

# Santacruzán & special Mass at the Fiesta

OUR memory of Philippines summers always includes the Marian march of queens and their retinue of consorts and angels, a tradition still observed with much fanfare on both sides of the Pacific and the continent. Wherever there is a community of Filipinos, there is a Fiesta and a Santacruzán. It is no different in this year's Philippine Fiesta which features the grandest Santacruzán in the region with traditional sagalas, arch bearers, escorts, angels, flag bearers, and flower girls.

Introduced by the Spaniards centuries ago, Santacruzán is the dazzling culmination of the colorful Flower Festival of the Philippines. It depicts the finding of the Holy Cross by Queen Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, and the joyful celebration that followed.

This year's Hermano Mayor is Ben Iletto and his wife Lou Iletto is the Hermana Mayor. Some of this year's participants in Santacruzán are: Denise Cintron, Reyna Elena; Pearl Lanez, Reyna de las Flores; Ria Martin, Reyna de las Estrellas; Kay Ashley Manuel, Reyna de las Angeles; Stephanie Suyhogo, Reyna del Sol; Meriden Villanueva, Reyna Luna; Jessica Tiglao, Reyna Judith; Marla Villanueva, Reyna Ester; Annaliza Beltran, Reyna Sheba; Genna Basalatan, Reyna Mora; Luchie Vivas Changco and Annelyn Florez as Emperatriz.

A mass will be celebrated on Sunday, August 15, at 10pm, before the Santacruzán, officiated by Rev. Fr. Juancho de Leon. This year's choir is the Filipino Choir of Essex (FCE) with Conductor Carlo Padua. Mass Chairpersons are M. Rhodora Lyness, and Virgie P. Wilcox, and Eucharistic Minister is Vicky Rey.

The Philippine Fiesta in America has become an annual summer destination for Filipino-Americans. This year, Philippine Fiesta in America will open its doors on August 15 & 16 at the Meadowlands Expo Center in Secaucus, New Jersey. To sponsor, exhibit, advertise or purchase tickets, please contact 212 682-6610, e-mail at sepmgzn@aol.com or visit www.philippinefiesta.com. See the TV commercial on youtube- keyword: Kim Chiu Fiesta.

## Saint Joseph's Academy-Las Piñas 2009 Grand Reunion in Oxnard, California

VINCENT Baltazar, the current president of St. Joseph's Academy Alumni Association of Southern California (SJAASAC), and Lucie Mayuga Ongaco, the event chairperson, cordially invite all former students of St. Joseph's Academy (Las Piñas, Philippines), to the upcoming Third SJAASAC Grand Alumni Reunion that will coincide with the Labor Day weekend of 2009.

The Grand Reunion will be held on the entire day of September 5, 2009 at College Park - 3250 South Rose Avenue, Oxnard, CA 93033. This will be a morning-to-dusk affair; and the costume theme will be Hawaiian. The association has contracted vendors to provide food and drinks for individual purchase. There will be games and fun activities—so needless to say, family members are welcome.

Two nearby hotels are recommended:

Comfort Inn at 1001 E. Channel Islands Blvd. Oxnard, CA 93036 (about 1/2 mile from venue), Phone: (805) 487-7755, and

Best Western at 1156 S. Oxnard Blvd. 93030 (about 2 miles from venue), Phone: (805) 483-9581.

\*\*\*Bring your proof of stay at any hotel in Oxnard, to the reunion. We will have a drawing, and two lucky alumni will be reimbursed—

thanks to the generosity of our First Lady—Mrs. Vollette Baltazar!\*\*\*

The following evening, Sunday Sept. 6, 2009, the reunion celebrations will continue with a Reunion Dance at SMR Dance Studio - 10591 Mills Avenue, Montclair, CA 91763. This will be from 7pm 'till midnight. The theme will continue to be Hawaiian. A dinner buffet is included with the \$25 entrance ticket. Since the venue has a maximum occupancy of 150, this will be a first come-first seated basis. Tickets will be pre-sold.

The recommended hotel is: Hotel Clairemont at 840 South Indian Hill Blvd. Claremont, CA (about 1.5 miles from venue), Phone: (909) 621-4831.

For more information, you may email: Vincent Baltazar res04fgu@verizon.net) and/or Lucie Mayuga Ongaco Longaco@osterkampgrp.com).

### Class participation

Get together with your classmates to prepare for the Class Cheering Contest!

Yes, we will have a Cheering Contest. So, come up with your best cheers and choreography – SIS-BOOM-BAH! Praise your Class, Praise SJA. Design your best cheering squad outfit: pom-poms, bull horns...the works! Practice your high kicks, and SCREAM! This will

be FUN!

During the Reunion, we will introduce and photograph each Class. You may want to have your Class T-shirts made, and wear them for this souvenir photograph.

While the different batches are being introduced and photographed, we will set up a projector for a picture slide show (no live-video/audio). Each Class will be allotted 3 minutes, so we will include 36 of your class pictures (5-second slide). You may include old, recent, group, or individual pix. Let's get busy! Please send a zip file of your JPEG formatted pictures to Mel Rivera at: mky1mse@gmail.com. Mel will compile the pictures for the slide show, so he has to receive them by August 10, 2009. Thanks.

Class '73 will be in charge of coordinating the entertainment activities before and during the Reunion. So, if you have any suggestions, or if your class will provide a special number that you want included in the program, please contact: Lyn (De Leon) San Miguel at: llynsanmiguel@yahoo.com.

Needless to say, after the programs, everybody is welcome to put on their dancing shoes! You may forget to bring extra socks and underwear, but DO NOT FORGET to bring your cameras!

## Western Union welcomes Filipina Trans USA runner at Colorado Headquarters

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The same thing happened in Colorado. Rojas recalls how before reaching Denver, a Filipino man read the words "Can we ignite the Filipino spirit across America?" on the Western Union support vehicle. He then immediately introduced himself to Rojas and Macabe. After the day's run, the Filipino man came over to their hotel where he cooked them dinner consisting of elk and deer that the man had hunted.

"Can you believe that? All of these strangers that we meet



everyday have been so kind and generous to us," said Rojas. "I'm a vegetarian but when he asked if I was eating elk and deer I said 'for you, I will.' You have to be a gracious guest."

Rojas also admits that the run through Colorado hasn't been exactly easy. The high altitude and steep roads have required her to

stop and walk at times but she continues to persevere. Rojas said that after Colorado, her run should be smooth as the flat plains

of Kansas. She continues her run towards New York City, igniting the Filipino spirit across the nation.

A survivor of tuberculosis, Rojas's is running for her beneficiaries: a Division of the Philippine Heart Center and the Anti-TB Program of the Inner Wheel Club of Quezon City, District 378.

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