



PNASC: *A Look Back ... through the years*

By Leticia C. Jue

Updated by Warlie Galzote

Finding solace in hearing one's tongue spoken by someone who, until a moment ago, was but another stranger; mingling with like souls for a measure of warmth in an alien land; cracking up over some silly old anecdote, belching out faintly remembered lines from tunes of childhood years. They were a tightly-knit little group, toasting each other's little triumphs, offering comfort through tough times, welcoming the newly-arrived. Amid such ambience, they marked the quiet beginning of what is today a significant force that generates a positive impact in the lives of many.

At 1047 S. Tremaine, home of Blas and Angelina Torres, 15 expatriate Filipino nurses turned another social gathering on October 1, 1960 into the Filipino Nurses Club of Southern California. Their objectives: education, cultural enrichment, and serving as resource to Filipino nurses. Public Health Supervisor/Educator Juanita Virgilio Inocencio, now deceased, was its founding president (1961-1963). Under the next president, Fe Behringer (1963-65), the club was awarded scholarships and reached out to newly arrived Foreign Nurse Graduates (FNG) under the U.S. Exchange Visitors Program to ease the nursing shortage brought on by the Vietnam War.

Administrator/Educator Delia Buncio Goggins served as President for the next three consecutive terms (1965-1970). It was during her term, that the Filipino Nurses Club was renamed Philippine Nurses Association of Southern California (PNASC), a chapter of the Philippine Nurses Association Philippines. The following served as subsequent presidents: Amparo Soozu Sauz (1971-1972); Corazon Luna Hall (1973-1975); Delia Goggins, her fourth term, (1976-1978). Membership hovered around 100 with friends and families supporting its social/fundraising events. Advocacy on a national level began with a petition to President Jimmy Carter, raised funds in support of the two Filipino nurses (Narciso & Perez) who were charged of negligence in Chicago

A growing influx of immigrant nurses swelled. FNGs were required to take licensing examination. The passing rate was a dismal 10%. President Maria Pablico (1979-1980) and Fely de la Cruz offered sorely needed licensure exam review classes, but to no avail. During D. Goggin's 5th term as president (1981-1982), as PNASC hosted the 85 Philippine delegates to the 17th International Council of Nursing Congress; the State Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Central Testing Unit revealed that the 40-year old National League of Nursing test pool adversely affected the FNGs. A second study found that the tests failed to meet Federal Testing Standards, thus were invalid.

In response, hundreds of FNGs picketed and testified at the Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) hearings, sent petitions to legislators, did media interviews in support for BRNs push for new, unbiased tests. Educators Leticia Catacutan Jue, Mierfe Calica, Elsie Fontanilla and Delia Goggins led PNASC's relentless campaign to extend the unrealistic six months FNG Interim Permit (IP) which required immediate deportation upon failure to pass the exam within that period. The BRN authorized review of all tests to determine appropriateness, detect bias and construction flaws, and demanded rescoring based on these results. This initiative was opposed by mainstream U.S. students/ graduates; Deans/Directors; American Nurses Association and California Nurses Association who contended that the reviewing/re-scoring and extending interim permits would lower patient care standards.



PNASC: *A Look Back ... through the years* (continued)

From this struggle came unequivocal positive outcome which gave birth to several triumphs for the underdog: exams were reviewed and rescored bumping up FNG passing rate significantly. Leticia Jue became the first Filipino nurse to serve on that pioneer State Board Review Panel (SBRP) which found that up to 60% of test items were flawed. IPs were extended to 12 months. Delia Goggins was appointed by Gov. Jerry Brown to BRN, a post she held for 11 years, several of those as its President.

Under the leadership of Leticia Jue as President (1983-1985), implementation of the changes was vigilantly pursued while her work with SBRP continues for several years. Public speaking opportunities in academic and community forums increased PNASCs visibility bringing PNASC leaders collaborative efforts with civic and political pacesetters in the state.

Advocacy work continued during Rodney Casorla's term (1986-1990), through work with a medical mission group to the Philippines, his role in BSRP and BRN Computer Adaptive Testing. With Mila Capulong Velasquez and Cora Barrios, a BRN-supported PNASC State RN Exam survey was completed.

A highly spirited executive group under the leadership of Mila Capulong Velasquez (1991-1994) went on to muster an all-out recruitment effort that resulted in an unprecedented membership surge. PNASC obtained a non-profit status on May 29, 1992 through the efforts of Dale and Patricia Hoerth. Carmelita Rafols led the major revision of the association's Bylaws. Mila C. Velasquez carried on the BSRP charge, and continued to increase collaboration on educational, research and networking initiatives with Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNA). Several PNASC officers took PNA leadership roles, hosted a number of its conventions, thereby expanding its linkages and power base.

During Mila Velasquez' presidency (1991-1994), and the ensuing years with Mely de Leon (1995-1996), and Patricia Hoerth (1997-1998), educational offerings have been numerous including an international program held in the Philippines. PNASC visibility was enhanced by increased collaboration with community civic and professional organizations/agencies to include Philippine Arts and Culture; LA Dept. of Cultural Affairs; Philippine Consular Office; Philippine Medical Society of Southern California to name a few.

PNASC has grown in leaps and bounds. President Linda Alinea Ascio (1999-2000) led an organization with confidence and sense of stability. Its partnership with PNA is solid. Through the commitment of its executive board and constituency, PNASC has emerged as a rich resource for leadership in this region's Filipino expatriate community. It has significantly contributed to a unique ethnic identity, while effectively claiming its place as a productive and necessary segment of mainstream culture.

And so through the years, we have hastened to fill each other's needs, discovering that in diversity, our aspirations made us one. Keeping in touch with our beginnings, with confident hearts we grew branches, sent out new shoots, generated further growth.

And our leaders, having accepted our mandate, must forge ahead to serve it.



PNASC ... *through the years*

Leadership Highlights

*By Leticia C. Jue
Updated by Warlie Galzote*

Juanita V. Inocencio, 1961-1962 - Collaborative effort in the founding of the Filipino Nurses Club of Southern California

Fe Behringer, 1963-1965 - Recruitment of members

Delia Buncio Goggins, 1965-1970: - Officially changed Filipino Nurses Club of Southern California to Philippine Nurses Association of Southern California (PNASC)

Amparo Evangelista Sauz, 1971-1972 - Increased networking activities

Corazon Luna Hall, 1973-1975 - led fund raising events for the Narciso & Perez Defense Fund (Filipino Nurses in Chicago charged with negligence)

Delia Buncio Goggins -1976-1978 - Increased fellowship amongst nurses

Maria Pablico-Holm, 1979-1980 – offered RN licensure exam review classes

Delia Buncio Goggins, 1981-1982 - First Filipino to be appointed to the State Board of Registered Nursing (BRN), a post she served for eleven years.

Leticia Catacutan Jue, 1983-1985 - first Filipino Nurse to serve on the pioneer State Board Review Panel

Rodney Casorla, 1986-1990 - Participated in the development of the BRN computer assisted testing

Mila Capulong Velasquez, 1991-1994 - Revised Constitution and Bylaws. PNASC obtained non-profit status, unprecedented membership surge.

Mely De Leon, 1995-1996 - Started increased educational offerings. First International Conference to the Philippines

Patricia Hoerth, 1997-1998ity through - Introduced PNASC Nursing Excellence Recognition Award, Revised Policy and Procedure, Community Outreach and Civic Involvement

Linda Alinea Ascio, 1999-2000 - Solidified partnership with Multi-cultural Council of Nurses in Southern California.

Josie Franciso Villanueva, 2001-2002 - Initiated the Care and Share Program, ABCD award, founding of PNASC Auxiliary, and Speakers Bureau from PNASC members.

Connie Orillo Oliveros, 2003-2004 - initiated the Youth Enrichment Program. During her term, PNASC was nominated to the 2004 Presidential Awards for "Outstanding Overseas Individuals and Organizations".

Josie Estaris de Jesus, 2005-2006 - Launched the PNASC website. Increased visibility through strong linkages with various community socio-civic organizations.

Brenda Cohen, 2007-2008 - PNASC hosted the ultra successful PNA 29th National Convention. Established efficient and transparent book keeping, procurement of state of the art educational equipment.

Emma Cuenca, 2009-2010 - Initiated the "Green Program" with paperless meetings, electronic communications, record keeping, and management of archives.