The 23rd Philippine Neurological Association Midyear Convention will be held on May 27-28, 2017 at the Makati Shangrila Hotel. This year’s theme is “Bringing Back The Good Old Days” which aims to rekindle the tradition of building camaraderie and strengthening bonds among fellows. For the past years, this real objective of our midyear convention was lost due to the demands of the different pharmaceutical companies sponsoring our conventions. From here on, fellowship nights of the midyear conventions will be sponsored by our association.

There will be 2-3 lectures in order to meet the requirement of earning CPD units. As regard to the membership status of every fellow, attendance in the business meeting will be closely monitored by the Membership Committee.

With this new format of the midyear convention, we hope to bring back the fun in our association spiced with informative lectures.

Marietta Cruz-Olaivar, MD
 Overall Chair, 23rd Midyear Convention
I am excited to offer everyone our 2017 issue number 2 of SYNAPSE our official newsletter. Issue number 1 is an electronic issue and is available at the PNA official website. Special thanks to Dr. Alejandro Diaz, this year’s SYNAPSE editor-in-chief for increasing the number of issues this year to 4 (2 electronic issues, 2 hard copy issues). In the era of social media, we are utilizing the different social network platforms to be connected to everyone - pna facebook, pna app, pna official website, pna bimonthly conference webinars.

We are looking forward to catching up with everyone at the PNA Midyear Convention on May 27 at Makati Shangrilah Hotel headed by Dr. Mayette Olaivar, and at the PNA ASNA Convention in November being organized by Dr. Anette Bautista and Dr. Soc Sarfati.

Please continue to support all our PNA activities for this year.

Mabuhay ang PNA! One PNA!
A Need for Paradigm Shift in Education

Dr. Alejandro Bimbo Diaz

True to the concept of education is content and learning. Since its inception, education revolved around strategies to enhance the learner’s knowledge, skills, and attitudes and to prepare them intellectually to achieve success in their respective fields of study. The 20th century emphasized on the mastery of content teaching which includes technicalities of a discipline and the knowledge needed to obtain to achieve desired competencies. In contrast, the 21st century improved the process in which the content is delivered to the learners; introducing and refining various strategies in teaching delivery with the goal of effective and efficient learning.

In response to the changing trends globally, the Philippine school systems need to acquire innovations in improving education at all levels. Rather than keeping pace, our country has to develop a strategic vision to accurately anticipate future trends and challenges that will affect the present educational system. Aside from content learning, cultural competencies must also be developed and with this, measurable activities for continuous assessment, implementation and evaluation of future initiatives. To quote Franklin D. Roosevelt, “We cannot build the future for our youth- but we can build our youth for the future”. Therefore, the concept of education must be student-centered, focusing on the student’s individual capacities.

On 2016, only four educational institutions in the Philippines were included in top universities worldwide in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Ranking. The ranking, which assessed four areas including research, training, employability, and internalization, clearly exhibits an urgent need for Philippine educational institutions to revise current instructional methods and devise new strategies in employing responsibility in learning towards the students, defining the role of the teacher as a coach in the learning process. In doing so, skills such as Critical thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity, known as the 4 Cs are essential in providing a broad perspective for students during the learning process.

In the discipline of Medicine, a holistic approach is continuously applied throughout the learning process. Content and concepts are introduced and taught with a view of bio-psycho-social systems in its core. The 4 Cs identified, once developed by the students, will be useful indicators in developing culturally competent physicians capable of delivering competent health care to different ethnics and races of health consumers.

During the learning process, the development of Critical Thinking entails a student to intellectually process gathered information and analyze it in a disciplined manner thereby producing sensible outcomes. Critical thinking embodies the process of decision-making, which is generated from observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, and communication. Effective decision-making in the medical practice guides the physicians to perform the appropriate tasks despite confounding factors such as time pressure and the growing diversity in patient population. As part of the development of critical thinking is effective Communication between the teacher and the student. Exercising proper communication allows avenue for articulation of instructions and opinions valued in daily encounters. In that sense, gathered information from different sources must be identified on its level of accuracy. The internet, for instance, delivers information about a certain topic but in variability. Social media has made communication locally, nationally, and internationally a way of organizing thoughts and delivering information relevant to global issues but the question is “are these information sensible and accurate?”. Issues regarding effective communication utilizing social media continue to arise despite its obvious advantage in improving globalization.

In order to achieve effective communication, Collaboration of parties involved is of primary importance. People or organizations working towards a common goal explain what...
collaboration is about. Technology has made it possible to improve communication and collaboration between different parts of the globe which speeds up the process of producing desirable outcomes. In the process of collaboration, it is important to identify a group with which you can work closely who also shares a common interest. In the concept of education, collaboration between the teacher and student will determine the success of the learning process by developing a goal and measurable activities for evaluation.

Eliciting creative ideas from both the teacher and student during the learning process is essential in determining developed competencies. New ideas in learning must be developed, but first, creativity must be instilled in the student. The teacher must be able to motivate and inspire the student in developing new and innovative ideas which also gives way to effective learning. Encouragement, teamwork, and social accountability are introduced to the student towards developing a disciplined thinking process.

The global society continuously changes and to keep pace, educators must develop strategic vision and become critical thinkers. Through developing awareness of the ongoing trends in education and the growing needs of students, actions must be started on how education can be moved from the instructional paradigm to a learning paradigm, which highlights the student as the center of decision making in the earning process.

Are we ready for 21st century paradigm shift in education?

OPLAN PAYONG

Dr. Marietta Cruz-Olaivar

O plan Payong review was originally conceptualized by Dr. Carlos Chua some years back. It helped many associate members to become fellows. With the upcoming Asean Integration, the Professional Regulation Commission is encouraging every physician who finished his residency training to pass the certifying examination to become fellow or diplomate of his respective subspecialty. Without satisfying the examination, he will be classified as a Generalist.

Starting January of this year, we have revived the Oplan Payong review which included the new graduates of neurology residency program. Since many of the associate members are in the provinces, an Oplan Payong Website was created and an online review is being conducted. There are more or less 50 associate members who are participating in the review. Regular lectures of our fellows are recorded which can be downloaded by our associate members. Pre and post tests are being given online after which a feedback can be accessed.

For the last two weeks before the Adult Neurology Specialty Board Examination on August 12, 2017, they will be housed in an area where modules on the following fields will be conducted: neur anatomy, neuropathology, neuroimaging, neurophysiology, EEG and neurosonology.

We recognize the limitations of this kind of review but this is the most practical way to gather our associate members. We can see their efforts and dedication in this Oplan Payong Review. We hope and pray that our associate member will soon be joining the ranks of the fellows for us to become ONE PNA!
Honored guests, founders, past presidents of this association, the PNA board of governors led by Dr. Arnold Pineda, dear fellows and colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

I’m thrilled to stand here tonight with the privilege of speaking to a room full of people who share my passion for neurology. There is no doubt that the collective knowledge in this room represents some of the best and brightest neurologists in the country. As such, I don’t think my time on stage would serve you best if I were to talk about neurology. After all, you would probably already know whatever I share with you on that topic.

Therefore, I will talk about something we don’t always hear in our daily routines.

The SC Maglev train in Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan, has opposing magnets on the train and tracks. These allow the train to “float” along with no friction. This means higher speeds and lesser commute times, allowing passengers to live in farther, lower-cost places, despite working in big cities.

In the very near future, the Tesla Model S will have the capability to self-drive. This will be possible with a combination of cameras, sensors, and software to replace human drivers.

This will mean safer travel because human error will no longer be a cause of accidents.

This is BMW’s Motorrad Vision Next 100. It uses gyroscopic sensors within the bike’s tires to sense its position and balance itself, even while standing still. The whole frame flexes as the rider steers the bike. The rider wears special glasses that display information including speed and cornering hints to help the rider maneuver the bike.

Compared to present-day motorbikes, this BMW will be a lot safer.

And finally, there is the Da Vinci Surgical System. It is powered by robotic technology that allows the surgeon’s hand movements to be translated into smaller, more precise movements of tiny instruments inside the patient’s body.

One of the instruments is a laparoscope – a thin tube with a tiny camera and light at the end. The camera sends images to a video monitor in the operating room to guide doctors during surgery.

The Da Vinci system makes surgeries less major, translating to shorter hospital stays, lower risk of infection, and faster recovery.

These technological advances are just a few in today’s headlines. Our industry itself has seen unprecedented advances. The question on people’s minds nowadays is whether the progress of technology is too fast for our ethics to keep up, and at what point should we trust our technology to do work for us - and even make decisions.

We can either embrace and leverage its advantages, or fear its potential to be used for harm. Regardless of where we stand in our appreciation of technology, it is, in my opinion, our professional responsibility to stay abreast of its development and determine its contributions to our practices and the well-being of our patients. After all, we cannot apply 19th century treatments to 21st century health issues.

However, instead of talking about technology’s merits or flaws, I’d like us to consider the human side of technological development. None of these would have been the result of any person’s efforts. There would have been teams of scientists, researchers, engineers, designers, and doctors like us working together across continents and timezones.

While ours is a dynamic field, the values that help us succeed remain constant. In my opinion, these are what must define us as professionals; more importantly than all the knowledge we accumulate in our careers. There are the values of honesty, integrity, hard work, courtesy, responsibility, and living moderately. All these should have been deeply ingrained in us, thanks to our parents and schools.

Let me talk about a different set of values that, I believe, have significantly driven the technological advances around us. Regardless of language or culture, technologists would have valued seeing themselves as part of a bigger picture, and not settling for good enough - the antithesis of our “pweede na yan” attitude. With the privilege of time that I’ve been given to stand here, I’d like to share how seeing myself as part of a bigger picture has enriched my life - in and out of my medical practice.

In fact, for all of us, our social networks underpin much of what
makes us succeed in life. This is very much like how important the synapses between neurons are to our overall well-being. We must walk the talk of neurology.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of nurturing our social networks. Without us actively participating in them, our practices and the body of knowledge we’ve built up will stagnate and eventually wither as the rest of the world moves forward at an ever increasing pace.

I entered the PGH Neurology Training Program in 1977 together with Drs. Ramiro, Salonga and Buit as my batch-mates. Drs. Bitanga, Pepot De Los Reyes, and Corazon Danguilan were my senior residents. As it was before and still today, one of the routines was to go on duty every three days. It was then that I discovered the vastness of neuroscience. It was an area in Medicine that most young graduates feared to tread.

One of the prevailing sentiments then was that there was no future in neuroscience. From one duty day to another, coming up with an accurate diagnosis became very challenging for a first year neurology trainee. And yet, we saw patients and relatives following us and always asking for guidance. Some of them even clung to us as if we were God. I asked myself, “Why me?” I didn’t even understand what subarachnoid hemorrhage, rebleed, and rostrocaudal deterioration were. It was like the blind leading the blind. I realized that there was a lot of reading and learning despite the physical and mental stress.

Regardless, it was very clear to me that my fellow-trainees and I had to apply true grit - something that many young people do not have nowadays.

In retrospect, I’m thankful that our patients trusted us with their lives, that our mentors believed in us and guided us. They were only a handful then. These were Drs. Martesio Perez, Lilian Lee, Alfredo Bengzon, Braulio Idea, Rogelio Libarnes, Corazon Rivera, Girlie Bascal, Regina Macalintal. Without their encouragement and dedication, I wouldn’t be standing here tonight.

I discovered my passion for teaching in 1981. I was then a faculty member teaching clinical neurology in the department of neurosciences in UP College of Medicine. When making bedside rounds, I had always been very thorough with my trainees because I hated shortcuts for I believed there are no shortcuts to success. This meant our rounds took longer than usual. Some trainees appreciated the amount of things they learned while others just wanted our rounds to end as soon as possible.

Because of this, I was considered one of the stricter and more stringent faculty members – yet my dealings with my students were devoid of any subjectivity. I did my best to ensure that I imparted as much knowledge to my students because I knew that someday they would be part of the community of neuroscience practitioners.

Around the same time when I was involved in teaching, I was acquainted with someone from Cabanatuan city who helped me see a need to support those who needed to take the PNA specialty exam through some review classes. Of course, there were similar activities in the various institutions, but there wasn’t a general offering that was open to would-be examinees from any institution. After gaining the support of the PNA board, I assembled faculty members who would hold review classes with me. We successfully held those classes and saw the majority of our students pass the specialty exam. The interesting thing about this was I intended this to be just a one-time activity, for a specific group of trainees. However, the need for such review classes turned out to be a yearly thing.

From that first lecture in 2013, it has become a yearly activity. Every year, I see more and more muslim students in medical school. In quiet moments of reflection, I sometimes find myself saying, “Perhaps this is one small way for me to contribute to peace and progress in strife-torn Mindanao.”

I share these not to put myself in the spotlight. Rather, to emphasize that growing our careers and social networks sometimes requires us to first see the needs of people around us, and just be available to help. After all is said and done, when we’ve done our parts, we will just end up surprising ourselves that we gain more from helping others than by just helping ourselves.

When I moved on from teaching, my students and fellow faculty members took time to appreciate my efforts. In fact, some of you here today were some of the people I’ve had the privilege to work with and you are now part of my social network.

When I take time to think about this, I’m reminded that in life the things that matter the most are not what shimmer and shine. Rather it is those that gather dust, that fade over time, but always remain in the fondest of memories. My early forays in the PNA included participating in various outreach activities to educate local doctors and to continue expanding networks for the faster transmission of knowledge. My participation was also in cooperation with the younger neuroscience societies like the Stroke Society of the Philippines, the Philippine League Against Epilepsy, the Dementia Society of the Philippines, the Alzheimer’s Disease Association of the Philippines, and the Movement Disorder Society of the Philippines.

Moving up the ranks was not part of my agenda, I just wanted to be involved. In time, I was able to build professional and personal relationships with many of you here.

My goal in joining the PNA was primarily to serve the association in areas that presented themselves, in any capacity I saw myself capable. As I continued being involved, opportunities arose for me to take on more responsibilities.

I learned that if I simply made myself available to serve the association, leadership roles opened up as a result. I welcomed these because I believed that I could further serve our community of doctors if I led others to share the same vision of the association.

As I continued in my various roles in the association, the time came when I was finally given the privilege of being president. Honestly, I did not have this as a goal when I first got involved with the PNA. In retrospect, I can now understand that having
the right agenda – that of service - allowed me to focus on the actual work that needed to be done. Serving as president was then just an eventuality, a validation of previous work done for the association and our members.

Becoming president of the PNA was not the pinnacle of my achievements in the association. Looking back on my term as president, I can see that the most valuable thing that I gained was not the title or its prestige. It was what I experienced away from the spotlight, away from official functions.

You see, as leaders, we can do our very best. But human as we all are, we do get tired, we get frustrated when things don’t go as we expect them to, and we make mistakes too. I’ve had bouts of these even as president. Despite my efforts, I fell short of others’ expectations and was criticized at times.

My natural reaction was to be defensive, to be confrontational, or to just give up. However, I understood in those times that if I gave into these tendencies, I would have failed the association and its members.

Perseverance in the face of criticism was the biggest thing I learned from these experiences. Of course, I also had to be humble enough recognize my weaknesses and engage other people in the association who had the strengths I did not. I realized that being president didn’t mean having all the answers, but instead being in a position to invite others to excel in areas I could not. Let me share a principle I learned years ago that parallels this experience. It was one of my favorite teachers who said:

“The plum tree chooses to brave the harshness of mid-winter to blossom while other trees around it are bare and focused on survival. The snowy landscape isn’t as bleak and monotonous when there’s a plum tree in its midst. The plum has gained the admiration of cultures and countless generations because its perseverance despite hardship makes it stand out.”

Having the right people to support me through challenges and adversities was a highlight of my years as PNA president. In our careers there will always be highs and lows. But there will also be people around us who will encourage us and see us through.

Even before the internet gave us Facebook, we had real social networks that we tapped into starting from childhood. As professionals, our first social networks were with the institutions we were trained in, with our faculty and peers.

As we moved on in our careers, many of us retain connections with our institutions while expanding to other networks, for example, this very association we are part of. When we expand our networks, we also need to expand our perspectives and adjust the way we interact with our connections. When I was younger and deeply embedded in my institution’s social network, my tendency was to prioritize its agenda. As I grew older and started being involved in the PNA, I had to adapt my priorities to be able to serve a larger group of people, including those who were part of the institution I began with. Moving forward in our careers, as we gain more credibility, let’s not forget that there are larger networks than the PNA, waiting for us to be involved. We have opportunities to collaborate with peers from associations in other countries. We may be primarily consumers in our field, on the world stage, at this time, but let’s not be content with that. Let’s get rid of the “pwede na yan, OK na yan” attitude and work to be contributors someday.

Let’s keep our organization strong, dynamic, and healthy. A healthy PNA should be in constant motion so it can embrace and adapt to the future. I encourage all of us to dream big! To the younger ones among us here, I challenge you to consider even expanding your borders beyond medicine. Aim for congress, the Senate, or the Department of Health. These are wonderful platforms for us to push for the growth of neuroscience and to improve the health care of the Filipino people.

I’ve shared several examples from my personal experience over the years, to illustrate the importance of nurturing our values, our character, and social networks. We must mind our surroundings, notice the needs of others, be involved, and gain more responsibilities to make a positive difference in the world. Rarely can someone succeed in life without the support of others. In my case, I have many people to thank. But for now, I would like to name a few:

To all my mentors and teachers, thank you for your guidance and patience in nurturing us.

To all my colleagues, trainees and students, thank you for the fantastic work we’ve done together over the years.

To my sister, Ate Baby, thank you for unconditionally imparting your wisdom and providing emotional and material support, especially when I was still in medical school, when I was starting out in my career, and even now.

To my father, when I was just about to start my practice, reminded me several times saying:

“The most that your patients can give, is what you should be prepared to receive.”

These words continually remain in my mind even now at my age.

To my wife, who frequently thought that I loved neurology more than anything else. Thank you for sacrificing a lot for the family, especially when I was away often. You have been with me through the highs and lows of my career. You encouraged me when temporary setbacks made me prone to discouragement, and you celebrated with me whenever I reached new milestones.

Thanks to all of you - including those whom I haven’t named, you know who you are. My career has been enriched because you are part of my social network.

And finally, I would like to thank my Lord, Jesus Christ. He is the director of my life - past, present, and future. Every misstep and every success was part of His plan for me. It is my wish that every one of us, would have a personal relationship with Him.

Friends, despite the dizzying array of technological advancements and the uncertain future before us, we must be steadfast with our values and leverage our social networks to surmount challenges in our practices and personal lives.

Let’s all be plum trees and we will have done our parts to stand out and make the world a better place.

A pleasant evening to all of you. Mabuhay and PNA.
The PNA bimonthly is a venue for Filipino neurologists to discuss and update themselves in current issues in neurology. Last year in 2016, the 4 bimonthly meetings under the leadership of Dr. Marietta Olaivar were held as a webcast in order that more fellows will be able to participate.

For 2017, the first PNA bimonthly meeting with the topic Recurrent Atherothrombotic Stroke in a Patient on Aspirin: Adding or Replacing Anti-Platelets was held at the Philippine Center for Advanced Surgery (PCAS) Cardinal Santos Medical Center 6 pm on Thursday, March 2, 2017. Our discussants were Dr. Joyce Tenorio and Dr. Marc Molina with their respective coaches Dr. Jose Navarro and Dr. Johnny Lokin. Dr. Abdias Aquino added his comments at the end of the discussion. There were 40 attendees at the venue with 110 attendees from 15 clusters from Baguio to Davao. GlaxoSmithKline provided assistance in broadcasting our activity as a webinar.

The next bimonthly is scheduled on June 22, 2017 with the topic: Hyperactivity in a Child with Epilepsy: Drug Treatment vs. Non-Drug Treatment. July 6 and September 7 are the dates for the subsequent bimonthly meetings. Please save the dates!
The PNA gathered its best and finest for the very first PNA Forum on Research Issues last January 21st at the Makati Medical Center Auditorium.

Dr. Regina Macalintal Canlas, Chair of the MMC Department of Neurosciences graciously welcomed all the delegates to the meeting. Dr Rosalina Picar, the organizer for the event discussed the importance of a research culture which is defined as: a system of widely shared and strongly held values which provides a supportive context in which research is uniformly expected, discussed, produced and valued. This effort requires 3 main components: THE INSTITUTION (the PNA), LEADERSHIP (all of us) and INDIVIDUAL FACULTY MEMBERS (pioneer fellows in research).

The morning session started off with lectures discussing relevant issues such as: Outcomes Based Research and the state of research in the Philippines by Dra Grace Brizuela from the University of the East Institute of Research and our very own, Dr Sally Vios from the UP-PGH and PHREB to discuss the Philippine Research Agenda.

The afternoon workshop session focused on the current issues that encourage and hinder the conduct of neurologic research in the Philippines. The residents and training officers of the various residency training programs focused on the research requirements prior to board examination and the necessity for standardization of a research curriculum and the allotment of a “research protected time” in which residents can focus on their research projects. In conjunction with this, the ANSB and CNSB have also been asked to operatively define the research requirements and readiness of training institutions.

The necessity for publication was also brought up by the PNA research committee members which resulted in the necessity of standardization of procedures for research conduct and PNA research grant endowments. To provide encouragement for fellows and residents to go beyond the annual research contest and aim towards publication, Dr Artemio Roxas, Jr. voiced the suggestion to create a Research Excellence and Research Publication Awards in which financial and recognition will be given to worthy research efforts.

With regards to publication, the Philippine Journal of Neurology faces the greatest challenge to publish at least 2 editions per year and to aim towards being indexed and achieve a worthwhile impact factor.

The meeting ended with high hopes and the realization that the path before us will be laborious and challenging. The 2017 PNA Board of Governors, through its President, Dr Romulo Esagunde, pledged its commitment to make the vision towards a PNA research culture a reality.

The various PNA councils were also represented and voiced their wish towards the development of a “ONE PNA” registry of the most common neurologic diseases in the country that will provide the factual base for future research efforts.
The International Stroke Conference (ISC) 2017 Houston

Dr. Romulo Esagunde and Dr. Alejandro Bimbo Diaz

The International Stroke Conference held in Houston Texas last February 22-24, 2017 was a huge success. It was a well attended congress which include a number of Filipino neurologists. Some worth sharing topics are described below.

1. A new trial showed no benefit in the use of Hemostatic agent RFVII in patients with intracerebral hemorrhage who were CTA spot sign positive. This was reported by two collaborative trial SPOTLIGHT in Canada and STOP-IT in USA.
2. A sub-analysis of the SOCRATES trial suggested stronger efficacy of Ticagrelor over Aspirin in the prevention of recurrent ischemic strokes or TIA that were secondary to ipsilateral atherosclerotic stenosis. Senior author Pierre Amarenco reported.
3. TARDIS trial- Triple antiplatelet therapy(combined Clopidogrel/ ASA/Dipyridamole) showed no benefit in stroke or TIA compared to guideline antiplatelet Tx with ASA/Dipyridamole or Clopidogrel alone given for one month.
4. TPA given in Mobile Stroke Units (MSUs) linked to better outcome compared with conventional thrombolysis in the ED. A new analysis of data from the first study of giving thrombolytic therapy in a mobile stroke unit (PHANTOM-5) has suggested that this approach is associated with improved outcomes when multivariate regression analysis was used(p.052).
5. Aspiration of a clot was as effective as using stent retrievers in achieving successful reperfusion in patients with an ischemic stroke of the anterior circulation, ASTER a new trial from France was presented..
6. The PICASSO trial was also presented which revealed cilostazol to be non-inferior to aspirin in preventing vascular events in patients with a recent ischemic stroke and a history of intracerebral hemorrhage (ICH) or multiple microbleeds.Cilostazol also appeared more effective than aspirin at reducing recurrent ischemic strokes but less effective at preventing myocardial infarction.
7. Midlife vascular risk factors were again seen in another new analysis of ARIC study to be associated with higher risk of developing dementia later in life. These include, smoking, diabetes, hypertension, and prehypertension, as much as carrying the APOE4 allele.

The lighter look of Investing 101 for the Everyone

Dr. Renato P. Evangelista

Talking about money to many is not a very attractive activity. To some, it is distasteful. To others, looking at numbers turn them off. They would rather spend time on social media, internet, television, or spend time with friends talking about the latest social event or someone else. However, no matter how we try to avoid talking about money, we realize however that we need money to address many of our basic needs as well as many of our wants. Not many of us do not also realize that the good life that we live now, because of the success in our career, will stop as soon as we stop working. Thus we need to plan ahead for the future. Through careful saving and investment, we can maintain the quality of life that we enjoy during our active working period. If we think that our retirement will result in the decrease of our expenses, as our children will have graduated and our spending can be pulled back, this would be a fallacy. As we grow old, our medical and health expense also grows. We all know how much it costs to have a coronary bypass or an endo-vascular treatment or even just to be admitted to the ICU for a week. And as we mature into our senior years, maintenance medication will be the norm. Add to that, the money that we might have placed in the savings account will have been eaten by an insect called INFLATION. And if we think that we would not be helping our children who are just starting their careers in a world much more turmoil than that which we grew up in, then we really have a heart of stone. That usually melts when we see our grandchildren. It is the saddest story: a person whose success in his or her career, ended in an aftermath of relative poverty due to carelessness in considering the needs of his or her Golden Years.

If we are now convinced that we need to prepare for our future financially, let us try to come up with certain general statement.

1. A person who does not save has no hope for greatness.
2. Begin with the end in mind.
3. Invest in yourself first.
4. Do not lose your money.
5. Diversify.

1. SAVING is the first step to all investment. Second, realize that we have to save enough to reach a level that makes us FINANCIAL FREE. This means, the earnings that the savings we accumulated, is enough to allow us to live a life we want without having to work for it.

To achieve this stage of financial freedom, let us start by projecting an amount that we think would allow us to live the kind of life we want in the
future computing from the amount of money we think we need now, and adding the inflation growth every year and other expense that we think we will need when we reach the age of 65.

Example. If we think at a present age of 30 y/o we would need 30,000.00 a month now to live a comfortable life. That would means that you would need to save an X amount of money that would earn at conservative 5% net P360,000/ annum.

(X) x 0.05 = P360,000.00
(X) = 360,000.00/0.05 = P7,200,000.00

With the P7,200,000.00 computed, if we want to know the equivalent amount after 35 year when we would project retiring, we add 3% inflation (historical average inflation in the Philippines) per year to come up with the actual amount we would need that would earn the equivalent amount of P30,000.00/month in buying power, now.

(7,200,000 x 0.03) x 35 + 7,200,000 = 14,760,000.00

This P14,760,000.00 is the amount that is equivalent in buying power of the P7,200,000.00 now, after factoring in 3% inflation for 35 years. This computed amount can earn us at 5% interest coupon per year, P738,000/ year or P 61,500.00 / month when we reach 65 y/o. So the P61,500.00 / month is equivalent to P30,000.00 / month after we factor in a 3% inflation per year that depreciates our money for 35 years when we project retiring at age 65.

This shows to us that the money we have now if not placed in an asset that earns better than inflation, will have no value. Thus investing our present money is very important. This reminds us of our allowance when we were in elementary, high school, premed and even in the college of medicine. Our monthly allowance may not even be enough to buy us the favorite siopao or pizza that we love nowadays.

This example varies with each person and one has to determine what he wants and what he will need in the future. The age that we are in now will also determine how much we need to save to achieve our goal. The younger we are when we started saving and investing, gives us more time to earn, save and invest and the older we are, the more difficult it is to achieve our financial goals. We have less time thus we need to save a bigger amount and to try to increase the yield of our investment thus increasing the risk of making a mistake. This means we need to save and invest as early as possible.

1. Beginning with the end in mind, means that in the period we are working of about 35 years before we reach 65 y/o, we have to save about P421,714.29/ annum or P35,142.86/ month to accumulate P14,760,000.00 to prepare ourselves to be financially free. This means setting aside that amount to achieve our financial freedom. To some this is a daunting task, but to others it is walk in the park. Nevertheless, we have to do this in a disciplined manner to prepare ourselves for the future. As they say, it is not how much we earn, it is what we keep that is important.

When we think of setting aside that amount per month and putting the money in a safe savings account away from the temptation of spending it. It may seem difficult as we are tempted to spend on so many thing like shoes, bags, expensive watches, the latest fashion, jewelry, travel, latest tech gadgets, latest SUV, so that saving seems to be an activity that deprives us of the immediate happiness that we get from buying this things. Plus the bigger expense of buying a house, paintings, sculptures to impress people or just make ourselves happy. Then we also need to spend for our daily needs like food, electricity, water, expenses for our children, and other daily operating expenses. When we analyze the price of these basic needs and needs for instant gratification. Having money left over seems like an impossible task. However, just the act of recording a budget for all our needs, allows us to realize what we can do away with in order to allocate more to our savings. We would also realize later that the savings we create early in our life, becomes a big helper in earning us more. So by cutting the unnecessary expense, we can generate assets that earn us money that the asset earned for us without directly working for it. This is what we call Passive Earning. So early in life, we have to determine what are assets and what are liabilities or debt.

There are actually very few things that appreciate over time like the house, maybe the expensive watch, or if you are collecting the rare cars, or works of art. These latter things actually require serious study if you want to use this as a tool for investment. These are investments that you enjoy while they earn money for you.

If we just place what we save in a savings account that does not earn much, then the task to reach our goal becomes tedious and the temptation to spend it is tremendous.

Our interest is how we can shorten the period of savings and decrease the amount that we need to save so we can focus more on the important issue of living a quality life. This is where knowledge of investment plays a big part because it helps you find opportunities to increase your earning and avoid the pitfalls and possible disaster of losing your hard earned money. Thus making it easier to reach your financial goal.

If we want to shorten the period to reach the goal of P14,760,000.00. Then the knowledge of Investment becomes a very attractive option as it will not just shorten the period to reach a financial goal, it can even decrease the amount we need to save to reach our goal. It may even double or triple our earning depending on how good we are at investing and how lucky we are. With knowledge in investment, we will definitely be luckier.

If you leave P3,000,000.00 to compound at 5% net per year, in 35 years, it would amount to P16,548,046.10 even if you do not add any amount to the original P3,000,000.00. This is the Power of Compounding.
2017 marks the 50th year of the association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Starting out with just 5 member countries, now 10 states share the aim of regional cooperation with a vision of one identity and one community. The culminating events of ASEAN Summit stretches from November 4-17, 2017. Tighter security will be expected with the attendance of leaders from US, Russia, China, Korea, Japan, Canada, and Australia joining the ASEAN leaders. Flights will be delayed, rerouted if not cancelled. Road closure from the airport to the bay area, including roads to Conrad Hotel will strictly be enforced. It will be everybody’s nightmare.

After planning as early as the first quarter of 2016, crafting a very stimulating scientific program, confirming attendance of a powerhouse cast of speakers, formalizing pledges of our pharmaceutical partners and finalizing our contract with Conrad Hotel, we received an advisory from the ASEAN Summit Technical Group about the scenario this November. But this same frustration fuels our determination and redirects our energy to work harder for a successful ASNA 2017.

The convention dates have been changed to November 21-24, 2017 in the same venue, Conrad Hotel. The Organizing Committee is working double time to keep the powerhouse cast of speakers with the least number of changes. The scientific program stays. Workshops on Neurosonology, Thrombolysis, Neuropsychiatry, Child Neurology and Movement Disorder will be held on the first day. The next 3 days will continue to discuss regional and international health concerns on stroke, dementia, epilepsy, headache, movement disorder, infections, Neuroimmunology and Neuromuscular Disorders.

Everybody is invited to listen to the keynote speech for PNA’s sapphire year to be delivered by Dr. Romeo Enriquez who will be presenting his research on ASEAN Integration. In a similar mold, there will be sessions on Consensus of the Competencies of a graduate of a Neurology Residency Training and Educational Outreach Program in the ASEAN region.

Everybody looks forward to a very interesting Fellowship Night, a chance to rekindle old acquaintances and make new friends with neuroscientists from the South East Asian region.

All fellows are enjoined to visit and explore our website www.asna2017.com. Online registration can be accomplished through the website.

REGISTRATION FEES FOR LOCAL DELEGATES

On or before August 31, 2017
- Consultant: PhP3000
- Trainees, Gov MD, Allied Health Professional: PhP2500

After August 31, 2017
- Consultant: PhP4000
- Trainees, Gov MD, Allied Health Professional: PhP3000

The login code to view these special reduced rates and proceed to register for local delegates is ASN@2017.

Let us all mark the new dates, November 21-24, 2017 for the 12 Biennial ASNA and 39th Annual PNA Convention.