

# Supper in the City

A group of steadfast USC chums made a commitment to stay in touch – and have kept that promise for 50 years.

**WHEN ARTHUR MOLINA** '49 graduated from USC, he never dreamed that he'd remain lifelong pals with his Trojan friends, even after bonding over such perennial pleasures as Trojan kick-offs and the Newman Club's annual Stardust Ball.

Fifty-plus years later, Arthur and his wife, Anne-Marie (Picard) '48, are still surprised. "But I'm even more surprised that we lived long enough to see the 21st century," Arthur adds with a laugh.

The glue that has held these friendships together for over half a century is "The Supper Club," brainchild of Richard Fixa '51. In April 1952, he and his wife Katherine (Alderson) '51 gathered together an initial group of 10 couples, most of them USC friends, and proposed that they meet bi-monthly at each other's homes. Says Richard, "When you really care for people, and you know you'll never meet friends like that again, you never want to lose touch with each other."

The Supper Club's USC contingent came from a diverse variety of majors, including pre-med, business, education and art. But what they all held in common was their Catholic background. All were members of the Newman Club, a Catholic social group on campus, where they had originally met. "Religion kept us together," says Anne-Marie. "We had similar values, and were comfortable together."

**DECADES LATER**, the core group of eight couples has watched each other's lives evolve, careers blossom and children grow. They were bridesmaids and groomsmen at each other's weddings and are godparents to each other's children. They've spent some 50 weekend vacations together at places like Palm Springs, San Luis Obispo and San Francisco, and have almost exhausted the state's recreational possibilities. "We've done about everything that there is to do in California," says Anne-Marie. "Fifty years covers a lot of ground!"

Staying in touch for so many years did present its challenges, says Del Monge '49. "Lots of people get tied up in their personal lives and business affairs. You just have to be motivated."

Adds Anne-Marie Molina: "We're of different political persuasions, and this almost sunk us a couple times. We've had to learn that we can't discuss politics together."

Two of the eight original couples are now deceased. The other six are going strong, and have recently celebrated their 50th anniversary together. But they have made a couple of small concessions to age. They now meet for brunch ("We don't like to meet at night anymore," says Richard, citing poor vision); and no longer do they host dinners at their homes, opting instead for the hassle-free choice of restaurant dining.

The original Supper Club has done more than keep a group of Trojans together. It's started a family tradition. Richard's son Charlie '80 is carrying the torch into the next generation. He started his own Supper Club five years ago, boasting a core group of six USC grads and their families.

— *Laurel DiGangi*



Still friends after all these years: (top, from left) Bob Gorgen, Del Monge, Tom Foley, Art Molina, Bernie Nestor, Dick Fixa, Walt Smith, Fred Story, Gene Tighe; (bottom, from left): Ruth Becker Gorgen, Eva Murphy Monge, Elaine Fockens Foley, Ann-Marie Picard Molina, Kathy Alderson Fixa, Marie Turk Smith, Betty Hebert Story, Gwen Turke Tighe.

## PERFECT PERFORMANCE

### Verdi Impressive

The majestic Pasadena Civic Auditorium served as backdrop to the USC Thornton Symphony's and the USC Thornton Choral Artists' one-night-only performance of the Verdi Requiem in March. The performance featured a quartet of USC alumni vocal soloists, shown here with conductor Sergiu Commissiona: soprano Michelle Patzakis '85, mezzo-soprano Juliana Gondek '75, MM '77, tenor Robert MacNeil MM '97 and bass Andrew Wentzel MM '78. Sharing the stage with USC Thornton students past and present were the Camerata Singers of Long Beach.

Of the production, the *Los Angeles Times* wrote: "As a demonstration of the achievements of the student orchestra and choral bodies, this was a handsome display. The instrumentalists showed remarkable technical finesse, admirable cohesion and bright resonance. The chorus sang with musical commitment and dramatic gusto." ●





Subj: **In praise of Laurel DiGangi !**  
Date: 5/15/2002 11:53:29 AM Pacific Standard Time  
From: [ASMolina](#)  
To: [dkrieger@USC.edu](mailto:dkrieger@USC.edu)

Dear Ms. Krieger,

Please accept our thanks for accepting the article written by Laurel DiGangi, titled "Supper In the City," which appeared in the recent USC Trojan magazine. We were very impressed by its accuracy, writing style and how well Laurel had perceived our years of friendship. Of course we had many memories and she melded them into a fine description of our 50 years since our student days at USC. Interestingly, many of our other USC friends have called after reading it! We believe Laurel has a long and fine writing career ahead of her and we wish her success.

Anne-Marie Picard Molina '48 and Arthur S. Molina '49.