



The Damdamag

The Official Newsletter Of The Vergara Clan

Issue 1, 2006

Survivor: Vergara, The Reunion

By **JC Chong**

December 30, 2005, Friday

12:00 - 2:00 P.M. Registration

Despite coming from way up north, the Membreres beat us, and everyone else, to the first family spot. Noel was already taking shots when we pulled in. No web-cams, or live-feeds this year. Digidcams, plus this newsletter, would have to do for now.



No fanfare like what usually greeted those who came a little late. I'd rather be among the first anyway. Lola Pat and Aunt Myrna came with us Dacanays. A van of Paconans, driven by Dannie Digan, was right behind us. Jemuel was manning his post, together with mom Julie, making sure that we all signed up and that we had our tribe-tags. Uncle Cesar was manning his, the parking lot, greeting those who came that way: Timothy and Donovan leading the Ruth sub-clan.

The air was a little warmer than last year's. We checked in our room, and made our beds. There was so much room to spare that almost everyone took the top spots of the double-deckers. We went out and saw more clanistas trickling in. Slowly but surely. The Dacanays went to the left side of the sanctuary to pose for pictures like athletes -- yellow Bossini shirts, sweat bands and white shorts.

2:00 - 3:00 Snacks

Some spaghetti and juice. More than a hundred clanistas had registered by this time. VSOP was underway! Esther was going to and fro, making sure everyone was comfortable and everything was ok. What they lacked in manpower, with a lot of them in Australia, they more than made up in spirit! The busted fan in our room was taken care of by Aunt Julie.

3:00 - 6:00 Parlor Games!

Teo and Jaja took turns at the mike, leading a hundred or so highly-spirited clanistas, in about half a dozen fun-filled parlor games. Dazha was one of the facilitators. Our Puripaz (Red tribe) tribe leader Tito Matt heckled the other tribes to no end. He drafted me to join the chopsticks relay game, which we eventually lost. Fraser Holt was virtually indefatigable, joining every single game, and was his tribe's go-to guy!

More clanistas were still pouring in. Several Carinos came. Benny and Ledy, Theresa, Suyin and her one-year-old daughter Justine. Late in the afternoon, Hector and his family showed up.



Damdamag, International Edition

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December 30 – 31, 2005

6:30 - 7:30 Dinner

Incredibly not inedible. Fried chicken, veggies with some quail eggs, and watermelons. Burp.

Several tall torches lighted the way from the dorm rooms to the mess hall, making it really look like a scene from "Survivor." The Survivor backdrop in the mess hall that Israel Padolina painstakingly worked on, completed the atmosphere.

8:00 - 10:00 Talent Show Night / Sing-Galing Showdown

Festive mood. Little kids, and not-so-little kids had waited several months, and maybe a whole year to perform. Agatha,



Krizka and Cyrene took turns emceeing. The Tintoy kids started off with a Pinoy Big Brother dance number, followed by the Paconians. Then Ziggy came forward to play the violin. He had been taking lessons, according to mom Lala. Older Paconians

came out with another trademark performance, starting off with black shrouds; finishing with a dynamic dance number.

There was a short break with Lorie handing out prizes. Her new husband Ador sang a heartfelt "Always" using the videoke machine. (Ali's Patrick and JB's Gianina, you eventually have to come home you know. Hehe.) The guy could really sing. William had a heartfelt "unplugged" song number. His sisters Cyrene and Elynne also sang several pop songs.

Last but definitely not the least, the showstopper! Text messages from Cian about this "special performance" had been circulating the night before. Well, I just had to see it to believe it. Karl, wowed the crowd with his first-ever song number in clan history, "Pinoy Big Brother!" I guess more than everyone or Tita Faith, he surprised himself! A lot of people stood up, clapped and sang with him like it was a big concert. This hoopstar turned singer had lots of help: Cian, Jaja, and several Pacing "apos." It was, as they said, "the first ever multi-subclan number, done on their own volition."

After the dinner had died down, a lot of clanistas, mostly Neoriginals, stayed on for some serious videoke. I voted myself out and went to sleep, along with the rest. The crooning went on



through the night.

December 31, 2005, Saturday

7:00 - 8:00 A.M. Breakfast

Hotdogs, plus some *giniling*. Not inedible. Some neoriginals picked up from where they left off last night, dishing out 60's songs. The neoriginal babes (of 1965) acted as background dancers, doing the twist. Some raffle prizes were drawn but most of the winners were still asleep.

8:00 - 12:00 Sports

The T-Ners had a strong start at 35-17; the LC's evened the odds in the next round, 35-18. They took the series in the final round at 25-22. The victors posed for photos right after.

In basketball, the LC's prevailed again over the T-Ners, 46-37, despite missing the services of twin towers Alvin and Allen. The score was tied at 22 during half-time. The T-Ners never led, but came close many times during the game. The LC's broke away late in the second half to take the lead for good. That effectively extended their winning streak to four years, dating back to the unprecedented rout in Condora.



In all these, ears could have busted from the roars and screams of two teeners, Auntie Myrna and Tita Aie (who called themselves "teeners for life"). Talk about passion...

12:00 - 1:30 P.M. Lunch

Some fish, *kare-kare*, and more *giniling*. Yup, and more singing.

1:30 - 6:30 Tribe Group Planning and Rehearsals

Things started off slowly, with a lot of clanistas either resting, talking or taking turns at the videoke machine. There were more snacks at three. Could've sworn they were stuffing us up. I was at the back, shooting rounds with Jake's high-powered Airsoft guns. He was with his daughter Lucky. I went back to my post and OC handed me two spindles of CDRs from Tito Earl.

The groups started practicing a little later than expected. Off to the north near the piano, Rob Castro was giving a spirited speech to his Green tribemates about what real survival meant. I heard him say something about interpretative dancing and that really made me grateful I was in another group. Tito Matt went around the grounds, corralling my tribemates. He made me the



December 31, 2005

designated writer, and I thought I could write myself out of acting. No luck that time. I collaborated with Teo, Lala, and Krizka. At least I wouldn't have to take the heat alone if we lost. In between writing our script, typing this newsletter, and shielding my notebook from kids running around, Pastor Jeff was giving me instructions for the Worship Service through text.

Air was getting cold. New year was just around the corner. *Already?*

7:00 - 8:00 Dinner

Sweet and sour chicken fillet. Not inedible. Great in fact! Brewed coffee and tea overflowed at all times.

More clanistas were taking turns at videoke, giving you that "you'll-have-to-pry-this-off-my-cold-dead-hands" look.

8:30 - 10:00 Tribes Presentation

The theme was all about making something, anything out of "Outstand, Outshine, Outrace." The Red (Puripaz) tribe drew first blood. We depicted a close-knit clan, suddenly torn apart by common



problems like lack of finances, apathy, sickness, etc. *T h o u g h* faith, hope and love, we were able to conquer all and come back again. Not too shabby, and in my opinion, the "purest" if not the simplest, presentation. The Blue (Alberu) tribe headed by Aunts Faith and Ophelia depicted the different colors of the reunion. Cool concept. The Yellow (Mimichi) tribe depicted a group lost in a deep jungle and they survive in the end because of their unity.

The night before, the newcomers, plus some balikbayans like the Holts, Aunt Myrna, Cherry and Summer were welcomed. Now the last reunion attended by Aunt Myrna (aside from the '99 reunion) was in 1968. There, she sat at the back, completely enthralled by the presentations. I just had to know what was going on up there in her head, so I asked, "How are the modern-day reunions similar or different to that 1968 reunion?" Without batting an eyelash she answered, "Well, we were all close since we were all first cousins. Very few of us had married at the time so most of you hadn't been born yet. But, come to think of it," pointing to everyone in the room, "I think its pretty amazing what you've done. You're mostly what, 2nd, 3rd cousins right? Yet, you are all just as close as we were, maybe closer, so congratulations!" And with that, she went right back watching the show.

The Green (Patinto) tribe was the last act. It was more like a

theater production and I knew somehow they'd be a top contender, if not winning outright. Angelica gave a blood-curdling scream and "gave birth" to an embryonic Darwin, who did a great performance visiting Hell and Heaven. I overheard my mom and Tita Myrna calling this the placenta number.

10:30 - 11:30 Thanksgiving and Memorial Service

Pastor Jeff (with Doxee, Cara, and Caleb) came in the nick of time. The hosts also made sure we started on time at 10:30 so

everything would be done before midnight. Everyone was hauled from the mess hall to the sanctuary. My brother JR was the liturgist. We all settled down and the Vergara Choir sang "Thank You, Lord" (with hardly any practice) like angels. Little



pianists Timothy, Ezra and Kelson had a mini-concert during the offertory. The Word was about the apostle Paul surviving a shipwreck in the book of Acts. At the memorial service, a representative of each subclan would read some Scripture and mention the names of the departed while symbolic candles were lit.

11:30 - 12:00 Countdown

I usually just grab anyone's hand at random, but this was one of those reunions where our family was next to each other. Amidst the fireworks and firecrackers that started to blow, I looked back at 2005, thanking God for everything that came our way, good or bad.

I looked at the chain, amazed at how we've "survived" this long. We may not have thanksgiving day in the Philippines but this was our way of saying thanks. The first reunion itself was some sort of thanksgiving for "surviving" the war. What were the odds of having all your nine children surviving a world war that left almost no family untouched?

Before long it was almost 12. Everyone, including Lola Pat, sang lustily *Auld lang syne*, *Let Me Call You Sweetheart*, *Good Luck Good Health*, and some Ilocano songs. Pastor Jeff led us in prayer, and after that, Lolo Bert started the "electric handshake."

Three, two, one...

January 1, 2006, Sunday





January 1, 2006

12:00 A.M. Happy New Year!!! - Media Noche

Couldn't possibly blow firecrackers in that small enclosed space. Didn't need to. Shouts of jubilation, joy and laughter were more than enough. Stereos blared and whistles blew. Everyone



went around, hugging, kissing whoever came one's way. Before long, clanistas started forming a human train that went around the room; steaming forward, and dancing. After a few minutes, everyone settled down

for some chow, *puto't kutsinta atbp.*

First call for hide and seek and everyone was already there. No need for a last call. There were a lot who turned up at the front of the sanctuary. Mostly 5th generation kiddies. No, they weren't kiddies anymore. A lot of them were now teeners! I knew that somehow the torch had been passed. A lot of us 4th generation veterans felt a bit out of place, as much as a Neoriginal would have felt joining our games just a decade ago. Some of us like William were drafted as "guardians" to help out the new young



players. Marshalls Teena and Karl explained some safety rules at the start, and why they had to sleep early to be able to attend the Family Council Meeting.

Kelson and Ezra Holt joined with their mom OC (who used to play herself) told them they could join "one round." But they enjoyed so much they played about three. Jaja-boy's group was

tagged a lot. Cyrene's WIB (Women In Black) were obviously prepared and everyone was out for their heads. Veteran Richard heckled all the "amateur" teams but was easily tagged once he joined.

After the games had officially ended, veterans who were still eager to play went for a couple of rounds as individuals instead of teams. Still, everyone had fun.

8:00 - 9:00 Breakfast

Tapsilog and some tomatoes! Not inedible.

9:30 - 12:00 Family Council Meeting, Picture taking

Uncle Willie presided over the meeting, with (forever) acting secretary Teena typing the minutes. The General, even in his most

somber mood, still brought down the house several times. Prizes were awarded to the tribes according to rank. The Red tribe ranked last overall but Tito Matt kept maintaining that we were the "most honest team!" Even while the prizes were being distributed, we all stood in line. A puzzled Kelson asked, "are we really the most honest?" to which Tito Matt replied, "why of course! That's why we're last place!" After the awarding ceremonies, a hoarse, but gritty William promised "We will take back our throne next year."

Picture-taking begun with the two originals physically with us, Lolo Bert and Lola Pat occupying two of the nine chairs. Lola Puring, in Chicago, was sorely missed. The subjects literally multiplied as the two were joined by the Neoriginals (click), then the Gen-next (click), then Lala (click), then Lala's Ziggy (click). Thanks to the balikbayans and returnees, there were more reuniones this year compared to last. I squeezed in at the back for the Official clan photo. More "cheese!" for the subclan photos.

12:00 P.M. Lunch

I forgot, but it was great!

1:00 - Onwards Goodbyes

The parking lot was turned into one giant "kunol-kunol" spot. Nobody seemed interested in leaving. Clanistas took pictures, laughed, and talked.

I thought about the 5th generation again, and that early 80's album I was just browsing through just moments ago, about how they were now even bigger and more in number than we were back then. In about two decades, there'll be 4th and 5th cousins, and I'd be echoing auntie Myrna, telling them how amazed I am at how close they still are. I'm glad there are people like Noel who care about archiving all this stuff. The 50s and 60s albums are just amazing!

Rob Phillips was right all along. Long before blogs were in vogue, a decade in fact, he called this the "Damdamalog." And with good reason. All this time I've been "blogging" in a manner of speaking, all the reunions I've attended. I kept thinking about how amazing our reunions really are, which we sometimes take for granted. With God's help, we have survived, and will continue to do so. "Outstand, Outshine, Outrace!" (Cheesy I know, but I have to end somewhere.)

Happy 2006 everyone! May we not just survive, let's enjoy the ride! See you all next year!

Seacrest, out.





Financial Report 2005-2006

COLLECTION:

Balance, last year	P11,397.40	
Originals 9 x P5,000	45,000.00	
NEO-riginals (inclusive of Anolin's guest)	53,400.00	
Gennext (inclusive of 3 guests)	<u>23,300.00</u>	<u>P133,097.40</u>

LESS EXPENSES:

- 130 people, package cost for lodging, 6 meals, 4 snacks for 2 days, 2 nights, and exclusive use of facilities	P 110,450.00	
- ID's, pentels, supply	1,025.00	
- Tips (waiters and cooks)	1,500.00	
- Tips to security guard	300.00	
- Films and developing of photos	4,000.00	
- Love gift to pastor/preacher	1,000.00	
- Sound system	4,000.00	
- Videoke	<u>1,000.00</u>	<u>P123,275.00</u>

EXCESS CASH

P 9,822.40

OTHER INCOME: FOR THE UMINGAN UCCP CHURCH

- Bob and Leah Ewoldt	-	\$ 500.00
- Eva Anolin	-	\$ 200.00
- Bill and Nora Verespie	-	\$ 300.00
- Special Offering	-	P 10,898.00
- PLEDGE (uncle Bert)	-	20,000.00 (2 checks of P10,000 each Jan & Feb)

Prepared by Mavang (clan treasurer)

Audited by Vinva (clan auditor)

DONORS:

Scanner, P10,000 cash – Myrna Anolin of NYC
 Prizes – MAJOR: Adrian and Bessie Sukkel; Danny Vergara; Jermeiy, Jenny and Jobryan;
 OTHER PRIZES: Esther, Cesar, and Julie
 Backdrop and other odds and ends – host sub-clan
 More odds and ends and important things we may have failed to mention -- other Clanistas (please read the Damdamag for some details)





Summary of Minutes

61st VERGARA CLAN ANNUAL REUNION

UNIDA Christian Center, Silang, Cavite

January 1, 2006

10:16 AM

Presiding Officers: Willie Vergara, Acting Chair, 61st Reunion

1. Chairman called meeting to order 10:16 at AM.
2. There are 143 reunionites this year.
3. Minutes of last year's meeting approved.
4. Business arising from the minutes:
 - 4.1. Albums

Noel: I would like to thank the clanista (Tita Myrna) who gave a donation for the scanner. The master plan is to collect various reunion pictures, scan them, and catalogue them. From the master copy, we will replicate, and then give a copy to each sub-clan, down to the basic family units.

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Darlene and Dannie for last year's reunion scrapbook.

We now have "Creative Ideas" albums (by Manang OD in California). These are restored albums. We have done away with the old albums with pages that are falling apart.

Thanks to uncle Earl's donation of cds.

Lastly, I got ten years of reunion videos which we could put into DVDs and do the same as we would with the pictures (distribution).

Aie: The techies spoke throughout the year on how to preserve the memories of the past reunions. If it is ok with you (the clan), the (original) scrapbooks could be kept in Chit's home (Umingan).

I would like to propose a motion that Noel Membrere be chairman for the Committee on Restoration of Reunion Albums.

Majority seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- 4.2. Umingan church repairs

Aie: They have started construction. The walls have been built around the old church, thereby enclosing the old church structure. They are experiencing trouble with building the roof and ceiling because they are short of cash. Php 125,000 is needed to finish the basic structure.

Hopefully, I speak for the clanistas in saying, the Vergara clan can and will help with the basic reconstruction of the church building but the local church should be the ones responsible for reorganizing the church.

Tony: I propose a motion that there be a Committee on the Umingan Church Repairs. They should submit a financial and progress report which includes expenses. Perhaps if the donors can monitor the progress being made, we would feel better about giving.

*Motion was not discussed.

5. Business at hand: Evaluation of the 61st reunion:

5.1 **Tony:** "Congratulations to the organizing committee. It was a very well-organized reunion. *Kung meron mang pagkukulang, bale wala na* because all the other aspects of the program (i.e. decorations and schedule) seemed to be well put together."

5.2 **Matt:** "It was a good reunion but I think we should put more emphasis on our reunion originals. Sadly, at last night's thanksgiving/memorial service, we remembered everyone except Lolo Berto and Lola Cionang. It is my suggestion that we make them (originals) the focus of the reunion while they are still alive."

5.3 **Ofelia:** (comment on venue) "There is no maintenance during our stay here. I complained about our CR upstairs (lavatory). Although I was



told that there would be repairs done, none was made. My fault was that we went straight to the administration instead of approaching the host sub-clan."

Tony: They clean at the beginning of the reunion but once the people come they maintenance people keep away. We should maintain our rooms ourselves. But if it is a malfunction issue, then that's a different thing altogether. We didn't experience the same inconvenience though. When we arrived, a ceiling fan was not working. We complained to the reunion host and an extra fan was provided soon after.

5.4 **Myrna:** The reunion was very good. Special mention to those who made the name tags, they were very helpful.

Joy: I suggest that the name tags include the parent/s' names.

5.5 **Aie:** Firstly, I was able to relax this reunion because tasks were delegated/ passed on to the next generation. Secondly, we looked forward coming to the reunion because of the efforts of Jemuel sending out teasers. Lastly, the backdrop is superb.

5.6 **Joy:** I would like to suggest that collection be done during registration. This will ensure a smoother collection process and assure that even those who leave early can still be collected from.

Tony: I would like to make the suggestion of Joy a motion to be discussed.

Chairman: We will leave this issue for the next sub-clan to decide on.

6. Final financial report was given by treasurer, Grace May Chong. (Printed separately)

7. Appointing an auditor:

Aie: "I nominate Vinya."

Vinya: "I accept the responsibility of being the clan auditor."

8. Business arising from the e-groups: Permanent Reunion Site

*Aie puts on the table what some clanistas had been suggesting about a permanent reunion site.

Noel: The best site would be Umingan. There are two available sites: 1) behind the church (Vergara property -- cousins of Lolo Berto), and 2) Cabalayanan. If ever this idea pushes through, each of us can have our own dwellings built.

Aie: I would like to make a motion to form a committee to study the possibility of coming up with a permanent reunion site. The committee's responsibility is to collate all ideas, suggestions and recommendations given by clanistas, after which submit a report and their recommendations.

Myrna: "I second the motion."

*Motion was approved. Nominations are left on the table.

10. Turnover ceremony: Representative Cesar for the Astring sub-clan turned over chairmanship symbolized by the REUNION LOGBOOK to Lorelie of the Albert sub-clan.

11. Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.

*Awarding of prizes

BASKETBALL: Los Casados, VOLLEYBALL: Los Casados

TRIBE STANDINGS:

- 4th - PURIPAZ Tribe (Red "Most honest" Team)
- 3rd - MICHIMI Tribe (Yellow Team)
- 2nd - ALBERU Tribe (Blue Team)
- 1st - PATINTO Tribe (Green Team)

Prepared by:

TEENA DACANAY
Acting Secretary (Forever!)

