

The Valdosta Daily Times

Dance competition

Dean Poling

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— VALDOSTA — Registration has opened for dancers wanting to share their heritage and native lands' cultures in the Third Annual World Cultures Dance Competition. The competition is not scheduled until 1-6 p.m., March 8, but now is the time to start entering, says Serena Huang, the competition's organizer and the founder of the Azalea International Folk Fair. The dance competition is part of the fair, which was originally named the Asian Cultural Experience.

"This dance competition is the South's very first organized effort in hosting a dance competition with a theme of international folk cultures," Huang says. The success of the first competition in 2006 allowed it to grow during the second one held earlier this year. More than 20 multi-cultural dance groups from Georgia, Alabama and Florida represented dances from across the world this past March. The invitation is extended again to the South's folk-dance teams. "This program was created to offer a unique opportunity for Southern communities to connect with and explore the world's rich cultural diversity through colorful folk dances," Huang says.

Anyone unfamiliar with this event can see performances from past competitions by visiting www.youtube.com/azaleainternational. The dance competition and folk fair have grown to partner with Valdosta State University's annual international dinner. Huang's events have earned funding not only from local businesses, state agencies and corporations but the National Endowment of the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Valdosta Daily Times is also a partnering sponsor. The event has also received media coverage in Asian nations. The festival started with Huang teaching her native Taiwan dances to her children's school classes, grew to include other area schools and grew from there.

Dance Registration

Interested groups may register for the Third Annual World Cultures Dance Competition, which is scheduled for 1-6 p.m., March 8, James H. Rainwater Conference Center.

Registration dates: Now through Feb. 15.

More information, registration forms: Visit the Web site

www.GAinternationalfolkfair.org s

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Dancers perform a traditional Mexican dance during the Multi-Cultural Folk Dance Competition earlier this year. Registration is open for the next competition in March.



A traditional African dance performed during the Multi-Cultural Folk Dance Competition earlier this year. Registration is open for next year's competition.