

## INSIDE this Issue

- Derarca's visit to Baguia, and project progress.

## COMING EVENTS for your diary

**Talk on Baguia: For ALL supporters**  
**Wed 12th April - 6.15 to 8.15 pm**

**Everyone is invited!** Learn more about Baguia and our progress. "Insider" Elizabetti Batista who is studying in Melb and grew up in Baguia, and "Outsider" Derarca O'Mahony, will tell us about the area with a slide presentation.

Venue: Upstairs meeting room at Malvern Library, High Street.

## Talks about East Timor

U3A Stonnington will present talks about East Timor on 5, 12, 19, and 26 April, 2 - 4 pm.

- \* Experience with the International Force: *Chip Henriss-Andressen*
- \* Travel: *Jane Crouch*
- \* Women's Economic Development: *Deb Salvagno*
- \* Friends of Baguia: *Derarca O'Mahony*.

If you are not a member of U3A, contact Jean Ling on 9824 7385 for an invitation.

## Gourmet Dinner - Thurs 4th May

This will be a fund-raising Gourmet 3-course dinner, at Mekanix restaurant in High Street, Prahran. Guest Speaker. Booking details will be provided soon.

## August Conference in Dili

A **Friendship Groups Conference** will be held in Dili on 16 to 18 August 2006, to discuss their achievements and future activities. The climate at this time is the most pleasant of the year. What an opportunity for you to combine pleasure with business. We hope to get a small group together to also visit Baguia. Are you interested?

## CONTACTS for FRIENDS of BAGUIA

### **PRESIDENT:**

**Derarca O'Mahony 0412 761 763**

**ENQUIRIES: Aysin Akdeniz 8290 3229**  
**aakdeniz@stonnington.vic.gov.au**

## **PEOPLE WANTED!**

### **Committee**

We need a **Treasurer** (minimal record keeping only, as the Council does banking and receipting), a **Computer guru** to set up and run a **simple website**, and people to help in **Publicity**, and **Fundraising**. For details contact Derarca on 0412 761 763 or [baguia@pacific.net.au](mailto:baguia@pacific.net.au)

### **Information Stall**

Who can assist to occasionally staff an information stall, possibly at Prahran Market, monthly on Saturday morning? Offers to Kathy 9571 8213 or Lorraine 9529 4195.

## **WINE SALES**

Friends of Baguia now has available two quality wines from Margaret River for supporters and friends. You will receive details and an order form with this newsletter, or by email. Proceeds from these sales will go directly to our projects in Baguia. **Wine enquires: Contact Adrienne or Gaye on (03) 9822 1867.**

## **HELP NEEDED!**

### **Can you donate:**

- Working Sewing Machines.
- Working Portable Manual Typewriters.

### **Can you introduce us to:**

- People who can repair and renovate these machines.
- Any contacts in the Sports industry - we need volleyball, soccer and basketball equipment.

If so, please contact Derarca on 0412 761 763 or [baguia@pacific.net.au](mailto:baguia@pacific.net.au)

**THANK YOU** to those generous donors, who have contributed to the Friends Projects.

A significant donation from **Korowa Anglican Girls' School** will provide scholarships for 10 girls at Baguia Junior High for two years.

Council's continuing help in supporting the operations of the group is greatly appreciated.



## REPORT ON VISIT TO BAGUIA

By Derarca O'Mahony

I spent 6 weeks in Timor over December and January 2006, with almost 5 of those in Baguia. The highlights and achievements for **Friends of Baguia** were:

- A much higher profile of FoB in the Sub-District of Baguia.
- Visiting all 10 sub-villages that comprise the Baguia Sub-District. This included 5 villages that only have walking track access.
- Staying overnight in 4 small villages on the mountain - 3 of these villages were whilst accompanying Padre Marcus for Christmas masses.
- Forming a small "**Baguia Management Committee**" of 8 key people in Baguia to be responsible for managing projects.



**New Baguia Management Committee**

- Opening FoB Bank Account in Baucau.
- Mentoring and assistance was generously provided by Lorraine McBride of Friends of Baucau - along with much needed "rest and relaxation"!
- Assisting Baguia Community to submit an AVI Assignment for an English Teacher/Community Development.
- Meeting with Sr Lino Torrezao (Director State Admin - Dili), Sr Jose Mousaco (Friendship Co-ordinator - Dili) and Sr Luis Guterres (Baucau D.A.).
- Attending "Festa" (party) in Baguia with Sr Lino Torrezao, Sr Luis Guterres and Abel Guterres (Australian Consul General).
- Providing Christmas decorations for Baguia Church.
- Linking in with newly re-formed Baguia Women's Group.
- Identification of future projects in Baguia

## THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE OF BAGUIA

The people of Baguia are incredibly hospitable. No-one ever seemed disturbed by me turning up at their schools or homes completely without warning. (Obviously, it's hard to make appointments with no phone service!) People always willingly stopped whatever they were doing - after some child was asked to race off and find them, and then happily gave me the guided tour and answered my multitude of questions. In many cases the women had to then rustle up a meal (over an open log fire) for me and my guide, in accordance with true Timorese hospitality.

If I wanted to have a meeting with a particular group or village, then it would be happily organised for me and I would be advised of the time and place.

**The people in Baguia are its biggest asset!** They are very keen to see their area developed and their children to have a brighter future. They are ever so grateful of the assistance that the "Friends of Baguia" have promised. Parting words to me were:

**"Say hello to our FRIENDS in Stonnington. Not YOUR friends, but OUR FRIENDS!"**



**Derarca in Baguia with Abel Guterres (Aust Consul General) and his daughters**

## UPDATE on CURRENT PROJECTS

### Junior High School Scholarships

- Set up Committees of 3 teachers in the 3 Junior High Schools.
- Developed a Tetum Scholarship Application form, and the guidelines for choosing the candidates.
- Tried the process at Baguia Jnr High.



Olandina baking bread on open log fire

### Bread for Orphanage Breakfast

- Identified all 5 members of the bread-making group - all are using their small share of income to pay school fees.
- Watched this daily process that takes from around 4pm until midnight!
- A new metal cooking “box” has been provided by Rotary (offcut from Rufagua’s new school roof!) - this should last 1 year.



Children in Baguia Orphanage

### Rufagua New School Construction

- Visited Rufagua to see the new galvanised iron roof Rotary put on in September 2005. The community have put Indonesian corrugated iron on the walls.
- Rotary delivered new double desks to Rufagua in January.
- Liaised with Rotary for the excess 46 desks to be distributed to remote Primary Schools that only have home-made bamboo desks. Afalari (16) which has just commenced a new school building, and two very poor Government schools - Dar Loi (15) and Lebene (15).
- Rufagua community have requested **FoB assistance with putting a concrete floor in their new school**, which should open later this year.



Rufagua New Primary School

### Osso Huna Teachers Salaries

- Met with Laurinda Pinto (English teacher) and the other Osso Huna teachers to discuss scholarships and FoB funding of salaries. Also attended classes at this school.
- Visited the new school building that has commenced with funds from Satilos (NGO). Building has stopped while some funding issues are being resolved.

## FUTURE PROJECTS!!

There were numerous requests for assistance from ‘Friends of Baguia’. These are some of those being considered

- **Women’s group - literacy classes** for adult women.
- **Women’s group - sewing co-op** to make school uniforms and other clothes.
- **Volleyball project** - The boys and girls and men of Baguia are avid Volleyball Players, the young village kids play by hitting fruit (grapefruit type) over a wooden pole!

## Christmas up the Mountain

By Derarca O'Mahony

I was drifting off to sleep to the lilting sounds of Christmas carols sung in Tetum. I dreamily thought of this beautiful mountain village, Afalari, and how I had got there - well that was not so dreamy - an arduous almost 2 hour climb up a rocky path from the valley below in hot, humid conditions. I had used the spectacular views of the valley below as an excuse to keep stopping to catch my breath and ease my aching legs. Timorese paths always take the most direct route - so it often seems like it is a completely vertical ascent!

I was accompanying Padre Marcus, the parish priest, as he trekked to several high mountain villages to say Christmas mass. These villages have no vehicle access, so he has to walk to them for the two masses there each year.

We arrived just on dark, and Padre Marcus was given a very warm welcome including a spontaneous round of applause! It wasn't hard to find the "church" - I just had to follow the harmonising voices of young girls. They were sitting on the dirt floor huddled around two candles so that they could read their handwritten song books.

After introductions and plenty of "Bon noite's" (*Good evening in Tetum*) - my first priority was to wash off my 10 layers of sweat. To my delight I found the village had built walls from palm leaves around a "bathroom". Well, it consisted of a small hole between some strategically placed flat rocks for a toilet, and then a bucket of water to wash oneself. I shone my dim micro torch around, but pulling and poking I couldn't discover how the "palm-leaf door" worked. Finally, with horror it dawned on me that I was meant to do my ablutions with a metre wide opening facing the world!! There was NO door! Phew! Thankfully I never travel anywhere in Asia without my Sumatra sarong - it has 101 uses - but the first time it's done service as a door!

Refreshed, I emerged to devour a simple rice meal and then sit on the dirt floor with the choir. We were in the bamboo constructed primary school, which doubled as a church. I was delighted by the simple home-made decorations that adorned this small bamboo building. The villagers had obviously spent much time on these Christmas decorations. There was also a large nativity "cave", made from lots of tree branches and turfs of grass. The branches were

decorated with wisps of cotton wool, but when I peered in with the help of a candle - it was empty, except for a star. There were giggles from the girls - I didn't understand that baby Jesus would only be there during mass the next day!

Three of the girls attending Baguia High School were friendly, but shy, so I tried some English, but after a few basic sentences - punctuated by lots of laughing and giggling - especially by their friends! We reverted back to my limited Tetum and they giggled at my attempts!

The Timorese love singing and were still energetically polishing the harmonies on their carols while I was fading fast. Padre Marcus had graciously given me his bed - a tiny room attached to the school with a kapok mattress, while he had a bamboo bed in the school.



**Padre Marcus at Christmas Mass - Afalari**

The next morning, the tiny Church was packed and it was easy to see the villager's happiness and joy in celebrating their Christmas mass. To my delight most of the women were wearing traditionally woven Tais sarongs. Naturally, with all the choir's practice, the singing was just beautiful!

All too soon we were leaving this picturesque village with its tiny bamboo huts nestled among beautiful bamboo groves and corn fields, as we trekked on to the next mountain village and another Christmas mass.

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**When you have finished reading this newsletter, please pass it on to any friends who may be interested.**

**NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS:  
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