

# **The Valdosta Daily Times**

## **Work Progresses on International Folk Fair**

**By Malynda Fulton**  
January 31, 2009

— VALDOSTA —Preparations continued for the 2009 Azalea International Folk Fair Saturday as students and festival directors took part in a workshop at Lowndes High School Saturday to get ready for the event. The workshop featured an East Asian Demo and visual displays from countries across the world. The event gave folk fair participants, board members and area programs directors the opportunity to rehearse for the annual fair, discuss new features and take pictures. Board members and directors in attendance included Southeast Asian Directors Inday Bauer, Randall Strother and Nok Safford; East Asian Directors Jae Branch, Teresa Herron, Haruka Sakoda and Kazumi Kikuchi; Latin American Director Olinda Alexander; African Director Temple Ogundu; and European Director Michael Noll.

Before the workshop's end, a Taste of Global Cuisine banquet was held, providing authentic, international dishes prepared by the diverse folk fair board members. The banquet featured traditional Korean, Filipino, Cuban and Italian entrees and desserts. The Azalea International Folk Fair opens Thursday, March 5, and Friday, March 6, for school field trips and continues Saturday, March 7 for the general public.

This year, the fair introduces a cultural geography project entitled "Are You Smarter Than A 7th Grader?" to prepare students for the annual CRCT exam. The project, coordinated by Noll, allows audience members and local community members to engage in an educational game that models the popular game show "Are You Smarter Than A 5th Grader?"

Students from various parts of Georgia, Florida and South Carolina are scheduled to attend the fair. Saturday events include the annual International Folk Dance Competition, which is open to dancers from throughout the region representing national dances from around the globe. Ogundu mentioned plans to showcase the traditional African wedding as well.

"The folk fair is the ultimate social studies experience for the community as well as the state," said Italian representative Rosetta Coyne, who attended the workshop along with Gabriele Costa, a Valdosta State University exchange student from Ancona, Italy.

The annual folk fair and dance evolved from the vision of Director Serena Huang, who began a celebration of the Chinese New Year in Valdosta in 2000. The event grew into a celebration of Asian culture hosted by the Valdosta Asian Cultural Association, and has now developed into an all-inclusive showcase of the world's cultures. Last year, State Rep. Amy Carter deemed the event Georgia's official international festival.

Tickets for the fair are on sale now or \$5. On the day of the event, admission will be \$6 for adults and \$3 for children under 12. Super Saver Cards, which include specials from several folk fair sponsors, are also on sale for \$6. Tickets and cards can be purchased from Asian Food Market on Bemiss Road or from any board member, director or representative. For more information, e-mail Serena Huang at [serenahuang@gainternationalfolkfair.org](mailto:serenahuang@gainternationalfolkfair.org).

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A group demonstrates the traditional wedding ceremony of residents of Nigeria, Africa, in traditional clothing during the Azalea International Folk Fair workshop at Lowndes High School Saturday.