

## by MITOS VILLASENOR

Like Nini said in her article last year, the house in Singalong was *suwerte*. Even the house number had a winning ring to it - 711. And as Nini once remarked, 711 C. Ayala was a household that ran itself.

### GRAND CENTRAL

I REMEMBER it more like Grand Central Station. Cars were always coming and going. One driver was never enough and no driver stayed long enough. Few survived the hectic demands of the *laquacha* Laicos. Lolo Jim was the first trip out. He would leave by seven AM. Then there was the school "bus": the carload of Laico girls and one boy - Chicho.

I had no problems catching the school bound car but coming home was something else. The driver

she would walk home with her best friend, taking their time and chatting all the way. Later I noticed there were always these two high school guys trailing them and Nonon and her friend would coyly glance back at them now and then. *Aha!!*

Learning to drive was a matter of survival. It certainly was for Lola Luz. She was frequently without a driver so

### "One time Malu had been sick for days when she realized no one missed her."

she decided that all her children should learn to drive. I quickly learned that whoever could drive could have a car! Ching was super glamorous driving the red, white and black OE56 Buick Roadmaster. Malu was fifteen and could barely reach the pedals when she started driving. My license said eighteen (the legal driving

because of his gender. We girls had an easier time borrowing a car, while if Chicho borrowed a car it was presumed he would be out all night carousing with his friends.

### SEEN AND NOT HEARD

LOLA LUZ used to say that children should be seen and not heard. So we would all simply stand and shut up when we were introduced to guests. Peewee was always heard because she had to do the obligatory piano playing for the guests. By dinnertime, we were supposed to disappear! We were confined to the kitchen dining room to wait for food to spillover from the main dining room where the grown-ups and guests were. The worst part was the mangoes. We were given platefuls of mango pits while the best parts were offered to the guests.

If you were not seen, you were forgotten. One time Malu had been sick for days when she realized no one

missed her. She decided to gather her strength and come down rather than die alone upstairs.

One day

Bingbing decided to actually disappear! She must have gotten into trouble because Nonon suddenly saw her wrapping her clothes one by one in newspaper, preparing to run away from home. She changed her mind when she realized no one would even notice she was gone!

Although we couldn't be seen, we could see from the top of the stairs where we peeked into the living room. When Dan came a-courting, he came by first with a friend, and they sat on the east end of the long couch while Nini sat on the west. The second time, Dan came alone and he sat east while Nini sat west with the Grand Canyon between them. East is east and west is west and ne'er the twain shall meet? Well, the next time we peeked, there they were cozying up with only a hairbreadth distance between them.

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### More Random Memories of

# LIFE WITH JIM AND LUZ



would pick us up from school at a certain time. If you weren't there, tough luck. Even if the driver wanted to wait, the lucky ones already in the car would order him to move on and not wait. You had to walk home or take the jeepney. I remember walking home practically crying because I came out just in time to see the car moving away into the sunset.

Nonon actually enjoyed walking home! She was in high school when

age), but I was really only sixteen years old and was driving. By college I had my own original Volkswagen beetle and was earning pocket money by driving four other classmates to school.

One time, when Rory was about six, we were all in the car and she

was leaning against the door. The door suddenly opened and she actually spilled out of the car and into the "canal" - the muddy gutters!

We had a station wagon with the trunk seat facing backwards. Nobody wanted those seats, but since we were the younger ones we had no choice. Bibot always got exempted because she would claim that she got carsick in the back. It pays to be smart! But poor Chicho! More stringent car rules always applied to him