

# Culturally Speaking

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**Cultural Diversity Resources is dedicated to building communities that value diversity, in partnership with the cities of Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead, Dilworth, and Cass & Clay counties since 1994**

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## Pangea Showcases Area Cultures

By: **Rose Marie Gueidner**

To the compelling cadence of a drum, two colorful dragons entered the room and snaked their way through the crowd to the front of the auditorium. On stage, the Vietnamese dragons continued to prance, twist, and leap to the delight of those gathered at the Historical & Cultural Society of Clay County (HCS, formerly the Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead) for the 16th annual Pangea Cultivate Our Cultures Festival, Saturday, November 14.

Suomi Rosvot could not have been more contrasting in appearance and performance to the ritual performed by young Vietnamese, recent immigrants to the area. Dressed in street clothes, the

eight member Scandinavian band of elders sat facing the audience throughout their routine. However, the liveliness was delivered from their horns, brass and reed plus an accordion for balance. The music was European, generally from the Scandinavian countries and Germany. Finnish Robbers (the English translation) began years ago in Minnesota's Iron Range. The group played fun, upbeat dance music, waltzes, schottisches, foxtrots, but the crowd favorite was the Beer Barrel polka.

After a moment of silence for a prayer which precedes Indian celebrations, the stage gave way to graceful women clad in festive saris. Their



Roots of Mexico dancers

performance included a hand-held stick dance from the northwestern part of the country, a devotional number based on mythological lovers, and a swaying fusion dance performed to a medley of songs from Bollywood movies.

Barefoot dancers nimbly hopping in and out of a pair of

## The Ethnic Mosaic that is Fargo-Moorhead

Fargo-Moorhead is steadily becoming more demographically diverse. Performers, food vendors, craft exhibitors, and guests at the 2009 Pangea Cultivate Our Cultures festival were testimony of this.

Official confirmation of the gradual trend comes from reports recently issued by state data centers which draw upon census figures to show FM's minority population doubled each decade since 1980.

The FM metro area has increased in population because of net domestic migration (more native-born residents arriving than leaving), natural changes (more births than deaths), and international

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# Ethnic Mosaic



Vietnamese drum and dragon performers, Pangea 2009

*Gradually, we are becoming a country that will not have an ethnic majority.*

migration (more foreign-born residents arriving than leaving). The vitality of the area as a retail, food processing, manufacturing, healthcare, technology, and education hub is a factor in this trend just as these sectors

**“Population growth does not by itself define a city’s health. Nevertheless, the fact that people “vote with their feet” makes population change a good first order indicator of the appeal of a place.”**

**“Understanding Our Community” published by City of Fargo**

have benefitted by population growth.

The increasingly diverse ethnic mosaic of the region is a small-scale version of the dramatic shift that is taking place throughout the nation.

Gradually, we are becoming a country that will not have an ethnic majority. That day will arrive sooner in certain areas of the country than in others. Demographers predict, for example, Texas and California, states that in addition to location and climate, appeal to newcomers because of business/employment opportunities and their long-established multi-ethnic make-up, will not have a majority ethnic group once the 2010 census is counted.

The U.S., of course, is largely a country of immigrants; except for indigenous people, all of us

are descended from people who immigrated here, or are ourselves immigrants.

The U.S. and the FM area in recent years have benefitted from the influx of highly motivated immigrants. Without intelligent, well-educated new Americans our medical facilities, colleges and schools, manufacturing and engineering firms, and other businesses would have a different profile and productivity. Some businesses, ethnic restaurants and grocery stores, would not exist. In tandem has been the expansion of ethnic products in es-

**Diversity is not about how we differ. Diversity is about embracing one another’s uniqueness.**

**Ola Joseph  
Nigerian-born  
American contemporary  
author and speaker**

established markets through the area.

Those of us who are descendants of long-ago settlers continue to demonstrate the motivation and values they brought from various European countries.

This solid and rich fabric has been made stronger, more varied and beautiful with the addition of each new ethnic group and the advancement of others. Newcomers bring with them the same aspirations and values we attribute to our ancestors, namely, interest in a better life, compensation for contribu-

**“We have not become a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams.”**

**Jimmy Carter  
U.S. President, 1977-1981**

tions, fairness, and freedom.

Rural areas, most of North Dakota and much of Minnesota, continue to age at a rate faster than the nation. To not only survive but thrive, we need people as residents, as merchants, as teachers, as medical personnel, as artists, as elected officials, as leaders and members of civic and non-profit organizations.

**“Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable.”**

**Aesop, ancient Greek fabulist**

By accepting our differences, celebrating our common values, and showcasing our cultures, the ethnic mosaic that is Fargo-Moorhead is good for today and great for tomorrow.

**“I take as my guide the hope of a saint: in crucial things; unity, in important things, diversity; in all things, generosity.”**

**George H.W. Bush  
U.S. President, 1989-1993**

# Pangea

moving bamboo poles gave the festival goers a glimpse into one of many rituals which make up Filipino culture.

According to choreographer/dancer Rosalinda Connelley, tinkling, the national dance of the Philippines is a reference to roadrunner birds commonly referred to as tikling. The dance is an imitation of the birds dodging bamboo traps set by rice farmers. The poles are also used as a percussion instrument as they are rhythmically banged against the ground and each other.

Over the noon hour the crowd was treated to an International Fashion Show with festive costumes ranging from Norwegian bunads (folk costume for females and males unique to each of more than 300 areas in the country) to Somalia guntino (full-body female dress) and hijab (head covering worn by Muslim women).

This year as in recent ones, the planning committee for Pangea Cultivate Our Cultures received requests for a repeat performance for a crowd-pleasing group. Roots from Mexico did not disappoint as they took the stage to brassy, energizing music.

Grasping the hems of their

brightly colored long skirts and lifting them slightly, young Hispanic women performed indigenous dances which like their costumes and hair style reflected the Flamenco from days of Spanish rule.

Youth again took the stage when elementary school children dressed in embroidered and appliquéd Irish dancing outfits performed soft-shoed jigs.

After skilled Irish dances by several young couples, Maureen McDonald-Hins, a name synonymous with dance in the FM area, gave the viewers a look at the learning curve of all performers when she brought to the stage two very young girls so new to dance they were talked through their routine.

The appeal of the attractive, earnest children as they bravely performed the barely-learned steps in front of a standing-room only audience of strangers, climaxed as the auditorium broke into applause and the children scampered to embrace their instructor.

The next performer, a sixteen-year-old member of the White Earth Nation of Ojibwe who has been dancing since she was three, showed the skills that earned her championship status in regional and national contests.

With mother/seamstress Dana Goodwin narrating between numbers, Quinne Goodwin-Chaffee performed the Fancy Shawl Dance.

Also known as the Butterfly, the routine is one of the most contemporary dances in arenas throughout powwow country. It originated when women donned body shawls and began moving to songs with a fast drumbeat.

Incorporating quick turns and intricate footwork, Quinne held her arms out displaying the shroud, a relatively recent adaptation from the arms-close-to-the-body position of this contemporary dance. All three types of Fancy Shawl dance songs were featured.

Proving that dance is a universal expression of celebration, Bhutanese natives performed two songs which paid tribute to lovers.

But the songs were also about the necessity of love *in* life, life *as* love, the compassion and respect that can make us one and bring world peace, the oneness that is the spirit of Pangea Cultivate Our Cultures.

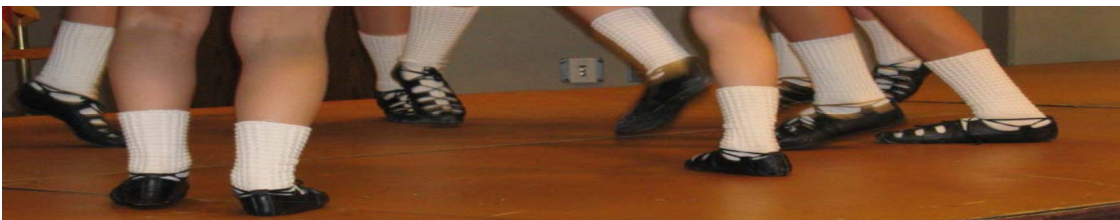
The last group of the day, Mariachi Mexico, traveled from the Twin Cities to present the unique musical sound that

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We are one.

**As the agency in charge of performers, CDR played a central role in making Pangea a success.**



Soft-shoed Irish jig dancers

# Pangea

originated in the state of Jalisco during the 1800s. Pangea goes heard the music as it has evolved, indigenous rhythms, a blend of Spanish folk songs, plus a strong element of violins, trumpets, and guitars.



Aebleskivers being prepared for Pangea guests

Pangea was as food-centric as it was musical. The public got a taste of culinary delights from around the world: Danish aebleskivers (ball-shaped pancakes), Filipino chicken adobo (poultry cooked in vinegar and soy sauce) as well as beef caldereta (meat and vegetable stew), French crepes, Jewish blintzes, Mexican tostados, Native American fry bread, Scottish shortbread (cookies), Sri Lankan chicken curry, and Vietnamese egg rolls.



Egg rolls at the Asian food booth were a crowd favorite

Pangea is a term coined by geologists to describe the undivided landmass which existed before the forces of nature over the millennium

shaped the earth into present day continents.

The festival, a prism for understanding and appreciating our cultural diversity, was planned and staged by representatives from Cultural Diversity Resources, Lutheran Social Services, HCS, Mujeres Unides/Woman United, and Moorhead Human Rights Commission.

As the agency in charge of performers, CDR played a central role in making Pangea a success. Sixteen years ago when city leaders declined to replace the controversial Columbus Day with Diversity Day, CDR's executive director Yoke Sim Gunaratne organized the ethnic celebration that has grown to become one of the area's signature events. At last year's event, Gunaratne and long-time volunteer Irene Hogan were presented with the first ever "Spirit of Pangea" award for their work.



Pangea (also Pangaea). The term was first used in a 1928 scientific conference.

Map courtesy of Wikipedia

## CDR Sponsors Food Safety Program

When you prepare food, are you sure your handling and cooking techniques don't spread germs? How many hours can leftover foods safely be kept on the table or countertop? What is the safe way to thaw frozen meat? What part do home cooks play in the spread of food-borne illnesses?

These and other questions were answered recently in two presentations sponsored by Cultural Diversity Resources.

Although Americans are constantly educated through the media by food scientists, medical and public health personnel, new Americans who are learning English as well as American ingredients and foods, packaging, appliances, and customary in place of metric measurements, it can all be confusing.

To help ease their transition, CDR arranged for NDSU food and nutrition specialists operating with the aid of a USDA grant to give several hours of instruction to about 30 recent immigrants.

### Hand Washing

When you wash your hands how do you how they're clean? With the aid of a black light box, attendees were given a visual look at "germs."

After hand washing with soap and water, each person placed his or her hands in the box. Those who had inadequately rinsed, saw

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## Food Safety cont'd

the soap residue show up as "germs."

To be safe, a minimum of 20 seconds of washing with hot, soapy water and another 20 seconds of rinsing, the time it takes to sing two choruses of the Happy Birthday song, is recommended by experts.

## Food Handling

Cross contamination, the spread of germs from one cutting board, countertop, or knife to another place or piece of food equipment, is a major cause of food-borne illness commonly referred to as food poisoning.

The problem is avoided by using simple procedure, different cutting boards for raw versus cooked meat and washing utensils (including knives and thermometers) before reusing them. Complementary cutting boards, food thermometers, and produce brushes were distributed to the

group during the sessions held in October and November.

Throughout the food safety presentation the NDSU team emphasized their Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill Campaign (rinse and scrub produce before using, use separate tools for separate jobs, use temperature and times appropriate for each food, chill leftovers with two hours after preparation, and thaw frozen meat and other foods in the refrigerator on a plate or bowl to prevent any liquid from coming in contact with other foods.

## Food Poisoning

An estimated one in four Americans get food poisoning every year. And while food poisoning ranges from mild, unreported cases to head-line-grabbing serious and fatal incidents (300,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths yearly), the vast majority of the cases can be prevented by handling and preparing food properly.

Contrary to popular belief, home kitchens not restaurants are at the center of most food poisoning cases.

Because information gathered by NDSU experts from surveys and focus groups revealed that many recent immigrants at the request of school-age children wanted to learn to make typical U.S. foods, several recipes (Glorified Rice, Sloppy Joes, both Chopped and Tossed Salads) were prepared and served.

In addition to nutritional and economical tips (reducing calories in the rice dish by substituting dry milk and the drained pineapple juice in place of cream and adding protein and omega 3-rich walnuts to the Tossed Salad), attendees received recipes for the dishes.

While the audience was mostly women from Somali and Bhutan ranging in age from approximately 25 to 50, several men attended. Two of the Bhutanese men and one woman helped interpret for Fargo-Moorhead's newest immigrants.

Coming . . .

## Native American Center Opens

## Get Acquainted with FM's Newest Ethnic Groups



The staff & volunteers of  
**Cultural Diversity Resources**  
Wish You a Happy, Healthy & Prosperous 2010