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Ti Similla

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UP Baguio Alumni Reunion 2008 “Beyond wildest dreams”

■ Victoria Rico Costina



In a text message I received on December 6, Chancellor Priscilla Macansantos expressed: “I never in my wildest dreams thought we could get all these people from the past together.” It is a thought echoed by most others at UP Baguio after an unprecedented number of nearly 400 (Atty Isagani Calderon insists it was “more than 500”) homecoming alumni galvanized the campus on December 5 and 6, 2008, a fitting yearender to a full celebration of the centennial of UP.

A total of 305 registered but we had to close at this number. (Catering was asked to increase from 200 for lunch to 300 for dinner, but with more alumni and guests pouring into the campus after office hours to attend the Solidarity/ Artists Night on December 5, organizers decided on closing shop). Other alumni arrived in Baguio in the next few hours to participate in the weekend alumni varsity games organized by the Human Kinetics Program and to network, in smaller, more intimate gatherings, with close friends and former

teachers in restos (and bars) all over Baguio City.

December 5 began with an early morning Fun Run organized by Dr. Evelyn Degollacion, in coordination with Texas Instruments and UP Baguio alumni working for the corporation. Twenty five runners took part in the 10K run. By midmorning, UP Baguio Vanguard alumni, led by Col. Benjamin Sembrano, had also set up a Medical Clinic to service UPB personnel and their dependents. The Medical Mission, involving five doctors invited by the Vanguard, was held at the UP Baguio Clinic, with the assistance of Dr. Linda Macalalag, resident physician of UP Baguio.

The Bulwagang Juan Luna was the main venue of the reunion program. Lunch was followed with a welcome program emceed by UP Baguio Alumni Association Vice President Benny Alhambra. A run-through of attendees showed that the biggest delegation of attendees came from the seventies. Songs and dances from multi-talented, multi-tasking faculty of the three Colleges, a revue of the classic “Iskolar ng Bayan” skit, and a raffle marked the early hours of the reunion. Even then, things looked very good: we had not known that campus organizations would be ready with greetings set on tarpaulins (these were bright and cheery displays on the main building facades). At the Lobby, the Repolyo Revolution band played their neoethnic repertoire nonstop, as scores of alumni arrived to register. At the Audi alumni stood up to greet and to update everyone; it was just simply great to see old, “well-preserved” friends after a stretch of years. Alumni had traveled all the way from sundry places: the USA, the Netherlands, Dubai—to be at UP Baguio for the reunion. At the back of



the Audi, Prof. Corbelita Palima choreographed a private, giggly photo session among Chancellor Precy, Nonilon Queaño, Bella Queaño, and myself. In one corner Lydia Casambre, Steve Rood and Abby cheered the rousing Mama Mia Number of the College of Arts and Communication.

At the College of Social Sciences food and souvenir booths were readied, a photo collage of past years at the CSS was set up, a stage for impromptu performances was fully used, including a lounging area consisting of a sala set transported by Mike Ang to the SocSci building especially for the reunion. At the College of Science, food was plentiful for visiting alumni, photo collages were also meticulously readied and displayed, and CS took over the MultiPurpose Hall, transforming it into a three-star like hotel foyer. The night before, the College of Science had met with 30 Biology alumni for an exclusive dinner at the Hotel Supreme.

By mid-afternoon of Reunion Day, hundreds of students flooded the campus grounds with banners, tarpaulins, mascots, balloons— set for the Homecoming Parade. The whole group had to wait for dusk so the Human Kinetics Dance Troupe could do their lighted dance sequence at the Oblation area. By then the Christmas Lights of the campus were on. Every tree, bush, post and parol was strung with lights, a veritable wonderland. Prof. Rolly Fernandez would remark: “Ay, dito sa UP Baguio, walang recession.”

The City High Band led the parade, with Vanguard alumni bearing flags. When we had reached the foot of Session Road, Dean Willy Alangui told us of a text message he had received: the tail end of the parade was still leaving campus. A few days later, we received an e-mail from Romie Aquino, head of Pi Omicron based in Herndon, Virginia. He said that their scholar had marveled that the Pi Omicron men survived the hike from UP Baguio, down Session Road, Harrison, back up to Governor Pack and the campus. This applies to all the other alumni who took part in the kilometeric parade, some of them in high heels, in fact.

Simply hundreds filled every space on campus when we got back, as everyone awaited the Oblation Run by Alpha Phi Omega Fraternity members (not alumni, good grief); but we did hear that some alumni and non-UPB frat members took part. That was a scream. The 10-minute fireworks display followed, with the usual generous sponsorship of the Beta Sigma fraternity alumni... By then we had been told that we had run out of kits, registration forms, and food. Utterly gratifying problems.

Dinner, with the Audi filled to the rafters, followed. An all-night program ensued: songs, dances by Tayaw, Shadows, the HKP Dance Troupe, and Karen Navarette-Anton's dance school. Awards were handed out by Judge Fernando Pamintuan, president of the UPBAA, to key alumni in law, medical and allied professions, education, arts and sports, community service and social work, journalism and broadcast communication, business, and public service (complete listing in this issue). The Judge came with a CD with special music for each segment: e.g. during the awards for business people, he played “Money, money, money...” Segments of the Vagina Monologues were read by Angel Aquino, Susan Tagle, Faye Abalos, Kleng Carreon and myself; direction for the performance was by Manny Palo. The performance was cathartic, to say the least. Kidlat Tahimik, guest artist, also performed, upholding local culture and art forms. UP Naming Mahal was led by Jimmy Fong at the end of the day, it was 12 midnight for us Cinderellas. The campus was still crawling. At two in the morning, I received a text message from Dean Willy Alangui, saying that alumni groupings had taken over tambayan areas all over campus, and he and friends congregated around the Alma Mater statue, drinking to the future. ■



“Thank you for the warmest welcome.” Chato Ledonio O’Buckley
New York



“We are already planning to attend the next reunion, in 2011.”
Romie Aquino and Pi Omicron Fraternity



Reunion Diary

■ Victoria Rico Costina

In February 2006, the last reunion here at UP Baguio, we had 153 registered participants, with around thirty more as guests coming later on in the day. The next event where alumni were asked to join the UP Baguio contingent was the 2008 Panagbenga Parade. Seven alumni showed up, to our secret dismay. In ten months we were having the 08 reunion, and we only mustered 7? But by then we had begun meeting to plan for the December event. I recall that each time someone cited it as the “centennial reunion” I’d edit that out and term it plainly an alumni “reunion” because I was almost sure we’d have at most 70 alumni coming over, with us here, campus stalwarts, filling up the void.

In previous decades, it was just as hard, if we needed “numbers,” to draw in alumni, no matter how extensive alumni relations officers’ efforts were. Time and again, the Chancellor herself would note that this was one area we just hadn’t made headway on. I had my own thoughts about this. (I still believe that a full-blown separate alumni relations office could focus on a sustained networking and follow-through of all alumni; year-round events could draw them in on a regular basis: career talks, lectures, project collaborations; an alumni newsletter could be published regularly too. An office like this, I have been told, is not possible for now.)

Still, we began planning for the December reunion as early as 2007 and the major concern was how to get alumni to attend. Suggestions were aplenty: e-groups, web postings, media plugs, campus billboards, personal letters, resident student organizations networking with their alumni, Colleges following up on their own alumni, personal networking, text brigades. We tried all of these, except for the personal letters this time (this was done in the past, inviting donors for the Alumni Building project; there was difficulty getting busy alumni to respond in turn).

Atty. Yzanne Merced who sits in the Alumni Board emphasized the value of preparing kits to go with the registration fee. By the way, we had set the registration fee at P500, thinking that if we raised the figure any higher, that may make alumni hesitate to come even more. But for the kit I thought we’d have a campus map, a bulletin of general information on UP Baguio, the famous Old Guard photo of senior faculty, a laminated program of

reunion events, an ID, and a free T-shirt. Later on Rose Teng, based in the States, wrote that this kit, plus two big meals and snacks was “a steal.” The UPB Cooperative funded the kits, and we had to pay them after the reunion, whether or not we had enough attendees. I ordered 250 kits made and stacked up and stood pat on the number. Later on, a month before the reunion, facing the whole Executive Staff and the Chancellor, I reported this. They all told me as nicely as they could: “Vickie, instead of paying the caterer for a “sure number” of 250 people can we reduce the number to 200?” I said: Okay. By then the kits had been ordered from Julie and Ofel of the Coop. An awesome 250 kits. It was a gamble of sorts.

I was advised: send resident faculty alumni copies of the registration form so they could fill these up in advance and pay Abs, our head cashier, ahead of time. That way we can guess at how many will attend. I was also told: do online advance registration. Brilliant, but this needed someone to closely monitor the postings, no one could do this, so that was scratched. There was no way we could tell how many would come. A week before the reunion, I turned to Frederick, my clerk, to ask: “Ilan na ang nag-register kay Abs?” He reported: “Ma’am, 12 pa lang.” One Executive Staff member also told me: “Vickie, bad news. Yung mga tiga-Nueva Ecija na alumni na nagsabing mag-aattend sila, di na raw makakapunta, maski isa, kasi yung leader nila di rin daw makakapunta.” Two weeks before D-Day, media wrote about “one last typhoon before the year ends,” and I thought: “Oh no, babagyohin pa yata ang reunion.”

I had to attend to other concerns that came up, all so unexpectedly. One, a promised project of a digital history of UP Baguio was cancelled. We had been told that the major sponsor needed to fill up the campus with advertising booths. The booths looked high-end, but these just didn’t seem right. Then, too, one alumnus picked a month-long quarrel with us at OPA and HKP, did this online, in an e-group; later on he sent me nasty text messages. Another alumnus did this too, arguing against reunion events, dates and plans, and posting these catcalls online. Reading all these online squabbings, one alumnus texted me to say that he wanted out, he wasn’t attending, he’d rather go to an “academic conference.”

Dr. Benjie Marzan was asked by VCA Rapanut to take care of the campus décor for the reunion and Christmas festivities on campus. Prof. Gie Rafanan agreed to take care of food needs. Ivi Inovero managed the games, Profs. Gladys Cruz and Vicky Diaz, the registration tables. But the rest of UP Baguio: admin, faculty, students and staff

helped in every way.

Benjie and I decided we’d have bunting hung across the parking lot and the IM courtyard. From the start I wanted these in UP colors: dark maroon, dark green, and dark yellow. No writing on the bunting, so we could use these in future events. When SPMO canvassed this, we were told this would cost UP Baguio more than P30,000 for the length of bunting we needed. We were sunk in debt with the Coop. So that was out. Rod then showed me a sample of the cheapest bunting they could get in town. These came in neon yellow, orange and fuchsia. Flashy, but cheap. Sigue na. When these were strung up, it was painful to the eyes, with sunlight on these causing lightning glares to flash across walls and windows of the Admin Building, up to the Chancellor’s office. Walking under those, one had to sorta stoop, keep one’s eyes down. I put on shades, walking to my car at noon. I told Frederick: “Para tayong karnabal. May aangal niyan.” Carnavalesque, welcome to the funny farm.

D-Day, I was strangely calm. I put on a dark-green silk blouse that I had reserved for a special occasion and then I realized it needed a black inner blouse. I ransacked my closet and couldn’t find what I needed, so I pulled out a long-sleeved black blouse and promptly cut up the sleeves with a pair of scissors. I was ready to party.

I think that we drew in that many alumni because of the Centennial of the University, and because of the good name that UP Baguio has established through more than four decades of existence, especially in recent years as UP in the Cordillera. Our alumni’s presence in full force was their way of affirming UP’s preeminence as a University that has served the people, producing graduates who do their jobs well and will not tolerate corruption, injustice, and all other foolishness. Plus they came for the fun and the fellowship. I won’t say, the drinks.

I was fagged out weeks before the reunion, coughing away like an overworked horse, but attended church anyway the weekend before December 5. I took note of the church décor that was already up for the observance of Christmas. I was struck by the simple rendition of the Nativity scene so I thought that I would ask this young student who did the artwork to do a smaller version of the scene for me to put up on my Office bulletin board. The picture had Mary and Joseph and the Christ Child, a manger scene in warm colors. I told him to add, at the bottom: “Emmanuel: ang Diyos, Kasama natin.” For me, that is what the reunion affirmed, the reality of a God who blesses, “more than we would dare to ask or even dream of.”■

Fertility and Freedom

Enframing House Bill 5043 within sustainable human development

■ Narcisa Paredes-Canilao

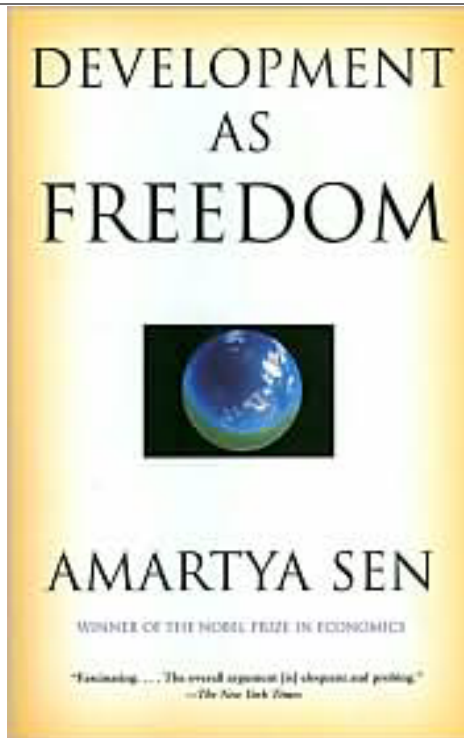
“The magnitude of the population problem is often somewhat exaggerated, but nevertheless there are good grounds for looking for ways and means of reducing fertility rates in most developing countries.”

“There is also considerable evidence that fertility rates tend to go down with greater empowerment of women.”
—Amartya Sen—

These statements are drawn by Amartya Sen from his analysis of the population problem commonly faced by developing countries in his book, *Development as Freedom*, (2000 [1999]). His non-simplistic analysis is an application of his own social philosophy “development as freedom” which has widely influenced the shift from “economic growth” to “human development” in development theory and practice, particularly the human development indexing of the UNDP (See Gasper, 2004; Mephram, 2008). His most striking conclusion is that public policy that gives closer attention to—education, health care, and job opportunities—rather than just higher incomes, would be more effective in achieving manageable population targets. Sen’s analysis also casts doubts on the generalization that coercive birth control more successfully cuts down fertility rates compared to voluntary means. The integral link between well-being and agency (the expansion of choices matched with capabilities), particularly among women, evidenced by Sen’s cross-country comparisons of population programs, strengthens his theory of “development as freedom.”

House Bill No. 5043, which carries the complete title: “An Act Providing for a National Policy on Reproductive Health, Responsible Parenthood and Population Development, and For Other Purposes,” has been analyzed, critiqued and evaluated in so many ways. One more tack is to ask whether the Bill recognizes and promotes freedoms and expands choices or legislates reduced fertility rates under duress.

This question is relevant because Section 2, Declaration of Policy, states that “responsible parenthood, informed choice, birth spacing and respect for life” in accord with



international human rights standards are upheld and promoted by the State. No less than “sustainable human development” is stated as the most fundamental rationale. “Sustainable human development,” Section 2 states further, “is better assured with a manageable population of healthy, educated and productive citizens.” Sustainable human development is defined in Section 4, Definition of Terms as “the totality of the process of expanding human choices by enabling people to enjoy long, healthy and productive lives, affording them access to resources needed for a decent standard of living and assuring continuity and acceleration of development by achieving a balance between and among a manageable population, adequate resources and a healthy environ-

ment.” This definition encapsulates several definitions of “human” as contrasted to “economistic” development (See D. Gasper, 2004).

Section 3, Guiding Principles, enumerates 13 guiding principles of the Bill, foremost of which are: allowing couples the freedom of informed choice between natural and modern methods of family planning, gender equality, women empowerment, development as a multi-faceted process leading to a general uplifting of the people’s quality of life, and active participation of stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the national policy. This principle of active participation is one important pillar of human development such that development is not done to subjects as passive objects of programs or recipients of development loans or aids. Likewise, one finds among the guiding principles the reiteration that development is a multi-faceted process and should not be focused only on quantitative targets.

Contrary to one of the most rabid objections so far to the House Bill, Section 3m, unequivocally states that “abortion remains a crime and is punishable.” This should assuage apprehensions and correct misinformation that the Bill is promoting abortion. However, some objectors have actually misinterpreted the proviso which immediately follows the statement criminalizing abortion: “the government shall ensure that women seeking care for post-abortion complications shall be treated and counseled in a humane, non-judgmental and compassionate manner.”

This is not different from the Hippocratic Oath guiding the medical profession. Besides why deny professionals these

quintessentially human opportunities, based on the ridiculous fear that women will be encouraged to abort, after all they will be treated in a humane, non-judgmental and compassionate manner?

The Bill is a big disappointment to Malthusians and to target-oriented policy makers. Sec. 16, Ideal Family Size, reads, "The state shall assist couples, parents and individuals to achieve their desired family size, within the context of responsible parenthood for sustainable development." Section 16 is emphatic that two children, as the ideal family size, is "neither mandatory nor compulsory" – because "no punitive action shall be imposed on parents having more than two children."

Combing through the 26 sections of the Bill, one finds no pro-active incentives either, for two-children families, maybe tax cuts, or scholarship privileges. Unless one sees in Sec. 20, Reporting Requirements, the requirement for DOH to submit an annual report to the President on the implementation of the Act, a possible pressure for implementors to use coercion, or cause misinformed choice, just to meet targets.

Most important for human development, the HB gives primacy to reproductive health education to aid couples in making responsible choices. Sec. 5.f, Components of the Reproductive Health Care Program it as the first of 6 components. Sec. 12, Mandatory Age-Appropriate Reproductive Health Education, enumerates 10 different subject areas, and sexuality only one of them. Again objections that the Bill encourages irresponsible sexuality and promiscuity are misdirected. In fact, Sec 12.g covers the subject of abstinence before marriage. Rights are always coupled with responsibilities.

HB 5043 which seeks to be a substitution of four separate House Bills, is to be known by the shorter title: Reproductive Health and Population Development Act of 2008. Section 4, Definition of Terms, defines population development as "a program that aims to: (1) help couples and parents achieve their desired family size; (2) improve reproductive health of individuals by addressing reproductive health problems; (3) contribute to decreased maternal and infant

mortality rates and early child mortality; (4) reduce incidence of teenage pregnancy; and (5) enable government to achieve a balanced population distribution (Sec. 4. r).

Population development is to be achieved without disregarding personal convictions and religious beliefs, and this is found in two sections: Sec. 3.r: The actual decision on the number of children or on the method of family planning, will be left "to the sound judgment of parents and couples based on



their personal convictions and religious beliefs," and Sec. 21, Prohibited Acts, provides for the right of conscientious objectors to refuse delivery of medical service based on religious grounds, or the right to follow the dictates of one's conscience.

Based on this brief and certainly incomplete analysis, it appears that not just in its declarations of policies and guiding principles is HB 5043 a guarantee of the respect, promotion and expansion of peoples' freedoms in matters of fertility. This avowed end is consistently followed through in the subsequent sections.

Nonetheless, the field of Development Ethics is not monolithic, and neither is there a consensual agreement among disparate and sometimes incommensurable positions. Regarding the issue of lower fertility rates in developing countries, for instance, some serious ethical concerns can be raised:

1. What and whose agenda are ultimately met?
2. To what extent is national policy on fertility pressured by International financial

bodies, or rich and powerful countries?

3. What are the social and economic costs of lower fertility rates? How can fertility control be rationalized to avoid unintended consequences such as an aging population, or decreased human resource?
4. What are the costs, and do we have adequate knowledge, of the increasing medicalization of human capacities like reproduction?
5. What value can be achieved from the marginalization of indigenous, local or religious knowledge by scientific knowledge?
6. Which is preferable, a smaller number of happy people due to lower fertility rates, or a greater total sum of happiness of a very large number of people? (I draw this obviously utilitarian hypothetical dilemma from the "repugnant conclusion" noted by the philosopher, Derek Parfit, as recounted by Mepham, 2008: 103).
7. What sense is there in reducing populations in poorer countries, if one child born in the industrialized countries consumes more and causes more pollution than what would be consumed, or caused by 30 to 40 poor children? (See Mepham, 2008 and Schumacher, 1973 for comparative consumption and pollution rates between rich and poor countries).

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UP BAGUIO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AWARDEES*



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND COMMUNICATION AWARDEES FOR JOURNALISM*

Maricar Datuin-Maquinto, ABS-CBN Baguio
Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon
Rommel Lubguban, GMA
Raffy Matutina, Convergy's
Sheryll Saupan-Pacer, Philippine Economic
Zone Authority (PR)
Karen Navarrete-Anton, SunStar, Host

**These lists reflect names of awardees who were present at the Alumni Reunion Solidarity Night, 5 December 2008*

UP Baguio is joining the 2009 Baguio Centennial Panagbenga Parade on February 28.



**Calling all sectors,
including alumni, to join
our contingent.**

Fields

LAW

1. Atty. Romeo Ibarra
2. Judge Reynaldo Alhambra

MEDICAL AND ALLIED PROFESSIONS

1. Dr. Myrna Cabotaje
2. Dr. Mario Imson
3. Dr. Romeo Navidad

EDUCATION

1. Dr. Nelia Cauilan
2. Dr. Miriam Pascua

ARTS AND SPORTS

1. Carlos Anton
2. Manny Palo
3. Angel Aquino

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SOCIAL WORK

1. Marlene de Castro
2. Helen Monta
3. Priscilla Gacusan

JOURNALISM AND BROADCAST COMMUNICATION

1. Vincent Cabreza
2. Gerry Evangelista

BUSINESS AND AGRICULTURE

1. Michael and Angie del Rosario
2. Mark and Sol Go
3. Eric Picart

PUBLIC SERVICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Col. Facundo Palafox IV



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