

NY 62nd Street FORUM

"Where ideas flourish"

NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER

Issue Num 1

Published by the NY 62nd Street Forum

April, 2003

Fourth Session Lasted Long into the Night

How it all started

A few months ago, my wife Lisa and I attended a concert of Michael Dadap at the Philippine Consulate. In the reception that followed, we saw a familiar face: Dr. Amador Muriel, PhD, our physics professor in the early 60's back in UP, Diliman. We approached him, and sure enough, he remembered us. We were invited to his house, and over coffee, we reminisced about the old college days.

Though we hadn't seen Amador in 40 years, we had heard much about him and actually were in email contact a few years earlier when he was running for the UP presidency, and though we still were based in LA, California, we helped launch a campaign among our UP friends via the email "Loop" we had, about 120 strong.

That night, he explained briefly his latest project, of applying the predictive ability of his Turbulence Theory to currency trading. In the course of the evening, he mused that some years back, his place was the venue of many a meeting/forum/gathering of various groups, albeit mainly political. And then he suggested the idea, which we fully endorsed, of starting up again a regular meeting group mainly for intellectual growth and camaraderie.

This Newsletter is a further extension of that idea.

One of the early attendees was Johnny Reyes, an engineer who also is a prolific writer. Here are excerpts from an email he sent soon after the third lecture:

The back-to-back talks at the Manhattan home of Dr. Amador Muriel and his wife Gloria (Merchan) last Saturday evening were the third in a series of informative lectures.

The first in the series was given in early March by Dr. Muriel himself, a former U.P. professor of physics who now runs a computer business in New York and Geneva. In his spare time, he has been



The fourth lecture was by economist Norman Madrid, above right, who talked on "Projects and Policies to Enrich Us — Theoretical and Practical Lessons for Filipinos from Wealthy Nations, Wall Street" and "Today's Top Billionaires and Political Leaders." Picture on left shows some of the attendees: Carlos Esguerra who is scheduled to talk about Photography, Milan Genciana, Jose Guerrero, Manuel Rodriguez who is scheduled to have an art workshop in backyard garden, and Bert Florentino who did the second lecture on poetry. Unlike the earlier lectures, Norman's went on until 11:00 pm and was punctuated by lively participation by all. Even after most of the participants left, a few of us stayed on and on, and over wine and more coffee, we reminisced about the good old college days and the personalities we had known then. We broke up past two in the morning.

working on a theory which explains why turbulence occurs in nature. Every engineer knows that when the Reynolds Number of a fluid exceeds a certain threshold value, the type of flow changes from laminar to turbulent. But the reason for this change has never been understood.

Dr. Muriel says he has solved the problem mathematically, and it is now just a matter of getting his solution officially recognized by the international college of physicists (or some such body). It is said that until that happens, Dr. Muriel prefers to remain a Filipino citizen, because he wants the honor to be rendered to the Philippines. Solving the turbulence problem is said to be of the same order of magnitude as formulating the special and the general theories of relativity, and could merit the Nobel Prize in Physics.

The second in the series comprised back-to-back talks about Philippine National Artist Jose Garcia Villa, given in late March by Bert Florentino (playwright, Palanca awardee and friend of Garcia Villa) and Dr. Gene Pulmano (Garcia Villa's

personal physician). Bert narrated Garcia Villa's biography to the group how he moved from the Philippines to Greenwich Village in the 1930s and decided to stay there permanently, hobnobbing with other poets and artists.

Dr. Pulmano told how he provided Garcia Villa with medical care during the last few years of his life in the 1980s,

Flash! Keep Your Calendar Open!

The tentative next session is Saturday, May 17. This will be a workshop on various printing techniques by Manuel A. Rodriguez. This will be held at the backyard of Amador's house, and the weather should be very pleasant.

Watch for an email or phone call to confirm this date.

Amador's address:
347 East 62nd Street
New York, NY 10021
Between First and Second Avenue
Best to come by subway, stop at 59th St and Lexington, walk east.
(917) 216-4688
(212) 888-6931



The lecture was indeed lively and engaging, notwithstanding the momentary lapse of attention the above picture shows. Actually, Lisa was picking up something. For one thing, it turned out that one of the guests, Romeo Abenoja, also was an investor, even more big time, and spoke the same banker's language as Norman.

while exchanging philosophical views with him at the same time. Bert and Gene said Garcia Villa became a National Artist, but the stipend he received from the Philippine Government was a pittance which was barely enough to pay for the rent of his Manhattan apartment. To the end, he refused to return to the Philippines.

After his death, his manuscripts and other Andy Warhol-like art work became the property of an American associate, and unless this person decides to release them, Jose Garcia Villa's heretofore unpublished works can never be published. Bert Florentino then read us samples of Garcia Villa's few published verses, including his famous comma poems. (I tried very hard to understand them, but I've always had difficulty with poems that don't rhyme, so had to give up.) Bert said the only person who has fully understood Jose Garcia Villa's deepest poems is fellow poet Wilfrido Ma. Sanchez (our contemporary in U.P. Diliman and now a successful businessman in the Midwest). I asked whether Garcia Villa was a copycat of E.E. Cummings' style, and Jorge Ortoll, one of the guests, emphatically replied no. He said Garcia Villa's style, while similar to that of Cummings, was not a copy that was just the genre at the time. Bert Florentino added that Garcia Villa and Cummings became good friends and even wrote poems in tribute to each other.

As I said earlier, the third in the series also consisted of back-to-back lectures. The first talk, given by yours truly, was about Oil Refining in Tabangao (Batangas City) 31 Years of My Life. I mentioned that it was an exciting and heady period for chemical engineers while it lasted (which explains why I didn't immigrate to the U.S. earlier). The subject covered the following topics:

The justification for building crude oil refineries in the Philippines (and other

third world countries) in the late 50s and early 60s.

The economies of scale.

The hydrocarbons family.

What Tabangao Refinery was designed to do.

Living near a petroleum refinery (risks; actual accidents; inconveniences; perks and conveniences; social life in a housing compound; British and Dutch expats; the local Batangas culture; Join Shell and see the world).

Expansion in the 60s and early 70s.

110-km product pipelines to Manila (commissioned in the late 60s).

The Tabangao refrigerated LPG terminal built in the early 70s (justification; risks; environmental impact).

Purchase by Shell of an existing luboil refinery in Pililla, Rizal (mid-80s).

A new state-of-the-art oil refinery built in Tabangao (early 90s).

The natural gas find in Palawan (early 90s) and the undersea pipeline to Tabangao (late 90s).

Contraction and decline of the oil majors worldwide; downsizing, shutting-down, and/or selling of refineries to small no-frills companies;

Deregulation in the Philippines; the future of Tabangao Refinery.

The second talk on the evening of April 12 was given by Danny Gil himself, and revealed a current U.S. Government initiative to persuade creators of buildings and equipment to incorporate more effective energy-saving ideas in their designs. Although compliance will be optional, points will be awarded for features that make use of innovative principles and that eliminate or reduce waste. An example of a points-rich idea is the geothermal pump. Mechanical engineers will tell you that a heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning system is actually a heat pump.

The fourth lecture in the series will be given by Norman Madrid. So far, he hasn't revealed details of what his talk will cover, but he has hinted that it will deal with the well-worn topic of why the Philippines is still not a tiger economy, and fresh ideas on what can be done about it. Also, tips on the stock market.

A forthcoming lecture in the series will be given by IBMer Tony Nievera, covering Computers and IBM. The following topics have been suggested:

How a computer works (in layman's terms)

Who invented the first computer?

When?

The UNIVAC computer

Computer languages (Fortran, Basic, etc.)

Why no one needs to learn them anymore today

A comparison of computer sizes vs.

capability from the first primitive ones to the latest supercomputers

How computer cards worked

How a typical laptop today compares in capability with the so-called mainframes of the 60s, the 70s, and the early 80s [Aside: When I took up MBA in La Salle between 1981 and 1985, one of my subjects was Computers. It was a hands-on course, with each student in the class provided with a workstation linked to the main school computer. But the workstation consisted merely of a keyboard (with a carriage return instead of an Enter key), a typewriter-style printer, and rolls and rolls of newsprint paper no monitor!]

Who invented the Internet and when

Minimum essential components of a simple Internet

The distinction if any between the Internet and the WorldWide Web

Is Deep Blue really smarter than Kasparov, or does it just calculate faster?

How many moves ahead can Deep Blue (or Deep Junior) plan?

How many theoretical permutations are there of say the first ten moves of a chess game?

The effect of computers on the labor market (is it the main cause of downsizing?)

Careers in computers (what do programmers, systems analysts, MCSEs, CCSEs do, and what are their prospects nowadays?)

How has IBM managed the competition from smaller manufacturers?

When buying a personal computer, what should one consider to get the best buy?

What parts of your car are now run by computers?

Ten thousand years from now, when future men dig up archeological artifacts of the 20th and 21st centuries, what will they find and how will they interpret them?

Should we keep hard copies of everything in fireproof vaults?

Tony's response to the suggestions:

I can do all these topics, and I will start the talk by reading and answering your questions and I will add to make it more interesting. . ."

A candidate for another speakership is Dr. Erwin Gomez, who commutes regularly between Indiana and New York, but like Norman he hasn't given the group an indication so far of what he would like to talk about. I have suggested that he discuss the possibility of brain transplants being carried out in the near future, which could enhance a human being's lifespan significantly (I wasn't thinking of a fresh brain being transferred into an existing body more of a fresh body receiving an existing brain). This subject was featured at length in a scientific movie during the late 50s, starring Peter Cushing.

Another possibility is a brain implant to enhance the IQ of intellectually-challenged individuals somewhat like adding extra gigabytes to your CPU. Or a personal dialysis machine portable and compact. After all, look how computers and cell phones have shrunk over the years but gotten more powerful. What is to prevent technology from developing a kidney-sized dialysis machine in effect, an artificial kidney?

Dr. Amador Muriel, in whose 62nd Street apartment the lectures are being held, has remarked that ...the group is expanding. We should make it an informal requirement for new attendees that he/she be willing to give a talk on a topic of general interest, so we can all grow intellectually.

Other forthcoming topics:

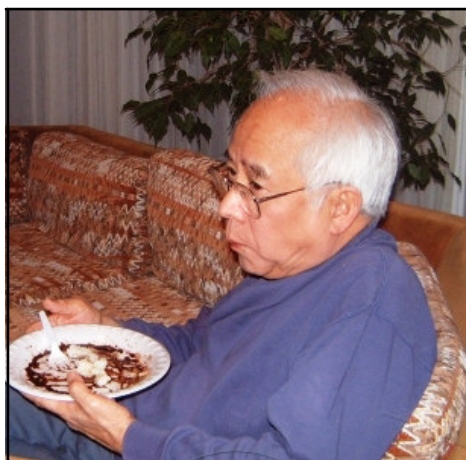
- 1) Learning to Paint by Doing (by a well-known Filipino artist),
- 2) Photography (by a prize-winning Filipino photographer),
- 3) the Global Diabetes Epidemic (by a Filipino physician),
- 4) Philippine Regime Change.



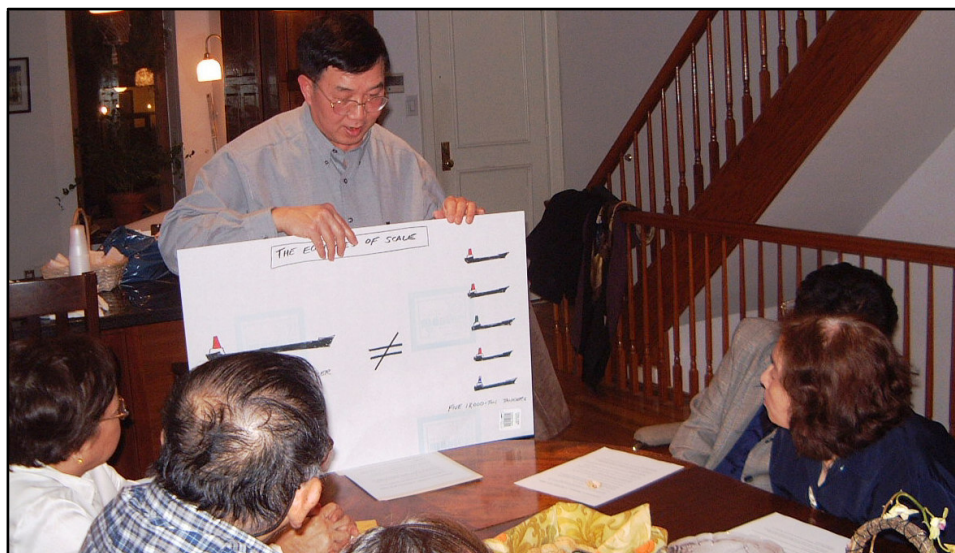
The fourth lecture was to have been attended by another well known person, Dr Mars Custodio. He had mentioned to Amador that he specifically wanted to come over to meet his old La Salle high school classmate, and valedictorian, Johnny Reyes. Unfortunately, a close kin of Mars passed away a few days before the event, so he couldn't make it. Our condolences and prayers to your family, Mars.

Then, also, Johnny couldn't make it due to a pressing engagement. Hopefully the May 19 event will have all the players present.

---OOO---



The host, Dr Amador Muriel pensively listening to the lecture, but ready at any time to jump into the discussion and lead it from going astray, and even more ready to go down to the basement to make more espresso coffee on the special machine.



Ex-executive from Shell Filipinas Johnny Reyes, lecturing on his 31 ones years with the company and, as the chart shows, how one tanker is not equal to five. The third lecture series.

...energy, calculate the quantity of the trans...
 as the volume of the system and N a...
 We will use the following equations:

$$P = \frac{2N}{mV} \int_0^{p_m} dp p^2 f^{eq}(p^2),$$

$$U = \frac{3N}{m} \int_{-p_m}^{p_m} dp p^2 f^{eq}(p^2) + \frac{NA}{2},$$

$$PV = (\gamma - 1)U.$$
 ...strate our results, we have...
 ...and calculated ab...
 ...choice of...
 Amador gave me a file of one of his technical papers, and not surprisingly, it was full of higher math. I remarked to him that it looks like Greek to me. Whether I see it upside down or sidewise, it looked all the same. See sample above. Don't you agree?

It is stories like the Baquirans' -- a tale of hard work, family ties, and skilled know-how -- that have propelled Filipinos to the title of top wage earners among all New Jersey ethnic groups."

---OOO---

On the next page is a partial list of those who attended the past lectures. Since we only circulated an attendance sheet in the last lecture, the list is incomplete.

We have also added into the list those who have indicated their interest to join us sometime, and others whom we'd like to have around. Of those who signed up the attendance sheet, some inadvertently didn't include their addresses and telephone numbers.

However, we managed to get their complete data by searching in the internet, and have included it in the mailing label database we have made, so this newsletter will get to them by postal mail.

But for privacy, we only have included the addresses and telephones of those who wrote them in the attendance sheet, and those whom we are sure will find no objection.

The remarks column shows who have already lectured on what topics, and who may yet lecture on other topics.

A friend of mine emailed me an article from the NJ Star Ledger with the title "Census Traces a Path of Skill and Success to the Philippines". And it mentioned one of the recent attendees:

"The house is modest and typical, a split-level on a middle-class Bergen County street. But the lively party inside, where the Baquiran siblings have gathered with their families to celebrate their sister Nina's birthday, is a snapshot of other measures of wealth.

Over a table piled high with roast pig and spring rolls, Lestrino Baquiran and six of his siblings who, like him, came to the United States from the Philippines discuss how they have toiled to find success in medicine and business.

They beam with pride as they introduce their children, from a Princeton neuro-scientist to a 6-year-old piano player.

Published in Jersey City, NJ, and targeted to be quarterly, depending on the responses to this first issue. Most material is culled off the internet from various emails. Snailmail, email, fax or send your pictures, trivia, jokes, manifestos, etc, to either Danny Gil at 126 Ogden Ave, Jersey City, NJ 07307 or fengil@aol.com, (201) 659-4695 or alternately send them to Amador Muriel. See his address at flash box on page 1.