

## THE BIG APPLE SLEEPOVER

by Paolo Villaseñor

Back when it was warm in NY--the leaves were still green and the flowers were in bloom--my summer roommate/in-house-techie, Joedie, and I drove down from Beantown to NYC. On the agenda was a Laico summit with some cousins. Bubbles--I mean "Carmela," and Via--I mean "Olivia," were visiting the East Coast, so Joedie (an East Coast Transplant, who recently became a West Coast transplant) and I decided to entertain them. The result was a weekend reminiscent of an episode of "Friends". Four 20-somethings dishing *chismis* (gossip) in an apartment in the Big Apple. Wackiness was sure to ensue...

Upon arrival, we were greeted by my mom and the *Donyas* (our newly created nickname for them), who we immediately banished to the guest suite, so that we could talk about them in private (and vice versa, I'm sure). What we learned is that certain Laico traits seem to be prevalent in all of the members of our parents generation.

Let's see, how can I explain while protecting the innocent?

"Yeah, so my mom hates everyone who I bring home because apparently, nobody's good enough," exclaimed one anonymous late night *kuwento*-maker.

"REALLY? Mine, too! She even had [one of her other sisters] give a detailed report of my [sibling's] significant other, just to see if they were up to par," stated another.

"In my case, it's more like, 'Okay, *puede na*' (Okay, that one will do)," declared a third.

Such phrases lead me to truly admire all of you who have been embraced by the Laico clan. To all of my cousins-in-law, I commend you on persevering through the intense scrutiny and dissection of which you were probably unaware.

Then there was the matter of our parents finding some bizarre cosmic link between the cousins, that also must be the result of the genes.

"Yeah, Ricardo's really laid back, and I always tend to be a control freak about things like money and school."

"Really? Actually, Jeff's like Ricardo. I, of course, am an obsessive-compulsive yuppie guy."

"No wonder, when my mom's talking to yours in Tagalog, I can't understand anything except for '*parang si Via*' (just like Via) or '*parang si Dickie*.'"

Note to parents: if we hear our names mentioned, we notice. Beware . . . .

So basically, our evening of making *kuwento* (telling stories and gossip) took us into the early morning hours (which was fine for the West Coasters who were still on California time). The following day, we wandered the streets of the great white way, dined at the Times Square Brewery (because my choice of the WWF Restaurant was undermined), and saw the Broadway Production of *Saturday Night Fever*, compliments of our parents, and starring Tita Rory.

In the evening, my cousins and I met up with some friends of Carmela and myself and went out in Soho. It was quite an experience having to act as the protective brother type fending off my cousins from the pack of wolves that my friends became. (Now I know how my friends feel about me when I'm around their sisters and female cousins.) At any rate, I salute all of my cousins with sisters--and I thank my parents for just having Jeff and me.

Still, being young and hanging out in NY is great fun. Olivia salsa-danced with some of my friends. Carmela got hit on by a 40 year old drunk guy (she recruited me to pose as her husband to get rid of him), and then by one of my friends. And when all was said and done, we were in a cab heading to the upper east side, and both *lasing* (tipsy) girls were running up my cell phone bill by making calls to their beaus across the country.

The next day, we realized that Jeff and Joedie never met up with us--but that's probably another risque story.

Anyway, although NYC isn't necessarily my stomping grounds, I had a great time. And for any of you cousins over the age of 21, please come to Boston (as the song goes), but preferably when I'm in town (unlike when the Villanuevas came and I was in Florida).

Happy Christmas!

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TRAIPSING AROUND TIME SQUARE  
FROM LEFT: MITOS, RORY, VIA, BUBBLES,  
JOEDIE, NINI

