While the majority of us rested comfortably on the night of August 5, 2012 monitoring Facebook and Twitter, wondering if classes would get cancelled, the habagat entered the country, its presence expected but the consequences, totally not. It wasn't even a minor typhoon yet the devastation and suffering it wrought on Metro Manila rivaled Ondoy from three years ago.

One week without classes left most students and teachers wondering what they could do to help amidst the disaster that shook the metropolis and adjoining provinces. This was just the tip of the iceberg, while we were at home safe and sound, thousands were sent packing out of their homes or stuck in their homes waiting to be rescued. They sought refuge into hastily organized evacuation centers inside schools and churches.

We couldn't just sit there and watch. We had to do something about it and so by the morning of August 7, messages flooded Facebook and Twitter asking for donations in cash or in kind that could be forwarded to Southridge for the eight barangays in Muntinlupa affected by the rise of Laguna de Bay.

Within the same period other schools such as Woodrose, De La Salle Zobel, and even schools up north such as Assumption College, Xavier, and Miriam were inspired to help out as well. Students and teachers came together to volunteer hands and heart. They sorted, grouped, and packed goods in a bayanihan spirit. Here in Southridge, three groups forged an alliance to serve the community in a time of need. High School Student Council, the Grade School Student Council, and Molave Study Center brought together volunteers and connected goods to the people who needed them. The spirit of volunteerism flowed like it was second nature to these the Southridge Admirals.

This is all good; however true volunteerism is more than being responsive when the problem comes, it's also about being the solution to preventing the problem from ever happening again. While battling the rise of flood waters seem to be a David-Goliath act, it is still evident that social awareness and social responsibility drive us forward to national development, at times of peace and through stormy periods that wreck havoc. In the face of suffering, it is the individual student, each a Southride Admiral who is ready to serve, driven by the school's perennial cry: Viriliter Agite!
To see the president in person is a rare opportunity in itself; but to actually sit down and talk with him, even more so. Yet this improbable event happened on August 6, 2012, a day to be remembered in Southridge history. On that day, High School Batch 2013 met with His Excellency Benigno S. Aquino III, the President of the Republic of the Philippines.

Given this once-in-a-lifetime event, several days before the trip, the seniors were given a talk on palace protocol and the conduct expected from a Southridge Admiral front of the country’s most important man. Everyone listened intently, knowing what a serious matter this was. After all, they weren’t just bearing their own reputations, but the reputation of the entire school as well.

Come the day of the trip, one could observe the effort every single Southridge gentleman made to look his best: hair all sorted out, shoes shined, and not a single untucked shirt in sight. Everyone wanted to make a good impression. It was the president, after all.

Upon their arrival at the riverside palace located at 1000 Jose P. Laurel St., San Miguel, Manila, the students filed quietly out of the buses and into the building for security screening. They couldn’t help but exclaim and point many details of interest such as the Grand Staircase and the great narra chandeliers in the Main Ballroom.

Protocol officers guided the Senior class into the Malacanan Heroes Hall, a surprise because the President normally entertained guests at the Kalayaan Hall while the Heroes Hall was reserved for dignitaries and guests of state. Awestruck whispers punctuated through the patient and well behaved crowd, there they were almost incredulous staring at the podium bearing the seal of the President of the Republic of the Philippines.

Media crews from several news agencies arrived and set up their equipment. The anticipation of being seen on national television rippled through the Southridge crowd. The appointed time came and though it took a little longer than expected, as the saying goes good things comes to those who wait, the President came into the room with a smile, fresh from a meeting with congressmen.

Everyone rose to greet him with welcome applause. Claudio Lopa made the proper introductions, and then the ball rolled on. Upon sitting down, the eager Admirals threw one question after another, topics ranged from the mundane details of a president’s life to clarifying points in the recent SONA. PNoy gracefully answered each question, all the way to the end when he was asked, “Why did you bother meeting with us, ordinary high school students, despite your very busy schedule?”

He simply replied, “I am a public servant. You boys, being citizens of the country, are my bosses. As any good employee would do, I listen to my bosses for feedback on my job. Thus, here you are.”

The crowd erupts into a long applause, having seen this man’s down to earth nature and his sincere desire to uplift the country. PNoy ends the get-together by thanking the Southridge Seniors for their time, and in turn they render their own gratitude. Photo-ops proceeded, something everyone had eagerly awaited.

Teachers and students leave Malacanan smiling, having experienced this rare and wonderful opportunity, and concretely appreciating the president and all he does.

“I am a public servant. You boys, being citizens of the country, are my bosses. As any good employee would do, I listen to my bosses for feedback on my job. Thus, here you are.”
Last August 31, 2012, Southridge High school students trooped to the UP Theater inside the University of the Philippines – Diliman campus for Real Love Revolution II, a chastity talk headlined by Chris Stefanick and Leah Darrow. Organized by PAREF Woodrose School, it was an extraordinary afternoon where two remarkable people not only entertained, they enlightened high school students from all over Metro Manila on the importance of chastity and how popular culture has trivialized this great human value.

Chris Stefanick began by rocking out on his guitar and inviting volunteers to sing in what he described as a rock karaoke. Benson Leong of Year IV-B and Matthew Mendiola of Year III-A rose up to volunteer for Don’t Stop Believing and Sweet Child of Mine respectively. Other songs followed with volunteers from other schools as Chris energized the crowd with his funny way of interacting with the audience. From the love songs he began to speak about real love and authentic relationships where sex is sacred and people aren’t just objects, they’re persons. The audience of high school students began to appreciate themselves as worthy of being loved in a genuine way, worthy of respect. He also reminded them that God wanted His Love to penetrate their lives here and now. Among the surprising bits in his talk, Chris emphasized the importance of bonding with family and socializing with friends in order to appreciate them even more.

Next up was Leah Darrow, she was a contestant in the reality TV series America’s Next Top Model before embarking on a new advocate for chastity and reaching lives as an international Catholic speaker. Her talk chronicled the rocky road from small town girl to New York high fashion model and then to her own road to Damascus.

Having opened about her past, the audience identified themselves with a truly remarkable woman who showed us that change is never impossible, God is a Father who embraces His children in forgiveness. She expressed how important and sacred the purity of a human being is and like Chris Stefanick before her, Leah Darrow emphasized that this gift should be reserved for one’s true love in marriage.

As young people continue to grapple with peer pressure, the distorted values of a materialistic media, and their own growth as, the engaging messages of choices over a comfortable life made by Leah Darrow and the revolution of the youth rebelling against false promises of Chris Stefanick are messages of hope and challenges of love.

Whoever thought that so many people, especially students, cared about life having the courage to stand up for what is right. Despite the rain, on August 4, 2012, people from different walks of life gathered together at the EDSA Shrine of our Lady of Peace in Pasig City to pray and rally against the RH Bill which seemed to have been railroaded through Congress.

Southridge School sent a contingent of high school students who willingly gave up their Saturday afternoon to stand up against the RH bill. They started the prayer rally with a 1:00 PM meditation preached by Fr. Frank Aniban inside the Southridge Chapel of the Holy Family. At 2:15 PM, they left the school and made their way through Metro Manila traffic to the converging point.

Periods of torrential rain and gusts of wind didn’t dampen their spirits. In the midst of a sea of red shirts, red to symbolize martyrdom for the faith, the group of more than twenty students and teachers weaved their way through the jam-packed streets looking for a good vantage point. An optimistic and festive atmosphere borne of music, prayer, bunting, and sharing from a range of speakers like Archbishop Chito Tagle, Bro. Mike Velarde and Dr. Lucille Montes.

It was truly a sight to see, made even more special by the presence of Muslim groups who came to share their support against the passage of a law that they too felt would curtail their freedom. Dr. Quirino Sugon, a researcher at the Manila Observatory, later posted that using crowd estimation analysis, at its peak approximately 60,000 people prayed and shared their faith and conviction at the corner of EDSA and Ortigas Avenue.

The rally ended solemnly with Holy Mass at 5:30 PM. As darkness covered the metro and rains continued to swirl through the city, the Southridge contingent left in high spirits, firmly believing in prayer and the power of people who work for genuine human upliftment.
Southridge’s Big Brother Experience

By Jomo Filart

In the Southridge circle of life, the upper classmen say hello to a group of young curious individuals called Freshmen. These Freshmen, having said goodbye to their previous home, the Grade School, are tossed into young adulthood of high school. To get them stoked up and ready for the year, the HS Student Council led by Faisal Tabusalia organized a bonding activity, the Freshmen-Seniors Bonding.

SY 2011-2012 ended with a difference due to the implementation of the revised K-12 curriculum, as a result last April 2012, two batches of students graduated from the Southridge grade school. They are the newly baptized Year 1 and Year 2 students, both new to the high school.

With two sets of freshmen in mind the HS Student Council had their hands full in planning and executing a day to strengthen ties that bind their brothers in the school.

On June 21, 2012 the Year V Seniors took under their wings their assigned Year 1 bros. The next day, June 22 it was the turn of the Year IV upperclassmen to bond with their respective Year II buddies.

They Year V’s and their Year I counterparts started their day with an informative talk given by Claudio Lopa on the do’s and don’ts of High School. Next came the pairing where a senior was partnered with a freshman to have as his buddy for the rest of the day. After the pairing up came the core bonding activity. Each pair shared to one another their past experiences, regrets, and possible plans for the future.

As the more experienced partner, the seniors gave tips and advice to the freshmen. Over lunch the two new friends bonded even more. Then came the sports activities. Nothing like sports brings out the shared experience of triumph of winning and the agony of defeat. Truly speaking though nobody lost in this case, everyone was a winner. They participated in Ultimate Frisbee, Futsal, and Basketball.

The Year IV and Year II seminars weren’t so different. Fonz David of the student council started their day with a short commentary on the virtues needed to survive and thrive in high school.

Looking back everyone involved appreciated the essence of this event to springboard into a successful and enjoyable school year. Year IV and Year V upperclassmen remembered how they too once upon a time looked with trepidation at the demands of high school life. With the friendships they built on those two days, one can be secured that the transition to young adulthood is in capable hands.

She Sees Dead People

By Gian Balangue

Whoever knew that a real life Catherine Willows (CSI: Las Vegas) or Jo Danville (CSI: New York) had stepped outside Hollywood fiction and was working at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine? In line with June’s Virtue of the Month, Hard Work, our guest speaker was someone who knew very well how hard work is needed in our Filipino culture.

The first of only two Filipino forensic pathologists, Dr. Raquel del Rosario-Fortun graced the Southridge Auditorium stage on July 2, 2012.

Dr. Fortun is a professor at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, teaching general pathology and legal medicine. She is occasionally called on to lend her expertise to cases involving autopsies. Arguably, this CSI: Philippines setting is far less glamorous than what you see on television.

In her many years of study abroad and her work in the Philippines, she has encountered many difficulties, including the temptation to simply give up and go home to an easier medical track, but she has always soldiered on with her goals in sight.

During her talk, she narrated events both amusing and thought provoking that led her listeners to reflect on how steady and healthy work ethics overcomes adverse conditions. These included issues regarding sanitation around a body and the deplorable conditions of some workspaces. In one particularly memorable slide, she showed a hastily pitched tent idyllically set in a rice field. Inside was a makeshift table, a bucket with muddy water, and a table. Nevertheless, she made do with what was available and did her job well.

When asked why she chose forensic pathology as her specialty, she replies, “I chose to specialize in a field which is underdeveloped and misunderstood in this country and it has been quite a challenge battling ignorance.”

Dr. Fortun is a great role model and she serves as an inspiration to all who take the path less traveled.

ASDC

By Kyle Mitscheiner and Meeko Rustia

Every year, schools from across Asia gather for the Asian Schools Debate Championship (ASDC), the largest high school debate competition in Asia and second largest in the world. Southridge has had an impressive record, being the first champions of the tournament in 2009 and reaching the semi-finals twice the following years.

However this year was extremely different, we entered the tournaments as nobodies, unheard of debaters who had failed to make a name for themselves in the international debate community. In fact, as we sat in the convening room waiting for the motions to be released and we overheard people whispering, “Southridge’s golden age is over” or “Oh… we’re against Southridge, this should be an easy win.”

Little did they know that we’d spent the whole summer training. We spent countless hours meeting up to practice giving speeches, sleepless nights researching on what’s going on around the world and I’ve even heard stories from my teammates giving practice speeches in the shower. Call us crazy but we were just passionate. We went playing this tournament carrying the name Southridge.

In 2011, ASDC was held in Seoul, South Korea. This year, Ipoh, Malaysia was hosting it from May 31 to June 7, 2012. The place reminded us of the Philippines except that it seemed a little more developed and there were a lot less cars on the streets.

The first round was a good warm up round, the motion was simple and the opposing team was inexperienced. However the succeeding rounds tested the fire in our hearts.

By the fourth round, the whispers that “Southridge’s golden age was gone” were gone. In fact, many people from other schools recognized that our three teams were much better than they had expected, and the Philippine teams even vouched for us so that we go on with our progress. Many personally went to some of us and asked us how we were doing, some even declaring that they weren’t surprised that we did well.

The record to advance to the elimination rounds was 5-2 (five wins, two losses) and our record heading into the last round was 4-2. We needed a win; it was go big or go home.

When the final tally was in how did the Southridge team do? One team broke 5th place into octofinals (Kyle Mitscheiner, Paulo Abalos, and Meeko Rustia). Another team broke 3rd into octofinals (Kyle Mitscheiner, Paulo Abalos, and Meeko Rustia). Another team broke 3rd into novice semi (Gabby Leda, Jet Nicolas, and Thirdy Santos). Best of all, two reached Top 10 3rd place (Meeko Rustia) and 5th place (Kyle Mitscheiner) Best Speakers, Individual Awards.

All in all it was pretty good for a tournament whose teams came from thirty six schools, eighty teams of three debaters each, nine countries: Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, China, Indonesia, South Korea, Hong Kong, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and India.
Admirals, Unitas! Admirals, Unite! Admirals, magkaisa!

Call it what you want: a spark, an ignition switch, or a battle cry. Yet these words are more than just a Helm versus Vinta taunt. For decades, this phrase has brought together Admirals to unite in accordance with our school vision.

But uniting more than a thousand different guys—whose age groups, interests, and personalities vary like human DNA—is a difficult task. To do this, you would have to find a common denominator among students, teachers, administration, and faculty. Entering the picture is online social networking.

A quick disclaimer: this article in no way encourages or pressures those who don’t have social networking accounts to create one. In fact, you guys are cool that way. Anyway, back to the topic at hand.

Fact: a majority of students today own social networking accounts, Facebook and Twitter being the most prevalent. So why not use these websites as an instrument to unify the school? As seen above, you can say “Admirals, Unite!” in Latin, and even Filipino. But the cry that echoes the loudest in this generation is the cyber-way.

Take an example common to all of us: On the week of August 6-10, a series of torrential rains ransacked the National Capital Region and surrounding provinces. Marikina, Pasig, and parts of Quezon City were inundated by 300 mm. of rainfall, three times the daily average; this was the heaviest in three years.

We live in a cyber-age. Today, everyone has a voice and an opinion that matches it. The voice of the youth now echo loudest online. Everyone had seen images on television and the news on the calamities the storm had caused. But it was the conversations, the posts, the shares, the tweets and the opinions on Facebook and Twitter that unified millions of social network users.

A picture that went viral on social networks displayed the silhouette of the Filipino Flag coupled with the words: “The Filipino spirit is Waterproof.”

Overall effect: this moving picture garnered more than 50,000 likes, along with more than 20,000 shares. Look at the viral spread, more or less 70,000 people came into contact with these photos. And if each of these people has a rough average of 400 or so friends on Facebook, then the audience would expand like a plague.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, imagine the effects this image—among dozens of others—had on those who viewed it. Pictures and words, when brought together, form a powerful duo that has the capability to educate the populace and invoke noble emotions. Thanks to posts like these, millions of people from all walks of life united by a common spirit of patriotism (AKA, the eternal “bayanihan”) worked together in serving those affected by the calamities around them, especially those in dire need.

One post calling all Admirals to “Unitas!” gets shared on Facebook. Coupled with encouragements from teachers and administration—the message is sent to practically the entire school. And the viral message produced results: around 7,000 people were administered to and aided through the efforts of Admirals, faculty, families, and friends through mass relief operations in the city of Muntinlupa.

This is just one of many examples on how social networking—through a single viral idea—can impact so many lives. From the unity of the Southridge Admirals rise an even more unifying cry of “The Filipino Spirit is Waterproof!” Amen!
Walking on Water and Crossing Thresholds

By Enrico Grio

Strong rains, gusts of wind and loud thunder sounds, these are what woke up millions of Filipinos at the night of August 5, 2012. What was expected to be light showers and your ordinary dose of tropical weather, turned into a devastating disaster that left thousands of families homeless and over sixty people dead. No one expected this to happen. Even the PAGASA, the Philippine weather center, was very much surprised with these events. Monsoons, the cause of this disaster, would always happen in the Philippines but they never turned out to be this strong or destructive.

People were very much unprepared and some woke to find the water levels rising inside their houses. Others watched as the rivers near their homes rapidly becoming deeper and deeper. Waters along the streets gushed rapidly as it carried trees, trash, cars and many other things along its path. Media men who were supposed to go patrol and report about current situations were already in search of various alternative routes for many routes including major roads were already impassable.

With water rising to dangerous levels, people moved fast to find a safe place to stay. Many Filipinos, who lived in affected areas, immediately rushed to the nearest evacuation center. They would bring a few clothes and food with them to help them survive as they know they would be spending the next few days there. Others even, with the danger that the rising floods pose, would no longer think about their material goods but would rather have everyone in their family safe first.

In order to get to evacuation centers, many people had to cross the river-like roads and the strong currents. Local government units, the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines), the PRC (Philippine Red Cross) and other institutions had rescue operations all over Luzon especially in Metro Manila and the nearby provinces which were hit the most. Some people had to hold on to wires just so they could cross and survive the strong currents of the flood. Other families had to be rescued from the roofs or the second floor of their houses. Evacuation centers were their place of refuge and security from surprises of nature such as these floods. Crowded as they may be, people would rather live under such conditions just so they could survive and live another day.

As all of these were happening, many of us were safe under the comfort of our dry and warm roofs. As the rain brought devastation to millions of Filipinos, many of us, students had this comfortable feeling because our areas were not hit as hard as the others. But as one would turn on the television and browse the internet, our hearts just broke with all the suffering that we saw. Children shivering in the cold, babies in hospitals lacking electricity, families with nothing to eat or drink were just some of the things we saw that surely made our heart sink in sorrow and pity for our fellow Filipinos. Upon seeing these saddening sights we just knew we had to do something, we knew we had to help.

Messages of concern flooded Facebook and Twitter. People were calling and messaging everyone they know to ask if they were alright. People started calling out for donations and volunteers. Southridge too took its own initiative to start collecting such with the people staying at the Alabang Elementary school as the beneficiaries. The Southridge student council headed by chairman, Faisal Tabusalla, called out to the students for donations to brought to Southridge. Southridge students then immediately brought their donations not only to Southridge, but to other collection areas as well. Even though the sky was already clear and the sun shined bright, these people still lost a lot, some even lost their homes and they need all the help they can get.

People suffer but we know how to get back. It is through tragedy that we see that people still care. We see that people still have that heart to help each other even when during ordinary times it is not the case. Perhaps this is why we are challenged with such calamities; to make us realize that people around us need our love and care. Such are the wonders of life.
Sa pangayuta, kalabaw at ang bahay kubo, ito ay ilan lamang sa mga bagay na ating pinagmalalaki bilang mga pambansang simbolo ng ating pagka-Pilipino. Ang mga bagay na ito ay itinuturo sa atin sa paaralan bilang mga bagay na dapat nating ipinagmalaki. Subalit maaitutangong natin sa ating mga sarili, ipinagmalalaki nga ba talaga natin ang ating pagka-Pilipino?


Sa Paaralang Southridge ay ipinagdiriwang ang Buwan ng Wikang Pilipino. Sa


Monsoon winds carrying torrential rains flowed into the country in the last few days of September. These continued to a steady rain that submerged Metro Manila and its surrounding areas by Tuesday, August 7, 2012. Loss of life was not as widespread as Ondoy from 2009; however, business and school activities were suspended as thousands tried to cope with rising floodwaters. In a country visited by an average of twenty typhoons each year, is there anything that we can do to prevent losses to lives and property brought about by these natural calamities? How can the government improve our seemingly inadequate flood warning system? Can Metro Manila ever be flood free? To answer these questions, I interviewed Dr. Carlo A. Arcilla, Head of the National Institute of Geological Sciences at the University of the Philippines – Diliman.

Ridge: What is the main cause of flooding?

Dr. Arcilla: Flooding occurs when there is a great amount of excess water or runoff that accumulates on the ground due to the lack of natural and artificial drainage systems. Extreme rainfall is the primary cause of flooding. If a lot of rain falls over a short period of time, the drainage systems would be overwhelmed. The saturation of the ground also makes an area more prone to flooding. This means that the soil is impermeable, and water can’t seep through the ground.

Besides the impermeable soil, huge tracts of land are being covered by cement in the urban areas, especially Metro Manila. The cement keeps the water from seeping into the soil, and because the drains in the area are either too small or are blocked by garbage and/or illegal structures, flooding occurs. There are several other factors that greatly increase the discharge, or volume of water passing per unit of time.

Ridge: Authorities said that it would take several months for floodwaters in towns around Laguna de Bay to subside. If this is true, what’s the reason?

Dr. Arcilla: The excess water that flows to the heavily silted Laguna de Bay has only one exit – the Pasig River. Unfortunately, sediment and garbage being carried from the dying lake clog the pipes that should have drained the excess water to the river. The government and private groups aiming to clear the Pasig River need to consider clearing the filthy pipes that pass through the river, and while this may seem simple enough, removing the waste that blocks the pipes is a long and costly process.

Opening up Laguna de Bay’s other exits appears to be the best solution to relieve the lake off its stress. However, the illegal settlers whose homes have blocked these exit paths serve as a burden to the government and other NGOs aiming to conserve the Laguna de Bay, such as the Society of the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands. Relocating the squatters is more complex than just identifying a relocation site. The government needs to consider providing them with a source of livelihood, otherwise they will most likely return to their illegal settlements as their means of livelihood are here in the metropolis. More than the financial issue, relocating illegal settlers also requires a great deal of political will especially at the local elections draw near.

Another factor that greatly affects the flood situation is the destruction of forested areas. Trees keep the soil in place, making the ground strong and less prone to landslides. Unfortunately, most of the mountains in the country are barren because of mining operations and large scale logging, not to mention illegal logging.

The foresters are the only ones who police the mountains, and there is a very small number of people patrolling the mountains. Because the foresters are mostly poor people, they tend to “bitch a ride” with the loggers.

While we have enough laws to control mining and logging operations, implementing them seems to be a greater problem. The government should continuously encourage tree planting in urban areas and seriously work at the reforestation of mountainous areas in the country.

Ridge: We’ve read that Metro Manila is sinking at a rate of several centimeters per year. Are we going to be the next Venice?

Dr. Arcilla: This is happening because of the rising sea level brought about by global warming and unregulated groundwater extraction, the method of obtaining fresh water used by many municipalities and barangays. In groundwater extraction, pipes replace the water in the soil with air, causing the ground to collapse. The local governments should limit the use of “pump” or deep wells, and consider creating municipal water distribution systems that will operate similarly to the National Water and Sewage Authority (NAWASA) which was formed with the responsibility of the production and distribution of portable water.

Ridge: Do typhoons cause floods?

Dr. Arcilla: Our country has an average of 20 typhoons that visit it every year, and this is one reason why our meteorologists and geologists have difficult tasks. Typhoons are relatively easy to predict because scientists could already see their path through the use of satellite images. However, the amount of rainfall is more difficult to predict without the right equipment.

Our scientists need more tools and equipment to help them create adequate typhoon and flood warning systems and make more accurate weather forecasts. The Philippines needs more Doppler radar units to help scientists predict rains and check the density of clouds through the use of infrared waves. Right now, we only have two – one in Subic and the other in Tagaytay.

Doppler radars should have been bought before Typhoon Ondoy, but because certain congressmen wanted to be involved in the purchase of these radars, there was a delay in setting the budget for the Doppler radars. If these radars were bought earlier, the death toll in Typhoon Ondoy could have been reduced significantly.

Ridge: Who are responsible for predicting the weather and analyzing how it impacts us?

Dr. Arcilla: My colleagues Dr. Lagmay and Dr. C.P. David actively helped in the improvement of the Philippines’ forecasting systems by asking Mr. Pingulongin of Smart to allow automatic rain gauges to be placed in the Smart cell sites. By doing so, the data collected from the rain gauges is directly streamed to the DOST’s Project NOAH. Project NOAH or the Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards was founded to make updated information on flood and weather situations accessible to the public. You could check the NOAH website www.noah.dost.gov.ph to see a detailed and accurate map of the different regions in the Philippines and their current situations through the information gathered from satellites, radars, and rain gauges.

Ridge: What else can be done to further improve our systems of weather forecasting?

Dr. Arcilla: There aren’t a lot of meteorology graduates. Meteorology is only offered in graduate schools and right now, it is only being offered in two schools – Ateneo and UP. In UP, we’re also losing faculty members. We really need the people and instrumentation, more students to consider taking courses in meteorology and geology.

Our country’s preparedness involves more than one body or group. It involves the active participation of everyone of people in public service, media and communication, academic and research sector, and of course, you and me. As a people, we should respect and support the government’s efforts on waste reduction and waste management. Our active participation in tree planting and reforestation projects can help tremendously. Every small act counts. If we work together, we can surely weather each storm.
Choosing a club is one of the more important tasks to do in your high school life. Firstly because you are going to be sticking with that club or clubs for the whole school year, and secondly, it needs to be something you really enjoy and not just something to fill in a college application form.

I signed up for a number of clubs including the Ridge which is why I’m writing this article. Besides the Ridge though, I joined a small club which could have been overshadowed by a lot of the bigger clubs out there; this club is called The Admirals Musical Ensemble (AME).

Being together with people who had a similar interest was all I wanted. Right now there are three violinists, a pianist, a percussionist, a double bassist, and a couple of guitarists. I myself lead the guitar. Jamming in the music room during lunch time or in club days is one of the most fun things you can do in this club.

We played our first gig as the showcase piece of the Southridge Got Talent portion during the August 3, 2012 High School Student Assembly. The piece was “He’s a Pirate,” from the movie Pirates of the Caribbean. The audience didn’t really know what to expect, but as the first notes of the guitar beating a rhythm flowed over the crowd, a beat well known to every Johnny Depp/Jack Sparrow fan, the ripple of anticipation grew into thunderous applause.

The High School OpCom loved the performance so much that they invited us to perform again for the High School Student Assembly on September 7, 2012. This time we played the equally popular Canon Pachelbel’s Canon in D. It was great to see everyone in the high shool, from rock headbanger to hip-hop aficionado greet the classical piece with loud applause.

Performing my hobby in front of the students is something I want to be doing for the whole school year and that is why I chose this club because I knew it would give me just that.


HABAGAT

“Habagat” is the Filipino term to describe what is otherwise referred to as the Southwest monsoon. A monsoon is best described as a prevailing wind bringing rain to an area. The Southwest monsoon affects the country between the months of July to September. It’s counterpoint is the “Amihan” or Northeast monsoon which blows through the country from October to late March.

The Southwest monsoon is characterized by a very warm and humid weather. This warm and moist air brings heavy rainfall lasting over an extended period. This wind generally brings the rainy season to the western portion of the country. As a yearly phenomenon, the habagat doesn’t have the status of a typhoon, where an identifying name is applied.

So if wasn’t a typhoon why would it rend unusual destructive power? The answer is simple; this was not your everyday ‘hanging Habagat’. According to the meteorologists of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), the unusual strength shown by this year’s late July early August habagat is explained by the enhancement of the typhoon Haikui presence, north to the Philippine area of responsibility.

Typhoon Haikui moved very slowly, this gave time for the habagat to accumulate moisture. That increase provided the deluge that rendered impassable parts of Metro Manila and the surrounding provinces. Previously familiar and predictable, suddenly the habagat has shocked Filipinos—it’s something that everyone should keep in mind the next time it comes around.

School Boats, not a School Bus

Once in a while stories of heroic children who brave mountain routes and multiple kilometer hike through forests surface. They all seemed so far off, it probably could happen in another country yet until a year or so ago, here in the Philippines, everyday from a mangrove encircled island, children used to swim, not trek to their school located in the city of Zamboanga.

The children of Layag-Layag held their bags above their heads, bags that contained school material and a dry set of clothes they could change once they reach the shore. No student, teenager or child, city boy or small town girl, deserved to undergo such grueling struggles to receive the education that they are entitled to; circumstances have forced them but their indomitable spirit soldiers on. It was this challenge in Philippine education that attracted Jay Jaboneta.

On August 3, 2012, Southridge High School invited Mr. Jay Jaboneta, founder of The Yellow Boat of Hope Foundation, to speak during the High School Student Assembly on the virtue of Charity, the Virtue of the Month for August.

In October 2010, while at the Mindanao Bloggers Summit in Zamboanga City, Mindanao, this Filipino blogger learned about the inspiring story of the children of the island village of Layag-Layag in Barangay Talon-Talon who could only attend school by swimming to mainland Zamboanga City.

Inspired, shocked, and dismayed by the difficulty these kids had to undergo to get the education thousands elsewhere take for granted, he posted a status update about their plight, and then, inspired by a friend to do more than just talk, started the Zamboanga Fund for Little Kids to raise funds to provide Layag-Layag with boats that the children could ride to school.

The first yellow boat was given on March 27, 2011, and the project came to be known as the Yellow Boat of Hope. The group also looks for different ways to serve the needs of the impoverished communities and has since expanded into three other communities with residents living under similar conditions, giving them yellow boats, symbols of, of course, like the group’s name suggests, hope, change, and a better world for the people of the Philippines.

To date 154 yellow boats have been distributed among four coastal regions: Layag-Layag in Zamboanga, Isla Mababoy in Masbate, Lakewood in Zamboanga del Sur, and Matubas Island in Negros Occidental.

The story of the Yellow Boat of Hope Foundation inspired the high school students. The Q&A started with a pledge from Year 1 students to forego their own allowance money, not asking their parents for any additional amount, and raise enough for two yellow boats. Other pledges followed suit soon after.

Jay Jaboneta has had the opportunity to present the social initiative at the prestigious TEDx in Montpelier, France. International bodies such as the Reader’s Digest and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty have likewise recognized and awarded his contribution. Hailing him as a modern day hero are Yahoo! Philippines and Geny Lopez Jr. Foundation. The World Economic Forum has also recognized him as a ‘Young Global Shaper’.

The experience provoked discussion and reaction from the Southridge community. If Mr. Jaboneta hadn’t done what he did and in the process astonished those who have gotten to know the project the world and those children would be a poorer place. Thank God that he did.
K-Pop has indeed come of age. It’s no exaggeration to say that K-Pop has reached the US music market. The moment a song of K-Pop is uploaded on Youtube proving that K-Pop music has clearly reached the US. The moment this song was ranked, most of the people copied the dances and sang along to. Now who are the K-Pop singers that make the fans go crazy? The first would be PSY, a Korean rapper, whose song “Gangnam Style” was released in 2011. PSY has achieved a great success and is one of the best songs leading the K-Pop music leader boards. Most of its lyrics are repetitive and easy to memorize, thus making it so easy to sing along to. 

Complete Dance is also another factor that makes K-Pop popular. Frankly speaking, Usher, Michael Jackson and the like are the ones who perform solo. However, the emergence of group-dance singers is fresh shock to the audience: Wonder Girls is composed of five members; nine members in Girls Generation; five members in Big Bang. Performing in groups and dancing in sync are what’s hip when we take a look at K-Pop. Eventually complete dance and group dance performers become a trademark in this genre.

Moreover, the world prefers to listen to new genres of music instead of the old, overplayed and monotonous genres we already have. Hence K-Pop has just shown the people, what we can expect their future music industries have in store for them. In fact, K-Pop originated from South Korea and its purpose is to highlight South Korea as a country of music. So why are the media and press, specifically in the United States bargaining for K-Pop to become more popular? According to a survey, most of respondents answered that “K-Pop will bring about huge success and rampage the US as a new wave of music”. In fact there are two principles explaining why the people are so crazy about K-Pop: complete dance and repetitive song. 

K-Pop, the world is enjoying the new genre music to add a new genre to their iPod playlists. Another popular K-Pop singer would be 2NE1 and Big Bang who are the next generations to succeed the K-Pop propaganda. Their music is mostly known in iTunes, which is the biggest music company in the US. Especially 2NE1 is known for their peculiar style: their own ways of expressing their music. Thanks to these characters of K-Pop, the world is enjoying the new genre music to add a new genre to their iPod playlists. A latest example would be a Korean rapper, PSY who abruptly bagged the attention of CNN, BBC and France press about his new music video-Gangnam Style saying: “the Gangnam Style music video was the best music video that they have watched”; such idea was never thought by the American people but only could PSY do so. We bargained for him to produce the more music videos to shock us”, and was able to bring an unconventional sensation to the public. His music video hit 1 billion views and CNN described his music video as “Gangnam Style goes viral”. In addition, most of singers and actors in the US extolled his music and said that “his choreography is funny and makes me want to imitate it.” Consequently, PSY has achieved a great career in the US and the world is just waiting for his next hit single.

In the future, K-Pop will be on everyone’s playlists thus experiencing a taste of South Korean culture through repetitive lyrics and catchy dance routines.
Milk Tea, Not Just a Fad

By Joel Hernandez

Milk tea, also known as bubble tea, has emerged as one of the most popular refreshments in the last few years and has now found a big market in the Philippines. Around an estimate of 25 milk tea concessions have opened up in the Balangub area in the past two years, ranging from foreign brands such as Chatime and Gong Cha to our own homemade brands such as Bubbly Tea and Freshner Tea.

There is just something that makes milk tea very distinct. It is an acquired taste that not everybody may enjoy, but certainly delicious when one grows accustomed to it. The astringent, cooling, slightly bitter and fragrant aroma of tea leaves mixed with luscious condensed milk, sugar, a wide variety of syrups and sinkers create the ideal milk tea drink. Originating from Taiwan in the early 1980’s, milk tea is a drink best served cold.

Popular varieties include the Pearl Milk Tea, which consists of the milk tea and small, round-shaped tapioca balls we call pearls. Another is the Winter Melon Milk Tea, a concoction of blended sweet winter melon, black tea leaves and sweet condensed milk. These flavours are just the tip of the iceberg as there are dozens of variants to satiate the most discriminating of palates.

Foreign companies such as Chatime, Gong Cha and Happy Lemon have made quite a splash in the milk tea craze in the country, but there other popular and just as delectable home-grown brands, like Serenitea and Moonleaf. Each has its own delicious, signature aromatic taste that challenges one to be faithful to a single brand.

There have been brave souls who make their own milk teas at home. With the right methods and ingredients, home brewed milk teas can taste just like the pricey branded milk teas—they start at P70.00.

Milk tea caters perfectly to the Filipino palate that veers to the matamis. This ensures that it’s not a fad, no you can be sure that milk tea is here to stay.

Let the Curtains Rise

By Gabriel J. Goseco

Plautus returns, promising both hardships and fun for the three highest levels in high school. Last year’s Fifth Column and 14 set the bar ever so higher that there is a collective hunger to at least match, and better even, to improve on those remarkable productions, new additions to the Plautus pantheon.

Season 14 features earlier playdates, the first and second week of October 2012. This is due to the contracted schedules in November and December where the auditorium is reserved for other events such as the Christmas programs.

By bringing the plays earlier, we avoid competition for the auditorium. Aside from this, the seniors can also focus on Father’s Day once the second semester starts. However, this change means a tighter schedule for the classes, so my advice for everyone is to budget your time. You will run out of time before you know it.

Here is a little tip for the third years. When planning out practices, information is power. If people know the script well, and they also know what must be done, then they only need guidance to actually get things done. I advise everyone to be familiar with their lines and to understand the overall flow of their plays.

Everyone must contribute to the overall production, but they will not be able to if they do not know what to do. A good example is my class last year—I simply love my IIC class—even though many were distracted by, ahem, “school work” during practices, people could still follow what was going on.

This proved invaluable when their contributions were needed in the middle of practice.

Another piece of advice I want to give is to listen to everyone’s comments. Be it feedback or suggestions, any reactions from any member of the class is valuable. These little things can be pivotal to the production. A classmate once suggested someone to audition for a significant role last year. That someone ended up winning an award for it. It was unforeseen and it was all thanks to one who voiced out an unsolicited reaction.

For all the directors and producers out there, your plays are not, and will ever be, yours alone! One valuable thing I learned last year is the importance of friendship among my classmates. Do not let people work because you tell them to, but because they actually care! When you see your classmates as friends, not drones, then you can surely make a great play. This, I assure you, will make all the difference.

Finally, have fun! You are making a play with your friends, something you get to do only three times in your high school life. I am telling you, treasure these moments. Undoubtedly it will not be easy, but it does not mean you cannot have fun!

There you have it. I wish everyone good luck. Let us make this Plautus season a truly memorable one!
A cool breeze rustles the leaves of the silhouetted, imposing mahogany trees that surround me. I look around, and sigh out in relief finding no one around. Carefully walking down the rough, concrete road, I ignore the distant shouts as time is of the essence.

I finally spot my target: a vague outline of a single floored building down the incline. Walking closer, I recognize the rusted metal bars securing the windows and faded out white paint on the walls. The shiny steel letters naming the building: “Department of Communications” is the only thing that gives contrast to the old, neglected structure right in front of me. I reach for the door and enter the building closing the door quietly.

The room is bathed in darkness; a glance at my surroundings shows an old office, filthy folders and notebooks on the floor; I stride towards the janitor closet. I open it, close the door, and sit down on a conveniently placed chair.

Reaching for the doorknob, I pull out a thin sliver of metal and insert it in a well camouflaged cranry. As I fumble around, I hear a small "click" and I sigh in relief. Swiftly the whole room starts shaking, dust falls of the ceiling, and I feel the sensation of going down. As the closet fades away from view, I slip into a reverie.

My name is Santos, Gabriel Santos. My regular job is being head journalist of the daily mirror, but after multiple attempts the door finally gives in. I stand up and shake Lee’s hand, give Reyes a seat across from me. Lee concludes his briefing with a firm nod.

“I don’t have time for this Reyes.”

“Well, we’re sending you, one of our best operatives, to infiltrate the headquarters of National Electric Vehicle Sweden (NEVS), an Asian Electric Car Consortium, hack into their computer database, and erase all the files in their hard drives.” Smith concludes his briefing with a firm nod.

And with that, I’m off.

I hurriedly walk out of the Mainframe, and towards the room with computers, so I take the nearest one. I work efficiently, masterfully bypassing firewalls, and basically erasing their whole company from the inside.

While browsing through the files, I glance upon an encrypted file, hidden among the data. It isn’t any of the regular discrete ones, this looks more like the old ISO communiqués. Curiosity getting the better of me, I open it.

“NEVS, We’re sending you our most valuable and effective agent for the ‘experiment’, We trust you personally caused).

Reyes, shut up. Report to Logistics.”

What makes the ISO so secret, mysterious and effective is that we are able to appear in certain places almost instantly, and disappear just as quick. We have a proprietary teleportation device located in the exact same room I’m in.

I’m not exactly a scientist, but I will attempt to explain how it works. This experimental, trans-dimensional device was created by Julius Robert Oppenheimer as a by-product of his research into the atomic bomb. Utilizing a gamma type radiation, the device is able to transport an object virtually anywhere in the world. There have been reports of ‘incidents’, but I wouldn’t want to think of them.

Approaching a digital interface on the wall, I input the coordinates of NEVS HQ.

“Hong Kong, China.”

I press enter and then strap myself into one of the teleportation cubicles. Sitting down, I relax. Thinking as this mission as routine, I’d rather just plan out my day after the operation. The possibilities are endless.

I’m bathed in green rays of light transported across half way around the world.

Appearing in the apparent interior of NEVS, I take in my surroundings. I’m in the middle of an entirely white hallway, with doors lining up on both sides—certainly the trademark of any corporate building, if I say so myself.

Cautiously dropping my pen on the floor, I realize that there aren’t any obvious traps. Slowly but surely, I stride towards the door labeled: “Mainframe Database” which seems like the most likely place to go to. I push the door open.

No one inside. Clear.

The room’s filled with computers, so I take the nearest one. I work efficiently, masterfully bypassing firewalls, and basically erasing their whole company from the inside.

While browsing through the files, I glance upon an encrypted file, hidden among the data. It isn’t any of the regular discrete ones, this looks more like the old ISO communiqués. Curiosity getting the better of me, I open it.

“hong Kong, China.”

I open it, close the door, and sit down on a conveniently placed chair.

A sharp stop in the elevator breaks me out of my thoughts and I realize I’ve arrived. A quick turn on the doorknob and I’m greeted with a resounding “ah, damn it. Stuck again.”

In the past, the ISO’s primary task was to overthrow and dethrone governments around the world. Now however, we just spread viruses around the world to support the drug companies who produce and sell the cures, and the like.

“What happened to Mr. Sarcastic?”

“What do you want us to do boss?” I ask, with slight interest.

“Well, we’re sending you, one of our best operatives, to infiltrate the headquarters of National Electric Vehicle Sweden (NEVS), an Asian Electric Car Consortium, hack into their computer database, and erase all the files in their hard drives.” Smith concludes his briefing with a firm nod.

And with that, I’m off.

I hurriedly walk out of the Mainframe, and towards my origin point. I didn’t see the ropes and manacles coming out of nowhere and suddenly pinning me to the ground.

Alarms blare and the room becomes bathed in red light. I struggle and reach around the restraints but I just can’t, it seems that the only thing I can move is my head. My luck runs out tonight

A needle-point injection enters my left shoulder.
**Letters to the Editor**

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**Jet Nicolas (jet.nicolas123@gmail.com)**

Dear Editor,

This is in reference to the Editorial: “Southridge keeps its traditions but continues to make new ones”

Southridge has definitely kept Traditions, but I think we have certainly refined them. We simply don’t keep them; we took it to the next level and added some twists. Last Year’s Fathers’ Day was not the same as the ones before it, it was different. We have learned to improve it every year, no exceptions. We evolved Fathers’ Day into something more compelling that the whole school helped in making it the best.

Southridge is proud to say that they took part in assisting the collection and distribution of donated material to the locals of Alabang Elementary School. The Southridge faculty, students and alumni alike all gathered in the campus grounds and worked as one family in order to make sure that the families residing in Alabang Elementary School receive the essentials that they had lost because of the heavy flooding.

Being socially aware is very essential especially for the youth in their adolescence. Southridge is very proud to say that the majority of the students gathered as one loving family and helped out voluntarily when means of social media sites requesting that they help out sort and gather the donations during the aftermath did their part in contributing to the society in a time wherein they were needed the most.

In a time of calamity, especially by the rampant typhoons, Southridge will always provide more than a helping hand.

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**Matthew Banaag (mattbanaag@yahoo.com)**

Dear Editor,

High school has always been full of many new opportunities for people to show their talent and express themselves. But during high school there’s always been one event that gets everyone excited, Plautus. Plautus has always been something that can cause people to start pulling their hair out with stress, but it can also make people jump for joy and keep them smiling for hours. So in many ways it can be either your worst or best experience in your high school life in Southridge.

First, with Plautus being extremely exciting from the very first time you get assigned as an apprentice till your final year as a senior how can it be one of the worst experiences in your life? Well first of all no matter what year you’re in your class is always going to fight, whether it will be something as small as cooperating in practice or something big like what the plot of the Plautus will be. Next finding time to practice can sometimes be difficult, especially if you have a lot of classmates in the varsity teams.

Then again, like I said, Plautus can be a really exciting thing where you can freely express yourselves as a scriptwriter or an actor or even with the props you make. I’ve always loved how in Plautus despite all the hardships we face we go through it as a class, and even though we tend to fight each other every now and then, we somehow get through it with stronger bonds and ready to face the next challenge. Plautus is also another great way to get to know your classmates better, get to know their strengths and weaknesses and most importantly get to know them as people. Plautus truly can bring people closer together.

So overall I think Plautus is a wonderful idea. Sure enough, we’re just a bunch of students without any training in theatre and the other important aspects needed for Plautus but that doesn’t mean that we can’t put up a good show. Yes, I know there are some people who are not really in favor of the idea of Plautus, but even if what we’re doing isn’t professional-like and even sometimes ridiculous and foolish in the end it all comes down to the memories made and lessons learned. So far Southridge has been doing a great job with Plautus and I hope that it continues doing a great job this season and the next and the seasons to come.

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**Gino Guevara**

**Dear Editor,**

I would like to suggest that your next issue focus on SR efforts to help victims of the recent floods around Metro Manila.

On August 11, a devastating monsoon, also known as Gener, poured down endlessly on the provinces of central and northern Luzon resulting in a nationwide catastrophe, leaving many peoples’ homes submerged by the floods and also leaving them without food. Many barangays and local communities flooded.

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While I agree that we are an academically inclined school, Southridge, as far as I know, is recognized as a very good Football school. This is cemented by what recently happened to Sandro Reyes, the Southridge student who received a scholarship at FC Barcelona at Escola. Southridge has won many championships and is continuing to win them every single year. In this view, we can see that even in sports, we continue to evolve our traditions as a school.

Anyway, with the MOST, we see that we have either stayed consistent or have become better. We have consistently been at the top in MOST with Thomas Manalac during 2010, Lance Katigbak in 2011, and Mike Agoncillo in 2012. Mike got 2nd place and continues Southridge’s proof of excellence.

I am pretty sure the term for the flower carpet occasion is not Corpus Christi, but it is the Eucharistic Procession. With the Eucharistic Procession, the carpets improved from last year. The carpets were more colorful and beautiful. Once again, we see the evolution of tradition.

In traditions of the old and of the new, we as a school have certainly refined them and evolved them. We can see this trend continuing this year with the recent introduction of a new mascot. Andy the Admiral.
It wasn’t too long ago when Jeggy Filart of Batch 2011 coined the name Southridge Admirals. This finally gave Southridge students a name to call themselves - their very own Blue Eagle or Green Archer. On September 3, 2012 at a similar pep rally held at the covered courts, the High School Student Council Two unveiled something even bigger: Andy the Admiral, the school’s first mascot.

It’s no secret that having a physical mascot was a dream for many students. Many in the past have tried and failed to create a living, breathing, and dancing mascot to inculcate unity and love for the School. The highlight of the pep rally renewing the Vinta and Helm House rivalry was the introduction of Andy the Admiral.

The program kicked off with Captains Greenheart and Bluebeard galvanizing the primary school students with their respective house cheers. Each house showed their hearts and loyalty by shouting with great gusto. The Admirals Step Crew also assisted in livening up the atmosphere.

To further stoke up the crowd, the School recognized and brought onstage the Football, Basketball, and Baseball varsity team. Among those lauded was Sandro Reyes, an exceptionally skilled Grade 3 football player recently granted full scholarship by Spain’s FC Barcelona Escola, the academy of FC Barcelona, one of the world’s best football clubs.

Then Andy the Admiral came in to loud cheers of appreciation. He was garbed in a beautifully gilded Admiral’s coat and wearing the signature tricorne hat. He wore a blue band on his right wrist (Vinta) and a green band on his left wrist (Helm). The crowd erupted in ecstasy as Andy walked onstage, danced, and paraded through the mob of students who angled closer for a better look. To top it all off, Andy made a monumental three point shot to officially inaugurate himself as the school’s name and face.

Do not be surprised when in the next varsity game, Andy the Admiral will be there, cheering on the players and the students. He is an image that will unify Southridge for generations to come.