



Winter 2008, Issue No. 11

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2009 FYP-DC

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**Welcome Message:
George Faustino, FYP-DC President 2009**

Greetings fellow FYP-DC Members, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Thank you for your vote of confidence to be the 2009 FYP-DC President. As we start 2009 I'd like to thank Victor Ecarma for his leadership as FYP-DC President the past 3 years. Our constitution is written with a 3 year term limit as President and its time for Vic to move onto an advisory role on the FYP-DC board of directors. So we are fortunate that he will still be around for our council.



As Vice President the past two years I've implemented more community service events and outdoor activities into FYP-DC's exciting schedule. As President I plan to continue implementing those types of activities. I've gotten feed back from our group that we have enjoyed volunteering with ALIVE and that will continue to be worked into FYP-DC's calendar. I understand some people favor outdoor activities more than networking activities so we will continue with those starting with a Skiing/Snowboarding trip early next year. Member interest will decide if the trip is a day trip or overnight - but we would like to invite the Filipino young professional groups from NYC and VA Beach to join us.

The annual mainstays on the FYP-DC calendar will still be around - Speed Dating, Summer Pool Party, Networking Happy Hours and an occasional DC Club Night. FYP-DC is an evolving organization. We will grow the way our members would like us to. Please keep in mind that we are only as useful as our members allow us to be. Please renew your membership! The idea of a Flag Football team has been brought up many of times. That's just one thing that FYP-DC could help offset costs with if we had more membership dues paid on time. Increased membership dues allows us the flexibility to schedule better more meaningful and fun events.

Thank you again and I look forward to working with each and every one of you in the coming year.





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Mabuhay!

Welcome to the Filipino Young Professionals of Metropolitan Washington, DC (FYP-DC). We are an organization that is dedicated to developing the professional, social and service aspects of our community. All are welcome to attend our events, and we encourage your involvement. FYP-DC is a 501(c)7 non-profit organization, whose primary objective is to support issues or interests, related to the Filipino-American community and the DC metropolitan region, for noncommercial and non-political purposes. As such, FYP-DC is subject to guidelines set forth by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and may not endorse any political parties, candidates or similar activities.

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2009 FYP-DC Officer Profile

PRESIDENT: George Faustino



I have been the FYP-DC Vice President for the past two terms. I've also been a program manager on a Department of Labor contract employing 18 people. I've been in the workforce in various different management positions for almost 10 years.

In addition to continuing the once per quarter community service and white water rafting that I helped organize last year, I would like to add a Skiing/Snowboarding trip and Camping trip. I am also currently working the FCA president at GMU to coordinate a professional development seminar with GMU FCA graduating seniors. I will work to continue our traditional events such as speed dating, networking happy hours and the fashion show.

VICE-PRESIDENT: Jerry Chaves



I've been with the org for about 4 years now, and I think I'd like to put on another facet of fypdc by reaching out to first-gen Filipinos in the area, of which I am also a part of. One thing I'd really like to do is expand our membership to the first-gen Filipinos demographic where it seems we don't have good exposure with; also, expanding our membership base should also expand our outreach and intra-member programs so we're not pigeon-holed as purely a networking group.

PR/MARKETING CHAIR: Katherine Valesco



I would like to get more PMP committee members involved in planning, organizing and executing events. In order to achieve that, I plan on having small informal meetings with them to discuss roles and ways to have everyone involved. I am friendly, outgoing and enjoy working with people. I have already worked with most of FYP officers and I would like to participate and promote more FYP events in the future.

SECRETARY: Diana Ocampo



I recently started an international non-profit which was founded by a United Nations official in the Philippines and I'd love to share what I've learned with FYP. Through Human Development International, I've been honored to meet and discuss issues with Filipino politicians at the United Nations, the Philippine Consulate in NY, very soon in the Philippine Embassy, and I'm slated to go back to the United Nations this fall. I'd love to use my connections to help anyone in FYP. On the side note, Manny Pacquiao just endorsed HDI, and I'm flying over there to meet him in person and see his fight! So exciting!!



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The Honor Has Been Mine to be Have Been Your President

By Victor Ecarma

It started over three and half years ago, at Rodney Salinas' house while talking to Jay Gatchalian. I told him, "I think I want to be President and take FYP-DC to the next level." He looked at me, and said it would be a tough road. Then I replied, "Jay, be the first one with me on this journey and we'll do it together and bring people with us."



That's how it started, and FYP-DC has grown from it's humble beginnings to an organization that has over 175 paid members, 500 plus on its listserve and programs diverse events from happy hours, community service, fashion shows, dragon boat teams and professional development events. This meteoric rise was a result of active e-boards and members who believed in FYP-DC. People like Abby Camacho, Joni Samilin, Wayne Kei, Francis Lira, Natassja Manzanero, Patrick Ledesma, George Faustino and the others who have faithfully served this organization.

I did not become president of out ego but because like these people, I cared. After 3 years as president, my time has come to leave. FYP-DC has so much more potential to become better and it will through the new e-board led by George Faustino. My job while as president, was to help lay the foundation for stability, growth and development of a strong brand name in FYP-DC to be the organization of choice for young professionals. I was merely a caretaker till the next leader came and took FYP-DC to the next level.

While I may not be president anymore, I will be active and stay on as Chairman of the Board. From this position, and with the help of the other Board Members, we plan to help FYP-DC broaden its membership base and continue to look for opportunities for funding and revenue.

It has been an honor and my pleasure to lead such a great organization and people.

Thank you FYP-DC! By Natassja Manzanero



I am sad to announce that I will be leaving the FYP-DC E-Board this year. I started my position as Social-Networking Chair in December 2006, and I must say that it has been a privilege working with such a driven and versatile group of Filipino young professionals. I have learned a tremendous amount from the officers and the members of this organization, and hope I can maintain this tight-knit relationship with everyone in the DMV area. It is refreshing to know that there are dedicated, educated, and professional Asian Americans in our area who are willing to work together to help us engage in our culture. From the social, professional, outdoor, and community events, I am glad to have been involved in all of these networking opportunities. I know that my successor will have the energy and creativity that this position calls for. I now must move on to accomplish more challenging and

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David Alfonte

College: Undergrad- UVA , Grad- UMD

Holiday Questions

1. Wrapping paper or gift bags? Gift bags - way easier
2. Real tree or Artificial? Artificial
3. Favorite thing about this time of year? Snowboarding
4. Open the presents Christmas Eve or morning?

Immediately after midnight mass - we can't wait until morning!

5. Have you ever recycled a gift? No, but I may this year. Cologne sucks!



Charise Ditalo

College: Virginia Tech (Go Hokies! lol)

Holiday Questions

1. Wrapping paper or gift bags? Wrapping paper, I'm all for the mess after it's over, but gift bags for harder to wrap stuff.
2. Real tree or Artificial? Real, I like the smell and feel of it, but have settled for artificial since it's safer for my dogs.
3. Favorite thing about this time of year? Getting away from the normal routine and spending time with the family.
4. Open the presents Christmas Eve or morning? Both, yes it's pretty cool! lol
5. Have you ever recycled a gift? No, but I have recycled the gift bags.



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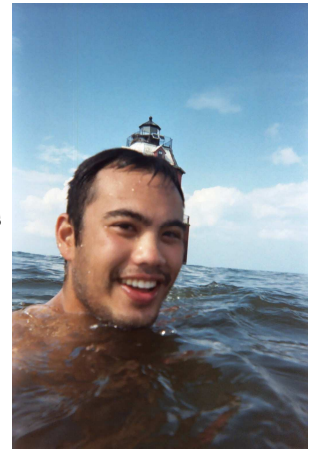


Name: Joey Leoncio

College: B.S. Virginia Military Institute; M.B.A. (in progress)

Holiday Questions

1. Wrapping paper or gift bags? Paper
2. Real tree or Artificial? Real tree
3. Favorite thing about this time of year? Time off from work
4. Open the presents Christmas Eve or morning? Christmas morning
5. Have you ever recycled a gift? No



Sharlene Umayam; College Far Eastern University, Manila, Philippines

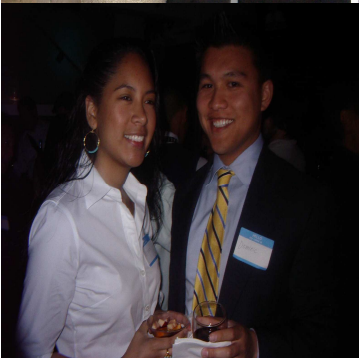
1. Wrapping paper or gift bags? I like to wrap the gifts I give away for the holidays, though they rip it off like crazy... presentation and the excitement of ripping it off counts =)

2. Real tree or Artificial? Real tree is always better, but I'd go with artificial because I can always use the same tree and ornaments every year...I remember our family Christmas tree was the same tree we've been using for the past 25 years...it is still the same tree they use till now. It's cool how that tree is older than I am haha good times... good times..

3. Favorite thing about this time of year? My favorite thing about this time of the year is that even with the financial turmoil going around everywhere... I'd get to spend the holidays with my family in P.I. haven't seen them for awhile...plus I'll get to experience the simbang gabi...(puto and bibingka YEAH!!)

4. Open the presents Christmas Eve or morning? We open our presents in the morning... Though I'm a big girl now I STILL BELIEVE IN SANTA CLAUSE. haha

5. Have you ever recycled a gift? yes. I was happy to receive that gift but I really don't need and wouldn't need it either...so I just gave it also to someone who most needed the item and made them happier =)





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10 Things I Wished I Knew As I Was Planning My Wedding: By Abby Camacho

I was asked to writing an article on 'Top Ten Things to Consider for a Wedding'. Last October my husband and I were married a (mostly) traditional Filipino American wedding. This followed with a cocktail and dinner reception nearby. One thing several people told me was that it will not be perfect. Something will go wrong, and no matter what happens, just go with the flow. This was very true. Generally I followed the typical check lists as best I could and was organized until the last few weeks. Somehow a few items were forgotten in the process. Otherwise some aspects were just more difficult to schedule than others. Below is my top 10 list of wedding items to consider.



Church Selection and Reservation - Make sure you have all the guidelines up front. If you are getting married in a church, the Catholic Diocese of Arlington is one of the five strictest in the U.S. While the priest may say one thing is okay, another in the parish administration may say another later. Make sure you have a printed copy of the parish guidelines on the day you reserve your wedding date, not 6-8 months later.

Working with Hotel (or Similar) Packages - Make sure you understand what is included in any upgrades. My parents were eligible for a free upgrade to a suite, but we declined since we mistakenly thought it only had a king size bed. It turned out that the sofa was a sofa bed. Also note that although you will have a hotel coordinator throughout your planning process, he or she may not be at the entire reception. She was there for at least half of the time, and she introduced me to someone else in charge, but it would have been nice to know upfront.

Reception & Bakery Head Counts - Give them 5%-10% less than the actual number, due to last minute emergencies or cancellations. I had so much going on, that I forgot to do this, although it was on my list. Opps. Fortunately I remembered this for the rehearsal dinner and vendor head count. Similarly with cakes or cupcakes, order about 20%-25% less because the baker assumes that everyone will have a huge piece. Usually by the time everyone is done with salad and dinner, they are not that hungry.

Selecting Vendors - Whether you are selecting a photographer, makeup artist or otherwise, try to book them during a holiday or seasonal special to get some extra perks. Bella Pictures has some monthly or quarterly specials. Also work with an agency who schedules multiple vendors, such as the Washington Talent Agency or Elan Artist, so you can get an extra hour or otherwise by booking several vendors at once.

Working with the DJ or Band - Just because all of your other vendors are email and internet savvy, that does not mean that the DJ or band will be. Coordinating your music and announcements with DJ are one of the last items done, so the extra work to coordinate could be an extra headache you don't need. Double-check that the band or DJ knows some important songs before reserving them. Also note that online timeline examples may provide too much time for some activities. Consult with someone - either a reliable vendor or recent bride - before distributing the timeline.

Wedding Day Transportation - Even those the coordinator notes the address and says that are familiar with the location(s), go over the directions and location address before you get in the car. Being in a bridal gown in the back of a 10-person limo, it is going to be difficult to give directions or get the drivers attention if he makes a wrong turn.

Ceremony Flowers - If you are getting married in a church, usually the altar flowers are left behind as a courtesy to the church. Otherwise, if you have aisle flowers, arrange for someone to bring them to the reception location. At the ceremony they are only used for an hour or two. Plus you can save a few hundred dollars by reusing them around the cake or head tables. Another inexpensive option is just having aisle ribbons for decoration.

Photography - Wedding photographs will be cherished mementos for years to come. This is one vendor that is usually worth the cost. Most brides I know had planned to do their own album, but never found the time. Make getting a professional album a priority. Find a package deal that includes your photo album and all of your digital negatives. I was fortunate to get an excellent package deal with Bella Pictures. Although Bella is a national company that arranges a photographer for you via online questionnaires (both questions and images), I chose them because I know if an emergency came up with the photographer, they always have someone else on standby.

Wedding Attire - Both the wedding I was a bridesmaid and my own wedding had issues with custom-made dresses. Keep it simple, just buy a dress already made, and do not reply on a seamstress. (continue on next page)



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With the former, the seamstress had a death in the family and had to fly to the Philippines. With the latter, some instructions from relative to relative were not conveyed or followed. (continue on page 7)

Virtual Assistants - One thing I was hesitant to do and regretted was working with a virtual assistant company. In today's age, the internet provides all kinds of guidelines, timelines and check lists available. Between that and package deals including some event coordination, you will have lots of help, if you ask and let them. Try delegating some of the initial research to a virtual assistant like AskSunday.com. For example, have them get estimates from flower vendors X, Y and Z. Be specific in your guidelines and information needed. This can potentially save lots of time.

Above all, have a good time and relax during the last several days before your wedding. As several brides and consultants told me - organize, prioritize and delegate. Also, my photographer gave me some excellent advice during the last several weeks before the wedding. She said that no one will notice what happened or did not happen. Regardless everyone will think the wedding was beautiful. This is true. Sometimes one can get too caught up in the details. Most details will go unnoticed. There will be lots of people who have not been together in ages, music and food to distract from any lost details or mishaps. Enjoy!



Habitat in Bicol:
By Natalie Marston

So, how did this American girl of Armenian descent end up in the middle of Bicol, working alongside locals to rebuild their homes after a damaging typhoon?

Like most people who go the college route, I felt safe and settled in my standard post-grad life. New job, new people in a young city, catching Big Papi's grand slams at Fenway Park. But a nagging curiosity kept creeping into my cubicle. What is it really like to live in a developing country? What could being there teach me beyond textbook descriptions? I longed to immerse myself in another culture, challenge my fears and doubts and, perhaps along the way, find a part of myself I had never met before.

Pressing the "pause" button on my life was not easy. Stepping off the path to success scared me. But then I thought to myself... *why not just follow my instincts instead of caring about what other people think?* So I did just that...

Why The Philippines?

A good friend and remarkable mentor opened an unexpected door for me. Knowing I was interested in Habitat for Humanity work, Peter Stephens from the World Bank handed me the business card of the Chief Officer of Habitat Philippines—Tony Valencia. After a few emails with Tony, he sent me a brief itinerary of work options I could (continued on next page)

How Does FYP-DC Communicate?

1. Your Reading it Right Now! Three Newsletters a Year!
2. Yahoo Member Listserv: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FYP-DC-Members> (MEMBERS ONLY)
3. Yahoo General Listserv: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FYP-DC/>
4. MYSPACE: <http://www.myspace.com/fypdc>
5. FACEBOOK: Search for Filipino Young Professionals
6. [Http://www.fypdc.org](http://www.fypdc.org)



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participate in once I arrived to Manila. Sounded fantastic to me. I booked the flight.

Volunteering for Habitat solo rather than as part of a group created some unexpected experiences, which made this experience extraordinary. Tony offered countless challenging, interesting, and spontaneous learning opportunities throughout the entire trip. I cannot begin to explain how much he did for a total stranger. Tony made every moment of this excursion possible and worth sharing with the world.

Day one of volunteering, drenched in bug spray and taking my first jeeney ride, part of me wanted someone to turn to for comfort and to share my excitement with. But then I realized what a fantastic challenge this was for me – to step out of the predictable, not rely on anyone else, and experience something completely different from anything I have ever done before.

Ask questions.

Listen to their stories...not a story I could ever read about, but what I can learn face to face.

Stepping onto the Habitat site, I scanned the area for an international volunteer group I would join. I was puzzled – there were *none*! Keeping an open mind, I worked side by side with an all- male crew, which was a bit intimidating given their strength compared with my unsteady hand, and without a buddy to help break the ice. Two women began chatting with me and joined in on the shoveling. The remaining crew welcomed me warmly. I soon discovered that these people, the “homepartners,” were working together to rebuild their homes – they were not relying on others to do the work for them. Working with a teenage boy in bare feet, who wore a perpetual smile on his face as he shoveled the soil in wheelbarrows, cracking jokes and asking me questions, simply amazed me. He was so happy to be gaining a new home and he was working hard to build it. This is the mentality I continued to see in these people.

A Habitat staff member, Mr. Ving, invited me to his family’s home for lunch – making it my first real Filipino meal with locals! That was awesome – instead of eating my packed lunch, I was able to try traditional food and spent an hour with Mr. Ving, bartering him with questions about Habitat, the Filipino culture, and about his personal stories. The unmerciful typhoons in the Philippines have destroyed so many homes and even some Habitat staff like Mr. Ving are waiting for new homes. I began to realize how much people like Mr. Ving sacrifice what little they have to create a better life for families in their community. This one conversation left a lasting impression on me and influenced how I want to lead my life.

By the end of the first day spent with lovely Bicol locals, I heard stories about their favorite songs, foods they prepare, distances their kids walk to school, and ways they endure a typhoon that destroyed their homes and belongings. It was so fascinating and fun to learn about the family dynamics, to learn what life is like in this community, and observe how the small things in life bring these people such joy. And this was just the beginning...

Since I was traveling alone, Habitat staff invited me to bunk in with them; their remarkable generosity and sense of humor made the trip especially memorable. They exposed me to what Habitat actually implements on a daily basis. I tagged along to attend meetings, traveled to multiple sites, met with city Mayors, and worked within several different communities. (continue on next page)



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What I admire most about Habitat is their value of education – educating communities to work together to fix their problems instead of relying on outside resources. With Habitat’s support of providing homes, they now want to teach the people about working in partnership. Communities collaborating with Habitat to build their houses gives homepartners a sense of independence and empowerment that they previously lacked.

(continued on next page)

“...it is not the material things handed to us that should make us happy and solve our calamities – it is our attitude and how we look at the problem – we can create our own solution!”

Habitat cares beyond providing shelter for those in need. They serve as the homepartners’ support system and will do whatever it takes to improve their overall livelihood. The people I met on staff have humbly contributed more to these communities than most realize – they bring hope back into the lives of those who have been left with nothing. I was so lucky to be surrounded by such welcoming, warm communities and inspirational staff members.

Before I began my journey, a friend of mine left me with a significant piece of advice that stuck with me throughout this experience:

*“Start small. You are no super woman.
If people like you and I could really and truly make a difference,
then the world would already be changed.”*

Committing to a journey like this did not mean I needed to change the world. It meant exploration, education, challenge, openness, and awareness of life, people, and myself. It’s the simple things in life that are most refreshing – they have the ability to leave a powerful impact or may teach you a valuable lesson in disguise.

The places I visited and people I encountered who have close to nothing, yet remain hopeful and in high spirits, inspires an optimism in me– seeing the bright side of the situation and appreciating what I have in front of me. Each conversation, road trip, and image will remain with me forever. Now is time to let it soak in and find out where it will lead me.