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# MEKONG

CIRCLE INTERNATIONAL

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- In 1975, Filipinos who had lived and worked in Laos, some for as long as two decades, were told to leave. Together with other nationals of foreign aid agencies, they had been expelled by a Communist-inspired insurgency that took over the country. Most of the Filipinos returned home, others resumed their professions as engineers, teachers and health care workers in countries as far apart as the USA, Libya, Iran, Africa.

About 900 Filipinos had spent time in Laos during the 18 years that the country underwent tumultuous years of early independence, a bloody civil war, foreign aggression, and as a helpless, collateral victim of the Vietnam war on its eastern border. As a result, they carried indelible memories of those years formed during their impressionable youths.

When about 50 of these expats settled in the USA, the urge to re-live those times resulted in an association that organized bi-annual reunions. In 2002 regular publication began of a newsletter to record new lives transformed by their Lao experience. Along with the usual notices about post-Laos marriages, births and deaths, the issues memorialized living a culture so similar to their own and also exotic in other ways.

Twenty-four issues of this Newsletter from 2002 to 2013 are contained in this CD. An index of names and features for each issue provides a way to search for their places in this mini-history. It is produced as part of the celebrations marking the 10th reunion of their association Mekong Circle in 2014, actually 40 years of their exile. Another CD newsletter collection -- "Balitang Laos" (for the years 1964-1966), published in Vientiane was released at that occasion. That was another time and another place that infuse the pages of this present Mekong Circle Newsletter collection.

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