



ECTOPIC MURMURS

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Dr R Abejuela inducted 21st PMASC Prexy

The Philippine Medical Association of Southern California (PMASC), a non-profit professional organization for physicians in Southern California of Pilipino ancestry aims to serve the economic, educational and humanitarian needs of members in the community, recently inducted Reynaldo Abejuela MD⁷⁹ as president during its 21st biennial anniversary



REYNALDO ABEJUELA MD

Dr Abejuela replaced another FEU alumnus, Wilson Morales MD⁷⁴ at the PMASC helm. *continue to page 8*

STATINS CAUSE DIABETES!

Statins or HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors since introduction in mid-1970s have become one of the most popular and most prescribed drugs to the point of hearing some experts saying they should be taken by almost everyone, including the overweighted dogs and cats. *continue to page 16*

Message from the CHAIRMAN



PEPITO C RIVERA MD

Through the years, I have tried to vary my articles to entertain, educate and prompt thought on various subjects. I hope that you have enjoyed them as much as I have enjoyed putting them together. This month, my comments will be a little different.

Congratulations from one medical professional to another! May in the United States should just be called medical month. We celebrate National Hospital Week, National Nurse's Week, and National EMS week. I think it is appropriate to honor these entities. Personnel who work with any of these areas spend much of their lives performing their duties. It is not just the 8-12 hour shifts, but also continuing education, maintaining licensure, and researching new information while keeping abreast of current standards of care. Through the years it has been my pleasure to work with well educated,

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PRESIDENT'S Message

Greetings, fellow alumni!
The month of May is upon



OSCAR C TUAZON MD

us, which means there are only 10-11 weeks left before we all converge at the JW Marriott in downtown Los Angeles for our 33rd annual

reunion and scientific convention on July 25-28, 2012. Although I know that many of you are deeply focused on cheering on your respective NBA teams in the playoffs, I want to take this opportunity to remind you all to please register for our reunion. By registering early, you can avail yourselves of the generous hotel discount!

The Southern California Chapter has worked very hard to plan a truly memorable event for all alumni, especially the 2012 Jubilarians. I also highly recommend that Jubilarians sponsor an advertisement in our souvenir program.

It is a great way to get in touch with old classmates while simultaneously giving back to our school. Your donation of \$100 per full page will go far in helping us to fundraise for our revolving accounts, which help to fund our support of the

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FAITH CORNER

REVEREND MELVIN ANTONIO MD⁶⁵

My apologies to the readers of the **ECTOPIC MURMURS**.



REV MELVIN ANTONIO MD

I have been amiss in submitting a Faith Corner article due to the heavy schedule that the Lenten season

brings for clergy everywhere. Now that the Easter season is upon us, I am able to write more devotional material.

A student in my confirmation class recently asked whether it was okay to question God. The question is quite valid especially for a devout Christian because we are taught that it is simply unfaithful to express disappointment with God, as if there is no more certain mark of a lack of faith than to do so. To question God is unheard of. To express disappointment with God is unthinkable. To be angry at God is unforgivable.

The opening verses of **Psalm 13:1-2** go like this: *How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?*

The psalmist is none other than King David who expresses his anguish by questioning God. Psalm 74 is a prayer for help from a community after a

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THE PROJECT (INVESTMENT) THAT OUTLASTS ALL OTHERS

ULYSSES M CARBAJAL MD

Introduction

Less than four months away from my 90th birthday, and after a thorough review of my past, I have arrived at the paramount conclusion



ULYSSES M CARBAJAL MD

that Jesus' advice that we *lay up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and thieves do not break through nor steal*, in **Matthew 6:19**, stands true and unchallenged.

Modesty aside, a few of my pet projects as well as of investments are concisely cited in this presentation to confirm the validity of the advice coming from the lips of the Lord on the best place where to store our treasures.

Medical Mission in the Philippines

Initiated in Legaspi City.

Way back in 1964, I was personally invited by Dr Damaceno Ago, a service-oriented and enterprising alumnus of the University of the Philippines, to start doing charity work for the indigent EENT patients flocking to his hospital in Legaspi City from all over Bicolandia. Although I had planned to work there for just three days, I had to stay another day as there were so many elderly patients with

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FLOWERS

ROLANDO M SOLIS MD⁶³



ROLANDO SOLIS MD



Bleeding hearts



Red tulips

And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
Matthew 6:29

WHOA! A DOUBLE RAINBOW!



The sight is a rarity. My first and I was able to photograph it.

It is an expression when awesome or spectacular are not sufficient descriptive words.

Double rainbow happens when the ray of light that causes a single rainbow is reflected twice within raindrops and exits at a greater angle than a single rainbow. Because the twice-reflected light has had two chances to be transmitted out the back of the raindrop rather than reflected back toward the observer, the secondary bow is much fainter than the primary and frequently cannot be seen at all. It is typical for a secondary rainbow to be visible only at certain points along the arc.

It could also serve as a precursor to an even more impressive triple, or an even greater mystery, a quadruple rainbow.

If one could not see the second rainbow, don't worry, you're not alone, since the band is less distinctly striped and colored.

This particular double rainbow was experienced at our Maui Kaanapali Beach condo hotel while we were preparing our trip back to Chicago.

The rainbow's end was also so close --- just at the beach back of the next hotel; but a pot of gold was not there.

Perhaps, it was simply how God is telling me that I already have His grace and blessing which are more than enough than gold.

To see a double-rainbow, I am very lucky! I know people get as excited when they encounter such a discovery.

According to **Jeremiah 29:11** - *For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.*

If there has ever been a double-rainbows verse in the Bible, this has to be it!
by **CESAR V REYES MD**⁶⁸

OLD CLASSMATES, OLD FRIENDS

CELSO DEL MUNDO MD

Old classmates and old friend
shine like pure gold,
Which always glitters even
behind dusk and smog.
Old friend can't be replaced, for
the links and memories



**CELSO
DEL MUNDO MD**

always linger
All the good and
bad times
that we have
gone through.

My eyes are teary,
just thinking of
my friends and

old classmates,
The lean years we were
together, building sand
castles in the air,
Beautiful memories sometimes
gloomy alternated by all
laughter,
To the silly and crazy things
that prevailed in our carefree
youthful years.

Old friends and old classmates are
hardy, tested by passage of
times,
Even with years apart, without the
images of our changing faces,
After those years of silence we are
all back together
To reminisce the good old days
and patch up the void of bygone
years.

My dear friends and classmates,
we have reached and passed the
golden years,
Our days are slowly drifting but
our love and respect remain
the same,
We have acquired new friends but
all our good times will always
remain,
In our senescence, beautiful
memories of old classmates
will always be alive and well.

WHITE HOUSE HONORS CHAMPIONS of CHANGE

In the Fall of 2011, the White House launched the “What’s Your Story?” video/essay writing challenge. The challenge aimed to highlight the personal stories of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders across the country, which have impacted their community through their dreams, experiences, and dedication to a cause.

The White House received over 200 videos and 35 essays. From these entries, the nine inspiring leaders were chosen to represent their communities as part of White House’s Champions of Change program.

The Champions of Change represent the millions of Asian American and Pacific Islander leaders who are making a difference in their community, many of whom continue to make a difference without being formally recognized.

The nine leaders and organizations have stood out as demonstrating exceptional leadership in civil rights, immigration, community empowerment, anti-bullying, health, and the arts. Their work has been an integral part ensuring that the underserved among them are given a voice.

The winners are:

Terisa Tinei Siagatonu is a spoken word artist/arts educator and community organizer from the Bay Area.

Rebecca Chin has been a member, leader, and creative talent within the Philadelphia Suns, a volunteer-led, youth organization.

Chinese Immigrant Student Leadership program is a pilot leadership program for Chinese immigrant students in the Chinese-Sheltered English Instruction Program at Charlestown High School in



Dr Erlinda Barranda with brother, Robinson Barranda at the White House Champions of Change

Boston.

Elena Chang and Suma Reddy aspire to foster greater visibility, pride, acceptance, unity, and harmony for all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Asians and Pacific Islander people in our families, cultural communities and beyond.

Paul Kim is the founder of Kollaboration, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to empowering the community through entertainment. Its main

annual event is a talent show which takes place in 15 cities and draws over 20,000 people annually.

Nidhi Chanani is an artist who creates illustrations that capture the everyday romantic and whimsical moments in life. In a fast paced society that is saturated with a variety of media, her work reminds people to recognize those moments.

My Linh Vo, currently a doctoral student in clinical psychology at John F. Kennedy University in California, is developing her skill set to provide culturally-responsive services to underserved, underrepresented and marginalized individuals and families.

Harry Leong is the president of the Philadelphia Suns, a volunteer-led, youth organization, which focuses on community building by offering educational, cultural, social, athletic, and service opportunities for

Asian American youth.

Even Hollywood celebrities, including Minnie Driver and Tim Daly, were among the essayists.

Dr Erlinda G Barranda, an Arellano High School Class⁵⁹ graduate, FEU Institute of Arts and Sciences alumna, and Ago University School of Medicine (Naga City) medical degree recipient, was also an essayist and the only Pilipino contestant in the Champions of Change.

The following is what she said of her White House experience:

Writing an essay last November, 2011 about the *journey of one Asian American* caught the attention of the White House Staff.

She was invited last April 5, 2012 at 11:30 am to be at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building in Washington, DC during the CHAMPIONS of CHANGE

event. She needed a vacation after a hectic year at work. To be invited to be in the grounds of the White House complex finally compelled her to take off from a most fulfilling but busy work even for thirty hours.

After attempting to make roundtrip air flight reservations for herself and one invited guest she was allowed to have was rather futile all because of security reasons.

The White House sent the invitation to her and followed by an official email message with an official form she needed to fill up with her SSN, personal information such as email address, fax number, where she works and/ or the company or organization she may be affiliated with.

She replied and sent back such information as requested.

However, she found out that the state agency she works for could not release automatically her replied email to the White

House with needed information. Special permission and arrangement with the official help desk and webmaster of the state agency she works for full-time had to be made first to authorize release of sensitive personal information like her SSN information.

That took at least five days before finally such information could be released. It was meant to protect release of vital



President B Obama meets with some of the Champions of Change at the White House.

information through the internet on state workers.

In spite of the back and forth communication and could not make definite flight reservations, she definitely appreciated that kind of protection from her state agency she works for.

Everyone was most happy that one of their fellow employees is an honoree and to be invited by the White House.

In the interest of time, she finally decided to drive her SUV to be in the event, as making definite air flight and hotel reservations was not practical and was more inconvenient for her to manage her time and energy.

She made it just on time to be in the event venue, discovering that her invited guest, her own brother, Robinson G Barranda, a retired deputy of the New York State Board of Bank Examiners, who took the Amtrak from the Big Apple was already in the audience, waiting for the program to begin.

After pausing in front of the huge portraits of the nation's President and Vice President along the passageway and with other honorees and escorted by gentle White House Staff, she finally made it to be part of an august audience.

The event was intended to honor everyone, mostly Asian American and Pacific

Islanders who in the past described their stories with essay, videos, and/ or paintings on significant works and activities in creating change in their respective communities.

Two panels of honorees presented their respective views and reflections on how they championed change to take place in their varied communities.

They came from as far as Micronesia, California, New York, Philadelphia, Ohio and other states.

Most of the honored guests were first and second third generation Asian Americans accompanied by their respective guests.

After the panel discussions, a tasty and delightful luncheon entrée was served while some sample of video productions and creative humorous remarks of some honorees were presented.

Copies of presidential/ executive proclamation order in 2009 and expired in 2011 and official publications on various agencies of the government that impact many Americans of varied age, ethnic, gender, educational, business groups were made available.

It was a historical occasion for the honorees.

To receive an invitation from the White House staff and receive due recognition of their quiet, but firm and solid contribution as Asian American partners for progress of this nation was an honor.

Although Dr Barranda has been a consistent recipient of awards and recognitions since her college graduation, her contributions since the sixties to the re-making of America and be formally recognized by the executive branch of the United States government is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for her.

She intends to disseminate information that have definite impact on the lives of many through her various speaking and teaching engagements in days ahead.

by **CESAR V REYES MD**⁶⁸

MAY QUOTE

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

OBITUARY

ROMULO S ANCOG MD,



ROMULO S ANCOG MD

member of the first graduating class of FEU-NRMF passed away recently at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak MI, surrounded by his loving wife and classmate, CHING ANCOG MD⁵⁷ and family. The Ancogs have six children and nine grandchildren.

Romy was a devoted father of Cristeta Ancog Weeks MD⁸⁵.

After graduation, Romy taught physiology and microbiology at FEU Institute of Medicine. He migrated to the United States in 1959 for post graduate training in psychiatry.

He had residency at Receiving Hospital in Detroit and the Detroit Psychiatric Institute where he later run the inpatient department and trained future psychiatrists.

His trainees continued to consult with him from all over the country.

Romy is an author of a book *So you want to see a Psychiatrist*.

He was in private practice until he become ill late last year.

Romy was an avid golfer. He enjoyed dancing, and music, especially big band jazz, as well as art and painting. With his wife, they were very active in the medical community in Michigan.

Romy and Ching have travelled widely, literally travelling around the world, that included the Philippines, Russia, Egypt, China, many places in Europe, and throughout South America. He was loved by many and will be missed by his family, the many circles of friends, and numerous patients.

by **HERNANI TANSUCHE MD**⁶⁸

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Our annual scientific convention in July will be in



MINNIE C RIVERA MD

Los Angeles.

I wanted to extend my thanks in advance for the wonderful convention that awaits us. It takes considerable planning, coordination, and strength of character to make such an event possible and each year.

I am pleased and amazed at how well the conventions turn out. I would encourage all my friends, classmates, and colleagues to plan to attend.

The convention is such an intricate maze of activities spanning educational lectures, business meetings, and fun activities. There are wonderful evenings of dancing and camaraderie, chances to visit old friends and meet new ones and time to relax and enjoy the surroundings of the hosting city.

I feel safe in saying that each person who attends finds something special to remember.

I would also encourage everyone to participate in the yearly brochure. The cost to sponsor an advertisement starts at only \$100. The souvenir brochure is much more than an advertisement. It is a compilation of life for our alumni. People include pictures

of family, celebrate accomplishments, and show off their successful businesses.

It is interesting to look through old brochures and see how we have changed, how families have grown, or where people have settled.

It is much better than a one-time yearbook from our school years which focused on that one moment in time. Our sponsor brochures span years; sometimes entire lifetimes.

It is also a little sad when we see faces of some who are no longer with us. But even with the sadness, we are reminded of how much these people meant to us; what joy they brought to our lives.

I think it is an important part of our convention and I hope that people will take this opportunity to place an ad and memorialize this year in their lives, the good times, good friends, family and loved ones.

I noticed that this year is also unique in that a celebrating 45th anniversary class (Class⁶⁷) is also the class of the chairman of the board of trustees. I would challenge those in the Class⁶⁷ to make an extra effort to include their memories in the brochure, to leave their mark on the FEUDNRSM Alumni Foundation.

Again, many thanks for all the hard work.

I look forward to July and our convention.

I hope to see all of you there.

**MINERVA CONCEPCION
RIVERA MD⁷²**

FEUDNRSMAF Board
Trustees

R Abejuela

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Founded in 1971 in Los Angeles, the PMASC has become the leading organizational forum for Pilipino physicians in the medical communities in Southern California. To share their common interests and concerns, members established many chapters, most active of which is the South Bay Chapter.

With more than 300 active members out of possible 1700, the PMASC is one of the most important establishments for many Pilipino doctors in the medical communities of the Southland.

As a public charity IRS 501-C-3 organization, it sponsors programs affecting Pilipino physicians in the Southland, including providing assistance to unlicensed physicians and recent medical graduates by providing a medium for review of the USMLE, and assists the ethnic community to promote the interest of and educate the general public about diseases that may affect their daily life.

It also reaches out to the community through better quality healthcare services to the patients and programs that will update the physician on recent advances in disease management and control, and at the same time increase the community's awareness to the disease.

Health through education has also been the mainstay of the medical association.

The recent anniversary induction dinner was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Garden Grove, CA.

Dr Abejuela is a diplomate in psychiatry and affiliated with the Independent Mental Health Care Professional. He specializes in medication treatment using psychotropic drugs combined with focused individual and couples therapy, and deals with work related stress, workers compensation cases, marital issues and family mediation services.

His interest in academic work as well as teaching and advising corporations on mental health issues are notable.

He likewise possesses considerable experience in dealing with veterans who just came from Iraq and Afghanistan with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), depression, anxiety, insomnia, to name a few.

by **CESAR V REYES MD⁶⁸**



Dr Norma Salvatierra⁶⁷ in dark red gown is as lovely as ever in a dance highlight with Dr Bong Garlito.



Dr Ellen Punsaland Abejuela (secretary), Dr Reynaldo Abejuela, and Dr Fe Ludovico Aragon at the podium as the commentator during the induction.



Dr Pete Glorescio shadows Dr Ping P Florescio who is stunning in yellow gown.



Drs E and R Abejuela are shown with some of the PMASC past presidents that includes Drs Samuel Lardizabal, Robinson Baron and W Morales.



Dr Robinson Baron says a brief grace with, from left, Dr E Abejuela, Dr R Abejuela, Dr Wilson Morales and Mrs Teresa Morales in the presidential table.



Some of the PMASC ladies, from left, Dr Fe Baje, Dr E P Abejuela, Mrs O Tuazon, Dr Daisy De Guzman Castro, and Dr Fe Ludovico Aragon.

MORE MAY IMAGES



Drs Fely and Melvin Escara⁶⁸ lovingly spoiled their first and only grandson to date during a recent trip to Disney World Orlando.

THE PROJECT

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mature and hypermature cataracts in need of immediate help. A few had come too late;



ULYSSES M
CARBAJAL MD

for the over-ripe swollen lens had already burst, resulting in complications: glaucoma (increased intraocular pressure resulting in blindness), iritis (inflammation of the iris), or phthisis bulbi (shrunken blind eyeball). In the succeeding trips, a few private patients were served and charged accordingly.

Bacolod and San Jose. Two years later, I had to include, in my itinerary, Bacolod and San Jose (Antique), doing the clinics and surgeries in Bacolod Sanitarium and Hospital, under the directorship of Dr Willis G. Dick, and in the provincial hospital in San Jose, with the assistance of Dr Facundo Train. Having been tutored by Dr Dick earlier in 1951, in the art of medicine, I counted it an honor and privilege to accept his personal invitation to perform EENT surgeries in the Bacolod Sanitarium and Hospital, at the outskirts of Bacolod City. He would patiently meet me at the airport, drive on a muddy short-cut road across and through a vast sugar cane plantation, and accommodate me in his home during the first few visits. The Hospital charged a minimum fee for the lab work, for the use of the operating room and

supplies, and for the hospital stay after surgery. No surgery fee was collected from the indigent patients. In San Jose, Dr. Train volunteered to screen the patients for possible surgery. The trip was rather rough from Iloilo City to San Jose, but it was a great relief to see many needy patients waiting eagerly for my arrival with a surgical nurse.

Puerto Princessa, Palawan.

Not long after, an Adventist doctor, who was an officer of the local Rotary Club in Palawan, made arrangements for me to conduct medical mission in the provincial hospital in Puerto Princessa, Palawan.

Much to my chagrin, I found the main operating room poorly equipped and not safe for cataract surgery. A few flies had to be swatted away and the room had to be "sanitized." Moreover, the hospital did not have sufficient beds for the many patients scheduled for cataract extraction. At that time, before the advent of nigh perfect suturing under a surgical microscope, it was absolutely necessary for patients to lie down quietly for at least two days following cataract surgery, or they develop complications like prolapsed iris or hyphema (blood in the anterior chamber). In the aforementioned provincial hospital, some twenty-five cataract patients had to lie down on the mat-covered floor. There were no mattresses!

Cotabato, Bukidnon, General Santos, and Digos. During my term as President of the Philippine Medical Association (PMA), 1969-1970,

COMMENTS

Editorials

news releases

letters to the editor

column proposal and manuscripts are invited.

Email submission, including figures or pictures, is preferred.

ECTOPIC MURMURS

Deadline for the June 2012

June 15, 2012

Please address submissions to acvrear@aol.com

I was invited to do EENT surgeries in the 50-bed church-managed hospital in Cotabato, in the 100-bed provincial hospital in Malaybalay (Bukidnon), in the 20-bed hospital of Dr Rosendo Diagan in General Santos, and in the 75-bed hospital of Dr. Rodolfo Canos in Digos (Southern Davao). Patients were classified into “paying” and “charity” in the aforementioned hospitals except in the government hospital in Malaybalay, where all were indigent.

Ed Caparas Joins. For a few years, I found myself a lone exponent of medical mission among less than a dozen US-trained eye specialists who had returned to their homeland. How I thanked the Lord when I heard that Dr. Ed Caparas, a well-known ophthalmologist a year ahead of me, had recently commenced doing charity work for needy people in a couple of towns in Northern Luzon!

Berrien Springs MI. While practicing in the Philippines, I flew to Legaspi every month, spending three days at the Ago General Hospital in Legaspi and at a newer branch-hospital in Naga. This was reduced to twice a year after moving to Berrien Springs, MI, in 1978. About two weeks were allocated for free EENT medical and surgical services to needy people in the far-flung areas of the country, especially in Bicolandia—Southern Luzon.

Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya. My daughter Jan, after completing her 3-year residency in ophthalmology at the Manila Central University (MCU) Hospital, 1990, teamed up with

me, and joined Dr. Robinson Baron, a hard-working surgeon, in conducting medical mission in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya at the Veterans Hospital. At that time, Dr Willie Damasco, the Surgeon who had taken over the management of the Nueva Vizcaya Doctors’ Hospital (NVDH) four years after I moved to USA, sadly informed me that at one time, after its closure, NPA (anti-government rebels) found temporary shelter in NVDH, and that it was now occupied by homeless people.

In 1994, we returned the Veterans Hospital as a father-daughter team to work on scores of patients who had been waiting since the prior mission there.

San Fernando and Concepcion, Tarlac. In June 9, 1991, Mt. Pinatubo, quiet for over four centuries, suddenly erupted, dislodging the *Negritos* (aborigines) from the Zambales mountains and destroying vast rice land and sugar cane fields in Central Luzon with the deluge of overflowing lava. I joined the Philippine Medical Association of Southern California (PMASC) group, led by President Ruben Guinto, in holding charity work for the disaster-stricken residents, particularly in San Fernando, Pampanga and in Concepcion, Tarlac. Two years later, Dr Teresita Sison-Diego, my Associate at the Clinic in Makati and in NVDH, helped me complete the unfinished work in our previous medical mission to Concepcion.

Tagub, Malolos, Bulacan, and Laoag. My daughter and I worked also during Christmas Season, 1997, with the multi-specialty team headed by APPA

Past President Jess Ho in Tagub, Misamis Occidental. There, I saw the most spectacular display of Christmas lanterns and Christmas decor I have seen in my life. Grateful for our labor of love, the Mayor rewarded each missionary with a beautiful battery-run clock.

Two years later, we joined the over one hundred-member team co-sponsored by Dr Rodolfo Punzalan (APPA President) and Dr Modesto Llamas (PMA President) bound for Malolos and Laoag in December, 1999. Governor Bong Marcos welcomed us with open arms, and supported the project to the hilt. Surgeries were performed in the well-furnished hospitals in Laoag and in Batac. This triumphant experience more than made up for the rude treatment I had been subjected to a few years earlier, when one newly established eye specialist, who vehemently opposed medical missions, threatened to harm me bodily.

Palawan Adventist Hospital. November 4-6 and 9-10, 2000, the PMASC under the leadership of Dr Alex Abary, conducted charity work at the Adventist Hospital in Palawan. Jan and I took care of the EENT patients. I readily noted the well-equipped operating rooms, in sharp contrast to those of the provincial hospital over three decades before.

Agoo and Aklan. There was also the opportunity of working with missionaries headed by APPA President Amable Aguiluz, covering Agoo in La Union and Aklan in Capiz. In Agoo, EENT and general surgery operations were

performed at the Dona Gregoria Memorial Hospital. Surgery residents from the Manila Sanitarium and Hospital (MSH) assisted Dr. Alfonso Miguel do thyroidectomies and other major surgeries. The next stop was at Aklan provincial hospital, where scores of general and EENT surgeries were performed. From there, we drove and sailed for the island of Boracay, one of the best resorts in the world.

San Fernando, Pampanga.

The following year, 2001, Jan and I participated in the medical mission organized by APPA President Roberto Quizon in San Fernando, Pampanga. We were welcomed and treated royally by the few ophthalmologists there, even arranging for the Rotary Club Officers to meet with us and have picture-taking with the Hospital staff and Operating Room personnel. In the evening, Dr Ruben Henson, President of the local chapter of the Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology (PAO), drove us to the 5-star Holiday Inn in Clark Field, after the President of the Rotary Club had invited and treated us to a lavish dinner in the most popular restaurant in the area.

Furthermore, the older son of Dr Sabino Santos, medical director of the famous Santos Eye Hospital, had traveled earlier from Malolos to help us examine patients in the Lingad Memorial Hospital in San Fernando. Here, I was given the opportunity of demonstrating to the local eye residents and hospital staff a modified technique in glaucoma surgery. It is noteworthy that this particular mission took place

soon after the September 11, 2001 debacle in New York City, making doctors shun away from flying because of the prevailing fear of being hijacked by terrorists.

Other Medical Missions.

Several medical missions were conducted in many other areas of the country, especially in those where specialists did not practice. The following is a partial list.

Luzon: Zambales, Dagupan, Vigan, Tayug, San Nicolas, Cabanatuan, Santiago, Laguna, Lucena, Daet, Iriga, Sorsogon, Catanduanes.

Visayas: Ormoc, Tacloban, Tagbilaran, Cebu, Dumaguete, Iloilo.

Mindanao: Agusan, Davao del Norte, Takurong, Iligan, Lanao, Dapitan, Basilan, and Jolo.

Other Islands: Guimaras, Marinduque, Masbate, Romblon, Mindoro, Rio Tuba in Palawan.

Four Dialogues on Medical Mission. Because of the increasing number of young eye specialists being produced in several Medical Centers in the country, certain problems had emerged, which needed to be threshed out between the Association of Philippine Ophthalmologists in America (APOA) and the Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology (PAO). Accordingly, a dialogue was held during the term of Dr Jaime Aragonés, first APOA President, to promote a congenial relationship between the two groups.

Over a decade later (during my term as APOA President in 2000-2001), two more dialogues with the PAO officers were arranged--the first, in

Quezon City and the second, three months later, in San Juan, Rizal. The main recommendation emanating from those meetings was that foreign-based eye specialists should coordinate with the local eye specialists to insure a careful screening of indigent patients, as well as the proper care and follow-up of post-cataract surgery patients.

In December 12, 2008, it was also my privilege to participate in the dialogue between APPA and PMA during the administration, respectively, of Dr Francis Talangbayan and Dr Rey Melchor Santos. Also present was Dr Florentino Doble, president of the Philippine Board of Medicine. During this dialogue, I voiced out, on behalf of APPA, our strong opposition to the proposal requiring a foreign-based medical mission team to deposit half-million pesos as guarantee for the management of patients who might develop postoperative complications. Much to our delight, PMA listened and relented. The proposal was stricken out.

Last Medical Mission. The last medical mission stint for me took place from February 22 to March 9, 2010, when, together with my wife and daughter, I was invited to join the FEU team led by Drs Robinson Baron and Archie Lamadrid, bound for Bicol, Central Luzon, and Palawan. Since the invitation came rather late, I had to get in touch with the PAO secretariat to furnish me promptly the email addresses of the PAO Chapter Presidents in the areas whither we were bound. The

ophthalmologist in Puerto Princessa, responded promptly, welcoming my coming. But I was surprised, soon after, to receive a letter from the PAO president, intimating that he did not favor the coming of foreign-based eye specialists to the Philippines because there were, allegedly, now sufficient well-trained eye specialists to serve in the country. This was, factually, an overstatement

Virtually Handcuffed.

Because there was not ample time to renew my Philippine medical license, (expiring 2000), I decided to simply watch and randomly assist my daughter do the eye examinations and to refrain from performing eye surgeries. (Nonetheless, I secretly relished the concept that being a life-member of the Philippine Medical Association {PMA} by virtue of my having been President in 1969-70, and having been President of APOA, 2000-2002, I would have been assisted more kindly and politely in complying with the new requirements rather than being misjudged and wrongly condemned.)

Lamentably, I was handcuffed during my last medical mission. What a waste of time and talent! What a frustrating experience! I was crying inside of me as many patients came in need of my surgical expertise in EENT, but rigidly inhibited from sharing this.

Shipment of Donated Alcon Supplies Is Aborted.

Even worse, the shipment to the APOA office in Vermont, Los Angeles, of the large box containing IOIs, sutures, Viscoat, and other supplies donated by Alcon, as it had

kindly done several times in the past, was suddenly aborted because of the stiff opposition of the PAO President. Despite my trying hard to observe the PAO guidelines on medical mission, I was hastily accused and even reported to the Secretary of Health and to the Professional Regulations Commissioner's office as unlawfully performing surgeries in the country.

I replied promptly that it was my daughter who did the surgeries. Up to now, I have not yet received a letter of apology from the officers involved. The only letter that came back to me was received the other week from Alcon, in Texas, furnishing me new guidelines on how to send a request for Alcon supplies for medical missions to the Philippines. This letter poignantly reminded me anew of the box of supplies that was supposed to have been shipped for the 2010 medical mission.

Philippine Choral Conductors Association (PCCA)

This organization was organized during one meeting of choral conductors coming from Manila, Quezon City, and suburbs. This was held at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, in the presence of Dean Lucrecia Kasilag, the First Lady's right hand in culture and arts, 1973. Officers were elected and, a few days later, sworn into office at Malacanan by the First Lady Imelda Marcos. The PCCA was active for five years, conducting workshops in the Cultural Center, Philippine Columbian, and principal churches in Manila and suburbs. These

workshops were later extended to far-flung areas like Zamboanga down south and Aparri, Cagayan up north. The organization reached its zenith when the major choral groups in the Philippines participated in a music festival at the main auditorium of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, expressively presenting great songs, sacred and secular, through the ages.

Unfortunately, the dream of continuing the great mission of this Association started to fade away when my wife and I left for USA. With the assistance of Professor Cristina S Careaga, PCCA Secretary, I called for a meeting of the Association when I returned the following year to the country, as a *balikbayan*, to encourage them to continue implementing the goals of PCCA; but this bold attempt did not prosper. Nonetheless, the former officers, individually, endeavored to hold isolated workshops and concerts in Greater Manila and Quezon City. Professor Reynaldo T Paguio, PCCA vice-president, continued in leading the UP Concert Chorus to major cities in USA and Europe, winning in a few competitions.

Philippine Board of Medical Specialties.

While serving as PMA president, I helped establish the Philippine Board of Medical Specialties (PBMS), patterning it after its exemplar in USA, the American Board of Surgery. It was then felt that such a move would assure the standardized training of future medical and surgical specialists in the Philippines. Moreover, as proved later, this body unified

splintered specialty groups, like the ophthalmologists and the anesthesiologists. This support continued with the four succeeding PMA Presidents. Steadily, the number of Specialty Societies joining PBMS increased.

Among our invited guests during the Annual PBMS Meetings were President Marcos, Secretary of Health Clemente Gatmaitan, the incumbent PMA president, and Pastor Moises Jereos, president of the North Philippine Union of Seventh-day Adventists. During the term of Dr Jaime Laya as PMA President, I visited with Dr Juan Flavier, DOH Secretary, to enlighten him about PBMS and gain his approval. Then, at the initiative of Dr Laya, PBMS officers met with those of PMA in the PMA headquarters in Quezon City. Unfortunately, time came when PMA wanted to control the PBMS organization. This unexpected move alienated the original incorporators. Much to my disappointment, the PBMS organization did not last beyond seven years.

Rice Land Acquired through My Mother's Help (Eight Hectares of Rice Land.) At the start, the homestead did not have an irrigation system. We had to develop one, using a creek nearby. It soon appeared that the soil was fertile, yielding excellent harvest twice a year. But the joy of ownership did not last long as a result of our moving to USA. The newly approved Agrarian Law was strictly implemented by the government, purchasing the said property and allocating it to the

five current tenants, leaving me just one hectare. Hopefully, I went to claim the sale amount of 88,000 pesos at the Land Bank in Makati and later in Manila. The money which had already increased to 280,000 pesos, after the passage of a few years, was not delivered to me, simply because the Torrens Title in my possession was just a copy—not the original. I went to the Register of Deeds in Bayombong, but did not succeed.

Bangenan, Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya. A 3-hectare rice land was purchased from an unlettered farmer, Mr. Bustillos, in the early 60s. Two years later, an enterprising businessman, Mr. Gordiolan, entered the picture, claiming that he had purchased the said property ahead of my parents and me. I won in the Department of Agriculture, chaired by Vice-President Salvador Lopez, who had inducted me into office as PMA President in 1970. Mr. Gordiolan, then appealed and appeared to have bribed officials in Malacanan in 1977. When he tried to possess the property and dislodge the tenants working there, I wrote a personal letter of appeal to President Marcos. As a result, the Agrarian Office in Bambang wrote me that although Mr. Gordiolan had now become the rightful owner, the tenants would still continue to till the said rice land indefinitely.

Umingan, Pangasinan. I provided the necessary funds for Mom to purchase some eight hectares of rice land in Umingan, as I had done in earlier land acquisitions. But when she visited the tenants and

the families squatting on the property, she was threatened. We never could possess the said property despite our having the legal papers of ownership. Understandingly, we did not wish to get killed. We had to give it up!

Caliraya Resort in Laguna

Dr Pacifico Marcos, PMA President three years ahead of me, convinced me in 1972 to buy two shares, in the Caliraya Resort, at 25,000 pesos per share. Twice I enjoyed the scenery and the boating there, first with the Choir members of the Pasay Adventist Church and later with my family. The placid man-made lake was beautiful and conducive to boating; it also teemed with fish. Unfortunately, the unique nipa-thatched cottages standing along one side of the lake were burned by the NPA in the early 80s.

A meeting of all investors was scheduled not long after; but I failed to attend. I soon learned that another Company had acquired and repaired the resort. What a loss for my family!

Nueva Vizcaya Doctors Hospital and School of Nursing

The construction of this hospital was kindled when my Sister Magdalena died at the Bambang Emergency Hospital because of the lack of proper equipment, particularly the proper cannula for doing a cut-down. This was absolutely needed in order to replace the great loss of blood from a stab wound on her back, as well as to allow time for her to be transported safely to Manila for a major vascular surgery.

The timely support by multi-millionaire Eugene Baltao, together with the endorsement of the eleven physicians in Nueva Vizcaya and the assured assistance of several specialists from the Manila Sanitarium and Hospital in Pasay City, resulted in the final establishment of a hundred-bed hospital facility and a School of Nursing for the Cagayan Valley in 1975.

As founder and first medical director, I had to spend more time in this hospital than in my clinic in Manila. What a day of rejoicing when the first batch of nursing students was capped, with yours truly as guest speaker! All departments appeared smoothly running when the first batch of nurses graduated. Unfortunately, the two medical directors elected after me were unable to keep the NVDH and Nursing School from losing ground when my family moved to the United States. I did my best to continue supporting NVDH by soliciting donations in cash and equipment from colleagues and institutions in the United States. I even devoted time doing surgeries there after moving abroad, donating all the surgical fees for the maintenance of the Hospital.

My heart was torn asunder when the hospital was finally declared bankrupt! As mentioned earlier in this report, the place had become a lodging place for the NPAs and shelter for the homeless. (An effort to revive has been recently initiated.)

Hospitals in Southern California

Alhambra Hospital. A time came when the management announced that the Alhambra

Hospital was at the verge of collapsing. To prevent this, the medical staff was encouraged to invest money for the maintenance of the hospital. I was one of those who swiftly responded. We lost a good percentage of our investment. But the hospital was worth being helped in order to continue serving the community.

CVCH Surgical Unit. The hospital administrator personally approached me in my EENT Clinic in Azusa to convince me to invest \$10,000 to help rejuvenate the surgical unit of the Covina Valley Community Hospital (CVCH). Up to now, I do not fully understand how the investors lost their invested funds. However, we later heard from the grape vine that the administrator had mismanaged the project. During my term as president of the medical staff, the hospital was purchased by another group and transformed into an acute-care center.

Terrace Plaza Medical Center. Less than a year after joining the medical staff at Terrace Plaza Medical Center in Baldwin Park, I purchased one share for \$50,000. Together with other investors, I started receiving monthly modest dividends. I was encouraged to buy another share. But not long thereafter, I discovered that the administrator was dishonest. The Institution was at the verge of closing. Being then the chief of medical staff, I tried hard to revive it, even hiring a well-known corporate lawyer to intervene, but utterly failed. The Medical Center was finally locked up. (It was later re-

opened and functioned for a few years.)

A Short-lived Medical Corporation

A dozen medical practitioners in Berrien Springs and Niles in Michigan organized a pharmaceutical firm in 1979 to produce and market a dental powder product, each investing at least \$5,000.00. The product was effective in fighting gingivitis; but the failure to advertise it widely, spelled the firm's doom ultimately.

Investing Overseas

During my first year of medical practice in Malate, Manila, (1961–1962) I was won over by a colleague to invest dollars abroad via an overseas firm. At first, the prospect of earning hundreds of dollars was bright; but ten years later, I was suddenly notified of its failure to remain viable any longer. I could not withdraw even a dollar.

In USA

Investing Pension Money in Mutual Funds. When we moved to Los Angeles 1983, I invested \$10,000 in mutual funds at the suggestion of my financial adviser, Alberto Baguingito, CPA. This modest start grew to \$99,000 in 2008. Because of the ongoing financial crisis, I was compelled to withdraw it and had my son re-invest it where we were assured this would grow by leaps and bounds. Much to our dismay, we lost the whole capital within the following two years.

Central Filipino Church (CFC)

A New Challenge. When I moved my medical practice in Berrien Springs, MI, to Los

Angeles area in 1983, I soon found out that the church which my wife and I had helped establish in the mid-50s, was in deep financial trouble. It had, in good faith, started a stupendous project of building a modern church edifice at 777 Colorado Blvd. in Los Angeles. Because of their diminishing income, the few remaining doctors backing the project could not continue giving their promised support. The project came to a jarring halt, becoming an eye sore to the surrounding community. (Weeds had grown, covering the steel beams for the proposed church, lying at the back of the unfinished all-purpose building.) At the behest of the disturbed surrounding business offices, the City Hall was poised to condemn the existing construction project. At that time, I was prevailed upon by the Church Board and the late Philippine Union College President Alfonso Roda (a guest at the Board meeting) to accept chairing the said building committee because the chair, the late Dr George Atiga, was being promoted to a higher position in the Pacific Union. (I did not foresee then that my accepting this position would interfere with my studies at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA.)

CFC Members Accept the Challenge. As a leader, I had to show, by precept and example, my full support for reviving the project. Listening to the suggestion of my business accountant, I had to get a loan from Mitsui, a Japanese Bank, in order to be able to pitch in, setting aside \$50,000, together with 9 other church members. Thus, we were able to show to

the Southern California conference officials that we meant business and were not willing to accede to their recommendation that we sell the property to the neighboring firm for 2 million dollars and look for another cheaper place. After paying off its indebtedness of \$450,000 to the Pacific Union, the Central Filipino Church (CFC), under the leadership of Pastor Simeon Rosete and First Elder Eliseo Bautista, was finally given the go-signal to resume finishing the construction project. Providentially, Mrs Velcy Abracosa, a former member of the City Hall Building Committee, graciously accepted CFC's invitation, soon thereafter, to serve as Architect to complete the building project.

The New Sanctuary Is Dedicated. To cut the story short, the new church building was finally completed, dedicated, and inaugurated formally and triumphantly on April 18, 1992, with officials from the Southern California conference and Pacific Union, as well as from the government, in attendance. More importantly, it was now felt that CFC has a decent base for evangelizing the City. This had been, and will ever be, the main objective for its being founded many years ago.

Paying Off the Mortgage. The next problem was to pay off the mortgage loan in the amount of over a million dollars. Other church leaders (Head Elder Alfonso Miguel, Nelson Cometa, and Nestor Ramos) chairing the MPOP worked hard, but failed, still leaving \$700,000, in December

2000, to be raised. Much to my surprise, the invitation was hurled to me by Pastor VicLouis Arreola to chair the Mortgage Pay-off Program (MPOP). I tried had to decline, but the Church Board finally prevailed. Assured of its full support, I led out in organizing the church membership into 14 bands, each band being assigned \$50,000 to raise. To encourage members to participate actively in this campaign, a large device was prepared, showing a huge thermometer in the center, planked on either side by seven smaller thermometers, to show how hot each band currently fared, as well as to disclose the progress of the entire church. Other gimmicks which had been used were theme songs, golden pine cones, lapel pins, and T-shirts displaying wholehearted support and love for the church.

Within two years, several bands exceeded their goals! I did my best to help my band by donating the entire proceeds from the sale of our Town House in Glendale, CA. in order to help our band almost reach its goal.

Burning the Mortgage Papers. I never felt so happy in my life as when leading out in the litany of mortgage paper-burning, November 27, 2003. While gazing at the smoke curling upward from the burning mortgage papers, I thanked God for leading my wife and me to help in establishing the first Filipino Adventist church in the mainland and, many years thereafter, for granting us the opportunity of leading out in completing the construction of a modern church edifice and of

paying off the mortgage payments. No longer unencumbered by burdensome monthly mortgage payments, CFC could concentrate on soul-winning more than ever.

More significantly, Jovita and I were now convinced to assume that the best investment we had ever made in life was that of helping establish and support God's church and work on earth.

Concluding Thoughts

In this article, the author has portrayed from personal experiences that even endeavors to serve well our family, neighbors, and the community, thinking that by so doing we lay treasures in heaven, are not free from criticism, opposition, obstruction, and even failure. All projects on earth appear as if destined, sooner or later, to come to the end of the road. Even the most relevant projects which are aimed at helping the less fortunate members of society are not automatically assured of a happy conclusion.

1. Several times in the past, I expressed my ardent desire to spend my twilight years in the Philippines, serving the needy and nigh-blind people in my land of birth. Painfully, this wish to get involved in medical missions came to an unexpected dead-end in 2010 when I received undeserved reprimands from the Philippines in my honest endeavor to continue helping the needy people in my homeland, as emphasized by President Gloria Macapagal in her letter to me in February 2009.

2. Investing in civic organizations and institutions is not exempt from failing.

3. So with investing in properties, like rice land and resorts for vacation.

4. Investing in hospitals and a School of Nursing, in spite of the desire to help mankind, is fraught with unforeseen risks.

5. Investing in manufacturing firms, stocks, mutual funds, and the like are not without risks.

6. According to the aforementioned experiences, the project (investment) which has outlasted all others is that of investing in a church that is engaged in proclaiming the good news of salvation.

FAITH CORNER

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national defeat at the hands of their enemy:
O God, why do you cast us off forever? Why does your anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture?



REV MELVIN ANTONIO MD

And then there's Moses, that great prophet of the Old Testament openly questioning and expressing his disappointment at the Lord as he leads the Israelites through the wilderness not just once but many times.

Abraham, God's personal choice to be the father of many nations openly haggles with God over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Reading these various psalms of lament and bible

stories, we come to realize that naming our disappointments and doubts is really an integral part of a life of faith, a necessary part of being renewed in faith.

Jesus himself borrows the words of one of those powerful psalms while hanging on the cross to express his own great despair as he says, *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Psalm 22)*

I think a lot of people feel that it is wrong to voice your disappointment with God. Many of us have been brought up to believe that it is blasphemous to do such a thing. I submit that it is not wrong to wonder where God is when we lose a child, when we learn that our beautiful child is autistic, when we learn that our beloved spouse is sick and dying, when our prized relationship has crumbled, when our dream job has just been eliminated.

The people who suffer from natural disasters would not be wrong to ask where God is as they pick up the pieces of their lives.

The parents of three young people senselessly shot to death in a cafeteria would not be wrong to ask, *Dear God, why did it have to be my child?*

When I lost my daughter six years ago, I asked the same question over and over again.

Everything in our faith teaches us that these things are not what God wants, or desires, or wills for us. And yet these things do happen and so we see God in a different way. What we learn from this is that God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ always shows up in the

broken places of our lives and our world.

We are disappointed when we do not get the God that we want, the God we have been taught to worship, the God we expect.

But in Jesus and his cross and his resurrection, we discover, not the God we want but the God that we desperately need: the God who sheds all glory to join us in our shame and sorrow, the God who comes down from heaven to enter our hell-on-earth world, the God who abandons strength so he can join us, embrace us, hold us, love us and redeem us at our places of weakness.

This God understands our giving voice to our disappointments. The only caveat is that we must first establish a relationship with the Lord our God, a relationship that begins with our baptism and continues to be nurtured through our study of his Word, worship and prayer.

God can take our anger, our disappointment, our questions. Not only can God take them but he has promised through Jesus Christ to meet us and stay with us until we come out on the other side of our disappointment to renewed and resurrected faith.

PRESIDENT'S

Message

continued from page 1

mounting medical needs of our *kababayan* back in the Philippines and our beloved Alma Mater.

For your convenience, email your artwork to me at otuzonmd@gmail.com and



OSCAR C
TUAZON MD

there to hit the green in Los Angeles. With Dr Gavino's help, we have secured a course where you can play for a nominal fee of \$120. Please e-mail me or call me at (626) 336-6652 if you are interested.

On behalf of the Southern California Chapter, we hope you come and join us this July in Los Angeles!

We are working hard to make sure this year's reunion and scientific convention is as memorable and fun-filled as the last! If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best Regards,
OSCAR C TUAZON MD⁷⁴

STATINS CAUSE DIABETES!

continued from page 1

Statins, however, are not benign chemicals. They are double-blade: they have great beneficial effects as they have numerous side effects, including tumor, mental impairment, rhabdomyolysis, liver failure and even death.

For example, Ezetimibe, an effective blocker of cholesterol absorption, failed to demonstrate an additional risk reduction when added to statin therapy, even though it

endorse your donation to the payment of FEUMASSC.

In addition, we have planned opportunities for all you golf lovers out

produces a respectable reduction in low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) levels.



This was followed by fenofibrate's discreditation. In the flawed Fenofibrate Intervention and Event Lowering in Diabetes (FIELD) study, it was the definitive Action to Control Cardiovascular Risk in Diabetes (ACCORD) trial, where fenofibrate added precious little, if anything, to baseline statin therapy.

The biggest concern of all was the damage that the Atherothrombosis Intervention in Metabolic Syndrome With Low HDL/ High Triglycerides: Impact on Global Health Outcomes (AIM-HIGH) study to much welcomed niacin, which showed no additional CVD risk reduction.

Statins have survived a number of hurdles for acceptance through the years, such as the concerns for liver damage and fatal rhabdomyolysis. These complications are legitimate, and fortunately, they are very infrequent

Statins have also survived worries that they may increase the risk of malignancy and that they might lead to some degree

of mental impairment over the years.

Now, along comes a brand-new concern that statins seem to cause a statistically significant increase in the rate of development of new cases of type 2 diabetes. This is quite bothersome because statins have been prescribed like candy in an effort to reduce strokes, heart attacks, and other vascular mishaps, and meanwhile they may actually be increasing the frequency of diabetic small-vessel disease.

Based on clinical trial and epidemiologic data the Food and Drug Administration added a red warning to the package inserts of all statins concerning the risk of new onset diabetes. Fortunately, the magnitude of this complication is relatively small in absolute terms and needs to be balanced against the benefits derived from these drugs.

Several major papers have now shown increases in the number of new diabetes cases with statin therapy.

In a meta-analysis of 33,000 subjects enrolled in 5 major statin trials showed that the drugs are, indeed, associated with one new case of type-2 diabetes for every 498 patients treated with a statin. That is not too bad, considering the benefits of reduced major CVD event, including heart attack or a stroke, prevented in every 155 patients receiving a statin.

Of course, a skeptic can always dismiss a meta-analysis because of issues over which trials were included and which were excluded, and the obvious fact that all such analyses are retrospective rather than prospective.

In another review of more than 150,000 postmenopausal women who participated in the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) trial, which disabused some of our long-held beliefs about estrogen replacement therapy indicated that women taking statins had a 48% greater risk of developing new-onset diabetes than women not taking statins. However, the WHI was not designed to look for such an effect, so the statin data can essentially be considered purely Observational.

As such, there are huge limitations on what can actually be concluded from this finding. Perhaps, the women taking statins were poorly matched with those who were not taking statins. Those being treated with statins may have had a greater prevalence of associated risk factors such as obesity and hypertension, which inherently predisposed them to needing statin therapy and to the development of new diabetes.

But the noose is, indeed, starting to tighten a bit, particularly when one considers the new-onset diabetes results that emerged from the rosuvastatin in the Prevention of Cardiovascular Events Among 17,802 Men and Women with Elevated Levels of C-Reactive Protein (JUPITER) trial.

This high-profile statin trial was set up to determine whether the indications for statin therapy should be broadened to include individuals whose only CVD risk factor is an elevated C-reactive protein (CRP) level.

Subjects with elevated CRP levels were randomized in a double-blind fashion to receive either rosuvastatin or placebo.

The trial confirmed a modest benefit of statins in these patients, but it also showed that the number of cases of new-onset diabetes was 25% higher in those receiving the statin; there were 270 cases of new diabetes in the rosuvastatin group versus 216 cases in the placebo group.

It is a lot harder to dismiss these results, other than to observe that new-onset diabetes was not the focus of the study at the outset.

So it may be true that statins, by some still-unknown mechanism, do push a bit along the spectrum from glucose intolerance to full-blown diabetes. But with everything kept in perspective, before any major changes in our therapeutic approach instituted further studies are needed.. The increase in new-onset diabetes is still a fairly minor one in absolute terms; it is roughly in the same ballpark as the increase in new cases of diabetes seen with diuretics or with beta-blockers.

How meaningful is it that this modest handful has been nudged across the line to full-fledged diabetes? It all depends. It depends on the absolute number of CVD events prevented with the statins, as opposed to the modest amount of collateral damage they may cause by producing a few new cases of diabetes.

If the absolute CVD risk reduction is minimal, because a low-risk population is involved with a low absolute risk of CVD

events, such as a group of young people with only modestly elevated LDL-C levels, then the tradeoff may not be all that favorable.

This assumes that the risk of new diabetes is constant across different populations on statins, which may be a shaky assumption.

On the other hand, if statins are used in high-risk patients where they really are preventing a significant number of strokes and heart attacks, then the collateral damage associated with producing a handful of new patients with diabetes may be a very acceptable cost of doing business.

Of course, these types of calculations can be very challenging for the individual provider to make when facing a real patient sitting on the examination table. But the guiding principle should be to try to do the most good possible while minimizing any collateral harm that is caused.

The bottom line is that statins remain a really good choice in patients with a high CVD risk, but the modest amount of collateral damage that may result from new-onset diabetes needs to be factored in when statins are contemplated in low-risk patients.

On this topic, ABC World News likewise reported about *the most popular prescription drug in the world: statins*. Investigators at Harvard Medical School found that people who take statins to reduce their cholesterol are at slightly higher risk of diabetes.

NBC Nightly News indicated that according to the study published online in the Archives of Internal Medicine, *women who*

take Lipitor [atorvastatin] or other statin drugs for cholesterol have approaching a 50% greater chance of developing diabetes, according to this study, a find that affects potentially millions of Americans. It was added *the study out today from the governments Women's Health Initiative, followed more than 150,000 women over 50 with and without heart disease for about ten years. They found those taking statin drugs had a 48% greater chance of developing type 2 diabetes*.

The Los Angeles Times explained *The heightened risk for diabetes was most pronounced in statin-taking women of Asian origin or those with a body mass index, or BMI, in the healthy range*.

Despite these findings, the study authors advise patients *not to stop taking their medications without talking to a doctor, because statins' proven power to prevent heart attacks and strokes outweighs any potential increase in type 2 diabetes risk, according to USA Today*.

The AP quoted Nissen of the Cleveland Clinic, who said, *What I fear here is that people who need and will benefit from statins will be scared off of using the drugs because of reports like this. We don't want these drugs in the water supply, but we want the right people treated. When they are, this effect is not a significant limitation*.

HealthDay also reported *When contributing factors such as family history and excess weight were considered, the statin users were nearly 1.5 times more likely to develop diabetes than those not taking statins. The risk applied for all kinds of statin drugs. The study authors cannot explain the link. It is still an area under scrutiny... Statins may affect the way the body manages insulin and glucose responses*.

It was added that *the findings emphasize current guidelines that recommend lifestyle intervention as the primary means of treating high cholesterol*" from MedPage Today. *Too many people are put on a statin who do not have to be. Patients should go on a statin if they can't control [their cholesterol] through dietary intervention, but once they're on that statin they should still continue lifestyle intervention*.

WebMD concluded that *the new study is not the first to suggest that statins may raise the risk for diabetes*. In fact, *an analysis of 13 studies, published in a year earlier found that statin users had a 9% increased risk for diabetes*. Another study, published last June, suggested a similar increase in risk among patients taking high doses of statins.

by **CESAR V REYES MD⁶⁸**

Message from the CHAIRMAN

continued from page 2
professional staff who take



PEPITO C
RIVERA MD

pride in educating themselves and others so that all patients receive the very best care possible

even in rural settings.

Often when you mention medical personnel, people think *doctors and nurses* but in fact, it covers many other people. As doctors, we sometimes forget who and what is involved with caring for our patients because we become so wrapped up in completing our own portion of the patient care. There is a saying that it takes a village to

raise a child. It also takes a community to care for a patient. Duties range from housekeeping to maintenance, from clerical to laboratory, from nursing to physicians. No one can complete patient care without input from the others and the entire medical community must function as one for a patient to receive top notch medical care.

During the month of May, I encourage everyone to take a look around the medical workplace or community. When was the last time you thanked a co-worker? Do you know the name of the receptionist at your facility? Take a moment to shake the hand of a nurse or a lab tech and let them know how much you appreciate their hard work. Positive comments don't always need to come from patients. Some of my most memorable *thank you moments* came from colleagues. Stand proud as a physician and stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the medical community. We are a strong association and our members deserve recognition.

On a personal note, I would like to address my alumni of Class⁶⁷. I would like to remind everyone of the upcoming Los Angeles convention in July. This convention is very special to me as it will complete my term as Chairman of the Board of Trustees and my Class⁶⁷ has the distinction of 45th year reunion. These are wonderful reasons to celebrate.

My hope is to leave this office on a positive note with impressive alumni participation, an overflowing sponsor brochure and as many of my friends and classmates in

attendance as possible. I encourage everyone to come party with me and ask that anyone who wants to place an ad in the brochure contact Dr Oscar Tuazon, president BOT.

I hope to see you there.
P C RIVERA MD⁶⁷

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Annual PMAC Picnic Elections

The PMAC, PMAC Auxiliary, PMAC Foundation, CIM alumni, FEU alumni, MCU alumni, SWU alumni, UE alumni, UP alumni, UST alumni, other Philippine medical alumni groups, and 2nd generation Pilipino physicians will hold their annual picnic on **Sunday, June 17, 2012**, from 11:00 a.m. to sundown, at the Oak Brook Park District SHELTER, 1450 Forest Gate Road, Telephone (630) 990-4592.

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Class⁶⁷ Sapphire Jubilee
Class⁷² Ruby Jubilee
Class⁷⁷ Coral Jubilee
Class⁸² Pearl Jubilee
Class⁹² 20th Anniversary
Class⁹⁷ 15th Anniversary
Class⁰² 10th Anniversary**

To qualify for the discounted rate, register on or before Saturday, **June 25, 2012.**

Mail this form and your check payable to **FEUDNRSM Alumni Foundation,**
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