



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)



★ Volume 21, Number 2

★ P.O. Box 24112, Columbia, SC 29224



Fall 2011 ★

FAAGC at 20 : TOGETHER, MEMBERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



At the 20th Anniversary Gala held on September 10, 2011 at Columbia Marriott Hotel, the Filipino-American Association of Greater Columbia recognizes the Lifetime Sustaining Charter Members who have been continuous FAAGC members since 1991. Photo by Carlton Edwards

Annual Christmas Party Set for December 17

FAAGC will hold its 21st Annual Columbia Fil-Am Christmas Party on December 17, 2011, starting at 6:00 p.m. at the St. John Neumann School gymnasium. The venue is at 721 Polo Road, Columbia, SC 29223. All Association members, supporters and friends (and their families) are all invited to this fun-filled, festive occasion.

The holiday celebration will feature a Filipino food buffet (including *pansit*, *adobo*, *lechon paksiw*, *menudo*, *dinugu-an*,
(continued on Page 2)

FAAGC Honors Lifetime Sustaining Charter Members

As it celebrated its 20th Anniversary during the 21st Annual Gala & 14th Induction Ball on September 10, 2011, the Filipino-American Association of Greater Columbia (FAAGC) recognized its long-time members who have been instrumental in helping the Association attain such a major milestone in its history. FAAGC honored the charter members who have been continuously dues-paying members since 1991 by naming them as *Lifetime Sustaining Charter Members*.

Recipients of the *Lifetime Membership* plaque awards were Rita Houston ALCANTARA, Noel & Helen ALON, Edith AL-

STON, Lulu ANDERSON, Ruben Matias BAGNAL, James & Edith BARKER, Linda BROWN, Grace COLLINS, Manny & Leah CUARESMA, Tony & Tessie De CASTRO, Gene & Sally ELLIS, Jim & Tessie KENERSON, Julieta MARTIN, George & Nieves McNULTY, Marvin & Beth NOBLE, Alfonso & Susana PASICATAN, Naty Akana ROBERTS, and David & Cindy TEFFT.

The *Lifetime Members* do not have to pay the annual dues. The *FAAGC Lifetime Membership* is also available to any member who has paid or is willing to pay the equivalent of 20 years of dues. Those who may be eligible to become *Lifetime Members* should contact the Treasurer.

FAAGC DOCUMENTS NOW IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

A 20-year documentation of the Columbia Fil-Am Association from 1991 to 2011 is now in the **Library of Congress** (LoC) as part of its Asian American Pacific Islander (AAP) Collection.

The written history and

record of FAAGC and its members is now available to researchers and scholars in the largest library in the world. Located in Washington, D.C., the Library of Congress is the nation's oldest federal cultural institution and serves as the research arm of the U.S. Congress.

Incidentally, locally, the USC South Caroliniana Library has been archiving our newsletters since 1992 (<http://tinyurl.com/FAB-USC>).

The LoC documentation consists of copies of all the issues of the Fil-Am newsletter (from April 1991 to Summer 2011), souvenir programs of
(continued on Page 3)

FAAGC Hosts Basketball Tournament

The Filipino-American Association of Greater Columbia, South Carolina (FAAGC) will host its second **Columbia FIL-AM Basketball Invitational Tournament** on Saturday, January 21, 2012.

Free to spectators, the round-robin, nine-game tournament involves South Carolina Fil-Am teams from Columbia, Orangeburg and Sumter and will benefit the **Columbia Fil-Am Scholarship Fund**.

The whole-day tournament will be held at the Polo Road Park gym (730 Polo Road, Columbia, SC 29223), starting at 9:00 a.m.

Filipino food will be sold throughout the day as a Schol-

arship Program fundraiser at the event. Food donors and food service volunteers are most welcome; contact FAAGC President Marj Peña (803-360-2469) or the other officers for details.

First Tournament

Earlier, FAAGC sponsored the very first **Columbia FIL-AM Basketball Invitational Tournament** on October 15, 2011, also at the Polo Road Park Recreation Center gym. The round-robin tournament involved six Fil-Am teams from Georgia (Atlanta, Savannah) and South Carolina (Beaufort, Columbia, Sumter). Columbia was represented by
(continued on Page 9)



Ms. Reme Grefalda (right), the Library of Congress AAP founding curator, receives 20-year Columbia Fil-Am documents from FAAGC past president Helen Alon.



From the President by Marj Peña

FAAGC is a Big Extended Family !

I hope that everyone had a great Thanksgiving celebration with family and friends! I also hope that everyone survived the Black Friday shopping rush which signals the start of the holiday season!

A Very Big THANK YOU

I would like to thank everyone who participated in our twentieth anniversary gala which was held at the Columbia Marriott on September 10th. It was a significant milestone in our organization: we are twenty years old and we stand proud and strong!

For the first time, we recognized our *Lifetime Sustaining Charter Members* and honored them with a small token of our appreciation. These are the members who have steadfastly supported and continuously sustained the FAAGC from its inception through the past twenty years.

What was amazing to me was that, although we did not inform any of them that they were receiving the award,

ALL of them (or a relative) were there to accept the award. This is a testimony to their dedication and we are truly grateful!

It gives me reassurance that as the FAAGC expands and embraces the new members, the founders are there to guide us as we move forward. Indeed, the FAAGC is a big extended family that makes Columbia a home for all of us. A very big **THANK YOU** to everyone who made the Gala a truly enjoyable and memorable event!

Basketball Tournament

For the first time ever, the FAAGC sponsored the first **Columbia FIL-AM Basketball Tournament** on October 15. Six teams from Columbia, Sumter, Savannah, Beaufort, and Atlanta participated. We also had a Philippine food sale at the event to raise funds for the **FAAGC Scholarship Program**.

Although we had never done this before, the event was such so successful and enjoyable that we are sponsoring the next tournament in January! Thank you to all who participated and donated food, and we hope that you can all join us at the next

tournament which is scheduled on **January 21, 2012** at the Polo Road Recreation Center. Come cheer for the FAAGC teams and support the youth in our organization.

Christmas Party

It is time again for one of our honored traditions: **The FAAGC Annual Christmas Party!** We invite everyone and their families to join us on **December 17th** at the St. John Neumann School's gymnasium. The party will begin at 6 PM featuring a Philippine Buffet for everyone to enjoy. The *Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe* will be performing, DJ Mike Lamb will provide music and entertainment and of course, SANTA will drop by for a visit. I hope to see you all there. **Please purchase your tickets from any FAAGC Officer or Executive Board Member as soon as you can.**

Thank you for all your support and for making all of our activities a great success!

**MALIGAYANG PASKO
AT MANIGONG BAGONG
TAON SA LAHAT!!!**

Christmas Party (continued from Page 1)

chopsuey, lumpia, cassava cake, biko, and puto) and entertainment numbers showcasing the *Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe* and other children. DJ Mike Lamb will provide music for the listening and dancing pleasure of attendees. All Association members, supporters and friends (and their families) are all invited to this festive occasion.

To cover costs for the buffet dinner, DJ, venue rental, and other incidental expenses, tickets are **\$12** each for members and **\$15** for non-members, if purchased by **December 15**. After December 15, tickets are **\$14** each for members and **\$17** for non-members. Tickets for children 6-12 years old are **\$8** each; children under six years are free. Also, to help defray expenses, each family is requested to bring a 2-liter bottle of soda.

Families who are bringing their children are requested to bring a wrapped present (*just ONE*

for each child, please) to be placed under the Christmas tree for distribution by Santa Claus. Each present should be clearly and **LEGIBLY** marked with the child's **FULL NAME**.

For tickets or more details about the Fil-Am Christmas Party, contact **Marj Pena** at (803) 360-2469, **Nieves McNulty** at 803-781-9509, or any other officer listed on this page. In the Sumter area, contact **Cecilia Jacobsen** at the **Fil-Am Store** [(803) 494-5613]. For additional details or for a map, visit the Columbia Fil-Am website at

www.FilAmSC.org



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FIL-AM BULLETIN

The Official Newsletter of the
FILIPINO-AMERICAN
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 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 ALON

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Helen Alon

Production/Circulation Coordinator

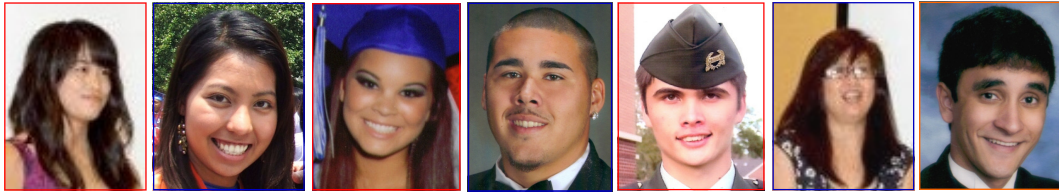
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MOTIONS & TRANSITIONS

2011 COLUMBIA FIL-AM SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES



CHRISTINE
ARROYO

KAREN
MAGSINO

NICOLE
PHILLIPS

NICHOLAS
ROBERTS

JOSEPH
SZOKE III

NICOLE
VICTORIA

ANDREW
WHITMIRE

These 2011 *Columbia Fil-Am Scholarship* awardees were formally recognized during the 21st Annual Gala on September 10, 2011. Started in 2002, the scholarship awards are given to college-bound students who have participated actively in Columbia Fil-Am activities or whose parents are active FAAGC members.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

★ JAMES & VANESSA FLORES



Vanessa, Malaya & James FLORES

of Columbia, SC. Recent movers to Columbia from Greenville, SC, they are originally from Abra and Quezon City, respectively, and are both state employees. They have a daughter, Malaya, 2.

★ DC & JOCY LOCKE

of Columbia, SC. Originally from Oriental Mindoro, she works as lab safety manager at USC. From Alabama, he is a self-employed historian/artist/photographer/writer. Recently arrived in the area, they have a daughter, Tehy-lani, 8.



Tehya-lani, Jocy
& DC LOCKE

★ PAUL & JUNELLYN

MILES of West Columbia, SC. She is the daughter of FAAGC members Jun & Elvie Pading of West Columbia, SC.

★ **JOHN & ELENA NICHOLS** of Columbia, SC. Originally from Borongan, Eastern Samar, she is a home builder executive assistant with Fortress Builders. He is a real estate sales agent. They have been in the area for a year now. ❖

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (continued from Page 1)

all galas and cultural shows (*Karilagan* and *Kalayaan*), *By-laws* booklets, *Directory of Members* booklets, Christmas Party programs, and a DVD of 1991-92 original computer files and digitized photos.

Noel & Helen Alon delivered the documents on Sept. 26, 2011 to **Reme Grefalda** (founding Curator/Librarian, Asian American Pacific Islander Collection, Primary Holdings Initiative, Asian Division, Library of Congress).

In an en email dated September 28, 2011, Ms. Grefalda wrote FAAGC: "Thank you so much for bringing your collection over. . . . I am so proud of your

documentation!"

Special thanks to **Dr. Susana Pasicatan** for keeping some of the 1991-92 newsletter issues that allowed compilation of a complete sequence of all the newsletter issues as well as photos during that first year.

We are continuing the compilation of later years' documentation, especially of photos and videos, to send to the AAPI collection. If you have FAAGC-related photos, videos, newspaper clippings, or other documents through the years that can be used in this compilation, contact Noel Alon at (803) 738-0372 or FAAGC@hotmail.com]. ❖

~ CONGRATULATIONS ~

★ **AMANDA GOYENECH EASTERLING** was featured in the October 2011 issue of the *SDP Newslines* newsletter of the Comer School Development Program, Yale Child Study Center, Yale School of Medicine. She was one of 13 educators from Hartsville, SC, who made a site visit to New Haven, CT, in June to learn about the Comer Process of School Development. She is currently the director of Education Internship Programs in the Education Department of Coker College. She is the youngest daughter of FAAGC charter members Charles & Bev Goyeneche of Hartsville, SC.

➤ **ROMEL LACSON** graduated on May 7, 2011 with a doctorate degree from the Department of Anthropology at USC. His Ph.D. dissertation was entitled "Photovoice with Persons Affected by Tuberculosis Intervening in the Bio-Political Spheres of Communicability: A Study of the Circulation of Power." He is now with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, GA. ❖

Maraming Salamat!

THANKS FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

Recent Membership Renewals:

- * Conrad & Rita ALCANTARA
- * Billy & Jennifer BLACK
- * Linda BROWN
- * Ben & Aida DAQUIOAG
- * Jun & Elvie PADING
- * Tom & Flor RIPLEY
- * Roger & Naty ROBERTS
- * Brian & Cecile STRICKLAND
- * Dave & Cindy TEFPT
- * Charles & Precy WALKER
- * Francisca WALKER

We hope others will also continue their support of the Columbia Fil-Am Association!

BON VOYAGE & GOOD LUCK

➤ **ANTHONY & ONIE JABER** moved to Naples, Italy in early November due to his U.S. Army re-assignment. ❖

† CONDOLENCES †

Our condolences to the families of:

† **Gene Ellis** on the death of his mother Alice Robinson Ellis of Atlantic, NC, on November 5, 2011, at age 86;

† **Celyn Szoke** on the recent death of her father-in-law;

† other FAAGC members who recently have lost loved ones but for which we had no details as of press time. ❖

A Note of Thanks..... from Susana Pasicatan

Dr. Susana B. Pasicatan and Family — Michelle-Arlene, Marco, Marvel, Mary & children Kadan and Ava; sister and brother-in-law- Flora and Tony Buangan of San Francisco — are deeply grateful to all who came to grieve with us during the wake and funeral services of my husband, Dr. Alfonso Anolin Pasicatan. The beautiful flowers, Filipino/American delicacies, monetary contribution, and cards are equally appreciated.

Also, I mostly treasure the presence and help of my children, Flora and Tony Buangan, Drs. Laura and Pete Siazon, Lolita and Patrick Baens, Dr. Eadie and Jess Sebastian during the most trying and difficult period of my husband's illness.

MARAMING, MARAMING SALAMAT PO SA LAHAT.

MARAMING SALAMAT SA INYONG LAHAT!

Thanks Y' All!

The Filipino American Association of Greater Columbia proudly acknowledges with gratitude the following for volunteering time, talents, and services to the organization during the 2010-2011 term. The FAAGC certificates of appreciation were presented during the *Columbia Fil-Am Summer Picnic and FAAGC Volunteer Appreciation Day* held on June 26 at Ft. Jackson's Weston Lake Recreation Area.



FAAGC also acknowledges with gratitude the following youth and children for their participation in the Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe (#), Columbia International Festival (+), or Christmas Party Presentation (*) :

Dan	Adcock	Gala Organization, 2009-2011 Executive Board, International Festival
Lita	Acostar	International Festival
Helen	Alon	Gala Organization, Newsletter Circulation, Dance practice volunteer, International Festival, Christmas Party Decoration, Membership Committee
Noel	Alon	Gala Souvenir Program, Webmaster, Newsletter Editor, International Festival
Grace	Balanquit	Gala Organization, 2009-2011 Executive Board, Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe, International Festival, Christmas Party
Mary	Barradas	International Festival
Cecille	Boman	Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe
Odess	Brinkman	Gala Organization, Dance Director and Choreographer, International Festival
Linda	Brown	Christmas Party
Ginalyn	Castañeda	Easter Picnic Games, Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe
Joy	Clark	Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe Support
Grace	Collins	Gala Organization, International Festival, 2009-2011 Executive Board
Leah	Cuaresma	Gala Organization, Christmas Party
Rudy	Dizon	International Festival, Christmas Party
Carmelisa	Edwards	Gala Organization, International Festival, Dance Coordinator, 2009-2011 Executive Board
Carlton	Edwards	Photography, International Festival
Sally	Ellis	Gala Organization, Christmas Party
Jojo	Flora	Gala Organization, 2009-2011 Executive Board, Dance Troupe Practice Coordinator
Joette	Flora	International Festival, Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe Coordinator
Reyna	Funderburk	Easter Picnic Games, Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe
Cecille	Geoghegan	Gala Organization, 2009-2011 Executive Board, International Festival, Christmas Party Decorations
Imelda	Go	Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe, Newsletter Contributor
Yanni	Gould	Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe
Christina	Horton	International Festival
Frank	Hutchinson	Christmas Party, International Festival
Cecillia	Jacobsen	Gala Organization, 2009-2011 Executive Board, International Festival
Jonathan	Jacobsen	Gala Usher, Dancer, International Festival
Lindy	Joshia	International Festival
Tessie	Kenerson	Gala Organization, Dance Director and Choreographer, International Festival, Christmas Party
Jim	Kenerson	Christmas Program
Peter	Liunoras	Christmas Party
Alan	Matienzo	Gala Emcee
Shirley	McGuinness	Gala Organization, International Festival, 2009-2011 Executive Board, Christmas Party
Nieves	McNulty	Gala Organization, 2009-2011 Executive Board, International Festival
George	McNulty	Gala Organization, International Festival, Easter Picnic, Christmas Party
Lynn	Page	International Festival
Cristina	Papiona	Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe
Marj	Peña	Gala Organization, 2009-2011 Executive Board, International Festival
Edsel	Peña	Gala Organization, International Festival
Corazon	Peña	International Festival, Christmas Party
Florencio	Peña, Jr.	International Festival, Christmas Party
Christine	Peña	International Festival
Alma	Robichaud	Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe
Celyn	Szoke	Gala Emcee
Joey	Szoke III	Gala Usher
Jett	Thomas	Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe
Maribel	Tijing	Gala Organization, 2009-2011 Executive Board, International Festival Exhibit, Christmas Decorations
Neil	Tijing	International Festival
Lanz	Tijing	International Festival
Wyda	Viray	Gala Organization, International Festival, 2009-2011 Executive Board
Myrna	Whitmire	Gala Organization, Christmas Party
Bernadette	Yavis	Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe Director and Choreographer

#	Joshua	Angolian
#	Glyde	Apan
#	Leigh	Apan
#	Darryl	Arevalo
#	Christine	Arroyo
#	Taylor	Ashby
#	Joshua	Bautista
#	Kirkwood	Bautista
#	Mico	Capalar
#	Nicole	Daquilanea
#	Joshua	Dean
#	Justine	Flora
#	Jennie	Hyunhe
#	Nilo	Legaspi
#	Rina	Lowder
#	Onie	Meadows
#	Ryo	Nakaro
#	Steven	Rostata
#	Kyla	Salomon
#	Christine	Sanchez
#	Michael	Sanchez
#	Christian	Singleton
+	Jenna	Szoke
#	Mikko	Tupas
#	Vanessa	White
*	Jeff	Antonio
*	Jolo	Antonio
*	Jun Jun	Balacanao
*	Aji	Ballesil
*	Danielle Jyll	Ballesil
*	Leigh	Ballesil
*	Kyle Andrew	Bolotano
*	Kenneth	Bolotano
#	Jeremy	Brinkman
*	Hanz	Briones
*	Marc Andrei	Bumanglag
#	Jaxen	Castaneda
*	Brandon	Clark
#	Shane	Clark
#	Taryn	Clark
*	Abegail	Faller
*	Phillip	Faller
#	Casey	Funderburk
#	Jela	Lucillo
*	CJ	Martinez
*	Lanz	Pasig
*	Victoria Maristela	Rances
#	Andrea	Robichaud
*	Clover	Robichaud
#	Julia	Szoke
#	Lara	Tijing
*	Keisha	Wilson
*	Jesu	Wilson

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Recently the Philippines' **Puerto Princesa Underground River** was named provisionally as one of the new seven wonders of nature. Puerto Princesa is the capital of the Philippine province of Palawan. The author has had the opportunity to visit the Palawan locations described in this article. Although the author last visited El Nido ("the nest") in 2004, she is hoping to visit it again sooner than later because it is her favorite place on earth.

Palawan

The Philippines has been blessed with biodiversity of which Palawan is perhaps its best example. Composed of 1,768 islands and islets, Palawan is located in the western portion of the Philippine archipelago and is the pan-handle-like cluster of islands above Malaysia's Borneo island. West of the Palawan mainland lies the South China Sea and east of it lies the Sulu Sea. Movie enthusiasts may know that the 1997 James Bond movie "*Tomorrow Never Dies*" includes scenes shot in Palawan.

There are theories regarding the origin of its name. One likely theory is the Chinese as early as the 9th Century called it PA-LAO-YU, or *land of beautiful safe harbor*. Palawan can boast of being the cleanest Philippine province that supports ecologically friendly tourist programs. The nature lover have plenty to see in terms of tropical fish, birds, corals, and even endangered species, such as sea turtles that nest on its white sand beaches and the dugong (sea cow) that feeds on the abundant seagrass. Palawan is home to at least 232 endemic species and was proclaimed a Fish and Wildlife Sanctuary in 1967. To protect its forests, timber license agreements were cancelled in 1993, which ended commercial logging.

Opportunities to snorkel and scuba dive abound. Dive sites range from gradual slopes to drop-offs, and wall dives to flat reefs. Renowned marine explorer Jacques Cousteau is said to have remarked that Palawan has the most beautiful

PALAWAN IN THE WORLD SPOTLIGHT:

The River, the Reef, and the Nest

by I.C. Go



seascape he had ever explored. Palawan has nearly 11,000 square kilometers (~4,250 square miles) of coral reefs with multitudes of marine life forms.



Puerto Princesa Underground River

Along Palawan's west coast, the **Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park** features old-growth forests, cathedral caves, white sand beaches and the underground river. The underground/subterranean river is one of the world's longest, if not the longest underground river known by man. The navigable part of the river inside the cave stretches 8.2 kilometers (~5 miles) in length. Some Filipino explorers believe that the Puerto Princesa Underground River's total length could reach 15 kilometers (~ 9.3 miles) if fully explored and measured.

On 11/11/11, based on the first count of multi-hundred million global votes (by phone, text message, email and Internet social networks), the N7W headquarters in Zurich, Switzerland, announced that the Puerto Princesa Underground River is one of the provisional *New7Wonders of Nature*.

Tubbataha Reef

Declared a World Heritage

site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1993, the **Tubbataha Reef Marine Park** covers 33,200 hectares (~82,000 acres). The word *Tubbataha* is derived from two Samal words that mean "long reef exposed at a low tide."

The Park includes the North and South Reefs, which are atoll reefs, ring-shaped coral islands, with a very high density of marine species. (A coral reef is the ocean's counterpart to a tropical rain forest.) The North Islet is a nesting site for birds and marine turtles. East of the Palawan mainland and in the Sulu Sea, the Tubbataha site includes a spectacular 100-meter perpendicular wall and extensive lagoons.



El Nido

Of the many beaches in the Philippines, the islands and beaches of El Nido is what many consider Palawan's crown jewel and paradise incarnate. Located in the northernmost tip of the Palawan mainland, it is a cluster of 45 unspoiled islands and islets with rocky limestone and black marble cliffs estimated to be 250 million years old. Skyscraping over sparkling

emerald waters, weathering and erosion continue to shape these massive geological formations. There are tropical mangrove forests, white-sand beaches, caves with dripstone formations, secret coves, and hidden lagoons.

The town is named after the edible nests formed by the saliva of swifts (*Collocalia fuciphaga*) that nest in the cracks of the limestone cliffs. (*Nido* means nest in Spanish.) The nest is the main ingredient for the Chinese gourmet bird's nest soup. Because of the risks involved in scaling and climbing the steep and jagged cliffs to gain access to the nests, the wholesale price for just a gram (almost half an ounce) of the bird's nest is a few dollars.

El Nido's Bacuit Bay area was elevated from a marine preserve to a protected area to prevent its overdevelopment. The El Nido Managed Resource Protected Area includes over 35,283 hectares of land and 53,847 hectares of water. Famous scenic islands and islets are Gintungawan, Dibuluan, Manlet, Matinloc, Miniloc, and Lagen. There are exclusive resorts in Lagen, Miniloc, Dalarog, and Malapacao. The fishing village of El Nido town offers beautiful beachfront native cottage accommodations of which *Lally and Abet* (www.lallyandabet.com) is one of the most established.

Lally and Abet is a successful enterprise that enjoys repeat visits from its Filipino and international guests. During the week we were there in December 2004, we stayed in cottage room number 10, which was a few yards from the water during high tide. The view from the cottage was made even more spectacular by the full moon we were lucky to enjoy when we visited. Our neighbor next door was a couple from France who were at *Lally and Abet's* for the 12th consecutive year. All visits except for one were each one month long.

Their customer loyalty is impressive considering El Nido was challenging to travel to but no doubt well worth the effort. We flew into Taytay and

(continued on Page 8)

PALAWAN

(continued from Page 7)

and were shuttled in a van to the town of El Nido. The terrain along the way would have challenged heavily any sports utility vehicle. Direct flights into El Nido airport were exclusively through Soriano Aviation, which catered mostly to the highly exclusive (and expensive) El Nido resorts, such as *Amanpulo* frequented by international celebrities.

We also met a Spanish woman with her American husband, both avid divers, visiting El Nido for the first time. Although they had considered visiting Phuket, Thailand, they chose to visit El Nido instead. Their decision proved fateful because we were together in El Nido on December 26, 2004, when the deadly tsunami struck Phuket.

When asked how El Nido compared to the beaches in Spain, she remarked that in Spain the beaches are crowded while in places like El Nido, one can enjoy nature in its purest unspoiled form.

When you see it for yourself, you will know why El Nido is recognized as one of the most beautiful places in the world. Its beauty was affirmed by episode number 12 of the reality TV show *Amazing Race 5*, which selected the most exotic places in the world to bring its contestants to and which promoted El Nido to television viewers worldwide. El Nido is an international treasure that those

who can should experience once in their lifetime.

“The Philippines is blessed with unique natural beauty found nowhere else in the world.”

— Dell Tancongo

Filipino

Metro Manila, Philippines

“Filipino hospitality is alive and well in El Nido, Palawan.”

— Dits Rekomono

Filipino-Canadian

Toronto, Canada

“I’ve seen beaches in the South of France, Greece, Boracay, Bali, Phuket, Mexico, and Maui and I still think El Nido’s beaches are the best in the world!”

— Rachel Jakubowicz

Filipino-French

Paris, France

[Dell, Dits, and Rachel are Filipino sisters vacationing at *Lally and Abet* with their families in El Nido in December, 2004.]

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• Puerto Princesa’s Tourism Gem: Underground river among new 7 wonders. Retrieved November 16, 2011, from <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/17745/underground-river-among-new7wonders>

• <http://www.new7wonders.com>

FAAGC Member Starts USC Scholarship Fund

FAAGC sustaining member and *Fil-Am Bulletin* regular contributor **Imelda “Mel” Go** has established a scholarship to help international students attend USC.

She calls the education she received at the University of



Imelda Go discusses the *International Alumni Scholarship Fund* project with USC President Harris Pastides.

South Carolina “priceless.” Now she’s committed to helping other international students attending Carolina by establishing the new *International Alumni Scholarship Fund*. The fund, supported by the university’s international alumni, will help meritorious international students who are experiencing financial hardships.

“Alma mater is the ‘nourishing mother.’ My education here gave me so much. My life would be meaningless if I didn’t give back,” said Go, who studied at USC from 1989-95. She received her MS degree in statistics, her master’s of education in testing and measurement, and her Ph.D. in education research from USC. She is now a researcher, statistician and manager in the S.C. Education Department’s Assessment Office.

The scholarship project was announced on September 21, 2011 at the President’s Reception for International Students and Scholars. The annual event was hosted by President Harris Pastides to welcome the university’s nearly 1,500 international students from 111 countries.

The scholarships for international students will be awarded beginning in spring 2012. A scholarship award of \$250 can result in a tuition reduction valued at \$4,500 or more for a semester of scholarship support. Contributions of any amount are welcome. For information or to make a contribution, contact International Student Services, (803) 777-7461, iss@sc.edu, or donate online through this quick-link: <http://tinyurl.com/USC-ISS> ♦



GALA
2011



Photos by Carlton Edwards & Ronnie Corn



COLUMBIA FIL-AM BASKETBALL INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT

(continued from Page 1)

two teams, one coached by Charles Goyeneche and the other by Butch Tupas and Roy Balacanao.

The Beaufort **SC PiNOY** team coached by PJ Oliveros and Geo Floresca went undefeated to win the championship trophy donated by FAAGC. The second place trophy donated by Rio Daquilanea went to the Savannah **RPSav** team coached by Luis Bucay. The Atlanta **Garage Boys** coached by Rico Cabrera and the Sumter **ShawPinoy**s coached by Kirbe Delmo received the third place trophies donated by Rolly Bumanglag and FAAGC.

Beaufort's Noel Regis garnered the tournament MVP trophy donated by Bong Rances. Team MVPs who received medals (also donated by Bong Rances) were Leo Balacanao (FAAGC 1), Jeff Capalar (FAAGC 2), Kirbe Delmo (Sumter), Ivan Olendron (Atlanta), Noel Regis (Beaufort), and Joe Torres (Savannah).

Tournament commissioner Peter Liunoras and tournament co-coordinators Bong Rances, Carlos Arevalo & Rio Daquilanea managed the tournament, with some assistance from Noel Alon.

Thanks to All Volunteers

FAAGC acknowledges with thanks and appreciation the following for helping make the first-ever *Columbia FIL-AM Basketball Tournament* highly successful:

***"The Committee" (timekeepers/scorekeepers/announcers/spotters)**: Leigh Apan, Darryl Arevalo, Kirk Bautista, Mico Capalar, Denise Daquilanea,

Mary Jane Daquilanea, and Nicole Daquilanea;

***Donors of food and drinks for sale**: Helen Alon (*pansit*), Edith Alston (*pansit*), Cathy & Carlos Arevalo (*pinakbet* and brownies), Grace Balanquit (*rice*), Odess Brinkman (*lumpia*), Grace Collins (*rice*), Mary Jane & Rio Daquilanea (*menudo*), Peter Liunoras (bottled water), Nieves McNulty (soft drinks & condiments), Jojo Miranda (bottled water), Marj Pena (*adobo*), Barbie Proctor (cassava cake), Rosa & Bong Rances (*laing*), and Bambi Tijing (cupcakes);

***Food service**: Edith Alston, Grace Balanquit, Odess Brinkman, Grace Collins, Nieves McNulty (*ticket sales*), Bambi Tijing, and Helen Alon;

***Other services**: Zaldy Balleil (sound system);

***Post-event clean-up**: Catherine Arevalo, Marie Capalar, Mary Jane Daquilanea, Charina Lacson, Rosa Rances, all the food service volunteers, among others.

Basketball Practice

Sports-minded Fil-Ams in the area are invited to join the Columbia basketball teams for practice and scrimmage every Saturday afternoon at the Polo Road Park gym. Children are also welcome since a children's team is being organized and trained.

For more information about the Saturday practices and/or the basketball tournament, contact **Bong Rances** (803-788-6271; vmcr24@yahoo.com), **Carlos Arevalo** (803-237-9171; carlos73626@yahoo.com), or **Rio Daquilanea** (803-629-8829; Ridaq94@yahoo.com). ❖



Six teams from five cities (above, right) listen to instructions from tournament commissioner Peter Liunoras and tournament co-coordinators Rio Daquilanea and Bong Rances (above, left) at the start of the first Columbia FIL-AM Basketball Invitational Tournament on October 15, 2011.

Photos by NCA



Tournament co-coordinator Carlos Arevalo (left) instructs "The Committee" (timekeepers/scorekeepers/announcers)



FILIPINO—AMERICAN Association of Greater Columbia CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- * **December 17, 2011** (Saturday, 6 pm)
 - ▶ **Columbia Fil-Am Annual Christmas Party**
 - ◆ **St. John Neumann School gymnasium**
721 Polo Road, Columbia, SC 29223
- * **January 21, 2012** (Saturday, 9 am —7 pm)
 - ▶ **Columbia Fil-Am Basketball Tournament**
 - ◆ **Polo Road Park gym**
730 Polo Road, Columbia, SC 29223
- * **March 31— April 1, 2012** (Saturday -Sunday)
 - ▶ **Columbia International Festival**
(www.cifonline.org)
 - ◆ **SC State Fairgrounds**
1200 Rosewood Drive, Columbia, SC 29201
- * **April 8, 2012** (Sunday)
 - ▶ **Columbia Fil-Am Annual Easter Picnic**
 - ◆ **Sesquicentennial Park** [(803) 788-2706]
9564 Two Notch Rd., Columbia, SC 29223

Mark Your Calendars Now!

Visit & Bookmark the FAAGC Website

www.FilAmSC.org

for the clickable direct links to the websites mentioned in this issue of the Fil-Am Bulletin.

Current and some past issues (in color) of the Fil-Am Bulletin are also available online.

Copies of the By-laws and application forms can be downloaded from the website.

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*** Just A Reminder ***

Membership renewal for the Fil-Am Association Year 2011-12 is now due for many members. Please check the mailing address label below — *if there are three asterisks (***) on the line above your name*, then your membership has expired or will expire on the date specified after the asterisks.

Your membership renewal and prompt payment of dues are crucial to the continued operations and success of the FAAGC in our community. Please send your membership dues as soon as possible. Dues can also be paid at the Christmas Party. If there are membership renewal questions, contact **Nieves McNulty** (553-6540; nmcnulty@columbiasc.edu).



~~~ Non-Members or Former Members ~~~

Please consider joining or re-joining the FAAGC; your support can help us achieve our objectives for the Fil-Am community in the area. A membership application form is enclosed or can be downloaded our website: www.FilAmSC.org.

MALIGAYANG PASKO AT MANIGONG BAGONG TAON
MALIPAYONG PASKO UG BULAHANG BAG-ONG TUIG
¡FELIZ NAVIDAD Y PRÓSPERO AÑO NUEVO!

Have a Happy & Safe
HOLIDAY SEASON!

FIL-AM BULLETIN

"TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE"

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

P.O. Box 24112, Columbia, SC 29224



Fall 2011



Volume 21, Number 2



Don't Forget:

- * **Columbia FIL-AM Annual CHRISTMAS PARTY** will be held on **Saturday, December 17, 2011** at the **St. John Neumann School gymnasium**.