



UPSCA NEWSLETTER

RESURECTADO

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Special Edition
On Batanes Lakbay

Published irregularly and whimsically . . . send in your news, trivia, photos.

In emailable, printable color PDF format

Hello, everybody!

After almost a 4 year hiatus, the Upscan Alumni bunch of the mid '60s have come back with a vengeance on reporting to the others what's going on, especially on their recent peregrinations, in this new format of the Newsletter.

As usual, let us quote from email exchanges excerpted below:

From Danny to Johnny: Lakviajeros leave for Batanes early tomorrow morning, allow me to give some running commentary. After I hit the send button, I will close the laptop, and will be incommunicado for the next 6 days, unless Basco, Batanes has an internet cafe. Hopefully, Johnny's scenario of having to send messages in a floating bottle will not come to pass.

Early on, Johnny had admonished us: See you in ten months. Don't forget to take ample supplies of Gillette shavers, empty coke bottles, cork stoppers, writing paper, and ball pens. Wait for the current to shift southwards before launching any sea-mail.

And Mercy threw in a whodunit mystery: You do not know who else is coming. But that is my final surprise!!! He he he, as Gerry would say, control your passions.

Even the day before, I had to email all: Mercy still refuses to divulge who is the mystery lakviajero(s) who will be joining us, thus rounding out the group to 15. Abangan ang susonod!



Fifteen Upsca Lakviajeros all, but seventeen in picture. Discounting the two extra guests who joined the boat trip, they are L to R, kneeling, Danny Gil & Jimmy Abad; standing, guest1, Erwin's son Victor, Erwin Gomez, Mon Pasicolan, Mercy Abad, Edna Manlapaz, Romy Manlapaz, guest2, Jessie Javelona, Bernie Muller, Lisa Gil, Jess Javelona, Mimi Pasicolan, Jun Calejesan and Cynthia Calejesan. Yes, life vests were mandatory.

The surprise couple was Romy & Edna Zapanta-Manlapaz. In a sense, Mercy's hints were true; we haven't seen them in quite some time, and we knew them from way back.

We all somehow managed to be at the airport at about 5 in the morning for the 6 o'clock flight on Air Spirit to Basco, Batanes. It was a 2-engined turboprop plane, certainly not new, but it didn't look too old either.

These discussions had prompted Bernie earlier to relate a true story about how her friend got on a really old plane on some hick airline in Africa and when she expressed concern about it, the flight attendant soothingly said not to worry because at least the pilot is new.

According to the flight attendant, there were 48 adults, and 2 children. Yet, we saw still a number of empty seats. So obviously Batanes isn't such an off-the-beaten-track destination.

The flight was surprisingly smooth, all 1 hr 50 minutes, despite the fact that we flew only at 17,000 ft, almost half the height of modern jets which fly over the weather fronts.

When we touched down, our tourist guide and her crew were very efficient; they took care of getting our bags through checkout, loading them on one jeepney that served as the baggage vehicle, and loading us on a second stretched-version jeepney that served as

our limo. But our general impressions of the airport were all positive: the structure was new and modern, and the restrooms were clean, and even had running water and TP. And there was a cell phone network (we later found this true for the entire island and even in the adjacent island).

There were two people who were at our service, a lady manager/proprietor named Luz, and a young and energetic and versatile tour guide named Roger. Under them worked a team of assistants: drivers, cooks, attendants, etc. We quickly got to see that the fee for the entire tour package of P7000 for each of us (not including airfare) was very reasonable for the 5 day-stay.

Airfare, on the other hand, was not that much of a bargain. But considering the Airline had a monopoly, it was not too surprising.