



IF THE name *Pinoy*, a semantic tag which Americans pin on a Filipino who enters the United States, rings a sort of unpleasantness in our ears, we need not be disturbed by it, because our townfolk have paid off old scores with these whites. Indeed, the word *Pinoy* is not pleasant to hear. There is *balut pinoy*, a nutritive duck's egg, all right, but we don't want to be associated with ducks, which are for swallowing everything. We might be misunderstood to be doing the same. Our folk, in happy retaliation, call the American serviceman *Mika* (from *Americano*). They coined the name when the GIs landed in our east Visayan province in the early days of the Liberation.

When these *Mikas* set foot on our soil, the natives knew nothing about them, so that when they sighted a huge ship anchored a distance from the shore they were stirred and grew apprehensive. They thought those on board the ship were another batch of Japs. The rumor spread. All the people grew apprehensive. Convinced and united to fight the foreigners off, my townfolk sharpened bolos and bamboo spears. With bolos in their hands or slung from their waists, they boarded bancas and rowed to the ship. What they found were not the brutal Nippons but big hunks of Americans. Brandishing and cutting the air with the sharp bolos, the natives challenged them to fight but the GIs just laughed

at them and at their primitive fighting implements. Americans high up on deck and others peering through portholes just hurled down pieces of cleaning rags soaked in grease and crude oil, hitting some men below. The Americans gestured to show that they and the natives were friends. A native in one of the boats understood, talked to his co-freedom fighters and accepted the offer of friendship. They quickly calmed down. They even exchanged their bolos with GI rations and much-needed clothing. They sailed back to their homes *sans* the bolos and spears.

A few weeks later the Americans set up stations at strategic points, there were no clashes, for the Japs had been annihilated weeks before when a swarm of

Mustangs dropped bombs on Japanese installations and ships. The Americans made friends with the natives and spoke the dialect a little.

Now, too, our folk could speak English, but limited to begging for things only. Everyone was handy with: "Joe, give me candy," "Joe, chocolate." A teen-age girl once begged: "Joe, shoot me," meaning she wanted her picture taken. (Everybody then called the Americans Joe.)

You know what the Liberation days were like. Business was booming. A bootblack could rake in fifty pesos a day; a barber could make twice the amount. Those with the Mickey Mouse money exchanged it for US dollars; souvenirs like sea shells and native handcraft work were worth twenty pesos and up. Even those who started from scratch made a fortune during those days. Articles could be bought from the GIs for a song, or had for the asking, if one knew the right thing to say.

The natives who had not gone to school started learning to speak

My Townsfolk and the GI's

by FRANCISCO MACASIL

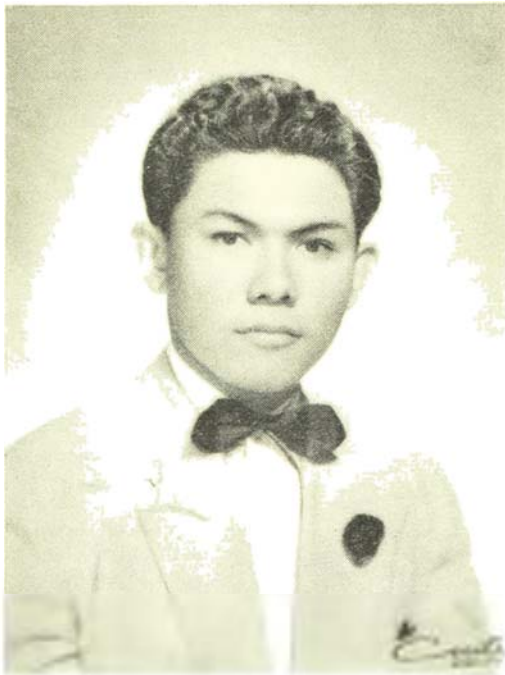
English because it was a *sine qua non*. The most useful men in our town were those who could speak the king's language. Speaking English became a craze.

There was an ambitious but inarticulate young man from a town in the north. He had slippers made of abaca fibers and he approached a fatigue-clad burly GI cleaning his shoes inside his tent. "Joe," he called, "will you exchange my *chinelts*," raising the pair of slippers in his right hand, "with your *makinils* that sounds *tak-ta-dak-tak*?" He was after the typewriter on the husky GI's table.

The American forces not only gave us back freedom but also re-introduced the American way of

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OSCAR ABELLA

Oscar Nacua Abella is a name that might very well be the synonym of self-confidence. This was the impression he made on us right from the very first question we fired at him. His answers came in squarely with nary a trace of false humility. Talking about his life, loves and ideals without hesitation and without bothering to put on false fronts and pretenses, Oscar presented a picture of a modest campus figure after our own hearts.

Perhaps a born politician, Oscar has always been in the middle of campus politics. The fire of leadership ever burns in his heart. He has always been leading his class from the intermediate grades, through high school and presently in college. Leadership has its entailing price though: he has to mix a lot of extra-curricular activities with his books. Wonderfully enough, he has always been acquitting himself creditably in both.

Oscar loves books. Steinbeck and Hemingway rank high on his list. He likes Loring and Gardner, too, but not much; a few of their works is as far as he will go. Possessed of a critical literary eye, he has noted the stereotyped pattern of Loring's and Gardner's works. "Read one of them," he says, "and you've read them all". He likes books that probe deep into the human mind and heart.

A battle of wits never fails to fascinate Oscar. As a matter of fact he finds himself not infrequently involved in them. He has won several laurels as orator and debater. His love for polemics was the prime mover that drove him into the arms of the law profession.

Mature beyond his years, he understands and has a lively awareness of the state and welfare of his country. While he is a rabid admirer of the late Don Claro Mayo Recto, he would not close his eyes to the errors in some of the radical views of the "eternal oppositionist". Oscar idealizes President-elect John F. Kennedy and bears a strong dislike for some of our political moguls. He looks at Philippine life beyond the ordinary sphere of a mere student.

Oscar is a self-made man — and that is because he wanted to make himself. To achieve his goal of individual independence, he had to undergo hardships and sacrifices. He has worked at a number of jobs ranging all the way from miner to teller. But all his sacrifices paid off. He is now enjoying the bliss of freedom — he is free from the shackles and domination of anybody but himself.

Knowing Oscar's life and experiences is like reading a Pulitzer prize winner. For his is a life that is lived not by ordinary men. Obviously, Oscar realizes this. He confided to us that his great obsession was to write a book based on his unique experiences which he would give as a gift to whoever might be his better half...

Oscar has a long way to go yet to the success and glory he dreams to reach. But however long that might be, we are sure, it's just a matter of time.

— N. McFarland

MY TOWNSFOLK . . .

life, which struck deep roots in our folk's way of thinking, mode of dressing and social customs. For instance, anyone who wants to get off a jeepney or bus says, "Hulit!" This is the murdered version of "Hold it."

There were a lot of friendly Americans. An ex-serviceman now in California sent his friend gifts just recently. Their friendship developed when the father of his Filipino pal saved the ex-serviceman and his companions when their barge was sunk by an early morning storm off the island of Homonhon. In the letter, the GI recalled how the father had saved them six hours after their boat went down. He once more expressed his gratitude for the hospitality shown him and his companions by the Filipino family. The American enclosed a photograph of his family one of his youngest son and a teen-age daughter.

What we villagers remember most vividly was an incident involving a GI. Whenever his story is told hearers bend and choke with laughter. When this was narrated in a *tuba* session by Momoy Boroka, the village master storyteller, a boy laughed and laughed so much that he dropped to the floor, breathless. The other listeners had to revive him by artificial respiration.

It was a GI who had a close friend, our neighbor. I knew him well because he was popular among our villagers. He was Joe Drinkwater, a native of Texas.

On Saturdays he would go to our neighbor's house. Sometimes he would sleep there and eat with the Filipino family. One weekend he went to the house. Three notorious boys in the neighborhood wanted to find an answer to their curiosity. They wanted to know whether the tongue of Americans, like the Filipinos', feels the sharp sting of the local-grown pepper. With the pepper pulverized in a stone mortar, they set out for the house where the American was staying.

Through small holes in the wall, they peered into the room. They found the household asleep, including Jose who was lying on a bench by the open window. They picked him as their victim because his mouth was open in sleep. Slowly the ringleader tiptoed up the ladder, slipped through the half-closed door and with the powdered pepper in his hand he bent forward to reach the open mouth of

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Joe Drinkwater while his feet remained at the threshold, in readiness to get out fast. The trio got away quickly and they all clambered up a slender coconut tree with the swiftness of scared lizards. They stayed at a point where they could see the GI through the open window.

Our house, only a few paces from our neighbor's, was a little taller and from the window I could see the GI open and close his mouth, rise to his feet and spew forth the biting pepper. Writhing with pain, he jumped up and down so many times that the corner post of the house sank two inches deeper into the earth. The household was awakened. Joe, thinking that one of them must have pulled the joke on him, looked for the head of the family, Pekto. His face red, teeth gnashing and his fist clenched, he unbuttoned his shirt, gestured with his fists, ready to pounce upon Pekto's face. Pekto backed away and unsheathed a bolo near him, its blade shining. Without a word the GI leaped through the window to the ground and ran for his life from the pursuing Pekto armed with a very long bolo. The boys clinging to the tree roared with laughter. The GI, following a grassy trail, vanished among the tall grasses from the sight of Pekto.

The following morning, Pekto, together with sixteen neighbors and my uncle, jacked up the corner of the house. Nothing more happened that day.

The next day two GIs brought news to the village that Joe Drinkwater was the object of a hunt for not showing up in the camp the previous day. The news traveled fast and it reached Pekto. He grew apprehensive. But he was confident that he had not done any harm. Barefoot and wearing a *huri* hat he tracked down the path which the GI had taken. He leaped over a coconut trunk thrown across the path, but stopped to verify a sound like that of splashing water. He got near an abandoned, mossy well and he saw a man's head. Joe Drinkwater was struggling up in the water, weak and cold.

The three boys who were around at the time joined Pekto in fishing out Joe Drinkwater, panting for breath, his tongue sticking out.

Back in the States, Joe must have told his fellow Americans about us, the village folk.



YOLANDA VILLON

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"When you sit with a nice girl for two hours you think it's only a minute. But when you sit on a hot stove for a minute, you think it's two hours. That's relativity." — Albert Einstein.

That is how one feels when he talks with Yolanda A. Villon, for this young lady is truly, intrinsically lovable. Bedimpled, charming, amiable and radiant best describe her. She is gracious in nature and in her gentle will.

Born in Lucban, Quezon, this debutante is the eldest in the family of seven. Her younger sister and brothers look up to her as a sister anyone would love to have. A consistent scholar since grade school, Yolly is her parents' pride and joy. She first studied in Marikina, Rizal, transferred later to Ligao, Albay and then to Lucban, Quezon. She was in the third grade when they moved to Cebu. Being a stranger to this place, she had to hop from one school to another until finally she came to this University and made it her Alma Mater. She graduated from the intermediate and secondary courses, valedictorian.

Now in the last year of her pre-medicine course, she still tops her class. This future doctor hopes to finish her course at the University of the Philippines and has made the University of Santo Tomas her second choice.

When not with her books, she attends to her various extra-curricular activities. Deeply religious and virtuous, she has been a Sodality Prefect in high school and in college, secretary of the Legion of Mary, member of the Student Catholic Action Planning Board and at present Instructress to the aspirants of the Sodality. A prolific writer, she was the Tagalog editor of the Junior Carolinian. Gifted with a pleasing voice and the ability to speak fluent and flawless English, Yolly is also a declaimer, orator and actress, and former president of the Dramatics' Club. She is also a Kappa Lambda Sigma Sorority member. At home, she keeps a treasury of gold medals.

In spite of this litany of achievements, Yolly has remained what she is—naive, unaffected, despite beauty and brains.

She loves good books, especially books of poetry, music, and true friends. Bishop Fulton Sheen is her favorite author. Can she cook? She loves to and is trying to learn although she admits she gets burned once in a while.

What does the future hold for Yolly? Only the Creator Himself knows the answer but perhaps we can guess by quoting this: "Speaking of the future, Yolly dreams of a quiet and simple wedding. It takes a man with sterling qualities to let her give up her career and be a devoted house wife to her husband and mother of their children."

Such is Yolanda Villon, the most youthful yet wonderful friend a man can have, the perfect example of Filipina simplicity that is priceless these days, the personality you admire at a glance.

by E. Talaid