

RAMBLINGS - MEETING AT AMADOR'S WOODSIDE RESIDENCE

It all started a few weeks ago when I emailed all in the 62nd St Forum loop:

We've been in Jersey City for almost a week, and intend to stay another 8 weeks. We met with Amador and Gloria Muriel at their new spacious apt in Woodside Saturday, and he proposes we 62nd Forum members meet again for old times sake. As he says, our numbers are diminishing.

We can have a potluck lunch at his place on any day most convenient to whoever wishes to join. Most of us are retired, so no need for a weekend meet. Parking is easy at his place on 48-10 45th St, Apt 2-C, a few blocks from Queens Blvd. Lots of diverse restaurants in the area, too.

For those in NJ who may find it difficult to drive in, I volunteer to pick you up, or perhaps some of you can convoy in.

The response was very encouraging. We decided to hold it on June 12, a midweek Wednesday. Just so happened to be Phil Independence day. Vic Vitug even emailed detailed directions via subway. A few, such as Nel Reformina and Teresa Rodriguez indicated they couldn't make it because it was a work day. But Johnny Reyes and wife Mila decided to take the day off from work and join us retirees, especially since I offered that they first come to our place in nearby Jersey City, and we all drive in one car to Amador's in Queens, across from Manhattan. Erwin

Gomez in Indiana at first said he'd fly in, as he had done so a few times before, but unfortunately, at the last moment, he said he couldn't make it. Ninotchka Rosca said she'd join, if it so happens her busy schedule didn't take her out of town that day. Gene Pulmano said he couldn't make it due to some prior medical commitments. Carlos Esguerra could not make it as he was in Belgium. And since Bert Peronilla said he might find it difficult to drive into Queens, we offered to pick him up at his place in East Orange.

For those not familiar with the 62nd St Forum, this is a bunch of mainly seniors, majority of whom are UP alumni, who regularly met starting the year 2001 at Amador Muriel's on 62nd St, Eastside Manhattan for dinner, camaraderie and fun. Each meeting was actually a lecture session of sorts, with either one of us, or with some invited guest expounding on a specific topic, after which free wheeling discussions would ensue. Most intellectually stimulating. There even were music and dance presentations. It always was held on a Saturday, starting at 7 pm, mainly because parking at that area and time was free. Attendance ranged from a handful to two dozen.

Over a period of 5 years, we had about 35 forums. This kind of tapered off as Amador started having extended trips to Europe and Asia, and I retired to the Philippines.

But even so, the group keeps up lively discussions and debate via email using the Yahoo groups service which we call the 62nd Forum loop.



The group picture.

1 & 2 – Lisa & Danny Gil
3 & 4 – Amador & Gloria Muriel
5 & 6 – Johnny & Mila Reyes

7 & 8 – Jobo & Cora Elizes
9 – Bert Peronilla
10 – Jane Orendain
11 – Vic Vitug

12 – Frank Jimenez
13 – Mike Dadap
We weren't superstitious about 13, Vic's wife Vicky, 14, left early.

This is a picture taken by new-comer Jobo Elizes. He joined the email loop the other year, and this was his first time to meet with many of us. Actually, Jobo on the extreme right and I on the extreme left were cloned in. Jobo took the picture, so he wasn't originally in it. At that time, I was out re-parking Johnny's car so I also wasn't in the photo. But thanks to Corel Draw, I managed to clone ourselves in.

We had aimed to all get to Amador's at 11:30 am, in time for a potluck lunch. We were late by 2 hours.

Originally, Johnny & Mila were to have driven from Belle Mede to our place in Jersey City at about 9 AM, then I'd take the wheel and we all pick up Bert in East Orange then drive to Queens. By 10 Johnny hadn't appeared yet, and when I called him on the cell, he said he changed the schedule and was picking up Bert first, before driving to our place. Unfortunately, he got lost, and got to Bert's much later, and it was only at 12 noon did all three of them appear at the our house in Jersey City. Traffic was bad everywhere, and we finally made it to Amador's by 1:30 pm. I found paid street parking 2 blocks away, and as we hurriedly left Johnny's car with our loads of food dishes, camera, etc, I forgot to lock the car up. I only realized that almost an hour later when I checked my watch to see if I was still within the 2 hours parking meter limit. Knowing that on the front seat was Bert's GPS, and some cash on the console, I hurriedly went back. Thankfully, everything was intact. I moved the car to a closer parking slot for another 2 hours, then later for

the third time, moved it to a free parking slot I found on the next block. It still was there when we broke up almost at 6:00. After all, Johnny understood that years ago, this part of town was quite seedy. But not anymore. Like many areas close to Manhattan, the neighborhood is being gentrified as professionals move in when the earlier residents sell out.

Amador loves it here. Yet, ironically, this was one of the first properties they had years ago. They had rented it out to a Filipina who over the years sublet it to others ala "slumlord" style. Only recently did they take it back and refurbish it completely. The demographics in the building has changed a lot with so many professionals now calling it home.

They still own the 4 storey 62nd St brownstone which is rented out, save for the first floor they have retained as their Manhattan pad.

The food & drink was excellent, but the company and conversation was even more fun.

It was agreed that they'd be more of these get-togethers even when Lisa and I are back in Tanjay.

Below are more photos.

Danny Gil (ferngil@aol.com) 18 June 2013

