

Balitaan

Newsletter 63, Fall 2016 www.rpcvphilippines.org pcafpd@gmail.com P.O. Box 100114, Arlington, VA 22210

Embassy of the Philippines Hosts PCAFPD for Peace Corps 55th Anniversary Reception

By Sarah McMeans

On September 22, 2016, PCAFPD invited RPCVs who served in the Philippines to gather at the Philippine Embassy to celebrate 70 years of US-Philippines relations, and 55 years of Peace Corps service in the Philippines. About 35 RPCVs, more than a third of whom had served after 2000, another third who served in the 1960s, others from the intervening years, plus their guests, came together for an evening of reminiscing, a light meal of delicious Filipino food and a short program that featured videos made by PCAFPD alumni scholars. Videos made by Hannah Grace Catiis, Karl Vincent Soriano, Rico Ancog and Jessaline Escame will be posted on our website.

In her greeting to the assembled group, the Embassy's Public Diplomacy Officer Darell Artates said: "The presence of the Peace Corps in the Philippines has been a well-spring of strength and inspiration for this friendship. In many communities across the Philippine archipelago, the arrival of Peace Corps Volunteers constitutes the people's first meeting with America. For the past 55 years, volunteers and communities have been working hand-in-hand to address socio-economic issues, to foster mutual understanding and to expand the field of cooperation." Ms. Artates also thanked the Foundation for its scholarship program, saying, "It is an investment in the future not only of these deserving students but also of our country."

PCAFPD Board members and guests pose with playful "pogies" at the Embassy reception. First row, left to right: PCAFPD Board members Usha Vatsia, Denise Lionetti, Sarah McMeans, Steve Dienstfrey, Maureen Carroll, Joyce Javillonar and Embassy Public Diplomacy Officer Darell Artates.

Photo Credit: Embassy of the Philippines



Transitions:

New Faces in PCAFPD Places

***Balitaan* Editor Sarah McMeans, Retires**



Many thanks are due to Sarah McMeans (Group IV, 1962-64), who is retiring as *Balitaan* editor. During her service Sarah served on Cebu, in Moalboal, on the west coast of Cebu.

She joined the PCAFPD board in 1997 and took on the position of Database Manager. Later she also started helping Deane Wylie, the prior newsletter editor, and eventually completely took the reins with the Fall 2010 issue. Sarah remembers "Deane may have been on the staff of the Los Angeles Times, as I recall, and he worked with a Mac. He liked to have a lot more white space on the page than I did."

Sarah continued with responsibility for both the database and the *Balitaan* until last summer when Joyce Javillonar offered to take on the database job. Despite turning over the newsletter and database, Sarah will continue to serve on the PCAFPD board of directors and help with the *Balitaan* mailing logistics.

Thank you, Sarah, for your hard work on both *Balitaan* and the database, and enjoy all your new free time!



Joyce Javillonar has taken on the job of PCAFPD Database manager. She has been on the PCAFPD board since 2013 and will also continue with those duties.

Joyce, originally from Quezon City, worked for Peace Corps Philippines as the environmental sector manager from 2007 until 2010. Currently, she is working as Program Manager at the US-Philippines Society and has been instrumental as PCAFPD liaison with the Philippine Embassy in Washington, DC.



Marga McElroy (Negros Oriental, 2007-09) will take on *Balitaan*. During her service as a CRM volunteer in Sibulan, Negros Oriental, Joyce was her sector manager so they are looking forward to working together again.



We will be accepting contributions, notices, or suggestions for the Spring 2017 issue of *Balitaan*. Please contact me at margamcel@hotmail.com with any ideas or materials you would like

to see in our future issues. Have you been back to Philippines? Have you pictures of a 3rd goal event? We'd love to have you share these in *Balitaan*.

Challenges:

Gaining Self-Awareness and Skills

Justin O. De Torres is studying Mechanical Engineering at Batangas State University.

The last semester for my second year in college has just ended. Another struggle and unforgettable experiences have finished. More chapters are about to begin and new things will soon be learned.

During the first week of classes, we already have a full plate in our drafting subjects. We need to reproduce a plan of a two-story residential house from research that we will conduct. This will be a way for us to determine its parts and gave ideas for when we will soon design on our own. In our P.E class, we learned and practiced different kinds of folk dances. We had a practicum about this in the following week.

For our midterms, we were divided into groups in our theory subject. We designed a studio classroom



for one of the classrooms in our department's building. We have related this to different legal codes and existing foreign examples. After that, we discussed and proposed the design concept to our instructor. We already came up with our own

design of a two-story residential house. We based each part of plans and drawings from the previous ones that we had. We also created a scale model of different solids relating to our subject. It was made from recyclable and other appropriate materials.

Final term was the most effortful and forceful time out from the other terms. As usual, most of our instructors have given each of their final requirements for the same limited time. In our design subject, we had to pass a complete set of drawings/plans of a residential house. We need to comply with the specified standards.

We had a group report for our political science subject. Our group discussed the judiciary branch of Philippine government. We considered giving examples and recent activities for us to be able to understand. We also participated in the inter-P.E event, competing with other P.E classes in performing different genre of dances.

I have learned and encountered a lot of things all throughout this semester. I was able to witness again the things which I am capable of doing. I admit that there were opportunities which I didn't grab because of fear and insecurities. However, I realized that time is changing, more great chances are about to come for me to take for the benefit of my career.

Meeting Challenges Outside the Box

Thea F. Bacoco is a BIMAK sponsored student, studying veterinary medicine at Central Luzon State University.

Learning things doesn't only happen inside the four walls of our classroom it also happens outside. All

the things we learned inside would become useful if we share our knowledge with others and apply the skills we learned and also to gain more knowledge in the outside world.

The summer of 2016 I enrolled in Animal Science 399- Field Practice wherein I am going to apply all the things I learned on Swine Production together with my groupmates. We had our Field Practice at Brookside Group of Companies for almost two months. It was a great experience for me working there for I applied what I learned and shared what I know at the same time I also learned from the employees there. It is like a give and take relationship there and I enjoyed it so much.



I remember one of the supervisors there said to me, that it is useless if you know the things about swine management and yet you yourself can't even do it on the farm, that's why you're here to learn the basics and also gain more knowledge on what is in the real world; for what is written in the books is sometimes not applicable. I listened to my supervisor and thought that he is right, for it is important to know the basic things just like proper feeding, pen cleaning, and others for it would be my foundation rather than knowing only all the advanced things and yet not the basics.

I really learned a lot during my stay at the farm even though some of the workload there is more appropriate for males, it didn't limit me to try and experience it, (like semen collection from boars that are thrice larger than my size). At first I was quite afraid thinking that what if the boar will bite me or what, still I said to myself to keep calm and slowly try it and be careful. I was happy when I was able to do it.

This summer is one of my best summers ever, for I learned a lot through experience and also became aware of what is happening in the real world of

swine production. It is not enough to know everything that is in the book, it also needs an application. I will always carry my experience and what I learned at Brookside Group of Companies wherever I will go. Achieving my goal to become a veterinarian is not easy but I know I am moving forward to attain it.

Reaching the summit following a stressful time

Philip Mark D. Bang-ud, from Ifugao, graduated with a BS in Criminology from Ifugao State University.

This final semester of my college life has been the most difficult and most expensive period I ever experienced. All of my knowledge, skills, positive attitude, time and money have been used to the maximum. The major activities were the following: OJT (*On-the-Job-Training*), Thesis Writing, Group Research and Review with Mock Board Exams. The simultaneous conduct of these activities was really grilling. Worst of all, I met with an accident during our *Water Survival Training*. My right ear was unintentionally slapped and my eardrum ruptured and bled. The doctor said it might take six months to heal, but God's grace never left me. His miracle was displayed – in two months I felt the healing and was back to normal. There were many times I felt physically and mentally stressed, but I thank God for the special strength He gave me that kept me going until I reached the summit of my education on April 1, 2016, Graduation Day.

At this time, I want to look back to view the stepping stones that gave firm footings to my steps as I climbed to this summit, so that they will be forever captured in the camera of my memory. My aunt Nell and her husband took care of my needs while I stayed in their house during my OJT period. My parents dared to face financial crisis just to provide for my needs. And, my siblings provided inspiration

by looking up to me as their big brother. The challenges from my professors, and company of fellow students, acted their role with the guidance that pushed me to the limit where I developed self-confidence.

My special thanks go to PCAFPD through Sir Roland de Jesus. The essay requirement helped me improve my writing ability and taught me to give an account of whatever I did. PCAFPD's financial support to me for the last 2 years in college was like a strong man's arm picking a heavy load off of my parents' shoulders. PCAFPD's assistance to me improved our family bond. Most of all, I learned to deeply appreciate the love and kindness of big-hearted people from somewhere whom I never knew. They contributed much to who am I today. I learned from their selfless service to reach out to the less fortunate like me, lifting up the least onto the pedestal of success. I am proud to say that I am one among those whom PCAFPD changed into a person ready to face the world of professional service. I am forever grateful to GOD for PCAFPD's heart and hand on my life. Mabuhay PCAFPD!

Newly Confident & Enjoying Success

Jamila Catuyo is an Education major in her second year at Davao Central College.

I will start my essay with big smile, because I am happy to say that my academic performance and result is good. Even though it's not total excellence but it's beyond low. The big evidence of it is my grades, yes I know that it was not so impressive but I'm proud to say that I work hard just to get good grades. At my level of studying now, I experience many things especially in my field, to teach, to lead, to speak in front of many people and the reason for that is because I excel.

On the other hand when I am going to discuss my extra-curricular experience all I can say is now I have time to do extra-curricular activity because before I'm just focusing on my studies only, but now I have lots of time to help others. I experienced teaching a



few children near the street and also experienced feeding a lot of children near the mountain but it was part of our course. It was a great experience and feelings; if we can help others especially those people we know that they can't afford to do something. Like what the scholarship did for me, it helps me a lot, it leads me into my path of succeeding in something not only for myself but also for the people around me.



Lastly when I am going to evaluate myself it's just like what I am trying to say in my first stanza; I'm improving. Yes, it's true I'm improving, from my knowledge, performance and also confidence and trust in myself. Because before I was shy and I didn't have any trust in myself at all but now I have all the confidence to face other people. Also because of experience I know how to handle myself like a real teacher already. When my first demo-teaching came I had all the knowledge how to manage and teach my students. And that was one of my greatest experiences that made me feel near to my goal in life. But I know that those knowledge and experiences are not enough for me to say that I'm totally ready.

Surprise Problem & Challenging Field Work

Kate Louise G. Ariate is studying Agriculture at UP Los Baños.

Last semester brought a lot of stress both in balancing school loads and keeping up with so many outline revisions. When the previous semester ended I went home to Bicol for a week only to do my outline. I was barely going out of the house. It was a good thing, too, that my friend lent me her laptop because it made my life a little easier.

After, that, a week facing nothing but the laptop and venturing out for literature, I have to head back to Los Baños to present my outline. The oral presentation wasn't as grueling as I expect it to be.

Actually, it was quite easy. However, the delay in our travel to Sagada was the hardest. We were delayed for 2 weeks and it was very hard especially financially. I was only given enough money to be sent off to Sagada so I couldn't really afford the lag time and within the 2 weeks my money got lesser and lesser because I have to eat too. Finally, when the day of our departure came and when everything else is settled in Sagada and with our paper works done I barely have enough money to go there. I got very stressed thinking where to get money at that time when I remembered one of my professors who was willing to help. She was my professor in one of my majors and told me not to hesitate if we need monetary help, especially since me and my co-advisee are under a scholarship. So I texted her and she lent me 2000php. I promised to pay her back as soon as I can.

The travel was a long ride yet it was so exciting. It was first time ever to be in the North. Our travel lasted for about 10 hours. I wasn't awake though to witness the views. I was only awakened when the bus stopped at Banaue Ifugao for the usual visitor "photo op" with the majestic rice terraces. When we got back to our bus I went back to my slumber immediately. The next thing I knew we were on a very steep road up the mountains. I got scared that we might fall off so I couldn't sleep anymore. Fortunately, we arrived safely at Sagada.

When we arrived we were welcomed by our supervisor. He was around 50's, I could tell and he doesn't speak much. He can also speak good Ilocano, as I later found out that he was born and raised at Solano, Nueva Viscaya.

He accompanied us to the place we will be staying for the rest of the research goes. We all call the house 'HQ' for headquarters. When we settled our bag and ate our lunch, we started off on the 3.5km uphill hike to visit the farmer. We were so tired but we can't really complain for we went there for work. When we got back from HQ it was already getting dark. We just ate and dozed off immediately because the next day will be long one.

And every day, it was like that - waking up early, long walks, uphill traverse, hiking, interviewing farmers,

and helping out with their production and management of coffee. The people in Sagada value their coffee so much. They often use it to serve *when they have guests. Everyday coffee will never be absent from their table.*

Overall it was a humbling experience despite being so tiring. Right now, I'm doing my manuscript which I plan to finish and present by December. Although looking for literatures on organic farming is difficult and I might go to Baguio either to Benguet State University or UP Baguio to get some literature. One of my MS friends on organic farming told me he got most of his literatures there so I might push through.

Internship: A Rich Learning Experience

Michael Estuaria, a Hinrich Foundation scholar, is at Polytechnique University of the Philippines studying English.

This year's first semester has been fun filled and I really learned a lot from everything. I not only learned from school but also from the **Hinrich Foundation** internship that Donnielyn and I went into.



My two months internship has now come to an end. It was a short time but I really gained a lot from that experience. I remember the first day of my internship as if it had just happened yesterday. I felt both excited and anxious about everything. Excited because it was my first time working in an office and anxious because I was afraid of doing something wrong. I also expected too much of myself, which isn't always a good thing. When I got there, the team welcomed me and they introduced me to the all of team members in the office. Some of them thought I was Cambodian because it was their first time seeing a Filipino intern at the office.

Our coworkers made Donnielyn and I feel like a part of the team. They taught us everything we needed to learn about the foundation: its background, mission and vision. We were also given the basic

skills needed to write professional reports, do research, and communicate with suppliers. They even gave us direction on personal stuff. Ate Iycah Baylon, our mentor and Executive consultant, guided us all throughout our internship.

She was always there to check on us and remind us what is needed to be done. She also gave us a sense of responsibility about the tasks we needed to finish, making us feel more comfortable at the office.

My internship was great and I hope that more students can have the same experience as mine because only few have access to this kind of opportunity. I am still in my second year of college but I already have this kind professional exposure. This will help me decide which skills I need to develop as well as the subjects I have to focus on. I really feel blessed to be part of the PCAFPD- Hinrich Foundation scholarship.

I thought that the major I am taking is not interesting at all but after having my internship I am now more aware that everything being taught there was important. I can relate more to my subjects which I can also experience at BahayTuluyan like Cross-cultural communication. I am more focused than ever on my study.

I have realized that being able to communicate in English properly and learning the basic things that can be used at work is very practical but I know I still have to learn extra special skills.

This semester, most of our professors, especially in major courses, didn't give us examinations but major projects like a play for our Mythology; Documentary for our Cross-Cultural Communication; Speech Choir Competition for Speech Communication; and Research for Statistics and Linguistics. I have learned here how to prioritize, manage time, and to work as a team player. This semester is very time consuming and there were some times when I don't really know where to get money for group contributions, food and transportation. I thank everyone that supports me for patching this problem for me.

News Briefs & Milestones

In Memoriam

PCAFPD sadly notes the passing of **Richard K. Irish** who passed away in June. Richard and his first wife, the late Sally Goldsmith, served in Mindanao in 1962-64. After his service he spent a few years at Peace Corps, DC before founding the first of several businesses. Richard went on to a long career as an HR management consultant, specializing in NGO executive recruitment. Richard was also a renowned author of several books on management and career planning.



In May, PCAFPD heard of the passing of **Dr. Sally Nyquist**, 74, of Lewisburg, PA. A retired professor of Biology from Bucknell University, Dr. Nyquist was also a prominent researcher and author. After graduating from Wheaton College, she spent her Peace Corps service developing science curriculum at Pio Duran Memorial School in Guinobatan, Albay, before earning a PhD from Purdue. As a Fulbright scholar in India, she continued to show her dedication to students at home and abroad, as well as serving in many capacities in academia, her church and her community.



Iowa native **Jim Turner**, perhaps the Philippines' most famous RPCV, died in September after many years of failing health. As a member of the first Batch in 1961, Jim taught English in a rural barangay and fell in love with the country. After his service he settled in Manila, first using his political science degree from Notre Dame to gain a teaching position at Ateneo de Manila.

Later he managed TV station which often ran variety shows, which frequently cast midgets and dwarfs in

skits. The station was shut down when Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in 1972.

Needing new employment, Jim was inspired by Tolkien's books and the availability of dwarf actors. He established a Hobbit-themed restaurant-bar in Malate, hiring two dwarfs as doormen. Soon little people flocked to him seeking jobs at Hobbit House. Eventually they became involved in all aspects of the business, from bouncers to wait-staff to managers and all types of entertainers.

During the Marcos regime Hobbit House became a sanctuary for activists, artists, musicians, and others. It also became known for its entertainment and was a favorite venue for singer/songwriter Freddie Aguilar. The business continued to grow, Jim opened a second Hobbit House in Boracay and the original moved to a new location in Ermita in 2007.



Jim with some staff in front of Hobbit House.

Jim was involved with the personal lives of his employees, some became his family. Eventually he restructured the corporation, giving not just the management but principle ownership to a group of seven of his little people employees. As one of the waiters told a reporter "It won't be the same place without him, just a bunch of little people with broken hearts."



Contributions from our generous supporters. Thanks go to those listed below who made gifts to PCAFPD between May 10, 2016 and October 8, 2016. The plus (+) identifies those who made more than one contribution since our last report. In addition to the contributions listed below, PCAFPD received a grant from the **Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut for The Bill Foye Philippine Scholarship Fund**, which was established to recognize the sacrifice of the Filipino people in southern Luzon who rescued US Navy Aviator William Foye during WWII.

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¹ In honor of Paul Aleckson;

² In memory of Frank Kalisiak (Group 19)

³ In memory of Marie Villanueva Hilliard

⁴ In memory of Leonel "Lone" J. Castillo (Group 1)

⁵ In honor of Stephen Dienstfrey

⁶ In memory of Pat Nash (Group 1)

⁷ In honor of Sarah Wilkinson

McMeans

⁸ In memory of Julia Campbell

⁹ In memory of Kent Penfold

¹⁰ In memory of Leonardo Galutan Jr.

¹¹ In memory of Pauline O'Dell, Bogo, Cebu 1965-67

¹² In memory of Julie Wilkman Leones

¹³ In honor of Carol Garland

¹⁴ Gifts in memory of Derek Hulse and Patty Wernert

¹⁵ In memory of Ed Adriano

¹⁶ In memory of his parents, John & Agnes Kramer

¹⁷ In memory of her father, Frank French

¹⁸ In honor of Ron & Lilia Peters' 50th wedding anniversary

¹⁹ In memory of Tom Aring (Group 70 "Rural Electrification")

²⁰ In memory of Joe Sperrozza & Charlie Plant

²¹ In memory of Rachel Singer

James & Susan Lytle	PA	Ron & Lilia Peters ²²	IL	Ed & Jan Slevin	CA
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IRA charitable contribution tax-break was made part of the tax code at the end of 2015. The Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act (PATH) passed which permanently allows traditional IRA holders who are at least 70 ½ years old to give up to \$100,000 directly from an IRA to a qualified charity, such as PCAFPD, without having to include that part of their required minimum distribution (RMD) as taxable income. So, if you meet the age requirement consider taking advantage of this now-permanent provision of the tax code when making your gift to PCAFPD.



NPCA membership dues have been eliminated. Membership is now complimentary for everyone in the Peace Corps community: serving Peace Corps Volunteers, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, current and former Peace Corps staff, host country nationals and anyone

who shares Peace Corps ideals, so long as NPCA has accurate service and/or contact information for each of them. If you have not been receiving NPCA communications, register for your free membership on its website:

www.peacecorpsconnect.org/membership

Peace Corps Alumni Foundation

²¹ In memory of Rachel Singer

²² Monthly gifts are for the Ron & Lilia Peters Scholarship

²³ In memory of Paul Lampert, Leyte

²⁴ In memory of Frank Kalisiak and Barbara Huffer, Group 19

²⁵ In honor of Evelyn Castillo, widow of Lone Castillo

²⁶ In memory of Laurence Foley

²⁷ In honor of 50th anniversary of Claire & Carl Smith

²⁸ In memory of Cehra Duval

²⁹ In memory of his beloved daughter, Angela Wetmore

³⁰ One gift is in honor of Group 1 assigned to Negros Occidental

³¹ Monthly gifts are in memory of Carolyn E. Wylie (Group 1)

³² In honor of Patricia MacDermot Kasdan

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