

# Tropical

BRINGING YOU THE LATEST NEWS  
FROM OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS  
AROUND THE WORLD

*news*

OCTOBER 2007



# Editorial Ramblings



This is a time of uncertainty and instability for us. We don't mind what God has got planned for us as the next stage of our adventure in life - we just wish He'd tell us what it is - and let us get on with it!

Of course, we have a few ideas of what we would *like* to do, but it depends on God opening doors for us as to what will really happen. This is especially true regarding my future employment (I don't really feel

like retiring just yet), where several possible doors have been slammed shut in our faces. This has been hard to take at times, as some of the jobs would have been well worth doing - and well paid. But with the expiration of the lease on our rented bungalow fast approaching (8 November), it would be nice to know where we will be going next - or even what to do for the best!

This has also been a period where all of us has had some time of sickness. This has also meant a great deal of lost sleep too, and the consequent lack of being awake when not actually sleeping. I've sometimes felt too tired to sit behind the computer screen and we've had little chance to take photographs this month. We believe that some of this sickness has been caused, or at least triggered, by the stress caused by the uncertainty in our lives. This is the main reason why this month's *Tropical News* is such a small edition - Sorry! We hope that this time will soon pass and we can get on with our lives once more. On this topic, Grace has had to renew her passport (they only last 5 years), so she downloaded and completed the application form (that specified a white background). As her brother, Michael, had some problems with passport photographs a few weeks before, she telephoned the passport office and they told her the background should be royal blue. She got her photographs taken (royal blue) and went to the passport office where she was told the photographs should have a white background. Her downloaded application form was also rejected! The sheer stupidity here is beyond belief! Grace is blessed with initiative and she straightaway got new photographs taken and returned to the passport office and got it sorted out. Michael couldn't be bothered - he went home!



Many of you will remember our Dalmatian dog, Speedo (above), who passed away on 22 August 2003. In the photograph on the left you can see some of his family. The Dalmatian in the top right of the photograph is the daughter of Speedo's sister. The part-Dalmatian in the foreground is her puppy that I am introducing to our little lad

*Alan*

**Front Cover photograph:** Alikupan Beach. We walked to this beach from the family farm near Bani, Pangasinan.

**Back cover photograph:** Grace and John at the Arizona Beach Resort in Barretto - just a short walk from where we live.

# *Your prayers are needed...*

*for Paul (Alan's son):*

*Still in the most hostile area of Afghanistan*

*for David and Ruth:*

*Still undergoing treatment for cancer.*

*for Joseph and his friend:*

We have received another e-mail from our dear friend, Joseph who is under a great deal of stress at present, as he tries to sort out some personal problems in 3 countries, as well as looking after a friend who is seriously ill. We ask you to pray for both of them.

*for Teresa and family:*

We have just received an e-mail from our dear friend, Teresa informing us of the news that her mother passed away very recently due to an error when undergoing minor routine surgery. This, as you can imagine, was a terrible, and unexpected, shock for all the family, so we would ask you to pray for them all during this time of sadness and tragic loss. We also offer our sincere condolences to all the family during this sad and lonely time.

*and thanks.....*

*for the progress in the treatment of Leopoldo.*

# *Michael's Oath Taking Ceremony in Manila*



On 2 October, Michael attended the Professional Regulation Commission Board of Nursing Oath Taking Ceremony in Manila - like the graduation ceremony of a large University, where he was sworn in as a Registered Nurse.



# *A warm welcome to Margie*

As you may remember, we recently said a fond farewell to Ne-Ne. Now we welcome Margie into our family to help us take care of our little lad - who, as you can see, has readily taken to her.





In

his

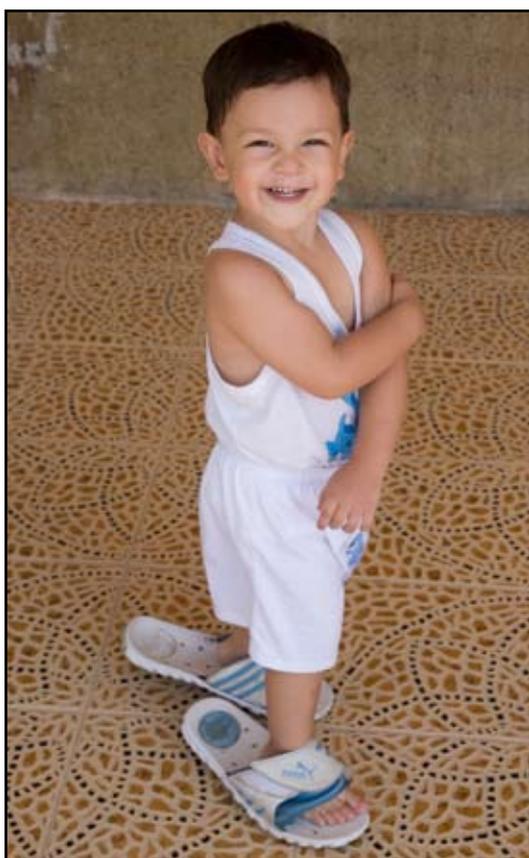


ready to  
go!



father's

footsteps





# Alan's Reflections

There have been many times that I've been castigated for saying somewhat negative things about the Philippines (as well as my own country). One of the things I've been saying for some time is that this country is in a state of deterioration and that I've seen no progress in the decade or so that I've known about the way of life here. In particular, I've always maintained that I've seen no improvement in the standard of living of the ordinary person - only a steady decline. This has always made me very sad - and angry - because this country should be a tropical paradise. Today, I'm even sadder and angrier, because my own observations have been proved to be correct.

**The Social Weather Station** (yes, that is its official name) reported on 1 October 2007 that the number of people who have experienced involuntary hunger during the last three months has reached a new record-high of 21.5% of the population.

And this despite the huge numbers of Filipinos sending money home from overseas (More than one million Filipinos leave their country *every year*, mainly to work overseas, and by sending their money home they contribute 10% to the Philippines GNP (ref: <http://www.bles.dole.gov.ph>)).

## THIS MEANS THAT ABOUT 19 MILLION FILIPINOS ARE HUNGRY!

This figure of 21.5% of hungry people, is **82.2%** higher than in 1998 when the figure was 11.8% of the population. As though that isn't bad enough, what should be remembered is that the population has grown enormously in those 9 years, so many more people are affected than this statistic would initially imply. I understand that the population has grown by about 15 million people during this time. Is it any wonder that the people here are striving to obtain an education, just so they can escape from their own country.

**And isn't it tragic that they need to do so in order to**

## LIVE

Unfortunately, the statistics fail to report the personal sacrifices and consequent tragedies that occur because of this huge emigration of workers to other countries. Time and time again I hear about people who have left their spouses and children in the Philippines and gone off to work overseas in order to provide for their families. Mothers leave their children in the care of the husband and grandparents, often for two years or more, before they can get any leave to come home for a short visit. Husbands leave their wives and children to struggle on their own while they are working thousands of miles away. As any sensible parent will know, children NEED both parents to bring them up, and often

feel confused or neglected if one of their parents is absent for a lengthy period. I also hear, very frequently, that the relationship of the parents falls apart and they separate. Living without your spouse - as a single parent, in effect, and raising children is a lonely and stressful task. Small wonder that so many of these lonely spouses find another partner and the children end up with broken families.

In recent years, I've been very fortunate as I've been able to take Grace with me when I've got a job in another country. As you know, our son was born in a foreign country. But not everyone is as fortunate as we have been. Indeed, I spent seven years working on board tankers at sea while my first family was very young, so I know something about this enforced separation that so many Filipinos endure. Having had this experience once, I do not intend to go through it again, and this is why I returned from Kuwait in early May after only being away for just over two months. But millions of workers all over the world, of all nationalities, are suffering because of the global labour market and the 'global economy' that is responsible for destroying so many lives and relationships. Very few of them can afford to go home when things go wrong with the paperwork and they cannot take their family overseas - and most do not even get the chance to take their family with them anyway. We are now getting to the point where, in many parts of the world, huge numbers of people cannot afford to stay in their home country as there is high unemployment and, even if they have a job, the salary is insufficient for them to live like a normal human being and raise and educate their families.

I wonder how long it will be before the people of the USA and the UK end up in this dire situation. I suggest it won't be very long if these countries continue to be run by thoroughly evil leaders, as has been the case in recent times. Certainly, in the UK, the uncontrolled immigration of cheap labour and the destruction of the trade unions, as well as the huge reduction in trade training and manufacturing, are playing their part in lowering standards of living, especially among the younger generation who are slaving under the threat of debt in order to get a roof over the heads of their families.

Of course, those in power are trying to maintain their positions and will do anything to control and suppress the people. A poorly educated, compliant population, slaving to pay their high-interest mortgages and living under the government publicised spin of the threat of terrorism will (democratically?!) agree to almost anything. I also wonder when there will be more than one million British people leaving the UK every year! At the rate people are now leaving, I don't think that time is too far away.

This is the not-so-Great Britain of the near future.

And remember - there is a 'security' video camera nearby. Big Brother is watching YOU!

Alan

