



Rey, Jovits (with Mother's Day bouquet) Lizzie, Joshua, Ching, Vic.

LIFE IS A ROUND OF GOLF

by Vic David

Since 1998 when the health condition of my wife, Ching, deteriorated from bad to worse, leaving her bedridden, our children and their respective wives in the States decided that every year they would visit their Mom back home staying about 2 weeks.

Nineteen ninety-nine was the most memorable when all our 6 children, 3 of whom have been in the States, were reunited after almost a decade of separation. To commemorate the event, our U.S.-based children hosted a grand party inviting all the P.I.-based Laico families, my only sister's family, our close neighbors and CFM members of Sun Valley. A Mass for the sick celebrated by our parish priest, Fr. Bernard McEachern, highlighted the affair.

This year, 2001, Rey and Jovits were the first to visit us from May 3 to 14. It was definitely a fun-filled and memorable vacation. Our first outing was a whole day enjoyment of most of the amenities of Canyon Woods Resort, the newest 5-star resort in Tagaytay. After touring the 2 modern clubhouses and taking a hearty native lunch, adults and children went to their desires--swimming, jacuzzi, billiards, pingpong, table hockey, movie, and toyland. Everybody so enjoyed the games that we were the only ones left in the game rooms staying up to past 9 in the evening. Rey and Jovits wanted to stay for another day but unfortunately the furnished houses were fully booked. Since it was the peak of summer, they selected Baguio as the ideal place to spend 3 days of their vacation. As in Canyon Woods, the couple invited Toto and Luz and their 4 children, Sarah and her daughter, Nicole, and me. This time Paul and Joy and their 2 children decided not to go.

We arrived in Baguio in the early morning, and immediately checked into a 3-bedroom cottage at Camp John Hay. We had a hearty lunch at Barrio Fiesta restaurant. Then proceeded to Burnham Park spending the time boating, riding bicycles and tri-cycles. We spent the rest of the afternoon enjoying horse-riding at Wright Park. Our dinner was in an American restaurant at Camp John Hay, Lone Star, which proved to be the most expensive in town. For me, Thursday was the best day of my visit to

Baguio. Early in the morning, our driver brought me to Baguio Golf & Country Club to play golf through the kind generosity of Edwin Villanueva. The golf course is first class, comparable to those in the States, reminding me of courses I played in Walnut Creek, Concord and Pittsburg. It is a short course, though, with a par of 61 but with very difficult fairways--very narrow openings and steep up and down terrain. In spite of the fact that I was a total stranger to the course and a high handicapper at that (26 - my PNGC handicap), I had a creditable score of 89 or a net score of 63, just 2 shots over par. Rey's entourage arrived by noon but we played bowling, billiard and pingpong in the game room of the Club for about 3 hours. Then we had an appetizing lunch at a first class Chinese restaurant downtown on Session road. Later, we bought quite a lot of cheap CDs and VCDs while others proceeded to go shopping in the public market. At night, we had a very sumptuous dinner at a native restaurant near Burnham Park. Friday, I woke up very early to play golf again at Camp John Hay golf course. But Mother Nature was against me. A depression started to hit Baguio so the golf course was no longer enjoyable to play. I just toured the newly built Ifugao designed clubhouse and invited our entourage to do the same. Then we spent the rest of the morning playing billiards and mini golf at the game area of the camp. After lunch, we proceeded to return home.

Everybody had just so much of everything that we were so exhausted and lost the appetite for more fun. Toto's daughter even caught flu. I believe all enjoyed gloriously our many adventures. I, for one, consider it as a very heart-warming, beautiful and memorable experience.

Gina and her boy friend, Phil Paras, were the second to come. They stayed with us from August 25 to September 8. A day after their arrival, I invited them together with Paul and Sarah and their families to a 2-day stay at the 5-star Canyon Woods Resort at Tagaytay. On the way to the resort, we stopped and dined at the most popular restaurant in Tagaytay, Josephine, well-known for its mouth-watering native cuisine. Tourists have been attracted to this place not only for its food but also for its breathtaking view of the world renowned Taal volcano within a lake. Phil, who hosted the lunch, ordered too many viands so we had to bring home a number of leftovers. Upon arrival in Canyon Woods, I managed to arrange for a first class 2-bedroom duplex with 4 levels. Most of us enjoyed the heated indoor swimming pool and jacuzzi. After taking our *merienda-sena*, Paul's family left for home leaving only Gina, Phil, Sarah and myself for another day of enjoyment. In the main clubhouse, we enjoyed with gusto the table hockey, billiard and pingpong games. But the top event of the day was our organic lunch deliciously prepared by Sonia's Garden. The bill was a little stiff but the set recipes of appetizer, fresh home-grown salad, and Italian pasta with 6 or 7 side dressings to give us the option to select any mixture that suits our individual taste induced us to eat to the full. For dessert, we were served sweetened fried sweet potato slices, fried saba and other native sweets. To help us digest, we were served Japanese tea mixed with aromatic leaves. On September 7, the eve of Phil's departure, I brought

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Gina, Phil and Sarah to Riviera Golf & Country Club, Silang, Cavite. While Gina and Phil went swimming, I played golf. We enjoyed the new 5-star clubhouse, the scenic golf course layout, and its surrounding thick vegetation as well as its rolling terrain similar to Tagaytay and Baguio. That evening, the Villanuevas invited all of us as well as all the Laico relatives to a sumptuous dinner at the new 5-level National Sports restaurant in Greenbelt, Makati. We relished not only the food but also the lively band and its singers.

The 3rd to arrive was Art & Grace. They arrived near midnight November 15. Their first five days were spent with Grace's family in Urdaneta Village, Makati. During the weekend, Art & Grace's family enjoyed the white sand beach & 1st class resort in Ternate, Cavite, Caylabne Bay Resort. The last four days with us were just too short to give them more fun-filled adventures at a leisurely phase. On Wednesday, November 23, Art & I left early for a whole day of golf at the Riviera Golf & Country Club. Being a weekday, I thought we could play immediately upon arrival at the easier more forgiving golf course designed by Fred Couples. Unfortunately, this did not happen. Our only option was to play on the most challenging course, by Bernard Langer, and to wait for more than an hour before we could start. This course with a par of 72 was studded with big & deep bunkers; most fairways were rolling & slanted at the sides; the roughs were very thick; & there was a good sprinkling of ravines & water hazards. As if adding insult

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to injury, the wind was abnormally strong that day which probably added about 10 points to our scores. After 18 holes, I had a bloated score of 117 but Art even surpassed my score by 3 points. The next day, Art & Grace had a hair workout at David's Salon & later went shopping at Alabang Town Center. In the evening, most of the Laico relatives attended the buffet dinner hosted by the Villanuevas at their Alabang residence in honor of Art & Grace. On Friday, November 23, Art & I again played golf with two village friends at the easier Philippine Navy golf course in Fort Bonifacio. This time Art exacted his sweet revenge by defeating me at my home golf course where I've been playing at least once a week. That's golf. Don't you know that playing golf is actually your life in capsule form? All through our lives, we try to conquer ourselves & experience defeats, frustrations & victories along the way. After all, our greatest challenge is not others but ourselves. In the evening, Art & Grace treated the David family & Grace's mom to a well-known Thai restaurant in Glorietta, Makati. Later we proceeded to Malate to listen to a live band in one of the newest disco clubs. They were kidding me that at my age I could still enjoy the loud & wild music of the young. On their last day, Art & Grace together with all members of the David household went to Tagaytay. Our trip was punctuated by an overheated car which forced us to stop at a car service station in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. We had a preset lunch at Sonia's Garden, well-known for their expertly prepared organic food. We left the place fully satisfied & happy. For the rest of the afternoon, we went swimming in the heated pool at Canyon Woods Resort. Paul & I also enjoyed the massaging effect of the jacuzzi adjacent to the pool. In the evening, we had the full company of Grace's family in our house exchanging pleasantries & handing over our pasalubong to relatives living near Silicon Valley.

Last but not least, all our children & their respective partners, who visited us, were happy to see that their Mom's health has never been better than at present. Ching has added some weight; her face has become pinkish; her skin, smooth & clean; & it appears that her recurring cold & loud groaning have left her. Her taking of Intra, an herbal food supplement, might have helped her.

Happy holidays to one & all!

LIHIM NI ALING CRISTI

Bibingka Galapong de Nonon

by Nonon Flores

Ingredients:

2 1/2 cups self-rising flour
1 cup evaporated milk
1/2 cup water
1 1/2 cup sugar
2 eggs
Slices of cream cheese (your preference)
2 salted eggs
grated coconut

Prepare 2 aluminum pie pans: Line with wax paper and banana leaf -- trim around the edges to fit the pan. Mix the first five ingredients together till well blended. (By hand! Use your muscles, not the electric mixer.) Pour into the prepared pans. Top with the slices of cream cheese and slices of salted egg.

Optional: Beat 2 more eggs and pour on top to get a golden brown color. (I don't do this--need to cut down on cholesterol.)

Bake at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes or until lightly brown.

Optional: After baking, immediately spread 1/4 stick of butter on the top while still hot, and sprinkle with sugar. Broil in the oven if you want a little burnt (*sunog*) effect, but this step is very delicate because it could easily burn if you forget about it just because the phone rings, or you suddenly have an Alzheimer's attack, you know? Should be in the oven for just about 2 minutes, or keep checking until you get the desired appearance.

When done, (*sa wakas*) remove the wax paper liner from the bottom, how to do it is up to you--use your imagination and originality--too challenging!

Sprinkle grated coconut on top before serving.

