

The Bohol Chronicle: Case Study of A Successful Community Paper

Crispin Maslog*

In a country where the community press is weak and unstable, the success story of the Bohol Chronicle is an inspiration. In 16 years, the paper rose from nothing to ₱200,000. The most important reason for this success is the talent and dedication of the paper's publisher and editor.

From zero to ₱200,000. From 500 copies to 4,500 copies weekly. From no equipment to a ₱90,000 printing press, with five major pieces of equipment. From a one-man newspaper staff to a 10-man full time and 17-man part time mass media enterprise staff.

This is the 16-year success story of the Bohol Chronicle, the only community newspaper in Bohol, the home of that intrepid, wandering tribe, called the Boholanos. In the Philippines, only the Boholanos can give the Ilocanos competition as far as enterprise, frugality, and wanderlust are concerned. As a matter of fact, the Boholanos are known as the Ilocanos of the South.

But this is primarily the story of the Bohol Chronicle, not of the Boholanos, and so we will concentrate on the paper.

History of Paper

The Horatio Algers story of the Bohol Chronicle is an inspiration to the struggling community newspaperman in the Philippines. It shows how the dedication and talent of one man can overcome obstacles and

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This article is the first in a series of case studies of successful Philippine community newspapers that the author is doing, with financial help from The Asia Foundation. The study was based on a number of interviews with the publisher-editor and other staff members of the Bohol Chronicle, and on observations.

make a success of a local paper that was predicted by a priest to die six months after birth.

When the first issue of the Bohol Chronicle came off its rickety printing press on May 16, 1954, an American priest working with the Divine Word College in Tagbilaran City predicted, half in jest and half in earnest, that either the paper or its editor would die in six months. Other papers had come to Tagbilaran City before—and they all eventually died.

Sixteen years later, however, both the Bohol Chronicle and its editor, Atty. Zoilo Dejaresco Jr., are still very much alive—and prosperous.

As a matter of historical fact, the newspaper has never failed to come out with its weekly issue every Sunday during these past 16 years. Sixteen neatly bound volumes of all its issues are displayed in the compact and neat office of the paper and printing press on Mabini St. in Tagbilaran City, showing how the paper has kept faith with its readers.

Today, The Bohol Chronicle is a byword among Boholanos and its editor is a prominent figure in the councils of power in the province.

This success did not come easily to Dejaresco, known to his friends as Jun or Zoilo. He had to work hard, day and night, without pay, during the first few months that he and his partner were putting out the paper. He had to overcome public apathy to a local paper, and lack of advertising support and other serious obstacles along the way in the past 16 years, before he reached the prominent position where he is today.

Paper Born Out of Frustrations

The Bohol Chronicle, Jun Dejaresco is fond of telling friends, was born out of frustration, as a poem is born out of pain.

These frustrations started way back in 1949, when Dejaresco was a Manila Chronicle correspondent, and continued when he became Philippine News Service correspondent in 1952. He became frustrated, he said, when stories he submitted to the Chronicle and PNS never came out in print. He felt that all his efforts were wasted. He thought that these stories would be of interest to Boholanos and there should be a place where they could be published—a local paper, maybe.

While toying with the idea of putting out a local paper, Dejaresco chanced to talk with a local businessman, Eladio Balili, about the need for one. Although a businessman, Balili appreciated the value of a paper that would be run as a public service.

They agreed to each put up ₱2,000 to capitalize the paper, or a total of ₱4,000. As events turned out, however, they did not have to use this amount because right from the start the paper was able to support itself. Their partnership was informal—no papers were signed. Balili stayed in the background and let Dejaresco manage the whole thing.

They started out by renting a dilapidated printing press in town, owned by Rafael Palma College. They used monotype. It took about a month to put out the 10-page maiden issue of the paper. This slow pace of putting out the paper proved to be one of the early handicaps the partners had to surmount.

First Issue: Fortune and Misfortune

The first issue was very timely, from the newspaperman's point of view. A big typhoon smashed Bohol, killed several persons and rendered thousands homeless. This was a big story in that province, where typhoons rarely visit, and the paper capitalized on it. This was the first banner story of the paper, and the paper sold. It was one of the ironies of the journalistic profession—a misfortune for the province, but a fortune for the paper.

The only expense for the first issue was ₱137—₱130 as rent for the press, and ₱7 for Dejaresco's allowance for gasoline. Dejaresco was not getting a salary. The paper carried advertising, of course. The income from advertising and street sales was more than enough to pay for the expenses. This proved to be the case every issue in the next few months, until the advertisers started to fall out one by one.

Dejaresco discovered that his friends were advertising mainly out of friendship. They did not really believe in the power of advertising to increase their sales. So after a few months, they started patting Dejaresco in the back, saying "Padre, that's enough help—we hope you don't mind." This lack of appreciation of the value of advertising was another handicap the paper had to overcome. Today, the situation is different. Advertisers come to the paper.

Meanwhile, after four months of publication, from May to August, 1954, the partners found they had a net profit of ₱1,000. Meanwhile, also, they were worried about the slowdown of advertising.

Then Dejaresco thought of the printing press. He thought that if they owned the press, they would be able to accept outside jobs, and earn money for the paper. At the time, the printing press was losing

quit a month because of mismanagement. By September, 1954, he proposed to his partner that they buy the press, and his partner agreed.

Paper Buys Printing Press

The owner of the press did not give a second thought to their offer to buy the press. The partners offered ₱1,000 down and the balance of ₱7,000 to be paid in 14 monthly installments of ₱500. The partnership paid the balance on schedule.

Through improved management, the partners were able to make the printing press earn for them. For two years, the Bohol Chronicle used handset types. It was a laborious effort putting out the paper week after week.

By 1956, the partners decided they were stable enough to buy a linotype. They got a loan of ₱35,000 from the Philippine National Bank, using the linotype itself as collateral—a brand new Blue Streak linotype.

The addition of the linotype to their press did wonders for the entire operation. They were able to accept more outside jobs. They were able to put out the paper in two days, where it took them most of the week before to do it. They were able to cut the number of personnel down—from ten to one—when they dispensed with the services of 10 typesetters and hired one linotypist instead. They were able to put out extra editions and more pages of the paper.

As the partners were beginning to feel the rewards of success, Dejaresco was induced to venture into a business that proved to be a setback to the success story of the Bohol Chronicle.

Paper Acquires Wire Radio

He was talked into setting up wire broadcasting in Tagbilaran City, which he called the Bohol Chronicle Broadcasting Service. Wire broadcasting is similar to radio in all respects, except for the method of transmission of signals. Radio signals travel through the air, while wire broadcasting signals use wires, like telephone wires. And in wire broadcasting the users subscribe to the service, like they do to a telephone system. Receivers were installed by the company. The Bohol Chronicle Broadcasting Service, however, turned out to be a white elephant. Dejaresco had trouble collecting from subscribers. So the Bohol Chronicle had to support the wire radio.

On February 26, 1958, just as the paper was well on its way to success, and the radio was floundering, tragedy struck. Eladio Balili died of a heart attack. The radio broadcast the necrological services of Balili. Then Dejaresco thought that this was an appropriate time to let the white elephant die also. This became the last broadcast of the Bohol Chronicle Broadcasting System.

Out of this failure, however, Dejaresco derived something. The brief tie-up between this wire broadcast station and the paper gave added prestige to the paper. It also gave Dejaresco experience which would be useful to him later when he decided to set up a real radio station.

When Balili died, the partnership was automatically dissolved, according to law, but the widow asked Dejaresco to continue with the status quo for a time. In 1959, Dejaresco and the widow agreed to formally dissolve the partnership. After an inventory of the business, Dejaresco agreed to pay the widow ₱13,000 to buy off her share in the business. Dejaresco's share was all the equipment in their press and the paper's goodwill—presumably also worth ₱13,000. Dejaresco also assumed the bank obligation of ₱31,500—money they borrowed to buy the linotype machine.

In 1958, the Bohol Chronicle covered the Philippine Interscholastics Athletic Association meet in Tagbilaran City. The paper came out daily during the week of the meet and sold like hot cake in the streets. This convinced the teachers and, more important, the division superintendent of schools, that the paper was serving the community. Shortly after that the superintendent sent a circular to all teachers in the province telling them that they may subscribe to the Bohol Chronicle as a cultural reading matter. Public school teachers are required by the Bureau of Public Schools to subscribe to one magazine or newspaper as cultural reading matter. So today, about 85 per cent of the public school teachers in Bohol are subscribers to the Bohol Chronicle.

There is another group of subscribers that is responsible for the big circulation of the paper—the barrio captains. In 1959, the provincial government of Bohol subscribed for all barrio captains in the province. The subscription to the paper is now a permanent item in the provincial government's budget. In answer to the obvious question, Dejaresco maintained that although this, in effect, is a government subsidy to the paper, there are no strings attached. He declared that if the provincial government starts dictating to the paper what to print and not to print,

he will reject the subscription. He admitted that there were government attempts to put pressure on him in the early years, but he had resisted them. In the last few years no such pressures have been made, he said, probably after government officials realized the futility of any such attempt. All these years, the Bohol Chronicle has maintained its policy of independence. As proof of this independence, Dejaresco pointed out that every election year, he is branded as a Nacionalista by the Liberals, and as a Liberal by the Nacionalistas.

Oct. 15, 1961: DYRD

On October 15, 1961, Dejaresco tried his hand again at radio—this time the real radio. He timed the establishment of the radio station with a presidential election year, knowing that politicians spend millions for advertising during this time. He got good business for election advertising that year, but the business went down the following year. He had no regular national advertisers yet. The radio station was losing money and had to be subsidized by his printing press. In two years, however, he found a good Manila advertising representative who was able to swing deals for him. Today, he has 24 national products advertised over his radio station—a one-kilowatt local station, DYRD.

Dejaresco has found the newspaper-radio combine an effective way to get advertisers, especially national advertisers. He offers a bonus ad in the paper, for people who advertise with his radio, and vice versa. His radio station has built up a strong foothold in Bohol and is the most listened to station in the area. The radio station started out as a monopoly, like the paper, but two radio stations were put up in Tagbilaran City recently to give competition to DYRD. DYRD, of course, has an advantage over the other stations because it has a sister paper and a sister press.

Dejaresco's press prints not only the Bohol Chronicle, and stationery and forms for the newspaper and radio station, but also outside jobs, like government forms and school papers in the province. There is one other printing press in town, but it is small and uses only handset types. So Dejaresco's press is practically a monopoly in town, as is the paper.

Starting from nothing, Dejaresco's printing press now has five major pieces of equipment—one brand new Blue Streak linotype, one paper cutter and three Chandler and Price platen presses (locally known as Minervas). One of the Minervas has a Kluge automatic feeder.

What started out as a one-man newspaper enterprise in 1954 is today a 27-man mass media enterprise—newspaper, printing press, and radio station. With this setup, Dejaresco is not only able to offer an attractive advertising package to prospective advertisers, he is able to save on production costs. The staff members of the Bohol Chronicle at the same time work for the radio station. The staffers write daily for the station. At the end of the week, they have a pile of news items which they simply update and publish in the paper.

Dejaresco's mass media enterprise has a unique physical setup, which also contributes to savings in production costs.

The Dejaresco residence and the radio station are in one building, the residence on the first floor and the radio station on the second floor. Adjoining is a one-story building, which houses the printing press and the newspaper office.

From the master's bedroom of the Dejaresco residence, there is a "secret door" and short tunnel which opens into the newspaper office, through which Dejaresco sometimes passes at night. One of his secret joys, Dejaresco revealed, is to look at the press and newspaper office at night, after an issue has been printed. At moments like this, he gives himself a pat in the back, and mutters, another job accomplished!

This physical arrangement of residence and station and office not only saves on rent. It saves time and effort. Dejaresco is able to supervise the entire operation—and his family—from his newspaper office—even from his bedroom!

Family Enterprise

We might add here another factor that has contributed to the savings in production cost, and hence to the success of the enterprise—his family. The Dejaresco printing press, paper and radio station are a family enterprise. Jun Dejaresco has seven children and he keeps reminding them to learn the mass media business, because they owe their livelihood and their education to it. The bigger ones among his children are already helping him. Even his household help work in the press and paper when they are not busy in the house—folding paper, cleaning the machines, going on errands. Dejaresco is thus able to save on labor cost.

Four of them in the Dejaresco family are in the staff of the paper and the radio station: Dejaresco himself, who is publisher and editor of the Bohol Chronicle and general manager of radio station DYRD; his

wife, Rosario, who is business manager of the paper and assistant manager of the station; their oldest child, Emmanuel, a journalism graduate of Silliman University, who is associate editor of the paper and program director of the station; and their eldest daughter, Charito, who is bookkeeper of the paper.

When we talked to Jun Dejaresco in 1968 about his mass media business, he said his printing and newspaper operations took in a gross income of about ₱80,000 a year. Of this amount, 51 per cent came from job orders, 32 per cent from advertising, 12 per cent from subscriptions, and 1 per cent from street sales. Most of his advertising income now are in the form of judicial notices. He has a monopoly of the legal advertising in the province. In 1968 also, Dejaresco said his radio operations gave him a gross income of about ₱60,000 a year.

While we might say, at this point, that the community newspaper business has been good to Atty. Zoilo Dejaresco Jr., we can also say that Jun has been good to the community newspaper field. He has dedicated himself to the improvement of community journalism in the country. He has shown, by example, that a community newspaper can succeed in the Philippines.

Profile of Publisher-Editor

Dejaresco has not hesitated to plunge himself into the business and politics of the community press. He was responsible for getting the Federation of Provincial Press Clubs of the Philippines organized, and became its executive vice president for two terms, from 1964 to 1966. He also became executive vice president of the Provincial Press Association of the Philippines, now defunct, from 1954 to 1956. He is president of the Bohol Press Club and member of the National Press Club. He was national treasurer of the Radio-TV Federation of the Philippines.

Perhaps the biggest distinction he got as a community newspaperman was when he was asked to serve on the board of directors of the Philippine Press Institute as a representative of provincial newspapers, from 1966 to 1967. He got another honor when he was invited by the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association, together with 11 other Filipino editors, to visit Japan and attend the Japanese National Newspapers Convention in Tokyo in October, 1966. He delivered a paper on the special characteristics of Philippine community newspapers.

One of his biggest contributions to the Philippine press is the

amendment of the anti-TB postal law. This law requires an additional postage of five centavos on every postal matter mailed in the Philippines from August 19 to September 30 each year.

From experience, he found out that some provincial newspapers were forced to stop publishing during this period from August 19 to September 30 just to escape paying the additional postage on the copies of the paper which had to be mailed to subscribers. For a circulation of 3,000, for example, one had to pay an additional ₱150 a week for stamps alone, or ₱900 for six weeks.

In any case, Dejaresco thought this law amounted to an infringement on freedom of the press. And it was practically insult added to injury, because the newspapers had already contributed their share to the anti-TB fund drive in the form of free publicity.

So one time when he was attending a convention during his incumbency as vice president of the Provincial Press Association in Cabanatuan City, he took the matter up with then Sen. Quintin Paredes, who was the convention guest speaker. Senator Paredes saw Dejaresco's point, and promised to file a bill amending the law that very day Dejaresco talked to him. Dejaresco helped draft the bill. When they found out that the deadline for filing bills for that 1955 session had already passed, he and Dejaresco went to Malacañang to ask then President Carlos P. Garcia to certify the bill as urgent. It was approved during that session.

Dejaresco was teaching law at the Divine Word College, where he finished his A.A. and L.L.B. degrees. But he has long given up teaching because he cannot find time for it anymore. However, he is still Philippine News Service and Manila Chronicle correspondent for Bohol. And he finds time for various civic and religious projects in the province. He is a Cursillista and first vice president of the Tagbilaran branch of Serra International.

As a civic leader, Dejaresco is president, Tagbilaran Lions Club; director, Bohol Bar Association; first vice president, Bohol Boy Scouts council; member, Tagbilaran City Advisory Council; board member, Philippine National Red Cross, Bohol Chapter; and board member, Bohol Girl Scouts Council.

How does Dejaresco find time for all these things? His day starts with a brisk one-hour tennis game with a close friend, six times a week. He is a good tennis player, and his tennis has kept him looking forty, although he is now fifty. He comes home for a quick shower and break-

fast. At 8 a.m., he is in his office, to take a quick look at things. By 9 a.m., he starts getting telephone calls in connection with the Boy Scouts, the Lion's Club, or any of the many civic clubs with which he is involved. He attends to these civic projects part of the morning, and then goes back to work, supervising the press operations and the editorial work on the paper. He writes editorials and his column. Sometimes friends drop by to consult him on legal matters, because he is also a lawyer. He limits himself to giving legal advice, and lets his compadre handle the cases. He says he has relegated his law practice to the background and made newspapering his life work.

Fridays and Saturdays are more hectic than other days of the week, because this is the time when the entire staff really buckles down to work on the week's issue of the Bohol Chronicle. The paper is put to bed on Saturday night, and is ready for distribution early Sunday morning.

Profile of Tagbilaran City

What kind of a town supports a paper like the Bohol Chronicle? Tagbilaran City is a bustling little place, more bustling than most cities with the population it has—only 35,000. It gives the impression of a city that is crowded and alive.

This is partly because the downtown area of the city is small and concentrated in one main street. This main street, called Libertad St., is wide and paved, stretching almost three kilometers from one end of the town to the other. It is well-lighted, clean and very impressive. On this street are found almost all the important buildings in town—the provincial capitol, the cathedral, the marketplace, the cultural center, commercial buildings, a private hospital, two banks, three of the five moviehouses in town, five of the seven schools and colleges in town, and the Coca-Cola Bottling Plant, among others.

Of course, the other parts of the town are beginning to develop, but it is a peculiarity of Tagbilaran that this main street has developed out of proportion to the other streets.

Tagbilaran, with its busy inter-island seaport and its airport, is not only the commercial center but also the educational center of the province. It has two colleges and two schools offering college level courses. The biggest school there is Rafael Palma College, with an enrolment last semester of 14,000—bigger than the combined enrolment of the two universities and one college of Dumaguete City, a city comparable in size.

During the school year, there is an influx of some 25,000 students to the town. This, added to the city's resident population of 35,000, makes 60,000 people at any given time living in that little city.

Incidentally, many of the students in these schools, especially Rafael Palma College, come from all over Mindanao, and many of them are children of Boholanos now settled in Mindanao. The Boholanos retain strong ties with their native province, even after they migrate to other provinces. Sending their children to schools in Bohol is one way of keeping these ties.

Incidentally, also, the student population is giving the mayor of Tagbilaran a headache. There is a growing incidence of brawls and misdemeanors because of the presence of so many young people in town. These students room and board in town because the schools, except for one, have no dormitories.

Education as Major Industry

Come to think of it, when you sit down and draw up a list of Tagbilaran City's major industries, education would be one of them. The two colleges have given business to the city, in the form of students coming in with their money.

Four major industries, or occupations, of the Tagbilaranons are farming, fishing, trading, and cottage industry. In the outlying areas, they plant corn and root crops, especially that famous Bohol ubi. Fishing is done on a small scale. Trading is done by itinerant merchants who move from town to town to sell during "tabu," or market days, and by merchants who go to peddle in other provinces. Boholanos are traders and travelers.

The cottage industry is now being developed, with the help of the Presidential Arm on Community Development, especially weaving—hats, mats, and clothing. The retail trade is about evenly shared between Chinese and Filipinos.

There are, of course, a large number of professionals in town, especially teachers, government employees, lawyers, engineers, doctors and nurses.

Tagbilaran became a chartered city in 1966. Today it is a fourth class city, with an income of ₱960,000 last year. It is a historic city. In one of its barrios, Bool, a plaque marks the spot where the famous

Blood Compact was consummated between Chief Sikatuna and the Spanish commander, Legaspi, in 1565.

This was the first treaty of friendship between a Filipino and a foreign power. The Tagbilaran cathedral is one of the oldest churches in Bohol, built in 1839-1855. The original church, built on the same spot, was burned in 1798.

There are many relics of the Spanish era in town—in the form of stone houses, including the present provincial capitol, and old Spanish type wooden houses.

The city is just beginning to be tourist conscious. With the help of the local paper, the Bohol Chronicle, the city is publicizing and developing its tourist spots, including a hill overlooking the city, called Banate. This hill commands a magnificent view of the city and its harbor.

Tagbilaran city is predominantly Catholic. And one senses that the attitudes and outlook of the residents are still conservative. Paradoxically, however, one also senses that the businessmen of Tagbilaran are progressive—more progressive than the businessmen of many cities its size.

Critique of Paper

Looking over the first few issues of the paper, starting with its maiden issue of May 16, 1954, we found a lot of pictures and advertising. Some ads were on the front page. The columns were separated by rules, in the old-fashioned way. The banner head was evident in all the issues examined—big, bold, gothic. There was usually a skyline between the banner and the nameplate.

Among the original sections and columns were the Visayan page on the last page, the School and Society section, the Town Brevities section, and the publisher's unsigned front page column, Trivia.

Examining the issues of the paper 14 years later, in 1968, we found that there were very few, or no, pictures at all. There was less commercial advertising, but more legal ads. The column rules were gone. These were the more obvious changes in the paper.

But on the whole, the appearance had not changed much. The format, the headline typefaces, were still the same. The banner headline was inflexibly there, giving the impression that week after week there was

INAUGURAL ISSUE

**RUSSIAN
SHOE PALACE**

Tagbilaran, Bohol

FRANCH STORES

378-380 Uyanguren Street

Governor Carpenter Street

Sta Ana, Davao City.

The Bohol Chronicle

BOHOL'S INDEPENDENT WEEKLY

Thirty years of efficient and continuous service is enough guarantee to satisfy your cartorial needs

Patronize

Bohol's Tailoring
Continuing on
said that with the intensi-
fied drive against typhoid in the
province, there has not been a
single case reported this week.
He added that vaccination was
(Continued on page 6)

in Abatan tragedy

Loon families suffered most; site now blocked

PAL resumes its V-cargo service

SSS chairman his power concentration in gov't

The Philippine Air Lines re-
sumed its V-Cargo ship-
ment operations last week to fa-
cilitate the transmission of cash
remittances
This was reported by Paul Hol-
ganza, PAL branch supervisor
here.
Hologanza said that the re-
sumption took effect last June 29
to give parents residing in the
provinces enough time to send
money to their children studying
in the cities.
(Continued on page 6)

Gaviola also recommended the
abolition of the prohibition of el-
feralia and employes under the
civil service from criticizing any
mail in their own depart-
ments. The SSS official said
that while the bill of rights
guarantees the freedom of speech,
this particular prohibition
against public school teachers
from criticizing public acts is a
"left handed" provision which
runs counter to the freedom of
In the cities.
(Continued on page 6)

Atty. Ramon Gaviola, Jr.,
chairman of the Social Security
Commission, Friday night se-
verely criticized the intrusion of
some departments into the func-
tions of other departments. He
said that while there is separa-
tion of powers as envisioned in
the constitution, other depart-
ments are overly powerful in
the others.
Gaviola was guest speaker
during the "Forum on the Phil-
ippine Constitution", a radio
program jointly sponsored by the
Bohol Bar Association and Sta-
tion DYRD.

Seven persons were killed and 16 others survived in
3 flames passenger jeepney plunged into Abatan River
10 kilometers from this city, early Monday dawn. It was
believed to be the worst traffic mishap within the living
memory of Boholanos.
The vehicle which was headed
mostly with Mindanao passengers
was running at full speed to-
wards Marikojoc from this city
which also loaded more Mindanao
passengers at the city wharf
The fatalities were:
1 Manuel Recamadas, 6;
2 Hubert Recamadas, 13;
3 Hazel Recamadas, 14. All

The two aged Polignos bro-
ther and sister took the passen-
ger vehicle from Tagbilaran;
The third fatality from
Davao where she attended
the burial of her brother.
(Continued on page 6)

Without fanfare, this city

Farmers to converse

Became four years old

Farmers from at least seven rice-producing towns in the province are asked to join the stockholders meeting of the Wabig Valley Pacana on July 11.

Tosillo Anala, administrator of the Agricultural Credit Administration, will be the guest speaker. He is slated to arrive on July 10.

This was revealed by Cipriano Abat, branch manager of the Agricultural Credit Administration here.

The Wabig Valley Pacana which is the only revitalized Pacana in the province has some 200 stockholders. It has benefited all farmers in seven municipalities in Central Bohol which is considered the rice granary of the province.

Abat stressed the benefits from their membership such as:

"As we embark on a new political and economic phase, I appreciate the support of the Bohol people. (Continued on page 6)



Mayor VENANCIO PINTING

and economic phase, I appreciate the support of the Bohol people. (Continued on page 6)

Series announced for negligence

children of Engr. Rafael Recamadas, former vice-mayor of Loon:

- 4 Perfecto Poligrates, 70, Board Member Erico B Anonuevo Tuesday severely damaged the office of the first engineering district for negligence in its bridge maintenance work in three towns.
- 6 Lucy Sabados, 18, also of Fig-on, and
- 7 Abilla Mercado, 28, a teacher from Inabanga.

The two bodies of Hubert and Hazel Recamadas were recovered late in the afternoon floating along Abatan River. Another Recamadas son, Manuel, was among the first fatalities whose body was recovered immediately after the mishap.

Engr Recamadas himself was one of the survivors together with another son, Nereo, who managed to swim from the ill-fated vehicle which settled wheels up from the deep Abatan river.

Engr Recamadas and his four children had taken the Jagua boat from Jimenez, Misamis Occidental where they attended the town

of the souls of the seven victims visiting of Bohol's worst traffic mishap early Monday afternoon were allowed to make a wish, they would have readily chosen to rise from their graves to curse the authorities of the first engineering district for their criminal negligence.

Yes, the authorities hastily indicated those reflected remorsements which were shared somewhere for many years now only after these officials were literally upbraid by the innocent lives and several rounds of public condemnation

(Continued on page 6)

Bohol's history unearthed!

By NICK MEJORADA

Bohol's pre-historic past may yet be unveiled by a recent excavation of human bones and artifacts in what was believed to be a pre-historic graveyards of ancient natives.

A two-man excavating team Loon town an ancient graveyard containing remains of human beings and some precious possessions including gold pendants, a bronze bolo and several pieces (Continued on page 6)

City Fiscal bares obstacles in the prosecution of cases

By MANUEL SICO

City Fiscal Jovenito Ortu to Tuesday disclosed that a good number of court cases are dismissed due to lack of witnesses. He informed the CHRONICLE that the most pressing problem in the prosecution of cases is the indifference of some people to act as witnesses.

The city fiscal said that people who have even actually witness

At the same time, City Fiscal Ortu commented that some government officials who occupy influential positions in the community, (Continued on page 6)



before the irresponsible officials in charge of roads and bridges maintenance would start to install a barricade near the entrance of Abatan bridge.

(Continued on page 6)

Fig. 2. The Bohol Chronicle 16 years and 2 months later, minus the ads on the front page.

always a banner story that merited the same size of a headline—which is hard to believe.

The School and Society and Town Brevities sections were still there. So with Trivia, on the front page. The Visayan section was still on the last page, but reduced to about half the page, only one story per issue.

A major criticism that can be made of the Bohol Chronicle is that it does not print letters to the editor. The publisher-editor has pleaded lack of space as an excuse. Modern editorial practices, however, insist on providing readers a forum in the paper. This makes the readers feel they are a part of the paper. And the paper serves a vital function—as a forum for ideas.

The format has changed somewhat in the issues this year, 1970, after Dejaresco's son joined the staff—the banner is more flexible, and there are more two-column heads, where there were few before.

Leafing through the pages of the old Bohol Chronicle reveals some of the early names that worked with the paper, now gone to other fields. There was Jesus Echavia, the first reporter and sidekick of Dejaresco. Echavia is now a lawyer for the Commission on Elections. He was followed by Aristides Osorio, who is now with the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA), then by Luis Boncales, now an English teacher of Rafael Palma College.

There was Eric Aumentado, a former clerk, staff member, and then columnist of the Bohol Chronicle. Aumentado has since gone on to more prominent endeavors—as a provincial board member of Bohol.

The present editorial staff includes Emmanuel Dejaresco, son of the publisher, who is associate editor. Up until a few months ago, they had a new editor for both the radio station and the paper, Jose Sesican, Jr., who was a journalism graduate from Manuel Luis Quezon College.

An old reliable in the staff, working part time, is Sofronio Fortich, a reporter. Fortich got his first taste of newspapering with the Bohol Chronicle. Today he is also Manila Times correspondent for Tagbilaran City and Bohol and is teaching in Rafael Palma College.

The two columnists of the paper are Justino Romea and Maximo Nuñez, a lawyer. Romea has been with the paper since its early days. He is teaching journalism at Rafael Palma College.

Static Format

An overriding impression that we got as we looked over the back issues of the paper is that the format has remained the same. The same banner headline is in the same place week after week. It gives the impression of stability, of course, but at the same time, it also gives the impression of being static.

Second, the mixture of typefaces, found in the first to the last issues of the Bohol Chronicle, gives that type salad appearance to the paper, resulting in a lack of unity. The front page also seems to be overcrowded all the time. There are probably two or three stories too many on that page every week.

This concern for form and appearance can, of course, be carried to the extreme. How about the substance of the Bohol Chronicle? The things it has written about in the last 16 years?

A general impression one gets as he leafs through the old issues of the paper is that the paper has been local through and through. It has, in other words, been relevant to its readers. It has, among other things, tried to tell Boholanos about their towns and province—their agriculture, fishing, home industries, education.

Right now, the paper is engaged in giving publicity to the province's tourist spots—and the publisher is personally in charge of improving the chocolate hills site of Carmen, Bohol, as a tourist attraction. The chocolate hills are a mystery of nature. Nobody knows how these perfect cones dotting the plains of Carmen originated, but they are attracting tourists to the place.

The Bohol Chronicle has both lavished praise and heaped condemnations on private leaders and public officials as the occasion demanded.

Paper's Crusades

A Philippine Constabulary provincial commander and a Bureau of Internal Revenue officer, for example, who tried to play deaf and dumb to the presence of smugglers in Bohol were promptly exposed by the paper. The officials were shipped out of the province. Two Trafcon officers who mulcted drivers were denounced. They were also transferred. There was a PC officer who insulted a provincial auditor during a meeting to plan a reception for **President Marcos**. The Bohol Chronicle

rebuked him, and he was grounded during the presidential visit. He was eventually moved to another province.

The Bohol Chronicle once carried a nine-week series of articles exposing the connivance between highway district engineers and **anapog** (limestone) suppliers. It earned the paper praise from its readers.

So while the articles in the Bohol Chronicle may not have been always written according to the King's English, they have always been relevant. The paper has served as the chronicler of history in Bohol for the last 16 years.

As proof of its success, the Bohol Chronicle has won one national award, the National Press Club-Esso award in 1964, as the second best edited provincial paper of that year. A proof of its relevance—perhaps the best proof—is the way its readers look for the paper. Whenever the Bohol Chronicle fails to come out on time because of a mechanical breakdown, the newspaper's telephone rings all morning—readers demanding for their copies of the paper. Whenever the newsboy forgets one or two subscribers, those irate subscribers will call or come to the office asking for their copies. The Bohol Chronicle also gets letters from Boholanos throughout the Philippines and in the United States, telling the editor how much they value the paper as their main source of news about their native province, and as their main link with home.

There is no doubt that despite its shortcomings, the Bohol Chronicle is one of the most successful community newspapers in the country today. In 1968, publisher-editor Dejaresco estimated the value of the Bohol Chronicle press at ₱68,000, and the radio station at ₱87,000. Today, the press-paper-radio combine would easily be worth ₱200,000.

Actually, Jun Dejaresco is worth more than that now. He has invested his money wisely. His house and lot, and other lots in town and in other places which he bought after he became a successful publisher, would easily be worth ₱300,000 now. Dejaresco can be considered a half-millionaire today. As an honest community newspaperman in the Philippines, that is a rare achievement.

Secret of Success

What is the secret of Dejaresco's success? In a seminar sponsored by the Philippine Press Institute in 1965, Dejaresco was asked to explain his success. Dejaresco pointed out a number of reasons.

First, a newspaper starting out must have financial resources, which the Bohol Chronicle had.

Second, a newspaper eventually, if not right from the start, must have its own printing press. Otherwise, it will always be at the mercy of its printers, who can jack up prices anytime, or not meet deadlines. The Bohol Chronicle got its press after two years.

Third, a newspaper must find a community that can support it, in the form of readership and advertising. The Bohol Chronicle found Tagbilaran City.

Fourth, and perhaps most important, a publisher and editor of a local paper must not only have the talent but also the dedication for his work. Jun Dejaresco has both.

To paraphrase Dejaresco, no amount of financial resources would make a publisher or editor succeed, unless he has the "dedication, zeal and love of newspapering." Without love, you see, there can be no sacrifice. And community newspaperwork is still largely a sacrifice.

Actually, Jun Dejaresco is worth more than that now. He has invested his money wisely, his house and lot and other lots in town and in other places which he bought after he became a successful publisher. In other places which he bought after he became a successful publisher, would easily be worth P800,000 now. Dejaresco can be considered a half-millionaire today. As an honest community newspaperman in the Philippines, that is a rare achievement.

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