September 15, 2011 *Volume 1, Issue 1*

TERRAPINOISE

Putting the "know" back in Filipino.

Sights, Sounds ,and Smells from Fiesta Filipiniana

On June 12, 2011, Filipino American organizations across the state of Maryland congregated in Towson for Fiesta Filipiniana to celebrate Filipino culture with food, games, music, and dance. The event was hosted by Kapitunan MD, a Filipino American group from the Baltimore area.

A number of college groups came were present at the event, including the University of Maryland's Filipino Cultural Association (FCA), and the Filipino Cultural Association of Towson (FCAT). Their booths were kid-oriented, featuring arts and crafts activities, face painting, and a ball-toss game that awarded winners goldfish.

Throughout the area, many booths were set up to sell different food from the homeland. Filipino favorites kutsinta, puto, turon, and other delicious sweets were sold. Grills everywhere were cooking barbecue pork on a stick; the aroma permeated through the festival air. By far, though Halo-halo was the main attraction for the day; the line to buy reached as long as twenty-five feet.

Around noon, a small parade around the festival was held. Behind a cross held by a Filipino boy, young men dressed in barong Tagalog promenaded beautiful young women, including Maryland sophomore Lauren Flores, clothed in elegant dresses ranging from traditional to modern styling.

A stage was set up highlighting local Filipino-American music groups, including Ivy Rose. Consisting of Martina Sandiego and sisters Kristine, Sarah, and University of Maryland junior Isabelle de Leon, the group is renowned across campus as the opening act of Art Attack 2010. The other acts ranged from alternative rock to metal.

On the main stage was a wide range of performances, from singing acts to dance performances. One group even danced the Tinikling to the sounds of Lady Gaga. Junior Joy Mateo sang on stage along with her sisters, as well. The largest performance at the main stage was done by the Filipino American Association of the Upper Chesapeake. Performers of all ages danced and sang while in traditional Filipino garb, reflecting the mix of Spanish and Filipino culture prevalent in the late nineteenth century.

The festival was an overall success, sharing the homeland's traditions, as well as showcasing the cross-cultural collaboration of Filipino Americans, before being promptly washed out by a thunderstorm late in the afternoon.

-Adrian Francisco

TerrapiNOISE Staff

Editor:
Jonathan Reyes
Writers:
Andrew Aggabao
Public Relations Officer
Tyler Babich
Community Service Chair
Mariel Bartolome
Webmistress
Adrian Francisco
General Body Member
Jeanine Reyes
FCA Alumnus

Interested in contributing to TerrapiNOISE? E-mail Jonathan Reyes at jonathan.js.reyes@gmail.com

The front of the Fiesta parade (photo by Adrian Francisco)

A Walk Through Asia in America

It was one of the last places I would want to be on a brutal, summer day in Fairfax, Virginia, but that's where the I, along with other members of the Filipino Cultural Association and the Asian-American community of D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, found myself. In more than 100 degree weather and unimaginable humidity, the 8th Annual Asian Festival: Destination Asia was held on the campus of George Mason University on July 23 and 24.

The centerpieces of the festival were four adjacent villages, each of which featured a unique Asian culture. They were called "Rushhi Heritage India", "Image of China", "Amazing Thailand", and "Wow Philippines!". In each village, cultural performers sang, danced, and presented both traditional and modern entertainment. The Filipino Cultural Association performed Sakuting, a Christmastime dance that represents a fight between the Christian Ilocanos and non-Christian mountain tribes in the province of Abra.

The villages also featured booths of different organizations selling food, clothes, and other cultural items, including fans, informational packets, games, bamboo plants, pop star posters, cooking utensils, and countless other Asian products that are no longer easily available to families of the Asian diaspora. At the end of the line of booths for Wow Philippines! was a traditional bamboo hut, called a "bahay kubo" in Tagalog. In front of it was an elderly man with a walking stick wearing traditional farmer's clothes, sitting next to a life-size water buffalo replica on which the provinces of the Philippines were painted. While there were many non-Asians who attended the festival, Destination Asia, like other festivals that usually occur during the summer months, tend to attract, and are therefore planned to appeal to, ethnic Asians. The Asian American community represents a displaced culture doing its best to co-exist with other displaced cultures in a land of promise, and the festival showed that even in a foreign land, the bonds of culture still hold together people of different families and generations.

-Andrew Aggabao

A protestor fights against deportation. (from change.org)

Unfair Deportation of Filipino Teachers

The Philippines exports quality teachers all around the world. According to the Pilipino Education Network (PEN), since PG County began hiring foreign teachers in large numbers, the schools have seen higher standardized test scores and have met No Child Left Behind standards. Sadly, hundreds of these teachers now face deportation due the Department of Labor's decision to penalize the Prince George's County Public School System for underpaying and mistreating over 1,000 foreign teachers.

For violating labor laws regarding foreign teachers, PGCPSS is on a two-year ban from hiring teachers on H1B visas, which require holders to remain employed or leave the country. Thus, the Department of Labor's ban has not only forced these teachers out of a job, but potentially out of the country as well.

This may not be an isolated incident; a Louisiana teachers' union filed a lawsuit against local public schools and Universal Placement International, a private company that recruits Filipino teachers for US employment. The official complaint sent to the Department of Labor lists eight violations by the schools, such as underpaying the teachers and retaliating when the teachers reported abuse. Universal allegedly charged Filipino teachers unfair fees in order to complete necessary paperwork and withheld their immigration documents. Currently, it is unclear if these teachers are also at risk for deportation.

In response to these incidents, Katarungan DC and PEN have begun fighting for the PG County teachers. A petition at Change.org has already received over 3,000 signatures, and hundreds of supporters protested at the White House in August.

-Tyler Babich

Filipinos At Sea: The *MV Explorer* Crew

I left the safe haven of my Maryland home to jump on the cruise ship *MV Explorer* to see the Mediterranean while on the Summer 2011 voyage of Semester at Sea. Here I was, the only student from the University of Maryland, boarding a ship with students from across the country from Augusta to Honolulu and expecting to stick out like a sore thumb among a group of white frat boys and blonde California girls. Asian student populations on these voyages are typically very low, averaging at about 3-4% of the overall total. After gaining so many friends here in FCA, I felt like I would be really far from my own culture for a while, especially while traveling throughout Europe.

But as soon as I boarded the ship, I noticed the crew appeared particularly Asian. Then I noticed that they spoke with an accent not so different from my parents. Then I heard them speaking Tagalog, and I couldn't help but to be astonished.

As I learned both in class and through conversations with the crew, 65% of the *Explorer*'s crew of 200 was Filipino, a visibly evident fact. From my steward, Jesse, to the servers in the main dining room, to the bartenders on deck seven, to the security guards making sure we weren't smuggling things onto the ship, Filipino crewmembers manned all facets of the ship, aside from some head positions.

The North Sea Marine Services Agency recruits many of the workers right out of Manila and places them on the ships of numerous cruise lines. They don't accept just anyone, though. They are very selective, and expect workers to have hotel industry or maritime experience before they will even look at an application.

Of course, ship life is not all glamour. Cooks have to be ready two hours before breakfast each day to prepare food. Housekeeping works around the clock to keep the *Explorer* at its most pristine, and students can often cause problems for them. One Filipino bar waitress, Teresita, had to put up with graveyard shifts at the 24-hour snack bar, dealing with rowdy, hungry, and drunk college students while we were in port in Barcelona. It is not an enviable position.

Photos of the MV Explorer. *(by Adrian Francisco)*

Homesickness was common among the Filipino workers. Whenever I was craving a Kit-Kat at two in the morning, Teresita often spoke of her young son back home. One bartender, Rommel, spoke of his own daughters going to college back in Manila and how he wished they could somehow come aboard the ship like us American students. Despite serving thousands of the ship's students, they cannot afford to bring their own children aboard.

The ship does a lot to keep them entertained, though. On Deck 1, the crew has a private karaoke bar and a drum set. Once or twice per voyage, a huge party for the crew is held on Deck 4. There is also a crew basketball tournament; Lord knows, Filipinos *love* playing basketball. Towards the end of the voyage, there was even a Crew Talent Show, where a number of servers and stewards showed off their singing, dance, and comedy skills.

Crewmembers stay on the ship for the duration of their contracts, which last for either seven or nine months time. Afterward, they make their way back to the Philippines by plane. I often found it sad when they left; without saying goodbye, many just disappeared midway through the voyage, only to be replaced by someone else.

My daily interactions with the crew showcased their immense hospitality. Those I talked to regularly were always friendly, and they even brought me some longanisa and kanin from the crew cafeteria.

Despite being the only fully Filipino-American student, I felt that, out of any other student on the ship, I was the one who could really call the *Explorer* home due to the ever-welcoming Filipino staff, and I'm sure any Filipino would feel the same.

-Adrian Francisco

Read more at americankatipunero.blogspot.com.

Walkathon to Raise AAST Scholarship Funds

The Asian American Studies (AAST) Program, directed by Larry Shinagawa, is a wonderful program that offers UMD students the opportunity to minor in Asian American Studies. It is also the first program on the East Coast to incorporate Filipino American Studies into its curriculum. The program offers five Asian American Studies scholarships, awarded annually to students enrolled in AAST courses at the University of Maryland. Jitter Garcia, current Vice President of FCA, is one of the recipients of The Major General Antonio Taguba Profiles in Courage and Leadership Scholarship. She comments, "It is a great honor to receive an AAST scholarship and it encourages me to continue to learn and represent matters important to the APA community in everything I do."

Many APA organizations, including, have collaborated to raise awareness and funds for the continued distribution of these important scholarships. The result will be the first Terps Walk fAAST 5K Walkathon at the University of Maryland, College Park on October 22. It will be an exciting event that will bring together students, alumni, faculty and administrators of UMD as well as members of the surrounding community. The goal is to raise $10,000 to support AAST scholarships through individual participant fundraising in the fundraising challenge. Prizes will be given to the top fundraisers and supporters.

This walkathon will be a relaxing way to enjoy a nice walk or run around beautiful Lake Artemisia with friends, to listen to the talents of acoustic musicians and spoken-word poets, and to learn more about the scholarships. This family-oriented event will also include children activities. It will be a great way to kick off the 2011-2012 academic year, and by word of mouth we can all take part in raising awareness about the five significant scholarships!

-Jeanine Reyes

For more information on Terps Walk fAAST, visit www.terpswalkfaast.com.

FCA's Good Life

This column covers all facets of life - food, music, movies, Jersey Shore episodes, presidential debates, reader questions, anything as per request.

Today's review is brought to you by the authentic cuisine of the North Campus Diner's Korean BBQ station. The dish: bulgogi with a vegetable mix of napa cabbage, carrots, red onions, sugar snap peas and baby corn.

I was told by the highly accomplished chefs of this fine eatery that their meat is marinated overnight in a medley of soy sauce, brown sugar, garlic, ginger and sesame seed oil. I believe that. The beef has plenty of flavor, although this is somewhat downplayed by its overcooking. Of course, this is nothing that can't be solved by a little extended chewing. In fact, I think it was the extended chewing that allowed me to savor the different flavors it inherited the prior night.

I am inclined to think that the vegetables are also cooked overnight. They are a bit lifeless, and I feel as though I have been robbed of nutritional value. All is not lost, however, since I believe that it is nutritional value that makes vegetables yucky. Research grant pending.

From the long lines you see at this station every night, there is no doubt that there is something in their bulgogi that makes them want to bul-GO-gi back. In terms of diner food, and the fact that they serve white rice, The Diner's KBBQ station hits a solid 4-hole par.

-Mariel Bartolome
Have a question for Mariel?
E-mail her at
marielbartolome@gmail.com

Upcoming Events:

September 15:
First FCA GBM
7PM @ ASY1213

September 17:
Kollaboration DC
@ University of the District of Columbia Auditorium

September 18:
Turkey Bowl Practices
10AM @ Chapel Fields
Cultural/Welcome Picnic
1PM @ Oakland Hall Patio

September 25:
Turkey Bowl Practices
10AM @ Chapel Fields
District VI Picnic
10AM @ Centennial Park

October 1:
District VI GBM
4PM @ George Washington University