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Eleazar is new BAR director

After being the assistant director of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) Department of Agriculture (DA) for three years and four months, Mr. Nicomedes P. Eleazar, a career executive service officer (CESO), is the new director of the Bureau.

The appointment was formalized through a simple oath-taking ceremony held on 22 December 2004 at the Office of the DA Secretary, Diliman, Quezon City with Secretary Arthur C. Yap administering the oath. Mr. Eleazar took over the position of Dr. William C. Medrano who finished his one year and 10 months stint as head of the Bureau.

When he was the assistant director of BAR, Mr. Eleazar provided leadership in evaluating project proposals on agricultural research, development, and extension submitted to the Bureau by different implementing agencies. Prior to this position, he served as technical consultant for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) based in Bangkok, Thailand. He was also the deputy executive director of the Livestock Development Council (LDC).

Mr. Eleazar graduated from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) for his BS degree in Agriculture and his MS degree in Management (agricultural development) from Cranfield University, Bedford, England. *(Rita T. dela Cruz)* ■

PhilAgriNet website launched; winner of logo-making contest declared

The Philippine Agricultural Libraries and Information Services Network (PhilAgriNet) launched its website during its meeting at the CERDAF Conference Room, RDMIC, December 9, 2004.

The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR)'s Institutional Development Division Chief Rolando Labios delivered Director William C. Medrano's message that encouraged the Bureau's Knowledge Management Division (KMD), Institutional Development Division (IDD), and Information and Communication Technology Division (ICTD) to lend their full support in the development of the PhilAgriNet.

Established in 2003, PhilAgriNet aims to create a central electronic database of Philippine technical agricultural literature and to link this with agricultural scientists worldwide. Specifically, it provides an equitable, cooperative, and cost effective manner of sharing information and an enhanced access to print and electronic agricultural knowledge, generated by public and private institutions engaged in agricultural research in the Philippines.

PhilAgriNet logo

The website posts updates, events, and activities the PhilAgriNet undertakes, and is planning to do a brief overview of how PhilAgriNet came about,

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PROFILE

Brisk and businesswise

by Virginia A. Duldulao

He has kept a low profile but his physical presence is a standout in any gathering. And when he talks and gives his decision after earnestly listening, one can fully appreciate the combination of physical and mental endowments that Mr. Nicomedes P. Eleazer, the new BAR director, has been blessed with. He works silently and patiently but brisk and businesswise. I had been a witness to these characteristics of his being a member of the Publication Grant Committee that he heads. He allows everybody to talk with no sign of disrespect from him for one's opinion and perception. Our deliberations were quick and decisions were made fast. Outside official business, he is a sweet brother casually talking about his farm in Quezon.

Mr. Eleazer brought to his position a wealth of experience along the fields of project development and implementation, policy advocacy, research management, institutional development, and administrative and financial management. He was the assistant director of BAR from August 2001 until he finally took over the position of director this latter part of the year. As assistant director he provided leadership in evaluating research proposals submitted to the Bureau. Before he joined BAR, he served various international bodies in different capacities.

He was the team leader for a FAO-UNDP diagnostic survey for farmer-centered agricultural resource management program and senior counterpart of a Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) expert on agricultural research management for three years. For about eight years he was the project coordinator for the International Development Research Center (IDRC) based in Canada. He coordinated the implementation of project activities in eight regions in the Philippines. He also led the team that assessed phase one of the Palawan Integrated Area Development Project, an Asian Development Bank-funded project.

While Nick (as he is fondly called by friends) exudes warmth as he discusses issues, one can discern depth of his views and opinions. Rightly so, since his experiences and exposures sharpened him as a professional and technical man especially at the Livestock Development Council where he was deputy executive director and concurrent chief of staff at the Office of the Secretary, as officer in charge, and also as deputy executive director. He also held responsible positions at the Department of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.

The various trainings he participated in, here and abroad, prepared him for whatever position he is assigned. He was on a study tour on agricultural trade to New Zealand, agricultural mission to Queensland, Australia, study tour on corn technology, trade and policy imperatives for international competitiveness to Indonesia and Argentina, and food and dairy convention in Chicago, Illinois, USA.

To date he is a member of different committees such as the governing board of the International Rubber Development Board, the International Network for Banana and Plantain in Asia and the Pacific, and the Technology Application and Promotion Institute.

He was awarded a British Council Scholarship when he worked on his Master of Science in Management (Agricultural Development) degree at Cranfield University, Bedford, England. He finished it in 1993. His Bachelor of Science in Agriculture was taken at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, 1981.

In him the present secretary of the Department of Agriculture is hopeful that research projects on postharvest and products development will be given impetus and the coupling of research and extension will be tightened. Director Eleazer will go beyond the task as he will also look into marketing initiatives so that the efforts and resources expended on research and extension will contribute to development.

Things can be different at one's own time. They can be positive or negative. But the new director is also a man at his own time that can make the right decisions at the right time. ■

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Prospecting for peace and development through LEAP

Improved farming systems through intercropping and crop-livestock integration may someday be the key in unlocking peace and development in Mindanao particularly among Muslim communities.

Results of an on-farm research funded by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) showed that corn intercropped with banana or mango increased farmers' net income from the usual Php5,000 – 6,000 per cropping/ha to Php14,746 – 14,791 per cropping/ha (for corn + banana) and Php11,845 – 20,680 per cropping/ha (for corn + mango). Also, the use of open-pollinated variety (OPV) corn in farming yielded a net income of Php10,584 – 13,259. Seventy-one farmer-partners validated the benefits of the intercropping system.

The Livelihood Enhancement and Adaptation Program (LEAP) that is being implemented in Mindanao has two major projects: a) community-based enhanced production of corn and fruits and enhancing livelihood through upgrading; and b) multiplication of small ruminants and poultry. The program gives importance to modern farming systems in increasing productivity of Muslim farming communities in the area as well as intensifying the main livelihood project in the community – livestock and poultry production.

Under livestock and poultry production, farmer-partners received upgraded breeds of buck, kabir chicken and muscovy duck. Significant increases in the weight of stocks after a year was noted.

LEAP was conducted in Barangay Manarapan in Carmen, Cotabato with the cooperation of the Municipal Government of Carmen and the Central Mindanao Integrated Agricultural Research Center (CEMIARC) of the Department of Agriculture. *(Rudyard R. Roxas)* ■

BAR donates food, clothes to typhoon victims

"Dark brown is the color of mud that now carpets the whole municipality of Infanta, Quezon. When you walk around town, the foul smell of death and rotting corpses pervades the atmosphere. As one walks along the 3-feet deep mud, one steps on something hard underneath...only to find the dead body of a person or an animal...everything looks dead."

Thus, narrates Fr. Francis Lucas, former parish priest of Infanta and now chairperson of the Sagip-Buhay Infanta operation. His email soliciting help for the people of Quezon Province devastated by two hefty typhoons, Winnie and Yoyong spread and reached kind people. Hunger, desperation, and deep depression are the major problems of the families crammed in various evacuation centers.

When the e-mail reached the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), staff members sympathized with the victims. Barely an hour after the email was circulated, some of BAR's contractual staff passed around a white hat to the different divisions soliciting for contributions. The money collected was then used to purchase grocery items for the victims.

Bags of food items and boxes of clothes and shoes were delivered to the Sagip-Buhay Infanta office at Santa Ana, Manila. BAR

see BAR donates...page 8

Young volunteers at the La Concordia College gym, where donations to the Sagip Buhay-Infanta are being stored and sorted. (above)BAR representatives turned over the bags of grocery items, clothes, and shoes to Fr. Francis Lucas (2nd from right, below).

NEWS

Natural farming...

opportunities for balancing development and environment. The landscapes of uplands, while environmentally sensitive can be managed in a sustainable manner that can support a wide range of agricultural activities. The uplands are the ultimate expansion areas for future sustainable and modern agricultural development and would require special and location-specific technologies and production systems. The highlands, for instance, is an outstanding upland area which has high potentials for the development of high value semi-temperate crops, herbs and ornamentals, livestock and even freshwater fisheries.

2) Launching of the QUEDANCOR credit window for organic rice farmers

Sustainable agriculture was re-introduced as a measure to address environmental concerns, food security and in increasing farm income. As organic rice farming gains ground, more farmers are interested to go organic. However, it takes about two years or four cropping seasons to convert from conventional to full organic farming. Thus, it is necessary to provide financial support to enable small farmers to facilitate adoption of low cost farming technology that has been tested to produce nutritious organic rice. The role of QUEDANCOR as an agricultural credit provider is critical in advancing the organic rice industry.

Dr. Medrano explained that in Memorandum Circular No. 329, signed by QUEDANCOR President and CEO Nelson Buenaflor on October 2004, QUEDANCOR approved its Credit Window Program For Organic Rice Farmers. Generally, the program hopes to provide farmers access to credit through QUEDANCOR to facilitate upscaling of organic rice industry. Specifically, the program hopes to provide and make available regular credit and technical support to farmers in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao areas who are into organic rice farming. QUEDANCOR's credit window program held its pilot testing on organic farming in Camarines Sur, Agusan del Sur, and Negros Occidental.

3) BAR's support to natural farming system

The Bureau of Agriculture Research (BAR), being the lead agency for coordinating R&D both national and regional is advocating natural farming system as an important strategy. This could be in the form of funding researches/ activities related to NFS. BAR is geared towards developing knowledge, methods, and technologies that can make the agriculture sector competitive and efficient. With natural farming, the Bureau is giving farmers an alternative towards sustainability and greater profitability. Under our national programs, DA-BAR is funding projects/researches on or related to natural farming. One of these is the varietal evaluation of selected vegetables under organic condition, implemented by the Institute of Plant Breeding (IPB). With the promising potential of natural farming system, BAR committed its support and assistance to this endeavor to improve the lives of farmers and achieve greater sustainability while at the same time preserving the environment. ■

PhilAgriNet...

library services, and membership information.

A logo contest was also held. The winning logo *(shown in page1)* was designed by Jerson Cruz of the BAR-ICTD. The winning logo of PhilAgriNET has a yellow book and green leaves as its focal point. The yellow book represents the library as the repository of knowledge and the green leaves, the agriculture sector. The three-colored circles on top represent the Philippine flag—blue, red, and yellow. The two overlapped rings, provide the backdrop to the book and the green leaves illustrate the collaborative efforts among information management professionals in the field of agriculture and how information links all other agricultural scientists worldwide. *(Ma. Lizbeth J. Baroña)* ■

Participants during the PhilAgriNet launching

For your info

EU to set up trade policy on chemical registration

Filipino manufacturers and exporters may be required to register first the chemical content of their export products before entering the European Union's market.

This is the premise of EU's policy-in-the-making, the ***Registration, Evaluation, and Authorization of Chemicals***, or **REACH**. Under the REACH policy, manufacturers and exporters will need to submit a registration of chemical or substance used in their product. Information on the properties, uses, and classification of manufactured or exported substance, as well as guidance on its safe use, shall be submitted to a European Chemicals Agency. The proposed agency shall manage the technical, scientific, and administrative aspects of the REACH system.

Industrial exports like paints and furniture treated with chemicals shall be largely affected by REACH, according to Mr Jerry Lacsamana of the DTI-Bureau of Internal Trade Relations. On the agriculture sector, the policy is expected to have an effect on coconut-based exports like fatty acids, fatty alcohol and glycerine, and other agricultural commodities that are used for fertilizer and pesticides.

Why REACH? Bladder and respiratory cancers, skin diseases, eye disorders and asthma are all linked to chemicals. The EU's current system of assessing the risks and hazards that chemicals impose on human health and the environment has proved to be slow. Introducing risk management measures have been sluggish. With REACH, approximately 4,500 deaths can be avoided yearly. If life is valued at Euro1 million, REACH's potential benefit is estimated at Euro 50 billion over a 30-year period.

REACH is still under negotiation, with various consultations being conducted by EU trade commissioners to address major issues such as the apparent restrictiveness of the policy. On May 2003, a world-wide Internet consultation with EU industries, non-EU countries like Australia and Mexico, and animal rights group generated more than 6,000 responses. Last November 25, 2004, various representatives from Philippine government agencies, chemical industry associations, and NGOs were invited to a seminar at the Hyatt Regency Hotel to discuss the possible implications of REACH on developing countries like the Philippines. A comprehensive question-and-answer information material is available online at *http://europa.eu.int/rapid/searchAction.do*. Click on "Search Complete Database" and write in the Reference field: MEMO/03/213. *(Carmela B. Brion)* ■

GRANT ALERT!

CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIP FUND

The **Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund** (CEPF) is giving away funds and extending technical assistance on biodiversity conservation projects. The grant is open to **non-government organizations (NGOs), community groups and other civil society partners.**

CEPF's objectives for the Philippines are:

- Improve linkage between conservation investments to multiply and scale up benefits on a corridor scale in Sierra Madre, Eastern Mindanao, and Palawan.
- Build civil society's awareness of the benefits of conserving corridors of biodiversity.
- Build capacity of civil society to advocate for better corridor and protected area management, and campaign against development harmful to conservation.
- Establish an emergency response mechanism to help save critically endangered species.

Corridors are areas in the landscape that contain natural habitat and maintain connections throughout the landscape. Majority of CEPF's investments in the Philippines will support conservation projects in the corridors of **Sierra Madre, Palawan,** and **Eastern Mindanao**, where approximately 70% of the Philippines biodiversity is concentrated.

CEPF is a joint initiative of Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank.

The Philippines is identified by CEPF as one of Earth's biodiversity hotspots, a term used for biologically-richest and most-threatened areas in the world.

For the application guidelines and inquiries on partnership with BAR, please contact:

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NEWS FEATURE

Natural farming system: The living agriculture

by Rita T. dela Cruz

The importance of natural farming in agriculture and sustainable food system is immeasurable. The interest in natural farming methods is growing, especially in areas where the present farming system has degraded resources that are essential to agricultural production. Health and environment considerations are also some of the big factors why some of our farmers are now shifting to natural farming management. On the marketing side, farmers engaged in natural farming will have no problem as most consumers now are becoming more conscious of what they are eating, thus prefer the organically-produced crops. This provides better opportunities for natural farming growers, enabling them to sell their products at premium prices.

Natural Farming System (NFS) creates a promising potential in terms of food production and environmental conservation. Reducing dependence on off-farm inputs and creating more balanced nutrient and energy flows, the pliability of our ecosystem is strengthened. Moreover, food security is increased and additional incomes are generated.

The Korean Natural Farming Association (KNFA) referred to NFS as 'vital agriculture' because it maximizes the use of natural resources in harmony with the environment wherein self-manufactured farming materials is also being applied.

Regional forum on NFS points greater green productivity

To fully emphasize the importance of NFS, the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) in Visayas and the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Unit 6 (DA-RFU 6) in cooperation with the local government units of Iloilo and Aklan, and the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) organized a regional forum on NFS for green productivity and integrated community development on 28 December 2004 at the Conference Room, 5/F Provincial Capitol Bldg., Iloilo City. Dr. William C. Medrano keynoted the event, representing Usec Edmund Sana who could not make it to the occasion.

In his speech, he commended the effort of DAP and RFU 6 for initiating such activity and reiterated the importance of natural farming as a vital component in sustainable agriculture. He said that this is a relevant move on the part of DAP and the DA family considering the recent global trends and agenda, which are geared towards supporting sustainable agricultural solutions, like food security and sustainable livelihoods. He added that, through practical and policy experience, we are able to raise awareness and provide information on the benefits of natural farming system in agriculture and on other agro-ecological approaches that work in a participatory way with our farmers particularly those in the regions.

DA programs and directions geared on sustainable agriculture

According to Dr. Medrano, the government recognizes the potential of natural farming system in agriculture not only in promoting food security but also the prospect that it is much cheaper to support natural farming system as a means to boost the agriculture sector, than to remedy problems associated with land degradation and other production related practices. He added that the true and genuine answer to problems of hunger and malnutrition should be founded on programs and policies for sustainable agriculture. Thus, he cited some of the directions and programs of DA that are geared on sustainable agriculture.

1) Establishing the basic policy statement and principles for upland and agriculture development

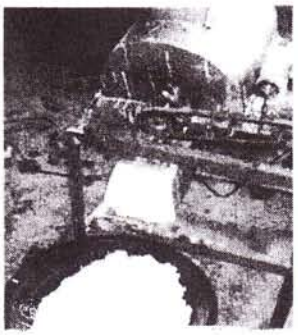
There is a Memorandum Circular signed by former Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo providing policy for the establishment and development of upland agriculture as one of DA's major programs, and shall serve as guiding principles for current DA initiatives and interventions being implemented in the uplands. This guideline is consistent with President Arroyo's 10 point legacy agenda, particularly in facilitating the development of 1 to 2 million hectares of land for agri-business purposes, and its capacity to support the generation of 6 to 10 million jobs in the countryside.

In recognition of the economic potentials of upland agriculture in the country and in support to the preservation of agro-biodiversity, this could provide

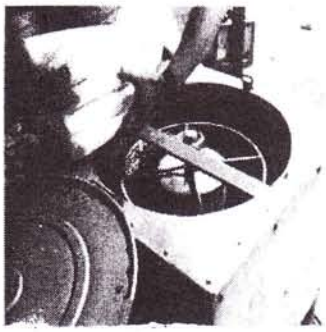
see Natural farming...page 4

New and improved cassava grates processing system developed

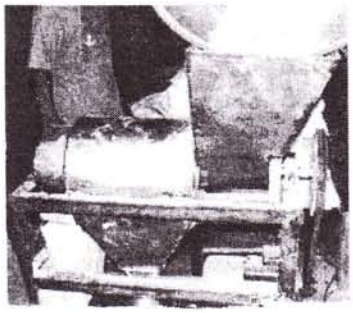
by Rita T. dela Cruz



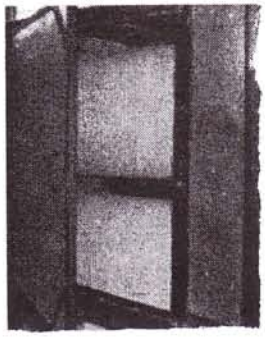
cassava grater



grates spinner



cassava grates pulvurizer/siever



rotary drum dryer for grates

The Philippine Rootcrop Research and Training Center (PhilRootcrops), with funding assistance from the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) of the Department of Agriculture (DA) has recently developed an integrated cassava grates processing system that is better than the previously developed root crop processing machines developed by PhilRootcrops. The newly improved cassava grates processing system includes four machines that complete the line of processing equipment used in the production of dried cassava grates. The machines were patterned, developed, and further improved from the traditional/existing cassava grater. The four machines include: cassava grater, grates spinner, grates pulverizer/siever, and rotary drum dryer.

To determine the performance of this new processing system, three parameters were used: capacity of each machine; weight of materials before and after loading into the machine to compute the material balance of the system; and cost of operating the system.

The newly developed grater machine, also known as the DA-BAR—PhilRootCrops Cassava Grater, has a capacity of more than 200 kg/h of cassava, which is better than the existing PhilRootcrops grater since it could only accommodate 100 kg/h. It was also observed that the newly developed grater is more efficient when it comes to wasted materials. It can practically grate all the roots resulting to very negligible losses that mostly consist of fibers and woody portion of the roots.

The newly developed spinner or the DA-BAR—PhilRootcrops Cassava Grates Spinner, also proved to be more convenient and mashes faster than the previous screw-type manual presser. The presser could only accommodate 20 kg/h of cassava while the newly developed spinner has a capacity of about 200 kg/h, which is 10 times better.

The two remaining—pulverizer/siever (DA-BAR—PhilRootcrops Cassava Grates Pulverizer/Siever) and rotary drum dryer (DA-BAR—PhilRootcrops Rotary Drum Dryer)—are the other newly designed and developed machines. The pulverizer/siever grinds the lumps in grates after spinning as it separates the grates from the coarse materials before drying while the drum dryer dries the grates. The pulverizer could accommodate up to 100 kg while the dryer could dry the grates to less than 12% of their moisture content in 15 min and could hold up to 20 kg/h of cassava.

The developers of this cassava grates processing system noted that the limiting capacity of the system lies mainly in the drying operation where there is only an average capacity of 20 kg/h—the lowest capacity in the whole processing system. However, they explained that at this capacity, the newly developed drying machines could produce more than two tons of dried grates in a month and that by increasing the number of dryers or its size, the capacity of the system could also be improved.

For the economic benefits, the researchers/developers noted that the breakeven processing cost in the production of grates using the newly developed system amounts to P24.84/kg. With this newly developed cassava grates processing system, good quality dried cassava grates could now be produced in commercial quantity. Processors, traders, and users are not the only beneficiaries but more of the cassava farmers who provide the raw material.■

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Medrano re-elected chair of CABI Executive Council

Drs. Pat Faylon and Willy Medrano representing the Philippines during the CABI Exec Council Meeting

For the second time, the Philippines, represented by Dr. William C. Medrano, outgoing director of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) of the Department of Agriculture (DA) was re-elected chair of the Center for Agriculture and Bioscience, International (CABI) Executive Council for this year. This transpired during the recently concluded CABI Special Executive Council Meeting held on 9 December 2004 at the International Coffee Organization, 22 Berners St., London. This is the second time that Dr. Medrano presided as chair of the Council.

CABI was established in 1913 as a global technical agency that supports the generation, access to, and use of knowledge for sustainable agriculture, environment management, and human development.

An independent board, an Executive Council and a Review Conference of member countries govern CABI. CABI's supreme governing body is the Review Conference of member countries, which reviews CABI's work programs and determines its broad policies and strategies. Meanwhile, the Executive Council composed of representatives from each member country monitors CABI's affairs and implements the Review Conference resolutions. The Council approves the annual budget, the admission of new members and decides on other key issues.

A 41 member-country organization, CABI focuses on meeting the needs of its communities and institutions while at the same time working with extension and rural development organizations, NGOs, civil society organizations, national research institutions, universities and the private sector, as well as other international organizations such as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The member-countries include: Anguilla, Australia, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Bermuda, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cote D'Ivoire, Cyprus, Gambia, Ghana, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Montserrat, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Saint Helena, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sultanate of Oman, Switzerland, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Kingdom, Vietnam, Virgin Islands, British, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. *(Rita T. dela Cruz)* ■

Web news

Malaysia to use biotech to speed up agric development
(http://www.bic.org.my/BICalert/1204/p1.html.)

DA to provide corn and palay seeds to farmers in Cagayan
(http://www.da.gov.ph)

Monsanto introduces triple trait tech
(http://www.monsanto.com/monsanto/layout/media/04/11-22-04.asp.)

Yap: No corn shortage despite typhoons
(http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/FlashNewsStory.aspx?FlashOID=22414)

African cotton growers must boost production
(http://www.bdfm.co.za/cgi-bin/pp-print.pl)

GM boom 'could spell economic growth for poor nations'
(http://www.scidev.net/news/index.cfm?fuseaction=readnews&itemid=1810&language=1)

RP government to expand hybrid rice planting
(http://www.searca.org/~bic)

Biotech a tool for the future
(http://www.probe.mbir.monsanto.com

BAR donates...

representatives met with Father Lucas to turn in the donations. "The situation in Quezon is still awful. Families are trapped, the supply of food is not enough and the place is not passable...but I am hoping we can survive this," answered Father Lucas, when asked about the magnitude of the damage brought about by the typhoons. The priest is very appreciative of the donations given by the Bureau. *(Carmela B. Brion)* ■

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