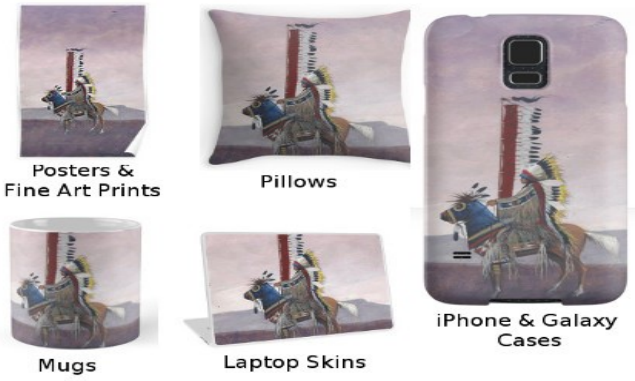



“Craftsmanship”

By Gideon Hopper, Managing Editor



And Much More!

There is something truly to be respected about an artist who goes above and beyond in the pursuit of excellence in their craft. Mario is one such artist—born in South America, and happily married to a Native American woman, he has spent 30+ years intensely studying Native American culture and weaving it into his art. Such detailed focus & dedication to exceptional craftsmanship has paid off, resulting in his art being exhibited in galleries around the world—Belgium, Germany, Japan, Central and South America, and numerous exhibitions within the United States. For all you aspiring artists out there, we encourage each of you—*strive for excellence!* And our heartfelt thanks to Mario, for setting such an excellent example—keep it up!



A Touch of Light.org
300 Lenora Street #311
Seattle, WA 98121
www.ATouchofLight.org

For fifteen hundred years, the Lighthouse of Alexandria (named Pharos, after the island it was built on), guided travelers safely to port. Borrowed from the Egyptian Coptic ‘phareh’ (guardian), in Greek, the word ‘pharos’ means lighthouse.

Whether this publication lasts for five years or fifty, it is our aim to keep watch over the Captive Arts™, and to be a guarding and guiding light home for all those artistic sailors currently adrift on stormy seas.

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This publication is shared with our arts affiliates around the globe, and is available in digital format at www.ATouchofLight.org/pharos

Editor’s Note

To all of our talented artists and writers out there, we want to say how tremendously grateful we are for the wealth of articles and art you all have submitted for this publication.

THANK YOU!!

Our goal is to publish The Pharos Gazette every month, and we need all the help we can get. Justice-involved stories, articles, poems, drawings, art, music, you name it, we want to publish it! Given our current size & format limitations, we ask that all of our contributors follow our publishing guidelines below—this helps us tremendously in getting each new issue of the Gazette out accurately and on time.

- Single column: 400-450 words (this is ideal for showcasing a single art piece, along with a short description of your artistic process/inspiration for the piece/etc.)
- Full page: 900-1,000 words (good for stories & articles with an accompanying illustration/photo/art piece)
- Letters to the Editor: 100-250 words (if we can fit more than one per issue, we will!)

The best way to send us submissions is via Jpay.com, using our publishing email pharos@atouchoflight.org. Due to the volume of submissions we receive, we are unable to reply to Jpay emails—however, every contributor will receive a copy of the issue in which they are published. Art submitted for publication will be considered a donation, unless you are one of our contracted artists, or return postage is included and you specifically request we return it.

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The Pharos Gazette™

Volume I, Issue VI

June 2020

“Does Creating Art Make You Happy or Rub You Raw?”

By Otter, Contributing Artist

Everyone who creates art, in whatever form, knows the joy and pleasure of a well completed piece. Sometimes everything goes right, and we astound even ourselves. I would prefer to have more of those type of feelings rather than the frustration of wondering why I even started a project, why can't I seem to get this shading or tone right, what am I doing wrong?

In the words of the immortal Charlie Brown, “AAAAAARRRRRRGGGGGGHHHHH!”

Nothing is truer than the old adage "artists are their own worst critics." We pick apart our work and see every flaw, then point it out to others who wouldn't even have noticed it if we hadn't said anything. Yet we continue creating, because the pleasure we get from adding another piece to our portfolios must surely outweigh the frustrations during the process, otherwise we would all live less colorful lives. Art is where we express ourselves, where we can have a sense of release (even through the cursing of our projects and our decision to ever pick up a pencil, paintbrush, chunk of clay, piece of wood,... you get my drift). On top of that, while living in the restricted environment of prison, art is a means of tuning out our immediate surroundings allowing us to be somewhere else for a little while.

There is a reason I tell people that I don't do requests or make cards. I put enough pressure on myself drawing and



“Lighthouse Kitchen at Yaquina Bay” by Otter

painting what I like, and I'm pretty hard on myself. I don't want the added stress of someone wanting to add this or change that, or not being happy with what I give them. Making art does make me happy, and I get ticked off enough with my own artistic struggles that I don't need or want the added frustration of an unhappy neighbor. So I keep it simple, I draw what I like and what makes me happy, if anybody else likes it, it's just a bonus.

I guess what I'm saying is that we all have our own artistic blocks and impediments that make us stronger when we overcome them, which in turn, keeps our creative happy meters in the red. I have never sold any of my artwork, and signing with A Touch of Light is my first real exposure outside of friends and family. I draw for me and I hope what I do is visually pleasing to others, but even if nobody likes it, my stress release during the process keeps me on an even keel.

“I Will Stand Up Again”

By Professor Raymund Narag, PhD. Southern Illinois University

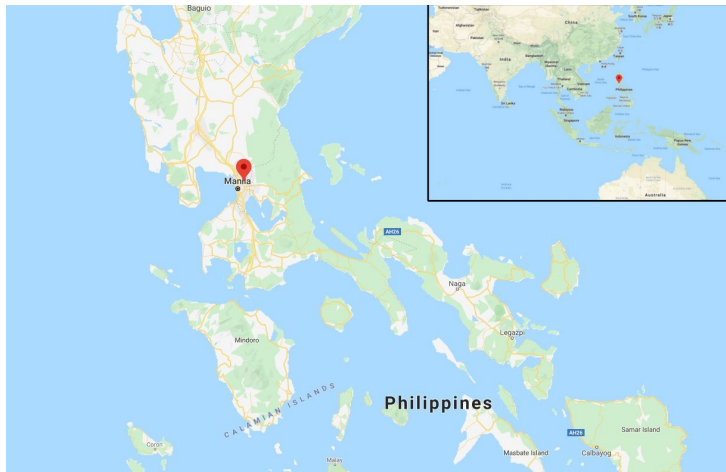
Joselito Joselito (not his real name) is 19 years old and is the fifth person freed through the Community Bail Bond Program in Quezon City in the Philippines. Joselito is the second of seven siblings and has completed Grade 5. His father is a tricycle driver and his mother is a housewife. He often gets a parent to look after his younger sibling. And like the average youth, he has friends in the corner. He also admitted that he is often buried. He finally learned how to smoke and drink wine. He said he tasted the drug forbidden. Nevertheless, he says he is a good kid and obedient to his parents – but, he admits that friends easily influence him.

One afternoon, his friend Benny convinced him to steal a mountain bike. Although he was reluctant, he went along with it - he said it was his first time to do it. They used it for a joyride but were later suspected – Joselito was taken to the precinct. He was scared of the cops, so he returned the mountain bike to the owner and led the police to the victim's house, hoping to be forgiven. His companion Benny was not caught.

He was charged with theft and imprisoned on December 28, 2019, and later transferred to the Quezon City Jail Male Dormitory on January 22, 2020. He was also caught by the quarantine. In the beginning, his bail was 40,000 Philippine pesos (around \$800 USD), because the cost of the mountain bike was 50,000 pesos (\$1000 USD). Thanks to the efforts of volunteer attorney Anthony Julian Purganan of IBP QC, the bail was reduced to 2,000 pesos (\$40 USD). Unfortunately, his father’s work as a tricycle driver was still not enough to raise his bail money, so Jose-lito was stuck decaying in jail.



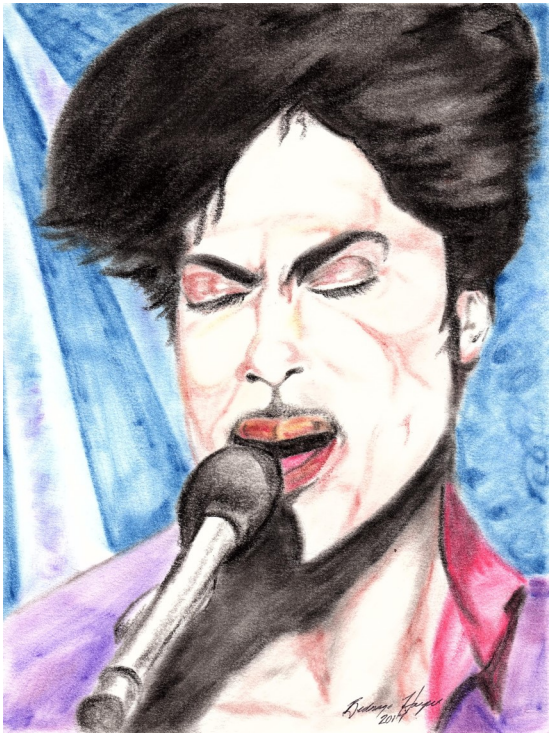
(Continued on page 2)



While inside, he got into the Sigue Sigue Commando gang. He says he often joins spiritual activities, and because of this, he was recommended to our Community Bail Bond Program. With the help of PAO Chief Persida Acosta and his PAO lawyers in Quezon City, and jail officers in Quezon City Jail like Marjorie Gonzales Engano, after several hearings with the courts and the bank, Joselito was set free. His bail money came from anonymous donors.

In total, he was imprisoned for six months, and he has not heard yet on the status of his case. Our volunteer Solita Baltazar makes sure he will attend his court hearings and monitors to make sure he will not go back to the gangs. He will also be included in programs like ALS and livelihood in the barangay (village).

These are the stories that find our Community Bail Bond Program. The aim is to facilitate case adjudication, prevent exposure to jail, reduce government costs and reduce the jail population. There are many challenges to face Joselito. His life transformation will never be easy. But in showing care to him, we hope this is the beginning of knowing the right path in life.

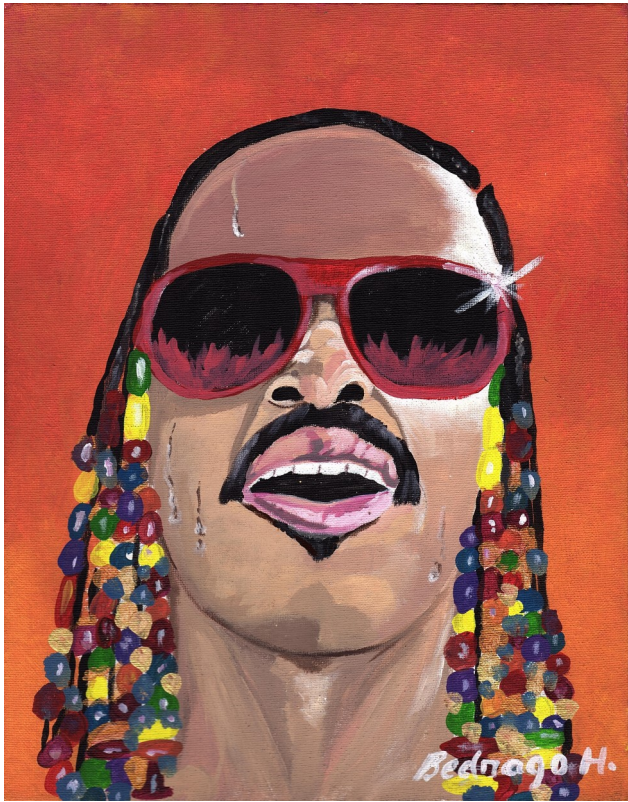


“Prince!” by Bednago

Artist Spotlight

By Bednago H., Contributing Artist since 2017 (Illinois)

Bednago is an African-American portrait artist, writer and poet, who specializes in iconic images of favorite celebrities, using pastel watercolors and acrylics with equal skill.



“Stevie Wonder: Hotter Than July” by Bednago



“Jimi Hendrix” by Bednago

Advisory Board Highlight

We’re tremendously honored to welcome our newest Advisory Board member to the A Touch of Light.Org family! Michelle Daniel is a third-year doctoral student in the American Studies program at New York University. She is interested in excavating the collateral consequences of criminal convictions for people and families directly impacted by mass incarceration, in addition to participating in a scholarly project challenging the narratives of the history of women’s prison with a group of incarcerated scholars. Even while incarcerated, Michelle published and presented her research findings to dispel notions about the reach and intellectual capacity of justice-involved women. Michelle’s advocacy extends beyond the classroom through collaborations and opportunities to speak truth to power. While incarcerated, she presented legislative testimony on a reentry alternative she created for long-term incarcerated people that was approved by the Indiana State Interim Committee on the Criminal Code and has joined the advisory boards of the Lumina Foundation and the Urban Institute.



She is a founding member and chairwoman of the board of Constructing Our Future, a reentry alternative for women created by incarcerated women in Indiana and a 2017-18 Beyond the Bars fellow, a 2017-18 Research Fellow at the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History at Harvard University, and a 2018-19 Ford Foundation Bearing Witness Fellow with Art for Justice, 2019 SOZE Right of Return Fellow, 2019 Code for America Fellow and 2019-2020 Mural Arts Fellow. Michelle is currently under contract with The New Press to publish the history of Indiana’s carceral institutions for women with fellow incarcerated and formerly incarcerated scholars. As an artist, further, Michelle is interested in finding ways to funnel her research pursuits into theater, dance and photography. Her original co-authored play, “The Duchess of Stringtown,” was produced in December 2017 in Indianapolis and New York City and her artist installation about stigma, “Point of Triangulation,” ran September 26, - October 1, 2019 at NYU Gallatin Gallery in New York and the Beyond the Bars Conference at Columbia University, March 6 – 8, 2020.



Virtual Gallery Launch!

Breaking news—we’re launching our very own virtual gallery! Due to the challenges posed by physical art exhibitions in the age of COVID-19, A Touch of Light.Org is moving ahead rapidly to overcome & adapt, and our virtual gallery is just the first step! This new platform will allow us to highlight a rotating selection of work—as we develop further, we will eventually be able to provide a personalized & dedicated exhibition space for each of our contract artists. Stay tuned!

