

THE GREAT AMERICAN DREAM

FRESH OFF THE BOEING
LAICO LINES 2000 4

by Paul David

We made it! These were the first words that Joy and I uttered when we finally first set foot in America--the superpower, the land of opportunity, the land of milk and honey, and of course the land of the Laicos!

I came to America in June, while Joy followed in July. Joy and I were together in the States for only three short weeks. That meant a tight itinerary and little stay-at-home time. The first few days were spent meeting the *kapatids* (siblings) with their warm welcomes and gracious hospitality.

On our first Monday together, Joy and I drove 500 miles to IA to meet Joy's college classmates. It was a three-day adventure. We took the scenic route, Highway 1, going to IA. It was a great route that took us through many mountains, and past ocean views--we even saw 5000-pound elephant seals. But the road seemed endless, and we were getting more and more delayed with respect to our estimated time of arrival of 3pm.

At one point during the trip, we were really almost out of gas and could not find a gas station. It seemed like the car's engine was already shaking from lack of gas and we were freaking out. We eventually found a gas station and filled up. But since then, we would make sure to get more gas as soon as the gas level reached half a tank. The trip that we thought would take us about 8 hours, ended up to be 12 hours. *Whew.* We finally arrived at our destination at 9pm. The classmates were there waiting for us with a warm reception.

We stayed at one of Joy's classmates' place. She gladly offered for us to stay at her place with great enthusiasm and willingness. So we thought that her place would be at least a one bedroom apartment where she would sleep in the bedroom, and Joy and I would sleep in some kind of sofabed in the living room. Funny thing, though, when we saw her place it was a flat with just one big bed. Hmm? She didn't have a sleeping bag, either, so we had no choice but for the three of us to sleep in that one big bed together. Joy was in the middle, of course. But nevertheless, we were all happy campers.

We were treated to Universal Studios the next day. I have to say that

Universal Studios was just awesome.

It had so many incredible attractions like *Terminator 2*, *Backdraft*, *The Mummy*, *Back to the Future*, etc. Too bad we were just there for a day. One day there just wasn't enough. The following day we went to Hollywood

Boulevard and to the Chinese Theatre. There we saw the handprints and footprints of Arnold Schwarzenegger, Tom Hanks, Jack Nicholson, Meryl Streep, etc. We also went to Beverly Hills after that. Later that night, we headed back home to the Bay Area. This time, we took I-5 with five and a half hours travel time.

Joy spent her second week in Missouri with her brother. Not much action for me while she was away. When she came back on the third and final week, we were back on track and went to Reno for two days where we gambled away our nickels in the slot machines. We even had some cash winnings to take home, from just nickels. It sure was fun winning in a casino. In the same week, Gina squeezed in time for us and took us to Monterey and Carmel. There, we visited the home of Tiger Woods--the Pebble Beach Golf Club. We also saw the Lone Cypress tree, the trademark of Pebble Beach. In the final days of Joy's stay, we spent more time with the *kapatids*, cousins, titas and titos. We all had a great time together. After all the merrymaking that Joy and I did, it was time for her to go back home to the Philippines where we had left our two adorable children--Lizzie and Joshua. As for me, I stayed on. It was a realization of a dream for Joy and me to make it to America. All this would not have been possible without the magnanimous support and hospitality of Art, Grace, Rey, Jovits, and Gina, who provided us with places to stay and a car. They actually did a lot more than that for us. To say the least, they have all been incredible with all their generosity.

PAUL AND JOY WITH THE "SPONSORS".

FROM LEFT: Arthur, Gina, Grace, Joy, Paul, Rey, and Jovits.



PAUL AND JOY AT UNIVERSAL STUDIOS, Los Angeles, California

