

## RE-DISCOVERING THE VIGAN VERNACULAR

by Ernie Endrina

For two months, between September and October 2007, I was fortunate to have been sent by the UNESCO office in Bangkok to serve as technical editor and on-site coordinator for a publication that the International organization is spearheading. The book, *The Vigan Heritage Homeowner's Manual*, is a component of a multi-pronged approach UNESCO is applying to facilitate culture-based sustainable economic development in the Asia-Pacific region.

First, let me state a brief background on why this book is being published. For the past 15 years, UNESCO-Bangkok has been instrumental in advocating and implementing statutory protection for the 200-year old structures in Vigan. It played an advisory role in the nomination and successful listing of Vigan in UNESCO's World Heritage Sites list. Recently, it has chosen Vigan along with eight other Asian traditional urban sites as part of a broad, multi-sectoral program in increasing local capacity in caretaking of its cultural assets while deriving economic benefits from these assets. This program included symposiums and training in heritage and local tourism management, and facilitating revival of traditional building skills that might have otherwise been lost due to changing cultural tastes and demographics.

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PARADE PARTICIPANTS AS PART OF THE CITY'S HERITAGE DAY CELEBRATIONS



FALEA Founder and past president  
Juny La Putt

### HAWAII RESIDENT RECEIVES 2008 OUTSTANDING MAPUAN AWARD

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*Hawaii Filipino Chronicle*)

Col. Juny La Putt of Honolulu recently received the Outstanding Mapuan (TOM) Award for 2008, which is given to alumni of the mapua institute of Technology for excellence in their professions and contributions to society.

La putt was among 17 professional engineers and architects who were honored at a special ceremony held may 17, 2008 at Le Pavilion in Manila. La Putt who was recognized for his achievements in the field of Academe, was asked to address the audience on behalf of the 17 awardees.

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## President's Message

Aloha FALEA Ohana!

Can you believe it, our "Newsletter" has now been enjoyed by many of our members, associates, and friends! The last issue, in addition to making it available at our website (falea.org), we managed to mail around 300 copies mostly to our members, partners and associates and have received calls and acknowledgement for the many invaluable information. I'd like to thank our hardworking members of the editorial board, our own webmaster Joey Resurreccion, all those who contributed articles and those who donated their time and efforts with the mailing. I request all the members to continue to provide input and/or suggestions and contribute article(s), pictures, and other important information that will benefit not only the FALEA Ohana but the other readers as well.

On all the previous issues, we highlighted the many worthwhile activities that we have accomplished. For 2008, the yearly Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) Review Class or formerly Engineer in Training (EIT) started last February 2 and was completed on April 5, 2008, just in time for the April FE exam. The class was made possible due to the invaluable contribution and tireless efforts of our volunteer lecturers: Dennis Bondocoy, Allen Thomas, Nick Orense, Emil Barroga, Frank Sapigao, Willie Rapisura, Joey Resurreccion, Manny Lanuevo and yours truly.

Special thanks to Mr. Willie Alicar, President of Allied Pacific Builders, Inc. for the use of his office, to Ramon Bonoan for taking the lead, and others that made this project a success. I'm pleased to announce that two attendees who took our review class passed the FE exam given last April 2007 namely: Mr. Steve Tagupa, a Mechanical Engineering graduate and works with the Department of Transportation, Airport Division, Engineering Maintenance Branch and Ms. Anita Joaquin, a Civil Engineering graduate and works with the Department of Transportation, Highways Division, Materials Testing and Research Branch. Again, a big Mahalo and appreciations to all those to contributed their time and efforts to the success of the review and congratulations to these successful candidates.

This year I'm happy to announce the successful completion of our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Scholarship FALEA Golf Tournament held on March 14, 2008, at the Hawaii Prince Golf Club Course in Ewa. With the help of all the Officers and Board of Directors, headed by our hardworking Chairwoman, Ms. Elvi Pineda, we were able to raise approximately \$15,000 for scholarship funds. This is the first fundraising event for the FALEA Foundation, whose main goal is to continue to provide scholarships to all deserving students who plan and/or are presently pursuing degrees in engineering, architecture and related technical fields. Many thanks to all the donors, sponsors, volunteers, the management of Hawaii Prince Golf Club, our main sponsor Allied Pacific Builders, Inc. and JN Automotive Group and to all those in one way or another contributed to the success of the tourney.

Lastly, we will hold the FALEA Family Fun Day on June 7, 2008 at the Magic Island (Ala Moana) from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM. This is a chance for you to meet our new members as well as old members. Please bring your family and friends and enjoy with the entire FALEA Ohana. Our General Assembly will be held on August 23<sup>rd</sup> at St. Philomena Church from 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM. We are asking all members to come and be part in ratifying the changes to our revised FALEA By-Laws and the selection of a new set of Officers and Board of Directors for the next two years (2008-2010).

For more information, please check our website.  
Mabuhay and God Bless,

Nap Agraan  
President

# FALEA Officers

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(OUTSTANDING MAPUAN cont. from 1st page)

Technology in 1961 and later obtained a Master in Geodetic Science from Ohio State University.

After graduating from Mapua, La Putt joined the Corps of Engineers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in 1961 and taught at the Philippine Military Academy for 17 yrs. He later taught at his alma mater and at the University of Baguio, before moving to Hawaii with his family in 1987.

La Putt took a teaching job at Honolulu Community College and then worked for the City and County of Honolulu, where he was appointed to the position of Building Official for the Building Department. La Putt worked for the City until retiring in July 2005.

La Putt helped to establish the Filipino-American League of Engineers and Architects (FALEA) in 1993 and served as its first president. In 2001, he received the Outstanding Civil Engineer Award from FALEA.

He subsequently joined the Hawaii Council of Engineering Societies – the umbrella organization for the 13 Engineering Association and societies in Hawaii that together comprise over 3,000 members. He was elected chair in 1999 – the first Filipino to hold the position in the organizations 46 year history.

One of La Putts most recent accomplishment is organizing the Hawaii Association of Mapua Alumni, which currently has 33 members.

*For further info on this article, please go to <http://hawaiianwebmaster.com/hama/awards.html>*

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NEWSLETTER**  
*Since 1993*

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## **EDITORIAL BOARD**

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## **Welcome to our newest members!**



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# Front Page cont.

(VIGAN VERNACULAR cont. from page 1)

Vigan's historic houses, considered the crown jewels in this heritage city's uniquely well-preserved architectural landscape, are still inhabited as dwelling spaces. However, most homeowners may not be aware of proper building methods while undertaking repairs to, or—more often—re-using their homes for more contemporary purposes. The publication is intended to serve as an all-in-one guide, resource, and advisory manual on the proper standards and repair techniques while helping to preserve the authentic qualities of Vigan homes. The hope is it will also become a catalyst in training local builders to become much-needed professionals in historic building repair and maintenance.

It is under this context that I started my journey to Vigan. Part of the excitement is finally experiencing the remarkable streetscape I have only seen as settings in period movies. What is unique for Vigan is the uninterrupted array of colonial structures and houses running for several street blocks, a rarity today in the Philippines. Helping to organize a book on heritage homes of Vigan is the icing on the cake, as writing and historic architecture are two of my main interests.

After an 8 hour bus trip from Manila (the airstrip in Vigan is big enough only for private propeller planes) I was picked up at the bus station by a representative from Mayor Eva Marie Singson Medina's office. I was billeted at a beach front, 2-story hotel in Baranggay Mindoro, a 10-minute drive from the *poblacion*, with amazing views of the South China sea in the morning and at sunset. It was wonderful to watch, while eating my breakfast, white herons fly close to the sea shore to pluck out *their* breakfast.

For the next 2 months, I went to work daily in historic City Hall, in an office right beside the Mayor's, who by the way, refused to stay alone in her office and instead set up a work desk right in the middle of her staff's office, where she receives the daily visitors and resolves city matters right then and there. The indefatigable Mayor has probably done more for the preservation and strengthening civic pride of the City's cultural heritage than all of her predecessors combined. She implemented the first comprehensive 'cultural mapping' of the City's cultural resources, rehabilitated and dredged the old canals that linked old Vigan to the sea, set up the country's only second organic waste conversion facility, obtained funding to convert a colonial-era school into an auditorium and exhibition space, and is now funding

The publication of the Vigan Manual which will be then distributed free to the homeowners of historic houses. Her culture-centered reach for an ecologically and economically viable Vigan resulted in the construction of a community park where a future children's museum—the only one outside of Manila—is planned. She is well-connected to a political clan, but is at the same time well respected because of her programs, and genuine grassroots concern for the preservation of the City's historic core. I was surprised to notice that, on numerous lunches held at her house, the fence gate were unlocked and always wide open. But not surprisingly, I found out her undergraduate degree was in Architecture from UST. While locals I spoke with claimed that Vigan was as good as a ghost town 10 years ago, its "main street" today is busy and crowded during working hours, with choking emissions from numerous tricycles serving as main mode of public transport. During Holy Week, local visitors arrive by the busloads, visit the centuries-old Cathedral (where I walked up to the space above the altar) and keep the many old houses converted to inns and restaurants full. Across the main plaza, where the country's oldest memorial marker stood, and where Gabriela Silang was hanged—a new, low-scale commercial mall designed in vernacular of the traditional houses was built. The 18<sup>th</sup> c. girl's Catholic school has been sensitively converted into a series of shops, where I make my daily run for *merienda* while at work on the book. Speaking of *merienda*, I had my fill trying on a daily basis, local delicacies such as Vigan's version of *empanada* (deep fried dough filled with veggie and local longganisa), pancit miki, and the dangerously addicting *bagnet* (twice baked pork). After months of "fresh and lean" cuisine from Thailand, I was back in home style, comfort food. Staffers at City Hall usually order the *miki* by 3 pm. It's not necessarily a healthy habit, but since I am working on traditional houses, why resist the total "traditional" experience?

Awareness of the city's architectural heritage is high among its residents, and they are proud of the special role that Vigan plays in the wider context of Philippine conservation efforts. The historic zone has antique and handicraft shops, but also a large grocery store inserted within an old rice granary building. In spite of the strides they had taken, Biguenos retained their simple affability and straightforward friendliness one often finds only when we travel out of big cities. During a baranggay fiesta,

# Front Page cont.

(VIGAN VERNACULAR cont. from page 4)

Manang Eva and her cohort took me to several houses where she was invited to. Okay—it was just another excuse for binge eating. Ever tried having lunch three times in a row? By the fifth house, I can only gobble on the dessert.

Oh—the book. Most of my days were spent editing the raw manuscript, correcting technical flaws, adding new texts or compressing superfluous ones, coordinating the needed photos with the local photographer, planning and generating the graphic contents, and doing mock layouts for the pages. Sometimes I had to do some photo shoots of houses myself, which I did not mind because it meant access to some of the city’s most historic properties. During my last week, I made a Power Point presentation of the progress of our work to the City council as part of their Children’s Day celebrations.

Unfortunately, there is still much to be done, and my time to return to Bangkok, and soon back to my firm in Hawaii come up. In between walking along the genteel, cobble stoned street of Crisologo, where only horse-drawn carriages are allowed, and where you are hemmed in by magnificent, centuries-old houses, and visiting some house-museums such as the exquisitely restored Sequia Mansion, I was also able to visit two houses under (somewhat massive) reconstruction and conversion. I was able to speak with a local conservation architect and spoke with concerned homeowner in the historic zone on why he cannot convert his house into a modern one. I happily managed day trips to the two other World Heritage churches namely Sta Maria Church and Paoay Church in Ilocos Norte. Truly, this is an architectural blitzkrieg trip like no other. The Manual, now under final editing and layouting stages, will hopefully be published this summer.

*Editors Note: In February 2007, FALEA member Ernie T. Endrina, AIA was accepted as a Professional Volunteer /Intern at the UNESCO Regional Office for Culture in Asia-Pacific (RACAP) in Bangkok, Thailand. Taking leave from his job at Architects Hawai’I Ltd., he worked as Associate editor and Project coordinator for two UNESCO publications on culture and heritage management in the region. Part of his 8-month sojourn took him to Vigan, Ilocos Sur for a book on the heritage houses of this World Heritage Site.*



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A PARADE SCENE ALONG HISTORIC CRISOLOGO ST

## FALEA FOUNDATION 1<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP GOLF TOURNAMENT

by Ms. Elvi Pineda, Golf Committee Chair

The Filipino American League of Engineers and Architects (FALEA) Foundation held its 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Scholarship Open Golf Tournament on Friday, March 14, 2008, at the Hawaii Prince Golf Course. This was the first fund raising drive after the establishment of the FALEA Foundation last year. Proceeds of this event will go to scholarship programs to benefit students in the engineering, architectural and other technical fields. The tournament raised a net amount of \$ 15,385.00

FALEA FOUNDATION would like to thank its main sponsor, Allied Pacific Builders headed by its President, Mr. Willie Alicar; Mr. David Higashiyama from JN Automotive Group, all our donors, sponsors, players, and everyone who in one way or another, contributed to the success of this event. It is our hope that you will support us again the future for this worthwhile cause.

A total of 112 players participated in the tournament and the first prize for a “hole-in-one” was a brand new Mazda (worth \$28K) sponsored by JN Chevrolet. Other prizes included cash amounting to \$300.00.

### The Top Five Teams

1<sup>st</sup> Place (net score: 48.80) – Ben Aquino, Dennis Corpuz, Randy Garaza, and Samuel Laciste

2<sup>nd</sup> Place (net score: 49.85) – Arthur Agliam, Melvin Mariano, Frank Plan, Francis Robiniol

3<sup>rd</sup> Place (net score: 50.25) – Manny Ancheta, Megazar Juntilla, Norman Pilihaloha, Jeff Rapoza

4<sup>th</sup> Place (net score: 50.80) – Shane Kailewa, Tracy Poepoe, Blaire Umeda, Sean Yamashita

5<sup>th</sup> Place (net score: 51.60) – Noel Gatchalian, Eddie Morales, Jojo Lopez, Rey Lorenzo

### Other Winners

Longest Drive (MEN) : Shane Kailewa

Longest Drive (WOMEN) : Karen White

### Closest to the Pin Winners

Romy Cachola – Hole # A3

Jojo Lopez - Hole # A5

Melvin Mariano – Hole # C3

Daniel Moats – Hole # C7



FALEA OFFICERS AT THE REGISTRATION TABLE



LYONS GOLF TEAM ON THE PROWL

# Activities atbp.

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By Jovenard L. Mapanao - 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

University Laboratory School

Welcome to the Valley of the Green Glass Doors,

Where trees are plenty and grass galore.

Within, glee resides, yet there is no fun.

Of course, losers must leave, but winners may come.

The question now is what may come in and what may not?

So give us a call and give it a shot!

Here are some clues:

GREEN may enter the Valley but BLUE may not,

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SUNGLASSES may enter the Valley but SHADES may not, because...

BOOKS may enter the Valley but MAGAZINES may not, because...

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