



Southern California Chapter

# FASAE SoCal Newsletter

Volume 13, Issue 2 December 2011

## ISIDORO “ALI” ALIMENTO: A PROFESSIONAL, A LEADER AND A FAMILY MAN

The Filipino engineering community lost a pillar of a man when Isidoro “Ali” Alimento passed away on October 21, 2011 after a short illness, at the age of 88.

Ali, as he preferred to be called, was the founding vice president of the Filipino American Society of Architects and Engineers, Southern California Chapter (FASAE SoCal) when it was established in 1994. He co-authored the FASAE SoCal’s By-laws and was instrumental in having the Society incorporated and registered as a non-profit organization with the State and served as its 2nd President from 1996 to 1997. Ali was also a member of the national Board of Director of FASAE based in San Francisco from 1996 to 1998, and was the 20th National President from 1998 to 1999.



Ali Alimento 1923-2011

Ali had a great passion for providing scholarship to deserving students. As such, he became the founding president of the FASAE SoCal Education Foundation that granted scholarships to students of Filipino descent from the United States and in the Philippines.

Prior to his retirement, Ali was an active member and a leader of numerous professional organizations including the Los Angeles Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) and the

Asian American Architects/Engineers Association, Southern California where he served as President for both organizations.

Even as Ali was advanced in years, he continued to exercise leadership and would always be looking out for ways to improved and

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## DEFENSE OF CLAIMS AGAINST DESIGN PROFESSIONALS SEMINAR

By Peter Hsu, A.I.A.

On September 29, 2011, the Programs Committee arranged and conducted its 3rd General Membership Meeting at Coco’s Bakery and Restaurant, Cerritos, CA. Atty. Clay Tanaka, Esq. P.E. of Newmeyer & Dillion, LLP, Newport Beach, CA was invited to speak on the subject of design professionals defense against claims and lawsuits, over dinner. As a topic, it was particularly relevant not because we lived in a litigious society, that these experiences were all too familiar for some of us, but that during these hard economic times, issues of none payment and plaintiffs finding errors and omissions in design and construction for claims are more prevalent than ever. Therefore, it is incumbent upon professionals, architects and engineers to protect themselves, whether such suits were frivolous or meritorious before the courts that can exact a heavy price to defend and to confute.

There was a familiar saying that the best defense is a good offense, this adage no longer apply just on battle plans and sports strategies, but to practicing professionals. These defenses to avoid pitfalls and exposure include an understanding of the different types of claims; contract, tort and equitable claims as potential causes for actions. To reduce potential risks, effective contract provisions should be drafted to include and define limitation of liability. The courts have upheld such provision as long as parties had a fair opportunity to accept, reject or modify during negotiation. A non-final draft agreement even without actual discussions between parties is enforceable. As for the scope of limitation, there are maximum

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## FASAE SOCAL 2011 SUMMER PICNIC

By Gilbert Dia, E.I.T.

Families and friends of FASAE SoCal members got together at Heritage Park in Cerritos last for a Filipino style picnic. It is only on a Filipino style picnic where one will find Filipino favorite foods such as *adobo*, *pansit*, *ginisang upo*, *inihaw na salmon*, *ginataang mahi-mahi*, and other home-cooked Filipino dishes, plus the traditional barbeque and fried chicken. And speaking of barbeque, Gilbert Dia’s Korean barbeque, which he marinated himself, and Peter Hsu’s marinated chicken barbeque received great laudatory compliments from everyone. Gilbert and Dennis Arca grilled the meat and the chicken to perfection.

The attendees had a great time catching up with family stories and discussing future plans. Members with grand children had plenty of stories to tell about their “apostolate” missions. The youngest attendee was Art Villanueva’s grandson, Jaguar, who is 15 months old.

Michelle Salazar did a highly commendable job in running the parlor

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### FASAE-SoCal Mission Statement

**To advocate and promote the advancement and professional growth of the Filipino American Architects and Engineers for the public good.**

## President's Message

**Joseph Rigonan, Jr., P.E.**  
**Consultant**

Christmas and the end of 2011 are just around the corner, and I would like to take this year-end opportunity to extend my sincerest thanks to the officers, directors and advisers. In spite of the many challenges we as an organization faced this year, our officers, directors and advisers have unselfishly donated their time and delivered their very best efforts to make FASAE SoCal Chapter a successful organization.



However, our work is far from being done. To elevate FASAE SoCal, we will need a greater degree of involvement from our membership to come up with new and refreshing ideas. To rejuvenate FASAE SoCal, we would need to increase our members, especially among the younger generation of architects and engineers. These are complex organizational issues that will take time to achieve the desired results. But I am confident that together, we can do it. And I am looking forward to working with you all on these issues.

Last month, the FASAE organization suffered a severe loss by the passing of our dear friend and colleague, Ali Alimento. Ali was not only beloved but was a mentor and father figure to many FASAE members. It is my hope that FASAE remembers what Ali had done for the organization he loved so much. Even at his late stages in life with health issues, Ali did his best to attend our monthly meetings so that he could lend his advice and perspective. FASAE would benefit immensely if we could be more like Ali.

It has and continues to be my honor working with you. The success of this organization is a direct reflection of your hard work and dedication. And as the year is coming to a close, I wish for you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! ■

***Merry Christmas and  
 A Happy New Year to All!!!***

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## FASAE SOCAL 2011. . . . .

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games. The biggest hit among the kids was the “piñata” party game. The kids knew that there were goodies inside the piñata and they all tried to break the suspended goodies container early. There was a mad scramble among participants to gather the most goodies once the container was finally broken apart.

For after-lunch entertainment, there was the traditional basketball free throwing contest and Rosie Dia surprised the younger women players by winning the women’s division. Raul Razonable won the men’s division while Dennis was the winner in the 3-point shot contest.

In the biggest upset of the day, a group of young art students defeated a professional team made up of FASAE SoCal architect-and-engineer members in the structure building contest. Each 3-person team was asked to build a structure using a package of uncooked spaghetti and a bottle of glue as materials. Prior to judging, Judge Peter Hsu asked each of the three teams to describe the concept behind their entry. The best and winning design concept was a tepee structure held together by grouped sticks used as a center post to support the structure. Members of the winning team were Adam Sostrin, Justin Chen, and Melanie Guevarra.

Everyone went home with smiles after a day of good food, exciting games, and most of all, the quality time spent with friends. ■



The big upset winning team in the structure building contest at work. From right to left: Adam Sostrin, Justin Chen, and Melanie Guevarra

## FASAE SoCal Newsletter

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Editors:

Wilfrido B. Simbol, P.E./Peter Hsu, A.I.A.

## DEFENSE OF CLAIMS . . . . .

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amount of liability, where such limitation would include attorney’s fees and costs that must be paid as part of the indemnity provision among other stipulations.

On the equitable claims, it is a catch all indemnity based on equity or fairness concept. Such layer of protection is the “Certificate of Merit Law” which intended to keep architects, engineers and land surveyor from being made part of a broad lawsuit where anyone and everyone involved in the project becomes party to the litigation. The attorney must however file a certificate in every action, including a cross-complaint for damages or indemnity that arose out of negligence declaring that there were reasonable causes for filing the lawsuit.

Insurance is another defensive requirements to hedge against uncertainties. A commercial general liability that covers bodily injury and accidental occurrences addresses tort claims. As for the self-insured retentions (SIR), it stipulates an established amount in a liability insurance policy that the insured must pay first before the insurer or insurance company steps in for both damages and defense costs. But beyond these informative legalese terminologies defined, the presentation was made more interesting when the Speaker offered to highlight specific case studies that had been litigated by his office and judgments rendered. These actual cases, having to do with negligent civil engineering work, such as the lack of soils report resulting in settlements, water seepage and errors made in locating or moving property lines beyond its legal boundaries of metes and bounds.

In summary, this article does not aim to capture all that was presented or to offer any legal advice. The presenter in his excellent and well-prepared slides had covered and conveyed as much as he could in the limited time given of less than hour that included Q & A. In the end one cannot help the sobering reality that in the world of design and construction as with other professional trades, claims are at its doorstep when we failed to exercise all due diligence with careful study on any and all projects and contracts. And while the best defense is a good offense, it is best still that such defenses are never used. As with another wise old adage aptly state, an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. ■



Atty. Clay Tanaka receiving a Certificate of Appreciation from FASAE SoCal President Joe Riganon, Jr. after his presentation.

## FEATURING A FASAE SoCal BOARD MEMBER

By Ali Alimento, P.E.

*(Editor’s Note: This was the last article that Ali wrote for this newsletter.)*

When we asked one of the newly elected officers of FASAE SoCal what interesting project he was working on, he beamed with delight while he described his work on a project at LAX. The person we were talking to is the newly-elected Recording Secretary of our organization, the Filipino American Society of Architects and Engineers, Southern California, (FASAE, SoCal, for short). The person we were talking to is Berwyn Salazar, an employee of Tetra Tech, Inc. as an Engineer 3/Project Manager 1, who is assigned by his employer to its projects at the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) site. We will refer to him in this article by his first name, Berwyn, for brevity.

Apparently, Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) embarked in a major redevelopment effort in the past few years to improve the capacity and upgrade the services at LAX. Some of the major improvements are reported to include the expansion of the northern and southern gates of the north and south concourses of Tom Bradley International Terminal (TBIT); improvement of the north and south runways to accommodate the newer bigger aircraft; refurbishment of Terminals 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and TBIT to increase capacity; construction of New TBIT to enable loading and unloading of international passengers in all directions; construction of new Taxiways Romeo and Sierra; and relocation of the Air Rescue and Fire Fighting Station # 80 (ARFF 80).

Berwyn mentioned that Tetra Tech was chosen by LAWA as one of its environmental engineering consultants involved in several of these projects. He stated that he was involved in the midfield environmental and geotechnical investigation to assess the presence

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## CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION: THE FILIPINO WAY

Philippines probably has the longest Christmas season in the whole world. Christmas songs are played on the radio throughout the “ber” months (September through December). Another tradition in the Philippines is the “*simbang gabi*”, masses at dawn from December 16th until December 24th. This tradition started during the Spanish era when the Filipinos petitioned the authorities to have an early mass before they went into the fields to harvest their crops. This series of masses is culminated by a midnight mass at Christmas Eve that is followed by a feast called *Noche Buena*.

*Simbang Gabi* in turn started another tradition, the *parol* or bamboo-framed lantern. Villagers made *parol* with candles or gas lamps inside which were hung outside their windows to light up their way to the church for the *simbang gabi*. The *parol* which started with a five point star now comes in different sizes and shapes,

Another tradition born out of the *simbang gabi* is the *bibingka* and *puto bungbong*. These are rice cakes cooked and sold along the

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### ISIDORO “ALI” ALIMENTO. . . . .

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strengthened FASAE SoCal so as to provide opportunities for the continuing development and advancement of its members. Ali once said, “I strongly believed that we have laid a sound foundation for a professional organization that the local Filipino American community can be proud of.”

Ali earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from the University of the Philippines in 1948. He would have graduated sooner had World War II with the Japanese invasion and occupation of the Philippines from 1941 to 1945 did not break out and disrupted his studies. Instead, Ali spent three of those war years as a guerilla fighter, fighting against the Japanese in the Northern Luzon province.

After the war and after graduation, Ali worked for Pacific Architects and Engineers, Inc. (PAE). He served as the Vice President and General Manager of their operation in Guam, Tokyo and Los Angeles until his retirement in 1992. After his retirement from PAE, several architectural firms approached him for consulting services in specifications, project management, constructability review, quality control and management audits. In response to these requests, he opened Alimento Consulting Associates, a consulting firm that provided services primarily to minority-owned businesses.

In addition to his stellar professional life, Ali was a devoted family man. He was survived by his wife Suzuko Umemura of Yokohama, Japan, his three children and six grandchildren. Eric being the eldest, graduated from UC Berkeley in Industrial Engineering, and later from USC with a Doctorate in Law. Kenneth completed his undergraduate studies at UCLA and went on to finish his Doctorate in Optometry at UC Berkeley. Mariko, the only daughter, received her BSEE degree from UCLA.

Funeral mass was held on October 29, 2011 at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Gardena, California and interment followed at Green Hills Memorial Park in Rancho Palos Verdes, California. A well-represented number of FASAE SoCal members, board of directors and past presidents attended the services and burial in their final respects to Ali. His smiles, leadership qualities and brilliant but dry sense of humor will be missed. ■

### FEATURING A FASAE SoCal . . . . .

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and extent of soil contamination in the areas where Taxiways Romeo and Sierra as well the new TBIT Building will be constructed.

He was assigned as the project environmental engineer during the environmental investigations for Taxiway Romeo, ARFF 80, Taxiway Sierra and New TBIT. These environmental investigations involved drilling soil samples for environmental analysis to verify the presence of contamination and map its lateral and vertical limits.

Berwyn was later assigned as the project manager for the environmental oversight during the construction of Taxiway Sierra and the New TBIT. During the peak sub-grade phase of the projects, he was onsite almost during day and night shifts to oversee the removal of jet fuel contaminated soils in the footprint of the construction. He managed the clean-up operations and documentation of all removed contaminated soils and prepared the final report for submission to the regulatory agencies.

His participation in the LAX redevelopment projects is still ongoing with the environmental investigation at Terminal 2, the environmental oversight during the construction of new TBIT, the environmental oversight during the demolition of the existing TBIT north and south concourses, and the ongoing environmental investigation around the Continental/ United Airlines leasehold. ■

### CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION. . . . .

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sidewalk after the *simbang gabi* masses. Together with *salabat*, a home-made ginger tea, these serve as breakfast of the people after the masses.

Filipino have brought these traditions here in the United States. However, on most churches in the Los Angeles County, the series of masses are held at night and not at dawn. Each mass usually starts with a procession of *parols*. Holy Family Catholic Church in Artesia is an exception. *Simbang gabi* masses are celebrated at 5:00 o’clock in the morning. After each mass, free breakfast is provided by a sponsoring Filipino organization. The church also have a *parol* making contest. For more information, visit the church web site, [www.holyfamilyartesia.org](http://www.holyfamilyartesia.org). ■



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