



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)

**Special
10th
Anniversary
Issue**

▶ Volume 11, Number 2

▶ P.O. Box 24112, Columbia, SC 29224

▶ Fall 2001 ▶

Next Fil-Am Meeting Set for November 4 at RVHS

The next general membership of the Columbia Fil-Am Association will be held on Sunday, **November 4, 2001** at the **Ridge View High School cafeteria** (4801 Hardscrabble Road, Columbia), starting at **2:30 p.m.**

Agenda for the meeting include, among others, the Christmas Party on December 8 and the Bayanihan performance at Koger Center on November 16. ☺

Annual Christmas Party Slated for December 8

The annual Columbia Fil-Am Family Christmas Party will be held on Saturday, **December 8, 2001** at the **St. John Neumann School gymnasium** (721 Polo Road, Columbia), starting at **4:00 p.m.**

The FAAGC Executive Board is now working on a program for an evening of food, fellowship, music and dancing. Additional details will be finalized during the next general membership meeting on November 4. For further information, contact any FAAGC officer listed on Page 2. ☺

Bayanihan Troupe To Perform in Columbia Philippine National Dance Company To Present Acclaimed Show at Koger Center on November 16

The world-renowned Bayanihan Philippine National Dance Company is coming to Columbia !!!

As part of the 13-production Koger Center "Presents" series for 2001-2002 season, Bayanihan will perform on Friday, **November 16, 2001** at **8:00 p.m.** at the **Koger Center for the Arts** at USC (1051 Greene St., Columbia; 803-777-7500). According to area Fil-Am old-timers, the last time Bayanihan performed in South Carolina was in the early 1970s.

Founded in 1957 by noted Philippine educator/senator Helena Z. Benitez, Bayanihan was the first Filipino group to perform on Broadway (in 1959) and the first non-American dance company to take to the stage at New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (in 1964). The first Philippine cultural group to perform in Russia, the People's Republic of China and throughout South America, the critically-acclaimed, award-winning Bayanihan was officially designated by the Philippine

Congress in 1998 as the *National Folk Dance Company of the Philippines*.

The current American tour program offers a lavish colorful feast of Filipino folkloric culture featuring over 30 separate song and dance numbers divided into five suites. As the *LA Times* dance critic puts it, "Bayanihan's specialty remains splashy ethnic vaudeville costumed for maximum splendor."

More information about the troupe and its repertoire may be found online at www.koger.sc.edu/natdan.html.

Tickets (\$27 adult; \$20 student) are on sale at Carolina Coliseum box office and all Capitol Tickets outlets. USC students may purchase \$6.00 *Student Rush* balcony tickets (subject to availability) at the Koger Center lobby ticket booth half an hour prior to curtain up.

Call (803) 251-2222 to charge by phone using Visa or MasterCard (M-F: 9 am - 5 pm). Tickets can also be purchased online at www.capitoltickets.com. ☺



FIL-AM PRESIDENTS ALL IN A ROW

In recognition of her services to FAAGC and the Fil-Am community, immediate past president Nieves McNulty receives the *Fil-Am Palmetto Award* during the 10th Anniversary Gala held on September 8, 2001 at the Embassy Suites Hotel. From left: incumbent president Peter Liunoras (2001-03), first president Eva Rigney (1991-92), past president Nieves McNulty (1997-2001), and past president Helen Alon (1994-97). Past president Minnie Wheedleton (1992-94) was unable to attend the affair.

NUGGETS & PEARLS

Ten Years of the Columbia Fil-Am Association

by Susana B. Pasicatan

For starters, let us focus on the number **10**. To the numerologist, 10 is the number of karmic completion. It signifies a new cycle of luck is out to begin. It is a time of planting seeds, new growth and starting again.

Such promising and encouraging remarks capture the 10 years of FAAGC's existence.

What have we "completed" in 10 years?

As faithfully chronicled in Noel Alon's "*Milestones of a Growing Organization*," we see our major achievements, accomplishments and memorable events.

Through the Fil-Am presidents and their major contributions, I would like to review how we evolved as an Association. I would also like to interject here that when

I mention the *presidents*, it invariably involves the other officers and members for that term. The reason the presidents' role is emphasized is that when whatever goes wrong, they bear the brunt of criticisms, and when things are "okay," it is quite expected and they may or may not hear the positive feedback.

1991 — 1992

With a lot of hard work and determination, **Eva Rigney**, as the first president, laid the groundwork for the Association. She started the *Fil-Am Newsletter*, a monthly publication of the Association. She introduced projects and ideas as the building fund, cultural presentations to the public, Filipino parades, scholarships for

continued on Page 4

The President's Corner

by Peter Liunoras

We Need To Support Each Other

I would like to take this opportunity to say *maraming salamat* for all of your and support for one of our best galas ever. Its success was due to your enthusiasm and loyalty to our organization.

As we enter the holiday season, I would like to invite and encourage you and your family to join us on *December 8, 2001* at 4:00 p.m. at the St. John Neumann School gym for our annual *Christmas Party*. We are already working on a program for an evening filled with food, fellowship, music and dancing.

We will be having a general meeting on *November 4, 2001* at the Ridge View High School cafeteria to plan this special occasion. I need your attendance and help to insure the success of this annual holiday celebration. Please make every effort to attend both the planning session and the celebration.

Finally, with the recent tragic events, our support of each other and our visibility in this community become more important. Please make every effort to participate in our activities so that as a community, we can support each other through these challenging times.

On behalf of the Fil-Am Association and my family, I wish you all a holiday season filled with happiness, love and peace.

God Bless America and Pilipinas.

Committees Set Up For Efficient Association Work, More Involvement

To accomplish and facilitate the various tasks and projects of the Association, the following committees have been formed:

Cultural Events Committee

- Organize folk dance groups and practices for association activities;
- Organize cultural events for FAAGC.

☞ *chair: Tessie Kenerson*

☞ *members: Lulu Anderson, Grace Collins Leah Cuaresma, Cristina Kaplan, Nieves McNulty, Diane Phillips, Jaja Salvador-Generoso.*

Socials Committee

- Prepare program of activities for FAAGC functions;
- Organize food preparation for FAAGC gatherings.

☞ *chair: Lulu Anderson*

☞ *members: Linda Brown, Leah Cuaresma, Tessie Kenerson, Marj Peña.*

Membership Committee

- Maintain and update membership information;
- Develop programs to increase membership.

☞ *co-chairs: Marj Peña & Helen Alon*

☞ *members: Bruce Ayen, Hector Galang*

Scholarship Committee

- Assist graduating high school senior members in their pursuit of higher education

☞ *chair: Melinda Drake*

☞ *members: Bruce Ayen, Edsel Peña.*

Volunteer Fundraising Committee

☞ *chair: George McNulty*

☞ *members: Helen Alon, Bruce Ayen, Tessie DeCastro, Peter Liunoras*

Publicity/Newsletter Committee

- Continue publishing the Fil-Am newsletter;
- Publicize FAAGC activities;
- Maintain FAAGC website;
- General media promotion through radio, news and TV.

☞ *co-chairs: Alan Geoghegan Noel Alon*

☞ *members: Helen Alon, Bruce Ayen, Cristina Zemp*

Sports Committee

☞ *chair: Rogie Lacson*

☞ *co-chair: Patrick Baens*

☞ *members: Carlos Arevalo, Rio Daquileña, Rudy Dizon, Charles Goyeneche, Jojo Goyeneche, Manny Cuaresma, Edsel Peña, Chancy Ripley*

Religious Activities Committee

☞ *chair: Tessie Kenerson*

☞ *members: Leah Cuaresma*

Telephone-Calling Committee

☞ *chair: Marj Peña*

☞ *members: Julie Galang, Nieves McNulty, Executive Board*

FAAGC members and supporters should contact the chairperson of the committee/s they want to be involved in for details about the specific needs and tasks.

How To Reach Us

FAAGC

P.O. Box 24112
Columbia, SC 29224

www.FilAmSC.org

e-mail: faagc@hotmail.com

????????????

2001-2003 EXECUTIVE BOARD

President

PETER LIUNORAS
(803) 699-1214

First Vice-President

TESSIE DeCASTRO
(803) 736-1649

Second Vice-President

TESSIE KENERSON
(803) 699-1178

Secretary

MARJ PEÑA
(803) 732-1202

Assistant Secretary

LULU ANDERSON
(803) 788-4050

Treasurer

GEORGE McNULTY
(803) 781-9509

Assistant Treasurer

POLLY PEARSON
(803) 499-9596

Executive Board Members:

RUDY DIZON
(803) 788-4067

HECTOR GALANG
(803) 736-8997

ALAN GEOGHEGAN
(803) 787-5255

RUBEN BAGNAL
(803) 699-0797

DIANE PHILLIPS
(803) 955-9515

FAAGC Annual Financial Report

(July 1, 2000 – June 30, 2001; unaudited)

OPENING BALANCE <i>as of July 1, 2000:</i>	2000-01 Income:	2000-01 Expenses:
Bank Balance \$ 4,738.61	Membership Dues \$ 963.00	General Operations \$ 486.14
Building Fund CD 5,000.00	Newsletter Donations/	Newsletter 327.32
Petty Cash 107.45	Advertisement 258.00	Dance Troupe 114.12
Total \$ 9,846.06	Dance Troupe	Annual Gala 7,057.13
	Donations 165.81	Halloween Party 62.73
	Annual Gala 9,770.00	Christmas Party 2,422.21
	Halloween Party 41.40	International Festival/
	Christmas Party 2,879.00	Governor's Gala 1,009.39
	International Festival/	Asian-Pacific Festival 2.86
	Governor's Gala 500.00	Representation at
CLOSING BALANCE <i>as of June 30, 2001:</i>	Asian-Pacific Festival 55.00	FilAm events 666.23
Bank Balance \$ 7,237.36	Aluminum Recycling 176.54	Insurance/Permits 254.00
Building Fund CD 5,181.55	Building CD Interest 181.55	Bank Charges 24.00
Petty Cash 21.17	Bank Interest 29.35	
Total \$12,440.08	Total Income \$15,020.15	Total Expenses \$12,426.13

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

NOEL C. ALON

Editor

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Motions & transitions

Welcome...New Members

► **Dr. LU & MERLYN BAJAMUNDE** of Columbia, SC. Originally from Dapitan City,



The Bajamunde Family

Zamboanga del Norte, Lu is a psychiatrist at Dorn VA Medical Center. Also from Zamboanga del Norte, Merlyn is a nurse who operates *Just "4" You* which makes personalized gift baskets and special occasion cakes. Less than a year in the area, they have two grown-up children, Lumer and Rosary Grace.

► **ROBERT & DIVINA BERRY** of Branchville, SC. She is originally from Santa Cruz, Zambales. Both self-employed, they like fishing and food preparation.

► **RODEL & WENDY BOBADILLA** of Columbia, SC. A family nurse practitioner with Midlands Cardiology, Rodel is from Ladson, SC. Wendy, also a nurse, is from Klamath Falls, Oregon. In the Columbia area for four years now, they have two children: Emily, 5, and William, 1.

► **Dr. ED & EDNA CORALES** of Elgin, SC. A physician at SC Department of Mental Health, he is originally from Laguna. Twenty-year residents in Columbia, they have two grown-up daughters: Elaine & Joanna.

► **RAYMUND & EVELYN DAWANG** of Columbia, SC. Mon is from Cavite and Manila, while Evelyn hails from Bauan, Batangas. In the area for just a year, both are physical therapists (he at Providence Hospital, she at Palmetto Baptist Hospital). They have two children: Raymond Justin II, 3, and Ryan Adrian, 1.

► **Dr. JOHNNY & MERIT FAGTANAC** of Irmo, SC. Both from Dumalag, Capiz, they

have resided in Greater Columbia for 28 years. He is a retired physician, while she is a homemaker. They have three grown-up children: Jeanette, Lonelle & Steven.

► **LORRAINE FAMINIANO** of Sumter, SC. Recently arrived in the area, she is a nurse who hails from Corcuera, Romblon. She has joined the Association to "meet new friends."

► **MICHAEL & CHERY**

MARIE FERNANDEZ of Columbia, SC. Newly arrived in the area, both work at Palmetto Baptist Hospital. A nurse student, he hails from Sta. Ana, Manila. A physical therapist, she is from Parañaque, Metro Manila. They think FAAGC should "reach out to more Filipinos in the state" and hope the Association can keep them "informed of the activities and events taking place." They have a son, Lawrence Michael, 1.

► **Dr. ANTON IMPERIAL** of Columbia, SC. Originally from Legaspi City, Albay, he is a retired psychiatrist who has lived in the area since 1974. A regular FAAGC supporter over the years, he has two grown-up children, Eva and Mike.

► **Dr. GERALDINE MAYOR** of Columbia, SC. In the area for less than two years, she works at Bryan Hospital. From Las Piñas, Metro Manila, she would like the Association to "promote camaraderie" and help her "meet new friends."

► **Drs. JOSEPH & MARIA YU McCABE** of Columbia, SC. A native of Calabanga, Camarines Sur, she is a psychiatrist at Bryan Psychiatric Hospital. A PhD graduate who hails from Long Island, New York, he is a deputy sheriff in Richland County. They have a daughter, Elizabeth Ann, 2.

► **Drs. RAFAEL & PAL ORTEGA** of Columbia, SC. He is a retired physician originally from Pangasinan. Now a housewife, she graduated as a doctor of optometry.

► **LAWRENCE RIVERO** of Shaw AFB, SC. From Cagayan

for about a year. Working for the US Air Force, he likes basketball, bowling, tennis and volleyball.

► **FERDINAND & MARIA SAMOT** of Columbia, SC. Recently arrived in the area, he is from Cavite City while she hails from Salisbury, NC. She is the Educational Program director for the SC Farm Bureau. They would like the Association to "have regular activities that would involve members promoting not only Philippine culture but also closer ties with fellow members" and to "be ready to render assistance when needed."

► **RONALD & PAM TUAZON** of Columbia, SC. A native of Angeles City, Pampanga, Ronald works at Ryan's. Originally from Maburao, Occidental Mindoro, Pam is a registered nurse at Providence Hospital—Northeast. Five-year residents of Columbia, they have a daughter, Nicole, 3.

Welcome Back...Former Members

► **Linda BOWEN** of Columbia, SC.

► **Dr. ROSITA DIZON** of Columbia, SC.

► **Nandy & Dr. Julie IGAMA** of Columbia, SC.

► **Cristina KAPLAN** of Sumter, SC.

► **Dr. Judy SALVADOR** of Columbia, SC.

CONDOLENCES

► Our condolences to the family of **DAISY PANELO**. She passed away on October 15, 2001 in Virginia Beach. Daisy and Delfin Panelo were active Fil-Am members when they were here in Columbia. FAAGC President Peter Liunoras and his family went to Virginia Beach for the funeral services.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

We are in the process of updating the Fil-Am directory. If you have a new address, telephone number/s, and/or e-mail address, please contact Membership Committee co-chairs **Marj Peña** (marjp7942@aol.com; 732-1202) or **Helen Alon** (helenqda@yahoo.com; 738-0372) to update our records.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

► Red Cross Donation

FAAGC, necessitated by the recent tragic events, recently sent a check for **\$228.00** to the **American Red Cross** for use in its Disaster Relief program. In his cover letter, President Peter Liunoras also thanked the agency for its "continued service to our community, state and nation." \$178 came from FAAGC funds with the other \$50 donated by **Dr. Melinda Drake**.

► Diabetes Walk

As part of the FAAGC's renewed commitment to strengthen community volunteerism, some Fil-Am families participated recently in the 11th annual *Palmetto Walk to Cure Diabetes*. Hosted by the Palmetto chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International, the event was held on October 14, 2001 at Sesquicentennial Park. Led by **Dr. Melinda Drake** and her family, the Fil-Am contingent in the walk included members of the **Agustin, Anderson** and **Liunoras** families.

► School Presentation

FAAGC Executive Board Member **Ruben Bagnal** gave a 30-minute presentation on the Philippines and immigration issues to fifth graders, their teachers and parents at Bookman Elementary School on October 26, 2001.

At Iba Pa ... Etc...

A Note from The Sports Committee

"To our new members, we thank you for joining and welcome to all the activities we plan to have. To our existing members, we would like to extend our gratitude for your continued support. We invite everyone to join us this year in having lots of FUN.

At the last meeting, suggestions were made by those who attended. Just to a name a few: basketball, bicycling, bowling, golf soccer, softball and tennis, for ALL age groups. If you can think of any other sport, contact us. We are open to any suggestion.

Again, life is about having fun. Come join us."

Rogie Lacson

699-5479 (please call 7-9 pm)

e-mail: rogersaulog@yahoo.com

Patrick Baens

397-8618

e-mail: patbaens@yahoo.com

10TH Anniversary Gala

(Continued from Page 1)

deserving Fil-Am students. Philanthropic endeavors were encouraged and some funds were directed to an orphanage in Pampanga, Philippines at the time when Mt. Pinatubo erupted. Due to her family's movement to Kentucky, there was a brief impasse.

1992 -- 1994

Minnie Wheedleton served two terms as President. She emphasized visibility of the Association to the community. She also invoked the *bayanihan* spirit — that in working "Together, We Make a Difference," eventually adopted as the Association's slogan. This was a time of many FIRSTS — participation in various community activities. FAAGC and *Hiyas-Min* presented "Karilagan (beauty)", a first-of-its-kind cultural show at Koger Center. Importantly, we won the coveted "Grand Marshal Award" for our "Christmas in the Philippines" float in the 1993 Christmas Carillon parade.

1994 — 1997

Helen Alon came in as the third President and got reelected twice. Again another time of many FIRSTS: to mention some events — we actively participated in the *Mayfest*, *Autumnfest*, and *First Night Columbia*. FAAGC won the "Best Country Exhibit" at the *First Columbia International Festival*. Philippine reference books were donated to area public libraries and schools and cultural shows were presented in Columbia schools. FAAGC got official recognition as a non-profit organization by the Internal Revenue Service.

Aside from these major accomplishments and events, I commend Helen Alon for keeping the Fil-Am spirit burning beyond the first years of enthusiasm. She also mentioned that FAAGC had been sending our *Fil-Am Bulletin* to the USC library and as a result our *Fil-Am Bulletin* is part of its Caroliniana collection. This certainly will be a good reference for Fil-Am activities and membership.

1997 — 2001

Nieves McNulty, the fourth President got reelected for the second two-year term. Another time of FIRSTS — FAAGC participated in the *Festival of Trees* and performed at the *SC State*

Fair; the FAAGC Dance Troupe served as opening act for the West Coast recording artists *Pinay* during a showcase concert at Koger Center. FAAGC and *Hiyas-Min* presented "Kalayaan, (Cry For Freedom)" as a Philippine Independence Centennial showcase. **Noel Alon** got the "1998 International Volunteer of the Year" and **Nieves McNulty** the "2001 International Professional of the Year" awards during the Columbia International Festival. What better way to exit as President!

Summarized — were not these ten productive years? Our congratulations and gratitude to the past four Presidents.

2001

Enter — the first male FAAGC president who starts the beginning of the decade. Inducted with a grand *10th Anniversary Gala* affair with a record number attending and with full family support, **Peter Liunoras** is off to a good start.

He and his active crew of officers have collected a substantial amount for FAAGC's fundraising activities. Dr. **Tessie de Castro**, first vice-president, has persuaded her fellow physicians from the S.C. Department of Mental Health and medical representatives from Pfizer, Janssen, Abbott, AstraZeneca and Organon to contribute generously. Other officers have personally contributed and/or solicited from business companies.

2001 Gala

Coming now to the heart of the evening's affair, the program is a delightful mix of numbers and presentations.

It is refreshing to see our young members and supporters get involved — the JROTC

Color Guard from Ridge View High School, emcees **Isel and Irene Liunoras**, anthems singer **Judith Peña**, and the *Kaibigan* dancers. It is worthwhile to introduce our youth to Filipino patriotic songs and dances. I am very pleased to see the young participants, especially the young gentlemen (*we know it is easier to get the young ladies to participate*). More so, they all appeared to be having a good time. Thanks to choreographers **Tessie Kenerson** and **Nieves McNulty**.

We welcome **Alan Geoghegan's** interest in our Filipino culture and his video presentation was varied and informative.

We are also "solemnly" glad to hear **Wilfred Jeffcoat's** invocation and hear **Nieves McNulty's** farewell speech. From the looks of it, they're far from "retired" and we like it that way.

It certainly is a pleasure to have General (*ret.*) **Charles Bagnal** and his lovely wife, **Patsy**, join us in this gala affair. They are staunch supporters and friends of the Associations since the start. Gen. Bagnal inducted the 2001-03 officers; he was also the guest speaker during our first gala in 1991.

Equally, we are glad and honored to have the Honorable **Bill Cotty** as our guest speaker. He aptly noted very important Filipino and American values: our love for freedom, free enterprise and family.

And kudos to our real troupers and fun people: **Eva Rigney** — all the way from Kentucky to give a vocal solo, despite being notified a day before the program and accompanied by a band she sees for the first time — and **Elizabeth Earl** and **David James** — dancing the "Filipino Tango" after a one-month crash course under the

direction of **Tony de Castro**.

It is noteworthy that the current President Liunoras thanked the past four presidents and his wife for all the good work and support they've done.

The *Rigodon de Honor* choreographed by **Lillian Sheedy** is a colorful array of the ladies and their lovely gowns accompanied by the gentlemen in their variedly designed *barong Tagalog*. This was made more visible by the active movement of the dance.

Now a gala affair is not complete itself without everybody dancing. As evidenced in the video candidly captured by videographer **Mervyn de-Guzman**, everybody had a fabulous time. Aside from the more formal waltzes, tangos and fox trots, I had more fun watching and joining the "free style" group dancing where individual talents and expression were less repressed. My son Marvel and his friends described our gala affair as a "real blast."

As always, we appreciate our out-of-town guests (*especially former FAAGC officers Remie Morales-Sarmiento from Texas, David & Cindy Tefft from Illinois and DeeDee Stewart from Arizona*), our supporters and benefactors, the undecided who attend our functions, our friends and the faithful members — the lifeline of the Association.

For those who like to imprint further their fond memories, you can always refer to the gala souvenir program designed by Noel Alon, our *Fil-Am* editor. It is certainly worth keeping!

Lastly, to pass on future memories and new ventures, we will see you all in the gala celebrating the **upcoming ten years**.

P.S.

I was a guest of Alfonso while he attended a medical conference in Chicago, sponsored by Eli Lilly. I took this chance to write this article in the 28th floor of the Marriott, overlooking cloudy Lake Michigan. I had the chance to contact Cindy Tefft and Dr. Eden Enriquez's brother, fondly called "Kuya" by every one. In the evening "Kuya" and his son brought us to their Fil-Am's Friday night dancing held at their three-story building. The building has offices and caters to social functions. To skeptics (myself included): the FAAGC building project is doable and feasible.



Former FAAGC officers reunite and whoop it up at the *10th Anniversary Gala* (from left): **Susan Pasicatan** (1991-92 1st vice-president), **Remie Morales-Sarmiento** (1991-92 treasurer), **Eva Rigney** (1991-92 president), **David Tefft** (1993-94 Executive Board member), **Cindy Tefft** (1991-92 Executive Board member), **Helen Alon** (1991-92 secretary, 1994-97 president).

Blast From The Past

FAAGC: The First Year

June 9, 1991

► Amid the earth-shaking news that the once-dormant Mt. Pinatubo started erupting to become the world's most violent and destructive volcanic eruption of the 20th century, the Filipino-American Association of Greater Columbia, SC, is formally organized when its By-laws are officially approved and adopted during a meeting at 216 West Springs Road, Columbia (Remie Sarmiento's residence).

►► Although Filipinos and Filipino-Americans in the Columbia area have been socializing with each other for years and even had a quasi-formal organization in the mid-80s, it was only in 1991 that they started meeting regularly with the idea of getting together and forming an association. During this initial series of meetings, interim officers were chosen, with Fe Cardona as president, Eva Rigney as secretary, and Remie Sarmiento as treasurer.

* A monthly newsletter was started in April 1991, with Eva Rigney as founding editor. (By June 1991, the newsletter was co-edited by Noel Alon & Eva Rigney; between October 1991 and February 1992, Noel Alon served as the editor. The newsletter was under an Editorial Board from March to June 1992).

June 15, 1991

► The Association held its first election of officers at a Philippine Independence Day picnic-celebration at Sesquicentennial Park. Elected to the First Executive Committee were: Eva Rigney (President), Susan Pasicatan (1st VP), Ofelia Milligan (2nd VP), Helen Alon (Secretary), Remie Sarmiento (Treasurer), and Grace

Collins, Jun David and Cindy Tefft (members).

► Reporters from *The State* newspaper and TV stations WIS-10 and WLTX-19 came during the picnic. Although they were more interested in finding out how local Filipino families were coping with Mt. Pinatubo's devastation, they did provide some free coverage about the Association.

July 11, 1991

► FAAGC becomes officially incorporated in the State of South Carolina.

July 14, 1991

► MINNIE WHEEDLETON is elected as 2nd VP as Ofelia Milligan had to resign due to her out-of-town work.

Sept. 7, 1991

► First annual gala and inaugural ball held at the Columbia Marriott Hotel (now Adams Mark Hotel), with Lt. Gen. Charles W. Bagnal as guest speaker and Atty. David Rigney as inducting officer.

Oct. 19, 1991

► Mt. Pinatubo Fund garage sale at the Alon residence.

Nov. 2, 1991

► Halloween dinner-dance at St. John Neumann Church social hall.

Dec. 13, 1991

► First Annual Christmas Party – Holiday Inn-Northeast

Feb. 15, 1992

► Valentine's Day Party – Days Inn (Sumter Highway)

April 12, 1992

► First Easter Egg-hunt at the Kenerson backyard.

June 14, 1992

► Second election of officers– Sesquicentennial Park–
► Minnie Wheedleton elected as President.

FAAGC 1991-92 Members: THE PIONEERS

* Gilda AGACER
* Naty AKANA*
* Noel & Helen ALON*
* Edith ALSTON*
* Leroy & Lulu ANDERSON*
* James & Edith BARKER*
* Belen BENEDICTOS
* Bert & Patty BENITEZ
* Liza BERNARDO
* Peter & Maria BONZAGNI
* Carl & Linda BOWEN
* Doug & Linda BROWN*
* Joe & Lita BROWN
* Rosie CABOT
* Jannette CANNON
* Tony & Tessie De CASTRO*
* Delia CHESTNUT
* Rose COETZEE
* Randy & Tessie COLLADO
* Grace COLLINS*
* Van de la CRUZ
* Manny & Leah CUARESMA*
* Jun & Paz DAVID
* Tina DAVIS
* Rosita DIZON
* Gene & Sally ELLIS*
* Amber & Linda FALLER
* John FALLER
* Josephine FALLER
* Gil & Vickie FRANCISCO
* Rosie GANDEE
* Hector & Julie GALANG
* Gemma GESLANI
* Tommy & Rosie GODDARD
* Jessie & Vera GONZALEZ
* Charles & Bev GOYENECE*
* Lorna De GUZMAN
* David & Grace HARVEY
* Rob & Vilma HINNANT
* Precy HOLBROOK*
* Nandy & Julie IGAMA
* Lily IGLESIAS
* Mike & Venus IVANOWSKY
* Sam & Luz JACKSON
* Bonnie JAMES
* Jim & Tessie KENERSON*
* Merle KNOWLES
* Eric & Yolie KURVACH
* Conrad & Zeny LAZARO
* James & Efleda LILLY
* Cesar & Nene MACATANGAY
* Phil & Tessie MALATE
* Mitch & Julieta MARTIN*
* Lety MATAWARAN
* Ruben MATIAS*
* George & Nieves McNULTY*
* Ofelia MILLIGAN
* Marvin & Beth NOBLE*
* Al & Susan PASICATAN*
* Edgardo & Edith PECSON
* Dom & Zenen PEREZ
* Alice PINEDA
* Boy & Lita POWAO
* John & Lily RAGSDALE
* David & Eva RIGNEY
* Rudy & Angie SANCHEZ
* Jose & Fely SANTOS
* Ralph & Remie SARMIENTO
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* Aurora SUMAYDENG
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Sustaining pioneer members who have been continuous FAAGC members through these ten years of organizational development, growth and changes.

"Together We Make A Difference"

GALA IMPRESSIONS

by Eden Enriquez, M.D.

What a tremendous success the 11th Annual Gala last September 8, 2001 at the Embassy Suites was --- with very good attendance. The audience stood up showing reverence, respect and honor during the presentation of colors by the JROTC Color Guard of Blazer Battalion of Ridge View High School and as the national anthems of the U.S and the Philippines filled the air with the singing led by a young Filipina. The video of Philippines' religious culture, games, and dances brought back memories of yesteryears and fiestas.

The guest speaker gave an inspirational talk about family values and cultures. The young Fil-Ams danced *kaibigan* (friends) gracefully. I won't forget the first FAAGC president giving a vocal solo and every time she raised her left hand, the audience sang the chorus with her. The tango exhibition by an American pair (the gentlemen dressed in *barong Tagalog* and the lady had an exquisitely sequined *kimono*) got a standing ovation from the audience. The unforgettable *Rigodon de Honor* dancers showed no age gap among the dancers and this was followed by a waltz dance in which the audience was requested to join.

The officers have to be congratulated for their efforts in selling tickets, soliciting benefactors, sponsors, patrons and advertisements. Many thanks are also due the previous officers who came from other states, the Fil Am members, non-members and everybody who in way or another helped make the gala affair a success.

The recipient of FAAGC's Mt. Pinatubo Fund was the Children's Home of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Inc., in Angeles City. The home could accommodate 150 children, but due to Mt. Pinatubo's eruption and the pull-out of Americans from Clark Air base, its "financial capability to feed and educate the children has been curtailed," as home director Zoraida Sazon wrote on April 1, 1992. With help from FAAGC and others, she was optimistic they "can again function at full capacity soon."

A Philippine Personal Journey

by Alan Geoghegan

[Editor's Note: The following is the text of FAAG Executive Board member Alan Geoghegan's speech given at the Fil-Am gala on September 8, 2001 as he shared his videographic impressions of the Philippines and its varied and rich culture. He was born in a Pasay City hospital and baptized at the Malate Church (*maybe that's why he likes lumpia and San Miguel beer very much and likes to be called pogi and makes comments like pangit*). A professional videographer, he has been a regular visitor to the Philippines since 1989, making video documentaries on aspects of Philippine life. At present he is completing a self-produced video production on the Tiboli tribe in southern Mindanao.]

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, I welcome you all to our **10th Anniversary Gala** and hope you all enjoy yourselves at our annual function.

I was born in Manila of a British father and a French mother. My first 2-1/2 years were spent in the Philippines and I don't remember a thing. Although my first contact was with my mother, it was my Filipina *yaya*, or nanny, Inday, who looked after me for those 2-1/2 years.

Soon afterwards, my family moved to New York where my father would work for the United Nations and only in 1989 would I be reconnected to the place of my birth. Fresh out of college, I headed to the Philippines, sent by the World Association for Orphans (WAO). As I began a 2-month video documentation on street children, I did not know that it was Marc Loinaz, a Filipino inventor from New Jersey, who first made the one-chip video camera.

Filipinos are spread all over the world and I often ask myself, what is the essential character of being Filipino?

Historical Perspective

At the root of Philippine culture is the **Malay** spirit, said to have come from the south of continental Asia. The Malay began as a nomad, he had an itchy foot and wandered down to the Malay Peninsula, down to the South Pacific, and eventually to the Philippines. What is astounding is that these voyages were not made by ship, but on flimsy rowboats.

During the time of the earliest settlers, religion was in the hands

of the women and the basic belief was that everything in this world -- a tree, river, roof, a season, had its own *anito*, or spirit. In this period, the rulers were called *datus* and *barangay* or "community" culture respected other people's property: the more you had, the more likely you could become a *datu*.

Many existing health beliefs and practices in the Philippines rooted back in the pre-colonial period are still practiced today: belief in nature spirits or *dwende*, supreme deities, such as *diwata* and an ability to repel the naughty spirits or *mumu* with *anting-anting* or talismans.

Soon after Magellan landed in Cebu in 1521 and claimed it for Spain, Ruy Lopez de Villalobos named the country after the Prince and later King of Spain, Philip II. Today, there is a small grass-roots movement in the Philippines whose members want the country's name changed to **Maharlika**: *maharlika* is a Filipino term which means noble and "*ma*" is an ancient word for truth, or light of truth.

**"FILIPINOS ARE
 MASTERS OF
 CELEBRATION,
 MUSIC AND ART,
 PRESENTATION
 AND IMITATION."**

Spanish rule lasted for over 300 years in the Philippines during which time the Catholic Church maintained strict control over a hacienda system of landlords and peasants.

With over 7000 islands, containing numerous ethnic groups speaking a reported 110-168 different dialects, the Philippine Islands would not be easy to control. Although Spain had domination over the Philippine economy, they would not have complete control over its people.

From 1588 to the 1890s, the Philippines was hit by countless earthquakes, a cholera epidemic killing thousands, hundreds of typhoons, thousands of fires (the Chinese Ghetto or pariah in Intramuros burned down six times in between 1588 and 1642). Dur-

ing this whirlwind of changes, the University of Santo Tomas was founded in Manila in 1611 and is older than Harvard University (1636) by 25 years.

The Philippines was repetitively invaded by the British, the Dutch, the Japanese and Chinese, by both pirates and wealth-seekers who all wanted control over the spice trade centered in the Moluccas.

The Chinese already had hundreds of years of dealing with the Philippines. The Spanish imposed strict taxes for Chinese doing business, though if they converted to Christianity, they were exempt from paying taxes for 10 years and could marry a Christian Filipina. This could explain the *chinito* or Chinese look of some Filipinos today.

Filipino Character

The Filipino character is a little bit of all these cultures mixed together: **Filipinos are Malay or bayanihan in family, Spanish in love, Chinese in business, and American in ambition.**

Due to the Philippines' long association with Spain, Filipinos are emotional and passionate about life in a way that seems more Latin than Asian, and a common trait that distinguishes them all is **Filipino hospitality**.

It is interesting to note that last names were adopted by people in the Philippines only in 1849, by a decree issued by Spanish Governor-General Narciso Claveria who observed that Filipinos had no surnames.

Still, who are the Filipinos? I have described these historical facts, because in essence, history shaped and molded the Filipinos as they are now. I am amazed that a people who has undergone so much change has still managed to prosper and spread around the world.

Before I traveled to the Philippines last January to document the Tiboli tribe in Southern Mindanao, I referred to my project as a documentary study on a vanishing tribe. I was so impressed by what I saw preserved in their art forms and customs, I decided a different title would be more appropriate, possibly "*The Tibolis: Super Women of Asia*."

Filipinos are masters of cele-

bration, music and art, presentation and imitation. If you visit Manila today and spend a few evenings in the music clubs and you will find the most perfect carbon copy of country music, American blues, bluegrass, even disco, complete with dyed hair and all the right attitudes and clothes.

Yet, the most powerful music in the Philippines are Tagalog and English love songs: ask any Filipina at your table what type of movie she likes, she will probably say romantic story.

It's almost as if, the accommodation of other cultures for so long has left the Filipino continually ready to adapt to any change, yet still, there is that longing search for an identity.

Maybe it is the Malay spirit, always on the move, maybe it's the recognition that throughout all this time, the Philippines rarely invaded any foreign country: with a perennial supply of fish and a virgin forest which used to cover 90% of the Philippine Islands, the country never needed to, the people were already living in a paradise.

Yet the romantic restlessness continued: Jose Rizal ventured out of the Philippines, mastered over 20 foreign languages, published books and poetry, lived abroad and serves as a national hero for many Filipinos, who seem to be able to assimilate just about anywhere, blending easily into the landscape, from Dubai to Alaska to South Carolina.

Despite the multiplicity of languages, the country has one of the highest literacy rates (90% of the population 10 years or older are literate) and the Philippines has the third largest number of English speakers in the world, 34 million people for 1993 estimates, not far behind Great Britain with 56 million.

Smiling People

People are often struck with meeting Filipinos; they are always well-groomed, impeccably dressed and clean, and they **smile** all the time: they smile while commuting, they smile at work, they smile in smog-infested traffic; even in an argument, or overthrowing their own President, they SMILE!

The Filipino "YES" puzzles most westerners. A yes means just that, though it can also mean "maybe," "I don't know," or "If it will please you," or "I hope I

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A Philippine Personal Journey

(continued from Page 6)

have said it enough for you to understand that I mean 'NO!'"

Grace Roces explains it in a perfect way: "A Filipino does not like to openly agree or disappoint; the Filipino anticipates and gives the expected answer. Hence, a question by a person seeking a direct answer concerning, for example, the quantity of a payment for services rendered will answer with a smile and say, "It's up to you."

Of Balut & Bagoong

A foreigner who makes an effort to learn, or understand, Filipino culture is very appreciated, especially when it comes to food: Filipinos have a particular love for a salty paste made of tiny shrimp called *bagoong*, and a common indoctrination into the culture is usually to eat the incubated duck egg called *balut*. By making you to eat the *balut*, Filipinos promise you that it works just like *Viagra*, as long as it is mixed with 2 or 3 San Miguel beers.

It is not necessary to pretend to like these foods, it is enough to be familiar with them and in true Filipino fashion, *smile gently* when declining.

Once somebody took the liberty of placing some *bagoong* under a piece of fresh mango and I ate it — it nearly killed me and I NEARLY KILLED THEM.

A Celebration of Life

Filipinos love to celebrate. During All Souls Day in 1995 (this is known as Halloween in the US), I visited the island of Cebu. During this holiday, which lasts about a week, people from all over the country head back to their towns of origin and pay respect to their ancestors by visiting and spending time at their gravestones. They do not leave a flower, say a prayer then disappear; they often stay there **all day and all night**, or even all week, with families taking turns honoring their dead.

You will find young and old, drinking *Tanduay Rhum*, making CHEEZ MEEZ (*tsismis*) or chatting, lighting candles and singing songs. Sometimes a family can be seen scrubbing their ancestors bones with *Ajax*, or even roasting a **whole pig**, adding to the **fiesta** atmosphere. The feel-

ing is celebratory, rather than sad, as departed souls would appreciate.

Adaptability

In a personal way, the Philippine people represent to me a surviving and intuitive people, capable of adapting to, and rising above, almost any situation: the Filipino spirit has not only endured this age, it has done so while paying due respect to the ancestors who have passed on, while devoting themselves day in and day out to their own families, who are often far away, with a deep faith in God.

In a world of steep international competition and change, Filipinos continue to adapt to where they can be of best service, often allusive to the great rat race of competition, always Filipino, joyous and caring, sometimes humanitarian and protective, in a world of "takers" where a pure heart and a genuine smile can go a long way.

They do this with *MA*, "truthfulness," and with grace, *"HARLIKA"*, and a sense of nobility and purpose. Positive ethical values are deep-rooted in Filipino traditions and family life, as is a deep trust in the Creator.

This is only a part of the story: there are still challenges that the country must face in the future to be able to regenerate, but I will not go there now, because tonight, we are here to enjoy ourselves.

Ladies and gentlemen, guests, thank you for listening, I hope you enjoy your dinner, but please, don't put any *bagoong* on my plate.

Salamat and Mabuhay! Thank you!

Sources:

***My Manila*" by Nick Joaquin.

***Culture Shock*" by Grace Roces.

*Travel Smart.net -- Philippine Section

**"Historical Developments of the Philippine Economy" by Aaron Creech & Susan Russell

**"The Chronology of Philippine History: in the World Context" from Tribong Pinoy - the Filipino tribe - a pictorial web journal about the Philippines, the Filipino people, and the Filipino diaspora. <http://www.tribo.org>

** Filipino Trivia and Historical Facts" by unidentified e-mail

BASTA PINOY

AN ENCHANTING EXPERIENCE

by Imelda Go



Look out folks! They are building a Disneyland in Hong Kong, which is scheduled to open in the year 2005. Hong Kong is a short plane ride from the Philippines. For those of us who like to go home to the Philippines, a side trip to Hong Kong is easy to arrange.

Many of us have already been to Disneyland in California and/or Disneyworld in Florida and a visit to Disneyland in Hong Kong may not appeal to us. We also go to amusement parks for different reasons. We may go to accompany our family/children or we may be young-at-heart ourselves and relish the amusement park experience at whatever age.

What about amusement parks in the Philippines?

It's not always easy to bring family members for a visit to the Philippines. Depending on where home is in the Philippines, they might complain of the heat, the humidity, the insects, the pollution, the overpopulation, and the list goes on. Hence, it may even be harder to talk them into visiting a Filipino amusement park. After all, they may have already visited several Disney parks and wouldn't think that a trip to a Filipino amusement park is amusing at all. Whatever the case maybe, I still encourage you to consider visiting **Enchanted Kingdom** in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

Here are a few reasons why I think you might enjoy visiting Enchanted Kingdom:

► **There's no place like home.** It's true, the Kingdom is patterned after American amusement parks, but isn't it refreshing to see your fellow Filipinos all over the Kingdom? You can protect yourself from the searing sunshine with an umbrella under a rainless sky without feeling peculiar.

► **You can see a new generation of Filipinos growing up** and enjoying the Kingdom. You'll enjoy the chatter of Filipinos around you.

► **You can reminisce** and see how much safer and more comfortable the rides are compared to the ones we rode while we were growing up in the Philippines. I don't know about you, but I've been on several bone-beating rides in Filipino carnivals while growing up in Manila in the 70s and the 80s.

► **It's an opportunity to see how far the Philippines has progressed** in the business of amusement parks. The Kingdom is well-maintained. I first visited it in 1998. My second visit was in 2000 and I was happy to see that everything appeared to be just the way it was in 1998.

► **You will also be supporting the local economy.**

To give you an idea of what's in store, the following are the Kingdom's seven zones and some highlights:

► **Boulderville** (dinosaur-themed zone that is perfect for kids)

► **Brooklyn Place** (New York borough with the 'Rialto' motion picture simulator)

► **Jungle Outpost** (winding water channels and 40-foot drop on the Log Jam ride)

► **Midway Boardwalk** (East Coast-style boardwalk with aerial, boat, and bumper car rides)

► **Portabello** (features Rio Grande, the park's biggest and newest water ride, Flying Fiesta aerial ride, Discovery Workshop, fireworks on the weekends)

► **Spaceport** (features an 11-storey high Space Shuttle roller coaster)

► **Victoria Park** (features the Grand Carousel)

There are also other rides, eateries with local and international favorites, and souvenir shops throughout the Kingdom where you can pick up merchandise featuring the Kingdom's mascot, the Wizard. The last time I checked, the Kingdom was accredited by the Philippine Department of Tourism; the Philippine Department of Education, Culture & Sports; and the International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions.

In addition, the Kingdom has many plans to continue upgrading and improving its attractions, establishments and facilities in the next several years. Franchises of food establishments such as *Subway* and *Tropical Hut Hamburger* will be opening at the Park in the next few months. A new outdoor event venue, the *Launch Pad*, was launched last April with a concert featuring no less than Gary Valenciano. Also, educational institutions can now avail of the Kingdom's newest education-entertainment program called "A Different Kind of Classroom" which allows students to enjoy the park's rides and attractions and learn at the same time.

The best way to enjoy your trip to the Kingdom is to **experience it just for what it is** and to not constantly compare it to its American counterparts and to not wish you were somewhere else while you are visiting it. You'll have fun if you let yourself have fun. A good attitude is a prerequisite to having an enchanting experience at the Kingdom. Happy travels to you and your family!

For more information about Enchanted Kingdom, visit its web site at www.enchantedkingdom.com.ph

Filipino-American Association of Greater Columbia

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ▶ **November 4, 2001** (Sunday; 2:30 p.m.)
- ▶ FAAGC *General Membership Meeting*
- ▶ Ridge View High School cafeteria
4801 Hardscrabble Road, Columbia, SC
- ▶ **November 16, 2001** (Friday, 8:00 p.m.)
- ▶ *Koger Presents*
Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company
- ▶ Koger Center for the Arts (777-7500)
1051 Greene St. corner Assembly St.,
Columbia, SC
- ▶ **December 8, 2001** (Saturday, 4:00 p.m.)
- ▶ FAAGC *Annual Family Christmas Party*
- ▶ St. John Neumann School gymnasium
721 Polo Road, Columbia, SC

Mark Your Calendars Now!

ANNIVERSARY GALA VIDEO NOW ON SALE

Anyone interested in purchasing a copy of FAAGC 10th Anniversary Gala video is requested to contact Tessie DeCastro (736-1649) or any other officer. Each cost \$10 (*a personalized copy is \$20 each*) and proceeds will go to the Fil-Am Center Building Fund.



Check out the FAAGC Website

www.FilAmSC.org



FAAGC Meeting (continued from Page 1)

Your attendance is urgently needed to help finalize Christmas party plans. This is also a good time to socialize and meet the many new members we have.

Since this is a **POTLUCK** get-together, please bring a 2-liter soda and covered dish enough for your family and others. To ensure food variety, suggested covered dishes are as follows (*based on the first letter of the family names*):

- A - : Pork or beef dish
- B - E : Rice, pancit or bread
- F - J : Chicken dish
- K - N : Vegetable dish
- O - Z : Dessert
- FAAGC : utensils, plates, ice



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P.O. Box 24112, Columbia, SC 29224 ▶

Fall 2001 ▶



Reminder:

Fil-Am Membership Meeting
on Sunday, November 4, 2001
at Ridge View High School