio-economic backgrounds (Pele from poverty, Ronaldo from poverty, the Williams sisters ‘Straight Outta Compton’ in LA, the list goes on and on) and while there is a lot to be said about how birth month can influence athletic abilities, there are always exceptions. But one thing the majority of successful athletes have in common is this: truly involved parents that encourage their children’s passion and provide a support system to help their participation in the sport. Whether driving them here and there, making sure their uniform and equipment are ready, taking part in supporting their schedules,

But one thing
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being part of the planning, or just being on the sidelines and cheering them on to victory. Family involvement, or the lack thereof, is hugely influential and plays a significant role in the success or failure of athletes. Djursholm F07 has enormous parental involvement. At one tournament abroad last year our team had about 15 parents and siblings along and two mom team managers (myself and my amazing co-manager Marie Elmlund - mother of player Julia) with the 12 players - in stark contrast to another team that had just 2 parents with them.

The convergence of all of these key advantages has provided the perfect spark for the little dream team in Djursholm and the future looks very promising. There’s talk of possibly participating in Asia’s biggest soccer cup in Singapore where they might meet teams from the Philippines, or perhaps staying closer to home and competing in Barcelona -- and there’s always the chance of playing in the Gothia World Youth Cup next year.

Until then, the girls will keep on doing what they do best - being kids and having fun and playing hard. As they share unforgettable moments together with their team they’re being meticulously transformed both physically and mentally every day to be victorious both on and off the field. We’ve become an extended family of sorts: coaches like extra parents, teammates like siblings, and hopefully, team managers like me and Marie, as extra moms. **R&W**



THE COACHES SPEAK ABOUT ABI, FILIPPA AND THE PHILIPPINES:

About Filippa

“Our own energy source Filippa! Probably the best offensive player I have ever seen or worked with in this age. Has a natural gaze on the goal and is extremely confident and safe with the ball.”

Robert

“Filippa is one of the most technically skilled players in the team and our best goal scorer. She is fast, she regains possession of the ball from the opponents a lot and is very skilled in passing and breakthroughs. She also shoots well with both feet.”

Jonus

“Filippa is a very happy, considerate girl with a sparkle in her eye! She is a typical striker: fast, technical, and a fantastic shot!”

Martin

About Abi

“Abi is a well-educated player, very tough to play with 1vs1 and often has a physical advantage, very flexible in her movements.”

Robert

“Abi is a hardworking and intelligent player. She reads the game well, she passes well, and she has a strong breakthrough capacity coming from behind, either from a defense position or as a wing midfielder.”

Jonus

“Abi is a very happy and sweet girl. Her strength as a soccer player is that she is very stable, confident in stealing the ball, and is skilled at passing.”

Martin

About the Philippines:

“The Philippines is a dream vacation. I actually studied a bit about the Philippine freedom fighters Lapu-Lapu and José Rizal in my political studies.”

Robert

“I’d really like to go to the Philippines one day. I’ve heard from people who have been there that it is incredibly beautiful!”

Martin

“I would love to go to the Philippines! The climate is warm, it is a great recreational place, and there are lovely people. The economy is also picking up.”

Jonus

THE GIRLS SPEAK ABOUT THE PHILIPPINES

From Filippa

"My favorite place in the Philippines - My favorite place is the beach in El Nido and the Boracay Shangri-La

My favorite food - Chicken Adobo!

My favorite things to do - I love to see my family! My mother has 46 first cousins on my Lolo's side, so I have so many relatives!"

From Abi

"My favorite place in the Philippines: Banaue where my mother is from, and our home in Manila

My favorite food: Adobo (or as she calls it, "Mammas special chicken") and dried mango

My favorite things to do: I'm very musical and sing in a choir and play flute. That definitely comes from my Philippine genes! The combination of sports and music/singing improves me both mentally and physically."



Filippa with mother Jenny and Abi with mother Juliet.

Jenny Syquia Skarne is the Djursholm F07 team manager or "momager" as she prefers. "Never in my wildest of dreams did I ever envision myself being a soccer mom, and definitely not a soccer team manager, but I love it!" The Filipina-American is the daughter of the recently deceased Victor Syquia from Ilocos Sur and American Susan Syquia. Jenny lived in the Philippines for several years working as a commercial model, starring in several movies with Fernando Poe, Joey de Leon, Charlene Gonzales and Ina Raymundo, and hosting the daytime TV show Eat Bulaga. She started her writing career at Vogue in New York City working for Anna Wintour, and then founded and was Editor-in-Chief of Bride Philippines. She is the author of the soon to be released children's illustrated book, "Cloie's Be Yourself Style" that you can read more about at www.JennySyquia.com.

Check out Filippa's soccer YouTube channel: Soccer Girl Filippa Skarne

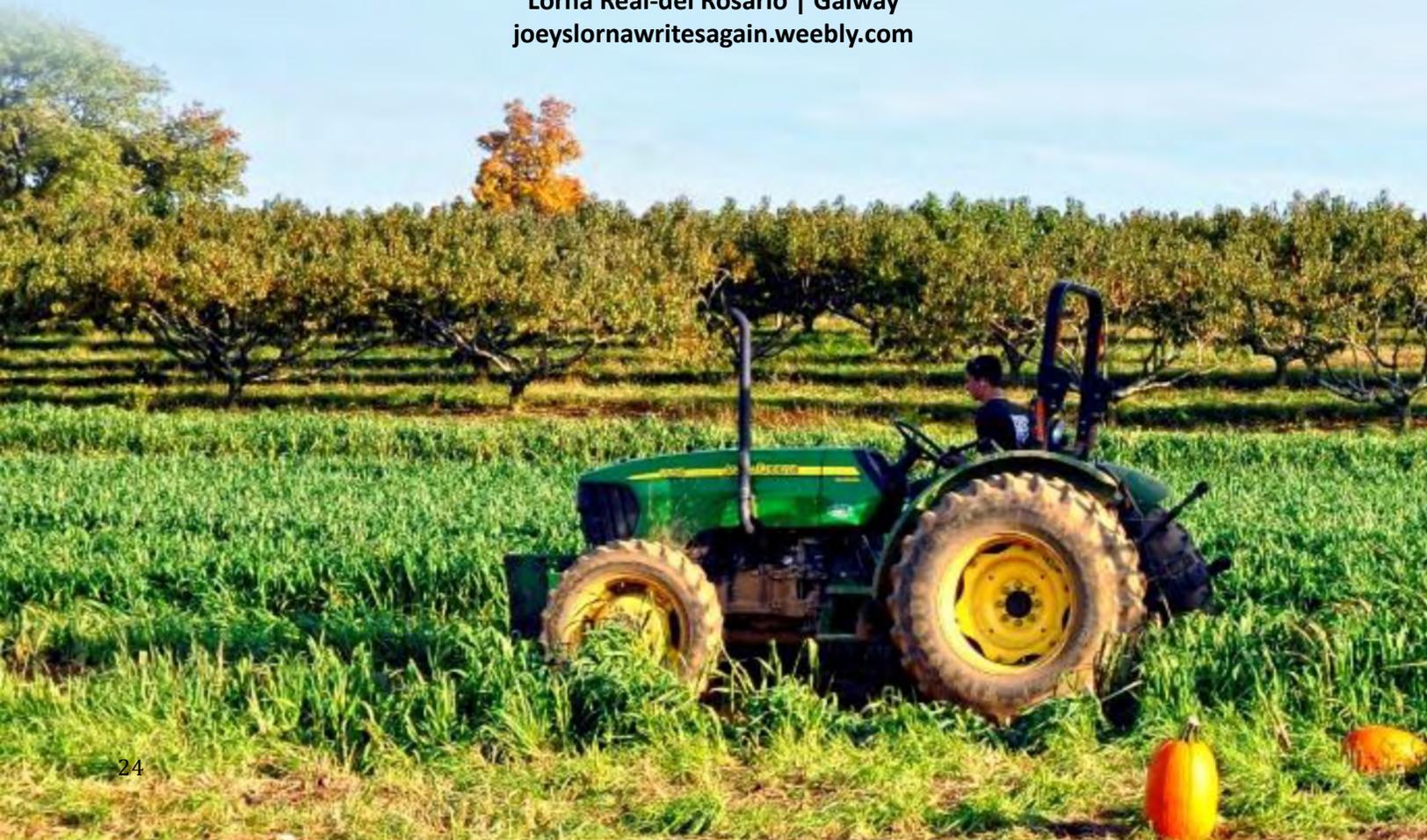
Learn more about the charity supported by the Djursholm Soccer Club: www.HandInHand.nu

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

THE PUMPKIN PATCH

NEW JERSEY U.S.A.

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I've been very fortunate with my job. Apart from families and friends, it is something that I always thank the One above. I remember years back, shortly after my college graduation, a palm reader in Mactan (an island in Cebu) told me that I would be very lucky with my work and employers. I would be able to travel the world. True enough, all the 5 companies that employed me carried travel perks with them, both domestic and international. Of all those business travels, the best tht I had was when Joey, my husband, accompanied and stayed with me for 6 months during my assignment in Pennsylvania, USA. There are many travel pieces to write about our life in the USA; where we experienced the many firsts of our lives together.

In New Jersey, I got re-united with two of my best buddies in college: Aura and Melinda. Together with them and their families, we had our first pumpkin patch experience.

What is a pumpkin patch?

Literally-speaking, a "patch" is a piece of land, a field, or a garden where a fruit or vegetable grows. In this case, it is pumpkin. It's a term you often hear around Halloween time. Pumpkins are gathered, carved, lit with candles to create a Jack O'Lantern.

Irish Origin of Halloween

Jack O'Lantern It is said that this tradition originated from Ireland. The large turnips, potatoes, and beets became an early canvas because pumpkins did not exist in Ireland. According to Irish folklore, a young blacksmith named "Stingy Jack" invited the devil to have a drink with him. But since he lost his money to gambling, Jack tricked the devil to turn himself into a coin to pay for the drinks. Jack never bought the drinks. Instead, he tucked the devil-coin into his wallet, along with a crucifix thereby trapping the devil. When the devil promised not to take his soul upon his death, Stingy Jack removed the crucifix and freed the devil.



A good, old-fashioned hay ride.



Fun times at a corn maze.

When Jack died, Saint Peter barred him from Heaven because of his mischievous deeds. He was also refused entry into hell because of the deal he made with the devil. This left Jack's soul wandering the dark hills of Ireland. Since then, the people of Ireland started putting the lamps in their windows to ward off evil spirits and Stingy Jack himself.

The Irish brought the Jack O'Lantern tradition when they migrated to America. As pumpkins grow abundantly in the region, they have carved pumpkin instead of the traditional root crops.

What happens during "Pumpkin Patch"?

If you have never been to a pumpkin patch, you don't know what you are missing! Not all farms are the same, but here are some bits that you can expect:

HAY RIDES

Hay rides are fun! It's your shuttle into the field where you will pick your pumpkins, though you can also choose to walk out to the patch yourself. We took the tractor-pulled hay ride, while sitting in a comfortable stack of straw. Be prepared for a wobbly ride.

FARM ANIMALS

Since it's integrated with a farm, you can feed the animals and ride on the horses.

FARM TO TABLE

Grab a basket and stock up on local produce. The farm we went to was selling fresh tomatoes, different varieties of sweet corn, apples, pies and pastries.

THE PERFECT PUMPKIN

Get ready with your wagon to pick and carry your own pumpkin. An average pumpkin can

weigh 8-15 pounds while a large variety can weigh 15-25 pounds. If you can handle it, you can try picking a giant pumpkin that can weigh 50-100 pounds.

Finding your perfect pumpkin depends on the kind of carving that you want to make. What's important is to make sure it is stable by putting it on a flat surface. Also, feel the pumpkin's skin.

It should be firm all over and does not have soft spots. If it already has, then it may be on its way to rotting. Of course, since it's Halloween, go for an orange pumpkin!

Our Jack O'Lantern

The farm priced their pumpkins by the pound. The ones we picked were weighed and paid at the end of our activity. We took 4 medium-sized, easy to carve ones. We scooped and scraped out the inner meat of the pumpkin.

They say that you can cook and eat all parts of your pumpkin. From the seeds, pulp, flesh, to its skin. You can bake them into bread, puree in the soup, or roast as a healthy treat. Some even suggests using them as part of your beauty regimen. Below, you can see how our first Jack O'Lantern looked like.

This was our first ever Pumpkin Patch and it did not disappoint us. It was a great way to spend time together and get into the Halloween mood. For us, it was a wonderful way to celebrate the colours of autumn. *R&W*



STRANGE SPACES

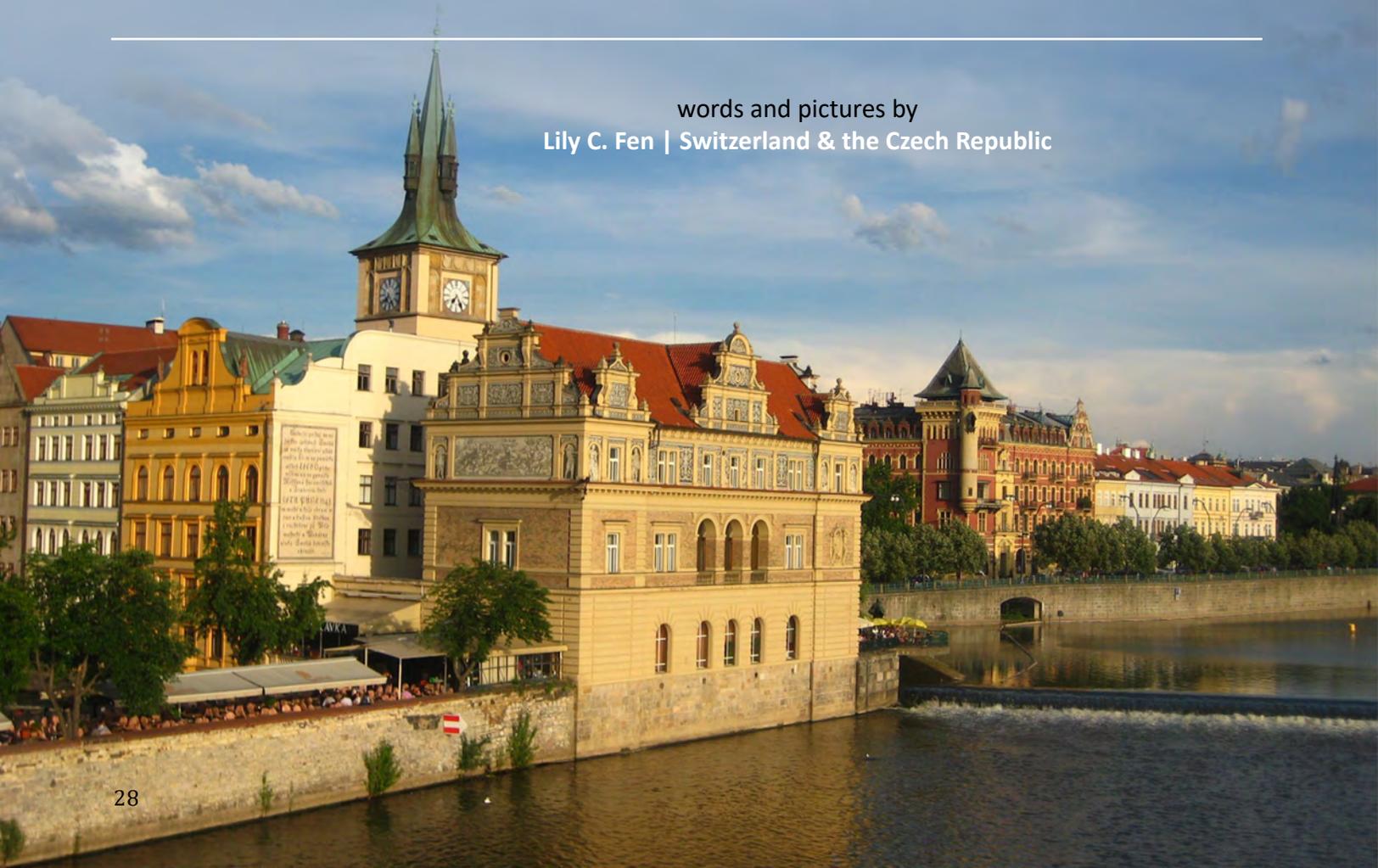
A REINTRODUCTION

What does it mean to cross an entire ocean and begin a new life?

Continuing where we left off from R&W's May 2018 issue, I'm taking you to a city where beer is cheaper than water. For all of you who have experienced being caught between two

cultures, STRANGE SPACES is going to be a relevant read. In this issue, see three more pieces from my collection of essays about living in Prague and Manila. We'll look at booze, public transport, and languages this time around. And somewhere along the way, we may just find parts of ourselves that we thought we'd lost.

words and pictures by
Lily C. Fen | Switzerland & the Czech Republic



EXCERPTS FROM THE CHAPTERS FOUR TO SIX OF STRANGE SPACES

WHERE BEER IS CHEAPER THAN WATER

The inescapable staple for the Czech people is beer. It is to the Czech as rice is to the Filipino. “Kumain ka na ba?” (Translation: Have you eaten already?) is the common greeting among Filipinos say when they see each other, instead of the English expression, “How are you?” or in Czech “Jak se máte?”

The Czechs consider beer to be their “liquid bread,” the one thing on the menu that can satisfy all cravings and satiate thirst. For Czechs, beer is what feeds and nourishes them, that which allows them hours of talk time in the hospoda (which means “bar” in English) with their best friends or colleagues.

Filipinos, on the other hand, live in the land of San Mig Light. My Czech confidantes have considered it a watered-down tippie with a blue and silver label slapped on it that the yuppies of Makati City drink all over Greenbelt. It tastes like water and waiters usually pour it over a glass full of ice, according to Czechs who lived and worked in Manila.

The land of beer in Manila is ruled by San Miguel Brewery, and those who want the

serious stuff go for that dark brown bottle—the bitter Pale Pilsen. This beer gets its name from a town in the Czech Republic called Plzeň, where the famous Pilsner Urquell Brewery is located. You can get a tour of the place and find out everything you need to know about this golden lager. As far as Filipino beer favourites go for this writer, the chocolatey-caramely taste of the dark lager Cerveza Negra produced by San Miguel Brewery would be the poison of choice.

On the other side of the world, Czechs stumble over themselves to have me try their country’s lagers. They are proud of their beers and have giant brand names throughout the small nation that sport classic tastes for a variety of demographics as well as independently-owned micro-breweries (Nota Bene or U Fleků Restaurants in Prague 1 offer some local brews that vary in potency, texture and flavour).

I embarked on my Czech beer journey by beginning with the sweet Krušovice, trying both the light and dark versions. This was a fair beginning for Filipina me.

Where two cultures converged

Despite all my talk of Filipino beers, it was a last resort for me when out painting the town red in Metro Manila. I *did*, however, try a Czech micro-brewery that was once located in Manila's *Grappas*. Several years ago, this was the place where two cultures converged for me: I was in Manila, having my very first sip of a Czech *Weizen* (actually German for "wheat") beer, taking in the sweet fruity tones of this frothy beverage.

Pivo Praha Microbrewery in Makati was the place to go for a taste of different kinds of Czech lager: from the original Czech pilsner to the aforementioned *Weizen* beer, as well as a dark lager with rich caramel undertones. *Pivo*, incidentally, is the Czech word for "beer."

I mentioned earlier that having a San Mig Light in Manila meant pouring it over ice. I discovered that for the Czechs, this was a big no-no. Beer was serious business to them—they have the highest rate of consumption of beer per capita in the entire world (higher figures than in Germany).

Beer was treated with reverence in Central Europe just as much as the Italians or French fancied their wine. Pure and unadulterated, beer in the Czech Republic must be served ice-cold, preferably straight up as a draft (rather than bottled). There *must be no ice* in the glass. The notion of diluting one's hops-filled drink with ice was tantamount to beer blasphemy for this lager-chugging crowd, as I so witnessed when taking out several Central Europeans out for a night of Filipino beer drinking.

The Old Man's Drink

The *Pilsner Urquell* is what I like to dub the "old man's drink."

Most traditional beer-bellied Czech men love to have a bitter *Pilsner Urquell*. I would say this is reminiscent of the Philippine *San Miguel Pale Pilsen*, in terms of its bitter aftertaste.

There may be the stereotypical brandy-swilling, cigar-tooting, pot-bellied *Manileño* in his fifties; but in the Czech Republic, you can see any man (from *any* demographic) guzzling down litres of this amber liquid at any time of the year.

Beer was cheaper than water in the Czech Republic, at least in restaurants. That should illustrate how beer is perceived in this part of the world.

Beer versus Water

In the Philippines, where humidity is as high as the temperature is feverish, having free rounds of tap or filtered water at any establishment is expected. It is considered a courtesy in the Philippines to be served this refreshing, non-caloric staple anywhere one goes.

Not so in the Czech Republic.

I was astounded that they had three different kinds of water on the menu – still (*neperlivá*), mildly sparkling (*jemně perlivá*) and sparkling (*perlivá*).

Water was a business commodity in these parts, with smaller towns like *Karlovy vary* boasting natural springs and spas running under the earth. These waters were known for being high in calcium, magnesium, and other minerals and were famous (and continue to be) for its

curative properties.

It seemed evident that the predominant choice for folks was 500 ml of the golden stuff rather than water.

Whether one had a *Staropramen*, a *Pilsner Urquell*, or the ubiquitous, commonplace tasting *Gambrinus*, beer was what any rational human being would have in his hand. It was affordable and could be nursed for quite a length of time before having to order another glass.

Honourable Mentions

Honourable mentions in the beer capital of the world to me are: the independently run brewery called *Bernard* that offers both light and dark lagers. Not too sweet on either drink, with a mild flavour to each. The man behind *Bernard* wanted the beer to speak for itself; he insists on not investing in fancy advertising campaigns.

Another is the orange-flavoured *Fénix*, served in a tall, curvy glass with a white phoenix painted on it, and a slice of orange on the rim.

Enjoying a hefty glass of Bernard's dark lager at U maleho glena

Lastly, a light, fluffy lager called Velvet, also served in a tall slim glass, can be found at the *U malého Gléna* (which means “By the little glen”) pub. This is the same place where you can have access to a glass of *Bernard*.

Of Beer Baths and Liquid Bread

Czechs are so crazy for beer, they even invented the *Beer Spa*, where you can step into a warm bath full of hops and *řezané pivo* — in English, a “mixed” beer made up of both light and dark lagers.

Be warned — beers are cheap, but they are high in sugar and calorie content. No wonder the Czechs have dubbed beer as “liquid bread.” If a man is poor and only has a few Czech *koruny* to his name, he chooses a tall glass of brewed gold instead of a slice of bread.



INTO THOSE TINY SPACES

There is that daily need that affects all of our lives: public transport.

Manila, to begin with, was a crowded metropolis with a lack of infrastructure to support not only its ever-expanding population, but also the growth of the business centres in concentrated areas. Put these factors together and you had the arteries of the metro choked with far too many automobiles at certain times of the day and night.

The only time I ever took the MRT (Metro Rail Transit system) that traversed EDSA (Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, one of the main arteries of automobile traffic in Metro Manila) was when it was launched sometime around the new millennium. It was for a photo shoot for the U. P. Theater Council and took place on the train itself. That was not even a real commute.

By year 2007, I had embarked on my graduate studies in my alma mater, The University of the Philippines. The colour-coding car scheme was in effect, preventing me from driving my vehicle every Thursday (each plate number corresponded to a certain day that a car could not be taken out on the road).

My Czech boyfriend, who would later become my husband, took the MRT more often than I

did. In fact, he took it to work everyday. Why did I not take it? He would ask. In response, I braved it and took the MRT on a weekly basis throughout my graduate studies career.

Manila was a sweaty, sticky place with high humidity, but odd hours climbing up to the Ayala Avenue MRT station were acceptable. Attempting to get into the same MRT station during rush hour, however, became a feat that was nearly impossible. A line of people snaked through the lobby as security guards waved around a wooden stick into every single person's bags (dating back to incidents such as the Rizal Day Bombings on December 30, 2000, where the highest number of casualties was on board the LRT, or Light Rail Transit Line, which cut through Old Manila). My city was not in a good situation when fatal explosives were known to go off city trains. Bomb security checks became the norm.

I hardly ever braved the tricky routes of the *jeepney* circuits of Metro Manila, despite being a local who grew up surrounded by *jeepneys* as a mode of public transport. *Jeepneys* were originally fashioned out of abandoned US military jeeps from WWII. They were transformed by locals into colourful vehicles for public transport, usually within cities. These rides followed certain routes that involved

several stops throughout an assigned area. A conductor was responsible for shouting out stops and putting up signs at the front of the vehicle, showing which route it was going. This type of public transport was probably not the most navigable for foreign travellers, even if they would like the adventure of riding in one.

I once came across a foreign man's attempt at mapping out the *jeepney* routes in Manila and it looked like a child's messy doodle across a blank page.

Still, there was the poetic experience of getting in one, stooping inside the cramped space and handing your fare to the next passenger, saying, "*Bayad po,*" with the understanding that your payment would be passed down by passengers to the driver at the front of the vehicle.

For all its inefficiency in route and schedule prediction (jeepneys tended to depart from the beginning of a route once the entire vehicle was full, thereby remaining dependent on the accidental volume of passengers, not on a scheduled timetable), there was something beautiful about the jeepney that was a metaphor for the Filipino people.

Filipinos can get into those tiny spaces, making themselves as small as possible. Getting into a jeepney ride meant relying on the stranger next to you, skin coming into contact with another's, almost smelling the shampoo in that someone's hair. Add to that the collaborative, unspoken understanding that all passengers work

together to move change and fares back and forth between the driver and any new person getting on for a ride.

Filipinos are a malleable people, able to adjust to the havoc of every storm that cuts through the archipelago like a banshee, able to give way to others who come along (in history, in terms of physical space, in interpersonal relations at the office).

Another noteworthy factor to commuting in Manila was that bus or jeepney stops could be in a state of flux.

The passenger wielded power over the driver, with the latter struggling to meet a quota for the day. He stopped at any place to pick up commuters. A man has to put food on the table, after all.

With the jeepney operator at the mercy of the traveller, the system was left to run amok, kowtowing to countless paying customers and their multifarious needs.

Prague Precision

In Prague, it was not so.

The system was painstakingly precise that all I had to do was look at a piece of paper (posted on a red stand next to every tram or bus stop) to see the schedule of what bus or tram I needed to take. This printed-out route schedule could inform me about the time any given vehicle was to arrive, down to the very minute.

I witnessed other passengers in Prague running after buses. Public transport was precise and waited for no one.

Thankfully, most rides had an arrival frequency of every two to five minutes, depending on the area of the city. With the system and schedule intact, hardly any deviations to these were made. Transport ran like clockwork in Prague.

The honour scheme set in place by *Dopravní podnik hl. m. Prahy* (DPP in short, the centralized transportation system of Prague) astounded me as well.

There were no daily checks on transit tickets of passengers. Instead, there were random checks done by conductors. They would suddenly appear at a train or tram cab, flash a golden badge at the passengers together with their electronic reader and see if transit cards were valid for that day.

Clogged lines at the underground Metro were practically non-existent in Prague, thanks to this. Every passenger was required his own measure of honesty and making sure he possessed a valid ticket for whatever ride he took. A conductor could check anyone at any time.

Teenage hoodlums once got caught in front of me. They tried to make a run for it, with the conductor remaining unfazed as he pulled the transport ticket violators by the collar before

the tram doors closed. There was no escape for the monetary punishment, a fine of Czk800 (about USD40 at the time of writing) the last time I checked.

Back to sweltering Manila. One can surmise that those precious seconds a security guard in Metro Manila uses up to swish that wooden stick around a person's bag, multiplied by about one hundred people who need to take the train within one hour, become a waiting disaster in one of the busiest areas of the capital.

A PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GUIDE TO MANILA AND PRAGUE

If I were to chart the advantages and disadvantages to public transport in Manila versus those of commuting in Prague, it might look something like the following.

ADVANTAGES

Manila

Drivers adjusted to passengers' needs as much as they were able, in terms of where to get off or where people could get on. They were considerate and served the passenger.

Prague

The system was incredibly meticulous. If the schedule said it arrived at 08:15, it would be there at that time. There were no renegade stops. Because of this precision throughout the entire system of public transportation, issues of slow-moving vehicles and clogged roads were eradicated.

DISADVANTAGES

Manila

A person could be waiting at the onset of a jeepney route from anywhere between five to forty-five minutes, depending on how long it took to fill up the entire vehicle. No schedule was adhered to. One was at the mercy of chance, waiting on passengers to arrive and fill up the car. There was also no stringent plan when it came to stops. This in turn created a ripple effect, contributing to the slow movement of vehicles.

Prague

No driver waited for anyone, even if a person were jogging after a bus. It often paid to be present before the bus was set to leave (the website dpp.cz lists the schedule of buses, trams, and trains). Once in a while, the bus arrived several minutes late. By then, I had already gotten so spoiled with Prague precision that I began to complain and harrumph, "Where's my bus?! It was supposed to be here two minutes ago!"

THE "IT" THING TO DO

I had never encountered the term "language attitude" until my colleague (now Dr. T. G. Roh) at graduate studies invited me to her Master of Arts thesis about the subject (we were majoring in English Language Studies).

What is a language attitude?

It is simply what the name implies: it is our attitude about a language. How do Filipinos feel about English? What is their opinion about the Filipino language? What do we think of these languages in relation to each other?

Both Filipino and English are recognized as the official languages of the Philippines, but it is safe to say that English is often perceived as the language of social mobility, the kind of language that aids in acquiring better paying jobs and allowing a Filipino citizen access to working in wealthier nations.

Many speakers still perceive Filipino as a language that does not have great social influence. And yet I view it as a language of the heart, one that binds a people wherever they may be.

Say, a few words are exchanged between a *doña* lining up at the bank next to the *manong* in *tsinelas* sent to run an errand about a paycheck: the insertion of a Filipino word into that brief interaction binds these two together, lessening the gap that speaking English can create amongst social classes in the Philippines.

Czech Language Attitudes

In contrast, how do Czechs feel about their own language? What have they felt about the German language, which Czech nobility spoke during the Austro-Hungarian Empire (from 1867-1918)?

Since moving to the Czech Republic, I had embarked on an informal education, by immersion, about the language attitudes of the Czechs.

I will never forget the day I went into the recording studio to be the voice-over (English version) of 19th century Czech author, *Karolina Světa*, for a non-profit organization's project about the writer and her hometown.

I was tasked to read some of the words she had written from the 19th century in English, narrating how she had lost her ability to write in her native tongue, Czech, as soon as she was sent to a German-speaking school.

She started writing about how she was a child that belonged to no land, as she did not speak her mother tongue well. She spoke it only with effort, and often with mistakes. She was now equipped with German words, the language in which she wrote.

Her verbalizing how she had lost the language of her childhood to the language of the empire around her, and what was expected of her as a member of the noble class made me think of present-day Philippines and the landscape of Filipino attitudes towards languages.

The official national language, dubbed Filipino, is made up of Tagalog as its base (most speakers refer to the vernacular as "Tagalog," rather than its official name, "Filipino"), with the rest of Filipino composed of borrowed words from Spanish and English. Tagalog happened to be the tongue of the seat of political power during the onset of the Hispanic era.

Was I the Filipina version of *Karolina Světa*? She wrote in the language her parents had sent her to learn at a premiere school, the language of those in political power over her own people.

In a similar fashion, my Chinese-Filipino parents made every effort to ensure that my future was brighter by making sure I learned English, not Fookien, in school. Learning Tagalog would just come naturally from living in Manila, the language around me at every turn, they figured.

As a third-generation Chinese-Filipina, I made every effort to learn this second language, English, to the best of my ability. I spent countless hours as a child watching *Sesame Street*, and had a natural inclination to imitate the sounds I heard in movies like *Forrest Gump* or *Independence Day* while growing up.

I even got in trouble in school for sounding "too American," when the principal said she wanted me to sound like "a Filipino citizen who spoke English well." I received a similar reminder from the radio station I worked for years after that grade school incident.

The late Singaporean writer *Goh Poh Seng* once wrote, "I had decided to write in English, an adopted tongue foisted upon me by the quirks of history." I identified with these words, and perhaps many members of former British or American colonies might say the same about themselves and the languages in which they write.

Some, like myself, have adopted a tongue that was not the language of their families several generations back. They have taken this other language as their own and have remoulded it into their own English, utilizing this vehicle for Asian purposes, reclaiming this seemingly foreign language. It is “decolonizing English,” as several linguists emphasized, so the University of the Philippines taught me through linguists such as Dr. Milagros C. Laurel and the late Dr. Maria Clara Ravina.

A challenge

Half a world away, the likes of *Franz Kafka* and other Czech intellectuals began to meet in cafes and pubs. They proposed that Czech was to be the fashionable language of their time. The Czech people revived their dying mother tongue in the 19th century, at a time when it had fallen in disregard. Peasants were left as speakers of Czech during that period.

These intellectuals, philosophers, writers, and noblemen brought the language back. They breathed new life into it, inventing words or borrowing from German when necessary. They adjusted spelling and pronunciation to “Czechify” a non-Czech word, such as the Czech word for “bag”, *taška*, from German *Tasche*.

It is not my personal battle to reclaim Tagalog and make fashionable our own language, looking to the history of the Czech language as a model.

But using the language I have chosen as my medium, it is certainly my job to point out to readers that it is time that Filipinos and those interested in *Filipiniana* begin to reconstruct ongoing attitudes and viewpoints of Philippine languages and make that the “it” thing to do.

That is my challenge to all Filipinos and my invitation to our foreign readers—to learn this language that winds its way around more than 7,000 islands. *R&W*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lily C. Fen has written feature essays and Filipino fantasy fiction for *Quarterly Literary Review Singapore*, *The Local Switzerland*, *La Isla* and *Asian Dragon*, among others. She earned her MA degree in English Language Studies from the University of the Philippines and co-edited a book on Filipino-Swiss migration entitled *Bending without Breaking:*

Thirteen Women's Stories of Migration and Resilience. She recently translated Josef Čapek's beloved Czech children's book *O pejskovi a kočičce* into Filipino, entitled *Si Aso at Si Pusa: Paano Nilang Nilinis Ang Sahig*. She loves the sea and will always be a storyteller. She resides in Switzerland and is working on her first novel.



Ambassador Franz Jessen of the Delegation of the EU in the Philippines with Chairperson Liza Diño of the Film Development Council of the Philippines.

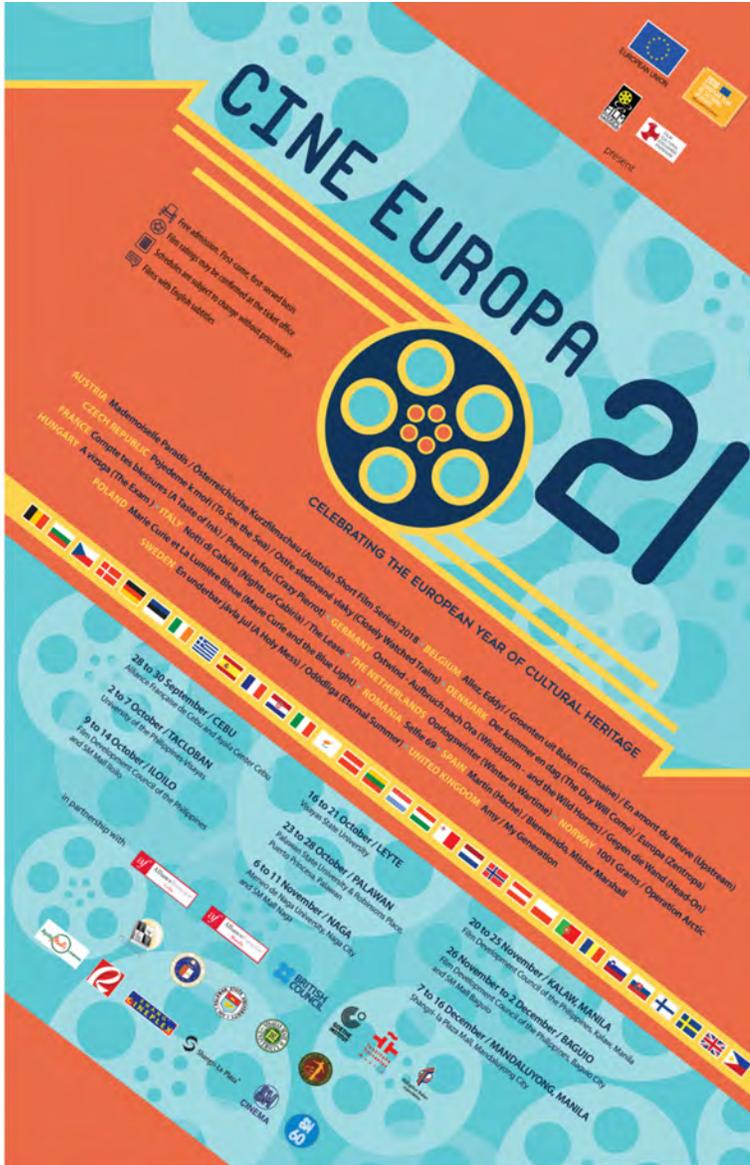
NEWS

The 21st Cine Europa Opens.

with reports from
Marthy Angue | Manila

Cine Europa, the country’s biggest film festival, opened its 21st year on September 27, 2018 at Circa 1900, Alliance Francaise de Cebu and the Ayala Center in Cebu City. This is the first time the festival is beginning its tour outside of Metro Manila in 16 years, an initiative noted by the organizers to be in recognition of the vibrant cultural landscape of the Visayan Region. Cine Europa is presented by the European Union’s Delegation in the Philippines, the Film Development Council of the Philippines, the Embassies and Cultural Organizations of many EU member states, as well as a number of schools and film-screening venues across the country.

Twenty-eight films from fifteen European Union member states (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, and Sweden) as well as Norway and the United Kingdom make up the Festival’s silver screen smorgasbord. The 1953 comedy *Bienvenido Mr. Marshall*, the tale of a sleepy Andalusian town whipped to life by the American-led post-WWII reconstruction of Europe, was screened for the press by the Spanish delegation as a sampler of things to come. Virtually every genre, will be represented in the festival however as well as both classic and fresh new films. Many delegates expressed a desire to share the best of their nations to their Filipino viewers and have chosen



Cine Europa will be playing in the following venues on the following dates:

September 28-30, 2018,
Ayala Center Cebu, Cebu City, Cebu

October 2-7, 2018,
University of the Philippines Visayas and
Robinsons Mall, Tacloban City, Leyte

October 9-14, 2018,
SM Iloilo, Iloilo City, Iloilo

October 16-21, 2018,
Visayas State University, Baybay City, Leyte

October 23-28, 2018,
Palawan State University and Robinsons
Place, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan

November 6-11, 2018,
Ateneo de Naga University, Naga City, Bicol

November 13-18, 2018,
Film Development Council of the Philippines,
Manila

November 26 to December 2, 2018,
SM City Baguio, Baguio City, Benguet

December 6-16, 2018,
Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Manila

Admission to this event is free.

movies that provide an experience of these things.

EU Ambassador Franz Jessen, asked about what he believed to be Cine Europa's legacy so far, expressed a hope that the Filipinos who have gone to study or work in Europe had been inspired to go there by these movies. "Cultural diplomacy is an essential aspect in nurturing the bilateral relations between the European Union and the Philippines" he intimated, outlining the integral part cultural exchange - especially with its move to expand into more cities and provinces outside the capital - plays in strengthening economic and governmental partnerships.

NEWS

The European Higher Education Fair welcomes aspiring students

Hundreds of ambitious young Filipinos flocked to Shangri-La Plaza, October 10, 2018, for what can loosely be described as a celebration of opportunity. The European Higher Education Fair, organized by the Delegation of the European Union in the Philippines, brought over forty colleges and universities to the day-long fair and hundreds more were made available by the representatives of the eleven participating countries: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

Given the theme “Sustaining Innovation and Excellence,” the fair’s press-conference and opening events encouraged prospective students to take full advantage of the opportunities being opened to Filipinos, inviting them to develop and thrive in Europe’s rich academic environment. Filipino alumni of European schools, especially the alumni of the EU’s flagship Erasmus+ program, expounded on the life-changing impact of studying in Europe for the guests making for some very inspiring motivation.

EU Ambassador Franz Jessen further encouraged this educational partnership between the EU and the Philippines in light of the growing economic ties between them. “The universities and education institutions in Europe offer the charm of Europe’s history as well as cutting edge, innovative education. The EHEF aims to bring both excellence and diversity to a growing number of prospective Filipino students.”

Running alongside the Fair-proper are presentations for each of the countries with national representatives, representatives of participating schools, as well as Filipino alumni explaining the unique benefits of studying in that country. These presentations put the broad diversity of learning experiences to be had in Europe in full display.

The Fair was co-presented by the EU Member States’ Embassies and Cultural Groups, and in partnership with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED.)



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