

# BAYANIHAN

By Malu Laico

In the Philippines when you say *Bayanihan*, it means that the whole community or neighborhood helps you move your *nipa hut* (palm and bamboo house). They carry it on their shoulders and move it to wherever you have to move.

I've sold my house in Pittsburg. I am now a resident of Pleasant Hill. Here's what happened:

Sept. 24, 2000 - As soon as I got the go signal that the house was ready, I called Lia, who came with Aisa, Bingbing, Alex and their 2 kids, Andre and Francine. I needed to move some of my boxes and they wanted to see the new house. That night my TV cable and water line were cut off in Pittsburg. Although I was still going to sleep there, I had to take my shower in Pleasant Hill.

Sept. 25, 2000 - My phone line was cut off.

7:30 A.M. - I had hired movers, called the "Starving Students," two weeks before the move, to move my heavy furniture and all the stuff stored in the garage. They started as volunteer students but now they're professional movers. Using my cellular phone, for which I had to go all the way to Safeway to get a signal, I called the movers and they said they would arrive between 8:00 am and 12:00 pm. In the meantime, I was feeling so helpless not being able to move my stuff using the Blazer because no one was there to watch for the movers.

10:00 A.M. - I saw Lia's garage open (about 5 houses away from mine). So, I went there to fetch some pails of water to flush my toilets. Then I decided to ask Alex to watch out for the movers while I brought some of my stuff to Pleasant Hill. I called the movers again and they said they were really busy with other customers and as soon as they were done they would come to my house.

11:30 A.M. - The movers had not shown. I did another run to Pleasant Hill to unload more of my stuff. Alex was still on the lookout for the movers who might drop by anytime. I came back from Pleasant Hill--still no movers.

12:30 P.M. - I was starting to feel hungry and Alex invited me to stay at their house because, he said, Lia would be coming back with Chinese food for lunch. In the meantime, I called the movers again and they said they might come after lunch. I was starting to doubt that they would ever come.

12:45 P.M. - Alex suggested that I start calling U-Haul and get any available truck. I called, and tough, there was no truck available. Then I started praying to Lola and to the Sacred Heart. Boy! My prayers were answered. There was one truck available and I had to pick it up by 2:00 p.m. Then Lia was on

the other line saying they were on their way home from Sweet Tomatoes. They had lunch there with Aisa's family. And they did not buy lunch at the Chinese restaurant. Poor Alex and me. Forget about lunch, I needed to pick up the truck! So, Alex and I went to pick it up. On our way, Alex was on the phone with Lia telling her to call everybody who was available to help Tita Malu with her move. At 2 o'clock we got a midsize truck.

2:15 P.M. - Boggie, Aisa, Lorrie and Larry (our neighbors in Pittsburg) were all set to load the truck. When we were just about to load half the truck, here comes Bill Packwood looking so dazed about what was going on, and why he was asked to help in Pittsburg. But he did what he was asked to do. (I was telling myself, poor guy, Rory must have scolded him to help me move.) I gave him the garage door remote because he moved so fast and was ready to load his truck full of my stuff. Now, I'm no longer in touch with time. All I know is that we were able to do the first truckload. As soon as the truck was about to leave, here came Imma with her son and her van. And Lia came walking, ready to watch over the house as we left. The moment the truck got to the driveway in Pleasant Hill, my cell phone rang and the movers let me know that they were ready to come over to the house to do the move. It was adding insult to injury. I was so mad. Of course I told them I didn't need them anymore. After we unloaded the furniture, Alex and I were hypoglycemic. We went to McDonald's drive-through just to learn that the truck wouldn't fit.

We were on our way back to Pittsburg for the second load when my cellular phone rang. Rory wanted to know where I was. I had told her before this mess-up that by 4 o'clock I would be done moving and we could see each other at Pleasant Hill. I told her I was in a U-Haul truck because the movers stood me up and that we were going for our second run. I mentioned to her that Bill was on his second run, too. She was so surprised that Bill was there. So I told her I thought she had told Bill to come. She said no. She was on her way home from San Francisco. She said she would meet me in Pittsburg. When Alex and I got to Pittsburg, I saw my house was all empty. Totally empty! There were Chicho, Tonnette, Jovitz, Paul, Jovim, Sandra, Lia, Bill and Rory. They were loading, vacuuming, sweeping the garage, doing the works. Then, when the Pittsburg house was clean, everybody was at Pleasant Hill unloading and fixing my house. I don't mean just unloading, the house was furnished! All the pieces of furniture were where they should have been. I didn't have to say where, they knew where to set them in place. I told them that by 7:30 dinner would be served at the Three Brothers' Restaurant. Actually before 7 o'clock everyone was just resting and enjoying each other's company. Thank you to the "Starving Laico Family" movers. Again, thank you so much for the help that all of you shared that day. It was really very touching.