



Cartoons and Characters

GAT



By A. R. NAVARRO

CONSTANT exposure to people and events fills a cartoonist's mental reservoir with fresh ideas. The idea is the soul of the cartoon and how a cartoonist puts this idea across makes all the difference. When I sit at my drawing board, I imagine myself creating for a major art contest and when I sign the final stroke — GAT — that work becomes my best and I take pride in it."

This is the key to successful cartooning as described by Liborio T. "GAT" Gatbonton, editorial cartoonist and art director of the *Manila Chronicle*.

WHAT HAS "GAT" GOT

To prove his point, Gat has won the following: 1) Seven-time first prize winner of the STAN-VAC (later ESSO-NPC) Journalism Award for editorial cartooning, 2) First Filipino winner in an international cartooning contest, 3) Participated in several international exhibition of cartoons, 4) Chosen Art Director of 1966 by the Art Directors Club of the Philippines and ADCP's awardee for 1963-64, 5) SPIC-NPC awardee for 1964-65 and MOPC-SPIC

awardee for 1960, 6) First prize winner in the Art Association of the Philippines' exhibition in the art of cartooning. He has also been a university professor for the past 10 years and he has published two books of cartoons titled "Jappy Days" and "Chroniclaff Parade."

CARTOONS FOR PEACE

Gat's winning entry in the "Cartoons For Peace" international contest was considered a stand-out by a panel of judges composed of, among others, President Eisenhower as honorary chairman, John F. Kennedy, Gardner Cowles of *Look*, William Randolph Hearst, Jr., Hubert H. Humphrey, and Norman Rockwell. In this contest, Gat won a silver medallion and a cash award.

Some of Gat's cartoons are also included in a collection called "Verdicts on Vietnam" which was published in London recently.

CREATOR OF HENRY

For their daily dose of laughs, *Chronicle* readers used to turn to "Henry" (see illustrations). Selections from Gat's "Henry" series were featured in a brochure published by the Diners Club International.

Gat is also the first Filipino to prick the balloon (a device used by cartoonists to denote speech or dialogue) and to introduce the one-line caption. E. Aguilar Cruz writes, "It was L. T. "GAT" Gatbonton who drew the first such cartoon by a Filipino for the *Tribune* in the 30's."

Generally conceded as the country's leading caricaturist, Gat has caricatured practically every leading personality in the country and international figures including Richard Nixon, Joe Louis, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Marlon Brando, Benny Goodman, Xavier Cugat, Tyrone Power and Nikita Khrushchev, Charles de Gaulle, Ike Eisenhower and Pablo Picasso.

Born in Candaba, Pampanga, Gat left school at 17 to help his widowed mother send his younger brothers and sisters to school. And to help the boys and girls of his town, he worked for the construction of two barrio schools in Candaba. Gat has also lent his talents to the fund-raising drives of charitable organizations such as the Red Cross and the Blood Bank.

Gat is married to the former PACITA PARCON. He has four kids, two boys and two girls. **PM**