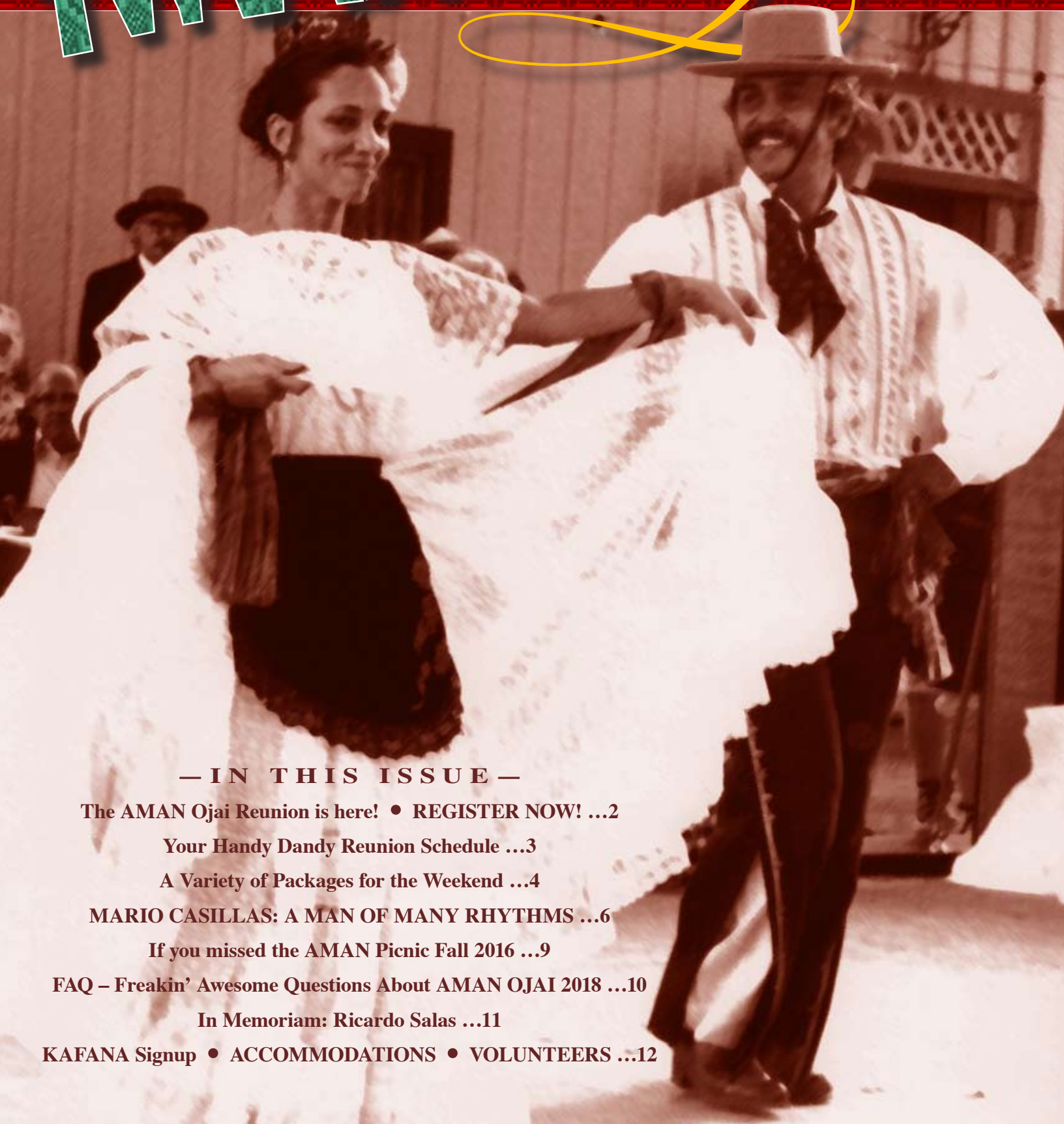


AMAN

SPRING/SUMMER 2018

Society ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



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The

AMAN Ojai Reunion is HERE!

Join us for a fun Weekend of Reconnecting & Reminiscing – Singing, Dancing, Music...and more!

**Ojai Art Center, Ojai CA
April 20-21, 2018**



Friday, April 20 “ALUMNI REUNION DAY” for AMAN Alumni + Guest

Afternoon > “AMAN Tribute” Workshops

Evening > Reunion Happy Hour, Dinner & Special Reunion Program

Nighttime > “Alumni Cabaret” and Dancing with Live Music

Saturday, April 21 “INSTITUTE & PARTIES” – for ALL – Open to the Public



Morning > Festival/Institute with Susy & Steve Kotansky

- Hungarian Dance Workshop
- Balkan/Rom Dance Workshop

*Afternoon > “LA Coffee House – Oldies Party” with DJ Billy Burke
recorded program & requests (vintage AMAN T-Shirts,
belts and opanci a must)*

*Nighttime > Ladarke Sing Along, Dance Party with Live Music from
AMAN Musicians & friends and a Late Night Kafana!*

.....

REGISTER NOW!

Online Registration (via PayPal) • End Date is April 15, 2018

Mail-In Registration Form

must be postmarked no later than April 1, 2018

Walk-Up Registration Available Saturday (4/21) ONLY for:

- All Day Package (*dinner sold separately*)
- Dance Institute & Request Party • Evening Dance & Kafana
(*see registration form*)

Your Handy Dandy REUNION SCHEDULE

April 20 & 21, 2018 / The Ojai Art Center, Ojai, CA

— SCHEDULE OF EVENTS —

(subject to change)

FRIDAY, APRIL 20TH (for AMAN Alumni Only +1 Dinner/Party Guest)

NOON • Doors Open for Registration

12:30 - 2:00 pm • AMAN Tribute Workshops — “2nd Gasp From the 1st Past”! Revisit dances from signature AMAN suites, basics, no choreography (*Bunjevačko, Oj Rastiču Šušnjati, Big Circle, Lepa Anka, Ruchcenitza, Canopy, Egyptian Bellydance*, etc. — various teachers)

— **Afternoon Break** w/light snack, drink & fresh fruit —

2:30 - 4:00 pm • AMAN Tribute Workshops! Women’s Šop Songs Review (*Što Si Goro, Dragana, Jove Malaj Mome* & more) Men’s Hungarian Workshop (*Szek and Legényes*) with Steve Kotansky

— Free Time —

5:30 – 6:30 pm • AMAN Reunion Happy Hour w/appetizers (no-host bar)

6:30 – 8:30 pm • “Memories of AMAN” Alumni Dinner & Reunion Program

9:00 pm – 12:30 am • Alumni Cabaret & Evening Dance Party (live & recorded)

SATURDAY, APRIL 21ST (Everyone Welcome – Open to the General Public)

9:00 am • Doors Open for Registration

9:30 - 11:15 am • Institute Dance Workshop #1! Hungarian Couple with Susy & Steve Kotansky

— **Morning Break** w/light snack, drink & fresh fruit —

11:30 am – 1:00 pm • Institute Dance Workshop #2! Balkan/Rom with Susy & Steve Kotansky

— **Lunch** Everyone on their own – (*There are many local restaurants within walking distance*) —

3:00 – 5:00 pm • Afternoon “LA Coffee House – Oldies Party”! DJ Billy Burke, recorded program & requests (*vintage AMAN t-shirts, belts & opanci a must!*)

—Free Time—

6:30 pm • Dinner at Agave Maria’s Cantina (sold separately – must pre-order) / Or elsewhere on your own

8:00 pm • Doors Re-Open for Registration

8:30 pm – 11:30 pm • Evening Dance Party w/Live Music (multiple bands, AMAN musicians & friends)
Includes Ladarke singalong with the all-star “AMAN & Friends Tamburitza Band”

LATE NIGHT KAFANA • till closing (sign up to perform at: amansociety.alum@gmail.com)

We have a
**VARIETY OF PACKAGES FOR
 MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY—**
we're dancers after all, and very stretchy!

* FRIDAY & SATURDAY

• ALUMNI FULL-WEEKEND PACKAGE (4/20 & 4/21)

Includes:

Friday's Alumni Reunion Workshops,
 Reunion Happy Hour w/Appetizers (*no-host bar*),
 Buffet Dinner & Reunion Program,
 Alumni Cabaret & Dance Party w/live music.

Saturday's Dance Institute (w/*Susy & Steve Kotansky*),
 Afternoon "LA Coffee House -Oldies Party" (*DJ Billy Burke - recorded program & requests*),
 Evening Tamburitza Sing-Along (*with Ladarke*),
 Balkan/International Folk Dance Party w/live music (*AMAN musicians & friends, multiple-bands*),
 Late Night Kafana **\$150 /person**

(*Please note, per caterer's request, NO Friday dinners will be sold on day of event)
 (*Don't forget to indicate your food preferences for Friday's dinner -see balloons below :-)
 (*Saturday's Dinner is Sold Separately, and is not part of any package - sign up at bottom)

• 1 ALUMNI FULL-WEEKEND PACKAGE (\$150) + 1 DINNER/PARTY GUEST TICKET (\$60)

AMAN Alumni purchasing a full-weekend pkg. can also order ONE guest dinner/party ticket for Friday (4/20).

Includes:

Friday's Alumni Reunion Happy Hour (*no-host bar*),
 Buffet Dinner, Alumni Cabaret and Party as listed above..... **\$210 total**

(*Please note, per caterer's request, NO Friday dinners will be sold on day of event)
 (*Don't forget to indicate your food preferences for Friday's dinner -see balloons below :-)
 (*Saturday's Dinner is Sold Separately, and is not part of any package - sign up at bottom)

MORE >>>



MORE FLEXIBILITY...

* SATURDAY PACKAGES - For Everyone - Saturday is Open to the Public

• SATURDAY ALL-DAY PACKAGE (4/21)

Includes: Saturday's Dance Institute (w/Susy & Steve Kotansky), Afternoon "LA Coffee House -Oldies Party" (DJ Billy Burke -recorded program & requests), Nighttime Tamburitza Sing-along (with Ladarke), Balkan/International Folk Dance Party w/live music (AMAN musicians & friends, multiple-bands), Late Night Kafana **\$60 /person**

(*Saturday's Dinner is Sold Separately, and is not part of any package - sign up below!)

• SATURDAY DANCE INSTITUTE + AFTERNOON OLDIES PARTY ONLY (4/21)

Includes: Saturday's Dance Institute (w/Susy & Steve Kotansky), Afternoon "LA Coffee House -Oldies Party" (w/DJ Billy Burke, recorded program & requests) **\$35 /person**

(*Does NOT include dinner or the evening parties)

• SATURDAY EVENING PARTIES & KAFANA (4/21)

Includes: Saturday's late-afternoon "LA Coffee House -Oldies Party" (DJ Billy Burke -recorded program & requests), nighttime Tamburitza Sing-Along (with Ladarke), Balkan/International Folk Dance Party w/live music (AMAN musicians & friends, multiple-bands), Late Night Kafana **\$40 /person**

(*Saturday's Dinner is Sold Separately, and is not part of any package - sign up below!)

• SATURDAY DINNER (4/21) -For Everyone (Saturday dinner sold separately, not part of any package above. If interested in attending, please Pre-Order below. There will be NO walk-up dinners sold on day of event.)

Saturday Dinner (4/21) (easy walking, across from The Ojai Art Center) Agave Maria Restaurant & Cantina -outdoor patio. Space is limited, so first come basis, sign-up early! Includes: an "expanded item" Mexican Buffet Dinner, Chips, Salsa, Guacamole, Dessert & a non-alcoholic Drink (tax & tip included). Bar libations are no-host. Live Music by AMAN Troubadours..... **\$25 /person (all inclusive)**

ONLINE REGISTRATION:

<http://www.amansociety.com/ojai-online-registration.html>

ALUMNI ONLY - Waiting List for Friday's Alumni Reunion Dinner/Party (4/21)

AMAN Alumni who DO NOT purchase the full-weekend package but would like to attend the reunion dinner/party on Friday (4/20), can add their name to a waiting list on the AMAN Society website. Waiting list processing will be first come, first served, with priority given to Full-Weekend Packages, and only if we still have room available for dinner. We will release dinner tickets for sale (1 Alumni + Guest) during the 2-week period between March 15th & April 1st, 2018, at \$60 /person. We will do our best, but there are no guarantees, and NO dinners will be sold on day of event!



MARIO CASILLAS

A MAN OF MANY RHYTHMS (AND WOMEN)

by Bonita A. Edelberg

In bereavement counseling, it is said that once someone important, even if unloved, is gone, we tend to turn him or her into Saints. Mario was well loved and fortunately for all who loved him, not a Saint but so wonderful on so many levels. That is what I choose to remember. His flaws have become irrelevant. I have not been given sufficient time to gather the stories that we love to share from all the Amanites, Avazians, family and extended family who loved him and must rely on my own memories and stories. I apologize for anything/anyone missed.

MARIO THE MAN: Most importantly, he was capable of unconditional love and absolute loyalty. He never broke anyone's confidence even if someone already knew a little something. He felt the limits of his lack of education but was confident in his own natural wisdom. (The first time he went to Europe with Tony, he hid \$100.00 in his shoe so that there would be money to eat on at the end of the trip. Having traveled with Tony, I know how smart that was-Buy now, Worry about starving later). He came from very humble beginnings but was able to retire very early and later, became wealthy because of his real estate investment acumen and money management



ability. He was a master at the purchase, renovation and reselling of vintage cars.

He was emotionally strong and vulnerable at the same time. He was rarely angry and was not ashamed to cry. When a bunch of us went to see the first production of Chorus Line in L.A., he cried like a baby so that some of the people sitting around us became concerned. "What We Did For Love" was the song that broke our hearts.

Mario would want everyone to know and remember that after almost a twenty year relationship, he officially became the loving dedicated spouse of Daniel Guardado – married under a wedding canopy of a commercial oversized tourist Prigoria umbrella.

MARIO

Nevertheless, Mario genuinely loved women. He often gave advice on how we should dress and actually came shopping with some of us.

Mario was also open naturally to all cultures, religions, persuasions and what nots. He weighed almost 13 pounds at birth and the doctor wrote a note saying, "this child may go to school tomorrow". He was also born with a sense of curiosity. AMAN only expanded on that openness and curiosity. He was way ahead of his time with health foods and naturopathic medicine. He believed strongly in his own natural ability to sense things about people, sometimes their physical health and sometimes with premonitions which proved to be accurate. He knew that most people were not convinced of this ability but he did not care. He did what he could. Aside from that, Mario was wise on every day matters and matters of the heart and many of the younger members of his enormous family came to him for advice.

How many remember the First Annual AMAN Seder at Mario's House on Parkman? Leanne's hard matzoh balls and my soft ones? No right or wrong – just a matter of taste (and argument among the Jewish cooks, of course). Mario loved playing host and loved both styles of matzoh balls but never acquired a taste for gefilte fish. We understood. Thanks again to Ken Moss for rushing Sherwin to an ER when he almost sliced his thumb off carving the brisket. Or, was it a turkey at Thanksgiving? OY!

The memories blend but the point is that his house was the heart of AMAN and open to all. His various houses retained that openness and became the heart of AVAZ and many, many different groups and events. He loved hosting parties and tolerated all our requests to come and live with him or in one of the apartments in the event of need with a gracious smile. He made all of us believe that could happen.

He was great with kids of all ages. I know that Shoshana thought he was way cool for more reasons than one. When she became a Bat Mitzvah, Mario's gift was an enormous classy designer make up kit. Her first. She still remembers the thrill of receiving that gift. She also remembers her shock when her



loving Uncle Mario turned bad cop on her when she was going to leave college and help end the suffering in then, war-torn Nicaragua. He disabused her of the idea of going to an, at the time, anti-Semitic country where she could not speak the language. Fortunately, she did not realize for years that he and I had colluded on the good cop-bad cop

dinner. Glad to have dodged that bullet and forever grateful. He was always a wonderful, interested Mexican-Dutch uncle to Benjamin. Ben was often the last one to leave one of Mario's parties and he, Mario, and Danny talked for hours. They were both always interested in his current project. Mario was simply interested in everything and everyone.

He had impeccable taste. He had a great eye for color and design. He had a great eye for art. The gifts



MARIO

he brought back from travels were never relegated to a junk drawer.

MARIO THE DANCER: I cannot remember any woman, tall or short, who did not long to be Mario's dance partner even though he never remembered the choreography. We all were willing to remind him of what came next and push him where he needed to be and still happily bask in his magnificent smile. His joy and passion were infectious. More than one audience member would remark that if Mario made a mistake, it just looked like everyone else was wrong. Not he. He was a superb performer. Nena and Misha said his Serbian styling was perfect. Bulgarian teachers said his Bulgarian styling was perfect. Vilma said his Greek styling was perfect.

Mario made us all believe that we were his favorite. That great smile shone equally on us all. I can still see him dancing with Barbara, Mady, Steff, Alison, Sherry, Sharon, Julie, Pearl, Dayle, Suzie B and Shelly. (Sorry if I left anyone out. My memory



is not what it once was). I hope to see them dancing together in my mind forever. (BTW: I was his favorite). At the cafes, he also loved dancing with you short women. I actually believe that he longed for Leanne to be tall. She was definitely his favorite.

Mario started off as a salsa dancer of course. He often annoyed the ethnic police by doing a sensual rumba in the middle of the floor while the line was doing a slow Greek Syrto. The rhythm was perfect. He knew nothing of Balkan dancing when he first joined AMAN and knew that people thought he would never learn. That infuriated him so that he was committed to working hard and it sure paid off.

He spent a number of years enthralled with the Tango and actually performed with a small group of professionals for a time (of course). He came to one Tango event during the summer – tanned brown as a berry dressed in a cream-colored silk suit – with no shirt. Just his beautiful bare brown chest. The women went wild.

Who can forget the bus trip after some show when we tried to explain to Mario the concept of drinking champagne from a woman's slipper. He kind of got it wrong and passed around his shoe filled with champagne. We drank it; you know we did, Sherry and Alison? A bunch of others too. Don't deny it.

Danny sometimes wears Mario's shoes when he goes to a special family or friend event. That's how he takes Mario with him and dances for him. The rest of us must take him in our hearts and memories. Let us drink and dance to that.





freakin' Awesome Questions

There are no stupid questions

about AMAN Ojai 2018, only

Freakin' Awesome Questions.

Here are a few...

about AMAN Ojai 2018

Q: If I register on the website have I reserved a room?

A: No. If you plan to stay in Ojai, you will need to reserve your rooms. Currently Ojai accommodations are quite full as there are a number of events scheduled this weekend. Don't wait. Book something ASAP. Click through here for our list of recommended hotels and motels.
http://www.amansociety.com/uploads/2/2/8/2/22826110/ojaihousinginfo_sheet2.pdf

Q: Can non-AMAN members attend the AMAN Ojai Reunion?

A: Of course – all AMAN friends and family are welcome to attend. Friday night is for AMAN Alumni plus one. Saturday night is open to the public.

Q: If I cannot afford the registration fee is there any financial help for me?

A: We do not have a formal solution but please reach out to amansociety.alum@gmail.com and we will help you figure something out.

Q: Can I just buy a ticket for a family member to attend the Saturday Evening Dance Party?

A: Yes, \$40 per person. Click here for online registration.
<http://www.amansociety.com/ojai-online-registration.html>

Q: How can I get a ride to Ojai?

A: If you need a ride, please reach out to amansociety.alum@gmail.com and we will reach out to find someone in your area for a ride-along.

In Memoriam:

Ricardo Salas

by Madelyn Taylor

Ric & I met in '65 in AMAN. We were dance partners often, especially in the early years. We spent time getting to know each other on the movie set of "What Did You Do In the War Daddy"! Ricardo, Tony & Vic recruited a few guys, while I tapped a few gals to join our group.

In the early days, we became close friends when we taught AMAN dance workshops around LA together. These were the prototypes for the popular AMAN Institute! When he came to my house for dinner, Ric & my husband had a lot to talk about. Marty had started a nursery school photography business & had his darkroom at home. Ricardo was working in Westwood Village at the well-known Bel-Air Camera shop, where I often stopped in to see him. He did a number of photo shoots with my daughter & later with my son, and these photos are still family treasures! Through those years we both had enjoyed our "AMAN family" experience so very much.

Later on, Ric moved to New York, where I visited him a few times, and when he came back to SoCal we got together occasionally. We spoke by phone when he was living out of the area. His focus was now on Hungarian Dance and he was a stellar teacher and dancer. Ricardo was always modest about his continuing dance achievements.

The years passed! One day I took my 6 year old grandson to his Little League practice. It was "Team Photo Day" at the WLA baseball park in Westwood.

I will never forget it... I brought Jordan to the check-in table, and who did I find in front of me? RICARDO!!!! We only stopped laughing & hugging because HE was working. Yes...with one camera on a neck strap and another in hand, Ric was an official Little League photographer! Imagine our surprise & delight at finding each other not so far from UCLA, where we had met 3 decades earlier! We quickly

exchanged phone numbers and got together a few times to catch up. We reminisced and laughed so hard that it hurt ...about "the good old AMAN days", about our visits in NY, where he had become a successful photographic artist, about the people we both knew.

I filled him in on my path to a long career in dance and told him about my kids, who now had their own little ones. We also shared deep hurts i.e. our personal losses & disappointments. And Ric told me about his serious health issues - much due to results of exposure to Agent Orange when he was a soldier in Vietnam. The last time we spoke he was about to go in for surgery, which as I recall, had been postponed.

Then the awful news.....Ric, we loved you! In your quiet gentle way, you gave so much to all of us. I am remembering your beautiful smile, your handsome face, your clear & excellent teaching, your quiet but strong voice, your powerful dancing....you are loved and you are missed!

—Love forever, Mady



Do Not Forget to Sign Up for the

KAFANA!

Calling all Singers • Musicians • Storytellers • Dancers • Whatever (you know who you are!) – if you have a talent (solo or group) that you'd like to share with us at the reunion, then SIGN UP for a Kafana time-slot to perform them at amansociety.alum@gmail.com



Wondering About
ACCOMMODATIONS?

Click through for a list of potential hotels and motels:

http://www.amansociety.com/uploads/2/2/8/2/22826110/ojaihousinginfo_sheet2.pdf

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED!**

If interested,
email us at:

amansociety.alum@gmail.com