Excerpts from *Seasoned: A Memoir of Grief and Grace*, by Tom Zink, Micro VII PCV (1968-70):

Background: Six months after Typhoon Jean struck Saipan in April 1968, Carlos and Olympia Borja and their six children were preparing to move into their new typhoon emergency home in Oleai village. I was looking for housing at about that time, and very soon the Borjas and I came up with a plan for me to move into their small 400-square-foot house when they moved into their new home with nearly double the space.

“My move to the Borjas’ house in Oleai village opened the door for me to the Carolinian community. I found myself in the midst of a culture of laughter and lightheartedness and a people whose unhurried, welcoming, hang-loose attitude slowly eased its way under my skin. At first it was itchy and a bit annoying, but, over time, it worked its way in to loosen me up enough to laugh at myself and accept mistakes as part of the fun. I learned this from my Carolinian students, friends, and neighbors in Oleai who welcomed me as one of their own almost as soon as I arrived. They encouraged me to speak their language and ‘forget that Chamorro language.’ The sense of belonging to a community became as strong as any I had known before and fastened my heart to the island of Saipan and the village of Oleai in ways I could neither foresee nor ever undo.” (page 120)

“In my time with the Borjas as a Peace Corps volunteer, I often felt more like a visiting amateur anthropologist—camera always at the ready—learning about island culture through their eyes, rather than a cherished family member who was always welcome. It was only much later I realized that Carlos and Olympia considered me an adopted son, an older brother to their children. I had barely a hint of the impact I’d had on them. On the day I was leaving, the Borjas draped an embarrassment of flowered decorations around my neck and my head. I was drowning in the fragrance and brilliant color of plumeria, ling-y-ling, hibiscus, and ginger. And in the Borjas’ affection for me.” (page 145)