

## THE TANJAY RIVER ADVENTURE

A couple of days ago, Balibbayan visitor Paul Amigo called to invite us for a trip on a pump-boat to go out to sea and then upriver. Paul is married to Nena Alcantara, originally from Tanjay. The couple had rushed to town a week or so earlier to attend the funeral of Nena's brother, Eddie.



Google map of Tanjay and vicinity. Red line traces the route of the eventual journey. It took about 1-1/2 hours.

We knew Paul and Nena from way back, when we were still in the US; actually visited them at their place in Charlotte, NC, and they of course had made a number of visits to our frequently well attended Los Angeles Tanjay USA affairs over the years. Some years back, together with two other couples, the Calumpangs and Zernas, we toured parts of Italy for a week. I was the driver and Paul was the chef.

Though Paul hails from Dumaguete, he had work stints in Mindoro and Mindanao before he left for the US. So he was used to "roughing it up". Paul is quite adventuresome, hence his invitation to go on a boat trip wasn't surprising at all. Apparently, he had done this before in a recent visit. Both of them are now considering coming back to retire part time in the Philippines.

Included in the group was another couple, Joel Borromeo and wife Linda Antonio, both locals, who together with Lisa and I (also locals for the past 4 years) would make up the six-some.

Paul said he'd take care of everything: bring the food, drinks, rent the boat. Our assignment was just to pick them all up 7:00 AM in our van, then go to Lawton pier, and park there.

The itinerary was ambitious: in a rented boat from the pier, go far off to sea, angle back to the White Sand beach front where the City is presently building a resort, have a lunch picnic there, back to the boat, go up-river to at least any one of the three bridges spanning the river, then back to sea, and return to the pier.



Above photo is a view from the pier where we parked the van. The boat Paul hired is on right side, berthed near the shore. It was good that it was high tide, so it wasn't too difficult to get onboard. Note concrete break water structures. What concerned me was when coming back, it would be low tide. See old photo below of the view from the pier at low tide. That's the



reason why Lawton pier is noted to be almost useless as a pier.

Alas, Filipino time saw us at 9:00 am still at the pier. We bought some fresh fish for good measure to supplement the "fiambarrera" of goodies that Paul brought, i.e., if we could have the time to cook the fish. See two photos below.



Top: Paul, Lisa & Joel. Bottom: Linda, Nena & Paul.



The belles pose before the journey. Background is the northward view with shoreline and fishing boats. An on-going City project calls for making this shoreline into a boulevard extending almost to the river mouth.



Photo at left shows the boat heading towards the river mouth. Once in the river, it was all serene and easy sailing. Photo below on left shows the well known river island which was once jokingly proposed to be a casino site



We decided to have our lunch picnic on the boat. We'd have difficulty climbing up over the

river's four foot embankment.

River scenes show children frolicking on a banana-trunk raft called a "gakit" Lisa recalls that as kids in the 50s, they'd swim in the river which was much cleaner then. Not surprisingly, there were tales about crocodiles at log ponds at that time.

That's Paul in a posed shot to entice our friends such as Braddock to come home sooner to enjoy the frolic and camaraderie.



It was a tight fit, six of us passengers and two boat men.



And the sea was rough. Waves were big and they often swamped the prow and wet us. Heavyweight Paul was sitting up front, and the boatmen advised that he should move to center for better balance. I had a sense that in that type of rough sea, we were overloaded. One boatman was manning the bilge pump.

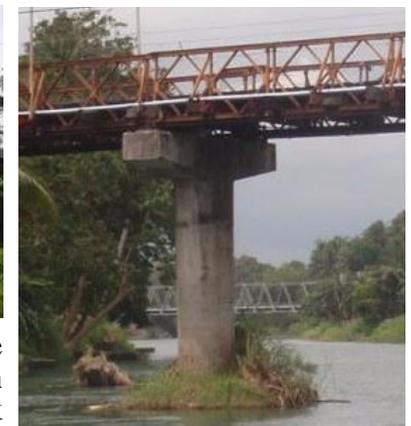
So finally, we decided to skip going to White Sand and just head up river.



Linda and Nena eating the adobo, boiled bananas, etc.



More river views. That's Lisa manning the food brigade. Above, that's me surveying the scene. On right is a teen-ager swinging from a rope tied to a tree overhanging the river where she dived into. Imagine, if this was the US, she'd probably be in a bikini. Below, the sand quarry site at Katiawtiaw. Center below, the old partly roofed Tabuc bridge, now used only for light traffic I drove the van over it once, but never again.



By this time, we were in no mood to go back to the pier via the sea route. There was an easier way: go past the Tabuc bridge to the new bridge (seen further on right photo), clamor up the staired embankment, cross the bridge and then walk



a block to the Alcantara house. That's exactly what we did. Photo above left shows the boat after we got off. The boatmen unloaded all our gear: chairs, food containers, coolbox, etc, and Paul took a pedicab to bring them to their cousin's house nearby.

Left photo shows Nena, Linda, Joel and Lisa relaxing at the house.

As for me, I took a pedicab to the Lawton pier to retrieve the van. It took only 7 minutes.

During the trip, Joel, being a civil engineer who had worked for the city, had much running commentary on all the infrastructure.

When my grand kids visit soon, we'll take them on this boat ride, but only in the river.

Paul talks about another trip into the mountains but that will have to wait until he comes back. With another adventuresome friend Wolfgang, we'd make a good trio.

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