

FANHS Sonoma County

Filipino American National Historical Society

President's Message

Retrospect

I recently read Carlos Bulosan's essay, *Freedom from Want*. I wanted to reconnect with his thoughts and ideals. It's been years since I've read *America is in the Heart*. I also started researching stories about OFWs (Overseas Filipino Workers). The end result? The burning thought, is history repeating itself and a sense of compassion for OFWs who find themselves in a strange country facing difficult situations. Like the manongs, most OFWs sacrifice to send money home to family in the Philippines. This

year is ending. Let's take the time to ponder, remember, celebrate, give thanks, and hope for a compassionate 2008.

Historical Moments

It is always so exciting to hear news about Sonoma County Filipinos. We're such a small community compared to our Bay Area kababayans. It looks like we are growing and definitely making history. Here are only a few of the Sonoma County Filipino American historical moments that occurred this year. I encourage everyone to start recording, documenting and writing about our history as it unfolds. In

this way, we'll be able to have a deeper, richer accounting to share with others.

Business Snippets

Some of us opened businesses - bear in mind, these are historical milestones. We can rejoice because we now have a Filipino (the first!) grocery store, **Pacific Plate**, 3020 Santa Rosa CA, (707) 544-6664 and **Trisha's Lumpia House**, 701 Sonoma Mountain Parkway, Petaluma CA, (707) 778-3845, held a grand opening in November.

Awards Snippets

April 2007. **Brandon** and **Austin Calos**, the sons

President continued on Page 4

FANHS Featured Member



Raul Pasamonte

I was born in the province of Capas, Tarlac; a small town where

all my nine siblings and I were born. I am the youngest child of Ricardo and Elvira Pasamonte. Having had so many children, both of my parents had to work to provide for the family. They worked at Clark Air Force Base, a U.S. military base in Pangasinana which was the province that my family later settled into. My

father worked as a custodian while my mother worked her way up from a housekeeper to a supervisor overseeing over 250 employees. Needless to say, my parents needed help in raising my siblings and I. This is where our extended family came in. My Auntie Helen and Uncle Nestor did not have any children, so they helped out raising all

Pasamonte continued on Page 5

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Filipino American National Historical Society
 P. O. Box 6915
 Santa Rosa, CA 95406
 Phone: 707.823.8715
 Fax: 707.823.7322

FANHS is a non-profit organization.

Remembering Our Manongs in Pictures

The photos below are from the collection gathered to date by the FANHS Oral History Project team. Wherever possible, individuals in each photo are identified. However, the names of some individuals, designated below by '*unknown*', have not yet been identified or confirmed by the project team. If you recognize any of them, please provide their names to one of the FANHS Board members listed on Page 3.



Left to right: Unknown, Manuel Tuscano, Unknown, Unknown, Louis Galleto



Left to right: Child Marce Galleto, Unknown, Louis Galleto

Photos courtesy of Vera Galleto

Photographs Needed for 'Remembering Our Manongs' Documentary Film

The oral history project team continues work on the "Remembering Our Manongs" documentary film project, with target completion next year. The film will include excerpts from interviews, other live footage, and many photographs. More than 100 photographs have already been contributed by local community members, but more are needed.

If you have photos from the 1920 – 1970 era that you would like to share, please let us know! We are particularly in need of pictures that include one or more of the original manongs, their families and friends here or back in the Philippines, community members and events, and local sites or landscapes of Sonoma County during that era.

If you do have photos to share, the project team will be happy to come to your home or other venue of your choice to electronically scan (make digital copies of) the photos then and there. There is no need to hand over your photos to anyone – they will be safe, and with you at all times.

If you have any photos that you would like to make available for possible use in the film, please contact any of the Board members listed on Page 3 of this newsletter. Your support and participation is needed!

All photo contributors will be listed in the film credits of the final documentary.

New FANHS Members

FANHS proudly announces the following new member who has joined our organization:

Eddie Alvarez

Welcome - we look forward to working with you!

FANHS So Co New Board Members

Elections were held in November and FANHS Sonoma County proudly presents the new Board members:

President: Delia Lanosa Rapolla

Secretary: Priscilla Sharp

Vice President: Alicia Vilorio Watson

Treasurer: Lee Cachola

Congratulations to all! “Meet” the new Board Members in the next newsletter.

President’s Message *continued*

Cindy Calos, grandsons of Ben and Nancy Aguirre, become “History Day in California” state finalists. History Day in California is a statewide program sponsored by the Constitutional Rights Foundation in conjunction with National History Day. They were finalists in the Junior Website category. Their website topic was 1806 Buffalo Soldiers: The Battle for Equality through Honorable and Courageous Military Services. Kudos to these young scholars!

History is powerful. October 2007. **Elenita (Leny) Fe Mendoza Strobel**, EdD, Professor, American Multicultural Studies Department, Sonoma State University (Rohnert Park, California) and **Nieves Cortez**, Co-owner and Sales Manager, Corte Riva Vineyards (Santa Rosa, California) were recognized by the Filipina Women’s Network at their summit in Washington, DC. They were counted as being

part of *100 of the Most Influential Filipinas in the US!* Leny was recognized as an innovator and thought leader. She was recognized as a Filipina woman who has broken new ground through vibrant, energetic presentations of critical ideas and transforming the way people think. Nieves was recognized as a builder and emerging leader making her mark in a business environment, displaying high energy and skill in a leadership role. Congratulations, Leny and Nieves!

I know there are many more historical moments that have not been shared. I encourage everyone to start recording, documenting and writing about our history as it unfolds. In this way, we’ll have a deeper, richer accounting to share with others.

Thank You

FANHS would not be successful without the assistance and support of

many people and organizations. I want to say thank you to all FANHS board members, you are the heartbeat of this organization. Thank you to all FANHS members, your support has been phenomenal. A special thank you to Dr. Carl Wong, the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County, the Community Media Center of Santa Rosa, the Pilipino American Association of Rohnert Park, the Filipino American Community of Sonoma County, Inc., and Move on Philippines. Lastly, with sincere appreciation, thank you to all the families and individuals that shared their history with us this year. Your oral history interviews are meaningful, poignant stories that have made a warm, heartfelt and lasting impression on all of the **Remembering Our Manongs** project team members.

Delia Lanosa Rapolla

Thank You Supporters

FANHS Sonoma County extends sincere thanks and appreciation to the following supporters for their generous donations:

☞ Loy Rayos - mini cassette recorder and micro cassette tapes

☞ Special Thank You to the following for their donations at *Race Equality Week*:


Ed & Patty Taan, Tim Gandeza, MaryAnne Tabor and Carol Cook for assisting with setup of and sharing information at the FANHS table, Trisha Hunt - food, Flori - turon, Josie, Nellie & Karen - desserts, and Leony, Fay Torralva, Cora - Elders

Your generous contributions will help support our mission to preserve and share Filipino-American history.

Support these Filipino Owned Businesses

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Please support these Filipino owned businesses! If you'd like to advertise your Business in the FANHS newsletter, please call Karen Mejia Pennrich at 707.837.0883 for ad sizes & prices.

Oral History Project Update



As year two of the Remembering Our Manongs oral history project ends, the Project Team continues progressing toward its' ultimate goal of a finished documentary film. Interviews within the Filipino community are nearly complete, as the focus now shifts toward the broader Sonoma County population.

Recent interviewees include Sonoma County historian and columnist Gaye LeBaron, as well as local businessmen Mike Grace and George Dutton - both descendants of local ranchers who employed many of our manongs in years past. We

also spent time with Bay Area artist Johanna Poethig, creator of the Cesar Chavez Mural, which is installed at the Sonoma State University (SSU) campus library. A colorful and telling art piece, the mural features prominent references to Filipino field workers and labor leaders who contributed to the formation of the United Farm Workers union.

Behind the scenes, more tedious tasks continue. Some team members are transcribing interviews into written form. Others are scouring Internet websites or researching information at the Sonoma County Library. Inter-

view videos are being reviewed and tagged for possible film inclusion. Work on the written narrative continues. Special thanks go to new team members Noemi Issel and SSU student Jennifer Cantrell for their help with research.

Completion date for the documentary has been extended from Spring 2008 to Fall 2008. At times, it all seems overwhelming to this team of novices. But the history of our manongs—their challenges and accomplishments, continue to inspire us as we move forward toward our goal. *Remembering Our Manongs, Sonoma County's Filipino History*—coming November 2008.

***Happy Holidays to All & Have a
Happy Prosperous New Year!***

Raul Pasamonte *continued*

all ten of us and even helped to raise my nieces and nephews. Both my uncle and auntie became our family's second parents.

After 25 years of working at Clark, my mother was granted a special immigrant status to the United States. On February 14, 1991, my family immigrated to the United States via San Francisco, however only four of my siblings, including myself, were able to migrate with our parents. Just like many parents, my mother and father wanted to provide us with as many opportunities as possible.

Therefore, our chase for the American dream started in Sacramento, where we lived after arriving in San Francisco. However, just like many Filipinos that came before us, we soon found out that catching the American dream was not as easy as others made it out to be.

My father settled to work as a custodian in a linen industry where they provided linens to hotels, restaurants, and other businesses. Since linens had to be washed, dried, and folded, this meant using machines that produced a lot of heat. My father had to work in an environment that heated up to 130 degree Fahrenheit. In addition, my mother became a seamstress and a housekeeper. Many employers did not consider my mother's experience as a high ranking supervisor with many awards. Wanting to be able to provide for their family, my parents endured many hours of back breaking work. My older siblings also helped out with the family needs by working odd jobs. While my job on the other hand was to take advantage of the free education and go to college.

However, the goal set for me did not come as easy as it should have been. The reality that I knew attending the public schools in the Philippines was much different from the reality I was facing in the American schools. I still can recall my first day of school, I recall being dropped off at school by my cousin Marvin Malonzo and my mother. A teacher assisted me into the classroom. This is where I answered all her

questions with "Yes, ma'am or No, ma'am," which was engrained in my customary replies by my prior teachers in the Philippines. However, I soon found out that calling the teacher "ma'am" was not necessary as she said, "You're very polite, but you don't need to call me ma'am." I went

"I became fascinated studying Filipino American experiences as I continued to search for my Filipino American identity..."

through the day keeping to myself since I was in a new environment and was out of my comfort zone. In addition, although I knew how to speak English I was embarrassed to speak because of my accent. The embarrassment of not being able to speak English perfectly stayed with me until my middle school years. I kept quiet during class and spoke only a few words here and there with the few friends I had made.

In addition, the American culture had given me a feeling of being lost. Going through adolescence was hard enough, however I had to do it while learning the "American" culture and keeping my Filipino identity. This experience eventually brought me to search for belonging, which in turn led me to stray from my goal of getting a good education. In middle school, I started hanging out with peers who were involved in gangs, drugs, and alcohol. Looking back now I realize that this was something I am not proud of. Unfortunately, it took the tragedy of losing my mother to get me back on track.

My mother passed away due to a brain aneurysm during my sophomore year in high school. I reflected upon my mother's death and realized how much she sacrificed in order for me to have the opportunities that I was exposed to. I started to take advantage of the opportunities that were available to me. I became part of AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), and was exposed to the idea of receiving a higher education. I started to receive good grades and by the time I was ready to graduate high school I

was accepted to Holy Names College. Holy Names is a small, private, Catholic college in the hills of Oakland.

During college, I was able to get out of my shell and blossom. I became involved in many aspects of the college community; being a part of the student government and served as the President of the Asian Pacific International Club whose members were mostly Filipinos. In addition to coming out of my shell, I became fascinated studying Filipino American experiences as I continued to search for my Filipino American identity. I started doing research on the Filipinos who came to the United States and paved the way for other Filipinos. I came across the stories of Philip Vera Cruz, Larry Itliong, and the true story behind the United Farm Workers movement. In time, I was able to incorporate the Filipino American history, culture, and experiences into my research papers. For my senior thesis, I was able to put together a paper focusing on the understanding of Filipino American culture to be better served in the field of mental services.

After graduating from Holy Names with a Bachelors of Arts Degree in Psychology and Sociology, I moved to Sonoma and started working at Hanna Boys Center as a Child Care Worker. As Child Care Worker, I was responsible for helping severe emotionally disturbed boys develop socially acceptable behaviors. After two years working at Hanna Boys Center, I left to be an Outreach Advisor for the Academic Talent Search program at Sonoma State University. Academic Talent Search is part of SSU's Pre-College Programs' focus on assisting first-generation, low-income students prepare and be accepted to the college of their choice.

I currently reside in Santa Rosa and have lived in Sonoma County for the past 4 years. I recently joined FANHS in hopes of preserving the Filipino American experience in Sonoma County so that our Filipino youths may learn from the past as I have.