



The Damdamag

The Official Newsletter Of The Vergara Clan

Issue 1, 2004

Through The Seasons For A Reason

By **JC Chong**

Coffee beans. Whole place was full of the stuff. Just the night before, the Dacanay adults and myself were enjoying cups of 'Barako', a gift from Aunt Aie. Little did I know I'd be deprived of the stuff the next few days...

December 30, 2003, Tuesday

1:00 - 3:00 P.M. Registration

We missed a few turns here and there, but Uncle Matt finally got us to the "Light of the World Formation and Retreat Center. Reggie was all smiles as he greeted us. From the time I set foot on the place I knew I was going to like it. Nice small buildings in the middle of shadows and tall trees. The cold breeze made me forget for a while the airconditioning I yearned for every reunion. I unpacked some stuff in our room in St. Mark's building. The place reminded me of those boarding houses abroad I see on TV.



Lola Pat had a grand entrance being carried like a queen over the stairs. Lots of new kids. With each passing year, the faces got more and more unfamiliar. They were either growing up too fast, or they were multiplying faster than my brain could process. It was unnerving, seeing my uncles and aunts, kneeling down, introducing themselves as "lolos" and "lolas". New generation grandparents, not quite like the traditional grandparents I knew. The new ones go by monickers like "mommy-la" and they're just like, well, older versions of regular parents I grew up with. Me and my cousins on the other hand, were being introduced as "titos" and "titas". Except for me and a few others, most of those new generation "titos" and "titas" are still in school. Unnerving indeed.

Light snacks were served while waiting for the rest of the Clan. Chicken sandwiches and juice!

4:00 P.M. Welcome Ceremony, Parlor Games

Not too many Clanistas yet, many were still at work, but the show just had to go on. After a short opening prayer by The General, Irene took over. She introduced each sub-clan and their new members. Lots of new faces, babes and babies. Then there was this wacky "acquaintance" game where you had to match some items like "likes Starbucks better than Seattle's Best" with people from other sub-clans. Great idea! There was a "Sago race". Four main teams - Yellow/NCR, Blue/Luzon, Green/Visayas, and Red/Mindanao joined. The yellow team won! Several parlor games like "patience" were played after. There was "kunol-kunol" here and there, in between games.



7:00 P.M. Dinner

The food was served in a mess hall a floor down from the conference room. We said grace and dug in... Not inedible. Beef steak and some veggies. Very organized too. We had to bus our plates. Every once in a while, we'd start a

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December 30 – 31, 2003

"this is table number one, number one..." thing but didn't really last long. It was getting a bit colder. Uh-oh, forgot my jacket.

8:00 P.M. Bingo

There was draw-your-face game right before the Bingo games. Kids and adults alike joined the fray. There was something about it that drew one to the game. First game, lots of numbers were drawn. Lots of frustrated faces, but Aunt Aie finally got it. For the second game it was Aunt Faith! Karl got the third. All through out, there were games in between. Fourth game went to Karen, and the fifth, to an ecstatic Uncle Matt, who also won the block-out game!



10:00 P.M. Lights

Out!

A lot of LC guys were still awake near the main hall, catching up. Some were in the mess hall, eating some snacks. After cleaning up, we all hit the sack. No mosquitoes but had to make do with my blanket folded in two to keep from shivering. Brrr! Jaja, who also happened to forget to bring a jacket, was my roomie.

December 31, 2003, Wednesday

7:00 A.M. Breakfast

Didn't want to get out of that hot shower. It was probably the only thing that kept me from freezing. Went to the mess hall, had some "giniling" and egg. Not inedible.

8:00 - 11:30 A.M. Ball Games

Everyone went to that little half-court next to the parking lot. Cian just shot a perfect 21, from both beyond the arc and under-goal stabs. Then there was an "in-out" game before the actual basketball game where Dannie Digan was the last man standing. 2003's grudge match was a half-court, but fast-paced 4-on-4 game where the LCs prevailed over the T-Ners, 30-26. Rodel fired the winning shot. Must've been disorienting for Richard who recently left our ranks. After the final buzzer, there was a free-throw shoot-out! Many categories, couples, teeners, etc, had to score the most to win. Everyone had three shots, so each couple had up to six. Allen and Monique shot the lights out of everyone. One can have loads of fun, even on a B-ball half-court! In Volleyball, the LCs won.

Lola Pat enjoyed this game so much she was laughing all the way. After the game, she insisted on talking to Cian and congratulating him. She said in Ilocano, "You were the best of the best!"

The Carinos and Rimorins arrived. MJ was the only representative of the Dagupenos. Uncle Benny was a little feverish. Uncle Fely, auntie Theresa, auntie Leddy and my mom were huddled in a never-ending chat about anything and everything.

12:00 P.M. Reunion major Lunch

Beef, Lechon (two biggies), and some veggies. Not inedible. More chit-chats among oldies.

1:30 P.M. Kunol-kunol, naps, etc.

I was near the back of the Conference Room idly typing away as most were either still in the mess hall or resting in their rooms. Rizalian kids were practicing on the stage. Desiree was going back and forth making sure things were in order. Randy was taking care of the sound system. Some Clanistas started to show up near where I was and started chatting as well. Not a few were trying to get a glimpse of the family tree. The spot I picked was good. It gave me a chance to randomly drag Clanistas getting in and ask for help in updating his/her sub-clan. My skin was getting used to the cold...

Jeff startled me as he looked over my shoulder. "What's up?" He asked. Spent the next few minutes talking about the Worship Service. He asked me to look for a Bible, a candle and a Cross for the Altar. Also asked me to round up some people who could help. Gonna be a long afternoon...



3:30 P.M. Group Rehearsals

I had just barely finished rounding up the cast for the Worship Service when Aunt Liege caught me by the collar. "Oh, there you are! We've been looking all over for you. Anyway, you're supposed to..." I was looking at my teammates as she explained the drill. I was to write a narrative about "Luzon" and practice reading it aloud. Other teams were huddled as well for brainstorming and early rehearsals. I could tell not everyone was there as some Clanistas were walking around calling out names. Kids were running around. Some of our hard-working hosts were in front, discussing among themselves.

5:30 P.M. Worship Service

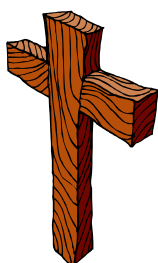
I had asked Reggie to write the the Worship Service pro-





December 31, 2003

gram - The Liturgy - on the white board. He soon passed it on to Anna after a while. Had to write it there for everyone to see. Jeff originally wanted to have many copies but there wasn't a printer or photocopier in sight. Everything went smoothly, the singing and the sermon. Jeff's coming was nothing short of providential - Uncle Mark had to tend to his wifey Mae who was suffering from mumps - not to mention prophetic; last reunion, I had been egging Jeff to "sing" or do some performing as was our custom of greeting newbies. He begged off, for the next reunion - this one - and we sort of agreed he'd do a sermon instead. To make the long story short, there he was on the makeshift pulpit! The other parts of the Worship Service were done by Clanistas from different sub-clans. I guess everyone was represented. Dennis, of Daryl, was the liturgist. After the closing prayer, etc, it was back to practice time. Rummaging for costumes had begun...



7:00 P.M. Dinner

Lechon paksiw (left-over lechon from lunch). Had Teo's extra drumstick. Thanks dude! You made dinner much less inedible. Had to hurry to team practice.

8:00 P.M. Presentations, Special Numbers, Picture Taking, Waiting, etc...

Theme of cultural show: "Wow Philippines" (after the Dept. of Tourism's ad campaign)

Rizalians had a lot of mini-presentations, mostly centered on "spaghetti" and "ocho-ocho". Our team, the blue team, was first. We depicted several heroes - Rizal, Bonifacio and Aguinaldo - after which we showed several dances from Luzon. Second team was the red team, introduced by Dennis Kabingue, who was actually from another team, in his native tongue. My Dad, a cross between a Rajah and a Buddha (according to my mom) then entered with his entourage (harem), followed by a fan dance. They finally sang "Let there be peace on earth..." Next was the yellow team. There were four scenes from Luneta, Binondo, Mendiola and Quiapo. They wrapped it up with "Manila" the song. The green team started with a



Magellan/Lapu-lapu showdown, then they showcased "Waray-waray" and "Hala Bira".

All presentations looked like they've been rehearsed for months. Even the costumes were authentic. And

the scripts! Professionally done, I must say.

There were raffles and games in between. Of course, the reunion wouldn't be the same without the usual presentations. The young ones, and not so young ones, mostly from the Paconians and Rizalians, showed their stuff. Lots of trivia questions, and couples' games in between. Ren and Rodel won the "Paste the missing mustache" game while Uncle Matt and Aunt Liege won the "Untie the Ribbon" game.

Then there was picture taking. I'm not exactly sure who moved it from morning of New Year to the dying hours of the 31st but it sure was a great idea! Talk about making efficient use of time. No dry eye in the house when the first shot was taken. Lolo Bert and Lola Pat moved slowly up front. All smiles, they held hands. Lola Pat put her head on Lolo Bert's shoulder (who was also teary-eyed) and the bulbs popped and flashed. A sentimental song about the passage of time played in the background. The aunties watching hugged and cried. And for sometime, we were all reminded of our mortality. Only three left (Lola Pure in Chicago) of the feisty originals. (A bit of reminiscing: my Lola Chit would have loved this reunion).



Then back to the same drill. Clanistas trying to jockey for position in the main pic. Photos according to sub-clan, age-group, whatnot were also taken. Took my usual spots at either the back or front. One thing I noticed though. Digital cameras were fast outnumbering the regular ones. Just plug and play, no more need for scanning. Wow, in just a few years' time, we'll be able to catch up with the 1960's technology the Clanistas of that era used, to come up with literally a daily Damdamag.

Lights were dimmed just a few hours before New Year, and multi-colored light sticks were distributed. Clanistas were wearing them, swinging them around. It was a scene straight out of Star Wars - Jedi Knights against a horde of baddies.

Right over left... That buzzing thing again in my head. Time, once again warping. I remembered a friend just the weekend before saying "see you next weekend..." a cousin saying "see you tomorrow..." an uncle "in just a few hours..." a niece "a few minutes to go!!!" As for me, 2003 flashed by my eyes again. Remembered Grandma Chit again for a moment. A month, a week, an hour, they were all the same at that particular moment. Know what I mean? Closing prayer was led by Jeff. We then sang "Auld Lang Syne..."

Three, two, one...



January 1, 2004

January 1, 2004, Thursday

12:00 A.M. Happy New Year!!!

Kisses flying, music blaring, luminous thingies lent a dramatic scene to the darkened room. Some people streamed up the terrace upstairs to watch the fireworks. I just stood there like Forrest Gump welcoming 1972. Wow, 2004! Definitely in the 21st century! Arroz-caldo, fried lumpia, and tokwa't baboy! What a way to welcome the New Year! Then there was a call from Australia, from the Astrings Downunder! I was able to chat with Jennifer!

Hide and seek. Some kids were able to convince my contemporaries to "un-retire". I yelled "Dynasty!" at the sight of Bibsy, reminiscent of our tag-team "Bulls" days half a decade back. Almost played against her but begged to be in the same team. Some of the older ones who "un-retired" thought the better of it and stayed as marshals. Darlene and Ren among them. Regular marshals Ali, Teena and the others set the rules and boundaries. Some really young rookies played a round or two before resting. Darren was in our team. I think it was arguably the first mother-son hide and seek tandem in Clan history! The grounds weren't that big and we had around six game rounds. All-kid teams had trouble catching up, so the marshals had to re-assign some to teams with grown-ups. There was a lot of shouting, heckling, trying to get the 'it' team to tag the others. William found a very nice hiding place for our group. We could have stayed there indefinitely. Hah! Where? I'm not telling, just in case we have our reunion there again. After the games, some still stayed up for some heavy-duty catching up, or just plain hanging out. Had to go to bed or the adults would kill us the next day for missing the Council Meeting. Waitasec! I'm an adult now! Oh well, time to hit the sack...

8:00 A.M. Breakfast

Brrrrr. Yawn. Egg and longanisa. Some vinegar, yum! Er, not inedible.

9:30 - 12:00 P.M. Family Council Meeting and Lotto draw

Had to rush from the mess hall. Most of the Clanistas were already there. The meeting was presided over by Desiree Mancecido and Anna Vergara. Secretary-for-life Teena was typing on this very notebook computer. All the details are in the Minutes of the meeting, the comments, the motion for moving the reunion, etc. Of course, no meeting would be complete without the General and his deadpan humor. Ali was making her rounds collecting pledges from GeneratioNext, as with the other collectors. From time to time I'd chit-chat with the Clanistas around me. Had a nice conversation with Dennis about Singapore and software. He was called to the front, and he gave his testimony about his old and new life, after which he sang a song "he'd been preparing for the past few years!" Towards the end, the Rizalians (I'm still trying to

get used to that after typing Mandaluyongs for more than a decade now) officially turned over the chairmanship to the Puring sub-clan, with representatives from each sub-clan. In the computerized lotto draw, mom won several times.

12:00 P.M. Lunch

Kare-kare, noodles with dumplings, bananas in syrup! Didn't eat much but it was definitely inedible.

1:00 P.M. Departure

Yup. Just like that! 2003 Anno Domini, Christmas, New Year, the reunion, all finished in a flash! The Clanistas weren't though. Still lots of "Kunol-kunol" going on. It seemed just like yesterday when I was just unpacking my stuff and there I was packing them now. Some old faces weren't around though there were a lot of new ones. Like the other Clanistas I helped move my family's stuff into our car. My bro JB wasn't around for the first time in our family's history. I found a lost Bible which I handed over to Uncle Matt when no one else claimed it. Went around again for the last time to chat with my cousins and get their friendster accounts!

I could go on and on and describe what I did those last few moments. I was almost tempted to say I was just going through the motions but no. There was something magical about the mundane things we did. The games, the jokes, the stories. The time warp I mentioned flashed again and I thought about all the things the Clan had gone through. With a nod, I looked at the banner one last time and I just had to agree... "A family through the seasons... for a reason..."





Financial Report

FINANCIAL REPORT

Vergara Reunion, 2003-2004

COLLECTION:

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|------------------|--------------------|
| Balance, last year | - | P15,102.15 | |
| Originals 9 x P5,000 | - | 45,000.00 | |
| NEO-riginals* | - | 62,500.00 | |
| LOTTO income | - | 1,290.00 | |
| BINGO income | - | 2,480.00 | |
| Gennext | - | <u>17,600.00</u> | <u>P143,972.15</u> |

(*Includes \$100 fr Lorna/Hilda, P5,000 from Minna, and \$100 in honor of Mg Max, Jr.)

LESS EXPENSES:

| | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|--------------------|
| 160 people (0-11, less 50%; Adults at P825 ea. For 2 days, 2 nights | - | P118,687.00 | |
| Miscellaneous | - | 332.00 | |
| Electric (add'l for New Year) | - | 3,000.00 | |
| Tips for 10 servers/helpers | - | <u>3,000.00</u> | <u>P125,019.00</u> |

EXCESS CASH P 18,953.15

WORSHIP SERVICE
SPECIAL OFFERING FOR
UMINGAN UCCP - P 17,130.00

CONSTRUCTION OF
NEW UMINGAN UCCP

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Tony Chong (pledge) | - | 50,000.00 |
| Matt and Liege Dacanay (pledge) | - | 50,000.00 |
| Gen. Ben Duque (pledge) | - | 50,000.00 |
| (cash) | - | 1,000.00 |
| Lolo Albert Vergara (pledge) | - | 20,000.00 |

THANK YOU TO ALL THE DONORS:

Prizes: Jaime and Toni Vergara and family
Lilia Pacheco
Behind the scenes: Jim-jim Vergara
Lechon and snacks: Archie Pacheco and Caymanians
Sound system: Randy and Reggie Vergara



Summary of Minutes

SUMMARY OF MINUTES
59th VERGARA CLAN ANNUAL REUNION
Light of the World Retreat Center, Silang, Cavite
January 1, 2004
10:50 AM

Presiding Officers: Desiree Mancenido and Anna Vergara, Chair, 59th Reunion

1. Chairman called meeting to order at 10:50 AM.
2. Minutes of last year's meeting approved.
3. Evaluation of 59th reunion:
 - 3.1 - Anna Vergara: "We are happy to host this reunion. We are happy that nearly all were able to attend this reunion."
 - 3.2 - Aie: "We didn't think a lot would actually make it to the Reunion. We thought only two or three families would come. But something happened in this reunion. More stories were exchanged. More people came than I expected. Let me not put a name to it any more. It just makes me feel good."
 - 3.3 - Faith: "The Venue. I have not gone to this area. Our housing was very good. We were all close to each other. The food was good. I would like to acknowledge and appreciate the host family for mobilizing their entire group. The fourth generation had done most of the planning. It's a good example for other hosts in the future; getting everyone involved."
 - 3.4 - Richard: "I was happy with the rooms. They were great! And even with a half-court basketball court, well, that's where your skills really shine!"
 - 3.5 - The General: "Thanks to the sub-clan! Reverting back to two nights! How things were meticulously done to the most minute detail... Wonderful! I must comment on the perseverance of families to come to the reunion. It might have been their first time but they were able to follow directions."
 - 3.6 - Grace May: "I would like to thank the new in-laws, Jeff and Dennis, who took charge of the reunion worship like pros. We've been so blessed by Jeff's sermon."
 - 3.7 - Matt: "I think the future chairmen of the reunion should allot time for a memorial service. It would be good for the young clanistas and the old clanistas to remember those who have gone ahead."
 - 3.8 - Esther Vergara: "We have our own C.R. There's even hot water! I'd like to acknowledge the games. They were new and mind-boggling! On the hide-and-seeek, most of those who joined were kids. It felt like we were passing on the strategies to them. Lastly, watch out Los Casados, I'll be in the Teeners Volleyball team next year!"
 - 3.9 - Albert: "Nice place, nice view. Though I noticed we had to use the stairs a lot. Hard for us older people. About the food, ok... excellent."
4. Formal welcoming of Dennis (husband of Daryl) to the clan. Dennis rendered a song he had prepared in 5 years, "A Prayer for a Godly Home."
5. Motion was raised by Willie Vergara. "I would like to set the basis before making this motion. Firstly, there was a clamor for the reunion to be done every other year. Secondly, our chapel in Umingan now needs to be repaired, renovated, or rebuilt. We will be needing a huge amount of money, Php 800,000. Having said that, I would like to move that we hold the next reunion in 2005 and the proceeds of the 2004 reunion be given to the reconstruction of the Umingan



church."

Motion was seconded by Onyol.

The motion was opened for discussion.

Grace May: "The Macabalitaws have accepted the chairmanship. It's something to think about. I always believed in the saying, 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's.' For me, the reunion is an entirely different concern from the Church."

The General: "There are various ways of solving a problem... God loves a cheerful giver. Give as much as you can. Give until you are happy. If we can still afford to give to the reunion, then good. But give more to the church. But let us also have the reunion, so we can still see each other."

Those who were in favor of the motion that the next reunion be held in 2005-2006 and donate the cost of the 2004 reunion to the rebuilding of Umingan Church: Willie, Sonny, Onyol.

Those who were NOT in favor that the next reunion would be held in 2005-2006 and donate the cost of the 2004 reunion to the rebuilding of Umingan Church: The Majority.

5.1 A suggestion was made by The General to course Vergara Clan contributions through the reunion treasurer, Grace May Chong.

5.1.1 Tony: "To start the Fund Raising, I am pledging P50,000.00. Further, that we elect a Chairperson for the Fund Raising Committee within the Vergara Clan." Faith Escobar was nominated as Chairperson and the body affirmed it.

5.1.2 The General, as a symbolic gesture, gave P1,000.00 cash.*

5.1.3 Albert pledged P20,000.00 to be given in three installments.

5.1.4 Matt pledged P50,000.00.

6. Acknowledgment of donors and behind-the-scene expenses.

7. Financial report by treasurer, Grace May. (Printed separately)

8. Turnover ceremony: Anna and Desiree turned over chairmanship symbolized by the REUNION LOGBOOK to representative Grace May Chong of the Puring Macabalitaw sub-clan. A core group to assist in executing reunion plans was formed, one representative from each sub-clan - Lilibeth, Charity, Julie, Irene, Vinya, JC, Ben Carino, and Grace May Chong as coordinator. (Note: Sammy, who was not present, will represent the Pat sub-clan)

9. Prizes awarded to winners in various activities.

10. Raffle and Lotto awarded to Clanistas.

12. Prayer was led by Student Pastor Jeff, in memory of those who have gone ahead.

13. Meeting was adjourned at 12:40 PM.

Prepared by: **TEENA DACANAY**
Acting Secretary (Forever!)

*After the meeting was adjourned, the General quietly approached the treasurer and also pledged P50,000. He'll probably fall off his seat when he sees this in print. Please refer to page 5 for total pledges.