



ISSN 0119-6634

Ti Similla

Official Newsletter of the Academic Staff • UP Baguio • December 2011

Merry Christmas

MESSAGE

Since mid-November, despite occasional rains, our utility personnel have been busy putting up strings of Christmas lights and other ornaments, best to mark the coming of a much awaited holiday celebration at UP Baguio. This yearly ritual of lighting and sprucing up the campus has become a cherished tradition, a welcome break from our everyday tasks in the university, and we are thankful to UP Baguio's "manongs" for their efforts, clambering up ladders and roofs, to ensure that the campus is well-lit and finely adorned for the community's celebration of the Christmas season.

And so once again, we celebrate Christmas, as we also mark the end of another year in our life as a university. Christmas is a special time for everyone. It is a time to reconnect with family and community — to share blessings, to celebrate life and its gifts, to renew friendships, to reconcile with those from whom we may have been briefly estranged. For us in UP Baguio, the year that is about to close has been an eventful one. This year, we marked our fiftieth year as the UP in the north, and our ninth year as a constituent university in the UP System. From all indications, and through many activities throughout the year, UP Baguio has kept true to its avowed commitment to deliver competent instruction, research and service to the community according to the UP tenet of excellence. This year, the colleges stepped up research activities, even as new research awards were made available to faculty, in observance of UP Baguio's Jubilee year. This year, too, we welcomed back faculty who have earned doctoral and other graduate degrees, further improving UP Baguio's faculty profile. On top of this, facilities and equipment up-

grading and development continued, with campus grounds improvement, upgrading of the water system, rehabilitation of the outdoor sports venue/s, reconstruction of the UP Baguio cottage in Diliman, and the acquisition of new laboratory and IT equipment for the colleges and administrative offices.

This year, our city and region once again endured the destruction and ill-effects of several storms — typhoons Mina, Pedring and Quiel. Thankfully, the campus and personnel were spared from severe devastation, but elsewhere in the region, communities lost homes, even sources of livelihood to the storms. In the last typhoon, UP Baguio again reached out to victims by raising funds and

seeking donations for Ifugao communities. These donations found their way to Ifugao through the office of the Ifugao congressman. Elsewhere in the country and the world, a number of calamities continue to bring untold misery to victims. The stories that reach us cause anxiety, even despair, and yet other stories of generosity and heroism make us realize that the worst of times can bring out the best in people and communities. As we remember to share what we have with those who now have very little in this season of hope, let us remind ourselves and each other that the very first Christmas was about Mary and Joseph who traveled far and had no room at the inn, and about Jesus who was born in a stable.

Then, too, even as this message is being written, there is news that a new planet — named the Christmas planet — has been found, a planet much

like the earth in temperature, perhaps even in living conditions. Yet we are also told that it would take millions of light-years to reach that Earth-like place. It is a mind-boggling, magnificent thing, one that should be a source of wonderment and awe — that this world of ours, with its unimaginable hugeness and grandeur, must be a gift from whatever, or whoever designed and created it. Perhaps this new discovery should also give us a better perspective as we reflect on our lives as individuals, communities, even as generations in the larger scheme of things, that in the end, there is a purpose much larger than our individual lives, interests, and concerns.

I believe Christmas is a time for gratitude and reflection, a time to seek renewal, and healing. I thank all who have helped UP Baguio in 2011, and in all the years that I served as Chancellor. Truly, what we are now, and what we are trying to be, is the sum of all the efforts of everyone in the community.

Finally, may I say again that the story of Christmas is the story of one beginning, the birth of an infant savior in a difficult time. It is the story of wise men who kept the faith, and followed a star. In that light, the message of this Christmas season for us is one of hope, faith, sharing and sacrifice.

Merry Christmas to all in UP Baguio. Together, let us welcome the new year with joy, hope, fortitude and faith that together, we will achieve great things for our community and our world.

Priscilla Supnet Macansantos
CHANCELLOR



Part 1

Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) 4th Research Symposium on Gerontology
October 28-29, 2011 Shanghai, China

To Shanghai for a conference on gerontology

■ Ma. Ana Diaz and Ma. Cecilia San Luis

"The elderly are... also the group to which in due time most people will belong...."
(Tinker, 1981: 3).

A CSC Research Fellowship granted in 2008 allowed us and University Researcher Alice Follosco of the Cordillera Studies Center to embark on a case study of a special group of elderly -- the poor, childless elderly. Preliminary findings of the study, "Growing Old Alone: An Exploratory Study of Childless Elderly Men and Women in Baguio City" were shared at the Baguio Centennial Conference held on March 6 and 7, 2009 at UP Baguio and in the Health GIS Conference held on July 24 to 26, 2009 in Hyderabad, India. Final results contributed to papers that we read at the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) Conference held on October 28 and 29, 2011 in Shanghai, China.

The APRU Conference

The Research Symposium on Gerontology revolved around the theme "Productive Aging: Creating a dynamic and participatory aging society in Asia." Topical areas covered in APRU research symposia have ranged from geology and earthquake studies, digital libraries, brain and mind, microgravity and infectious diseases. The fourth symposium on gerontology was participated in by researchers, practitioners, graduate students and professors coming from different fields, anchored on the growing global concern over population ageing.

Fudan University, found in the Handan Road in the Yangpu District of Shanghai is a leading educational institution in China. The faculty and graduate students of the University Population Institute hosted the recently-concluded event. The two-day symposium was divided into seven sessions that highlighted how, for instance, older people have contributed to societal growth. A qualitative research entitled "Community-based volunteerism and aging practices:

Perpectives from neighborhood Shanghai" was read by the anthropologist Dr. Tianshu Pan of Fudan University. Dr. Pan discussed the very significant role played by the "Granny Cadres" in the adjustment of rural migrants to urban living in Shanghai. In fact



Prof. Diaz and San Luis read papers in China

he referred to these volunteers as the "movers and shakers" in the community building process. Seniors have kept the spirit of volunteerism alive in a changing society, serving as the link between past, present and future generations.

Another paper was read by a Chinese Ph.D. candidate at the University of Auckland, on "Productive aging and quality of life- grandparenting or volunteering: Two approaches to being productive." The paper explored whether the older Chinese migrants to New Zealand can be as productive as their local counterparts. The cross-cultural comparison was based on two approaches: the informal and unpaid service rendered through childcare assistance and the formal and unpaid community work. Volunteer

work extended by the elderly to both family and community proves that the younger generation gains a lot from what seniors do in integrating the generational lives. Ms. Jingjing Zhang emphasized that "productive ageing is a lifestyle promoted by government and communities to enhance the quality of life of elderly individuals as well as the entire society."

Looking after what the seniors can do reminds us that technological advancements that the younger generation are so adept at should also be made accessible to them. Prof. Paula Gardner spoke on the evaluation of the OATS (Older Adults Technology Services) program implemented in New York. The program shows that biological aging does not imply a decline in mental functions. The paper, provocatively titled "Getting turned on: The impact of ICT training on active ageing in New York City," refers to the so-called 'digital divide' between the older and younger

generations that can be breached by learning technology. Seniors who underwent the training were documented to have appreciated much what they got from the training. For instance, older people can now regularly communicate with younger members of the family and can therefore stay connected with one another.

Other papers read focused on elderly concerns such as health (dementia, old age depression, rehabilitation from heart failure, stroke), living arrangements, psychological processes, long-term caring and social policies for the older people. A common theme regarding aging and health is the susceptibility of seniors to age-related illnesses. It was pointed out that the management and treatment of these illnesses

require the deployment of financial, medical expertise, security schemes and other vital resources that need the collaboration and integration of private and public sectors for long-term planning.

The socio-cultural realm where values, norms, traditions and customs are sourced from does have a large part in dealing with the phenomenon of aging, apparently across societies. The paper "An exploratory study on the living arrangements and social networks among selected elderly persons in Baguio City, Philippines" was read by Prof. Cecilia San Luis from the Department of Social Anthropology and Psychology (College of Social Sciences, UP Baguio). It describes the current living arrangements of six selected elderly men and women living alone in Baguio City and explores the group dynamics between the individual elderly persons and members of their social networks. Concepts of living arrangements and social networks were used to come up with a basis for a proposed community-based intervention action program. The living arrangements documented fall under the so-called 'aging in place' that refers to living in the community and outside of an institutional home, the more typical set-up for the Filipino elderly. Social networks include persons such as immediate family members, other relatives, friends, neighbors, and town/province mates. Formal institutions such as a government agency, NGO and church are also identified as part of the social networks. The six selected cases were used to provide a basis for exploring the potential of harnessing and fusing together individual and collective (community) volunteeristic spirit. Institutionalization of a *barangay*-based monitoring scheme and organization of volunteer groups in the *barangay* are the components of the proposed intervention.

Aging as a phenomenon shows that the personal, though biological, is intertwined with what is social. Psychological processes seen in aging, as expressed in the formation, maintenance and potential modification of self-concept are issues that need attention. Specifically, dealing with these processes

could help us better understand the elderly state of well-being. In the paper presented by Maria Ana Diaz from the Department of Social Anthropology and Psychology (College of Social Sciences UP Baguio), "Self-concept in the aging years," the focal question addressed is whether or not the self-concept remains stable during the aging years in the face of challenges. Using the case of 6 elderly participants (4 females and 2 males), it was presented that the self-concept of the elderly has remained stable. The perceptions they have about themselves do not radically change across life stages. These are seen in their beliefs on work, education, parenting and family relationships. There are personality traits that have endured through time. In the same vein, there also are modifications in self-perception of the elderly participant in the areas of cognitive, socio-emotional and physical aspects.

Common cognitive changes are in the slower processing of information and change in self-perception in terms of some skills and abilities. From a socio-emotional perspective it is seen that the elderly have become more sensitive and vulnerable to becoming lonely over some misunderstandings with other people. These elderly usually engage in self-reflection that involves looking back at the life they lived. Due to the deterioration of biological processes, participants realize that

their health conditions limit their daily activities. Interestingly, most of the respondents have stronger personal convictions now. They admit that they now have become more concerned with their spirituality and find their personal relationship with God very fulfilling. In the absence of others who can provide company and support, the elderly find solace in spirituality.

A position paper on how old gay men in developing societies should be regarded was presented by Prof. Maheswar Satpathy. In "The secret lives of single old gay men in the developing world: Finding a link between aging, sexuality and productivity," Satpathy advocates a change in social disapproval leveled against deviation from heteronormativity. Attention to certain points was given: gay men in developed vis-à-vis developing societies; gay and straight men; sexuality and spirituality; those suffering from HIV/AIDS in the face of the increasing number of gays. Using the case of Indian gay men, Satpathy calls for a model of increased understanding of the lives of single gay old men by providing them with increased social capital. ■



search ID: hsc1196

Birthing a UP Baguio Reunion

■ By Luchie Maranan

In early March of this year, invited to join the 2011 Reunion planning core group, I found myself face to face with people I've seen decades ago and some I just made the acquaintance of in recent years. The excitement was palpable inside the conference room of the newly inaugurated Alumni Center, energy and anticipation combined, expected of a gathering of people brimming with ideas grand, spectacular, and to a point, hilarious. It was almost like we were there to chart the event of the century.

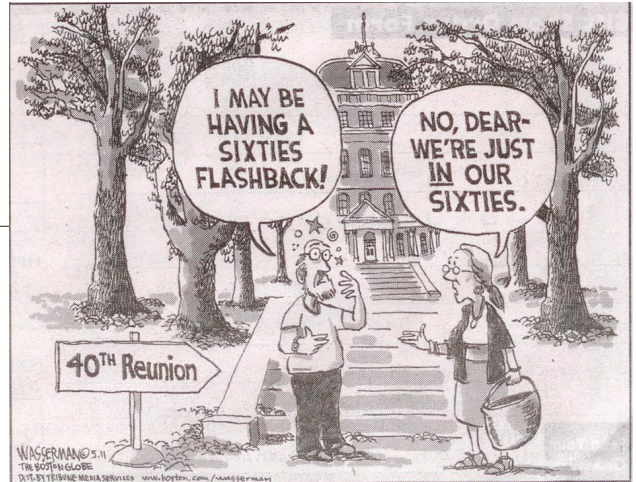
There were meetings in the following months when Vicky Rico would struggle to bring the core group back to reality as ideas soared beyond implementable (and logistical) heights. She would try to keep us sober by reminding us that our main objective was to ensure attendance on December 15-16. Lawyers Yzanne Merced and Janice Domogan would rest their cases. But because we were thinking in grand proportions already, there had to be a series of events to drum up the reunion. Logistics. Funds. Costs. Expenses. These had to be our mantric guide. Lelet San Luis would dutifully keep track of figures.

The big production at the launching of the Jubilee Year of UP Baguio will be re-staged, but director Manny Palo is adamant about an epic production in terms of beefed-up casting and technical requirements. Aesthetics and spectacle are truly this TV

director's cup of tea and cake. I remember the look of uncertainty the core group members threw at each other during that meeting with him. Ah, but that unease was lifted as I watched College of Science faculty Deemson Mones and Rocel Ortega ably co-directing the rehearsals a few weeks ago. The student dancers and band members, beginning with the voice classification session with Ben Tapang, have had tireless daily rehearsals despite their class schedules. These are times when the creative best in a UPian simply shines. Oh to be young again.

Days between meetings, core group members would be texting about updates on sponsorships. Who has given and how much? There would be celebratory text messages upon receipt of a donation, additional exclamation points and ecstatic emoticons, depending on the amount. Once during a recent heavy downpour, I sent Vicky a text message: "What if it rains on December 15-16?" And she replied "That's what's running in my fevered mind. Please announce on FB that they should bring umbrellas." And Nadine Navarro wickedly replied "Gamiting kapote ang mga tarps." Will it get zanier than these?

It has become part of my weekly schedule to go to UP Baguio for updates and regu-



lar core group meetings. People ask if I'm enrolled again or if I was teaching here (there was pleasure in reading "Prof" attached to my name on an attendance sheet). So in a recent activity held at the Alumni Center where I co-hosted the tribute for Leonard Co, I could not think of any fitting introduction of myself except "Tambay ng UP Baguio." (Official Bystander of UP Baguio).

Mulling over that sobriquet, it has dawned on me that an alumnus of UP Baguio, in a way, will always be a "tambay" because affection for the alma mater remains, lingering where you left it even as you enter the wider campus of life. Long after one has left University portals, it is not difficult to return, throw in some ideas, spare some time to work for projects, like a reunion. It *is* good to come home again.

Luz "Luchie" Maranan (Batch '75) graduated from UP Baguio with a BA Humanities, major in Comparative Literature. ■



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ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MAIL AT THE Baguio City Central Post Office,
Upper Session Road, Baguio City WITH PERMIT NO. CAR-08.



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ISSN 0119-6634

Published by the University of the Philippines Baguio through
the Office of Public Affairs
E-mail: opa@upb.edu.ph
UP Baguio website: www.upb.edu.ph

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