

Liliosa recently asked whether there'd be any writeup of the mini-Lakbay undertaken by Manilenos Pasicolans, Ongs and Abads to our Tanjay town. I promised a combination short writeup-pictorial, so here it is, and more.

Over the past 2-1/2 weeks, we have had 4 sets of house guests: Lisa's brother from NJ who flew in with me, then the Manilenos who stayed 4 days over the previous week-end, then Lisa's cousin from SF whose last trip here was 16 years ago, and finally my mother who flew in from Manila on the same day that my LA-based brother, his wife and 2 of her local relatives bussed-in and ferried-over from Carcar, Cebu. And of course, this does not count the kith and kin who came around to visit and/or we visited.

So here goes.



At the Tanjay house, after a sumptuous meal, the Manilenos partake of fruit - lanzones, nangka, marang, mangosteen, and the smelly durian. Lisa, Mimi, Mercy, Jimmy, Mon, Jong, and Ting love it all.



Snack time, at the beach house, after the heavier meal that included a lechon raised on local feed at the farm. Such piglets are black skinned, rather than the pale skinned imports, and are reputedly more delicious.



At the farm 4 km from town, where we ate fresh buko harvested from the coconut trees. At the back was the pig “condo”, the pen, where only 2 piglets were left.



Friday night is always dancing at the park, with a live band employed by the municipality. That's Mercy and Jimmy showing off their prowess doing the foxtrot.



Mercy and Mimi doing their early morning Taichi at the beach house front. We slept overnight that Saturday, although couldn't star gaze due to the cloudy skies.



In the highland town of Valencia, 8 km from Dumaguete, at the popular Forest Camp resort, with river, pools, cottages, and restaurant. The source of the river is the geothermal springs where power is generated. Residents of Valencia have subsidized power and water bills.



During the 4 days the Lakbayans were in Negros, portions of Metro Manila had no power due to the storm. The day after they left, Tanjay had no power for almost a day. At first I thought it was caused by a freak wind gust on that downed transformer above, and even text'd Mercy that they brought the bad weather, but I later found out it was a truck accident.

A few days later, my folks came into town, and they took up the challenge of Lisa's nephew Rex to ride a "habal-habal" up to the mountain top. The habal-habal is a modified motorcycle, used as the mode of transportation for the rough secondary roads (or trails) still taken by school teachers going up to their barrio school assignments in the mountains. You can see why many schoolteachers end up marrying the habal-habal drivers.



That's my mother and LA-based brother Caloy on the first bike, and me (fiddling with camera) and SF based cousin-in-law Iking on the second bike. These habal-habals are not the highly modified versions, which have extended tandem seating with "estribo" for 6 pairs of feet, driver included.



Fortunately, Rex (standing) used his Toyota Land Cruiser with 4 wheel drive, and it could travel with the habal-habals up the trail to the 3000 ft mountain top. We agreed that my Ma would ride only partway, then transfer to the van.



Unfortunately, it was all foggy when we got to the top 30 minutes later, and none of the fabled views showed themselves to us, which were the Bais Bay, Tanjay plain with the extensive sugarcane fields. That's me and Rex in a swirl of mist.



Yours truly on the habal-habal. I understand “habal” has a root word that connotes spooning. Rex indicates that in Mindanao, there is another version of modified motorcycle: instead of 6 passengers sitting tandem, they are placed on extended seats on either side of the driver, hence the term “skylab”, where if you can imagine, they are like the panels of the skycraft. Apparently, the trails are wider there.

I wonder if given the same opportunity, whom of the Lakbayans would have ridden?

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