



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 1

★ P.O. Box 24112, Columbia, SC 29224

★ Summer 2011 ★

Marj Peña Re-Elected FAAGC President

Marj Peña was unanimously re-elected President of the Columbia Fil-Am Association during the election of FAAGC officers held at the annual spring picnic at Sesquicentennial State Park on Easter Sunday, April 24, 2011.

She will head the 2011-2013 FAAGC Executive Board that blends experience, continuity and new blood. The new board includes four past Presidents, one charter officer, two sustaining charter members since 1991, six officers from the 2009-

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FAAGC To Celebrate 20th Anniversary At Annual Gala

The Filipino-American Association of Greater Columbia (FAAGC) will mark a major milestone in its history when the Association celebrates its **20th Anniversary** during the **21st Annual Gala & 14th Induction Ball** on **September 10, 2011**. The gala will be held from 6:00 p.m. to midnight at the downtown Columbia Marriott Hotel (1200 Hampton St., Columbia, SC 29201).

The formal affair (*coat and tie or barong required*) includes a sit-down dinner and an entertainment program that includes Philippine folk dances performed by the *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance*

Troupe. Dancers representing Fil-Am associations from Charleston, SC and Fayetteville, NC are also scheduled to perform. **DJ Mike Lamb** will provide lively music to dance the night away.

Until September 3, tickets are \$50 per adult (\$35 per student). **After September 3**, tickets are \$60 per adult (\$45 per student). Tickets for children ages 8-12 years are \$25 each. There is a 5% discount for a full table of 10 (*see enclosed order form*).

Due to hotel requirements, we would like all guests to **confirm their reservation** and remit payment by **September 3**.

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FAAGC at 20: Making a Difference in Family & Community

MY FIL-AM STORY

by **Helen Alon** (FAAGC sustaining charter member since 1991)

I recently visited my daughter Aileen, now 22, in Miami where she works. She lives in a high rise condo with two roommates, both recent college graduates like her, one white American, the other an Asian Indian-American. What touched me most was that she had a huge Philippine flag hanging on one side of her room. This was not the first time I saw this. In fact, when she was a college student at Winthrop University, she al-

ways had a Philippine flag as a decoration in her room -- sort of a focal point. I remembered the same thing with my son -- he always had a flag hanging at the ceiling of his dorm room when it won't fit on his wall since college dorms are fairly small. I said to myself "wow, this is awesome! She is so proud to be Filipino -- even though she was born here in America." I thought I must have **not** failed as a Filipino

(continued on Page 9)

MY FAAGC FAMILY

by **I.C. Go** (FAAGC sustaining member since 1996)

It's been 22 years since I left the Philippines to live in Columbia as a graduate student at the University of South Carolina. Unknowingly I had embarked on a journey to become an immigrant to the United States. Here I am 22 years later still in the United States — still in Columbia, SC.

Many things have changed since 1989. There used to be a time when making phone calls to the Philippines cost an arm and a leg and many times more

than what it would cost today. Long distance telephone charges started decreasing through the years. E-mail messages and e-cards soon became the rage. Now we have video calls on the Internet through Skype and other applications. There has never been a better time to be away from the Philippines and to be able to keep in touch with friends and relatives there through different types of media. In time, I know

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At the 2011 *Columbia International Festival* held April1-3 at the State Fairgrounds, Fil-Am volunteers have their *kodakan* moments while setting up the flowery *Flores de Mayo*-themed Philippine booth (left) and before participating in the International Fashion Show (above).
Photos by Carlton Edwards



From the President by Marj Peña
At 20 Years Young, We Stand Proud and Strong!

I hope that everyone is surviving the hot days of summer and that your summer vacation and travels have been full of fun and bonding with family and friends! Many of our FAAGC Executive Board members traveled to the Philippines, some of us running into each other in unexpected places, making the world a small place indeed!

NEW OFFICERS

At the last Easter Picnic, a new set of Officers and Executive Board Members was elected. I would like to thank you for your confidence in re-electing me for a second term as President of this great organization. You have also elected with me a very enthusiastic group of officers who come with new ideas, great talents, and dedication that will serve the FAAGC very well. You will get to know these Officers in this newsletter.

ACHIEVEMENTS

This issue also highlights the significant achievements of our children and our mem-

bers. Please join me in congratulating them and recognizing their hard work and accomplishments! Job well done! We are very proud of you and keep up the good work!

MAJOR MILESTONE

Finally, this year, we mark a very important milestone in our organization: the Twentieth Anniversary of the Filipino American Association of Greater Columbia! At twenty years young, we stand proud and strong! As an organization, we have made a great impact in showcasing the Filipino culture in the state of South Carolina and beyond. We have instilled into our youth the pride of our Filipino heritage. We have fostered camaraderie and strong ties with our "kapwa Pilipino" in Columbia and beyond.

We have also taken the time to help those who are less fortunate than us or victims of natural disasters in the Philippines. Looking forward, the ties that bind us are strong and will allow us to continue to make an impact in the communities that we live in.

In celebration, we are holding our **Twentieth Anniversary Gala on September 10th** at the Marriott Hotel in

downtown Columbia. The theme for our gala is "Fiesta sa Nayon" and just like all fiestas back in the Philippines, we will have a cultural program of Filipino dances to be presented by the *Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe* and friends from our sister organizations.

We hope that this event will be a gathering and a homecoming for all members whether they still reside in Columbia or not. I invite everyone to this joyous occasion. As always, your presence and participation will guarantee the success of this event!

Please consider making a donation as a Benefactor, Sponsor, Patron, or Advertiser in our Gala Souvenir Program. Your contribution will go a long way towards supporting the many projects sponsored by the FAAGC. For your convenience, we have enclosed a solicitation form with sponsorship levels. Thank you very much in advance for your generous donation.

I hope to see you all at the Gala and *mabuhay ang FAAGC!*

How To Reach Us

FAAGC

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 Vmcr24@yahoo.com

FAAGC Annual Financial Report

(Fiscal Year 2010-11: July 1, 2010– June 30, 2011; *unaudited*)

(As reported by **Nieves McNulty**, 2009-2011 FAAGC Treasurer)

OPENING FUND BALANCES

as of July 1, 2010:

General Fund	\$ 15,494.00
Building Fund	12,960.00
Scholarship Fund	1,953.00
Dance Troupe Fund	566.00
Petty Cash	200.00
Total	\$ 31,173.00

CLOSING FUND BALANCES

as of June 30, 2011:

General Fund	\$ 20,327.00
Building Fund	13,010.00
Scholarship Fund	853.00
Dance Troupe Fund	396.00
Petty Cash	100.00
Total	\$ 34,686.00

2010-11

Net Income:

Membership Dues	\$ 1,325.00
Annual Gala	3,576.00
Dance Troupe	350.00
Scholarship Donation	550.00
International Festival	109.00
Misc. Donation/Income	885.00
Calendar Sales	305.00
Bank Interest less charges	317.00
Total Income	\$ 7,417.00

2010-11

Net Operating Expenses:

Newsletter/Website/ Mailings	\$ 168.00
Scholarships Given	1,650.00
Dance Troupe	520.00
Easter/Summer Picnics	204.00
Christmas Party	300.00
P.O. Box fee	44.00
Insurance	251.00
Other expenses	767.00
Total Expenses	\$ (3,904.00)

FY 2010-11 Net Gain for the Year: \$ 3,513.00

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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.

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Carlton Edwards
 Photographer

MOTIONS & TRANSITIONS

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- ★ **RICHARD & TESSIE BANNISTER** of Prosperity, SC.
- ★ **DIOSA DEAN** of Columbia, SC.

~ Congratulations ~

✿ to **RON & MARIE GENEROSO** of Columbia, SC, on their soon-to-arrive son.

♥ to **DANIELLE GLENN** on her marriage to **Larry R. Burton** on April 1 in Irmo, SC. A former *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* performer, she is the daughter of past FAAGC Treasurer **Jon Glenn** of Columbia, SC.

✿✿ to **CRELLEN & MITZIE HOPKINS** of Clemmons, NC, on the recent birth of their twins. *Congrats* also to grandparents **David & Cindy Tefft** of Las Vegas, NV.

♥ to **LAUREL KENERSON** on her upcoming marriage to **Nick Stello** on October 14 in Awendaw, SC. She is the younger daughter of **Jim & Tessie Kenerson** of Columbia, SC.

✿ to **ALAN & JENNIFER LUCILLO** of Columbia, SC, on the birth of their daughter on July 1.

✿ to **JOSH & JESSICA Cuaresma TODD** of Lexington, SC, on the birth of their son **David Ethan** on May 23. *Congrats* also to grandparents **Manny & Leah Cuaresma** of Columbia, SC.

Bon Voyage & Good Luck . . .

✿ **RUDY DIZON** moved to Las Vegas on August 8 to be with his family. A longtime FAAGC member and active volunteer at Fil-Am affairs and events, he served as a FAAGC Executive Board Member for the 2001-2003 and 2003-2005 terms.

✿ **WYDA VIRAY** also moved to Las Vegas recently to rejoin her family. Her whole family was actively involved in the Association — she served as a FAAGC Assistant Treasurer in 2009-2011; husband **Mario** was 2005-2007 2nd VP and 2007-2009 Executive Board member, son **Josh** was a *Fil-Am Dance Troupe* performer.

FAAGC Charter Member Passes Away

The Columbia Fil-Am Association recently lost one active charter member when **Dr. Alfonso Anolin Pasicatan** died on July 15, 2011 in Columbia, SC, at the age of 72.

He was born on March 11, 1939, in Manila, Philippines. A graduate of Manila Central Medical University, he completed his psychiatric residency at Wayne State University in Detroit. A former American Medical Association member, he was a psychiatrist for the S.C. Department of Mental Health for more than 26 years.

Actively involved during the early years of FAAGC, Dr. Pasicatan was a *tinikling* dancer at the first gala, a fashion show model at the first Christmas party, and a *Habanera*



Botolena performer at the 1993 gala. He also served as chairman of the Membership and Election committees in 1991-92.

For 20 years now, Dr. Al Pasicatan and his wife **Dr. Susana Batcagan Pasicatan, M.D.**, have been founding and sustaining charter members and continuing patrons of the FAAGC. ❖

CONDOLENCES

✝ Our condolences to the family of:

➤ **Bambie Tijing** on the recent death of her father in the Philippines.

Maraming Salamat! THANKS FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

Recent Membership Renewals:

- * Edith Alston
- * Carlos & Kathy Arevalo
- * Ruben & Chari Bagnol
- * Cecille Boman
- * Jon & Gina Castañeda
- * Joy Clark
- * Grace Collins
- * Manny & Leah Cuaresma
- * Kenneth & Diana Dingman
- * Gene & Sally Ellis
- * Terry & Reyna Funderburk
- * Alan & Cecille Geoghegan
- * Ed & Yani Gould
- * Pete & Cecille Jacobsen
- * Don & Evelyn Liester
- * Marvin & Beth Noble
- * Mark & Prescy Ramirez
- * Bong & Rosa Rances
- * David & Alma Robichaud
- * Keith Seymour
- * Cesar & Gladys Subibi
- * Neil & Bambie Tijing
- * Warren & Myrna Whitmire
- * Ken & Ronelin Zearfoss

FAAGC Officer's Mother Turns 100

Carmen P. Reyes became a centenarian on April 6, 2011.



She was feted with a 100th birthday party in Philadelphia on April 29 hosted

by her children and attended by family and friends who came all the way from the Philippines and Canada.

She has six children, 13 grandchildren, and 21 great-grandchildren. She is the mother of FAAGC 1st Vice President **Carmelisa Edwards**. ❖

Orangeburg Fil-Ams Featured in Local Paper

The **Filipino-American Association of Orangeburg, ATBP** was recently featured in the Orangeburg, SC, newspaper *The Times and Democrat*. The article entitled "*Blooming where planted: Local Filipinos form family halfway around the world*" was also posted on the newspaper's website on May 22, 2011 and featured interviews with former FAAGC members **Yvonne Mitchell** and **Elena Hair**, among others.

Now in its fifth year, the 100-member Association "continues pursuit of its mission to share and preserve the culture and heritage of Filipinos"

and "will continue to be involved with community events, such as the annual Rose Festival and Taste of Orangeburg."

According to longtime Orangeburg resident and Association President **Yvonne Mitchell**, the group is "planning an extravaganza for the fall, maybe at Stevenson Auditorium, to showcase Filipino dances, food and culture."

The article can be found online through this quick-link: tinyurl.com/FAAOburg.

Below: Some of the Orangeburg Fil-Ams have a *kodakan* moment during a family get-together.





A★C★H★I★E★V★E★M★E★N★T★S★ G★A★L★L★O★R★E★

Although the 2011-2012 school year is now starting, for posterity sake and historical record, we would be remiss if we don't carry on our annual tradition of recognizing high-achieving children (*and adults too*) in the extended Fil-Am community during the immediate past school year (2010-2011). Belated this may be, **CONGRATULATIONS** to the following graduates and awardees — and all others not mentioned here due to our lack of details on their individual accomplishments — despite repeated telephone, e-mail, snail-mail and verbal reminders, only a few families submitted the needed information and/or photos in time for inclusion in this issue.

★ **Dr. EDSSEL PEÑA**



won the title of 2011 SC Blitz Chess Champion at the South Carolina Chess Association tournament held on July 9, 2011 at the Hilton Garden Inn (Harbi-

son), Columbia, SC.

A statistics professor at the University of South Carolina, he finished the 16-player, ten-round, double-swiss tournament in a tie as the highest scoring South Carolina residents with Dr. Philipp Lamby, a USC math professor and SC Chess State Champion. After splitting the first two tiebreak games, Edsel won the third tiebreaker to earn the state blitz chess title. A video of how Edsel won the title can be seen online at youtube.com/watch?v=fksZ7ENLdfy ❖

★ **CHRISTINA (Chrissy) HOPKINS**

graduated from the Law Enforcement Course at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy on June 24, 2011. She is now a Sheriff's Deputy at the Richland County Sheriff's Department. A former pioneer *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* member, she is a daughter of Cindy Tefft of Las Vegas, NV. ❖



✎ **FAYE COLLEY** graduated with a Master of Arts in Teaching Elementary Educa-



tion from the University of South Carolina on May 7, 2011. The recipient of the College of Education's *Robert A. Weber Memorial* scholarship award, she also received the Elementary Education Outstanding M.A.T. award from the Department of Instruction and Teacher Education. A *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* performer, she is the newly-elected FAAGC Assistant Secretary. ❖

✎ **JUDITH CHRISTA PEÑA**



is set to receive her culinary diploma in pastry arts from the Institute of Culinary Education in New York City on September 9, 2011. After graduation she will serve an internship with the *Everyday with Rachel Ray* magazine, where she now works as Assistant to the Executive and Managing Editors.

A former *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* performer and a 2004 *Columbia Fil-Am Scholarship* recipient, she is the older daughter of Edsel & Marj Pena of Columbia, SC. ❖

✎ **RAQUEL MATIAS BAGNAL**

graduated on May 5, 2011 from USC-Aiken with a Bachelor of Science in Exercise and Sports Science. She is now serving with the World Race multi-nation missionary program of the interdenominational missions organization *Adventures in Missions (AIM)*. A former *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* performer and a 2007 *Columbia Fil-Am Scholarship* recipient, she is the youngest daughter of Ruben & Chari Bagnal of Columbia, SC. ❖

✎ **FAY MANAPAT**

graduated on December 13, 2010 with a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (biology, business and French) from the College of Hospitality, Retail & Sport Management of the University of South Carolina. She now works in Las Vegas, Nevada.

A 2006 *Columbia Fil-Am Scholarship* recipient, she is the oldest daughter of Galen & Joanne Manapat of Lexington, SC. ❖

✎ **MICHELLE ANNE PEÑA**

graduated from Columbia University (New York City) on May 18, 2011, with a



Bachelor of Arts in Architecture. She currently works with Aki Ishida architectural firm and is also a teaching assistant at Columbia University. She plans to pursue graduate studies in architecture. A 2007 *Columbia Fil-Am Scholarship*

Scholarship recipient, she is the younger daughter of Edsel & Marj Pena of Columbia, SC. ❖



✎ **CHRISTINE ARROYO**

graduated on June 2, 2011 from Ridge View High School. A former *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* member, she is the younger daughter of Oswald & Rowena Arroyo of Columbia, SC. ❖

✎ **KIM JONES**

KIM JONES graduated from Richland Northeast High School on June 2, 2011. A former *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* performer, she is a daughter of Doug & Evelyn Jones of Columbia, SC. ❖

✎ **KAREN MAGSINO**

graduated from Richland Northeast High School and its *Horizon* magnet program on June 2, 2011. A National Honor Society member, she received



her fourth consecutive *RNH S Community Service* award as well as a *Student*

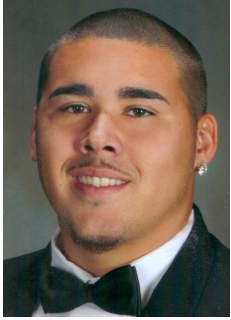
Government House Outstanding Member award. She was also a graduate of the Mid-Carolina AHEC Health Careers Academy. The recipient of *Leo Club Community, Leadership, LIFE, and PC Community Service* scholarship awards, she has enrolled at Presbyterian College to major in biology and complete pre-pharmacy requirements before proceeding to pharmacy school. A former *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* performer, she is the daughter of Barbara Proctor of Columbia, SC. ❖

ACHIEVEMENTS GALORE

CHRISTINE MANAPAT graduated on June 4, 2011 from White Knoll High School. She will join the National Guard Reserve and study to become a signal support systems specialist. She is a daughter of Galen & Joanne Manapat of Lexington, SC. ❖

NICOLE PHILLIPS graduated from Airport High School on June 1, 2011. Now enrolled at USC, she is the older daughter of Mark & Diana Phillips of Cayce, SC. ❖

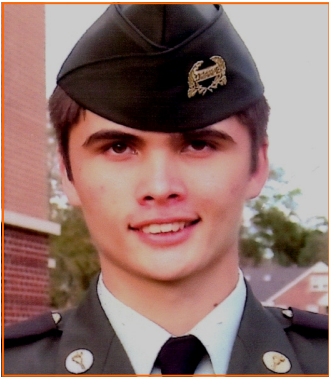
NICHOLAS BRIAN ROBERTS graduated from



White Knoll High School on June 4, 2011. He was a member of the Timberwolves

football team. He plans to attend Midlands Technical College to pursue a career in criminology. He is the son of Mary Barradas of Columbia, SC, and the grandson of FAAGC pioneer Grace Collins of Lexington, SC. ❖

JOSEPH A. SZOKE III graduated from A.C. Flora



High School on May 26, 2011. He was a member of the Drill Team, Rifle Team, Colored Guard and the Coordinating Staff of the school's ROTC program. He has already enlisted in the Air National Guard and plans to become an air traffic controller. He is a

son of Joseph & Celyn Szoke of Hopkins, SC and a grandson of Carlton & Lisa Edwards of Eastover, SC. ❖

ANDREW ROBERT WHITMIRE graduated



from Spring Valley High School on June 2, 2011. He has enrolled at USC to pursue an engineering career. He is the son of Warren & Myrna Whitmire of Columbia, SC. ❖



BRIDGET NICOLE ANDERSON completed her first year in college on the



Dean's List at Lander University in Greenwood, SC. A former Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance

Troupe performer and a 2010 Columbia Fil-Am Scholarship recipient, she is the daughter of Leroy & Lulu Anderson of Columbia, SC. ❖

ELAIZA "Leigh" APAN completed 11th grade

with all A's and in the Top 10% of all juniors at Blythewood High School. Elected into the National Technical Honor Society, she was also a player in the basketball and lacrosse varsity teams. A Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe performer for several years now, she is the older daughter of Bernadette Yavis of Blythewood, SC. ❖

Fil-Ams Design for Recycled Fashion Show

by I.C. Go

It's been said that people did not know that Columbia, SC has anything like the *Runaway Runway Recycled Fashion Show*. The show is the Columbia Design League's main fundraiser and is designed to raise awareness about recycling.

The contest rules state that: "Materials must be USED or POST-CONSUMER and on the way to the landfill. Entries will be disqualified (including the night of the event) if new materials are used (e.g. purchasing a package of plastic cups). Please keep in mind the event's concept is to explore new uses for materials that have reached the end of their lifecycle."



FAAGC member Ivy Sumaydeng Bryan (right) poses with her Recycled Fashion Show design modeled by a USC student.

Fil-Am Designers

The recently concluded April 2011 event featured the design of FAAGC member **Ivy Sumaydeng Bryan**. Her design was modeled by Olga Nedorub, a Russian geophysicist studying at the University of South Carolina, and featured:

- "Credit Squeeze Bustier" embellished with cut-up credit cards. The fabric was from the designer's martial arts pants (with apologies to her Tai Chi master).
- "All the News that's Fit to

Flaunt" skirt that used blue plastic bags from The *New York Times*. Petticoat and rosettes consisted of recycled net bags for oranges. Floppy disc earrings and video tape bows accessorized and completed the outfit.

Imelda "Mel" Go, our regular *Fil-Am Bulletin* contributor, has also participated in the show every year since its inception in 2008 as a designer modeling her own designs. She says that it's been a lot of fun for her to see how the designs evolved. She believes that they are just getting started and it will be interesting to see where creativity will lead them to in future years.

Both Fil-Am ladies are looking forward to next year's recycled fashion show and are already contemplating on what materials they could be using for their future designs. ❖

Congratulations to all Fil-Am Achievers!



EMILEE COLLINS completed first grade at Red Bank Elementary. Her IBIS artwork was selected to be displayed in the school website. She is the youngest daughter of Ronnie & Tammy Collins of Lexington, SC, and a granddaughter of FAAGC pioneer Grace Collins of Lexington, SC. ❖



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1066 Sayre Ln
ELGIN
Bed: 3 Bath: 3 1/2 SF: 2800



212 Wren Creek Circle
BLYTHEWOOD
Bed: 4 Bath: 3 1/2 SF: 4400



113 Wren Ridge Dr
BLYTHEWOOD
Bed: 4 Bath: 3 1/2 SF: 3600



167 Lakeport Dr
CHAPIN
Bed: 4 Bath: 2 1/2 SF: 3500



293 N Haigs Creek
ELGIN
Bed: 4 Bath: 2 1/2 SF: 2400



216 Eascott Place
LAKE CAROLINA
Bed: 3 Bath: 2 1/2 SF: 2331



141 Rivendale
NORTHEAST
Bed: 3 Bath: 2 1/2 SF: 2330



74 Polo Ridge
NORTHEAST
Bed: 3 Bath: 3 SF: 2400



1218 Beaufort St
DOWNTOWN
Bed: 3 Bath: 2 SF: 3099



3512 Bellingham Rd
DOWNTOWN
Bed: 3 Bath: 2 SF: 1400



6700 Cary Lane
FOREST ACRES
Waterfront Lot



804 Woodrow St
DOWNTOWN
Bed: 5 Bath: 3 SF: 1900

FORECLOSURE PROPERTIES & MORE.....



2340 Rolling Hills Rd
IRMO
Bed: 3 Bath: 2 SF: 1347



200 Kingsdown Ln
DOWNTOWN
Bed: 3 Bath: 2 1/2 SF: 1620



220 Sommerset Dr
NORTHEAST
Bed: 3 Bath: 2 SF: 1792



15 Ashley Brook Ct
NORTHEAST
Bed: 3 Bath: 2 SF: 1651

(continued from Page 1)

2011 Executive Board (three re-elected to the same positions, three elected to new positions), one other past officer, and four first-time officers.

Here's a quick look at the leaders who will guide the Filipino-American Association of Greater Columbia for the next two years.

MARJ PEÑA (President)

Since her family moved to Columbia in 2000, Marj has been a very welcome asset to the Association. A past two-term FAAGC Secretary (2001-2003, 2003-2005), she was elected 2009-2011 President.

Born in Cebu City, she grew up in Phillips, Del Monte, Bukidnon. She earned a chemistry degree from the University of Santo Tomas, and M.S. (chemistry) and Ph.D. (biology) from Bowling Green State University. She is a Research Assistant Professor at the Department of Biological Sciences and the Director of the Mouse Core Facility at the Center for Colon Cancer Research at USC.

In the U.S. for nearly 30 years now, she is married to Edsel Peña, a professor of statistics at USC. They have two daughters, Judith (a past performer of the *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* and a 2008 B.S. Biology and English graduate of USC) and Michelle (a 2011 architecture graduate of Columbia University, NY).

LISA EDWARDS (1st VP)

Previously, Lisa was the 2008-09 Assistant Secretary and 2009-2011 2nd Vice President. She has also performed with the *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe*.

Born in Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental, she lived in Manila and Naga City. A medical technology graduate of Far Eastern University (Manila), she is now retired, after working at Richland Memorial Hospital for 12 years and at the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control for over 18 years.

She is married to Carlton Lewis Edwards, Sr. and they have two children (who are also FAAGC members): Celyn (married to Joseph Szoke, Jr.) and Carlton, Jr. (married to Amy) and seven grandchildren.

THE 2011-2013 FAAGC EXECUTIVE BOARD



(front, l-r): **Rio Daquilanea**, **Carlos Arevalo**, **Bong Rances**, **Peter Liunoras** (Board Members). (back, l-r): **Grace Collins** (Board Member), **Bambie Tijing** (Asst. Treasurer), **Odess Brinkman** (Secretary), **Nieves McNulty** (Treasurer), **Faye Colley** (Asst. Secretary), **Marj Pena** (President), **Lisa Edwards** (1st VP), **Grace Balanquit** (2nd VP). Photo by Carlton Edwards

GRACE BALANQUIT (2nd VP)

Originally from Cebu who has been in the U.S. for over 23 years (and in Columbia for six years), Grace has been actively involved in FAAGC events since becoming a member four years ago. A *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* performer since 2008, she was a 2009-2011 Executive Board Member.

A regular advertiser with the *Fil-Am Bulletin*, as an officer, she would like the Association to have more "group participation and community involvement."

With BS in Kinesiology from San Francisco State University, California, she now works as a real estate agent with RE/MAX Real Estate Services. She is married to Frank Hutchinson.

NIEVES MCNULTY (Treasurer)

A sustaining charter member since FAAGC was organized, Nieves has served two terms as its President (1997-1999 and 1999-2001) and Treasurer (2009-2011). She has also taught Tagalog lessons for FAAGC, chaired the Columbia Fil-Am Scholarship committee, and even choreographed for the dance troupe.

Originally from Quezon City via Lingayen, Pangasinan and La Paz, Iloilo, and a mathematics graduate from the University of the Philippines (UP), she came to Columbia in 1974 for further studies. She received her Ph.D. in mathematics from USC in 1982.

She has taught math at UP-Los Baños, USC-Columbia, University of Hawaii, University of Colorado, UP-Diliman, and

USC-Aiken. Since 1999 she has been the math department chair at Columbia College. She has received numerous professional honors, awards and grants. In 2001 she was named "International Professional of the Year" by the Columbia International Festival.

She is married to George McNulty, a math professor at USC who has served as three-term FAAGC Treasurer (2001-2007) and Second Vice President (2007-2009). They have two sons: Alfred and Michael, both past performers of the *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe*.

ODESS BRINKMAN (Secretary)

Originally from Itogon, Benguet, Odess earned a B.S. Commerce (economics) degree from Saint Louis University (Baguio City) and an associate degree in computer technology from Midlands Tech.

In the Columbia area for over 15 years, she served previously as FAAGC Secretary (2005-2007) and Assistant Treasurer (2007-2009). A *Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe* performer, she is also one of the current Cultural Coordinators. She is married to Myrtle Beach, SC-born David Brinkman; they have a son, Jeremy.

MARIBEL TIJING (Asst. Treasurer)

A seven-year area resident, Bambie considers her family, which "loves to travel and do outdoor activities," as "diverse"—she is from Oas, Albay; husband Neil Anthony is from Dumaguete City; son Lanz Anthony, 12, was born in

Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia, and daughter Lara Allyson, 8, was born in Savannah, Georgia.

With an accounting degree from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, she is a "stay-at-home mom." Her husband works at AT&T as senior RF engineer.

A *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* performer since 2009, she was the 2009-2011 Assistant Secretary.

FAYE COLLEY (Assistant Secretary)

In the area for seven years now from Quezon City and Bohol, Faye recently graduated with a master's degree in elementary education from USC. A member since 2006, she and her husband "are happy to be part of FAAGC and to have found true friends through it." She has been a *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* performer since 2009.

As an officer, she would like for the Association "to strive to get members who belong to other race or ethnicity so we can continue to promote the Filipino culture to more individuals as well as expand our social network, to provide opportunities for real and meaningful friendship, and "to function as a support system to members who are in need."

To make the Association more vibrant, she hopes to have "subcommittees and interest groups formed, have long-time members encourage new members to participate, and cultivate new members' talents." She would also like an "education committee to be formed to teach young Filipino-Americans Philippine history and help them understand deeper the culture of Filipinos."

Currently she is a real estate agent with Crossroads Realty. Her husband Ronald is a residential builder/master electrician contractor. They have a son, Ronnie, 3.

CARLOS AREVALO (Executive Board Member)

Originally from Daet, Camarines Norte, Carlos has been here since the mid-90s. His wife Kathy, originally from Zambales, is a registered nurse. Their son Darryl has been performing with the *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* for two years now.

(continued on Page 8)

THE 2011-2013 FAAGC EXECUTIVE BOARD

(continued from Page 7)

GRACE COLLINS**(Executive Board Member)**

A pioneer sustaining charter member and part of the first Executive Board, Grace has served the Association in various capacities. She has served as an Executive Board member (1991-1992, 2009-2011), Second Vice-President (1994-1995, 1995-1996), First Vice-President (1999-2001), and President (2003-2005). She was the founding director (and once in a while, early on, a performer) of the *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* from 1993 to 2000.

A member of the Columbia International Festival organizing committee since it began in 1996, she was named the festival's "International Volunteer of the Year" in 2002.

Originally from Pampanga, one of the so-called Columbia "origins" [original Filipino residents in the area], and a retiree from the SC Department of Motor Vehicles, she has two

grown children, Ronnie and Mary.

RIO DAQUILANEA**(Executive Board Member)**

Originally from Olongapo City, Zambales, Rio has been here since the mid-90s. His wife Mary Jane, originally from Norzagaray, Bulacan, is a registered nurse. Their daughter Nicole has been performing with the *Columbia Fil-Am Cultural Dance Troupe* for two years now

PETER LIUNORAS**(Executive Board Member)**

Since becoming members in 1995, Pete and his family have been very active in FAAGC activities. He has served as Executive Board Member (1996-1997), First Vice-President (1997-1999), and President (2001-2003).

Born in Makati but growing up in Batangas City, he has degrees in aeronautical engineering from FEATI University (Manila) and in education

from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP). He was an assistant professor of military science at UWSP and a JROTC instructor at Ridge View High School. In the U.S. since 1969 and in the Columbia area since 1993, he is now a federal (U.S. Army) and state retiree.

As officer, he would like FAAGC to do "more recruitment and focus more on our young generation." He would also like to "convince the other associations in SC to get more involved in our activities."

He is married to the former Olga Laut from Bato, Camarines Sur. They have three grown children — Ignacio II, Isel and Irene — all of whom were members of the *Columbia Fil-Am Dance Troupe*.

FRANCISCO "Bong" RANCES**(Executive Board Member)**

Originally from Tigaon, Camarines Sur, Bong has been a FAAGC member since coming to the U.S. (and Co-

lumbia) in 2006. With a B.S. in Physical Therapy from the University of Northeastern Philippines (Iriga City), he has worked in South Korea as a production supervisor in an electronics manufacturing company.

As an officer, Bong would like the Association to be "bigger, stronger, united." He would also like to "encourage more Filipinos in Columbia to join and make them involved" in the organization and "reach out to and collaborate with neighboring Fil-Am associations by co-sponsoring mutually beneficial projects." He hopes to organize a sports festival in Columbia to be participated in by the various neighboring Fil-Am groups.

Now working as a machinist at Accutech Machine (Blythe-wood, SC), he is married to town-mate Rosa Victoria, a nurse at Palmetto Health Richland. They have a daughter, Victoria Maristella, 10. ❖

MY FAAGC FAMILY

(continued from Page 1)

technology will only get even better.

Objectives Met

A few years after I arrived in 1989, FAAGC formed and I have been reaping membership benefits ever since. FAAGC's aims are:

- ◆ to promote better relations between Filipinos in the U.S. and their communities of residence;
- ◆ to preserve and promote the rich cultural heritage of Filipinos and provide mechanisms for its introduction to the American culture;
- ◆ to provide charitable assistance when and where needed; and
- ◆ to provide opportunities for Filipinos and other interested parties to meet and promote friendship and good fellowship.

Through all these years, I believe FAAGC has met its goals. FAAGC goes well beyond picnics, parties, and socials. FAAGC is about community-building. Put plainly and simply, FAAGC has made my life happier and more satisfying by providing avenues for me to connect with fellow Filipino-Americans and for me to recognize my Filipino roots

and heritage.

Bayanihan

People have often asked me if I have family in South Carolina and the answer has been, for the most part, "no" in reference to blood relatives or a spouse. Comments often follow that it must be hard to be alone. I will have to agree that it takes a lot of fortitude and a lot of getting used to be on your own and without nearby kin.

As the years rolled by, my eyes opened to the fact that everywhere around me is an opportunity to be someone's daughter, sister, cousin, niece, aunt, and friend. There might be only one of me, but there are many around me who have no children, no sister, no cousin, no niece, no aunt, and only a few friends. There are those who might have one, two, or a few but could use another. Even if it is just for brief moments that I am such to another person, I have become many things to others.

Likewise, others have come to represent many persons to me. Connecting with each oth-

er could be as simple as a smile, a hug, a phone call, a conversation, a pat on the back, a helping hand, a hospital visit, or sitting in prayer at a visitation. It does not take much to help build our community or to promote the spirit of *bayanihan* (communal unity) Filipinos are known for.

I recently made several trips to the hospital to visit my Filipina friend of many years. I was but one of many Filipinos who visited. There was home cooking just for the Filipino palate, which was a welcome break from hospital food indeed. There were pictures of relatives in the Philippines and numerous get well cards.

Beyond Blood Relatives

One afternoon I walked away with tears welling in my eyes. If I were in the Philippines, I would do the same if my relative was in the hospital. There it struck me that although I do have my blood relatives, my many, many friends who far outnumbered my immediate family members formed a group that enabled me to be part of an even larger

network. This network of associations went beyond blood lines.

Maraming Salamat

Thank you to my Fil-Am *lolos, lolas, nanays, tatays, titos, titas*, many *kapatid, pinsans*, and many *kaibigan* (grandfathers, grandmothers, mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts, siblings, cousins, and friends).

More importantly, thank you for letting me be your *apo, anak, kapatid, pamangkin, pinsan, tita*, and *kaibigan* (grandchild, child, sister, niece, cousin, aunt, and friend). Words cannot describe how my life has been enriched.

Just like in any family, there are misunderstandings. We are all just human and conflict is inevitable. It is how we rise to the challenges of conflict that we define our character and the strength of the community. The Filipino-American Association of Greater Columbia, SC has remained solid for 20 years.

I am grateful for being part of this community. This is a family and a tribe that I belong to. I am not alone. ❖

MY FIL-AM STORY*(continued from Page 1)*

parent in instilling the value of preserving my cultural background to my children.

But what does FAAGC go to do with this?

The Beginning

Well, here's how it all started. About 20 years ago, one of my co-workers at the then Palmetto Memorial Hospital, a Filipino-American named Myrna Lomotan invited me to attend a Filipino gathering on one Sunday. This was followed by another invitation from another Filipino-American, Maria Bonzagni. So, that Sunday, with a little hesitation I attended the meeting with my two small children — AJ was five and Aileen was barely three at that time. It was a well attended meeting and there I met many Filipino-Americans from all walks of life — doctors, nurses, military personnel, technicians, office employees, store workers. As far as I could remember, there was so much excitement, willingness, enthusiasm and, most of all, so much fun, during the meeting.

I attended all the succeeding meetings that sought to organize formally the Filipinos and Filipino-Americans in the area. At one meeting the interim board was looking for a newsletter staffer. Knowing my husband's background in journalism (he was a college newspaper editor at Xavier University), I immediately volunteered him (of course, without his knowledge or initial consent; he was working outside Columbia at that time). When he came home that weekend, I told him about it; he hesitantly agreed. Since then, the rest is history with the *Fil-Am Bulletin* newsletter.

Our Involvement

I was elected as secretary during the first formal election of officers on June 15, 1991, first vice president the next year, eventually the president for three consecutive one-year terms from 1994 to 1997, and Executive Board member during the 1999-2001 term.

Since then, even though I stepped down as an officer, our family continued to be actively involved with the organization

— my children were members of the cultural dance troupe until they went away to college, Noel and I continued to be the Editor and circulation coordinator, respectively, of the *Fil-Am Bulletin* (which by the way, is being archived at the South Caroliniana Library), and he still does the annual gala souvenir program.

And I am very proud to say that, if my memory serves me well, Noel and I have **NOT** missed any single gala, Christmas party, spring picnic, general membership meeting, and the annual Columbia International Festival.

**Children's Involvement**

How did my children get involved? As I mentioned previously, AJ was five and Aileen was three when we started attending Fil-Am events. AJ was eight when he first performed *tinikling* as a pioneer member of the dance troupe and Aileen started at the age of five as a bamboo pole holder during performances. Since then, they both became major performers of the dance troupe until they went to college.

AJ went on to become the president of the USC Filipino-American Student Association (FASA) in 2004-2006. Under his leadership, and with the support of some Fil-Am parents, FASA was able to present a well-attended, first-at-USC "Philippine Night" event showcasing Philippine folk and modern dances and food tasting. The March 19, 2005 event was held at USC Russell House ballroom and was attended by hundreds of USC students.

Aileen, maybe with her experience since she was five in helping fold, stamp and sort out the Fil-Am newsletter (even with a fractured and plaster-cast arm one year), became the

newsletter editor of *City Year — Miami Edition* for 2010-11. Recently, she was also the co-master of ceremonies during the City Year *Young Heroes* graduation held at Miami Dade College in Miami, FL.

FAAGC Influence

Both my children practically grew up with the Fil-Am activities and I believe that our involvement with FAAGC had a tremendous influence on them. Looking back, I kept on thinking "how did I manage to do all these in my involvement with the Fil-Am over the last 20 years" — despite the fact that I had a full time job, two small children who were both very active in school academically and extra-curricularly, a home to take care of, a husband, two to three meetings every month, school events to attend regularly?

I really don't know how I did it but one thing I know is that **you can never be too busy for anything if you have the commitment to do something you want to do.** That is why I think I just can not abandon the FIL-AM because I feel like I have invested so much of my time that can never be compensated by monetary value.

"Embracing Culture"

Seeing my grown up children hanging Philippine flags in their dorm room /apartment since first year college makes me feel so happy and proud. I am happy because they learned so much to be proud of their Philippine heritage despite that they were born and raised here in America. After all, one of FAAGC's objectives is to promote and preserve the Philippine culture. I believed that FAAGC made a difference in their lives by helping them "embrace their Asian culture," as Aileen put it.

I wanted to write a more detailed article but space doesn't permit in this issue. Hopefully, I can finish my plan of writing a history of the FAAGC in Columbia ---after all I witnessed and participated in the events that led to the founding and growth of this organization up to the present. ❖

Annual Gala*(continued from Page 1)*

For a small fee, baby-sitting services will be available on-site for children aged 2 to 8.

Guests wishing to stay at the Columbia Marriott can reserve a standard or double room at a special rate. Please contact the Marriott at (803) 771-7000 or online www.marriotcolumbia.com; mention your stay is in connection with the *Columbia Filipino-American Gala*.

Gala Souvenir Program

The gala is the Association's main annual fundraiser to support its various projects and activities such as the Philippine cultural dance troupe, scholarship fund, charitable endeavors, and other educational and multicultural activities in the South Carolina Midlands. As such, we are also soliciting all kinds of contributions in the form of advertisements and donations (*see form included in this issue*) for inclusion in the printed souvenir program.

This year, the souvenir program has the theme of "**FAAGC at 20: THEN and NOW.**" If interested in placing an ad or making a donation, we would like you to send us an **old** (*preferably taken in 1991*) and **new** (*preferably taken in 2011*) photos of yourself and/or family. Deadline for all ads or donor messages to be included in the printed gala souvenir program is **August 28.**

Contacts

For tickets or more details about the Fil-Am Gala, contact **Marj Pena** at (803) 360-2469, **Lisa Edwards** at (803) 360-2636, or any other officer listed on *Page 2* of this newsletter. In the Summer area, contact **Cecilia Jacobsen** at the **Fil-Am Store** [(803) 494-5613].

For hotel directions and updated information, visit the Columbia Fil-Am website at www.FilAmSC.org ❖

**TOGETHER WE
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FILIPINO—AMERICAN
Association of Greater Columbia

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- * **September 10, 2011** (Saturday, 6:00 p.m.)
 - ▶ **Columbia Fil-Am 21st Annual Gala & 20th Anniversary Ball**
 - ◆ **Columbia Marriott Hotel (downtown)**
1200 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29201
- * **December 17, 2011** (Saturday)
 - ▶ **Columbia Fil-Am Annual Christmas Party**
 - ◆ **St. John Neumann School gymnasium**
721 Polo Road, Columbia, SC 29223

RELATED EVENTS:

- * **August 13, 2011 (Opening Ceremonies)**
thru October 16, 2011
- ▶ **Singgalot (The Ties That Bind)**
[Filipinos in America, from Colonial Subjects to Citizens] — A Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition on Filipino history, culture and community in the U.S.
[website: filam.si.edu/singgalot.html]
- ◆ **Charlotte Museum of History**
3500 Shamrock Drive, Charlotte, NC 28215
[website: www.charlottemuseum.org]

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.

Be Our Fun on Facebook with this quick-link:
tinyurl.com/FAAGCI

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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 Annual Gala. If there are membership renewal questions, contact Nieves McNulty (553-6540; nmcnulty@columbiasc.edu).



FIL-AM BULLETIN

"TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE"

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

P.O. Box 24112, Columbia, SC 29224 ★

Summer 2011 ★

Volume 21, Number 1 ★



Don't Forget:

- * **Columbia FIL-AM 20th ANNIVERSARY GALA** will be held on **Saturday, September 10, 2011** at the **Columbia Marriott Hotel**.