



### BRIDGING TRANSITIONS



President Rodel A. Cruz, together with other officers and trustees elected by the general membership to serve the 2015-2016 term, were inducted into office on 23 September 2015 during the 2015 PBA Law Day Celebration. They took the helm of the PBA as our association marches into the future and the mantle of leadership passes on to a new generation of lawyers.

In his inaugural speech, our President pledged to serve as a bridge during this transition. He committed to infuse our association with renewed energy and dynamism, as the PBA fulfills its social purpose in a nation that is also undergoing a similar transition. He outlined a list of activities and the rationale for each, as he laid out plans for what has become one of the busiest and most innovative terms in memory.

#### 2015 PBA Law Day Celebration

The 2015-2016 term began auspiciously with nearly 400 members and guests attending the 2015 PBA Law Day Celebration. Breaking attendance records, the ballroom was packed with former Interior Secretary Mar Roxas as guest of honor and speaker. He cited the role played by the PBA in times when the Rule of Law was under siege and spoke on what is at stake for the Rule of Law, as our nation faces a leadership transition in the upcoming national elections.

In another unprecedented turnout, 71 new PBA members were inducted that evening. The impressive increase in membership follows the amendment of the PBA By-Laws adopted at a special general membership meeting held on 23 September 2015. The adoption of the amendment was affirmed in the regular general membership meeting held on 10 June 2016. The amendment allows lawyers, who have just been admitted to the bar, to qualify and become PBA members. The new rule abandoned the previous requirement of 3 years membership in the bar to qualify for PBA membership.

At the inaugural, an open bar had members and guests sampling various wines, hors d'oeuvres and the single malt Scotch whisky Jura which had just been introduced to the Philippine market. Alongside the formal ceremonies, a Silent Art Auction featuring works from various National Artists was held to raise funds for the various activities of the PBA. Over cocktails and dinner, a show band and a string quartet from the Manila String Machine provided musical entertainment. The 2015 PBA Law Day Celebration was the last to be held by our association at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila, which for decades has been the chosen venue for memorable gatherings of the PBA.

Best of all, the successful celebration paid for itself and even earned some funds for the PBA.



### **JSCC Seminar/Workshop on Illegal Drugs**

Buckling down to tackle the work at hand, Committee on Public Issues & Public Relations Chairman and PBA 1st Vice President Jose Luis Agcaoili and Legislation & Law Reform Committee Co-Chair Ramon Manolo Alcasabas represented the PBA at the Seminar/Workshop on Illegal Drugs. It was a 2-day event held at the Century Park Hotel from 29 to 30 October 2015. The event was organized by the Justice Sector Coordinating Council (JSCC) in partnership with the European Union's EPJUST II Program. Highlights of the seminar included speeches delivered by Supreme Court Chief Justice Ma. Lourdes Sereno and Associate Justice Diosdado Peralta, who provided an overview of the drug menace.

Attended by various stakeholders in our criminal justice system, the workshop discussed the social scourge of illegal drugs proliferating in our country. They came up with concrete recommendations on how to improve the criminal justice system and help eradicate this social menace under the Rule of Law. Shortly after the event, a written report on the findings and recommendations from the seminar/workshop was shared via email with all PBA members to draw their attention to this issue and keep them informed and engaged on this critical social concern.

### **2015 PBA Yearend Fellowship & Thanksgiving**

As 2015 drew to a close, officers and members of the PBA took a break from their busy schedules and gathered at a Yearend Fellowship and Thanksgiving held on 02 December 2015 at the Manila Golf & Country Club. In addition to the buffet dinner and drinks that flowed through the night, there was an acoustic band that entertained the PBA Trustees, Committee Chairpersons and members in attendance. A surprise musical number from past PBA Presidents Federico Agcaoili and Ronald Olivar Solis enlivened the evening. Our President played guitar while other members showcased their musical talents. All of these made for an enjoyable fellowship.

In his remarks, our President thanked those who responded to the book and toy drive, donated funds and gave various gifts for the children of the PBA Gawad Kalinga Village in Pateros. Through a raffle of token gifts donated by our President, the PBA was also able to raise additional funds that evening. The funds raised were spent for the refurbishment of a unit in the PBA Gawad Kalinga Village that was turned into a Computer Literacy Center and e-Library. As the guests exchanged gifts, our President gave traditional Christmas gifts and the Board of Trustees gave year-end bonuses to the staff of the PBA Secretariat, in gratitude for their support in 2015.

### **More than the usual:**

#### **The PBA Travelling Fellowships**

In his inaugural speech, our President offered the idea of having PBA members leave the comforts of our offices and business centers and experience different social realities in our young nation. The move was seen as a fun and engaging way to broaden and deepen our collective understanding of the Rule of Law in the Philippine context.



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With the support of the Board of Trustees, the PBA broke tradition and deviated from our usual formal luncheon fellowships held in exclusive venues. Early into the term, the PBA fellowship travelled from our inner city to the highest peak in Luzon. We also went to our beautiful coasts and dove into the depths of our seas.

### **A fellowship with the children in our inner city:**

#### **The PBA Gawad Kalinga Outreach**

The series of PBA travelling fellowships began with a visit to our inner city. Back in 2008, the PBA helped establish a community of row houses, known as the PBA Gawad Kalinga Village, for the benefit of more than 50 urban poor families living in the outskirts of a bustling business district. With the support of Jollibee Foundation, in a partnership arranged through the efforts of Trustee Rodelle Bolante and Atty. Valerie Feria Amante, the PBA Gawad Kalinga Village Yuletide Outreach was held last 19 December 2015. Through the event, our President, together with past Presidents Ruben Fruto, Jose Feria and Ma Charito Cruz, joined by Trustees Rico Domingo, Rodelle Bolante and other new PBA members, braved the unseasonable downpour to bring yuletide cheer to the PBA Gawad Kalinga Village.

A Jollibee Children's Christmas Party was held with the children of the village enjoying kiddie meals and popular toys from Jollibee. A magician performed tricks to the delight of more than 100 children in attendance. The Municipality of Pateros extended logistical support to the children's party, through the efforts of past President Jose Feria.

In keeping with the yuletide spirit, the PBA donated several boxes filled with books and toys, 20 school chairs, 5 school tables and 3 electric fans to the PBA GK Village - Sibol Day Care Center. Plush and Play, a social enterprise based in the Gawad Kalinga Enchanted Farm, also donated toys to encourage children to attend pre-school at the day care center. The outreach gave the visiting PBA officers and members a better appreciation of the meaning of "inclusive economic growth," as seen through the eyes of children living in our inner cities.

Stressing the point that education is a powerful tool for empowerment, the PBA also donated a fully equipped Computer Literacy Center and e-Library during the visit. This was made possible through a donation by the law firm of Cruz Marcelo & Tenefrancia of desktop computers and tables. Our President also donated a printer with supplies, some chairs and an electric fan. The University of Makati will provide computer lessons under a previous arrangement with the village. The project is meant for young adults in the PBA GK Village to acquire computer skills so they can compete in the job market.

The outreach was covered by renowned photojournalist Rick Ricamora and reported in a photo essay in [www.rappler.com](http://www.rappler.com). Our President was pleased to report that the PBA did not spend a single centavo in staging the successful yuletide outreach, as he thanked the generosity of the officers, members and friends of the PBA for their support.



## **A fellowship at the highest peak in Luzon:**

### **The PBA Immersion Trip to Mount Pulag National Park**

From 29 to 31 January 2016, the PBA travelling fellowship went up north and held the first ever PBA Immersion Trip to Mount Pulag National Park. The event was organized by the Committee on Environmental Law & Education headed by its Chairman Angelo Valencia, with the support of Rep. Ronald Cosalan of the lone district of Benguet, who is also a PBA member. Accommodations at Baguio Golf & Country Club at discounted rates were arranged by past President Federico Agcaoili and 1st Vice-President Jose Luis Agcaoili. A welcome dinner was hosted by the President at Hill Station to kick off the event.

The memorable trip exposed over 50 PBA members and guests to the complex challenges posed by population pressure on our fragile environment. Several lawyers based in Baguio City took the opportunity to become PBA members during the visit.

Following a brief stop at scenic Ambuklao Dam, we took a challenging drive up narrow roads on the steep slopes of Mt. Pulag National Park. Our host village gave us a warm welcome upon arrival. They honored us with the performance of the ritual dance Kanyaw and serenaded us with traditional folk songs. In gratitude for their hospitality, the PBA delegation gave shoes and school supplies to the children in our host village.

After a rustic lunch that included native chicken and fresh vegetables from their mountain farms, a legal clinic was conducted at the village school yard in a setting similar to a town hall meeting. Village elders and other community leaders were in full attendance. Ms. Cara Cosalan, wife of Rep. Cosalan, joined us in the meeting.

Seen through the eyes of indigenous peoples living in remote mountaintops, our members and guests witnessed firsthand the clash between the assertion of indigenous people's rights to their ancestral lands and the enforcement of environmental laws to preserve the ecology of Mt. Pulag, as a national park. The exchanges reminded us of the urgent need to achieve a sustainable balance in the use of our natural resources, respect for indigenous peoples' rights, and the preservation of our shared patrimony for future generations. The lively town hall meeting ended as the sun was about to set in the horizon.

As temperatures dropped in the evening, we all had dinner and drinks with the locals around a campfire. The fare included a traditional dish of boiled pork slaughtered during the Kanyaw paired with Tapuy, an indigenous alcoholic drink made from fermented rice. Those who stayed for the evening were billeted in homestay arrangements, as guests of local families, to further deepen our immersion into life in the indigenous mountain community.

Before the break of dawn with temperatures plummeting to 5<sup>o</sup> centigrade, a group of intrepid PBA members led by 1st Vice President Jose Luis Agcaoili and Trustee Jose Raulito Paras, guided by Mr. Aldwin Flores and his team, embarked on a difficult moonlit hike to the summit of Mt. Pulag. Arriving at the highest peak of Luzon in time for the break of day, the PBA hikers planted the PBA banner to commemorate our visit.

Meanwhile, the less adventurous PBA golfers had a golf fellowship at Baguio Golf & Country Club before returning to Manila. A hosted buffet lunch capped the activity. After the visit, Committee on Environment Co-Chair Bernice Mendoza prepared a legal memorandum to help guide all stakeholders in achieving the delicate balance for the preservation of the majestic beauty of Mt. Pulag.

### **A Fellowship on the Coast:**

#### **The PBA Shore & Dive Clean-up in Anilao, Batangas**

During summer, the PBA travelling fellowship went to our coasts and held our very first PBA Shore & Dive Clean-up in Anilao, Batangas. The event held on 16-17 April 2016 at Aqua Venture Reef & Dive Resort was organized by new PBA member Martin Yasay, in cooperation with the Philippine Coast Guard, the Municipal Tourism Office of Anilao and their Bantay Dagat volunteers.

1st Vice President Jose Luis Agcaoili welcomed all the participants. LTSG Johnson Pabilane, Legal Officer of the Marine Environmental Protection Command of the Philippine Coast Guard, Ms. Pacencia Casapao, the Local Tourism Officer of Anilao and the Bantay Dagat Volunteers, and Ms. Joy Castillo of Divenet Philippines (a scuba divers' group) spoke on the pressures imposed by tourism and development on our precious coral reefs and beaches. A video presentation dramatically showed the impact of pollution on our coral reefs and marine life. It effectively conveyed the urgent need for the preservation of this precious global common. At the end of the program, our President donated snorkeling equipment to the local Bantay Dagat Volunteers to help them accomplish their difficult job as environmental guardians.

Following the informative forum, PBA members and their families, experienced how difficult it is to clean up after others who mindlessly pollute our beautiful coasts. Working together with Philippine Coast Guard personnel, PBA members and their families collected rubbish on the shores of Anilao. PBA divers had a dive clean-up and collected trash that littered the otherwise beautiful coral gardens. To mark the occasion, PBA divers brought with them the PBA banner to the depths of the sea.

Our President also raffled off introductory dives to new PBA members to encourage them to explore the beauty that lies under the sea. A Philippine Coast Guard patrol vessel made available for the activity gave PBA members and their families led by Trustee Miguel Luis Orosa, an opportunity to ride along in one of their sea patrols around Batangas Bay. The visit was capped by a hosted dinner and an evening of fellowship that lasted until early dawn.

Through this series of PBA travelling fellowships, it is hoped that our members gained valuable insights that can help us find creative ways of using the law as a tool for social engineering and deepen our shared commitment to build ourselves a better nation under the Rule of Law.

### **Elevating Public Discourse:**

#### **Media Engagements for the 2016 National Elections**

In the run up to the 2016 National Elections, the PBA helped encourage substantial discussions as we charted the future direction of our young nation. For this purpose, the PBA joined hands with leading media institutions in an effort to elevate public discourse, as our nation faced a crucial leadership transition.



Represented by 3rd Vice-President Rico Domingo, the PBA signed a Memorandum of Understanding forging a media partnership with GMA 7 Network in connection with the televised debates and the media coverage of the elections. This agreement builds on a similar partnership concluded by the PBA with ABS CBN in the previous year.

For all the televised debates, the PBA provided questions sourced online from our members and sent representatives, even to provincial locations, to be a part of the historic debates. Various PBA officers and members also actively participated in the campaigns of their chosen candidates as the nation went to the polls to elect our next leaders.

In the midst of the campaign, the PBA was compelled to issue an official statement that was published in leading newspapers. With the approval of the Board of Trustees, the measured and sober statement expressed concern over questions left unanswered and the confusion brought about by a controversial ruling handed down by a divided Supreme Court. The statement stressed the need for certainty in the application of settled legal principles and clarity in the resolution of legal issues in fostering a stable legal system. Following its release, the statement drew front page coverage in the Philippine Daily Inquirer showing the value of our association's stand on important public issues.

## **Beyond Borders:**

### **PBA Roundtable Discussion on the Philippine Workforce & ASEAN Integration**

On 18 May 2016, in commemoration of labor month, the PBA returned to our usual luncheon fellowship format at the Manila Golf & Country Club. It was time for the PBA to look beyond our shores and focus our attention on an emerging development within the ASEAN region. Organized by the Committee on Labor & Employment, headed by Chairman Cecilio Villanueva and Co-Chair Julius Gregory Delgado, the PBA hosted a roundtable discussion on the topic: The Philippine Workforce & ASEAN Integration.

We called on representatives from employers, labor groups and government to discuss the challenges we face in light of the ASEAN economic integration. Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) Chairman Donald Dee and Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) Administrator Hans Leo Cacdac took turns discussing the readiness of our nation in facing the challenges of ASEAN economic integration, among other issues.

The informative and wide-ranging discussion tackled questions on job security and job generation, the impact of regional integration on local businesses and potential benefits to our economy, as a whole. Representatives from various business chambers and professional organizations joined PBA members in an informative forum on a very timely issue.

### **The Philippine Competition Act Implementing Rules & Regulations**

As part of our abiding commitment to actively participate in improving our legal system, our Committee on Business Law, through its Co-Chair Aida Araceli Roxas-Rivera and Atty. Manuel Manaligod Jr., represented the PBA in consultations held by the Philippine Competition Council to discuss the implementing rules and



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regulations of the newly passed Philippine Competition Act. This engagement builds upon discussions held during the previous term wherein Senator Benigno "Bam" Aquino IV and Representative Dax Cua, the law's principal sponsors, discussed the salient features of the new law that will have a significant impact on the conduct of business in our jurisdiction.

### **125th PBA Foundation Day Celebration Rigodon Ballroom, Manila Peninsula Hotel**

On 22 June 2016, the PBA celebrated its 125th Foundation Day Anniversary at the Rigodon Ballroom of the Manila Peninsula Hotel. Nearly 200 members and guests joined the celebration. Our guest of honor and speaker was the Hon. Conchita Carpio Morales, Ombudsman of the Republic of the Philippines. Her keynote speech was covered by leading media outlets and featured in full on [www.rappler.com](http://www.rappler.com). It centered on the Rule of Law as a tool for good governance.

Adding a poignant touch to the occasion, the PBA honored two (2) of its esteemed members that evening. First to receive a PBA Citation was the late Senate President Jovito Salonga, one of the original incorporators of the PBA in 1958. He was cited for his life-long contributions to upholding the Rule of Law, as a legal practitioner, professor of law and public servant. The second PBA Citation was conferred on Atty. Delfin Gonzales, who at 103 years old is the oldest member of our association. He was honored for his inspiring life and his outstanding career as a law practitioner. Certificates of Appreciation were also given to acknowledge the generous contributions of our Sustaining Members.

Apart from receiving traditional citations, the evening's honorees were also gifted by our President with handcrafted statuettes of Lady Justice garbed in traditional Filipino dress made of Sinamay fabric. Shortly after being honored by the PBA, the inspiring life story of Atty. Delfin Gonzales landed as cover story of Starweek, the Sunday Magazine of the Philippine Star. Later in the year, Ombudsman Morales was conferred an Honorary Doctorate by the University of the Philippines and given the Ramon Magsaysay Award for her excellence in public service.

During welcome cocktails and over the formal dinner, we were treated to renditions of familiar tunes by a string quartet from the Manila String Machine and a number of original compositions from the Riddleys Band. Trustees Miguel Luis Orosa and Rachele Aileen Santos served as hosts for the evening. To reach out to future generation of lawyers and introduce them to the PBA, we also welcomed for the first time, law students from leading schools as guests in the event.

Indeed, the annual celebration of the foundation of the oldest voluntary association of lawyers in our country served as an opportunity for us to renew and strengthen our abiding commitment to upholding the Rule of Law.

### **The PBA History: A Video Documentary**

To cap the 125th PBA Foundation Day celebration, a video documentary on the history of the PBA debuted that evening and served as one of the highlights of the celebration. Our President produced the



documentary based on original text written and researched by past President Antonio Velicaria. It also featured excerpts from interviews with PBA stalwarts including past President Manuel Barcelona, Jr. and Teresita Cruz Sison, our first lady President. Atty. Delfin Gonzales, the oldest PBA member, also shared his happy experiences with the PBA. The video was produced at no cost to the PBA. It served as our President's gift on the occasion of the 125th PBA Foundation Day Anniversary. To reach a broader audience, the documentary may now be viewed on YouTube.

### **PBA Free Legal Aid**

Pursuant to a Memorandum of Agreement forged with the Regional Trial Court of Makati City during the previous term, the PBA continued to provide free legal aid to indigent litigants during the term. PBA volunteer lawyers led by past President Llewellyn Llanillo and 2nd Vice-President Benjamin Bacorro, who chair our Committee on Legal Aid, provided pro bono legal representation to selected indigent parties in litigation before the courts of Makati.

To further support private initiatives geared towards uplifting our countrymen, the Committee on Business Law, through its Co-Chair Aida Araceli Roxas-Rivera and PBA member Rosa Bagtas, gave our free legal aid program a new dimension, as they assisted various social entrepreneurs based in the Gawad Kalinga Enchanted Farm. The PBA extended legal assistance in addressing various issues arising from their efforts to establish and sustain innovative business models for medium scale enterprises that provide livelihood opportunities for the marginalized and puts social responsibility ahead of profits.

### **Off to the Course:**

#### **The 11th PBA Golf Tournament**

On 07 July 2016, the PBA held the 11th PBA Golf Tournament at the prestigious Wack Wack Golf & Country Club. Traditionally held during summer, the annual golfing event organized by Special Projects Committee Chairman Alfonso Victorio Reyno III and Co-Chair Rodelle Bolante had to be moved to a later date to give way to the busy election season.

Despite the slight downpour and a brewing storm on the day of the event, the highly anticipated tournament provided a welcome fellowship opportunity for PBA members and friends. Fellow lawyer Frank Figura was named overall champion. Trustee Jose Raulito Paras, PBA members Julius Yano and Ricardo Ongkiko won the major raffle prizes consisting of high-end home appliances and gadgets. Over 25 minor prizes were given to lucky participants.

The event successfully raised funds to establish the PBA Civil Rights Fund and sustain the various endeavors of the PBA.

### **The Intellectual Property Forum:**

#### **Reaching across the bar and partnering with the private sector**

On 12 August 2016, the PBA, in partnership with the Intellectual Property Association of the Philippines (IPAP) and PFMTC, Inc. held an Intellectual Property Forum at the Rizal Ballroom of the Shangri-la Hotel





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Manila, in Makati City. Organized by the Intellectual Property (IP) Committee headed by its Chairman, 3rd Vice-President Rico Domingo and Co-Chair Divine Pedron, with the support of Atty. Chita Laysa-Herce, the event focused discussions on current and emerging IP issues.

The event marks the first time that the PBA engaged a corporate partner in discussing matters of mutual concern. Global developments in IP rights pertaining to plain packaging legislations in other jurisdictions was discussed by Richard James, PMFTC Director for Corporate Affairs. PBA member Anthony Abad spoke on the impact of the new Philippine Competition Act on IP rights. The keynote speech was delivered by Hon. Diosdado Peralta, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines, who discussed recent Supreme Court decisions on IP cases.

For the first time, law students from the Ateneo School of Law served as discussants during the program. This was another effort of the PBA to reach out to future PBA members. The forum was followed by a hosted cocktail reception that provided networking opportunities for about 120 lawyers and law students who attended the event.

### **Beyond our shores:**

#### **A Lecture on the West Philippine Sea Arbitration**

As the term was about to end, the PBA hosted another fellowship on 16 September 2016 at the Manila Golf & Country Club. The event was organized in cooperation with the UP Institute for Maritime Affairs & Law of the Sea (IMLOS). Following the rendition of the final arbitral award by the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), the PBA thought it fitting to host an in-depth discussion of the arbitral ruling and the crucial next steps towards a rules-based resolution of the dispute.

UP Law Professor Jay Batongbacal, IMLOS Director, delivered the backgrounder and set the stage for the highly informative and insightful lecture of Hon. Antonio Carpio, Senior Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines. The lecture was aptly entitled *West Philippine Sea: The Final Arbitration Award and its Ramifications*.

Distinguished guests from the academe, the military, the diplomatic corps, the corporate world and other thought leaders joined PBA members in listening to the lecture and the open forum. The event further stressed efforts of the PBA to reach out to other sectors of society in addressing what have been traditionally viewed as purely legal issues.

### **Upgrades & Innovations: Housekeeping Milestones**

Amidst all the activities, the leadership did not miss attending to important housekeeping concerns.

#### **a. Fund Raising**

Through the adoption of new ways and means in raising funds for the PBA, we were able to raise more than P2.4 Million during the term. This is the biggest amount raised by the PBA in recent years. In addition to the usual fund raising efforts through our annual golf tournament, yearbook advertisements and contributions from our members, the PBA offered annual sponsorships for all events during the



term to leading corporations and philanthropic organizations. By itself, this innovative fund raising effort brought in more than P1.2 Million or half of all the funds raised during the term. Likewise, to address rising costs in staging our traditional fellowships, the PBA engaged leading corporations to sponsor fellowship discussions that focused on matters of mutual concern. All these innovations helped improve the financial health of our association.

*b. The PBA Civil Rights Fund*

Owing to the success of fund raising efforts during the term, upon the suggestion of our President and with the approval of the Board of Trustees, the PBA Civil Rights Fund will be established. The trust fund is intended to cover the costs of waging landmark litigation involving public policies that impact on civil rights and fundamental liberties. By unanimous resolution of the Board of Trustees, our President was tasked to determine the amount to be placed in the trust fund drawn from funds raised during the term and spell out the terms of its future use.

*c. Membership Drive*

Capitalizing on the amendment of our By-Laws intended to infuse new blood into the PBA, a total of 86 new members joined the PBA out of over a hundred applicants. This is the highest number of new members in recent years and fulfills a commitment of our President to infuse dynamism, renewed energy and new blood into our association. The PBA also updated its membership application form and converted it in electronic format. It can now be filled up and submitted online and contains more information that can be easily included in an electronic database as our membership expands.

*d. Updating PBA Corporate Records*

As part of our housekeeping efforts, PBA Secretary and Trustee Joel Raymond Ayson completed all required filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) that were overlooked in previous years. As a result, all corporate records of the PBA are now current. Past President Llewellyn Llanillo is also studying the most tax efficient way to manage the meager funds of the association.

*e. Reaching out: PBA Website, Social Media & the PBA Reports*

The PBA website is currently being updated with a view to incorporating new features and introduce functionalities that will make the website more engaging, informative and user friendly. The look and feel of the updated website was also made consistent with other PBA collaterals to project a more cohesive and up-to-date brand.

Currently a work in progress, the updated PBA website will serve as an information and registration portal for PBA activities and other bar matters such as MCLE seminars. In the future, it can potentially host webinars on important legal topics. In the meantime, as an added feature, the PBA website will host video blogs of PBA events and testimonials of past PBA presidents and PBA members speaking on their experiences with the PBA and extolling the values of joining our association.



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During the term, we also pioneered online advance registration to PBA events. This was meant to help members avail of limited slots and help organizers plan our activities better. In line with the use of information technology (IT) to cater to the needs of our community of lawyers in the PBA, our President, together with Committee on Legal Education, Lawyers' Rights and Legal Ethics Chairperson and incoming President Fina Tantuico, our President had initial discussions with a leading IT provider on the possibility of having MCLE webinars hosted in the PBA website, subject to the approval of the Supreme Court.

As promised, the PBA is finally on Facebook. The PBA actively used social media throughout the term to connect with our members and the broader society. Digital invitations to upcoming events as well as videos and photos of past events were regularly posted for PBA members to see. Members also shared photos and comments on various PBA activities. Links to media coverage of PBA events were also posted with some carrying full-length videos of the speeches of PBA special guests. Following its activation this year, the page has drawn a significant number of followers including even non-members from the provinces and abroad.

Traditional means to reach PBA members were also updated. A new edition of the PBA Reports, sporting a fresh look and feel, was published by Committee on Publications Chairman Francis Egenias and Co-Chair Anthony Rodney Velicaria, who worked under the guidance of our resident historian, past President Antonio Velicaria. A digital version of the PBA Reports will also be uploaded in the updated PBA website.

### **Thanksgiving Cocktails**

To close the term, our President hosted cocktails at Manila Golf & Country Club on 16 September 2016 following the last PBA fellowship for the term. The cocktails were held to provide a networking opportunity for new PBA members and acknowledge the contributions of the officers, trustees, advisers, members and friends to the success of the term that was about to come to an end. It was a fitting thanksgiving to cap a fun-filled, relevant and busy year for the PBA.

President Rodel A. Cruz extends his sincere gratitude to all the officers, trustees, the Council of Advisers, and friends of the PBA for all their contributions to the success of the term.

• All these, for the Rule of Law.