



HIGH VISIBILITY FOR THE PHILIPPINES AT THE 2008 ASIAN FESTIVAL IN RESTON, VIRGINIA

by the MHC News Team



Reston, VA: The Migrant Heritage Commission (MHC) and the Philippine Embassy spearheaded Fil-Am community participation at the 2008 Asian Festival in Reston, Virginia and showcased the best of Filipino culture. The huge 5th Asian Festival is organized annually by the Thai Tennis Organization in America (TTOA), supported by many



organizations and sponsored by SINGHA Beer.

The **Migrant Heritage Commission Tent (or Philippine Cultural Tent)**, considered one of the seven (7) main attractions of the Asian Festival (based on the Asian Festival Pocket Guide), was a spacious U-shaped Cultural Interactive Tent transforming that part of **Zone A** into a mini Philippine Fiesta Village of colorful bantings and background cloths of *vinta* and the *sambulayan* plus *Ati-atihan* decors. It was a very busy tent of purely interactive activities combined with delectable Filipino cuisine which caught every guest's attention and made them stay no less than 15 minutes to have a glimpse and taste of the vibrant Filipino culture. . The new location of the popular MHC Cultural Interactive Tent greeting newly arrived visitors after alighting from the shuttle buses, provided a beautiful lasting impression about the Asian Festival.



The MHC cultural tent also offered the famous Philippine "*Halo-halo*" or mix mix", a popular [Filipino](#) dessert which is a mixture of shaved ice and [milk](#) to which are added various boiled sweet beans and fruits, and served cold in a tall glass or bowl. The dessert exemplifies the "east-meets-west" culture of the Filipinos, with the ingredients used



coming from a wide variety of influences (eg.: Chinese red [mung beans](#), Indian [garbanzos](#), Spanish leche [flan](#) and the American shaved ice.¹

Main interactive activity was the continuous demonstration of “*Tinikling*” or bamboo dance by MHC and other zealous volunteers (mostly young Fil-Ams) from different Fil-Am organizations encouraging visitors to try their skills and hop in gracefully in between the fast clicking of the bamboos. Interspersed with the Tinikling were interactive

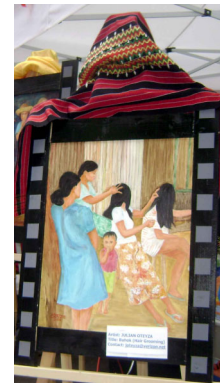


demonstrations of folk and traditional arts representing the 5 diverse cultural suites of the Philippines, from Tribal, Cordillera, Barrio Fiesta, Southern Philippines and Maria Clara as well as interactive arts that best represent the Asian cultures, as follows : :1) Eskrima/Arnis (or Kali in other Asian sytem) by Ultimate Eskrima Int’l Senior Master Instructor Wesley Crisostomo and his top students; 2) the “kapamalong-malong” (also common in Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei) by MHC volunteers and Tribung Pinoy; 3) Mountain Province dance (also seen in some parts of Thailand and Nepal and the Himalayas); 4) The gongs and the agongs (traditional musical instruments which almost all Asian countries have) and 5) the Ati-Atihan drums and music.



Adding interest to the tent were the historical exhibits which allowed the visitors to learn more of interesting vignettes in Philippine history as well as the migrants to the U.S. Pictures of traditional and trendy Filipiniana cosutmes were also on display coupled with Ati-atihan masks, Mindanao “Apir” fans, native baskets, Northern Philippine and Southern Philippines indigenous textiles and the Philippine mat or “*banig*” . Traditional products from different MHC supporters placed some merchandise on display and on sale.

A DVD showing the dance origin/ instructions and history was played at the tent. But nothing else was more enthralling than the actual demonstration of the dances themselves by the multi-talented MHC volunteers from various Fil-Am organizations (ISA’s Miss Teenage Philippines-USA, Tribung Pinoy, Fil-Am Heritage Ensemble, Ultimate Eskrima, Fil-Am Ministry St. Michael, Mother Butler’s Guild of St. Mary’s, Sunflower Group, PACP, APODCAA, FilCom St. Rose, Global Peace Festival (Philippines) etc) Filipino cuisine books were available for sale courtesy of **Mama Sita Foundation**. Paintings of notable Fil-Am artists **Julian Oteyza** and **Glen Brown** were also on



¹ Source : <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halo-halo>

exhibit. *En totale*, guests got an interesting glimpse covering every facet of the rich Filipino cultural heritage, from the Visual Arts to the Performing Arts.

Another vibrant Philippine tent was the Display tent in the **Destination Asia in Zone C** which required all booths in said area to compete in 4 categories : most colorful; most informative; most innovative; and most integrated. **Philippines won the “Most Integrated” Category** . The tourism and heritage display tent was led by the **Embassy of the Philippines**, coordinated by **Consul Rico Fos**, current Cultural Officer of the Embassy, with the support volunteers from the PAFC and other Fil-Am organizations. *A sincere congratulations to the Philippine Embassy, PAFC and other groups for giving their best in showcasing Filipino culture to win the top award in one of the 4 categories.*

On top of these, Philippines also performed on both days on the main stages of the festival : Main cultural stage - performing dance groups namely MHC’s Fil-Am Heritage Dance Ensemble, Bicol Youth Association and Mabuhay Inc. ; Hip Hop Stage- the Blackbird Pond from Virginia Beach; Martial Arts Arena - the Ultimate Eskrima International Inc. Pampanga Youth Club from Virginia Beach enthralled the audience with their “**SINGKIL.**” There was also an interesting commercial booth of Philippine products “**My BAYONG**” which displayed and sold native bags and hats made of traditional mats.



Philippine presence was felt in every corner of the Festival and this augured well for the Philippines for it met the worthy objective of making the Philippines highly visible in the festival, promote Philippine goodwill and enhance Philippine image to the American mainstream.

MHC is one of the patron partners of the Annual Asian Festival. Its participation is under the MHC’s Cultural Resource and Support Program which is supported by the DC Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.. MHC’s Cultural Resource Program aims to preserve the cultural identity of the Filipinos amidst a diversified America. Under this program, MHC aims high visibility for the Philippines in high profile events that reach the American mainstream.

Spearheading MHC’s Cultural Program is the former Cultural Officer and Attache’ of the Philippine Embassy, Ms. Grace Valera-Jaramillo, currently MHC’s Executive Director together with two other Executive Directors Jesse A. Gatchalian and Arnedo S. Valera Esq. Closely helping them are the multi-talented MHC Event Partner Advisers Walter and Wesley Crisostomo of Ultimate Eskrima Int’l , Fil-Am Heritage Dance Ensemble’s Antonio Calaro with MHC’s Programming Consultants Lani Travis, Jenny Hona, Sylvia Nera, Manny Lozada, Badet Ortañez, Milvy Murray and Cultural Adviser Nolly Ceballos of IPAG. Among the Cultural Program volunteers during the Asian Festival were Julie

Quitoriano, Juliet Barredo, Eileen de Cesare, Lucy Mallam, Connie Valera, Didi Achmadi, John & Joy Therio, Edward Busque, Wendy Dayagon, Aireen Granada, Elmo dela Madrid, Thomas and Damian, Looie Po, Vicky, Miss Teenage Philippines-USA Hannah Cabrera Johnson, Alex Valera, Raymund Jaramillo, Paul Acedera Cabrera, Karen and Lexi Crisostomo, Camille Comendador, Crystal, Jen & Cecile Therio, Wally Reyes and Judy Francia, Regina Reyes, Angie Calubaquib, Cess Lauchengco, Gina Inocencio and Joe Penano. Props and costumes were provided by MHC, IPAG, Aklan Ati-atihan of Virginia, New Jersey's Pintig and other MHC supporters. Halo Halo and Filipino cuisine experts came from the catering group of LIRIC LLC. For more information on MHC, please visit www.migrantheritage.org or call 202-247-0117, 202-631-8856 or 703-273-1196 or email migrantheritage@aol.com

PHOTO GALLERY

Photos courtesy of J.Hona, L.Travis, A.Valera

SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES/ MUSLIM SUITE AND TRIBAL SUITE



Tribung Pinoy volunteers teach visitors the different traditional ways of wearing the *malong*.



MHC volunteers play the indigenous *kulintang* gongs

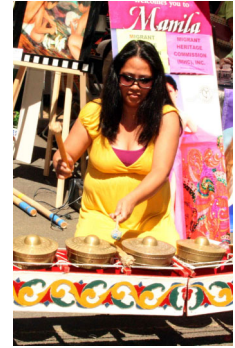
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A 3 year old girl tries the "*Agong*" of Mindanao





This McKaine supporter did not leave the *kulintang* gongs until he learned the basics.



Visitors proudly display their malongs after learning some of the styles on how to wear them

With Lani Travis, Sylvia Nera, Milvy Murray Jenny Hona and Manny Lozada, wearing an authentic "Yakan" costume from Mindanao.





The popular Blackbird Pond Band from Norfolk, Virginia visited the MHC Cultural Interactive Tent and delightfully sampled the Philippine "Halo-Halo"



A curious visitor looks at the photo exhibit on the history of Filipino Migration to the U.S.



Fil-Am Heritage Dance Ensemble's Raymund and Paul with guest performers - Crystal, Cecil and Jen Therio from Houston, Texas performed the "Subli" on the cultural main stage.



PAFC's and ISA's Ernie Cordero visited the MHC Cultural Tent with a **SINGHA** beer, Asian Festival's presenting sponsor



BARRIO FIESTA/ RURAL SUITE

MHC TINIKLING INTERACTIVE

Curious visitors tried their skills in the bamboo dance. . Many of them were successful in not getting caught in between the bamboos but some were not, to the extent of losing their balance. Combined efforts of several MHC volunteers from

different Fil-Am organizations paid well for everyone had a great time doing it with the audience sharing the fun as well.

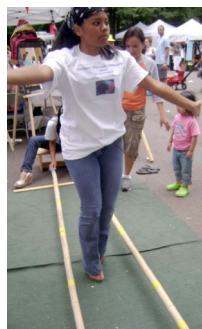
"Taking the challenge to hop in the bamboos was worth the fun" says one visitor.



Camille



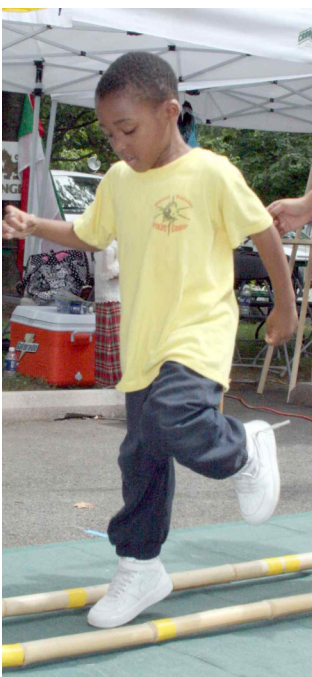
Karen



Paul



Julie Quitoriano patiently teaches a young girl who seems to be scared of the bamboo poles.



This little American boy stole the show with his skillful hopping in between the fast clicking of the bamboos....

Juliet Barredo managed to smile after clicking the Tinikling bamboos for almost an hour. . .



AGOS' Badet Ortanez tries her luck with the Tinikling





Who could resist a Mindanao beauty (Milvy) when she's the one clicking the bamboos ?



Endless crowd until closing time as MHC volunteers demonstrated the Tinikling” and other performing arts. . .



All smiles on their faces while watching fellow visitors do the Tinikling. . .

MARTIAL ARTS/ ESKRIMA / ARNIS INTERACTIVE



Smithsonian's Gina Inocencio and husband Dr. Joe Penano did some Eskrima tricks

Lani Travis, wearing an Igorot Head dress, demonstrates Eskrima to the visitors

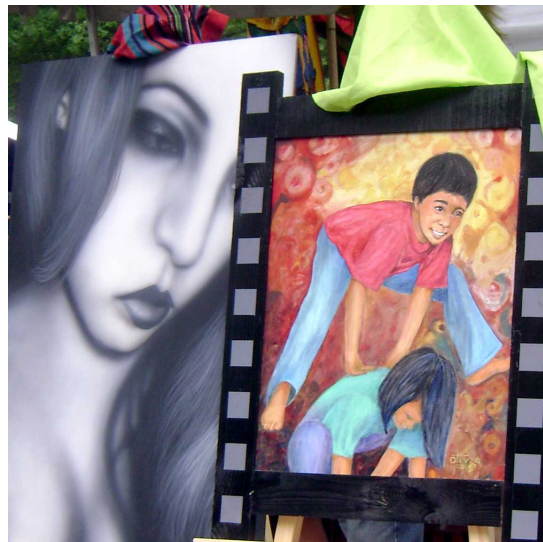


Laughing, this visitor gives up with the eskrima technique taught to her by Senior Master Instructor Wesley Crisostomo.



Ultimate Eskrima's Vic & Lexi impressed the visitors with their swift style of stickfighting

VISUAL ARTS



The MHC Cultural Interactive Tent also featured beautiful artworks of notable Fil-Am Artists Julian Oteyza and Glen Brown.

NORTHERN PHILIPPINES / MOUNTAIN PROVINCE/ CORDILLERA SUITE

MHC volunteers Thomas, Elmo and Damian from California and Colorado demonstrated Mountain Province/Cordillera Region's Cañao dance with gongs to the delight of the crowd and with Fil-Am youth giving it a try.



Raymund



The three MHC Executive Directors Grace Valera-Jaramillo, Jesse A. Gatchalian and Arnedo S. Valera Esq. with the dedicated volunteers



who really took time out to share the fun of promoting Philippine culture.



80 year old Connie Valera in a mestiza / Terna gown with 6 year old Liana Travis

Sunflower' Ass;n Lucy Mallam and Didi Achmadi





Looie Po shows her Muslim costume from the South.



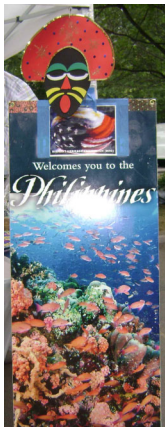
The Ati-atihan Mask symbolizes the famous "Mardi Gras" like festival in the Philippines

Multi-awarded Wu-Shu Champion Alex Valera and ISA's 2008



Miss Teenage Philippines-USA Hannah Grace Cabrera

Johnson bow to the crowd after doing the 1st Tinikling performance at the MHC Cultural Interactive Tent..



The combined vibrant colors of the Philippines from the North to the South- Sambulayan and the Vinta, with the Philippine flag, dominated the MHC- Philippine Cultural Interactive Tent at the 2008 Asian Festival. . .

LIVE A LIFE THAT MATTERS. . .



HONORING AND SERVING THE MIGRANT
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