



First Year

**WE ACTED IN PLAYS,
FURROWED OUR BROWS
DURING MATH TESTS,
WROTE PAPERS ABOUT IPS
EXPERIMENTS, ORGANIZED
PARTIES, AND LEARNED
THE VALUE OF A GATE
PASS.**



FROM ALL OVER THE PHILIPPINES, WE CAME. Two hundred thirty teenagers, after passing a rigid, two-step elimination process, enrolled at Philippine Science High School as the freshmen science scholars of school year 1987-'88. On the morning of June 15, 1987, the Pisay auditorium was awash with a sea of new faces, there for the opening convocation. Class '91 had arrived.

We were welcomed by Pisay's administration and upperclassmen, and assigned to sections. The volunteer seniors, our "big brothers" and "big sisters", helped us to get to know each other better through introductions, ice-breaking games and group presentations at the auditorium. The audience applauded as we "sang" songs, told "jokes," and "acted" in skits (by the way, those quotation marks are there for the sake of accuracy).

A period of adjustment followed. Dormers had to cope with bouts of homesickness and learn to eat the stuff in the canteen that was laughingly referred to as food, externs had to learn to wait on the right side of the street for their buses. We all learned that Pisay was not such a bad place, that it was not a breeding ground for nerds as some of us had thought. It was a place where we could make friends, have fun, and, oh yeah, learn

some things about science, mathematics and the humanities while we were at it too.

We acted in plays, furrowed our brows during math tests, wrote reports about IPS experiments, organized acquaintance parties, and learned about the value of a gate pass. We elected section officers and class officers. And of course, we had activities for the whole class - like "Buhawi", the school fair, that lasted from September 3-6. We had rides, food, booths that offered everything from makeup jobs to slaves for rent, and lots of wild (and occasionally wet) fun! "Buhawi" was just a part of the celebration of Pisay's 23rd Foundation Week, however. There were exhibits, invitational games, a PTA Cook-Out, and an Open House day for the dorms.

On October 2, a Friday, we trooped





into four air-conditioned buses and went on a class field trip, leaving homework, quizzes and lectures behind. Ooohs and aahs reverberated as we entered the Coconut Palace, the National Museum gave us a clearer vision of Philippine history, and Fort Santiago provided us with a nice place to sit down and have lunch while remembering our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal. Afterwards, we visited the Cultural Center of the Philippines, where the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra lulled us with music by Brahms. Last stop was the Planetarium, which delighted us with images of our world and the galaxy around it. We arrived home a little late, a little tired, but it was all worth it.

The Freshman Intramurals also gave us a chance to strut our stuff, to prove that there was more to the Pisay student than just books and studying. We ran, dribbled, spiked, smashed, and slamdunked our way to various victories and defeats, all the while learning more about teamwork and sportsmanship.

Our Batch Day bash on November 14 was a day of fun and camaraderie that featured contests, games and group shows. A sack race, a talent show and a mock awards ceremony gave us all ample opportunity to make giddy fools of ourselves.

Christmastime rolled around, and Class '91, always looking for an excuse to party, got together at the PSHS canteen on a Friday afternoon, December 18, right after our exams. If anything, the wild games and songs proved that our parents were just as good at looking silly as we were. Everybody had fun, a lot of people won prizes, and the spirit of the season cheerfully dominated the gathering.

First year was not all studying interspersed with fooling around, though. When our classmate Jacob Hermosilla was afflicted with a brain tumor, our class rallied around him. We visited him in the hospital, prayed for him, and organized fund-raising activities to help defray the sky-high cost of the brain surgery. When medical test results revealed that the tumor was benign, we were ecstatic. The dark shadow of death had been driven back. Jacob's story showed us what miracles love and faith in God can bring about.

We struggled through our final exams, the school year ended, and as we said our tearful, yet hopefully temporary goodbyes, we looked back, and realized that Pisay had taught us a lot. Not just about science and math, but about people, about friendships and about ourselves. We had gained some measure of independence and self-confidence. Corny as it sounds, we had grown up a little. We had learned about life.



Notes from a Sophie

AUGUST 1988.

I remember when I first enrolled at PSHS for my freshman year: I hardly knew anybody; everyone was tense; and nobody was quite sure about what to do, what procedure to follow. But this June, when it was time to enroll again, it was a joyful occasion -- an opportunity to meet old friends and laugh and talk about the past

summer. There was also a general feeling of pride in the air -- pride in knowing that we had survived a tough, bittersweet year at this formidable school. We were no longer freshmen; we were sophomores!

We encountered two new classes in Math and two in Science -- and worked on interesting projects, such as catching innocent little insects and stabbing them with pins. In Chemistry class we got to wear lab gowns and look like real scientists, handle test tubes and sophisticated equipment, observe colorful reactions and perform fascinating new experiments which could blow up any minute.

But being a sophomore isn't all fun and games. Now we have to study all the constitutional laws concerning the Filipino language since 1937, use dozens of postulates and theorems to prove complex mathematical statements (like $1 + 0 = 1$); and memorize the phylum, class, and scientific name of nearly every living animal on the face of the earth.

Of course, we knew from the start that we could handle anything that comes our way; but we also realized that we would have no more free time to bully the new batch of freshmen!

The next weeks were spiced up by enjoyable excursions, like our field trip in Art where we visited the Luna-Hidalgo exhibit at the Metropolitan and National Museums. Afterwards, we proceeded to



the CCP to view exhibits by contemporary photographers, painters, and sculptors. We sang, laughed, and told dirty jokes on the school bus on the way back to Pisay.

And who could forget our July trip to the Metropolitan Theater to watch the dramatic presentation of "El Filibusterismo"? Here, the magic of the stage transported us back in time to the days of Spanish rule.



July 30 was also a big day on our calendar, for this was the day of our annual Pasa Masid -- in which the students have to march and stand under the sun for two hours while listening to an infinitely long speech. We spent several days practising for this event, doing our best to stand at attention and withstand the sweltering heat.

But during the Pasa Masid itself, there was no heat; instead it rained, and we were forced to listen to the infinitely long speech in the shelter of our canteen.

However, all our effort and sacrifice was worth it -- because afterwards we were rewarded with a DYDCAT party, in which we danced ourselves silly into the night!

But now, after the fun, we have to buckle down to work. The quarterly exams are here, and we have to tackle more of those laws, theorems and concepts. A number of us have attended the Saturday review sessions sponsored by the Batch PTA. We hope our hard work pays off.

October 1988.

BANG! Everyone in the front lobby heard the gunshot, and the news spread like wildfire.

A security guard was shot (intentionally?) by a fellow guard, who escaped and left the victim helpless and bleeding. The poor man died later in the hospital.

Fear and excitement gripped the campus. Questions hovered in the air. How many guards in this campus are avenging Rambos in disguise? Shouldn't the school be more careful about the guards it hires? But nothing bad happened after that single incident, and life at Pisay returned to normal.

"Normal" of course meant more lessons, assignments and special projects. In Chemistry, we lit up matches and made combustible gas burst into flame. Physics students had fun drawing circles on sheets of paper. And in Biology we gathered beautiful and delicate gumamela flowers - then tore them apart piece by piece and plastered them onto stiff pieces of cardboard with Elmer's glue.

But all normal and no abnormal makes Jack a dull scholar, so special activities were scheduled to add spice to our school life. August came with Linggo ng Wika, during which pinitik ang tainga ng mga nahuling nagsasalita ng wikang banyaga.

Another big event was the Card-Giving Day in September, during which our parents came to receive our cards. To cheer us up after seeing our grades, the seniors were thoughtful enough to organize a fair, "Tarabusaw". Within the fair grounds, we enjoyed a wide range of wholesome activities: getting hit by water bombs, getting hit by rotten tomatoes, getting hit by raw eggs, having ink stamped on our faces, getting dizzy aboard the ferris wheel, and throwing up on the Octopus. Of course, we also had fun laughing at the Litratuwaan photo exhibit, and whooping and yelling like wild orangutans in "A Morbid Affair", a rock concert.

Our trip to the Treasures of Man exhibit was also a memorable event. Sponsored by Coca-cola, the show featured artifacts representing significant places and periods in the history of man. Immediately following the exhibit was an even bigger one showing the colorful history of Coca-Cola. Exhausted after absorbing the story of how Coke was invented, we refreshed ourselves with Pepsi, and ate lunch beside magnificent and polluted

Manila Bay.

Our math wizards had their fun too, as they represented PSHS in the Math Olympiad eliminations held in Claret. The test questions weren't too tough for their sharp minds; what did puzzle them was why the Atenean contestants were so much taller and heavier than they. Shrugging their shoulders, they finally concluded that the Ateneans probably eat better

served them, they wrote and signed a petition asking for explanations and, hopefully, improvements.

So far, there has been no response at all from the canteen management, leaving our sophomore dormers with stomachs hungry for food, and minds hungry for justice.

Hungry for justice too were the girls of Sampaguita and Dahlia, who were scolded by Deputy Director Vicenta Reyes for playing soccer in a downpour, and were "warned" not to do it again. Believing the "warning" to mean warning status (a punishment too strong for their offense), the girls were distraught and demanded explanations -- only to find out that the "warning" was simply a word

of caution from someone concerned about their health. All misunderstandings were ironed out.

But the incident brought some interesting things to light -- such as the fact that the YDT Department has not asked the Administration for approval of its intramurals program. This means that the rain-or-shine games, which have been going on for weeks -- interrupting classes and sometimes risking the students' health -- are unofficial. Does this imply a rift between the Administration and the YDT Department? We hope they patch up their differences before more students are caught in the crossfire.

It seems like only yesterday when we handed in our last test paper, and shrieked with joy at having survived the periodical exams. But so many exciting events have whooshed past us in a blur, and suddenly we are again ending a quarter and preparing for a new set of exams. Where did the second quarter go?



food.

The Batch '91 dormers also reached the same conclusion, and pointed out the PSHS canteen as the problem. Dissatisfied with the amount and quality of food being



January 1989.

New Year already? How fast time flies! Just a short while ago, we were enrolling and preparing to start school; now 1988 has become 1989, and the school year is fast approaching its end. Life is really too short for sorrow.

And yet, despite its shortness, our sophomore life has been crammed and jam-packed full of activities and events. There were, of course, the everyday academic lessons which hit us one after the other like a hail of bullets. In Biology (or pre-Medicine), we learned hundreds of facts about bacteria and how they make us sick, and about viruses and how they make the bacteria sick. In Physics, we learned about Projectile Motion and Uniform Acceleration, and how they can be applied to ordinary events such as urinating (don't ask for details). We also learned some wondrous and complex scientific principles: if you push a box, it will move; if you drop it, it will fall; if you leave it alone, it will stand still. However, we found that only half of the Law of Inertia applies to students: that is, a student at rest tends to remain at rest, while a student in motion tends to go back to rest. In Filipino, we read *El Filibusterismo* which is about a stubborn guy who should have died in Rizal's first novel, but didn't. And in Social Science,

we studied the Constitution; which is important if we want to know if a guy with Burmese parents is a Filipino, or if a baby can run for senator.

The Paskorus was a contest to remember: a battle of musical Christmas presentations in which the best carolling class would win. Two of our sections, Sampaguita and Champaca, dared to enter the elims and somehow made it to the finals, along with the best of the juniors and seniors. Sampaguita ended up edging the other sections out to win first place; Champaca placed sixth. Yeah, ninety-one!

Not everything is classes and competition. We also have good, wild, and savage fun. For instance, the seniors organized a rock concert ("December Delirium") and invited student bands to perform. The sophomores threw together two rock groups: Polyvox and Band-Alismo. On the night of

the concert they screeched out songs composed by people who probably have hallucinogens for breakfast, while the audience yelled and clapped and stomped.

And of course, we had to have our last get-together before separating for Christmas: our last chance to monkey around and act like animals. So after the exams we all held our little class parties to celebrate the end of three-fourths of our misery. It's too bad we couldn't have one big Batch Party like last year: we missed the clean, wholesome games, like the one where the fathers tied eggplants to their crotches.

April 1989.

Summer is here, and I'm sure all of us are glad it has arrived. But that doesn't mean that our sophomore year was all classes, books, teachers, and exams. It was all these, but also much more: it was a great adventure! It was a year full of fun, discovery, change, challenges, and excitement -- and the fourth quarter was certainly no exception.

Take Paligsahan, our 2nd year Batch Day. That was a big chance for our non-academic talents to burst forth in all their glory. Suddenly the whole batch was together: singing, dancing, drawing, sprinting, etcetera.

We started the day with *Lupang Hinirang* and then an energetic *We Will Rock You* for the parade of sections. Matching the colorful spectacle of sight and sound was the lively spirit of the sophomores, as they engaged in healthy competition in the various activities.

(Everyone had fun that day, except perhaps the parents.



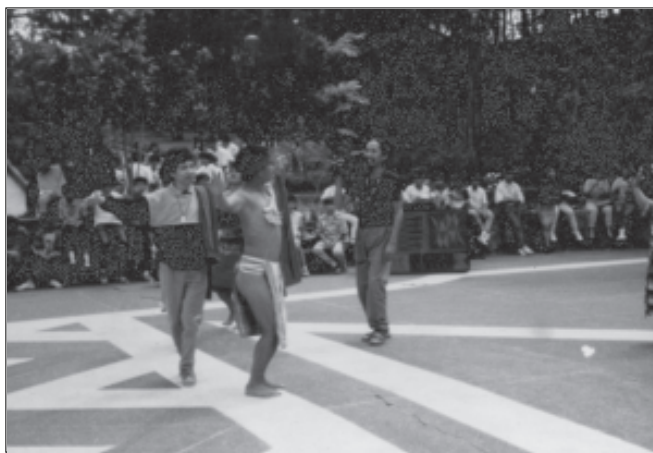
They had come to Pisay from all over the country to get their children's report cards. Suddenly, mysteriously, and without prior notice, the card-giving was postponed by the school. So a lot of parents were stuck in Pisay, many miles from home, with nothing to do -- not even a reason to get mad at their kids' grades. The students, of course, were doubly relieved and happy. Hooray for faculty efficiency!)

Paligsahan was great, but something even bigger was coming up. And we all went into a frenzy of fund-raising for the event, selling raffle tickets to get our hands on other people's money.

By the time the raffle was over, we had collected more than 50,000 Rizal-faces to support our biggest adventure: the Batch '91 Lakbayan sa Baguio! Some of us had already been to the Air-Conditioned City -- but never before with all our friends. So vacationing in Baguio, already a wonderful

more classes, no more books, no more teacher's dirty looks! But let's face it -- no matter how terribly inhuman the 2nd year curriculum was, it helped a lot in making us the (ahem) intelligent scholars we are today.

For instance, we now know that flies come from flies, and not from soup. We know that like repels like, but opposites attract (good concepts for marriage -- also for Physics). We know that $Ax + By + C = 0$, which is obviously relevant to our success later in life. And we also know that Crisostomo Ibarra is dead, and so there will be no sequel to *El Filibusterismo* (yahoo!).



Well, there's not much left to say. The 4th quarter exams are finally over. The school has already squeezed money out of us to maintain the labs and fix the things we didn't break. Just as quickly as it began,



experience, became even better because it was shared with peers.

We were in a colorful new world, and we had fun learning about its industries, history and people. We made new friends with students from the different Baguio schools, and we learned how they work, how they think, how they live, how they cut class. We toured Baguio's hotspots: Hyatt Hotel, Mines' View, and Camp John Hay, to name a few.

We rode horses! (Some galloped, some just trotted, and some were busy answering Nature's call.) We watched people in g-strings dance -- and joined them! We bought lots of souvenirs. And all throughout, we sang, laughed and enjoyed each other's company.

Baguio was great with a capital G, and not even the minor hardships we suffered on the way could dampen that experience.

Well, if there's one thing I'm glad about, it's that all of our academic suffering is over -- for now. For two whole months, no

our sophomore year has now ended.

As summer begins, Batch '91 will scatter to the four corners of the Philippines. But no matter how far apart we are, we will all have something in common: we have shared a bittersweet 2nd year together. We've shared joy and pain, and we've been through a lot of human experiences that have made us, I think, blood brothers and sisters. We're a family.

And if, for some reason, some of us can't make it to Pisay for 3rd year, we will always be together in spirit.



Notes from a Junior

AUGUST 1989...

Recharged or not, we all trooped back to school last June 13 -- no longer sophomores, but full-fledged juniors. We were immediately hit by a barrage of new subjects like Trigo and Economics (what fun!), new schedules ("Two free periods? Tara, SM tayo!"), new section listings, and new teachers -- specifically Mrs. Concepcion (Biology), Mr. de Leon (Economics), Mr. Gordon (Math), and Mr. Urbansky (Biology again).

Some of us became SCO's and WASCO's, while the others were quite content to remain Sigma elements.

Filipino (Finoy?) this year has suddenly become fun! No more memorizing of character names from *El Fili* -- we're in Creative Writing now!

Chem (at least for some of us) is still as much of a headache as ever. The only difference is that, this time, we've got it the whole year 'round! (Insert sounds of wailing and crying.) The electives are quite enjoyable -- this is the first time I've had

a subject where the teacher regularly fails to show up.

The Pasa Masid this year was okay. At least one of the speakers didn't bother to come, so we didn't have to bake our brains in the sun for too long. We were, however, forced

to listen to a long speech on the evils of communism. Good news, though -- this year, the title of Best Company went to the juniors of the JAP battalion: Sigma Company (that's us, people).

The DYDCAT party this year was a mild disappointment. The mobile was manned by morons who couldn't mix a song right to save their lives, the lighting was bad, it was too hot (who was the idiot who turned off the fans?), and the freshmen and sophies were barred from attending. Why, may I ask? Hopefully, it'll be better next year, when we're in charge. Correction -- it *will* be better next year, when we're in charge.

December 1989...

The gasps of surprise and recognition ring in our ears as if it were still enrollment time... Indeed, time passes quickly, for look: we're now well into the second semester of junior year! Just a few weeks ago, the Physics students were sighing with relief as they said goodbye to their teachers and equations while Biology students sadly bid farewell to their microscopes. Now they are secretly laughing at each other: the former Physics students at the new ones groaning over their equations and problem sets, and the former Biology students at the new ones as they scratch their heads and stare at the multitudinous terms and functions to memorize. But now, let's backtrack and take a look at the events of the past few months:



Last September, as we all know, was the silver anniversary of PSHS. Since this was to be a unique celebration (hey, you get to be 25 only once in your life), the administration decided not to hold the fair, as was customary (aaaaawh!), and instead, prepared their own list of activities.

There were fun and games all week long -- as well as music, mimes, costumes and balloons galore! For the students there were games and interbatch competitions. As an added attraction, we got to watch the teachers, administration and employees at their own games and such -- the so-called grown-ups ran around the field, dragged each other across it, and plopped down on the grass, screaming and laughing and shouting all the while. "Ma'am was wearing a headband like Karate Kid!" "They were carrying balloons!" "Sir cheated in the foot race!" Honestly, I never thought they still had it in them (hyuk hyuk hyuk)! It's heartening to realize they can let their hair down once in a while.

There were also presentations by the teachers, where they showed off their acting and musical capabilities. And who could forget the Kontra-Gapi, who made music with claps, gongs, and whistles? To top off the week, there was "Fiesta sa Pisay," a disco party for the students. There were a lot of parent-chaperones and for a while, it seemed that we wouldn't be able to let loose on the dance floor. Fortunately, we were saved from that situation by the people manning the mobile, who played the music so loud, the chaperones thought it better to stay away, for the safety of their eardrums.

And, of course, let's not forget the faithful '91ers who sold shirts and keychains the whole week (ahrrm-ahrrm!).

We were kind of downhearted at the end of Foundation Week, mainly because we had to go back to the usual humdrum routine of classes and tests and projects and books... But we didn't have to wait very long, for soon, Social Science Week came along! This occasion lasted from November 6 to 10, and it was a deviation from the Soc. Sci. weeks of past years. Instead of the usual barrage of seminars and lectures and symposia, there

were games and contests for everybody. The highlight of the week was the non-conventional music contest (entitled "Pagsalubong") wherein the students were challenged to make music, or what passed for music, with instruments fashioned from everyday objects. Pots and pans began appearing in school, and empty bottles mysteriously began disappearing from the canteen. Of the contest's 12 finalists, three were from Batch '91—Beryllium, Calcium, and Lithium. It was another triumph for our batch when Lithium grabbed first place!

Other Soc. Sci. week activities included a fund-raising Food Festival, indigenous games, a kite-flying contest, an interbatch Catch the Dragon's Tail game (wherein Batch '91 again emerged as the champion -- hey, can we help it if we're good?), and an on-the-spot painting contest for the whole school.

91%. -- My grade in Chem? Naah. Math? No. Physics? Absurd. No, 91% was a fund-raising dance party sponsored by Batch '91. Since the administration wouldn't allow a party in the canteen, we decided to hold it outside -- at the Philamlife Homes Clubhouse. The school was agog by '91's daring plan! There were many kinks that had to be ironed out: permits, transportation, and trivial things like the PTA's name on the tickets. Nevertheless, everything was brought under control by



our efficient batch council -- and the party went on as scheduled, on November 10. We invited outsiders and fellow Pisayers and partied away 'till morning!

At the heels of Soc. Sci. Week was Math Week (Nov. 13 to 17). To the sheer joy of the Pisayers, the Math teachers had to devote all their attention to this week's activities (No Math! Yeheey!). There were intersection contests within the batches. This year was unique for Batch '91, as all the contestants this year were first-timers, thus adding a new thrill to the contest.

But eventually, even Math Week had to end. So there we were again -- back to the old books and notes, back to the comfortable old routine. There was a mild flurry of excitement over the upcoming Paskorus (the school's annual singing contest) and Sui Generis, the student concert. Most everyone was adjusting well when suddenly --

COUP D' ETAT! Gunshots rang



through the air and metal birds of war screamed through the sky! The country was plunged into a state of worry and anxiety. Pisayers gleefully squealed “Walang pasok!”, as the government and the RAMboys battled each other in the streets. “Walang test sa Chem! Walang test sa Physics!” Worried parents flocked to Pisay. The

planned.

And so, amid all the ribbons and wrappers of our Kris Kringle presents and the apprehension over the past periodicals, we say goodbye to our beloved classmates, wishing them the best for the yuletide season...

around the wrist and in the hair (nope, none around the neck), dresses on Wednesdays, knee-high socks, and -- picture this -- records as hair ornaments! (The rest of the batch was both shocked and amused... Okay, mostly amused). The SCO's were made to do things like wear eye-blindingly silly ties and formal jackets. Not to men-



phones were busy all day as students called their anxious guardians. Some students were even sent home to their provinces as the events escalated to a state of emergency. During the week-long coup attempt, the dormers had review classes, and the externs stayed at home and watched TV or listened to DZRH on the radio.

As fate would have it, though, the coup was foiled and the rebel troops whistled their way back to the barracks. And Philippine Science students also trooped back to Pisay -- not whistling, but gaily telling each other stories about the events near their homes and exaggeratedly mimicking the people they heard on the radio: “Nais ko pong manawagan sa kuya ko. Kuya, huwag kayong susuko!” Or how about: “Kaya kayo d’yan sa baba, maghanda-handa na kayo -- darating na kami!” Or: “Aray! Aray! Tinamaan ako!” “Ng ano?” “Bubog.” Honestly, you wouldn’t believe these comments came from a coup, and not from some big TV drama. Christmas parties were cancelled, and the collected money was donated to the funds supporting the coup victims. And, to the students’ disappointment, the periodicals continued as

April 1990...

We came back with major hangers in January. Immediately, schoolwork was heaped on us. Third quarter lessons weren’t quite done, because of the coup -- at least, we had an extra week of vacation (yeah!).

We got puzzled about why scientists can never quite agree on (read as: “almost come to blows over”) the definition of acids and bases. We sweated it out under the sun learning how to pitch and hit and run and catch. Our flair for acting surfaced (or was forced out) during plays we presented in class. We were awed to learn that you can do a pirouette by computing for your moment of inertia, given one’s mass and radius of gyration (whew!). We laughed over the eccentricities of economists (like the one who washed his dishes with a watering hose and no soap).

The fourth quarter was also Hell Season for our fellow ’91ers undergoing SCO training. We saw more rifles and even swords dragged around by SCO’s and WASCO’s. The WASCO’s were made to wear things like: flowers and/or ribbons

tion the push-ups here and there, and impromptu concerts while standing at attention in the center of the canteen. Presumably, after all this, the 50 or so trainees are now ready to become disciplined and responsible leaders. Anyway, congratulations and best of luck to them next year!

The first month of the new decade ended with Student’s Week. It was fun to watch the student-teachers blunder while they desperately attempted to impart knowledge with lectures, visual aids, and occasional out-and-out threats. They drew quite a few groans with their surprise quizzes.

February came and everybody was busy with projects for Science Week. The Chemistry projects were mostly molecular models made out of plastic or rubber balls, or candle wax, or clay, or whatever else we students could find/ buy/ steal. The Physics lab became a playground with toys demonstrating scientific concepts. Students had more fun playing with the projects (whee) than reading the accompanying explanations.

This year’s school fair (finally, after months of waiting!) was dubbed “PerYASIP ’90”. (The corny pun was in

inverting YASIP - Perya Pisay, actually).

The old booths were there, together with some new ones (bike rentals, etc.). Seemingly, there were fewer people entering the fair grounds this year -- maybe because entering the fairgrounds meant risking getting hit by rotten tomatoes, patis, vinegar, starch, gulaman, and/or eggs (thrown for profit, of course). The call of our government to conserve water was apparently ignored by the Dunking Booth. The caterpillar ride offered few thrills. The octopus ride was better -- screams and shrieks, and the occasional flying nut or bolt pierced the air everytime the octopus was on.

Seniors (especially the officers) pestered the SCO's and WASCO's who were guarding the perimeter with rifles and all. Those on duty weren't smiling nor talking -- they were quite out of place amidst all the fun and laughter.

A jail-wall fell when the combined weight of all the "prisoners" was pressed against it. Apparently some as-- I mean, some nut had the crazy impulse to throw a pail of water on the hapless ones in jail. The "prisoners" rushed away, not wanting to get soaked, and so the jail crashed.

Loud music blared from the grandstand for the whole wide world to hear. This was interspersed with corny jokes ("Ano'ng fish ang may taghiyawat? Fish-ngi!"). One could just cry at the pitiful effort to amuse.

A week after the fair was the Junior-Senior Prom. Teenage stress had already been building up for the majority of us who had never asked anyone nor been asked out before. One stalwart individual, in his quest for a date, ended up approaching half of the batch's female population -- one by one, of course. During the actual affair itself, however, the issue of who did or didn't have a date seemed almost silly, as what was really important was that we were all together as a batch, having fun! (And if I repeat that to myself a couple more times, I might start to believe it).

At one point, people feared the Prom would not push through, due to an earthshaking issue: should the ceremonies be held before dinner or not?

The Prom was the first to be held at the PSHS Gym. Despite a few logistical problems, it was, overall, a worthwhile experience. Kind of like kissing, or pizza: when it's good, it's really good, and when it's bad it's still pretty good.

The transformations of our batchmates were something to behold: the girls were all dolled up and looking like fairy-tale princesses (with the aid of make-up and hairspray). The guys looked like aspiring yuppies with their neckties and

coats and barongs.

The food was, um, okay. The ceremonies started late (since dinner was also late) and took far too long. Each organization had junior and senior members exchanging short speeches mechanically. Few people were really interested. One could see the girls grimacing in pain (you would, too, if you weren't used to having high heels on and you had to stand in them for an hour!).

After we exchanged wilted roses for rapidly-melting candles, we had our first waltz with the seniors. As the first strains of Strauss' "Blue Danube" were played, many returned to their tables to rest their cramped feet.

Voted Prom Queen was Pat Chongco of our batch. Prom King was Michael Santos, a senior. They led another waltz during the night while scores of us grimaced in teen envy. Then we proceeded to go nuts on the dance floor as the mobile blared dance music from 10:30 PM to 1:00 AM.

The next week, the school's Songfest finally pushed through, with two sections from Batch '91 that qualified for the finals -- Potassium and Lithium.

Potassium's spirited rendition of *Ale, Nasa Langit Na Ba Ako?* earned them second place. Lithium won first place with their imaginative reworking of the song *Leron, Leron Sinta*. Once again, Batch '91 bested all the other competitors!

YDT Day came along amidst all the busy February activities. We saw some of our batch mates jazz it up on the field, and perform backbreaking stunts like cartwheels, splits and leaps.

March was our most hectic month, with lessons and assignments galore. Numerous sections also held farewell parties, wanting their last moments as classmates to be memorable (sniffle sniffle).

And at last, after endless nights of studying for tests and exams, after desperate hours spent in the library searching for a research project topic, and after submitting last-minute subject requirements, came -- Freedom! Summer arrived. Our

summer vacation began with the horrible realization that school would begin again early, on June 4, instead of the third week of June as expected.

Oh, well. At least, when we come back in June, we'll be SENIORS. With hearts filled with good cheer, minds newly armed with sarcastic wit, and glands overflowing with hormones, who can say it won't be our best year ever?





Notes from Senior

AUGUST 1990...

WE'RE SENIORS NOW! Yes! The power is ours! Now we can swagger in the hallways, sit anywhere we like, confuse the freshmen by telling them that the words "third floor auditorium" refer to that big, gray unfinished building near the basketball courts...



Ahem. Admittedly, we are now also blessed with more responsibilities, more subjects, a bigger workload... but what the heck, let's also try to enjoy it while we can! After all, next year, we'll all be (shudder) freshmen again. This is our last year here on Pisay World -- let's make it a good one.

We came back to school grumbling a little because we had to start classes a week earlier than most schools (people taking public transportation while wearing their uniforms got strange looks from other passengers). However, we soon immersed ourselves in that sea of old familiar faces and new unfamiliar subjects.

We were introduced to a new innovation: the 4:30 class. We were thrilled beyond words when we realized that this would mean that some of us would have to struggle home during the rush hour or even later, if there were club or group activities to be attended.

Aside from the fact that the science subjects now hit us four times a week the whole year 'round, we were barraged with projects, tests, subject requirements, reports (both written and oral), more tests,

experiment papers, still more tests, assignments, assignments, and, for a change of pace, the occasional quiz. Teachers and administration, have a heart! If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you prick us, do we not bleed? And if you bury us under schoolwork, do we not scream, run around like headless chickens, then collapse on the ground, our mouths frothing and our limbs twitching in uncontrollable spasms? Well, okay, maybe not.

In Chemistry, we were reintroduced to our old friends Arrhenius, Bronsted, Lowry, and Lewis. In Research, we went nuts thinking about project topics: Do pencil-top erasers have any nutritional value? What is the effect of pan pizza on *Mus musculus*? Can orthodontic braces be used to receive messages from outer space? In Physics, we discovered the secret fat people have always searched for - how to lose weight. All you have to do is suspend yourself in a liquid and let your buoyant force do the work. Math made us realize how much abject misery a few innocent-looking curves and lines can bring to the confused student.

July 16 -- Disaster struck! There we were, just minding our own business, when suddenly the ground heaved and rolled out from under us like a mad concrete sea. Students rushed out from the canteen, the dorms, and the Humanities building as the tremors rocked Pisay. Glass shattered, walls cracked, people were shouting -- and then, all of a sudden, it was over, and for a brief moment, a stunned silence prevailed. Classes were cancelled for a week after the killer earthquake. Teachers and students worked together to collect and deliver relief goods and funds to the needy victims of the devastation.

The fourth week of July saw us running around, visiting the Guidance office, attending last-minute career conferences in the auditorium, rushing to SM to have our photos taken, and agonizing over course and campus choices. It was the week for the submission of the UPCAT forms. Now, for most Pisay students who plan to enter a college here in the Philippines, there are only two choices: UP and Ateneo -- and without a scholarship, Ateneo's

tests out over three days, instead of the usual two. More time to cram!

August 9. A poster was put up in the canteen, and on it were a bunch of messages scribbled wishing '91er Vivian Silvestre a 'Happy Birthday'. However, among the 'Happy Birthday Vivian's and the 'Ang Tanda Mo Na!'s, someone had written: "Kung junior ka, sophie o kaya freshman, umalis ka na at baka makita pa kitang binabasa 'to! Umuwi ka na!"

A group of juniors took offense at this, and on Tuesday, August 14, they

trooped over to a side of the canteen that is usually heavily populated with seniors. They sat down, ate, and then proceeded to make the usual barkada noise -- laughing, joking,

choking on food, etc. Apparently some seniors (especially the ones who were attempting to study) were annoyed. A dialogue between the juniors and some seniors ensued, and the juniors stated

that they resented the statement made in the poster.

The Batch Councils of '91 and '92 met to ensure that this minor disturbance would not get any larger, and apologies were made. However, the subject came up again during the Batch congress last August 15, and two hours were wasted in futile argument about territories, traditions, and whether or not apologies should have been made. Personally, I think the whole thing was blown out of proportion. They should sit where they want to sit, and we should sit where we want to sit. It's just a matter of getting there first.

And now, at last, the first quarter of our final year in Pisay draws to a close. That leaves just eight precious months of high school. Use them wisely...

February 1991...

"Two days to go -- and a dozen long tests to tackle, novels to read, experiment papers to write. Write-up? What write-up? What about my recommendation form?!?" A senior was panicking.

"Why, oh why, did everything have to happen this year?" A senior lamented.

"Wow, pare, three months na lang -- graduates na tayo!" A senior was hopeful.

Utterances like these were on the seniors' lips scant weeks ago. Now, with three years gone and the first three quarters of senior year under our belts, we can certainly say that we have come a long way.

The NCEE last September 30 had us breezing through it (mahangin talaga!). After the test, '91ers came out yawning, grumbling about strict proctors, and laughing about an alarm clock that sounded off 30 min-



just too damn expensive. That leaves UP. And there we were, frantically trying to make up our minds about what courses to list down in the form so that we could submit the blasted thing already. There was some confusion, too, about whether or not any BS course would satisfy the PSHS contract agreement. The Guidance office wasn't too much help here: apparently, they didn't even have a complete list of "approved" courses.

Around late July, the government decided to discontinue the DST ploy and reinstate the standard time. Just when we had gotten used to getting up in the dark and trudging to school, we had to get used to getting out in the dark and trudging home.

The second week of August was exam week. Luckily, a new rule spread the





utes before the scheduled time.

During the UPCAT, we were grouped and put into various rooms with other students. Class spirit proved to be strong, however: minutes before the test started, '91ers were still roaming the corridors, peeking into each room, waving at other '91ers inside and wishing them luck, as if they needed it.

The UPCAT was the climax -- and conclusion -- of a week-long series of quizzes, long tests, experiments, home reading exams, and periodical exams. Good thing the Monday that followed was a free day! The batch had a food sale: fishballs, chicharon, ice cream, junk food and drinks flooded the front lobby. Never mind the profits (or the absence of such) garnered. Competing with Pisay's attractions was the Pisay extension building -- SM City. Trust the '91ers to traipse off to SM on any free day.

After the second quarterly Exams, various committees mushroomed: Yearbook staff, fair publicity comm., security comm., booths comm., and any other committee you could think of. Name the fair! Design our batch logo! Design the batch jacket! Make your own decorations for the batch Christmas tree! What about Jazz Up Your Uniform? Uniform? What uniform? That white and brown thing?

All of a sudden came the pressure for us to make "write-ups" for the batch yearbook describing what good, cute, kind, understanding, kalog people we are. It soon became apparent that, at least on

crisis. What was one noisy trash dump became, over the weekend, the site of an exhibit that featured the seniors' outlook and opinions on today's most relevant issues -- the '91er, you see, has perfected the art of cramming without significant after-effects. (Except for hairy palms... Just kidding).

The Parliament was so absorbing ("Let's sleep over at my house to finish this project!"), and so interesting and attractive ("Akala ko ba may makikinig sa lecture natin na lower years?"), that only three senior sections found time to join this year's Nonconventional Music contest. First and second place went to Class '91 -- to sections Electron and Muon, respectively (Neutron was the third '91 competitor). The batch turned out in full force and cheered for the three sections. Unfortunately, only selective suspension of classes was allowed that day... SM lost that round.

Math Week came. It wasn't quite

paper, every single member of the batch is a "true and loyal friend, and a shoulder to cry on."

Social Science Week. We had a "Parliament of the Corridors." Naah, we didn't tie bandannas around our heads nor raise clenched fists nor rally down Pisay's corridors. We just spent a couple of days in the second floor corridors of the Humanities building, pasting up cut-outs, articles and caricatures, constructing mini-tunnels, mazes, walk-ins, really corny jokes and makeshift jeepneys and polling booths, occasionally dancing the swing with the radio volume turned up, and formulating opinions about such things as censorship and the Gulf

felt in Pisay. At least they got more imaginative this year -- essay contests and art contests! What kind of essay can you make? How about "Why I Hate Math" or "Why I Love Math"? The treasure hunt was a welcome respite from the usual long, boring hours in the classroom. For once, Math class had us running around the campus, battling against time, solving problems and looking for more (right! MORE MATH problems were sought!). We wanted to bang our heads against the wall when we realized that we had erred by formulating overly-complicated solutions for really simple problems (we learned that the Binomial Theorem isn't always necessary and that no matter how many legs there are in a yard, there will always be three feet). Pisay trains us to hurdle the toughest lessons; the easier ones we sometimes stumble over.

So far, the effect of Pan Pizza on *Mus musculus* isn't evident. The Pan Pizzas (burp!) vanish all of a sudden every time we buy one. Last quarter, we met the strangest bunch of characters: a hunchback who swings around giant church bells for exercise, a great bird that lulls you to sleep, the Queen who walks through during Santacruzian, the writer famous for his "malansang isda" statement, Charlemagne's twelve knights, and some mysterious, love-sick and/or hedonistic authors.

We learned that seating arrangements for people, bead arrangements in bracelets, poker hands and bridge plays could give us intense Math-related headaches. We found that it takes 110 volts to



toast a classmate and a little less to make him dance a livewire act. We saw how complex organic chemistry reactions can be explained by turning an umbrella inside out. We learned that our genetic make-up consists of a lot of biological jigsaw puzzles. Meanwhile, the swing had our joints cracking, the boogie made our feet sore, and the waltz and the cha-cha got our legs tangled. We loved it.

In CAT, we waded into sewers like

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, hung over murky creek water like Indiana Jones, and tore across the campus in exhausting obstacle courses. We sported sunburns after that -- reminders of our Saturday activities.

This schoolyear's Paskorus proved, once again, that Class '91's musical talents are indeed formidable. While the seniors in the audience chanted "91! 91! 91!", the judges announced their decision: First, second and third place went to Electron, Neutron, and Gluon, respectively! Yeah! Go '91!

We returned in January to face the exams and some bad news: No more prom. No more fair. And, quite possibly, no more grad ball! Aaaaaaaargh.

Curse, curse, mutter, mutter. Sigh.

On the night of January 25, our TCOCCO held a Cadet Overnight Voluntary Refresher Training (COVERT) operation in a staff officer's Antipolo residence. All the trainees attended of their own volition. Neither the Commandant nor the school administration were aware of this activity. Weeks later, rumors about the



operation would circulate and the administration would conduct a formal investigation into the matter; nine officers would be expelled from the Corps and banned from participating in any graduation exercises.

But still we go on.

1991 has started. Our Pisay years are nearly over. The suspense is killing me.

March 1991...

Having been deprived of a real honest-to-goodness fair (among other things), Class '91 decided to have some fun on Valentine's Day instead. First, we chose two appropriate victims -- er, deserving individuals -- whom we crowned King and

Queen of Hearts: James David and Tina Torio (respectively, of course). Then we dominated the front lobby for the rest of the day with food booths and other things,



like a sound system that blared songs, announcements and dedications, a booth that sold roses, and a service that offered singing telegrams (they serenaded Dra. Reyes with their rendition of "Unchained Melody"). In the evening, Class '91 and '92 headed for the Pisay gym, where "A Cardiovascular Affair" was held: we had dinner and the turnover ceremonies, and afterwards, of course, we danced our hearts out. It was sort of an informal Prom.

Last February, the Science Fair was held. The fruits of months of research were put on display. The various groups presented their work using posters with charts, photos and write-ups. Some used bright neon letters to attract attention, others used striking visual aids. One group even strung Christmas lights around their project! Three scientists (a physicist, a biologist and a chemist) from other schools came to evaluate our projects, and we tried to convince them of the merits of our works by using detailed explanations, demonstrations, and outright lies.

At the end of the day, they announced their choices for the ten best projects, in no particular order. The top three were announced, in a particular order, the next week. It just goes to show that if you build a better hollow block, the world will beat a path to your door.

The Batch Night was held on February 22. It was a night to remember. We pitched tents and rolled out sleeping bags. We had games, heart-

felt messages from the Class officers, music, a "talent" show and a huge bonfire. We buried a time capsule. We reminded ourselves of our duties as science schol-

ars, we wrote messages addressed to the Filipino people, we embraced our friends -- our brothers, our sisters -- and made vows to stay together through college, through life. We sang off-key and raced around in the rain like idiots.

March. Finally -- the periodical exams. The last academic obstacles to be conquered before graduation (not counting overdue projects, of course). Aside from the usual written tests, we had practical exams in Chemistry. It's amazing how much mental and emotional anguish two

tiny vials of an unknown liquid can cause.

After all the tests, you could almost hear a collective sigh of relief from the whole Class. We still had two weeks before graduation -- two weeks to do things like goof around, go out with friends, break-in our lovely blue togas, lie down on grassy fields and stare up at the sky, play patintero and agawan-base in the back lobby... basically, two weeks of fun, marred by the occasional Grad practice.

We also had our Class recollection on March 11. Ma'am Ladera gave an inspirational talk in the hopes that it might actually cause us to do something worthwhile with our lives. We wrote messages, both positive and negative, to each other: the negative notes pointed out to our friends areas in which we hoped they would improve, the positive ones told them how glad we are that they're around.

Finally, Graduation. Remember the COVERT operation scandal? A mere five minutes before the actual ceremonies, the



Board of Trustees finally decided to allow the nine officers involved to march. We were to graduate as a complete class. So aside from the heat, a bad sound system, and the walkout of nineteen teachers, everything was just hunky-dory.

As we each walked up those steps and onstage, as we each received our “diplomas”, as the cameras flashed and our parents’ hearts swelled with pride, we thought: “My God, this is it! This is really happening! I’m graduating from high school!” and “I hope I don’t trip on my toga.”

The Graduation Ball was held on March 25, 1991, at Club Filipino. It was a time for sentimental messages, for fast as well as slow, sweet dancing, for tears and smiles, and for eating. For some of us, it was a time for goodbyes, as well. It marked the end of four weird, maddening, heart-stunning, mind-numbing, wonderful years in Pisay.



...These accounts were culled from the batch newsletter, *Pisay Balita*. Thanks to Mr. Jun Baluyut, who started the publication (and who painstakingly edited and typed and laid out each issue for the first two years, in the days before computers), and to Jason Baluyut, his son and our batchmate, who wrote a lot of these words, and to all the other *Pisay Balita* contributors over the years.