

# **The 62nd Street Forum Lectures And Other Selections - 2**

by

**Danny J. Gil & Juan M. Reyes**

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## INTRODUCTION

### How it all started

About fall of 2002, my wife Lisa and I attended a musical concert of Michael Dadap at the Philippine Consulate in NYC. We had recently moved in from Los Angeles, CA. In the reception that followed, we saw a familiar face: Dr. Amador Muriel, PhD, our physics professor in the early 60's back in UP, Diliman. We approached him, and sure enough, he remembered us. We were invited to his house, and over coffee, we reminisced about the good old college days.

Though we hadn't seen Amador in 40 years, we had heard much about him and actually were in email contact a few years earlier when he was running for the UP presidency, and though we still were based in CA, we helped launch a campaign among our UP friends via the UP email group we had, about 150 strong.

In the course of the evening, he mused that some years back, his place was the venue of many a meeting / forum / gathering of various groups, albeit mainly political. This was during the Marcos years. And then he suggested the idea of starting up again a regular meeting group mainly for intellectual growth and camaraderie. This we fully endorsed.

Thus was born the 62nd Street Forum, named after his address in midtown Manhattan. We started out by gathering our friends regularly on selected Saturday evenings at his place for social events that included meetings, lectures, but always ending up

with pot-luck dinner and drinks. The starting time was at 7:00 PM when free street parking was allowed.

I also started a YahooGroups cyber “Loop” of Tri-State (NY, NJ, CN) friends, and this accreted to over a hundred strong, and eventually extended to other out-of-state and -country participants, who joined in the discussions via email.

Over a period of 6 years, we had over 36 lectures or meetings spanning all sorts of topics by various speakers, locally and from the Philippines. Towards the latter part of the period, we had more social events, especially when some former member who moved out of the area, happened to come to town. Further below is such a list of events with Roman numeral designations.

We tried to keep records of the topics and content by making write-ups of each lecture, listing the attendees, photo ops, and then posting them on the internet.

We even started a Newsletter, but it only lasted two issues since email via the Loop was easier.

This where Johnny Reyes’ special talents came in very handily.

As an engineer, he apparently has a photographic memory. But another talent is his writing skills. After a lecture, he’d make a write-up and send it out to the Loop. Many of us often kidded him about hiding a wire or recorder some where, but that didn’t seem to be the case.

In any event, this book is a compilation of all those lectures that were reported on the Loop, plus many other selected email threads that were pertinent or of interest. One of the Forum members is Jobo Elizes, also a retired engineer who is an accredited

sub-contractor to the Amazon Book powerhouse, and it is through him that these books are possible.

The 62nd Street Forum's meetings started petering out in 2008 when a good number of us started leaving the tri-state area. The last article in the book gives all the interesting details.

But the cyber Loop still continues on, though perhaps not as active as before.

When first all complied, the contents made the book too thick. So the publisher decided to break it down into 2 books. This is the second book.

Referring to the Table of Contents, this Introduction, List of Lectures, Excerpts, Appendix and Publisher's Message are repeated from the first book.

Danny Gil  
20 Oct 2016

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## **LIST OF LECTURES / MEETINGS / EVENTS**

- |     |           |  |
|-----|-----------|--|
| I   | 1-Mar-03  | Amador Muriel - Retirement                                   |
| II  | 22-Mar-03 | Bert Floretino & Gene Pulmano<br>- Life of Jose Garcia Villa |
| III | 5-Apr-03  | Johnny Reyes - Refinery<br>Danny Gil - LEED                  |
| IV  | 19-Apr-03 | Mang Rodriguez - Sculpture                                   |
| V   | 17-May-03 | Norman Madrid - Economics                                    |
| VI  | 21-Jun-03 | Carlos Esguerra - Photography                                |
| VII | 19-Jul-03 | Tony Nievera - Computers                                     |

VIII	29-Dec-03	Christmas party - Loida on GMA
IX	21-Feb-04	Cynthia de Leon - Filipino Song
X	7-Mar-04	Mars Custodio - Cancer
XI	27-Mar-04	Jane Orendain - Dance Erwin Gomez - Heart
XII	18-Apr-04	Jane Orendain - Flamenco Amador Muriel - Physics
XIII	17-Jul-04	Vic Vitug - Arbitration Jane Orendain - Malong Elizabeth Cuevas - Ballet
XIV	19-Sep-04	Johnny Reyes - Turbulence
XV	14-Oct-04	Joy Barrios - War, GMA
XVI	28-Nov-04	Gene Pulmano - Diabetes Louie Acosta - Santos Statues
XVII	26-Feb-05	Amador Muriel - Einstein's Loves Louie Acosta - Santos Statues 2
XVIII	26-Mar-05	Preview of Ma-Yi Play by Cast & Jorge Ortoll
XIX	9-Apr-05	Mayou Gonzalez - Meeting the Challenge
XX	20-May-05	Poch Macaranas - Fidel Ramos Years
XXI	4-Jun-05	Don O'Buckley - Immigration
XXII	25-Jun-05	Volt Contreras - Philippine News
XXIII	20-Aug-05	Lito Clemente - Ampalaya
XXIV	10-Sep-05	Cecille Guidote - on GMA (pro)
XXV	17-Sep-05	Dodong Nemenzo - on GMA (anti)
XXVI	16-Jul-06	Lenore Lim - Print Making Carlos Esguerra - Photo exhibits Amador Muriel - Forex
XXVII	29-Jul-06	Linda F. Hall - How to write a Play, Workshop
XXVIII	16-Sep-06	Jane Orendain - Hula

XXIX	30-Sep-06	Jose Guerrero & Alex Tiongco - Oil Spill In Guimaras
XXX	14-Oct-06	Antonio Oposa Jr - Marine Biodiversity in the Philippines
XXXI	18-Mar-07	Michael Dadap - The Philippine Bandurria
XXXII	26-Jan-08	Benny Quiñones - Microfinancing Amador Muriel - Turbulence
XXXIII	3-Mar-08	Carlos Esguerra - Photography Amador Muriel - Lissajous Curves
XXXIV	16-Sep-08	Bert Peronilla's Barbeque Party
XXXV	14-Aug-10	Hery Brillante's Party
XXXVI	13-Jun-12	Amador Muriel's Woodside Party

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## **Don O'Buckley - Immigration**

Lecture XXI

June 4, 2005

Write up by Johnny Reyes

Tonight's speaker was Donal O'Buckley, American of Irish ancestry, married to a Filipina, the former Chato Ledonio. Don said he comes from a family of land surveyors, but someone got him interested in law, he went to the New York Law School, and eventually he became a specialist in the widely-divergent fields of Immigration, Real Estate, and Matrimonial Law (you know, pre-nups, divorces, etc.). I haven't misspelled his first name, which is the Gaelic equivalent of the English Donald. Don was introduced to the 62nd Street Forum by Jane Orendain. Now when Filipinos sense an opportunity to get free tips on immigration from a person in the know, you're sure to get a full house. When Loida Nicolas-Lewis wrote the book "101 Legal Ways to Stay in the U.S." a decade ago (later retitled "How to Get a Green Card"), it was a big hit among those lucky Filipinos who could afford to get a copy. Sure enough, Amador and Gloria's newly-rearranged living room was packed wall-to-wall with an audience buzzing with anticipation -- a somewhat louder hum than the ones I recall when the topics were more technical.

We were not disappointed -- at least in the delivery of the lecture. Don's talk followed a prepared outline, but he spoke extemporaneously. His enunciation was completely understandable to us -- I guess his being

married to a Filipina had something to do with that. At the same time, Don was a good listener, prepared to stop talking in the middle of a sentence to field a question (he actually understood mine without my having to repeat) -- many other speakers are so difficult to interrupt that the topic will have changed by the time you get a word in edgewise. When his talk ended, it seemed like he had a lot more to say and could have continued speaking hours longer without running out of topics. But end his talk he did -- like a concert baritone cutting the final note off cleanly.



Donal said that when he was asked to give a talk on U.S. Immigration, he wasn't sure which aspects to touch on -- his textbooks on the subject consisted of at least ten thick volumes. He acknowledged Amador's e-mailed suggestion to discuss also the demographic effects of uncontrolled immigration up through the southern border -- will future Americans

be brown? [JMR's aside: Not because of Filipino immigration, which is a trickle compared to the tsunami flowing into Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.] Don said his talk tonight would center on the following topics: Non-immigrant visas; immigrant visas (green cards); and citizenship. He added that Immigration Law is different in application from case to case. Just because it worked for your friend, don't assume it will work for you. You need to be careful differentiating good advice from bad. As Immigration lawyers go, he said he classifies himself as very creative. But he has never attempted to circumvent the law.

Don said the most used (and abused) type of non-immigrant visa is the "Tourist" or "Business or Pleasure Visitors" visa. A frequently-asked question goes like this: When asked by the Consular Officer while applying for a tourist visa why the applicant wants to visit the U.S., what reply provides the greatest chance of getting approved? Don said it is important to explain not why the visa applicant needs to enter the U.S., but why he/she needs to go back home to the Philippines afterwards. To have a fighting chance, the visitor's visa applicant must persuade the Consular Officer that

- The purpose of the trip is to enter the U.S. for business, pleasure, or medical treatment;

- He/she plans to stay for a specific, limited period; and

- He/she has a residence outside the U.S. and other binding ties which will ensure his/her return abroad at the end of the visit.

Don said the types of non-immigrant working visas range through the entire alphabet from A to Z. He considers the following types least desirable:

C - Transit visa, used for example by crewmen boarding a ship in U.S. territory. If the visa-holder fails to board his ship and disappears instead, it will be impossible to obtain any type of visa again later on.

D - Crew member, used by ship's crew or aircraft staff passing through U.S. territory. If the visa-holder jumps ship, it will be impossible to obtain any type of visa again later on. I guess that figures.

J - Exchange visitors. To obtain another type of visa afterwards can be difficult because often the holder is required to go back to the Philippines -- not just to any place outside the U.S. -- and wait two years before reapplying (the "two-year residency" requirement).

M - Vocational students. Same requirement as in J above.

In contrast, the following types of non-immigrant working visas are good to have:

L - Intracompany transferees, used for example by transnational company executives being cross-posted to a branch located in the U.S.

R - Religious workers receiving a salary from a recognized church within the U.S. [JMR's aside: I still can't get used to the concept of a priest with a vow of poverty receiving a salary.]

G4 - Employees of international organizations. The obvious example is a U.N. employee (a plum posting). After 7 years' residence in the U.S. (where of course the U.N. Headquarters is located), his/her children will be eligible to obtain green cards. Then they can petition for their parents -- and parents are in the

same category as other "immediate relatives," such as an unmarried child under 21; a spouse; etc. This means approval of the petition will be quick.

Believe it or not, there is a category S -- for Spies! [I need to make top-secret contact with Mr. Rivera. Oh, you mean Mariano Rivera the top-secret spy? The one with the S-type visa? He lives just around the corner. You won't miss the big sign above his front door.] Just kidding. Actually, S is for "Criminal Informant."

Don said the two biggest categories of immigrant visas (green cards) are issued for family reunification and for employment purposes. Family Reunification gives top priority to immediate relatives of U.S. citizens -- spouses, minor children, and parents -- and they don't normally need to wait very long to obtain a visa. Other types of relatives must queue up and wait for years under the following preferences:

- I. Unmarried children over 21 of U.S. citizens;
- IIA. Spouses and minor children of permanent residents;
- IIB. Unmarried children over 21 of permanent residents;
- III. Married children of U.S. citizens; and
- IV. Siblings of U.S. citizens.

The problem, Don said, is that the Department of State gives out only approximately 500,000 family-based green cards per year world-wide and are limited per category and per country. Each country is allotted only 26,000+ green cards per year. But Immigration receives a lot more than 500,000 green

card applications and many many more than 26,000 applications from Filipinos in any given year. It is simply a first-come, first-served situation. The Department of State maintains the Visa Bulletin, but Don says they are notoriously bad at keeping count. He's seen the dates bounce up and down as the government tries in vain to calculate the amount of green cards allotted. The only thing that can be done is to watch as the monthly numbers come out...

By the way, the new green cards show an expiration date ten years after issue, and must be renewed before then. If

- you are at home in the U.S.;

- you neglect to renew your green card and it expires on you;

- you need to make an urgent foreign trip before you can get a new card; and

- you want to be sure you can return;

then you should apply for a new green card and get a temporary stamp on your passport while waiting for the new card to be generated and mailed to you.

If you expect to be out of the U.S. for nearly a year (or longer), then before leaving you should apply for a Reentry Permit from the Citizenship and Immigration Service (formerly the INS), in order to maintain your Permanent Resident status.

On the other hand, if

- you are outside the U.S. when your green card expires; and

- you need to get back in;

then your best recourse is to request a Reentry Permit from the nearest U.S. Consulate. They may make you go through Hell, but if you are persistent you should eventually get what you need. An easier alternative is to try swimming across the Rio Grande at night. The old card didn't have an expiration date, but to be safe Don said it should also be renewed anyway. Actually, the purpose of the renewal requirement is to ensure your photo and address on the card are current. Don cited an example of a 40-year-old man who didn't want the hassle of applying for citizenship, hanging on to his old-style green card with the picture of a 7-year-old.

There is no time limit to holding on to your permanent residency status without applying for citizenship. But Don said if you are a green card holder, stay clear of any and all illegal activities. Otherwise, if you get arrested for any felony you will have discovered a clever way to fly back to the Philippines free-of-charge without any delays -- and without any possibility of ever coming back to the U.S. in this life (except by taking night swimming lessons in Mexico). Don't take a green card for granted -- consider it as a gift, but one which can be taken back anytime.

Donal was asked to comment on the following case: Father was a green card holder; mother was a naturalized American citizen. When a child was born two years after the mother became a citizen, the couple was in the Philippines. The Consulate ruled that the child was not a U.S. citizen. Don said there

was no easy answer to the question "Is the child a citizen?" The American system is --

Born in the U.S.A. -- Citizen

Born of a U.S. citizen -- Not necessarily.

Don said the rules keep changing continually, so there is a time element to the question. For example, was the child born between this year and that year? Don showed a thick reference book of charts needed to obtain the answers to questions like this.

Someone asked what the procedure was for availing of "the new dual citizenship." Don replied that allowing dual citizenship was a unilateral move by the Philippine Government which is not necessarily honored by the U.S. (which still requires candidates for naturalization to renounce their allegiance to all foreign states). The question should therefore be directed to the Philippine Consulate on 5th Avenue, not to an American Immigration lawyer.

The attendance tonight broke the previous record of 24 persons:

- 1,2. Speaker Donal and Chato O'Buckley;
- 3,4. Hosts Amador and Gloria Muriel;
5. Amador's sister Miliza Romero;
- 6,7. Her co-teachers Bella Estanislao and Virginia;
8. Jane Orendain;
- 9,10. Organizer Danny and Lisa Gil;
11. Her brother Dr. Ramon Seneris;
- 12,13. Vic and Victoria Vitug;
14. Vic's friend geriatric psychologist Phil Flores;
15. Nora De La Serna;
- 16,17. Mars and Cora Custodio;
- 18,19. Bert and Eva Florentino;

- 20. Carlos Esguerra;
- 21,22. Ham and Mayu Gonzales;
- 23,24. Concert pianist Richard and Susan Rodriguez-Fagan;
- 25,26. Mila Reyes and myself.

Regards. Johnny

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### **Volt Contreras – Philippine News**

Lecture XXII  
June 25, 2005

No detailed write  
up.

Picture of Volt  
on left of Bert.



--oo0oo--

### Lito Clemente – Ampalaya

Lecture XXIII  
August 20, 2005

No detailed write  
up.

Picture of Lito,  
with samples  
beside.



--oo0oo--

### Cecille Guidote – On GMA (pro)

Lecture XXIV  
September 5, 2005

No detailed write  
up.

Group photo with  
Cecille rightmost  
standing



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## **Dodong Nemenzo - On GMA (anti)**

Lecture XXV

September 17, 2005

Write up by Johnny Reyes

Tonight's scheduled speaker was former U.P. President Francisco Nemenzo, speaking on "The Philippines in Crisis: Is there a Longer-Term Solution?"

The President of U.P. during my first three years in college was Vicente Sinco. Then it was Carlos P. Romulo for the remainder of my stay. As a student, my idea of UP Presidents was someone aloof and unapproachable, pompous almost, probably arrogant -- someone you only saw from a distance during official functions, if at all. Since I never did get close enough to one to verify my impressions, I never found out whether they were correct or not.

This particular UP President rose and approached us when Mila and I arrived at Amador and Gloria's place on Manhattan 62nd Street a quarter of an hour before his scheduled talk at 7:00 pm. Perhaps it was because I was no longer looking at faculty from the point of view of a scruffy and shifty-eyed student with a term paper that was overdue, but I found that he conversed easily, with self-confidence but without any superior airs. How many mortals would have wanted to become UP President during their lifetime? Even Ma'am tried, but she was unsuccessful and she ended up founding her own university -- just to show them.

Mila recalled that the Dean of Arts & Sciences during our time was also named Francisco Nemenzo, but that was a long time ago and you don't look old enough to have been him. Oh, replied Dr. Nemenzo, that was my (late) father. So you're a Junior, I remarked. In reply to our questions, Dr. Nemenzo said that he was President of UP from August 1999 to February this year, when Emerlinda Roman (the first woman to assume the post) succeeded him. Before that, he was Chancellor of UP Visayas. Later I mentioned to him that he had been described to us as left-of-center (I had sort of expected that this supposed head of the biggest coalition of radical organizations in the Philippines including the Moro National Liberation Front would be a fire-in-the-belly rabblouser, and was actually surprised that he was so soft-spoken and unassuming). He confirmed that he was indeed a leftist, and added that on at least two occasions in the past his appointment to a prestigious government academic post had been derailed because of his background.

Anyway, it was time for his talk, which as expected was well-attended (19 persons in the audience, including the hosts). I prefer to call his lecture "The GMA Presidency" instead of its official title mentioned at the top of this page, because that was what it was about. Whether the Philippines is in crisis or not would seem to be debatable, because many households are said to be unaware of the problem or couldn't care less. But I was pleased to observe that in giving his well-written talk, Dr. Nemenzo stuck to a factual narration of events (which was almost entertaining, had the subject matter not been so grave), injected

minimal commentaries, and made no attempt to ply us with arguments or persuade us to adopt his views as our own.

Dr. Nemenzo started with the circumstances surrounding the impeachment motion against President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. He read from notes, but maintained eye contact with us. [I apologize if my legalese is not quite accurate, but I'm not too familiar with the technical terms used by congressmen and other lawyers, and am merely paraphrasing in my own words what I understood the speaker to have said.] It seems three different sets of impeachment charges had been filed simultaneously against GMA by various groups. Instead of concentrating on the motion originating from the Mainstream Opposition, Congress (which GMA controlled) selected the one filed by Oliver Lozano, a "crackpot" (in Dr. Nemenzo's words), Marcos loyalist, and perennial anti-government activist. Of course it was easy to find fault with the motion and throw it out on the basis of technicalities.

The Opposition could revive the impeachment motion again next year, but it was effectively killed for the rest of the current session of the House. The tactic gave GMA the advantage of time -- time to regroup and to rethink her options. Besides, after a year the proponents of the motion might just lose interest. But the real issues remained unresolved.

[This evasion of the issue sounds familiar. Recently, a Mr. Newdow in California filed a case with the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of his little

daughter to take the phrase "under God" out of the Pledge of Allegiance, because it allegedly offends her (she denied it) and other atheists. Instead of ruling that the Founding Fathers did not intend that all religion should be banned from public life, only that no religion should be given preferential or official status (as in England) or used as a test for public office, and therefore the phrase "under God" is not unconstitutional, the spineless Court skirted the main issue and ruled instead that Newdow had no legal personality to file the case, because he didn't have custody of his daughter. This allowed the issue to simmer, and left open the door to refile in future.]

Keeping his talk as cool and objective as possible, Dr. Nemenzo recounted other missteps of the GMA government, including how it increased the foreign debt of the Philippines to unprecedented heights, surpassing even the borrowings of Marcos and Erap. [JMR's note: But isn't that to be expected, considering the high rate of inflation? Even the U.S. budget can never be smaller than the previous year's.] But the topic that aroused most interest was the "Hello Garci" episode: It seems GMA had appointed a certain Mr. Garcillano to the Comelec, but he was not confirmed by Congress. She re-appointed him anyway on an interim basis (much like what Bush did for John Bolton, his nominee as U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., when the Democrats tried to block his appointment).

Dr. Nemenzo continued: Mike Arroyo, who didn't trust Garcillano, arranged for the latter's conversations with his wife GMA to be secretly tape-recorded. When GMA was caught on tape allegedly

cajoling "Garci" to ensure she won the last election by at least a million votes, the man assigned to do the bugging got ideas, became greedy, and decided to make money by selling the hot tape to the Opposition. By some accident, the tape got released to the public, and the "Hello Garci" tune became a popular cellphone ringtone among GMA haters. GMA herself admitted the voice on the tape recording was hers, but tried to put a spin on what she had said. She eventually survived the episode, especially after it became public knowledge that other voices on the tape calling up the popular Garcillano included prominent Opposition politicians.

Dr. Nemenzo then started listing several possible mechanisms by which GMA could leave office peacefully, without bloodshed or dishonor (on the assumption that her performance so far as President did not come up to requirements, and that she was not the legitimate winner of the last presidential elections anyway). I was itching to ask whether he thought Noli De Castro would do any better, but he answered the question before it was asked: One of the more intriguing options discussed by the UP President was for both GMA and Noli De Castro to step down, and turn the Government over to a Caretaker until new elections could be held. Which potential Caretaker would be most acceptable to the Public, and to the Military, which (whether we like it or not) is a major player?

\* Senate President Franklin Drilon? -- Considered too wishy-washy.

\* Young Turks in Congress? -- Not yet seasoned enough.

- \* Fidel V. Ramos -- Not interested.
- \* Cory Aquino? -- Out of the question.
- \* Young Officers' Union for a N\_\_\_ Government? -- No single strong leader. But the group may support an acceptable Queen Bee.
- \* Susan Roces? -- Fortunately, not interested. But Dr. Nemenzo believes she is intelligent, principled, and qualified, and said he would support her.

Amador asked whether it would be considered a fantasy to have a coalition between Roces and the members of YOUNG, and Dr. Nemenzo replied no, it was a realistic possibility. [I said it would be interesting to have the ex-actress and seven little youngsters leading the country.] At this point, Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, who I heard had given a very pro-GMA talk during the previous Forum, could contain herself no longer and with dramatic emphasis asked: Why should we risk everything by going for the Unknown Quantity (Susan Roces)? If the Opposition really wish to impeach GMA, they should get their act together and persevere with the constitutional means available for doing so. From personal experience, she knew what it was like to be in the Opposition, fighting for freedom. Nora De La Serna said the Unknown Quantity couldn't be any worse than the Quantity we already knew, and was worth trying out.

The discussion continued after merienda and wine. Dr. Nemenzo pointed out that he was not exhorting us to take any action, but was merely describing scenarios which he thought were likely to happen. Jorshi Sonza, a newcomer to the 62nd Street Forum with husband Pat, also voiced her impression that this was supposed to be a discussion group, not an action

committee, since we were powerless anyway to influence the political scene in Manila. But Jojo De Jesus, another newcomer, wanted to know what we expatriates could do from here to help the old country. Amador replied, nothing. If you really want to help the Philippines, the only way is to go back home. And when you get there, don't tell the locals what you think they should do as soon as you get off the plane. (Otherwise, they might put you back on the plane.) Cecile, however, cited some ongoing initiatives to help the Philippines which could do with contributions in terms of funds, talents, or muscles.

A complete list of attendees follows:

1. Rommel Genciano
2. Ramon Castaneda
3. Rose Alcido
4. Grace Young
5. Jaja Almendral
6. Melvyn Patrick Lopez
7. Tenni Lopez
8. Jojo De Jesus
9. Francisco Nemenzo Jr.
10. Cecile Guidote-Alvarez
11. Nora De La Serna
12. Pat Sonza, MD
13. Jorshi Sonza
14. Amador Muriel
15. Gloria Muriel
16. Johnny Reyes
17. Mila Reyes
18. Marie Luarca-Reyes
19. Lenore Raquel-Santos-Lim
20. Rosie Genciano (Rommel's mother).

Notes:

1. Tonight's lecture was organized and videotaped by Melvyn Patrick Lopez, who came with his wife Tenni. Watch for the replay on "The World Tonight," after the Yankees-Red Sox game.
2. Small world: Marie Luarca-Reyes, who organized Lecture XXIII on "Ampalaya and Health," is the wife of Cynthia Reyes-Calejesan's younger brother. I asked why he never attends the Forum. Oh, he's in South Africa. What on earth is he doing in South Africa, I ask. He's only the Ambassador, she replies.
3. I asked Lenore Raquel-Santos-Lim why she never gave the Forum a presentation on her print-making techniques (manual and computer-aided). She said Danny never invited her to.

Regards. Johnny

--oo0oo--

## **Lenore Raquel-Santos-Lim - Printmaking**

Lecture XXVI

September 16, 2006

Write up by Johnny Reyes

When Lenore's long-awaited and long-delayed presentation became a firm date on the calendar at last, I said to Mila we can't miss this. But when I tried to anticipate what to expect -- the topic was "prints," "printing" -- the only images that came to (my

information-challenged) mind were Johann Gutenberg.... printing press (as in Kayumanggi Press?).... Manuel Rodriguez.... The last had already given a lecture to the 62nd Street Forum about the fine art of printing, so what else, I wondered, could Lenore tell us that a National Artist (Rodriguez) hadn't talked about yet? But in the twenty-plus talks I had attended at 62nd Street in the last few years, I was never disappointed even once. So as usual I came with an optimistic and open mind.

My information gaps were soon filled in: Lenore clarified that she is not a "printer," but a "printmaker." And I also realized that Lenore and her art belong to the post-computer age, while Johann and Manuel belong to the pre-

Probably opportune to describe the audience at this point: The average age of the biggish crowd, in contrast with most other sessions we've attended at Amador and Gloria Muriel's brownstone at 62nd Street in the past, was according to Amador only around 30. Jose "Didi" Lim, Lenore's husband, remarked that it would be much lower still if not for Amador's presence. Indeed, if we could get Amador to step outside his front door for a few minutes, I wondered how it would feel to have your (average) age suddenly drop? Would it be like experiencing the laws of physics personally for the first time, like Archie (in his bathtub) and Isaac (under his apple tree) did? A glance at the faces in the audience showed Amador was right -- the newcomers were indeed predominantly young. And glamorous.

Seated to my right were Kathlynn Cortes and Lexther La Guardia, IT people, friends of Lenore. On my other side were Leon Dimaya, lawyer, and his wife Celeste, medical intern, who go to the same church as the Muriels (the Lorenzo Ruiz Chapel on Broome Street in Chinatown, which also features Fr. Erno). There were also Carissa Villacorta, who wrote a recent magazine article about Lenore and her daughter Claire, entitled "Gracious and Graceful," and her friend Pam Abastillas. And Cathy Young, microbiology student from NYU, who had attended the 62nd Street Forum before. Now the more experienced regular members of the audience: Hosts Amador and Gloria; Organizer and Driving Force Danny Gil; Carlos and Arlene Esguerra; Nora De La Serna; Lenore's husband P\* Didi; Mila's sister Pilar and her husband Javher Advani; my own Mila, and myself. That's 18, isn't it -- not counting the presenter, who was visibly heartened by the heavy turnout.

[\* P for Pepe (I'm just kidding around).]

Lenore started with a brief autobiographical update, to let us know what she'd been up to since we were all back in college many eventful years ago, when (she griped with self-effacing charm) she was simply referred to as "the sister of Lynn": After graduation from the UP College of Fine Arts, she taught Art at the International School in Manila, married Jose Lim, then migrated to Canada where Claire and her brother Justin were born. In 1988 the family moved to New York, and Lenore started teaching again -- at the United Nations International School. At the same time, she took up Computer Art at the School of

Visual Arts , focusing on Printmaking. Since 1991, she has been doing solo and group shows in the US, Canada, Italy, Rome, Austria, Jordan, Norway, Japan, and Chile. I am not competent to say whose work is more beautiful -- that's a very subjective call -- but compared to Manuel Rodriguez's prints, her own samples that Lenore showed us seemed to span a wider range of styles and, while they still required drawing by hand, involved extensive use of computer-aided design. Lenore mentioned two or three names of who are currently "in," referring to the trendsetters of printmaking fashion in The City at the moment, modestly omitting her own name.



Lenore explained that printmaking is unlike other types of art whereby the artist draws or paints directly on paper, cloth, or other media, which then become the work of art. With printmaking, the artist creates a negative impression on a durable surface (for example, wood or metal) as a first step. The

impression is then transferred during a second step onto paper, cloth, or other media with the use of a printing press (and different-colored inks). The process allows for an infinite number of positive impressions to be made, as long as the "durable" negative survives intact. To restrict the number of original copies to only the number of prints the artist creates personally and signs, she usually destroys the durable negative as soon as the batch (called a "limited edition") has been completed, thereby preventing unauthorized reproduction in future and maintaining the value of the original copies. [I don't want to confuse you, but with some techniques the "durable" negative is actually a positive.]

Lenore then took us through the four most common types of printmaking, displaying samples of her work with each:

\* Woodcuts -- The artist whittles a design with knives and scalpels on carving wood such as pine, balsa, etc. This is an ancient technique, antedating the invention of the mechanical printing press. Well-known users: Albrecht Durer (biblical illustrations); Paul Gauguin. The popular tourist practice of "rubbing" bas relief works of art (creating a copy by placing a sheet of tracing paper over the carved image and using a pencil to rub the entire page) makes use of the same principle.

\* Intaglio techniques (etching, engraving, drypoint, aquatint) -- These are the converse of woodcuts, because instead of bringing an image into relief by elevating its features, the artist highlights the features by creating deep incisions on a flat metal surface.

She sketches on the copper or zinc plate, covers the unaffected areas with a protective material, then uses acid to cut the (unprotected) design out of the metal.

\* Lithography -- The artist draws on a metal plate using greasy crayons. The patterns are then bonded onto the surface by a chemical process, and the entire area is wetted with water. Printer's ink will adhere only to the patterns, which are water-repellent and therefore dry. This method captures more detail than the intaglio, which can show only lines, and is normally used for newspaper photographs.

\* Screenprints -- The artist mounts a porous material, stretched tightly, across a frame. She then glues opaque patterns on the screen. Next, she places paper underneath, and -- no need for a printing press this time -- she uses a squeegee to force ink through the non-opaque sections of the screen. If she needs different colors, she uses different screens, with the appropriate areas opaqued out. Advantage: Large areas with striking colors. Well-known user: Andy Warhol.

I asked Lenore who compose her primary market, and she replied, friends, the international community, parents, teachers, and staff in her school, and some collectors (connoisseurs) who frequent art exhibitions. She is represented by The Paul Sharpe Contemporary Art in New York. Lenore has done very little commercial work, and does not mass-produce, even if she very easily can. Awards she has won include the 2004 Pamana ng Pilipino Presidential Award, as well as a prestigious Jackson Pollock-Lee

Krasner Foundation Grant. A handsome coffee table hardbound compilation of her best prints from 1990 to the present, entitled "Profound Afterglow" and with a foreword by MOMA Head Agnes Gund, is available on the market. See also [www.lenorelim.com](http://www.lenorelim.com).

The next person who went up to center stage was a surprise performer: Celeste Dimaya. She sang an oldie in English and "Gaano Kita Kamahal" beautifully acapella, then said she would do requests. There were plenty and she could recall most of the melodies, but unfortunately she didn't know the lyrics. I wanted to request "Maalaala Mo Kaya?" which seemed (to me) to belong in the same jahnruh as "Gaano Kita....," but for some reason I couldn't remember the title and didn't dare hum the tune, so that opportunity passed. Someone suggested getting lyrics from the Internet, but again the moment passed, as we moved on to the next unscheduled part of the program:

In the basement, Amador had set up his laptop and projector, which allowed Carlos Esguerra to display slides of his own award-winning photographs, together with a brief story about how he shot each. The anecdotes included a desert mirage of a solitary figure walking on a sand dune in the distance at the boundary between light and shadow. The figure later disappeared. (Carlos did Lecture VI for the 62nd Street Forum in 2004 about his hobby of Photography.)

Finally, Amador did a commercial about his system whereby he applied his Turbulence Equation to

foreign currency exchange fluctuations (for example, euros vs. dollars, Swiss francs vs. dollars, etc.). If you invest at least \$5K with him, you get a guaranteed return of 12% per quarter. This system has stood the test of more than a year. Amador was actually demonstrating his system in an attempt to answer my questions about the Enron case (attached). It appears that the Enron bad guys may not have shown certain items in their balance sheets (e.g., unrealized profits), which could have swung the wrong way, and if taken into consideration would have adversely affected the bottom line. They may also have published piecemeal financial statements (from those divisions of the huge conglomerate which happened to be doing well) without showing the overall corporate picture (which was much less rosy). And when the collapse was imminent, the bad guys may have unloaded their own stocks at a large profit before the bad news leaked out. Amador (not one of the "bad guys" I'm referring to) used his own balance sheets to explain the technical terms he was using (e.g., unrealized profits).

Next activity of the 62nd Street Forum will be a play-writing workshop to be conducted by Linda Faigao-Hall on Saturday, July 29.

Johnny Reyes

--oo0oo--

## **Email to the Loop for trip to the Hamptons 15 July 2006**

As a refresher for the new members, the 62nd Street Forum group is an informal bunch of mainly UP people of circa mid 60's and their friends who meet periodically at Dr Amador Muriel's house at 347 East 62nd St in NYC.

Over the past 3 years, we have had about 30 lecturers, many of whom have stellar qualifications. Aside from perennial host Amador (internationally known Physicist), the forum has seen the likes of Dodong Nemenzo, Poch Macaranas, Loida Nicolas, Cecille Guidote, and even Broadway performers. Chronicler Johnny Reyes invariably follows up with a write-up.

We usually bring eats, potluck style, and the meeting usually is scheduled at 7:00 pm for the free street parking in front. Subway access is 2 blocks away.

The topic or the presenter is only half the fun. The rest is in the fellowship after.

Danny Gil

**FLASH, FLASH, WE MEET AT LOIDA'S AT EAST HAMPTON - Tomorrow 2:00 pm**

Folks,

Amador just called to say that Loida Nicolas Lewis called him to extend the invitation to all those who would have gone to Amador's tomorrow for the lecture/demo by Jane -- to instead proceed to her place at:

165 Lilypond Lane  
East Hmpton, NY 11937

This is quite a distance and it may take 2-3 hours to get there. So consider this a whole day affair.

Amador will take care of Jane and says he will leave from his place at about 10:00 am. We should aim to get there at say 2:00 pm.

For those who showed a raise of hands, please pass along and hope to see you there. For the others who weren't too sure, then try to make it.

Do email the loop and/or call Amador (347-782-1215) or me (201-978-4401).

We have to give an indication to Loida about how many are coming.

Danny

--oo0oo--

### **Linda Faigao- Hall - How to write a Play, Workshop**

Lecture XXVII  
July 29, 2006

No detailed write up.

Picture of Linda  
on left and Liliosa.  
composing.



--oo0oo--

## **Jane Orendain - Hula**

Lecture XXVIII

September 16, 2006

Write up by Johnny Reyes

That's what I admire and like about Jane Orendain: Even when she is making a twice-postponed presentation to a group of only six diehard souls, she still gives a whole-hearted performance without the slightest diminution of enthusiasm or quality. The intimate size of the audience also gave us a chance to ask all the questions we wanted, and to pace down her lecture to allow maximum absorption. Jane's topic was the Hula, an art she had been studying for over four years and the subject of a seminar she had recently attended in Hawaii. She explained that the word means "dance" in Hawaiian, but I'll always have a hard time dropping the habit of saying "Hula dancing" -- which of course is redundant, like "Bilibid Prison." [In contrast, "Laguna de Bay" is not redundant, because the "Bay" refers to the lakeside town by that name (almost rhymes with "goodbye," except that the accent is on the "y," not the "a") and has nothing to do with the English word "bay" (rhymes with "good day," pronounced the American, not the Australian, way).]

Jane's presentation consisted of (1) a brief introductory lecture; (2) video showing of a Hula contest in Hawaii [I remember when I was visiting Brunei in the past, there was an exciting all-night Koran-reading contest simulcast on the nation's only two TV channels. I thought the Hula-chanting portion

of the contest in Jane's video looked and sounded very similar.]; and (3) a live demonstration by Jane herself to clarify certain points. From the above, we picked up a lot of new information.

Things I never knew about Hawaii before:

1. Both men and women do the Hula.
2. The men are usually more scantily-clad (leaf skirts, waist-high slits, nothing but g-strings inside -- yukkk!!! I don't wanna see this) than the women.
3. The women dancers are usually dressed very conservatively (long-sleeved dresses with cloth, not grass, full-balloon skirts, and ankle-length bloomers inside -- groan!).
4. Hawaiian dancers don't wear grass skirts -- only the inhabitants of the Marshall Islands do.
5. Modern Hawaiian dancers dance to music, but those performing in the classic style dance to chants - - often, their own chants.
6. Guitars and ukuleles were introduced by Europeans, probably Portuguese seafarers.
7. "Pearly Shells" was invented by the Americans. Hawaiians never heard of the song, just as real Chinese never heard of chop suey (American), and Dutchmen I know never heard of the story "The Leak in the Dike" (American) or of "Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates" (English).
8. When the European and American sailors and religious first came to Hawaii, the germs they brought with them were new to the natives, who didn't have the right antibodies, and the resulting epidemics decimated them. No, that's not the right word -- decimate means to kill one in ten -- Jane said the casualty rate was closer to 75 percent. [If you want to know more about the repercussions of the European

and American invasions -- for example, how the incestuous royal children were dealt with by the puritanistic missionaries -- get hold of a DVD of the movie "Hawaii," starring Max Von Sydow as a fire-breathing minister, Julie Andrews as his suffering wife, and Richard Harris as a rugged young seaman.]

9. The Hawaiian language has only 12 letters, which include the 5 vowels. As in Tagalog, a lot of consonant-substitution is needed when pronouncing foreign words. For example, Bing Crosby's song "Mele Kalikimaka" is the Hawaiian translation of "Merry Christmas."

10. Jane mentioned that Hawaiians don't pronounce diphthongs, but say each vowel independently. For example, it's O-A-HU, not OWA-HU; HA-WA-I-I, not HA-WA-YI; WA-I-KI-KI, not WAY-KI-KI. [I've always thought it was the Americans who can't pronounce diphthongs -- they can't handle DIOS and VIET-NAM, but must say DI-OS and VI-ET-NAM.]

The audience consisted of (1) Danny Gil (who brought takeout Chinese food to his own despedida -- he was flying off to the Philippines the following day); (2) Linda Pitchon and (3) her friend Robert; (4) Mila's sister Pilar Advani (without her husband Javher, but with a couple of exotic home-cooked dishes); (5) Mila; and (6) myself. There were no hosts! The Muriels were tied up in Connecticut -- I forget in which one of the three trendy towns, Darien, Greenwich, or Stamford (model for "The Stepford Wives") -- so we took advantage of their absence and raided Amador's wine cellar.

Although Danny was itching to get home because of his impending trip next morning, it was agreed I would show the 10-minute slide presentation I had made to illustrate an article on oil spills I had posted on the Loop recently. But the file inside my 2-gigabyte flash drive using pirated software locked up and wouldn't go unless I fed it a 10-digit code number, which I wasn't prepared to do. So I was forced to show copies of the slides one at a time -- a slow process because each slide had to be uploaded, resized, and then centered with the mouse. The audience could also see thumbnails of all my other slides before I was ready to show them. The result was a long-drawn-out and clumsy presentation -- a disaster worse than what the slides were trying to show. But the audience was very kind. (I'm prepared to do a take two.)

*Below are rejoinders via email of the write up of Johnny. Hosts Amador and Gloria were not in town but lent us the use of their house, with almost disastrous results due to a tripped alarm.*

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*From Johnny:*

1. That whole evening, I had a persistent sinking feeling we were in the wrong apartment. The furniture was different, the decor on the walls was different, but Jane said Amador just moved things around. Still, things never felt quite right. I must give you full credit for getting rid so easily of the cops who responded to the burglar alarm. But the vintage 1970 Burgundy was good, wasn't it?

2. Regarding the lecture, I forgot to mention: In response to a question from the audience, Jane clarified that the Hula is not a form of unarmed martial art which the native Hawaiians developed because they were not allowed by the conquerors to bear arms.

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*From Amador:*

What wine cellar? We only have a garbage cellar.

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*From Danny:*

....What is interesting is the story when I got to Amador's house earlier that afternoon. He had given me the keys to the house, but not the password to the house alarm system. He probably didn't arm it, but his nephew or niece who are temporarily occupying the upper floors may have done so.

Well, you guessed it, upon entering then closing the door, the siren shrieked horribly, so much so that I had to step outside (fortunately, the noise wasn't bothersome on the outside) and it mercifully shut off by itself after 5 minutes. So I went in again, and the same thing repeated. Of course, I tried calling Amador on his cell but he wasn't answering. But I figured out that when the cops would come, I could explain myself away (with the house keys on my person, etc). I also thought that if I went downstairs and opened the basement door, it may not trip the alarm, and the rest of the attendees could enter the house that way. So long as nobody passed through

the main front door, we'd be OK, and this was assuming further that there was no motion sensor. If the alarm tripped, we'd just have to wait 5 minutes for the racket to stop. But alas, the basement door was bolted, and I had no key.

Then Amador called and as I was talking to him and getting the password, the cops came. I handed the cell phone over to the first cop, and while he talked to Amador, I also explained to his partner the situation; that I was a guest, given the keys, etc. It all ended well without me becoming a felon.....

--oo0oo--

**Jose Guerrero & Alex Tiongco - Oil Spill In  
Guimaras**

**Alex was in Davao and live via audio link.**

Lecture XXIX

September 6, 2006

Write up by Johnny Reyes

Jose Guerrero said, "I met Alex Tiongco during a 2-day seminar on marine cargo insurance that my company hosted in Manila some time ago in order to explore offshore outsourcing in the handling of marine cargo insurance claims in the Philippines. At that time my company ([www.virtualclaim.com](http://www.virtualclaim.com)) was already doing onshore outsourcing for Royal & SunAlliance USA. I am not involved with the Guimaras Disaster but I would like to introduce Alex, who has some

involvement with this unfortunate event, and provide personal insight if I could about the subject. With regard to oil spills, I was involved on the insurance side with the following incidents:

- Exxon Valdez;
- Ixtoc 1 (the largest oil spill in Mexican history);
- The Sable Island blowout; and
- Several small oil spills mostly in Texas and Louisiana."

On the far side of a NYC/Davao telephone hook-up prepared by José was Alex, who gave a brief description of the recent incident which resulted in the worst oil spill in Philippine history, polluting the waters off some of the most beautiful, productive, and tourist-attractive areas of the country. The tanker M/V "Solar 1," chartered by Petron Corporation (60% owned by Filipinos and 40% by Saudi Aramco), was carrying a full cargo of industrial fuel (bunker) oil from Bataan to Zamboanga Del Sur when she encountered a storm and rough seas southeast of Guimarás Island. There was no report that she hit any rocks or collided with another vessel, but the ship took in water into its anchor housing compartment and sank stern (rear end) first 650 meters to the bottom and settled upright on the seabed. There were a few casualties among the crew members, but most were rescued and survived, including the Master. The sunken tanker leaked its cargo out continuously, and as of today it was estimated that 500,000 gallons of bunker oil had been spilled into the sea (not insignificant, even in comparison with the "Exxon Valdez," which spilled 11 million gallons of crude oil into Alaskan waters in 1989.) As of August 24 (about a month ago), the

“Solar 1” oil slick was already 66 square kilometers in area, located southeast of Guimarães.

It became apparent that Alex did not intend to automatically answer the questions in the list I had submitted beforehand, so I had to re-ask all my favorite ones. I was told by José Guerrero afterwards that without the video feature Alex thought I was Oscar Reyes, the former President of Shell Philippines (who is a dead ringer for Amador Muriel). Alex kept calling me "Sir," not realizing I was only a lowly former Head of Operations & Refinery Superintendent with Shell.

I was aware that Alex was constrained from answering some of our questions, because Jose had warned us beforehand that "there is some information he cannot divulge, due to his fiduciary responsibility to his clients." When I asked what lessons had been learned from the Guimarães disaster, and what corrective and preventive measures were being planned to prevent its recurrence in the future, I expected Alex to reply, None so far at this early stage, or None that he was aware of. I was therefore taken aback when instead he said, “Investigations? We should not be calling for investigations at this early stage when all efforts need to be focused on the clean-up. Investigations will interfere with the work. Besides, there was nothing out of order or blameworthy regarding the actions of the ship owners and crew, and what happened was purely an accident.

Whoa! Whoa! Nobody said anything about blame! My ears stung, I said to myself that Alex sounded more like an apologist for the owners and charterers of the sunken "Solar 1" than an independent claims adjuster. I pointed out to him that the people performing the investigation and analysis need not be the same ones doing the oil spill abatement and cleanup -- work which is now straightforward and can be delegated. I added that when an investigation is delayed too long, witnesses tend to forget and evidence tends to dissipate. It's been ALMOST TWO MONTHS since the "accident" occurred, and it's likely to take many more before the cleanup is completed.

Exonerating the ship owners and charterers of all culpability even before an investigation has been started sounds as ill-advised and premature to me as doing the opposite (finger-pointing). Having just damaged the ecology of a prosperous island for the next half a generation at least, the parties involved, in my view, should not get a free pass so easily. But my question regarding lessons learned really has nothing to do with pinpointing blame or liability. An effective and well-conducted incident investigation does not focus on who was responsible or who should be penalized, but on what the underlying and ultimate causes are, so those can be addressed and eliminated in a timely manner, in order to prevent recurrence of the incident.

In the case of the "Solar 1," the immediate cause of her sinking was the storm. But not all ships sink during a storm -- there must have been underlying and ultimate causes. I can think of dozens of

questions to ask: Was the ship operated by qualified officers and crew? Did they make the right decisions (continuing to sail into the storm instead of seeking shelter in some protected cove)? Did the "Solar 1" know about the storm in advance? Was her radio working? Did she have any mechanical problems with her engine equipment before the storm? Did she observe any hull leaks beforehand? Should she have fixed all the problems in drydock before continuing to transport cargo? Otherwise, was she shipshape and seaworthy, in general? Did she pass inspection by the regulatory agencies that inspect ships (just like cars need to pass inspection by the DMV)? Was she not overloaded with product?

Jose Lim: Whom do you work for?

Alex explained that he belongs to the claims agents appointed by the P and I Club, the mutual fund to which the shipowners belong. All claims directed to the fund are coursed through Alex's group.

Lenore Raquel-Santos-Lim: Did the "Solar 1" have a double hull?

Alex: No. It is not required. But she had a double-bottom.

[Note by JMR: A double hull, required for tankers entering the territorial waters of most Western countries but not those of the Philippines, consists of two concentric ship bodies, one inside the other. (Not to be confused with a catamaran, a type of watercraft comprising two separate hulls connected side-by-side.) Unless both the outer and the inner wall of a double-hulled ship are punctured, the oil contents will not escape. A double bottom, on the other hand,

provides some protection -- in case the ship runs aground or hits a rock underneath -- but if the hull is punctured from the side, the cargo will leak out anyway.]

Lenore: Whenever I transport small quantities of acid for my printmaking activities, I am required to use double-walled carboy bottles to prevent accidental spillages. Weren't the owners of the "Solar 1" responsible enough to use double-hulled ships, even if not required?

JMR (whispering): Economics, my dear.

Other questions from the audience:

-- (From Mars Custodio) What grade of oil was spilled at Guimarás? I replied, bunker oil – a thick, black, sticky liquid – the heaviest fraction obtained from crude oil.

-- Great underwater photos of the Solar 1! Were they taken by the Japanese robotic vehicle? José Guerrero said, Yes, the water was crystal-clear.

-- (From Nora Dumlao) What can modern technology do about Guimarás? I replied, We don't have too many options. What we'd like is that the oil slick formed by the spilled cargo be contained (by floating booms) and recovered (by skimmer pumps). But as you know, the slick now covers square kilometers of water surface – huge areas. And the oil layer can be only molecules thick, so that if you try to pump it into a barge you get mostly water.

-- Alex added that chemicals could be injected into the bunker oil remaining inside the ship's cargo hold to

convert it into a solid gel, which would be easier to handle and recover. (I have no experience myself with such chemicals, so cannot comment. But I can imagine the logistical difficulties of injecting them into a sealed compartment 650 meters below the surface.)

-- José Guerrero mentioned the existence of oil-eating bacteria. Perhaps they could be applied at Guimarães. (Anybody wants to experiment with oil-eating bacteria at home?)

-- John Entrada said he'd heard that large quantities of human hair were needed and donations were being solicited. How is the hair used? (Woven into bundles, the hair can be used as a substitute for rags, vast quantities of which are needed to absorb the oil washed up on the beaches.)

-- I added that the most effective remedy may be provided by Nature, which has a way of regenerating herself, given enough time. Ironically, a few new typhoons may help (by spreading the oil slick over a wider area). José Lim asked, How much time? I replied, About 10 years.

-- Amador asked what effects were expected on the taste and quality of the popular Guimarães mangoes. But because of static noise, Alex misheard and he instead gave a lengthy assessment of the extent of damage to the mangrove trees along the shore

-- What are the other capabilities of the Japanese robotic vehicle, aside from taking photos 650 meters

below the water surface? Alex said it could be made to close valves, or inject chemicals. (I must see to believe.) But he added that the submarine stayed only for three days, then left. (I can understand why – it must cost a fortune per hour.)

-- Is any oil still leaking from the ship? Alex said that was the good news – he'd just heard that the "Solar 1" had stopped leaking oil. (Because all of its cargo had already escaped, and there was nothing left inside its tanks? I wondered.)

-- I had one last question for Alex: In the past, I have observed Philippine oil tankers sitting so low in the water when fully-laden that you would think adding an extra gallon of water would sink them. Was this not the case with the "Solar 1"? Would you know how much deadweight she was designed to carry, in tons, and how much cargo she actually had on board, in tons, before she sank in rough seas? Alex replied that the "Solar 1" was not overloaded. He added that whereas you could overload a dry-cargo freighter by endlessly piling materials on board without any physical limit, it is impossible to overload a tanker, because it is like a glass of water – you can just fill it to the brim, and no more.

-- I disagree! (I was actually glad he used that analogy.) You don't fill a tanker to the brim! There must always be some "freeboard" left – several inches of hull sticking out above the water line, possible only if the ship's tanks are not completely filled. Otherwise, if the ship is swamped by heavy seas during rough weather, the extra gallons of water may

add just enough extra weight to sink her. If you don't believe me, do this little experiment at home: Fill a glass with cooking oil up to say 90% and then let it float in a bucket of water. Then carefully add more oil until the glass is full to the brim. If you're very careful, the glass may stay afloat. But now see what happens if you agitate the water in the bucket, simulating heavy waves.

-- José Guerrero pointed out that the density of the oil is also a factor. Since oil is lighter than water, a tank of oil will stay afloat even if 100% full. Yes, but only if the hatch covers have not been left open. Also, while it's true that the diesel grades are only about 85% as heavy as water, and kerosene and gasoline are even lighter, bunker oil (which the Solar 1 was carrying) is well over 90% as heavy as water. Some special grades of bunker oil have densities approaching that of water. That would make the ship sit very low in the water when she is totally full.

-- Another related piece of information: International tankers have "summer" and "winter" deadweight tonnage capacities. The winter DWT is lower by a certain percentage, meaning the ship is designed (and legally allowed) to transport less cargo during winter conditions. In the tropics, the term "winter" does not necessarily mean colder temperatures – it could be referring to the typhoon season. My point is that when anticipating bad weather and rough seas, an oil tanker should carry less cargo, so she will stick out of the water more and lessen her chances of sinking when swamped by big waves.

Alex said many of our questions may not have been answered to our complete satisfaction, because either he didn't have the answers yet or he was constrained from releasing the information at this time. He offered to send me a copy of the official report after it is made public. I thanked him, but explained that I only wanted the information for the purposes of tonight's discussion – I will have no special interest in the case, whether official or personal, after tonight. But perhaps the other members of the 62nd Street Forum would be interested in seeing the report when it becomes available.

When the question-and-answer period was over and everyone was happy, we all thanked Alex Tiongco for an interesting presentation and a lively discussion. Too bad there was no video – originally, Alex had planned to videoconference with us from Amador and Gloria's apartment in Makati, using the equipment installed there. But Alex was stranded in Davao and could not get back to Manila in time, because Typhoon Milenio had caused all Philippine flights to be cancelled. So we had to be content with an audio-only link between Davao and 62nd Street. We also thanked José Guerrero for doing such a professional job discovering Alex, organizing the telephone conference, and providing the logistics. He did a running commentary during the conference as phone anchor on the New York side.

I suggested we look for a few minutes at Internet (Philippines Daily Inquirer) photos of the damage wrought by that compact but powerful typhoon which

hit Manila directly earlier in the week. But the food was already laid out, and everyone was hungry. It was agreed to look at the Typhoon Milenio pictures later.

People now gathered around the dining table and the counter to eat. I heard an ongoing conversation about the United Nations and I tried to be sociable by joining in. I posed three questions one at a time. First I asked, Is the UN still relevant? The answers: "Very relevant still!" Sanjay Bhattacharya said, "Yes, despite John Bolton's efforts to shut it down." After a while I asked, Should the UN be moved out of its present location in Manhattan-- The quick answers: "Maybe." Sanjay said "No, because it's attracting billions of dollars a year from tourists." --to Governor's Island? I completed my question. After another interval, I asked my third question: In what way is the UN an improvement over the League of Nations? Nora Dumlao explained that one difference is the US was not a member of the L of N (which became defunct because it could not prevent World War I). So if the US were to pull out of the UN, I asked, would the UN be reduced to the equivalent of the L of N? Afterwards, I learned that Nora works for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). I guess small talk at parties isn't my forte.

I chatted with José Guerrero next: Are you related to León María Guerrero? "I wish I were." What about to UP's Arturo Guerrero? "I don't think so. And I'm not a UP alumnus." Perhaps you're related to Amado Guerrero? And I told him the background of the famous pseudonym.

John Entrada kindly volunteered to videotape the evening's proceedings and post the clips on YouTube for all members to access. You will recall that John has a conduit which ensures donations to the oil spill clean-up effort will go directly to the right parties. Several 62nd Street Forum members trusted John Entrada enough to entrust their checks to him.

John, Mark, and I talked about the meaning of some family names. I mentioned that men's shoes in the Philippines extending above the ankles used to be called "borceguí-style" or something similar-sounding. The more common low-cut style was called "media entrada." I told them the standard stories about the origins of Spanish-sounding Filipino family names (about the Reyeses being descended from the soldiers and the Santoses being descended from the friars, and also how all Filipinos were ordered to select and adopt new family names from the Madrid telephone book in 1820, except some Batangueños who managed to retain their original surnames such as Salagubang, Palikpík, Bagong-gahasà, etc.). Mark said his own family name means "ostrich." Since Mark looked Caucasian, John E. was curious whether he got his name the Madrid-telephone-book way or directly from European ancestors. But Mark replied that there is a town in Leyte whose inhabitants are all surnamed Avestruz.

The complete list of attendees follows:

- 1,2. José Guerrero & his wife Dr. Laura Tahir, psychologist;
- 3,4. Harry & Mila Brillantes;

- 5,6. Sanjay Bhattacharya & Evelyn Mandac-Bhattacharya (coloratura soprano, first Filipina to perform at the New York Metropolitan Opera House);
7. Nora Dumlao;
8. Antonio Pahati;
- 9,10. José Lim & Lenore Raquel-Santos-Lim
11. Mars Custodio;
12. John Entrada;
13. Mark Avestruz;
- 14,15. Hosts Amador Muriel & Gloria Merchán-Muriel;
16. Myself (Johnny Reyes).

Johnny Reyes

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## **Antonio Oposa Jr. - Marine Bio Diversity in the Philippines**

Lecture XXX

October 22, 2006

Write up by Johnny Reyes

This is like revealing to someone who's just entering the theater how the movie will end. Pero paano, sorry na lang kayó: I had put together a bagful of Johnny Reyes-type questions for the benefit of Mr. Oposa in case he turned out to be a Greenpeace-type nut, and I was prepared to be a pain in the neck. But I never did get around to asking my questions, because I ended up enthralled instead.

This guy was no environmental wacko -- he's genuine. I couldn't help wishing this session had been videotaped instead of the previous one. The mini-seminar was organized by Malou Allado-Reformina, charming wife of my old friend Nel from UP kem engg days (he who always got top grades and was a respected student leader). The venue was arranged by Cora Yabut-Custodio, equally charming wife of my even older (in terms of acquaintance, not age) friend Mars from high school. Unfortunately, hosts Amador and Gloria could not back out of a previous engagement elsewhere, so it became a challenge for Cora to get into the house at 347 62nd Street without triggering Police activity similar to what happened to Danny Gil a few weeks earlier.

You will recall that Danny came early on the afternoon before Lecture XXVIII, to prepare the apartment in the absence of the hosts -- he held the key to the front door but hadn't been briefed on how to silence the intruder alarm in case it was accidentally activated. In accordance with Murphy's Law it was, and the NYPD was at the scene within minutes in full force. In his writeup about the incident after he was released, Danny reveals only a portion of what happened to him that evening. If you really want to have an idea what, tune in to one of those World's Wildest Police Videos episodes on TV.

Tonight I had been instructed by Amador to "coordinate" the activity -- meaning prepare the projector and hook it up to the speaker's laptop in case he brought one (and do the inviting of the 62nd Street Forum members beforehand). Well, I was late

again and everything was already "coordinated" by the time I arrived. As you know, I live 45 miles southwest of Manhattan, and there are always several unpredictable elements: the traffic situation at the tunnel approaches (sometimes a breeze, other times a nightmare); the trip east across the City (which the traffic lights treat as low priority compared to north-south traffic); and the availability of street parking near Amador's. I'm either very early or late. On this occasion, I thought I'd park on the west side and experiment with the subway. Result: Curses! I arrived even later than usual. My greatest fear was that they'd wait for me before starting, but the speaker was also held up by heavy traffic and came only a few minutes ahead of me. So I was saved by the bell.

Where was I? Oh, yes, Marine BioDiversity. Atty. Tony Oposa Jr. wasn't the fiery orator type of speaker. He was relaxed and informal, and he spoke with a very slight but unmistakable Cebuano accent. His visual aids were excellent, providing spectacular images of what he was talking about -- I was very impressed by his slides and will probably copy their style in future. But I felt a bit shortchanged when Tony went very fast on some topics and skipped some slides -- was his presentation part of a more detailed lecture intended for a more intelligent audience?

Although Tony didn't hold any official positions in government, I wondered why he had so much clout. For example, when the slick from the Solar 1 oil spill disaster near Guimarães was threatening to move north into the Visayan Sea, Tony said he was ready to mobilize a squadron of volunteers to install a floating

oil boom stretching 32 kilometers from northern Panáy Island all the way to northern Negros. But the current carried the oil slick south towards Sulu instead. If Tony had pushed through with his floating barrier plan, that would have meant closing the straits east of Panáy to all navigation and rerouting all the heavy sea traffic elsewhere (west of Panáy or east of Negros). Tony explained that he had "many friends."

Why the zeal in protecting the Visayan Sea? If you look at a map of the Philippines, the Visayan Sea is an open body of water bounded on the north by Masbate Island, on the east by Leyte, on the south by Cebú and Negros, and on the west by Panáy. After he was introduced by Gloria Estenzo-Ramos, his deputy in the Environmental Action Team (Integrated Bar of the Philippines) , Tony started his lecture by describing the plant and animal treasures of the home country. He said throughout the entire world, the areas with the greatest diversity of wildlife are located in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia. And the biological diversity on land is dwarfed by that underwater. Our coral reefs, more richly varied and extensive than those of the Caribbean Sea or the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, are home to myriads of fish species many of which can be found nowhere else in the world, and which can feed our population for many generations to come. The pivot point of this exciting maelstrom is none other than the Visayan Sea -- in Tony's own words, "the center of the center and the hottest of hot spots in marine biodiversity. "

But the times they are a-changing -- fast. Atty. Oposa showed charts of forested areas in the

Philippines early in the 20th century and now, and the trend -- massive deforestation caused by irresponsible logging, road-building, and then kaingin -- is dismaying. It seems the only virgin forests left in the country are those in the former US naval base in Subic, and even those are probably being eyed greedily at this very moment by officially-tolerated illegal loggers. Even worse, our seas are rapidly being depopulated through cyanide- and blast-fishing activities, twin torpedoes that are destroying not only the fish but our coral reefs, which have taken centuries to become what they are. On top of all this destruction, the waters are being continuously polluted with chemicals and solid waste. (Tony shows graphic slides of both clean waterways -- in other countries -- and our own shockingly contaminated rivers.) He said the worst polluters are his own provincemates. At this point, Tony reminded us of a grim truism with this ominous statement: "In the Laws of Nature, there is no right or wrong. There are no rewards or punishments. There are only consequences. "

Atty. Oposa has impressive credentials (international consultant on Environmental Law; TOYM in 1993; commencement speaker at the Harvard Law School in 1997; UN environmental awards; etc.), but he said what is the value of all these honors, if he cannot make a difference in the efforts to preserve the natural heritage of the Philippines?

So he went ahead and did it. He organized the IBP Environmental Action Team and its naval-enforcement wing, the all-volunteer Visayan Sea

Squadron, dedicated to apprehending polluters and violators of illegal fishing laws and actually punishing them. Tony said that for punishment to be effective, it's got to be "swift, painful, and public." And he did exactly that, as shown in his slides. Only in the anachronistic Philippines will you see men in irons being paraded in the streets of a fishing town, wearing placards that say "I am an illegal dynamite fisherman." (I take that back -- maybe you'll see something equivalent in Afghanistan or Pakistan.) But these small fry were not lost souls yet: Tony's Squadron promptly and effectively rehabilitated them by appointing and training them to become Fishing Wardens -- a role they took very seriously.

Whenever colleagues would ask Tony how he hoped to sustain the campaign, which was costing money but was not funded by the Government, his stock reply was: "I am not rich. But I have rich friends."

Tony then showed us slides of life aboard the flagship of the Visayan Sea Squadron, a handsome *basnig*. With decorative pennants flying in the wind, the atmosphere was almost festive. (It reminded me of our annual picnic cruise from Tabangao Refinery in Batangas to Puerto Galera in Mindoro aboard a large tugboat.) Beside Tony aboard the fast boat sat heavy-set Jojo De La Victoria, a member of the Squadron and Program Director of the Cebú City Bantáy Dagat Commission. Their campaign was successful, they were on a roll, and they were debating whether it was now time to pressure the Government to ban all commercial fishing from the Visayan Sea.

Enforcement of existing laws is only one of Atty. Oposa's initiatives to preserve the ecological balance in our waters. It is the third of three E's, the other two being Education and Engineering.

Unfortunately, life is cheap and revenge is also swift and painful. In April this year, the Asian Human Rights Commission announced that one more environmental activist (Elpidio De La Victoria) had been killed, and his colleague (Atty. Tony Oposa Jr.) was facing serious threats against his life. De La Victoria was shot in front of his own home in Talisay City, and he died from multiple gunshot wounds a day after the incident. The same AHRC report described Oposa as a leading environmental attorney in the Philippines who is most famous in the legal community for establishing the right to sue on behalf of future generations to stop environmental damage today, and for his work to protect the forests and marine environments in the Philippines. Because of this work a bounty was put on his head and that of one of his closest colleagues Elpidio "Jojo" de la Victoria. The triggerman (a policeman) was apprehended by the authorities, but the mastermind remained at large.

Tony has written two books, "The Laws of Nature and Other Stories" (504 pp.) and "A Legal Arsenal for the Philippine Environment" (795 pp.). Writer Ceres P. Doyo in a review article said that "....Tony Oposa's opus is full of heart and, yes, undying hope. These are not just books of words, but of wisdom too, graced by exquisite photos.... The two books go together but,

says Oposa, if you could read only one, read 'The Laws of Nature and Other Stories'.... Oposa told me that if I could read only one chapter there (presuming that I already have a good grasp of the workings of nature), I should read Chapter 9." Doyo continued that "If most lawyers had the passion of Oposa, the earth would be less stuffy. It would feel fresher, smell cleaner, look bluer, greener."

Doyo's excerpt above effectively answers two questions I'd wanted to ask but in the end found unnecessary: 1. Will the murder of De La Victoria dampen Tony's passion to preserve our underwater heritage? 2. Is there any hope -- will we win or lose?

The answer to the first question was clearly "Of course not!" But Tony answered the (unasked) second question again in his concluding remarks: "Never underestimate the power of one person. You -- that one person -- can influence the future."

(I was dying to add: As long as you stay the course, and you don't cut and run.)

In an informal conversation afterwards among Tony, Gina Boncad-Francisco, Nel, and myself, I pointed out two things which should give us some consolation:

(a) I understand that Brazil with its huge rain forests is experiencing the same problem we have: illegal loggers creating access roads which allow slash-and-burn kaingineros to come in after they leave. Our

consolation: At least the Philippines has a companion in misery.

(b) I read somewhere that the ancient cities in South America, Indochina, and/or Indonesia which were abandoned and became completely overrun by forests were not always so richly covered by vegetation. The surrounding forests might have been as badly denuded as our own, if not worse, and this could be the very reason the natives abandoned the cities -- the immediate environment could no longer feed them. Our consolation: Nature always has the power to regenerate itself. After we become extinct, the forests and oceans of the Philippines will grow back their original glory.

Tony got my feeble joke. But he pointed out that Brazil is doing something to address the problem.

The full list of attendees:

1. Atty. Antonio Oposa Jr. (Chairman, IBP National Envi-ronmental Action Team; Environmental Lawyer & Advocate; Environmental Law Professor, Univ. of the Phil.; Environmental Law Consultant to the WB, ADB, UN, AID, and the EU)
2. Gloria Estenzo-Ramos (Deputy Chairwoman for the Visayas, IBP Nat'l Env. Action Team)
- 3, 4. Nel & Malou Allado-Reformina
5. Cora Yabut-Custodio
6. Dr. Gloria Caguiat-Tagorda (Alumnae Coordinator of her sorority in Manila)
7. Gina Boncad-Francisco (Deputy Director, Philippines Dept. of Tourism, NYC)
- 8, 9. Diloy & Didi Malabuyo

- 10, 11. Simon & Loida Racaza
12. Ignie Ocampo
13. Bee Monzón
14. Connie Ángeles
15. Pem Ancheta
16. Mildred Basubas
17. Susan Berman
18. Dr. Josefina Moneda
19. Dr. Beatriz Uy-Dykes (Registered Dietitian;  
resident at 347 62nd Street)
20. Carla Reformina (Nel & Malou's daughter)
21. Noel Reyes
22. Hans Groot
23. Johnny Reyes

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### **Michael Dadap - Bandurria**

Lecture XXXI

March 18, 2007

Write up by Johnny Reyes

Michael Dadap, world-famous classical guitar virtuoso from the Sugbuanon speaking region of the Philippines, is talented -- and popular. When the head count of those who indicated they would like to listen to Mike speak passed 20, I got nervous and asked Amador whether there was a maximum limit to his brownstone's capacity. As he often does, our host evaded the question and replied simply, "Impressive! Mike is a crowd drawer." Interpreting this as carte

blanche, I eagerly fielded the subsequent RSVP's with a Come-One-Come-All message. The old record for attendance was 23 -- during Tony Oposa's talk on "Marine Biodiversity in the Philippines" in October 2006 -- but at that time we were augmented by a large group of Sigma Deltans. Now, there were potentially 35 attendees. For Plan B, we could always declare the evening standing-room-only. On Sunday March 18 itself, at the appointed time of 6:30 Amador and Gloria's place was packed, and buzzing with anticipation. Jane Orendain's three foreign guests did not materialize, but as usual she had already made herself useful and organized a team of furniture movers so that the speaker could be positioned at the north end of the living room, by the French windows. A lot of newcomers were present: the Ledesma sisters from Rockland County NY, Bambi and Pinky (she had attended once before, during the evening of "Turbulence" in September 2004), and their friend Yasmin. The only one missing was Bopeep, sister #3, who was in the Philippines. Yasmin said she is a rondalla member -- a promising development.

Another newcomer was Frank Jimenez, a former seminarian who outed and then moved on to La Salle -- where he received a fine college education (this was long before Taft became co-ed). Since he currently lives in West Orange NJ, he knows many of the 62nd Street Forum members and was easily at home with the crowd. More newcomers: the notorious raider and ipo-ipo Bert Peronilla, his wife Mary Ann, and his antique violin (with which he hoped to perform a duet with Mike Dadap before the night was over). The couple brought along Mary Ann's sister, Grace

Montelibano. Then there was Matt Geraghty, jazz bassist, who was dragged in by his friend, 62nd Street Forum regular John Entrada -- unfortunately, Mark could stay only until 7:30. The only one missing was Michael Dadap. Nora dela Serna, another Forum regular, arrived half an hour late, as she had advised beforehand she would. When told the speaker was still not around, she smiled and said, "Why -- didn't you know? Michael is always late." While we were waiting for the scheduled speaker to arrive, Amador conjured up a few impromptu numbers:

1. A surprise appearance by famous writer and UP alumna Ninotchka Rosca, who read to us an episode from her forthcoming novel, "Undocumented." As you can guess from the title, it's about the pathetic circumstances in the U.S. of an illegal immigrant woman from the Philippines. In the excerpt, the Filipina nanny is made to wait at her masters' house while the couple stay out late -- she misses the last train home before her only day off. To make matters worse, she gets swindled out of an hour's overtime pay as a result of the switchback from daylight-saving time, which was scheduled to happen that night, and which her employers were quick to take advantage of. In reply to a question, Ninotchka confirmed that movie arrangements were being discussed.

2. A brief speech by smartly-dressed Bert Florentino, very recent (Philippine) Presidential Awardee on Literature, who came with his wife Eva. Amador asked how he felt about accepting an award from a President he didn't like. Bert replied he hadn't even physically received it yet, because he was being

invited to fly to Malacanang -- at his own expense. 3. A talk by Amador himself on his latest hobby: "Sculpting with Mathematics." He had observed that generating equations graphically in three dimensions produces interesting shapes. But unless one can create a 3-D hologram, one can only see a two-dimensional image on a computer screen. What Amador had been doing was to construct physical models of the most beautiful mathematical figures, using sticks glued or tied together. At first glance, his toys looked like the bird cages sold at Quiapo, but a closer examination inside the outer box frames revealed intricate and fascinating forms which showed different facets from every viewing angle. Amador said he knows someone who can convert his wooden sculptures into durable and pretty metal -- possibly the start of a profitable marketing business. Still no sign of Mike Dadap. Matt already had to leave earlier. Meanwhile, the audience happily attacked the Yellow Tail shiraz (brought by Carlos and Arlene Esguerra) and the sushi; cheeses; leche flan; ginataan; etc. (contributed by various people). Hey, wasn't there another musician in the house? Bert Peronilla was persuaded to perform a violin solo, something he'd only done in the shower before. So out came his precious instrument, which he'd bought from Prof. Julio Tapales more than 50 years ago, and bow met strings.

Before Bert could start with his third piece, Mike Dadap arrived at last, with an entourage of two ladies from the Ma-Yi Theater Company (dalawang babayi na taga Ma-Yi): Lyca Benitez-Brown and Myrna Anover. While Mike was unpacking and organizing all

the bandurrias he had brought, Lyca invited everyone to patronize and support Ma-Yi productions (commercial break).

Michael had prepared a list of some 25 questions, which he distributed at the start of his talk, intended to stimulate the audience's interest and provide a self-test on how much we knew about the bandurria. Then he intended to demolish the myths and sort out our knowledge of this underrated musical instrument.

The gist of Michael's talk follows:

-- The bandurria is a relative of the mandolin, lute, bandola, etc., which originated in Southern Europe more than a thousand years ago. During the Middle Ages, the Spanish bandurria started out with 3 strings, which became 4 during the Renaissance. The bandurria surged in popularity in the Baroque period, when the strings were increased to 10 (5 pairs). The modern Spanish bandurria has 12 strings (6 pairs). Other members of the immediate bandurria family are the laud contralto, the laud tenor, the laudon, and the laud contrabajo.

-- Filipino musicians, with a penchant for innovation, modified the bandurria and increased the strings further to 14 (in a 3- 3-3-2-2-1 pattern).

-- But unlike in Europe where the instrument is accorded due respect and concert-quality music is written for and performed on it, in the Philippines the bandurria is looked down upon. Those who do play it are entertainers, not artists. If a person who can't even read notes is capable of plucking strings with a regular beat, puede na siyang pang-musiko sa fiesta, and that's as far as the bandurria goes.

-- Philippine bandurrias are sold to tourists, who don't play them but merely display them on their living room walls as decoration. Because the items go cheap, the manufacturers don't bother with quality, but simply mass-produce pretty objects that look like bandurrias. Mike showed us examples: the fret spacing was irregular -- you might even say random. When you buy a bandurria, Mike said you should insist on structural quality: the distance between frets must decrease progressively as the pitch increases, and the chords must be playable -- i.e., with enough room for one's fingers to hold the correct string (or group of strings) down without affecting the adjacent strings. (Especially important if your fingers are not as long and fine as Mike's.) Hopefully, you will influence the Philippine bandurria cottage industry to produce better-quality products.



(Photo is from Danny's newsletter on Michael's visit to Dumaguete. Sample bandurrias shown)

-- The instrument also deserves more respect. The rondalla (of which the bandurria is the star performer) should be on center stage, not playing background music hidden behind a curtain. Mike is doing his part by training music teachers to inspire talented students and impart

the correct techniques to them. But we really didn't come to hear Michael speak. We came to hear him play. When his talk seemed over, I asked if he could give a demonstration. Mike replied that none of the bandurrias he had with him worked right. It was obvious the Philippine bandurria was not an instrument he was comfortable with, and he did not want to give a sub-par (by his standards) performance.

Yasmin saved the situation by volunteering to play one of the bandurrias available, if Mike would accompany her on his classical guitar. Out came Mike's favorite instrument, and soon the two were producing beautiful music. With Yasmin merely playing the notes of the (do re mi) scale and Mike providing the harmonics, it sounded like they were performing a classical piece. If you saw the movie "Amadeus," you will recall that upstart Mozart took a simple tune composed by National Artist Salieri and completely transformed it by adding overtones when he played it, something only a virtuoso artist could perform on the spot. (Salieri of course was green with envy.)

Then Mike Dadap played two solo pieces on his classical guitar, one Filipino and the other European. Our wish was fulfilled -- we forgot about the bandurria. Mike sitting at center stage and his guitar were one harmonious whole, and it was sheer pleasure to watch and listen. (John Entrada recorded this part on his videocam.)

Following is a list of those who were present:

1. Michael Dadap;
- 2,3. Amador & Gloria Muriel;
- 4,5. Bert & Eva Florentino;
6. Marie Luarca-Reyes;
7. Mayu Gonzales;
- 8,9. Carlos & Arlene Esguerra;
10. Jane Orendain; 11,12. Javher & Pilar Advani;
13. Nora dela Serna;
14. Pinky Ledesma-Salgado;
15. Bambi Ledesma;
16. Yasmin Yabyabin;
17. Frank Jimenez;
- 18,19. Bert & Mary Ann Peronilla;
20. Grace Montelibano;
21. John Entrada;
22. Matt Geraghty (left early);
23. Rebecca Magbag;
24. Ninotchka Rosca;
25. Lyca Benitez-Brown;
26. Myrna Anover;
- 27,28. Johnny & Mila Reyes

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**Email from Michael Dadap expounding his views on Philippine folk music. We had earlier met in Dumaguete and I had written up a short report on the Rodalla Festival there.**

Dear Danny,

Its great to be back in the 62nd Forum Loop again. Thank you for forwarding me your letters from Dumaguete. I could not have given a better, clearer, and most informative account than you did. Daghang salamat. Most importantly, I was truly overjoyed to see you both in Dumaguete. I wanted to stay longer but one can only do so much. (If you have any problem with the bandurria please let me know and I will personally bring it to the maker if necessary. Sometimes the wood can change due to weather conditions.) I am very happy that the International Festival had given the bandurria and our rondalla ensembles great exposure for all Pilipinos at home and abroad. I hope this will continue. There is still a lot to do to improve our ensembles. The International Festival is a great start but what could be more significant is when we spread our advocacy (like what you are doing now) to promote our culture through the music of bandurria ensembles. I truly appreciate everything you have done.

My job is simply to rally and ask support from my colleagues, friends as well as to all classically or music conservatory trained professional musicians to give our folk instruments a chance to become prominent in major concert stages. I dream someday that the bandurria will be a part of the curriculum in

our music conservatories. Unless classical musicians with great stature will rally side by side to help promote the improvement of our folk instruments, solo and ensemble performances, and compositions, I am afraid that we will have a hard and long campaign to cultivate and educate Filipino audiences in appreciating high level concert performances by Filipino folk instrumentalists. As proven by our own Kwerdas, the Russian, and Israeli groups, (they are conservatory trained musicians) the plucked instrument thus belongs to the main arena of sophisticated and highly educated concert audiences. Our great disadvantage for now is that we are ignoring the proper instrumental training for our children in the elementary schools about the bandurria. I am embarrassed to admit that most of our kababayan's attitude towards the bandurria is rather low at this point in time. This is what truly inspired me to write the book "The Virtuoso Bandurria" hoping it will provide our teachers additional tools to teach our children the art of making beautiful music through the bandurria.

I simply can not accept that our children will be deprived to hear, enjoy and love the masterworks of great composers like Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and including our very own Abelardo, Molina, De Leons etc., just because they are economically challenged and have no access to good teachers and fine musical instruments. I believe that a well made and high quality bandurria is a great alternative. It is after all, very affordable and accessible to all Pilipinos. It is our treasure and a great testament to our rich cultural heritage.

I envision that in the near future, when all of us can work on the same page together, we will literally and figuratively pick the bandurria up from the streets and bring it to the concert halls. You and I and many others have seen it work. It gave us joy and I hope I am not being presumptuous to say that let us all together spread this joy to as many Filipinos we can reach out.

Yours, Michael

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### **Email Thread on Dominatrix Bus**

As the logo in the heading goes "where ideas flourish", the forum encourages avid discussion. Much of the exchanges develop a thread that often times leads to surprising conclusions. This attests to the bantering nature of many of its members who have a great sense of humor. Below is an example of such an exchange.

*From John Entrada:*

After my wife Genevieve gave birth last month, she was itching to get back to her original figure, so she took to the exercise bike. While she was out of the gym nursing the baby, I found an old Honda alternator, hooked it up to the flywheel of the exercise bike, and hooked the alternator into a power inverter. I then plugged the television into the power inverter.

Now, if she wants to watch television, she has to maintain a constant speed of at least 30 mph on the bike. Otherwise, the television will shut off.

Anyway, I'm working out a deal with the Chinese to install these contraptions in their prisons. They're hoping to put their political prisoners to work while also trying to manage the energy requirements of a rapidly growing economic superpower.

*From Carlos Esguerra:*

There is an article in today's (March 1) front page of the Wall Street Journal about a gym in Hongkong (California Fitness Health Club) that is already doing this. The gym had rigged up 13 machines, so that when all the machines are in use, they generate up to 300 watts, enough to power three 27-inch TV sets, five 60-watt light bulbs or several video iPods. They calculate if all the exercise machines are in use 10 hours a day for a year, they can save \$183 worth of electricity. They calculated it will take them 82 years to pay off the initial \$15,000 investment.

*From Danny Gil:*

It really all boils down to economics. Even the hybrid cars, if scrutinized under that criteria, turns out to be not such a good deal. But as with environmentalism, one has to start somewhere.

*From John Entrada:*

Re: Pedal Power That's fantastic. Shows that there's a market out there for my contraption. Now all I need is to contract with prison systems in countries that allow for prison labor.

*From Bert Peronilla:*

I ran a feasibility test for the input side on my Sears Lifestyler DT1000 which has roughly an 18" flywheel. I pedaled as fast as I could for 30 minutes and the best that I could do was 13 mph. Is it possible to just forget the inverter and get a TV which runs on 12-volt DC? P.S. Using the concept of tandem bikes, is it also possible to have 50 bikes in tandem, say in a 5 x 10 arrangement to serve as a public bus where the passengers use muscle power to get the bus moving? I feel sorry for the bus driver if the bus is empty :-))

*More from Bert Peronilla after obviously looking at the economics involved:*

How about this scenario? A 50-seat tandem bike bus in Manhattan which will run for 8 hours a day and average 300 passengers per hour on a good day. Charge \$1.00 per passenger which is half of a regular bus fare. That will gross \$2,400.00 per day x 30 days = \$72,000.00 per month. Maybe the bike bus can be built for \$36,000.00? Payout will be 15 days, ignoring the time value of money which is probably acceptable since the payout period is very short.

*From Johnny Reyes:*

The transmission of Bert's 50-cycle bus can be designed for 4 speeds: cruising speed; overtaking speed; attack speed; and ramming speed. It will need a backward facing seat at the front of the bus for the drummer with double hammers, and a wide aisle along the centerline with sufficient safety clearance for the man with the whip. Then the company can have a captive clientele.

*The clincher from Bert:*

In other words, my bus is also a dominatrix mobile?  
There will be less passengers, but we can charge  
\$50.00 per passenger

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**Benny Quiñones - Microfinancing**  
**Amador Muriel - Turbulence**

Lecture XXXII

February 1, 2008

Write up by Johnny Reyes

Last Sunday, I spent half an hour on a mental exercise reconstructing the list of attendees the night before at the first 62nd Street Forum event that didn't have any formally scheduled speaker, and I came up with 27, including a preteener, a toddler, and an infant. [By the way, when you're stuck with nothing to do in a hospital waiting room, where the only reading matter is Lawn & Garden Magazine, get pen and paper and try listing down the 50 states of the U.S. & A. -- the trick is to do it geographically, starting with the coastal states, going clockwise or counter, and then gradually moving inland. The hardest to remember always seem to be Missouri and Oklahoma. Or try listing the 21 counties of New Jersey using the same technique. Or the 82 provinces of the Philippines -- now that's really tough!] As soon as I'd completed my list and congratulated myself for having done 40% of my promised writeup, I

opened up Yahoo to check my e-mail and whaddayounow -- there popped up Danny's illustrated cast of characters in full technicolor, complete with subtitles! Talk about stealing my thunder.

But the numbers were a heartening indication that the loose membership of the Forum hadn't lost their enthusiasm for this stimulating discussion group. Many more had planned to come, but couldn't at the last minute. For example, Mars Custodio was still recovering from a recent operation, Bert Peronilla's Mary Ann suffered a bad cut on her finger while peeling some vegetables in her kitchen, and Vicky Vitug sprained her knee, so we missed all these nice people (although Vic kept his promise to attend). Those who did arrive are listed in Danny's pictorial, which I re-attach below for your convenience. The food was terrific (gourmet quality), but I'm no good at describing cuisine -- we need someone like Tony Nievera to do it justice. There were several bottles of fine French wine (as well as Australian), and somebody brought chocolates shaped like miniature wine bottles, with real liqueurs inside that dripped when you ate the chocolate (remember Kim Basinger's scene in the remake of "The Getaway"?)

When Amador showed me around his basement, I was surprised to see that there is a second cellar located even deeper underground -- one more level below where we were. I guess that is where he stores his oak barrels of aged amontillado and where he bricks in his enemies after he gets them drunk. Amador said their basement bedroom had only recently been rehabbed from a disaster which

occurred while he and Gloria were abroad: An old pipe feeding a radiator had sprung a leak, spraying wet steam into the room continuously for nearly a week. Aside from ruining the walls and the furniture, the resulting dampness allowed some mold to form, to which Amador was sensitive. Not to worry -- it could have been worse -- I'd much rather deal with condensate than fire anytime. The room has been cleaned and refurbished, and is now as good as new. But instead of gathering in the basement, our biggish group convened at the customary place: the Muriel's grand dining/living room, around the dining table upon which the corpus of Amador's turbulence experiments lay in suspended animation, pulsating slowly while waiting for the next lightning strike to reenergize it.

Since many of the attendees were newcomers, the organizers thought of asking each person around the circle to introduce himself/herself, preferably with a brief anecdote. If any ice had not been broken yet, this certainly did it. Then the first and only volunteer speaker stood up and spoke about Micro-Financing: Benny Quiñones described the Grameen Bank system managed by non-government organizations in third-world areas. [Is that still a valid term? With the fall of the Soviet Empire, the myth was exposed as we all realized there was no second world at all -- the iron curtain countries were at third-world level the whole time.] Benny said the system first created in Bangladesh has been very successful. Funds are loaned to poor women, who use them in small business ventures. In some cases, they buy goods (for example, bunches of bananas) and sell them at double what they paid for them. Then the

microfinancier collects on the loan at 2-3% a month. This is a sizable return on investment but is not usurious, particularly when compared to the amazing 100% markup and profit made by the borrower. The Grameen Bankers are not profiteering, but providing an economic stimulus, albeit on a micro scale. An unexpected finding was that the poor have been showing a better repayment rate than the more well-to-do who borrow from the regular banks. It helps that the loan grantees are the women of the family, not the men who presumably are less dependable. It also helps that responsibility for repayment is imposed collectively on a group, generating peer pressure not to default. But a question worth asking is: Granted that the system is successful on a micro scale, how does it help the macro economy? Also, what was the experience when the system was transplanted to the Philippines, where *abilidad* has been an admired character trait since the time of the Marcoses (and probably even much earlier, when Magellan's group named one of the islands *Ladrones*)? Benny admitted that there have been difficulties. But the issue was not dishonesty. The problem was that the credit collectors were too softhearted, and the borrowers were typically Filipino: always trying to get the rules bent a little in their favor. [Note that in the Philippines, traffic signs cannot just say "No parking." They must say "Strictly no parking" -- otherwise, people will assume they're not serious.] By the way, the Shell Ladies' Circle in Tabangao, Batangas, has been putting the Grameen Bank principle into practice since the 70's as part of their community service projects among the poor barrios surrounding the refinery.

After a half-hour's break, Amador stood up and explained what the stainless-steel pipes and fittings and plastic tubes on the dining table were all about. He said that a pure gas from a pressurized cylinder (for example, nitrogen) is allowed to run out through



the piping, which is open at the other end. The flow rate is controlled by adjusting the opening of a globe valve. At the point where the gas escapes to atmosphere, the velocity and pressure

(which are always interrelated) are measured and continuously recorded. Amador's team gradually increase the flow rate by slowly opening the valve, and listen to the gas flowing through the pipe. When the type of flow is laminar (or layered -- meaning, it is slower near the walls of the pipe and faster at the center), the sound is smooth, like that of a tranquil stream. When the type of flow is turbulent (you all know what the word means), the sound takes on the Korotkoff Effect. The scientist after whom the effect is named has an onomatopaeic name (you know, from English 101 -- a name which, when pronounced, sounds like what it means). When the gas flow becomes turbulent, it makes a sound like "korotkoff-korot-rot-rot-kororot-korotkoff." One of Amador's original discoveries is that as the gas flow rate is increased, it changes from laminar to turbulent under certain conditions (described by the Reynolds Number, as

every engineer knows), but then as it is increased further, it becomes laminar again! And then, turbulent again. Laminar. Turbulent. Laminar. Turbulent. And so on, following a cyclic pattern. The spool piece assembly on the dining table allows Amador's team to verify this hypothesis. In fact, on one evening in the past, Amador and his assistant actually demonstrated the phenomenon to us (but unfortunately, he didn't attach a loudspeaker to the pipe).

[The assistant who demonstrated the experiment that evening happened to be Jerry Dadap Jr., nephew of Michael and son of carillon player Jerry Sr., who used to play "Push on, UP" on the bells every afternoon during our college days, a musical treat which we took for granted at the time, but which evoked nostalgia when we heard it as background music on a recent You-Tube video about the kickoff celebration for the 2008 UP Centennial (short "e") Anniversary.]

Another discovery by Amador is analogous (or, as he puts it, corollary) to the standard Law of Partial Pressures, which everyone learns in physics: When two or more pure gases are mixed together inside a closed container, each of the gases exerts its characteristic pressure at the prevailing temperature as if the other gas or gases are not present. (The pressures of all the gases in the mixture -- called their partial pressures -- when added together make up the total pressure inside the container.) Amador has discovered that when two or more pure gases are flowing together as a mixture inside a pipe, their flow patterns become turbulent independently of each

other (when each gas attains the Reynolds Number at which turbulence occurs) as if the other gas or gases do not exist. I believe he calls this his Superposition Principle of the Onset of Turbulence.

One other discovery which I didn't understand completely was named by Amador the Principle of Limiting Excitation. I thought he said that turbulence results when the gas molecules get over-excited, but their passion can be repressed by allowing them to exercise other degrees of freedom. Or the other way around: the velocity of a flowing gas is retarded when the pattern becomes turbulent, because instead of all the energy being directed forward, it gets scattered in different directions, cancelling each other so that the resultant driving force in the intended direction of flow is less than when the flow was still laminar. His analogy for laymen involved a car barreling downhill at full speed -- if the wheels are misaligned or unbalanced, they will wobble and slow down the vehicle. Or a person who is distracted from the object of his obsession by side attractions -- such as food.

All these discoveries and (proven) hypotheses will make Amador world-famous some day -- if he isn't yet. But he says his wife brought him down to earth recently with the remark: Why didn't you think of these things when you were younger!!!?

Before the end of the evening, the next gathering of the 62nd Street Forum had already been planned. But it will be offsite: Teresa Rodriguez of Montclair State University in New Jersey (who has attended the 62nd Street Forum only once before -- in May 2005) offered

to host the group at Montclair on Saturday, February 23. The plan is to rendezvous at the Pandan Restaurant (Teresa will provide directions) at 10:30 am, have a KKB lunch there, and then proceed to the university nearby, where we will have a meeting place reserved for us until 4 pm. One of the topics to be discussed will be "Photography -- An Art or a Vocational Craft?" Contributors to the argument, pro or con, are welcome, including long-range correspondence from Las Vegas. Speakers on other subjects are also encouraged to come forward.

Unfortunately, Lisa and Danny Gil will not be there. By now, they would already have left New Jersey for Tanjay, and will not be back until July, when they intend to accommodate Bert Peronilla's invitation to his long-awaited garden barbecue.

Johnny Reyes

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**Carlos Esguerra - Photography, Fine Art or Vocational Craft?**

**Amador Muriel - Lissajous Curves**

Lecture XXXIII

3 March 2008

Write up by Johnny Reyes

On a sunny winter's day with a temperature of 29 degrees F (which felt like 18 degrees F when corrected by the wind chill factor), a hardy and

congenial group of eight met at a café with a tropical motif -- the Pandán in downtown Bloomfield, off Exit 148 of the Garden State Parkway. Discovered by Frank Jimenez, this unpretentious but classy Filipino restaurant, one of the few in New Jersey, has been written up glowingly in that liberal broadsheet the New York Times:

Instead of individual ala carte, we ordered as a group and shared the dishes and the dessert as Filipinos usually do. For \$14 apiece, we enjoyed a satisfying lunch comprising ginataáng hipon, high-quality pansít, Thai-style chicken curry, inadobong kangkóng, and halu-halò topped with ube ice cream (I think that was our menu -- not 100% confident about the terminology, since my wife wasn't with me). Metered parking in a municipal lot was a convenient hundred feet away. Aside from Frank, the rest of the eight were Teresa Rodriguez, Amador and Gloria Muriel, Carlos Esguerra, Hery and Mila Brillantes, and myself (Vic and Vicky Vitug had cancelled at the last minute).

Small talk at the restaurant skirted the ongoing Barack demagoguery and the current unrest in Manila, but drifted instead towards reminiscences about Amador's old U.P. friends David Medalla and Behn Cervantes, the differences between Jesuit priests and Christian Brothers, the Jesuits' exasperation with Amador when they tried to catechize the 14-year-old boy in Marikina, and La Sallite Frank's replacement of the first syllable of the word "Ateneans" with another vowel. Today's formal discussion at the 62nd Forum was meant to resolve

once and for all the global issue of whether photography is a fine art or a tradesman's craft. Carlos is an award-winning photographer-artist (website: [www.carloesguerra.com](http://www.carloesguerra.com)). Since he sells his works, I assume he is classified as a professional. Frank is a photography hobbyist himself, who once took still shots of a Hollywoodmovie set while filming was going on (he didn't feel very welcome, he says). The rest of us are click-and-shoot amateurs. Anyway, it looked like we had enough credible resource persons in the group to come up with a respectable verdict. But first we had to adjourn to a proper conference room.

Fortunately, we had just what we needed: Teresa Rodriguez, Director of the George Segal Gallery in nearby Montclair State University, had offered a tour of her gallery and the use of a formal conference room with audio/visual equipment. It was only one day after a record-breaking snowfall in New Jersey had forced most companies to stay closed for the day. The snow was therefore still on the ground and on the awnings and rooftops, and as we followed the directions provided by Frank and Teresa and convoyed into the hilly campus of MSU with its colorful buildings, the quaint architecture and preponderance of red made it feel like we were entering a cheery snowbound Alpine town. (I guess it would have looked even better at night, with lights, instead of in broad daylight.) The George Segal Gallery is connected to a multi-story parking building, which has enough capacity to serve any fair-sized shopping mall. You drive all the way up to the 4th floor and then walk directly into the gallery, so you

never need to step outdoors (except probably during class days, when the students' cars are in and the building is full). Teresa's office windows overlook the campus entranceway far below, where security vehicles are parked and ready to roll into action in case of an emergency, and the boiler building, which has an unusual flue gas stack running horizontally along its roof.

Montclair is the second state university of New Jersey after the more well-known Rutgers with the famous football team (which is now being taken seriously in the collegiate leagues) and the recently-notorious women's basketball team (whose predominantly black players were offended by politically-incorrect radio talk-show host Don Imus when he jokingly referred to them as nappy-headed ho's, and caused him to be taken off the air -- for a while). Montclair with its smaller but still sizeable student population has enclosed premises, unlike Rutgers which has its campus facilities integrated into the towns of New Brunswick and Piscataway (and Newark and Camden) in the state of New Jersey.

I had just learned recently that the person after whom the gallery is named is not the actor who appeared opposite Glenda Jackson in "A Touch of Class" in the 60's, and who was a lookalike of James Franciscus and Richard Chamberlain. It turned out there was another George Segal: a sculptor who died recently in his 80's. Teresa took advantage of the opportunity to show us a photographic exhibit which was just closing. The dramatic black-and-white pictures consisted of two collections: (1) photos taken

by amateurs Giuseppe Morandi and Micio (a labor union activist) of rural life in the Tuscany region of Italy at the beginning of the last century, and (2) stills taken by professional photographer Angelo Novi of the sets of a movie being filmed by famous director Bernardo Bertolucci in the 1990's. Since the period of the movie is 1900 -- in fact its title is "Novecento" (with the "Mille" omitted) -- the costumes and sceneries of the two sets of photographs look similar, and it was hard to tell which were taken by the amateurs (authentic) and which were taken by the professional (staged). A clue: The Novi stills include shots of Robert De Niro, Gerard Depardieu, and a breathtakingly bare-breasted Ms. Dominique Sanda.

In the conference room, Teresa led off the discussion by pointing out the differences between a painter's and a photographer's morandi -- uh, make that modus operandi. Obviously, the painter's task is more labor-intensive and time-consuming than a photographer's. But a painter enjoys the luxury of having ample time to study, absorb, and appreciate a scene or a subject before putting it on canvas, whereas a cameraman must be lucky enough to be present at the right place at the right time in order to capture the moment when it comes.

One factor which has changed photography so much that a photographer can do nearly anything with his subject that a painter can is the development of user-friendly photo modification software such as Adobe Photoshop Elements. Do alterations affect the integrity of a photographer's work? In response to the question, Frank cited the following example: a striking

photo of a beautiful girl riding a bicycle, perfect except for a telephone pole in the background which seemed to be sticking out of the girl's head. He didn't see anything wrong with air-brushing the telephone pole out of the picture. Carlos disagreed -- he said spotting the pole and keeping it out of the picture would have been a good indication of the photographer's skill in composition. He said he jealously safeguards his own reputation for never altering any of his photographs. Does he consider alterations unethical? Carlos replied he would not go so far as to say that. [Perhaps a milder term, e.g., corrupted?] Frank countered that when Carlos takes several snapshots of the same scene, chooses the best, and discards the rest, although no individual photograph is retouched the mechanism Carlos uses is no different from the alteration of living organisms over generations through the Darwinian process of natural selection. I added that digitally-altered scenes taken with a movie camera, such as those in "Jurassic Park" and "Lord of the Rings," may not be generally considered as being up there with the fine arts, but to me personally they are top-of-the-line.

Why are some of Carlos' works in black-and-white? Did he simply run out of color film? No. Some compositions in black-and-white achieve drama and mood which are not possible with color. Same with movies -- can you imagine how Laurence Olivier's "Wuthering Heights" would come through in full technicolor? It would be just another period costume movie. Carlos said some photographer-artists consider black-and-white pictures as interpretative, while color pictures are merely documentary (like

those taken by a surveillance camera). But Carlos revealed an interesting secret: he always takes photographs with color film, and then if he wants a black-and-white output he filters the colors out. Advantage of this procedure: Grays taken with black-and-white film have only a few dozen shade gradations, while those taken with color film amazingly have tens of thousands. Carlos said you can easily see the difference in quality when you compare black-and-white shots taken via the two methods.

How do professional artist-photographers protect their work? Teresa asked this because of an experience she had whereby she recognized an article in a magazine that she had written years before as her thesis in college. Her permission to reprint the article had not been sought, and there was only an unobtrusive fine-print note mentioning her name as the author. [Now she knows how Joe Schuster and Jerry Siegel felt when their seminal idea was stolen and developed into an epic franchise that generated billions of dollars over half a century, with only a casual mention that they were the creators of "Superman."] After asking around, Teresa learned that her old professor in the Philippines had released the article, saying, "OK lang. Walâ na namán 'yon. Nasa U.S. na."

Carlos said he signs his work. He controls the number of prints by creating only a limited number and then securing the original (in a vault?). Although photos posted on the Internet may seem to be fair game for pirates, downloaded copies can't really

achieve the full quality of prints taken directly from the original. And then there are copyrights -- but the process takes so long the protection afforded is not really that effective.

Amador exposed another secret Carlos has: he is color-blind with respect to greens and browns (but his ability to see traffic lights is not affected). How does this handicap affect his work? Carlos replied it doesn't. [It probably even enhances the quality.] Shades of Beethoven! do you realize what this means!!? During his later years, Ludwig couldn't hear what he was composing, but that was the time he came out with the heavenly "Ode to Joy."

I guess we didn't really address the issue frontally of whether photography is a fine art or a tradesman's craft. But based on the above discussions, you decide.

At this point, Amador mentioned that he would allow the George Segal Gallery of MSU (c/o Teresa Rodriguez) to develop and market his idea for a three-dimensional Lissajous curve model. To jog your memories, here's some material I got from Wikipedia and embedded in an e-mail a couple of weeks ago. The article explains what a Lissajous curve is [omitted].

Amador says the families of so-called "Lissajous figures" are only two-dimensional. He thought about the 3-D version at the age of 16 when he was a student at U.P., and then forgot all about it. Half a century later, bored in Geneva while waiting for a

verdict on his theory of turbulence, he toyed with the idea again and finally acted on it at the age of 67. If he is the first scientist to play with the three-dimensional counter-parts of the Lissajous figures, he may have broken new ground. It will be difficult to prove it, but if he does he will have the option to name the 3D versions after himself. Teresa suggested "Muriel Curve."



We'll hear more about this venture soon, I'm sure.

(The final 3-d Lissajous metal figure. Amador had it cast in Europe.).

Regards. Johnny

In the ensuing emails, Danny who was in the Philippines, quipped that he vaguely remembered his college math about this curve, but thought all along it was spelled "lascivious".

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## **Party - Bert Peronilla's Barbeque**

Lecture XXXIV

September 16, 2008

Write up by Johnny Reyes

Two years ago, when the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee was still Hillary Clinton, Joe Torre was still the timeless Manager of the New York Yankees, and the prices of houses had not yet totally collapsed, Alberto Peronilla (University of the Philippines - BS Mechanical Engineering - Cum Laude; Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (Troy, New York) - MS Management Science, MS Mechanical Engineering, MS Computer Science, PhD Computer; and Mastermind of the first and only Panty Shower celebrated outside the ladies' dorm at U.P. Dilimán in the late 50's) organized a barbecue at his New Jersey home for randomly-selected attendees of the 62nd Street Forum. Unbeknownst to his charming wife Mary Ann, Bert proceeded to blend a batch of his secret-formula steak sauce, and (according to his neighbor Frank Jimenez) applied for a larger-diameter natural gas supply pipeline from energy company PSE & G to fuel his furnaces at the expected peak load. With the steak sauce brew already boiling, bubbling, and frothing, Bert was disappointed to learn that the invitees could not make it on the appointed day or any other day that year before the weather became too cold for an outdoor event.

So Bert deep-froze his concoction and planned for 2007 instead. But his guest list included several transnationals who were continually shifting from one

location to another, making it difficult to predict their position at a specific time with any degree of certainty. Time passed quickly, the seasons came and went, and soon Bert Peronilla was planning for 2008. The steak sauce was getting better with age.

At last, a date was agreed upon -- Sunday, September 7, 2008 -- auspicious because Danny and Lisa Gil were about to leave the East Coast (and sad to say were not planning to return for at least a year). Unfortunately, 62nd Street Forum Godfather Amador Muriel and Gloria had already left for the Philippines and would not be attending. Bert and Mary Ann live in the white (southwestern) section of the Oranges, a leafy and posh neighborhood known for the snootiest shopping center in the state: the famously expensive Short Hills Mall. Across an invisible divide lies the northeastern section of the Oranges, where the landscape changes dramatically into an all-black community. (I had become familiar with the latter area when I worked for an environmental consulting company as a lead inspector/risk assessor, testing the walls of all the schools in Orange and East Orange at night when the students were away, using a portable X-ray-effluence lead detector. One of the schools was built with Whitney Huston's help and is named for her. As far as black neighborhoods go, the Oranges are probably among the most affluent, in stark contrast with say Camden NJ where I was instructed not to stop for red traffic lights at night.)

Bert's home in West Orange is located in forested rolling hills at the foot (or on the slopes) of the Watchung Mountain range, which separates Route 78

from the parallel Route 22. Although I'd been in the area many times before, I got lost as soon as I left Route 24 (freeway) and entered the Short Hills Mall vicinity, and it took me over an hour and a half to get from my house in Belle Mead to Bert's place -- without asking for directions. Ten years ago when I first migrated to the U.S., I had a built-in compass in my brain, so that I always had a sense of north-south-east-and west. Lately, I seem to have lost this facility, and whenever I turn into an unfamiliar street I'm never sure now whether I'm going in the right direction or not. Bert's house is perched on the edge of a main road, so you can't slow down to check the number. But once you find the house, ample parking space is available: Bert's roomy driveway can hold six vehicles, and down below behind his backyard is a parking lot for a tennis club. Bert has a quid pro quo with his friend the club owner: his overflow guests can park in the tennis club parking lot, but during tournaments, the overflow participants can use Bert's house as a changing room (just kidding). I guess it'd be OK if Sharapova were among the crowd.

Those who came on Sunday were Frank; Danny and Lisa; Dr. Gene Pulmano; Teresa Rodriguez; Carlos and Arlene Esguerra; Hery and Mila Brillantes; Lisa's brother Dr. Señeris; and Mila and Johnny Reyes. Together with our gracious hosts Bert and Mary Ann, we were fourteen. The Peronillas' son and daughter-in-law were around initially, but when kodak-time came they had already gone. Since one of us (Danny) had to be the cameraman, there should have been 13 in the group photo on the garden steps. But if you count the persons in the attached picture, you

will find 14. It seems Danny has the uncanny ability to move faster than light, and he manages to be in any group picture he takes -- without using a delayed timer.

This group seems obsessed with David Medalla. I never met the man, but as described this all-around artist who was in U.P. and could do anything. He made a brief appearance, but the people were disappointed that he'd lost his shock of unruly wavy hair.

[Group picture below is from Danny's Newsletter that shows attendees at the barbeque plus other active 62nd Forum members cloned in].



1 Amador Muriel	7 & 16 Johnny & Mila Reyes	13 & 14 Bert & Mary Ann Peronilla
2 Cesar Lumba	8 Tony Nievera	19 Teresa Rodriguez
3 Frank Jimenez	9 Ramon Seneris	SUMMER '08 BBQ PHOTO AT BERT'S HOUSE
4 Gene Pulmano	10 Ninotchka Rosca	WITH SOME RECENTLY ACTIVE 62nd
5 & 17 Carlos & Arlene Esguerra	11 & 15 Danny & Lisa Gil	FORUM MEMBERS CLONED IN
6 & 18 Hery & Mila Brillantes	12 Michael Dadap	(un-numbered person is David Medalla)

As far as the topics of conversation went, the gathering was almost a reprise of the 62nd Street Forum discussion we had last year at the George Segal Gallery (of which Teresa is Director) in nearby

Montclair University, NJ: Photography and David Medalla. Teresa spoke about gestalt psychology as applied to art [Do I need to explain everything? Google it!] I've always confused the word with the name of the vampire played by Tom Cruise (or Brad Pitt?), who was trying to project an image of -- if not wholeness -- wholesomeness, I guess. Carlos noted that Danny was using an "SLR" camera, which didn't look extraordinary to me the layman, but which turned out to have capabilities beyond your wildest dreams (telescopic, microscopic, and X-ray mode).

The food? Oh the food! Bert and Mary Ann obviously spent a fortune on the steaks, which were soft, juicy, and plentiful. I complimented our host on his delicious kickapoo joy steak sauce vintage 2006, and politely inquired about his recipe. With his intimidating glare, Bert looked me straight in the eye and said quietly, "I can give you the formula if you want, but then I'll have to kill you afterwards." So much for recipes.

A couple expected to come who never showed up were Mars and Cora Custodio. But the person Frank really missed was his other (former) neighbor who'd already moved from West Orange to Las Vegas: Cesar Lumba. Would have been a lively political discussion if Tony Nievera had also been around. But Danny could make them all materialize if requested.

Thank you for the hospitality, Bert and Mary Ann.

Regards. Johnny

[Epilogue - Bert was also very active on the email Loop (being very computer savvy, and a co-moderator). He posted a few U-tube musical renditions of him playing the violin. Bert passed away June 2016 in NJ.]

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### Party - Hery Brillantes' Brunch

Lecture XXXV

August 14, 2010

Excerpts from the blog of Danny

Present were hosts Hery & Mila Brillantes, Danny & Lisa Gil, (on right), Ninotchka Rosca, Gene Pulmano, Mars & Cora Custodio, and Frank Jimenez



As Frank's earlier email indicated, we stayed on and on, and had wide-ranging discussions on various topics, from politics, to history, to theology, to feminism, jokes (bawdy or otherwise), and of course, plain chismis. Great fun & food.



My best candid shot on right, of Mars

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## **Party - Amador's Woodside Residence**

Lecture XXXIII

June 12, 2013

Write up by Danny Gil

It all started a few weeks ago when I emailed all in the 62nd St Forum loop:

We've been in Jersey City for almost a week, and intend to stay another 8 weeks. We met with Amador and Gloria Muriel at their new spacious apt in Woodside Saturday, and he proposes we 62nd Forum members meet again for old times sake. As he says, our numbers are diminishing.

We can have a potluck lunch at his place on any day most convenient to whoever wishes to join. Most of us are retired, so no need for a weekend meet. Parking is easy at his place on 48-10 45th St, Apt 2-C, a few blocks from Queens Blvd. Lots of diverse restaurants in the area, too.

For those in NJ who may find it difficult to drive in, I volunteer to pick you up, or perhaps some of you can convoy in.

The response was very encouraging. We decided to hold it on June 12, a midweek Wednesday. Just so happened to be Phil Independence day. Vic Vitug even emailed detailed directions via subway. A few, such as Nel Reformina and Teresa Rodriguez indicated they couldn't make it because it was a work day. But Johnny Reyes and wife Mila decided to take

the day off from work and join us retirees, especially since I offered that they first come to our place in nearby Jersey City, and we all drive in one car to Amador's in Queens, across from Manhattan. Erwin Gomez in Indiana at first said he'd fly in, as he had done so a few times before, but unfortunately, at the last moment, he said he couldn't make it. Ninotchka Rosca said she'd join, if it so happens her busy schedule didn't take her out of town that day. Gene Pulmano said he couldn't make it due to some prior medical commitments. Carlos Esguerra could not make it as he was in Belgium. And since Bert Peronilla said he might find it difficult to drive into Queens, we offered to pick him up at his place in East Orange.

For those not familiar with the 62nd St Forum, this is a bunch of mainly seniors, majority of whom are UP alumni, who regularly met starting the year 2001 at Amador Muriel's on 62nd St, Eastside Manhattan for dinner, camaraderie and fun. Each meeting was actually a lecture session of sorts, with either one of us, or with some invited guest expounding on a specific topic, after which free wheeling discussions would ensue. Most intellectually stimulating. There even were music and dance presentations. It always was held on a Saturday, starting at 7 pm, mainly because parking at that area and time was free. Attendance ranged from a handful to two dozen.

Over a period of 5 years, we had about 35 forums. This kind of tapered off as Amador started having extended trips to Europe and Asia, and I retired to the Philippines.

But even so, the group keeps up lively discussions and debate via email using the Yahoo groups service which we call the 62nd Forum loop.



The group picture.

1 & 2 – Lisa & Danny Gil	10 – Jane Orendain
3 & 4 – Amador & Gloria Muriel	11 – Vic Vitug
5 & 6 – Johnny & Mila Reyes	12 – Frank Jimenez
7 & 8 – Jobo & Cora Elizes	13 – Mike Dadap
9 – Bert Peronilla	

We weren't superstitious about 13, Vic's wife Vicky, 14, left early.

This is a picture taken by new-comer Jobo Elizes. He joined the email loop the other year, and this was his first time to meet with many of us. Actually, Jobo on the extreme right and I on the extreme left were cloned in. Jobo took the picture, so he wasn't originally in it. At that time, I was out re-parking Johnny's car so I also wasn't in the photo. But thanks to Corel Draw, I managed to clone ourselves in.

We had aimed to all get to Amador's at 11:30 am, in time for a potluck lunch. We were late by 2 hours.

Originally, Johnny & Mila were to have driven from Belle Mede to our place in Jersey City at about 9 AM, then I'd take the wheel and we all pick up Bert in East Orange then drive to Queens. By 10 AM, Johnny hadn't appeared yet, and when I called him on the cell, he said he changed the schedule and was picking up Bert first, before driving to our place. Unfortunately, he got lost, and got to Bert's much later, and it was only at 12 noon did all three of them appear at the our house in Jersey City. Traffic was bad everywhere, and we finally made it to Amador's by 1:30 pm. I found paid street parking 2 blocks away, and as we hurriedly left Johnny's car with our loads of food dishes, camera, etc, I forgot to lock the car up. I only realized that almost an hour later when I checked my watch to see if I was still within the 2 hours parking meter limit. Knowing that on the front seat was Bert's GPS, and some cash on the console, I hurriedly went back. Thankfully, everything was intact. I moved the car to a closer parking slot for another 2 hours, then later for the third time, moved it to a free parking slot I found on the next block. It still was there when we broke up almost at 6:00. After all, Johnny understood that years ago, this part of town was quite seedy. But not anymore. Like many areas close to Manhattan, the neighborhood is being gentrified as professionals move in when the earlier residents sell out.

Amador loves it here. Yet, ironically, this was one of the first properties they had years ago. They had

rented it out to a Filipina who over the years sublet it to others ala “slumlord” style. Only recently did they take it back and refurbish it completely. The demographics in the building have changed a lot with so many professionals now calling it home.

They still own the 4 storey 62nd St brownstone which is rented out, save for the first floor they have retained as their Manhattan pad.

The food & drink was excellent, but the company and conversation was even more fun.

It was agreed that they’d be more of these get-togethers even when Lisa and I are back in Tanjay.

--oo0oo--

**Excerpts from the last joint UPSCA &  
62nd Street Newsletter  
14 Nov 2014**

**Where are they now?**

Early on, Lisa and I visited Amador & Gloria Muriel at their 62nd Street brownstone. They have taken over the top floors again, and their daughter Marie is running the place as a classy bed & breakfast. Amador still is doing his Physics.

Amador was enthusiastic about reviving the 62nd Forum. On next page is a screen capture of the masthead of the 2007 newsletter which featured many of the writings of Johnny Reyes on the 36 or so lectures of the Forum. Since many of the 62nd Forum

members also are Upscans, this issue might just as well be considered also a 62nd Forum newsletter, and most likely also the last. I told Amador it is too late to revive the Forum. Many of the active members have left town. Lisa and I have been retired in Tanjay for the past 8 years.



Vic & Vicky Vitug retired and moved to Indiana, but recently found the pull of NYC in their Flushing house as irresistible, and have moved back.

Tony & Bernie Nievera have been in Las Vegas since early on, and Tony is most active on the internet with both Upsca and 62nd cyber loops, relating his various hobbies on photography, astronomy, food, travel, and guns

The ever-interesting writer Chay Lumba also moved to Las Vegas, and maintains his postings to a number of cyber groups.

Gene & Violy Pulmano now are in Hawaii, and he is most prolific in his emails on economics and health.

Award winning photographer Carlos & Arlene Esguerra still are based in NY, but at the moment, Carlos is in the Philippines where he has another exhibit. But a good portion of his time is also spent in Belgium with one of his children and their family.

Economist Hery Brillantes and Mila now are in Arizona. Their waterfront house on the NJ side of the Hudson was the venue for many a small get-together of some Forum members such as, among others

Mars & Cora Custodio, Frank Jimenez, Gene Pulmano, Ninotchka Rosca.

From what we glean from Facebook postings, Mars and Cora travel a lot and spend the cold months in the Philippines. Seems as if they recently were in Machu Picchu with Ham & Mayu Gonzales.

Frank Jimenez still is in NJ and occasionally joins the email threads on photography posted by Tony and Carlos. He of course comes out once in a while with postings that show his unique sense of humor.

Bert Peronilla & Maryann still also are in NJ, nearby to Frank, and Bert is the computer expert on any Yahoo problem regarding both cyber loops.

Bert & Eva Florentino are in Oregon, according to Amador. And Bert is quite not together up there, which is understandable at his age.

Nel Reformina, in NY, is also very visible in both loops, with his advocacies on education in the Bicol.

There are many other names that should be accounted for among those old friends we've had in the tri-state area during those 5 years we lived there, but we've lost touch.

For old times, sake, here is a 7 year old group photo (see page 98) at a barbeque in Bert & Maryann Peronilla's house. IDs seem discernible. In a subsequent redo, I cloned in a number of other active members, but unfortunately, I don't have that pic file on my present laptop.

Linda Faigao-Hall, playwright, retired to Ireland with her husband, who soon passed away. Last we heard was that she would teach in Silliman in Dumagete for a semester or two, in between her visits to hometown Cebu.

One transferee to Dumaguete is Thelma Ibañez-Teves, who moved from LA. Though from Luzon, she prefers the easy and slower provincial life there. Besides, her husband, Dennis Teves, has kin.

Mike Dadap is one we often see in Dumaguete. He visits at least once a year. But once there, he is busy in a whirlwind of activities from concerts to workshops, etc. We missed him last July when we were in Manila. Jane Orendain comes in often on the loop with her posts on little known but significant Philippine historical events. Though based in NY, she moves back and forth to the Philippines.

Ninotchka Rosca, also NY based, often posts about her advocacies. She co-authored a book with Amador.

Lenore Rachel Santos Lim occasionally posts schedules on her various print exhibits in the NY art scene.

Johnny Reyes in Belle Mead NJ (near Princeton) and Erwin Gomez in Indiana are of course up and about and doing well, (as the first 2 pages of this newsletter attests), Johnny from his brain implants (I kid you not), and Erwin from his second-hand kidney. But all these were discussed in previous loop postings.

I wish there were occasions to meet up with more of the UPSCA crowd, but time is short. Last year, the girls, spearheaded by Sari Valenzuela, Priscilla Bautista-Perez, and Cebu visitor Aissa Arambulo-Cruz (together with their UP college-mates) invited us to a posh restaurant in mid Manhattan.

Like the newsletters of old, forthcoming events are posted. On Dec 7, Ting Ong is having an inurnment

rite in Manila, where a whole lot of the Upsca friends of JOng will be attending.

In February, some of the group plan on a local Lakbayan cruise or trek to some interesting place. We understand that Bernie from Switzerland, Erwin from Indiana, TonyN from Las Vegas, and TonyE from LA will be in town, and are all gung ho for it.

Last week end, I was in Boston. This week end, I hope to see a close high school friend in NJ, then homeward I go mid week to Tanjay, Philippines.

Danny Gil, temporarily in NYC, 14 Nov 2014

[Addendum - Bert Peronilla passed away in June, 2016, in NJ]

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**Appendix**  
**Partial list of members of the Forum**  
**from the attendance sheets, when taken,**  
**and those on the email Loop**

Abastillas, Pam	Almendral, Jaja
Abelarde, Lito & wife(??)	Ancheta, Pem
Abenoja, Romeo & Henrietta	Ángeles, Connie
Acosta, Louie	Anover, Myrna
Advani, Javher & Pilar	Aruego, Jose
García-	Avestruz, Mark
Albano, Vic & Connie	Banogon, Petra
Alcido, Rose	Baquiran, Lestrino
	Barrios, Joy

Basubas, Mildred  
Benitez-Brown, Lyca  
Berman, Susan  
Bhattacharya, Sanjay &  
Evelyn Mandac-  
Brillantes, Hery & Mila  
Cailao, Reggie Cruz-  
Castañeda, Ramón  
Charenzel, Marla Yotoko  
Cheung, Cindy  
Christina ???  
Concepción, Nilo & Frida  
Contreras, Volt  
Cortés, Kathlynn  
Covey, Dick & Lirio  
Sobreviñas-  
Cuevas, Elizabeth  
Custodio, Lauro  
Custodio, Mars & Cora  
Yabut-  
Dadap, Michael  
De Jesús, Jojo  
De La Serna, Nora  
De León, Cynthia Guerrero  
Dimaya, León & Celeste  
Dolorico, Bembo & Gela  
Dumláo, Nora  
Dykes, Beatriz Uy  
Entrada, John  
Esguerra, Carlos & Arlene  
Estanisláo, Bella  
Evangelista, Liliosa  
Fagan, Richard & Susan  
Rodriguez-  
Fernandez, Elizabeth &  
Bonnie  
Florendo, Phil  
Florentino, Bert & Eva  
Francisco, Gina Boncán  
Genciana, Milan  
Genciano, Josie  
Genciano, Rommel  
Gener, Mutyá  
Geraghty, Matt  
Gil, Danny & Lisa Señeris-  
Gomez, Erwin  
Gonzalez, Abrahám and  
Mayu  
Groot, Hans  
Guerrero, José  
Hall, Linda Faigáo  
Javellana, Genny  
Jimenez, Frank  
Laguardia, Lexther  
Laserna, Nora  
Ledesma, Bambi  
Lee, Hoon  
Lewis, Loida Nicolás  
Libay, Flora  
Lim, Jose & Lenore Raquel-  
Santos  
Licad, Cecille  
Loanzon, Tristan  
Lopez, ???  
Lopez, Melvyn & Tenni  
Ma, Yeou Cheng  
Macaranas, Poch  
Mack, Ernst

Madrid, Norman & Sandy  
Magbag, Becky  
Malabuyo, Diloy & Didi  
Misenas, Lani  
Moneda, Josefina  
Montelibano, Grace  
Monzón, Bee  
Muñoz, Melinda  
Muriel, Amador & Gloria  
Nemenzo, Francisco  
Nievera, Tony & Bernie  
Ocampo, Ignie  
Oposa, Tony Jr.  
Orendain, Jane  
Ortoll, Jorge  
Pahatì, Antonio  
Peronilla, Bert  
Peronilla, Mary Ann  
Phillip, Jeff  
Pimo, Ave C.  
Pitchón, Linda  
Pulmano, Gene  
Quial, Linda  
Racaza, Simón & Loida  
Ramos, Gloria Estenzo-  
Reformina, Carla  
Reformina, Nel & Malou  
Allado

Reyes, Johnny & Mila  
García-  
Reyes, Lala Fernando-  
Reyes, Marie Luarca-  
Reyes, Noel  
Robert ???  
Rodriguez, Manuel  
Rodriguez, Teresa  
Romero, Miliza Muriel-  
Rosca, Ninotchka  
Salas, Hazel  
Salgado, Pinky  
Señeris, Ramón  
Sonza, Pat & Jorshi Taleón  
Tabora, Cristina  
Tabora, José & wife  
Tagorda, Gloria Caguiat  
Tahir, Dr. Laura  
Tan, Ping  
Tintiman, Ángela  
To, Rodney  
Villacorta, Carissa  
Vitug, Vic & Vicky  
Yabyabin, Yasmin  
Young, Cathy  
Young, Grace  
Young, Ted

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