

AI AI SAYS:

First timer Aling Dionisia is such a pro

by MARINEL CRUZ / Inquirer.net

MOMMY Dionisia stays put, especially if Manny's fight is coming up," said Ai Ai de las Alas, Dionisia Pacquiao's co-star in the comedy film *Ang Tanging Pamilya: A Marry Go Round*. Thus, Ai said, the cast flew last week to General Santos City in South Cotabato, hometown of the Pacquiao's, to shoot a few remaining scenes.

The champ's next match is with Puerto Rican Miguel Cotto in Las Vegas, Nevada, November 14.

The cast members of the Star Cinema film include former President Joseph Estrada, Toni Gonzaga and Sam Milby. Inquirer spoke with Ai Ai shortly after her return to Manila on Friday, Sept. 11. "The people were very warm," said Ai, who spent five days in Gen San. "Most of my co-actors are still there."

Her trip coincided with the annual week-long tuna festival in the province. "I brought home all the tuna I could buy. *Sobrang mura*," she said.

Estrada plays Dindo, a very strict dad to his daughter Charlie (Gonzaga). Ai is Sunshine, loving wife and devoted mother to their six kids. Pacquiao is Marlene, mother to Charlie's fiancé, Prince (Milby). "Mommy Dionisia is very funny—*walang* effort.

She doesn't realize how wacky she is; she's so much like Manny," said Ai. "She works hard on her scenes, even if she's already tired—which is good, especially considering that she's not a professional actress."

Tanging Pamilya is Pacquiao's first full-length film, Estrada's first in 20 years, and "my first time to shoot a movie outside Manila," said Ai. "I had so much fun!" The movie, directed by Wenn Deramas, opens in October.

Ai is also busy preparing for a guest appearance in Lea Salonga's *Your Song* concert at the PICC Plenary Hall on December 15 and 16. "*Mapapalaban ako ng Ingles do'n*," she quipped.

But to mark her 20th anniversary in show business next year, Ai will have a solo concert at the Big Dome. ■



With 'Planet: Philippines,' Richard breaks own record

RICHARD Gutierrez's latest (the third) environmental documentary *Planet: Philippines* rated 19.1 percent on its airing last Sunday (Sept. 6) night on *GMA's Sunday Night Box Office (SNBO)*, breaking the record set by *Signos*, his other docu of the same theme, which got a 16.4 rating. It's *SNBO's* highest-rating show so far.

His other environment-friendly show was *Full Force* which was also produced by the GMA News & Public Affairs.

"The effort that we put into *Planet* is well worth it," Richard (photo) told *Funfare*. "As I said, we shot in various places all over the country."

Together with the GMA staff and crew, Richard showed derring-do during the shoot. The team went underwater, explored caves, rode a helicopter and climbed mountains.

Credit for the show's success should be shared by the GMA News & Public Affairs.

Called an 'environment hero' because of the Fr. Neri Satur Award that he got for championing the conservation and preservation of the environment like the other awardees (also called 'environment heroes'), Richard is dedicated to that cause for, as he has been saying, 'The sake of the future generations.'

There's a clamor for GMA to replay *Planet: Philippines*. Watch for it. (*Philstar.com*)



STAR BYTES

Butch Francisco

FOR all the cosmopolitan ways KC Concepcion must have learned in Paris (where she studied for sometime), she still remains Mama's girl and chooses to live with her mother, Sharon Cuneta, and beloved stepfather, Sen. Francis Pangilinan, at the family home in Wack-Wack,

KC, however, has a second home and its address is 17 M. Paterno St., San Juan City. It's easy to find because there is a sign there that says *Symmetria*. Yes, it's that salon that takes care of the hair needs of most celebrities. That's where KC spends most of her time when she's not home or working.

The young star, an uncrowned showbiz princess, had her first taste of *Symmetria* styling five years ago when she had to do her first shampoo commercial. Since her hair was the main focus of this ad, they had to bring in the best in the field: Celeste Tuviera, a graduate of Vidal Sassoon, which is the Harvard of hairstyling.

KC and Celeste hit it off right away — and that shouldn't come as a surprise since Celeste is the daughter of Eat, Bulaga! producer Tony Tuviera with whom KC's mom, Sharon, maintains solid ties to this day.

It was to KC's relief that she met Celeste because the young star needed a professional stylist to take care of her hair. Whenever she would fly to Manila during breaks in her studies, she would always look for Celeste.

When KC finally returned to

KC & Symmetria: The tie that binds

the Philippines after finishing her degree in a Paris university, she turned *Symmetria* into her second home. The salon that time was still located in Connecticut Street in Greenhills and I remember the first time I saw her there. One of the senior stylists, Susan Aquino, was giving me a trim that time and I immediately felt a star presence around me. You know how it is when a star enters a room and his or her presence fills up the room even without making an effort. I don't know how they do it, but it happens when there are big names — their star presence becomes overwhelming.

In the case of KC that time, there was even no fanfare when she came in by herself. I just

knew that somebody important walked in and from the corner of my eye I spotted KC ascending the staircase to the second floor. I asked Susan if that was indeed KC

and she said yes. (KC didn't see me because my face was covered with hair.) I found out later that *Symmetria* had already become KC's second home and she would be there three or four times a week — minimum of once a week.

Aside from haircut and color, she'd drop by for change of nail polish (she has the loveliest nails and fingers, just like her mother Sharon, the staff claims) or a blow dry before going to work. Most of the time, she goes to *Symmetria* to have a Japanese iron treatment, which is like a hair spa (it's supposed to soften your hair and make it shinier). No, those procedures aren't exactly done out of vanity, but more of necessity since she has to look good as part

of her job. In fact, Celeste cannot just tamper with KC's hair without checking first the requirements of the talent's next project. That's how crucial the relationship of KC is to the salon.

When *Symmetria* therefore moved to M. Paterno, KC didn't — and apparently doesn't — mind the fact that she had to travel a bit farther (the New Manila clients rejoiced actually since it got closer to them). For KC it will always be worth the trip because she's comfortable there.

Spending three to four hours per visit (when she's in a hurry, she only stays for an hour and a half), she whiles the time away reading magazines, tinkering with her laptop or talking on the phone. Oftentimes, she takes her meals there — diet food she brings from the kitchen of their Wack-Wack home. "She's usually very quiet and never calls attention to herself," observes the salon staff. "But she is so polite and nice to us," they swear. As soon as she walks in, she always has a warm "good afternoon" greeting for everyone. She has also become close to some of the staff that she had given terms of endearment — some too private to print here. But everyone is an "Ate" to her there.

Most of the time, she is engaged in animated conversation with Celeste. KC, however, is also the type to swap stories with the one doing her nails or those sweeping the floor, which is constantly filled with hair, especially now that business for the salon had picked up in their new location. Sometimes, she'd chat with administrative staff Cecile Chua to ask, "How's your baby now?"



KC & Celeste

FUNFARE

Caparas: 'Libre ang mangarap'

by RICARDO F. LO
Philstar.com

TAKING their minds away from the National Artist issue, Komiks King Carlo J. Caparas and his wife Donna Villa, together known as the Golden Couple (after their movie company, Golden Lions Films), presided over the premiere of their latest venture, *Pangarap Kong Jackpot Trilogy*, at the SM Megamall Cinema 9.

"Times are hard and we want to help by giving as many of the industry people as we can," said Donna. "The more jobs they have, the better for them, their families and the industry."

The Golden Couple could easily, very quietly, slip into semi-retirement with their children CJ and Peach, with Carlo spending his time painting. He has done several pieces, good enough for a solo show. "But that can wait," said Carlo.

Pangarap Kong Jackpot Trilogy commemorates the 75th anniversary of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO). The three stories are *Hawak Kita Hawak Mo 'Ko* (starring Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao), *Sa Ngalan ng Busabos* (Jake Cuenca) and *Hiwaga ni Lolo Hugo* (Eddie Garcia). The cast also includes Megan Young, Gina Pareño and the Caparas siblings CJ (a Law student at Ateneo) and Peach.

The trilogy was written and directed by Carlo himself, assisted by Toto Natividad.

"In this movie," said Carlo, "Manny Pacquiao will show his hitherto untapped dramatic talent. I wasn't surprised that he turned out to be a good actor. Magaan dalhin."

Added Donna, "In times like now, what we need are movies that inspire and give hope, movies that impart positive values."

The three episodes were based on real people whose lives have been changed overnight when they won in the lotto.

"*Libre ang mangarap*," said Carlo. "You won't lose anything in pursuing a dream." ■



The salon staff volunteers that KC is just as nice to passersby who gawk at her when she steps out of *Symmetria*. With a sincere smile, she says "Hi!" to all of them. There are no "feeling star" airs about her at all. She is really just very simple in her ways, the staff swears. Maybe it also helps that she's comfortable in her surroundings, *Symmetria*

residential area) were actually surprised to see her in a formal turquoise dress because they've been so accustomed seeing her in casual jeans and T-shirt when she visits *Symmetria*—practically her house clothes. Yes, she feels that comfortable when she's there. That isn't really surprising. After all, it's her second home. ■



being her second home.

When *Symmetria* therefore had its formal blessing the other week, it was just proper that KC was asked to lead the ribbon-cutting ceremonies, along with Piolo Pascual, Jomari Yllana, businesswoman Angeline Tan (who came with best friend Anna Marie Yu) and this writer.

The people in the neighborhood (it's basically a

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