



FIL-AM BULLETIN

The Official Newsletter of the
Filipino-American Association of Greater Columbia, SC
(A Non-Profit Organization to Promote Inter-Cultural Education and Understanding)

**"Together
We Make A
Difference"**

★ Volume 14, Number 2 ★

P.O. Box 24112, Columbia, SC 29224 ★

Fall 2004 ★

FAAGC General Membership Meeting on January 23, 2005

The first general membership meeting for the year 2005 will be held on Sunday, January 23, 2005 at Ridge View High School (4801 Hard Scrabble Road, Columbia, SC 29229), starting at 2:00 p.m. Plans for upcoming activities and proposed projects will be discussed during the meeting.

This is a POTLUCK get-together so please bring a 3-liter soda and a covered dish enough for your family and others. For variety, suggested covered dishes are as follows, based on the first letter of the family names:

- A : Pork or beef dish
- B - E : Cooked rice & bread
- F - J : Chicken dish
- K - N : Vegetable dish
- O - T : Dessert (cakes, cookies, fruits, etc)
- U - Z : Noodles (*pancit, palabok*, etc.)
- FAAGC: Ice, plates, utensils

FAAGC members, supporters and other interested parties in the area Fil-Am community are all invited to come and share the fun and food with family and friends.

For further information and directions to the venue, please contact any officer listed on Page 2. ❊



ANNUAL FIL-AM CHRISTMAS PARTY SET FOR SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11

The annual Columbia Fil-Am Family Christmas Party will be held on Saturday, December 11, 2004 at the St. John Neumann School gymnasium (721 Polo Road corner Miles Road, Columbia, SC 29223), starting at 6:00 p.m.

The holiday celebration will feature a catered Chinese buffet dinner with *lechon* and Filipino dessert in addition to a surprise-filled program of activities for both children and adults. There will be an early visit by Santa and dancing to DJ music.

All Association members, supporters and friends (and their families) are all invited to this fun-filled, festive occasion. Tickets are required for admission and dinner and are available from any FAAGC officer listed on Page 2. To ensure an exact count of people served and

an accurate amount we need to pay the caterer, party-goers (including children) need to turn in their tickets in order to be served. **No ticket = No food service.**

Tickets are \$12 each for members and \$13 for non-members (tickets for children 6-12 are \$5 each; children under 6 are free). FAAGC requests that tickets be paid for at least three days in advance so it can finalize details with the caterer. Also, to help defray expenses, each family is requested to bring a 2- or 3-liter bottle of soda.

Families who are bringing their children (*and they should since this is a fun-for-the-whole-family affair*) are requested to bring a wrapped present (*just ONE each, please*) for each child to be placed under the Christmas tree for distribution by a certain jolly good fellow in red during the party. Each present should be clearly and **LEGIBLY** marked with the child's **FULL NAME**.

We will be setting up for the party at 9 a.m. in St. John Neumann School gymnasium and if any of you have any Filipiniana decor (like *parols*) that you wish to display for the public, feel free to stop by and add to our Fil-Am decor. ❊

Sumter Fil-Am Christmas Party Slated for Friday, December 17

The Sumter-area Fil-Ams have scheduled their Christmas Party for Friday, December 17, 2004.

For details, contact Polly Pearson at the Fil-Am Store at (803) 494-5613. ❊



Past FAAGC president Peter Liunoras (left) congratulates the 2004 Columbia Fil-Am Scholarship recipients (l-r) Judith Peña, Michael McNulty and Amanda Goyeneche at the last gala. Other recipients are Michaela Kenworthy and Danielle Glenn (pending college enrolment).



The Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe and the Filipino American Student Association (FASA) dancers pause to pose after performing *La Jota Cagayana* at the last gala. (l-r): Harry Ezell, Brenda Zosa, Philip Caoile, Judith Peña, Justin Anderson, Raquel Bagnal, Jasper Lim and Aileen Alon.

The President's Corner

by Grace Collins

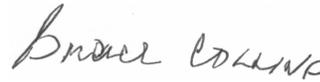
MY APOLOGIES & MY BEST WISHES

one who may have been offended, but in the same token, I thank everyone for their valuable donations.

The Christmas Party is right around the corner and I would like to have these two songs — *Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer* and *Silent Night* — taught to all children attending so they may be part of the Christmas program. Volunteers are also needed to help serve food and beverages. Any help is always greatly appreciated.

I would also like to remind everyone that the party does not end until 12:00 midnight. So bring your smiling faces and your dancing shoes because you're guaranteed to have a great time.

I hope you have a wonderful season and from my family to yours, warm and happy holiday wishes. ❖


Fil-Am 2004 Gala RevisitedFrom the GalaDecorations Coordinator

"Once again, a million thanks to the following: **Rudy Dizon, Al Gato, Marj Peña, Cecille Geoghegan**, and especially to **Jojo Goyeneche** who work hard (climbing the ladder) to hang all the decorations in the ceiling.

I really appreciated all the hard work and effort you all did. Without your help and cooperation, I would have not been able to get the desired effect of the stage decorations.

Thanks also go to our three emcees (**Marj Peña, Charles Goyeneche**, and **Cathy Goyeneche**) who did a very good job.

To the Columbia Fil-Am and the FASA performers, thank you for the excellent job you did at the Gala. It was a great performance indeed — *hats off to you guys and gals*. Keep up the excellent work."

— *Merlyn Bajamunde*

From The eMailbox

"I hope this letter finds you all doing well! My family and I had a great time ... at the Gala! I think I sprang my boogie bone ... I had not used it in about 15 years! LOL.

I am so thankful to God that we could give back the \$100.00 in prize money to the organization...

Thank you for all of your hard work! I hope to help and bring more support to FAAGC in the future....

Sincerely,
Buddy Miles & Family
Suzanne Miles
Paul Miles

~~~~~

*Special Thanks to these Donors during the impromptu fundraiser at the gala:*

- ◆ **Leroy & Lulu Anderson**
- ◆ **Elli Hero**
- ◆ **Little Mexico Restaurant**
- ◆ **Buddy Miles**
- ◆ **Paul Sloan**
- ◆ **Angelo & Violet Tsiantis and all others who gave donations or made pledges.**

**Just A Reminder**

Membership renewal for the Association Year 2004-05 is now due for many members. Please check the mailing address label on **Page 4** of this newsletter — **if there are three asterisks (\*\*\*) on the line above your name**, then your membership has expired or will expire soon.

Your membership renewal and prompt payment of membership dues are crucial to the continued operations and success of the FAAGC.

Please complete the enclosed renewal form and send your membership dues as soon as possible. If there are membership renewal questions, contact **Marj Peña (732-1202; email: mpena@biol.sc.edu)** or **Helen Alon (738-0372; email: helenqda@yahoo.com)**. ❖

I would like to take this opportunity to apologize to everyone regarding the over-drawn event that was not officially included in the program at the last gala. I would also to thank everyone for his or her generosity; however it was not the time nor place for such an event. Again, I extend my sincerest apologies to any-

How To Reach Us**FAAGC**

P.O. Box 24112  
Columbia, SC 29224

[www.FilAmSC.org](http://www.FilAmSC.org)

[www.FAAGC.org](http://www.FAAGC.org)

e-mail: [faagc@hotmail.com](mailto:faagc@hotmail.com)

or [FilAmSC@yahoo.com](mailto:FilAmSC@yahoo.com)

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**2003-2005 EXECUTIVE BOARD**

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(803) 782-6952

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(803) 781-9509

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DANIEL ADCOCK  
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*Assistant Secretary*  
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(803) 364-2627

*Executive Board Members:*  
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(803) 422-1524

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CHARLES GOYENECHÉ  
(843) 383-4598

JOJO GOYENECHÉ  
(803) 865-0795

REX SANTOS  
(803) 782-7665

**WELCOME  
New Members**

★ **ALMARIO GATO** of Columbia, SC.

★ **WILLIAM & ROSE MITCHELL** of Abbeville, SC. Originally from Camarines Sur, she works in food services at Lander University. Hailing from Statesville, NC, he works in mechanical drafting at Eaton Corp. They have lived in SC for 14 years and have three adult children.

★ **JUN & ELVIE PAD-ING** of West Columbia, SC.

★ **Dr. FELICITAS SANTOS** of Columbia, SC. She has been a long-time regular supporter of FAAGC. ❖

**~Our Condolences~**

➤ to **Precy Walker** on the recent death of her father in the Philippines. ❖

**~Congratulations~**

➤ to **Chuck & Aida Sikora** on the marriage of their son **Steven** to **Amanda Welsh** on November 6, 2004.

➤ to **Helen Pamela Diamond** on her upcoming marriage to **Michael Steele** on December 18, 2004 at **Pawley's Island**.

➤ to **Dr. Edie Sebastian** on her recent retirement. ❖

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Association of Greater Columbia, SC  
P.O. Box 24112  
Columbia, SC 29224

The **Fil-Am Bulletin** is one vehicle of the Association to achieve its objectives and maintain regular communication with its members and interested parties. Contributions of articles (*as well as financial donations*) are most welcome; contact the Editor for more details.

**NOEL ALON**  
*Editor*  
Tel. (803) 738-0372  
e-mail: [NCA7@hotmail.com](mailto:NCA7@hotmail.com)

**Helen Alon**  
*Production/Circulation Coordinator*

[Note: On a flight home to the Philippines in December 2003, the author exchanged Christmas notes with Raul (from Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental) & Marilyn Cabrera (San Pablo, Laguna). Many thanks go to Mr. & Mrs. Cabrera for sharing their Christmas experiences with me.]

The Philippines has been a predominantly Catholic country as a result of over 300 years of Spanish colonization. This time and the time spent as an American colony greatly influenced its Christmas traditions. However, these traditions may also vary according to the region in the country, Christian denomination, and time passing.

### When Does It Start?

In terms of getting psyched up for Christmas, the *-ber* months (September till December) are a good trigger. Some definitely think of Christmas sooner than others. I recall seeing a September ad in a Philippine daily newspaper regarding a Christmas raffle promotion by one of the major national banks. As a child, I also remember buying Christmas gifts as early as August. The radio stations may start to broadcast Christmas music in November. From a Christian perspective, the advent season involves four weeks of pre-Christmas spiritual preparation and culminates in Christmas Day, which places the official start of the season towards the end of November.



## Philippine Christmas Season: Longest in the World



by Imelda Go

### When Does It End?

The Philippine Christmas season does not officially end until the Feast of the Three Kings that was traditionally on January 6 until a change was made to the first Sunday after Christmas. The Feast could be as early as January 2 and as late as January 8. Christmas decorations do not come down till then. January 6 is also the twelfth day after Christmas as popularized by the Christmas carol *The Twelve Days of Christmas*.

### What Do People Do During the Season?

Many of the Christmas symbols and decorations we can find in the U.S.A. such as Christmas trees and Santa Clause are also used in the Philippines. Christmas carolers sing international Christmas songs and Filipino favorites.

The Philippines also has its own special Christmas traditions. Due to the Catholic influence, an opportunity to complete a *novena*, a religious devotion or petition to God for special graces, occurs from December 16 through December 24. There are nine dawn masses (a.k.a. *Misa de Gallo* [i.e., *Mass of the Rooster* in Spanish], or *Simbang Gabi* [i.

e., *Night Mass* in Filipino]) held in the early morning. To refresh the early risers, vendors line the streets with treats, such as *bibingka* (rice cake with coconut and salty egg), *puto bumbong* (special rice treat), *salabat* (ginger brew), and hot thick cocoa.

The *Star of Bethlehem* is symbolized by the *parol*, a star-shaped and/or star-patterned lighted lantern typically made of bamboo sticks and colorful paper. These hang just about anywhere — patios, doorways, homes, businesses, and streets. A particular type of *parol* with flashing and dancing lights was popularized by the craftsmen in the Pampanga province where the largest ones can be a few building stories high. Consequently, Pampanga is nicknamed as the *Christmas Capital of the Philippines*. A common sight at Christmas Day masses is the *Star of Bethlehem* located near the church's ceiling that slides on a wire to hover above a *belen* (i.e., a Nativity Scene), another popular fixture.

On Christmas Eve, devotees prepare for *Misa de Aguinaldo* (i.e., *Gift Mass* in Spanish), which is midnight mass on December 24. After mass, fami-

lies gather at home for the sumptuous *Noche Buena* (i.e., *Good Night* in Spanish) feast.

Right after *Noche Buena*, families may decide to open their Christmas gifts then or retire for the night and have the children wake up early for eager gift giving. Christmas day usually involves visiting one's grandparents and/or godparents who tend to give gifts to their beneficiaries. The entire season is marked with numerous reunions with family members and friends.

Gift giving is universal. Traditions very similar to the American *Kris Kringle* abound. Employers are also expected to give their employees a monetary gift with what is known as the *13<sup>th</sup> month pay*. Often given at the end of November or early December, this employee bonus is required by Philippine law and is considered by many as the Christmas bonus.

There are masses throughout Christmas Day and Christmas street pageants. The latter is the *panunuluyan* (in Filipino) that involve a reenactment of Joseph and the pregnant Mary's search for lodging in Bethlehem.

Given the choice to visit the Philippines at any time of the year, most Filipinos will opt to go home for the Christmas holidays to join the festivities. Need you wonder why? ❖

### IN FOCUS: IMELDA GO

by Helen Alon

Regular Fil-Am Bulletin readers may note that for the past several years, almost every issue of the newsletter has an article written by Imelda Go. Here's a brief "intro" to this regular newsletter contributor.

### FAAGC Elections Coming Soon!

Before you know it, it will be time for the FAAGC to hold another election of officers. The next election will be held during the annual spring/Easter picnic on March 27, 2005.

For those interested, be aware that the Association By-laws require that candidates and electors "must be paid members in good standing for at least 3 months prior to the election." Make sure that your dues are paid by December 2004 to become eligible as a candidate. ❖

## FILIPINO—AMERICAN Association of Greater Columbia CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- \* **December 11, 2004** (Saturday, 6:00 p.m.)
  - ▶ **Columbia Fil-Am Annual Christmas Party**
    - ◆ St. John Neumann School gymnasium  
721 Polo Road, Columbia, SC 29223
- \* **December 17, 2004** (Friday, 7:00 p.m.)
  - ▶ **Sumter Fil-Am Christmas Party**
    - ◆ Shaw AFB Social Hall  
Sumter, SC
- \* **January 23, 2005** (Sunday, 2:00 p.m.)
  - ▶ **Fil-Am General Membership Meeting**
    - ◆ Ridge View High School  
4801 Hardscrabble Road, Columbia, SC 29229
- \* **March 19, 2005** (Saturday, 7:00 p.m.)
  - ▶ **Filipino American Student Association (FASA) Philippine Cultural Showcase**
    - ◆ Russell House, USC  
corner of Greene and Bull St., Columbia, SC
- \* **March 27, 2005** (Sunday, 2:00 p.m.)
  - ▶ **FAAGC Elections & Columbia Fil-Am Annual Easter Picnic**
    - ◆ Sesquicentennial Park  
9564 Two Notch Road, Columbia, SC 29223
- \* **April 29 — May 1, 2005** (Friday-Sunday)
  - ▶ **Columbia International Festival**
    - ◆ SC State Fairgrounds  
1200 Rosewood Drive, Columbia, SC 29201
- \* **May 22, 2005** (Sunday, 2:00 p.m.)
  - ▶ **Fil-Am General Membership Meeting & "Start of Summer" Picnic**
    - ◆ Sesquicentennial Park  
9564 Two Notch Road, Columbia, SC 29223



### Sumter Fil-Ams Participate in International Festival

The Sumter area Fil-Am community, led by POLLY PEARSON (*back, left*), LILIAN SHEEDY (*back, third from left*) and POLLY DEPRA (*back, right*), displayed a Philippine exhibit at the *Sumter International Festival* held on October 18, 2004 at Shaw AFB. (Photo courtesy of Merlyn Bajamunde).

## FIL-AM STORE

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**Fax (803) 494-3160**

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of the **Filipino-American Association of Greater Columbia, SC**

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### Reminder:

The annual **COLUMBIA FIL-AM CHRISTMAS PARTY** will be held on **Saturday, December 11, 2004** (6 p.m. — midnight) at the **St. John Neumann School gymnasium**

**Have a Happy & Safe HOLIDAY SEASON!**

**TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL  
PLEASE EXPEDITE DELIVERY**