

ence felt in 1991 with the idea of an Islamic State in Mindanao as their cause for a “just war.” However, their cause has taken the form of banditry and kidnapping for ransom. They have been the prime targets of military operations since they intensified their criminal efforts from 1992 to 1994. These initiatives, which involved a number of foreign nationals, allowed the Abu Sayyaf to grab the world’s attention and to rake in what is believed to be millions of dollars in ransom money. They have also drawn world attention to themselves because of their links to Osama Bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network.

HOW HAS WAR AFFECTED THE RESIDENTS OF MINDANAO?

The armed conflict continues to take its toll on the people, combatants and innocent civilians alike. More than 200,000 people have been dislocated by the war, leading to poverty. And in a vicious cycle, poverty often drives people to arms and to insurgency. ★

ABOUT THE WRITER:

Marge Lopa Perez is a freelance writer. She contributes to many national publications.

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

- *In the Presence of My Enemies*
By Gracia Burnham and Dean Merrill
- *Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao*
By Marites Danguilan Vitug and Glenda M. Gloria
- “Notes on the Mindanao Crisis”
By the Balay Rehabilitation Center
www.codewan.com.ph/hrnow/monitor/ids2003_0506_01.htm
- “Moros in the Philippines”
By John Gershman
www.fpif.org/selfdetermination/conflicts/philippines.html
- “2000 Census of Population and Housing”
By the National Census and Statistics Office
www.census.gov.ph/data/sectordata/datapop.html
- “Hussin’s Revolution” by Carlos H. Conde
- “The Failing Province” by Marites Danguilan Vitug
Newsbreak January-June 2003

My favorite BOOK

What are these noteworthy Filipinos and celebrities reading? Take a peek into their bookshelves.



MR. JOHN GOKONGWEI
Chairman
Emeritus, JG
Summit Holdings
Inc.

My favorite book?
It’s *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret

Mitchell. I read it when I was 15 years old, and I finished it in two days in a *batel* traveling to Lucena to do buy-and-sell. It was the first book I ever read that wasn’t school-related.



MYRZA SISON
Editor-in-Chief,
Cosmopolitan
Philippines

I love *The Art of Worldly Wisdom: A Pocket Oracle* by

Balthasar Gracian. This book was written 300 years ago, but it’s still so applicable to today’s world. It contains 300 maxims on life. My favorites are #74 (“Don’t be unfriendly...this is the vice of those who lack self-knowledge”), and #273 (“Understand the characters of the people you deal with...to penetrate their intentions”). It’s Machiavellian, but with scruples.



GABE MERCADO
Actor and
comedian

I am a huge Tony Perez fan. I got hooked when I read his *Cubao* series. I have never read any

other author in any language whose characters are as alive and as real as Tony Perez’s. Some people actually believe

that he actually gets possessed by his own characters as he writes about them. Two of my most precious possessions are the original handwritten manuscripts of *Sierra Lakes* and *Basted*—which Tony sold to me at one of his book launches years ago.



MARK MEILY
Award-winning
writer and director
of *Crying Ladies*

I love reading. I have so many favorite books, but my first fave book is

Moon and Sixpence by William Somerset Maugham. I read the book when I was at a crossroads: Whether I should shift courses from pre-med to fine arts. It was an epiphany book.



AGA MUHLACH
Award-winning
actor

I want to inculcate the habit of reading in my own kids. Though the twins

are still young, Charlene and I have already started reading them storybooks. For a recent storytelling session I had with some public school kids, I chose the book *Klasmeyt*, written by Centeno San Miguel and illustrated by Paul Eric Roca. It promotes good conduct and relations among children. I thought it was a story that school kids could relate to; it’s all about how Leonor, Claro and their classmates stood up against Rigor, the class bully. This delightful tale ends with a surprising twist and a lesson or two on friendship and fighting for what is right.