

## **Write-up and summary of the Friday, February 8, 2008 dinner-meeting.**

As in many a reunion where people haven't seen each other in years, and the initial euphoria of handshakes, hugging, reintroductions and reminiscing gives way to serious eating and drinking and carousing around, there's the eventual realization that's it getting late and soon will be time to go. Fortunately, the person with the best camera always remembers that there has to be a group picture before the attendees start melting away.

Such was the case when almost 2 dozen of us met at the Peony room of the Grand Cebu Convention Center on Friday, Feb 8. This was a much anticipated event that was an inevitable consequence of the idea hatched some two years ago for a 2009 Golden Reunion. As we all know, the movement snowballed into a lively forum in cyberspace, and a reacquainting with each other via internet, phone, personal visits, culminating in a number of mini-reunions in Los Angeles, New Jersey, Virginia, Makati, Paranaque, Florida, etc. And now, this bigger mini-reunion in the place whence we all came from: Cebu.

Angelo Caballes, who had to leave earlier, reminded us of the group picture. With his Sony SLR on a tripod, he set up a series of shots with self timer to capture the whole group. We all knew that eventually, we'd get to see the photos, plus a movie version on YouTube compliments of master photographer Pete Roble, and perhaps even handsomer retouched versions of ourselves. Both Angel and Pete had flown in from Los Angeles.

But we couldn't wait for all that in this era of instantaneous communication. Cameras were flashing here and there, and I myself kept taking candid shots as I find them more interesting than posed portraits.

So as the group was being herded together by Angel, I took quick three shots on my point-and-shoot, and present them below as a passable stitched panorama in lieu of a wide angle single photo that Angel's camera took.



L to R standing: Edgar Gica, Bobby Barria, Lindy Alfar, Romeo Alejandro, Topoy Lock, Maning Guanzon, Marcelo Young, Mario Quiblatin, Alexander Flores (partly hidden), Jess Rosario, Mario Vazquez, Pete Roble and Tony Felipe. Wives in front are Dinah

Alfar, Lisa Gil, Linda Lock, Mrs Rosario and Alice Quiblatin. Not in photo are Angel Caballes, Alex Cui, Mario Vasquez and me Danny Gil.

On another forthcoming file will be the individual “before and after” shots of all those guys whom we have recent pictures of.

Not everyone had to brush up on their memory on who was whom; many of the guys were in touch with each other in various capacities. But for some of us who have been out of touch for so long, it took quite a doing to reacquaint, and I guess vice-versa. I had brought 20 copies of the Yearbook, and about an equal number of printouts of an Excel spreadsheet that tracks names, addresses, emails, etc. of all those listed in the yearbook. So every time a new person walked in who didn't ring a bell for me right away, I'd bring the printouts and give them as I introduced myself. But it seems as most of them did remember me as the “scientist” and had more than a few anecdotes to retell. I also circulated a “master” spreadsheet among the group to update for their latest data.

There were two round tables in the private room, and the guys who had brought their wives settled down at the table nearer the door, while the rest of the guys occupied the other table. Edgar Gica strode in a bit later, and not surprisingly, as an attorney in a neat polo barong, soon took commanding status as story teller and joke master at the other table.

Anyway, to go with the reporting, the food was an excellent Chinese meal of at least 7 or 8 courses. Later on, I asked Maning what would be our share of the damage, but he waved it all off as was on him. So again, Maning, thanks for everything. Then later on, as more rounds of soft and hard drinks were ordered, Edgar picked up the bill.

Then it was time for the serious part of the business: formally organizing the group. With every one so enthusiastic, each with good ideas and agendas, there has to be one person in charge. I found myself taking the floor and acknowledging the almost everyone agrees that the Cebu group should take the lead and organize and manage the entire affair. With representatives from the US and from the Manila groups present, we now had a quorum for an “election”. It was moved and seconded that Maning Guanzon be the Overall Chairman, with the power to appoint committee heads and/or members to discharge whatever functions are required for the success of the Golden reunion. Maning graciously accepted the responsibility, and asked if there were any objections to the any of the motions, and there were none. Toots Tautjo would be the contact man in Manila, and Edlin Torralba the US counterpart. Of course, anybody can float a suggestion on the loop.

I summarized some of the guidelines that have been discussed and agreed to previously: a) that the time frame would be following the January 2009 Sinulog festival; b) that we should meet at least 3 or 4 times, twice for get-togethers one of which should be a picnic, and with prearranged tours of the USC campus and perhaps the tourist sights of the city; c) that there will be fund set-up to help defray costs of some of those local classmates, if any, who may not be able to afford it; d) that the US group will proportionately contribute more; e) the rest of the guys should keep networking to recruit more of our

classmates; and f) we will have a souvenir program after the event to document all the fun and festivities.

The question came up as to whether this should be an exclusively '59 BHS affair. I mentioned that we originally figured that the more the merrier, and indeed considered including the guys from one or two years ahead and behind us, and that the girls also could be part. From the start, this idea has been contentious since it implies a "joint venture" with the other groups. After much discussion, and as I understand it, it was agreed that we will not have any so-called joint ventures. If smaller groups of girls and other schoolmates organize and wish to join, then they are welcome as guests to the 59ers Boy's High School Golden Anniversary. Our headcount of those who indicated their intention to join stands at 45, and that includes about half a dozen from the GHS. If we count the spouses and family members who will be part of the celebration, it stands at a respectable hundred plus number.

There appear to be many others in the Cebu area, and would be easily convinced to join the reunion. There were others who had been apprised of today's event but somehow didn't make it. For one, Toots Tautjo in Manila originally was all set to fly over and join but he told me via phone that he had important commitments he couldn't break that had to do with his Paranaque neighborhood association. But he compensated well for that: he met up with Pete and newcomer-to-the-loop Rudy Floreto a few days before. I downloaded a photo of the event from Pete's camera. Another person who didn't appear was Ogie Reyes. But he compensated, too. Met me at my hotel the next morning with Jollibee pack breakfasts for 5 people, then went with me to visit Pete at his Sheraton hotel for coffee and then lunch at Max's at Ayala Mall nearby, where his wife Paz joined the our group that included Lisa, our two cousins from Tanjay, Pete and his brother-in-law. Seems as if Ogie had to wait for his wife coming in late last night. I apprised him of what transpired and he agreed that he'd do whatever he can to help out in the program.



Rudy flanked by Toots and Pete.



Ogie flanked by Danny and Pete

After lunch, we from Tanjay drove back with Pete and in-law whose destination was Dumaguete. It was a pleasant and interesting drive/ferry-ride, but that is another story.

Danny Gil, Feb 10, 2008.