



ANNA BALADAD



MIA BALDONADO



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Miss Asian American Texas: A cultural extravaganza

AUSTIN—This year's staging of the Miss Asian American Texas pageant promises to be an evening of Asian cultural extravaganza.

Now on its 10th year, the Miss Asian American Texas pageant will be held in Austin on Saturday, Aug. 11, 2007, at the Austin Convention Center on 500 E. Cesar Chavez St. The pageant has always been held in Dallas since 1997.

Some 15 women of Asian

descent aged 18 to 25 years will vie for this year's coveted title of "Miss Asian American Texas."

"The pageant is the premiere cultural event for young Asian women in Texas," said Gigi Hobson, this year's pageant coordinator.

The Miss Asian American Texas pageant aims to foster unity, understanding and camaraderie among Asian Americans in Texas and increase awareness of

the diversity and strengths of the Asian American community. The pageant also seeks to provide opportunities for contestants as well as volunteers to further develop leadership and interpersonal skills through individual and group activities including community relations, public speaking, and other events.

The winner of the 2007 Miss Asian American Pageant will carry the title for

two years, during which time she will represent the Asian American community in her new leadership role. She will also represent Texas in a national pageant in California.

The grand prize includes a \$2,000 scholarship, crown, trophy, sash, and other awards. Cash scholarships will also be given to the finalists. Individual awards will be given for leadership, academic excel-

lence, dedication, congeniality, community service, fundraising, best in gown, best in talent, and others.

Various Asian community organizations will be also showcase their culture and heritage through their traditional songs and dances, top with their colorful costumes.

Tickets to the pageant are available online by visiting our website at www.missaatexas.org.

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children 11 years old and under. Doors will open at 5:30 pm. The cultural presentation will begin at 6 pm. The pageant starts at 7 pm.

For more information or if you wish to volunteer or to be a sponsor of this event, contact Gigi Hobson at 512-294-7045 or at gigi.hobson@prodigy.net. In Dallas, contact Merna Parcon at 214-244-9114.

Philippine-American friendship

Culture & Art



Ruth Fonceca Smith

HELLO, everyone! *Kumusta po kayo?*

I am sure you and I have our Filipino and American friends. We interact with Americans every day. Many of us even interact with them as Filipino Americans.

When I was in the Philippines, just like many of you, I had four jobs. This was in Angeles City, Pampanga, from 1980-1986. I would leave my house at 6 am to get to Clark Air Force Base, where I worked as a Music teacher with the U.S. Department of Defense. At 3:30 pm and on Saturdays, I would go to the Silver Wing Music Academy to teach my voice classes. After that I would proceed to Angeles University Foundation, where I was Music Director, to teach music fundamentals and elementary and high school Music to future music teachers. Sunday morning, I was the choir director at the Base Chapel.

I learned the best from the best and I also felt very privileged to be teaching in the Philippine and American communities.

When Dr. Emmanuel Angeles, the owner and chancellor of Angeles University Foundation became the program director of the Philippine American Society of Angeles City, he made me the society's music director. The American community was composed of military and civic leaders and their families; church groups; and schools inside the Clark Air Force Base. The Filipino community was composed of military, civic-business leaders

and their families; and universities off base.

This friendship society both committed to protect and help each other. It encouraged international understanding through educational, cultural and humanitarian exchanges. Filipino teachers taught Philippine culture and art at the schools in the base. Americans were guest speakers at Philippine universities and associations. Americans donated books, visual aids and building materials to poor Filipino school districts. The U.S. base and Philippine universities helped in developing better quality of life for the Aetas through sustainable agriculture, community-based health, literacy, water system provision, and education. Civic action from both communities helped settle their disputes through peaceful means.

Philippine universities would do excellent cultural presentations in the base. In the same manner, the Stotsenberg Performers (where I was their pianist) would perform at Philippine universities.

The American community organized fund-raising events for Filipinos ravaged by calamities. These events were on Channel 8, the base TV, which could be viewed off base.

The greatest event that Filipinos, Americans and I enjoyed was the yearly performance of the Fil-Am Choir, composed of some 500 members and accompanied by a Filipina pianist and the 13th Air Force Band, at the Convention Center of Baguio City, the summer capital of the Philippines.

The choir performed Handel's "The Messiah" which was coordinated by the base chaplains. The U.S. base provided air conditioned buses, housing and food.

Now here's the dramatic story. Blackouts were rampant in Baguio then. In the middle of the "Hallelujah Chorus" the lights went out. The Filipinos and Americans with the conductor and the 13th Air Force Band *perfectly* finished the music to the

ican students were very much affected when the bases U.S. closed. There are three main categories of a child's developmental milestones and one of them is the emotional milestone. Emotional focuses on friendships, separation, social awareness and cooperation.

My American students grew up in the Clark Air Force Base. This was their



THE author (left), soprano soloist, together with the members of the Fil-Am Choral Group.



THE base chaplain, the Filipina pianist, the author, and a flautist of the choral group.

end. As we were singing the last three "Hallelujahs," the lights came back on! God was with us! It was a GRAND PERFORMANCE witnessed by the city of Baguio that they gave us a resounding standing ovation!

The TIES THAT BIND Filipino and Amer-



THE author dancing with an American school principal who married his old fashioned maid.

home. They will always treasure their Filipino friends. They remember and cherish their Filipino maids whom they have grown to love. I still remember the Filipinos who used to serve me at the snack bars I stopped at on my way to the Music Academy. We enjoyed sharing stories and jokes. We will always remember and cherish the people who have enriched our lives and helped mold us into what we have become today.

I'll be seeing you in the next issue....