

Historic Filipinotown's Parol Festival and Contest attract more participants this year

by RENE VILLAROMAN
AJPress

HISTORIC FILIPINOTOWN—The Historic Filipinotown Neighborhood Council and the Search to Involve Filipino Americans teamed up for this year's Parol Contest and Parade held on last December 19.

"Tonight is important because it is a collaboration of SIPA and the fourth annual Historic Fili-

pinotown Parol Festival. We're combining two community events," said SIPA executive director Joel Jacinto. "We want to collaborate—that's the sign of the times—and we want to feed off the energy, and having the event here on SIPA on the west side of Historic Filipinotown was really gratifying."

The parol parade started at Manila Terrace and culminated in judging at the SIPA headquar-

ters at Hoover, west side of Hi Fi. Leo Pandac of Hi Fi Neighborhood Council announced the winners in the Parol Contest, minutes after judging. Remy's on Temple's entry won the "Best in Show; Lord of Harvest Church won "Best Original" and Burlington School garnered the "Most Traditional" pennant. "One of our parols was made by a Pampangueno in conformity with the tradition of Pampanga," Neigh-

borhood Council President Cecille Lam told *Asian Journal*. "I am challenging all barrios in Pampanga to join the festival and contest next year, when we will have a big parade," Ramos said.

David Rockello of the Hi Fi Neighborhood Improvement Council, who briefed the judges, said that the parol entries should have been made during the last 24 hours prior to judging. "The entries should be a clever interpretation of the parol," Rockello said. An accomplished parol-maker himself, his entry was one of the winners in last year's contest.

In the children's and senior's category, the winners were: Burlington School, "Best in Parol"; Hi Fi Neighborhood Improvement Council, "Best in Children"; Hi Fi NIC, "Best in Innovative Parol"; Christian Ortiz, "Inspired Parol"; SIPA, "Innovative Children's Parol"; SIPA, "Inspired Senior Parol". This list was released by Parade and Contest chairman Leo Pandac.

The parol festival attracted more than 50 entrants and close to 300 people to the SIPA headquarters. "The parade and festival



Members of the Historic Filipinotown Neighborhood Council pose in front of the "Most Traditional Parol" entry in the Parol Contest. From left are Leo Pandac, Joselyn Geaga-Rosenthal, Cecille Ramos, Doc Marte, David Rockello and Erlinda Rockello.

is growing, and SIPA continues to support a lot of families; not just Filipinos, Latinos and others. It's really gratifying," Jacinto told *Asian Journal*. "If you look outside (on Temple St.) there is a visible sign—lighted parols hanging on utility poles—signs that Historic Filipinotown and Filipinos in Los Angeles are increasing their visibility and presence. So that's good. *Mabuhay!*"



Other parols entered in the contest. AJPress Photos by Rene Villaroman

Problems seen in e-voting overseas

by RANDOLPH E. SCHMID
AP Writer

WASHINGTON—Election ballots could be safely distributed electronically to Americans overseas, but getting their votes back securely could present problems, a study released December 24.

It is difficult to ensure that an electronic ballot is from a registered voter and has not been changed en route, while still protecting the individual's privacy, the National Institute of Standards and Technology said in the study.

Currently most ballots are sent and returned by postal or military mail, which can take time. A few states distribute blank ballots by fax or e-mail.

The study, requested by the Election Assistance Commission, looks at the possibility of handling overseas voting by telephone, fax, e-mail and through the Internet.

Fax, e-mail and the Internet all could be used to deliver blank ballots, the study concludes, significantly reducing delivery times. Procedures could be instituted to reduce any threats to such programs, the report said.

But getting the votes back in a secure fashion would be a larger problem that needs to be studied, it said.

• Telephone: Voting by telephone presents a number of security challenges, the study concluded. Since a voter couldn't sign the ballot, officials would have to find another way to authenticate the vote, such as using a PIN, or personal identification number, although that could be stolen.

• Fax: Returning a ballot by fax raises questions about maintaining voter privacy and how the ballot could be protected from tampering.

• E-mail: Voting by e-mail requires several different computer systems to transfer the ballot. Since the systems would not be controlled by election officials they could be attacked to block movement of the bal-

lot, or to tamper with it.

• Internet: Voting on a Web page means "a great deal of trust must be placed in the software on the election server to accurately record votes, as there would be no opportunity for voters to directly verify that their ballots have been recorded correctly," the report said. Like e-mail voting systems, a Web-based system also would rely on computer systems outside the control of election officials. "Attacks on these systems, such as voters' computers, could significantly threaten the integrity of elections or the ability of voters to cast ballots," the report added.

In addition, voters could be tricked into giving up their voting credentials.

The report noted that such attacks are common in the banking industry, and difficult to defend against.

"There have been and continue to be significant problems in this industry," the report said. "Technology that is widely deployed today is not able to mitigate many of the threats to casting ballots via the Web."

Some stations to reach fewer viewers with digital

WASHINGTON—Nearly a fifth of the nation's full-power television stations will no longer reach at least 2 percent of viewers now covered by their existing analog signals after they switch to digital broadcasts in February, federal regulators say.

The Federal Communications Commission report comes amid mounting concerns that some consumers who rely on analog-only television sets could lose some or all over-the-air broadcast channels following the Feb. 17 digital transition even if they have purchased and hooked up digital converter boxes.

That's because many television stations will shift their broadcast footprints with the mandatory transition by changing transmitter locations, antenna patterns or power levels. The FCC is not requiring television stations to replicate their analog coverage.

Some viewers could also lose signals because of what's known as the digital "cliff effect." Unlike analog signals, digital broadcasts either come in clear or not at all, meaning that those on the fringes of analog coverage areas will lose that reception entirely after the transition. Currently, they can still get fuzzy analog signals. Some viewers may therefore

need more powerful antennas—in addition to converter boxes—to continue receiving certain channels.

In a report released December 23, the FCC said 319 of the nation's 1,749 full-power television stations, or 18 percent, will have a digital signal that reaches at least 2 percent fewer viewers than their current analog broadcasts.

Those numbers do not reflect viewers who will continue to receive channels after the transition because they subscribe to cable or satellite service—roughly 85 percent of viewers overall—or rely on so-called "translators" or repeaters to get reception.

What's more, many stations will be gaining viewers else-

where even as they lose some of their existing viewers. About half of those 319 stations will reach more people overall after the transition.

Other stations will also reach fewer existing viewers, but below the 2 percent threshold. All told, 196 stations, or 11 percent of the 1,749 full-power TV stations, will reach viewers overall, while the rest will see gains.

Broadcasters can take a number of steps to restore service for those who may lose signals. Options include using translators or "fill-in" stations that operate on a different channel, using another station's digital spectrum to retransmit a signal, maximizing the station's power, changing the station's channel or changing its antenna pattern.

The National Association of Broadcasters had no comment on the FCC report.

The transition from analog to digital broadcasting is expected to free up valuable spectrum that can be used to deliver high-speed Internet access and other commercial wireless services and to connect police officers, fire fighters and other emergency workers.

Earlier this month, Congress passed a law requiring analog broadcasts of public safety announcements and information about the digital transition for 30 days following the transition. The information to be broadcast will include details on how consumers can convert their television sets to receive digital signals. (AP)

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