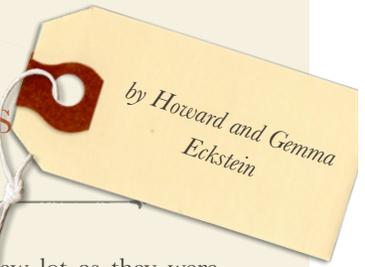




The Ladies Fashion Journal

OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE MAFCA ERA FASHIONS COMPETITION



It all started when Reid & Elaine Carlson gave a presentation in a club meeting about fashions last year. They came dressed in their period clothes and caught our attention. When we went to the MAFCA Awards Dinner in Medford Oregon last December, we sat at the table with Lois Przywitowski who is on the fashion committee. She encouraged us to participate in Loveland.

I asked Gemma if she wanted to join the contest and she answered with a big “yes!” I suggested to her that since she is from the Philippines that instead of going dressed as a 1930 American woman like all the others, she should be dressed as a 1930 Filipina. This suggestion was quickly seized upon and we went to work on our research.

Starting in February we searched every night on the internet for someone who could help us acquire the dress we wanted. Finally we found a company in Texas, *Barongs R Us*, who said they thought they could have a replica 1930 dress made, but that they had never had such a request and that for their suppliers to do their research for fabrics would take extra time. I told them we had to have it by the middle of May.

We were directed to go to a local dress maker and have them take specific measurements. Here in Orem is a little store called *Pink Kokiri* where a nice Korean lady makes dresses and does alterations in the back room. She took all the measurements and we sent them off to Texas who then sent them to the Philippines where the dress would be made.

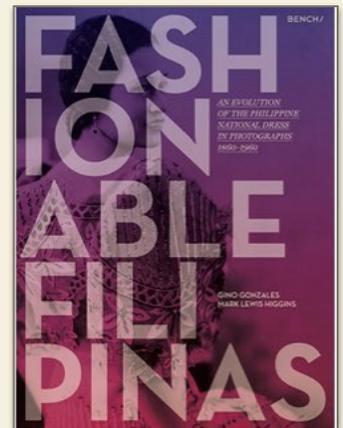
The dressmakers overseas did their research and found some of the fabrics they needed to make the outfit authentic for the period. It took a while for them to find the last bolt of material. They had to wait 2

months for the mill to make a new lot as they were ordering the style they wanted from a catalog.

In the meantime, we had been in correspondence with the MAFCA fashion committee and learned that we needed to supply documentation to show the judges what the Filipino dress looked like at the time. The committee knows all about American clothes of the period, but had no experience regarding Filipino fashions and fabrics. They required that the photos we sent were dated so that there was proof of the details they would need to make a serious judgment.

This was not as easy as it sounds. We emailed the designer of the dress for Miss Universe who is Miss Philippines this year, but received no response. While searching the web for images, we found a blog by Alex Castro who has chronicled original photos of the Manila Carnival, This was a fashion contest held from 1908 to 1939. Included were dated photos of young women wearing the best in traditional Philippine clothing. The complete ensemble is called a *Terno*.

We were able to contact Mr. Castro by email to ask for high-resolution files of his blog photos. He replied that he was out of the country and that his original photos were at home in the Philippines. He did however recommend a newly-published pictorial coffee-table book that covers the history of the *Terno* from 1860 to 1960 titled Fashionable Filipinas.





The photos in it are superb and all were dated and acceptable to the fashion committee and copies were forwarded to them prior to our going to Colorado.



Finally the dress arrived a month before we were to leave for the convention.

Although we had agreed with the dressmaker upon a style shown in an old photograph, we didn't know what the finished dress would look like until we opened the box when it arrived. Included in the box was a surprise from the makers of the dress. It was a beautiful feather fan.

Now that we had the dress, we turned our attention to finding a salon in Loveland where we could get Gemma a 1930 finger wave hairdo on the morning of the judging. The appointment for judging was 11:00. We searched the web and made many phone calls until we found an up-scale salon that was open at 8:00 on Tuesday, the day of the judging, and who said that they could do the hairdo we wanted. We made the appointment for her hair and started packing for the trip.

After we arrived at the convention, we attended a seminar on Monday about entering era fashion competition where we learned a lot. The fashion guidelines have been garnered from various period advertisements, patterns, movies and other sources so that

now MAFCA has a fashions guidelines book as thick as the one used for judging cars.

On the day of the judging, we went to the 8:00 styling appointment to get Gemma's hair done. We gave the stylist the book opened to the picture of the hairdo we wanted which is shown above. After about half an hour, she was brought up to the waiting area all done. I was shocked; it looked like the hairdresser stirred Gemma's hair with an egg beater and tied it into a bun at the back.



They knew in advance that the purpose of the hairdo was to compete in an era fashion contest. I told them that we had spent a lot of money and effort to get her a beautiful dress and that the hairdo would be judged in conjunction with it. The hairdo they presented would cost us points as it didn't look like the picture. The



staff told me that nobody in Loveland knows how to do a finger wave. I asked if they at least had a crimping iron to which they replied that they are not available and the ones that do exist are in museums.

We left the hairdresser thoroughly disgusted. We asked a saleslady in another store for a recommendation of a salon in town. She directed us to a fast-cuts outlet across the parking lot. Of course they couldn't do what we wanted, but one of their workers knew of a stylist on the other side of town who could do it. They kindly called ahead and explained what we needed and our time constraint. It was now after 9:00.



We drove the Model A across town to this other salon where Gemma was taken in and they went right to work. The stylist had the talent to do the job right. She also did Gemma's makeup and sent us on our way.



We raced the other way across town back to the convention site where we arrived for the judging at 11:05, almost in time for her to go into the room with the judges. After helping Gemma change into her competition clothes, they took her in.

I was told to wait outside while the judging was underway in order to maintain the sanctity of the judging. Gemma was directed to turn around in front of all the judges so they could see the overall ensemble. Then she was told to stop in front of the various judges who would inspect her hair, outfit, shoes and accessories. Because of the unique nature of her outfit, she had to answer many questions to help them know more about what they were looking at

We gave the Fashionable Filipinas book to the judges which helped them with their evaluations. Finally Gemma was sent out while the judges deliberated and added her scores. Before we left, I asked for our book back. Our host went into the room and finally came out with the book much later. "I had to pry that book from the judges' hands!" she told us. From there, Gemma was taken to the photographer for her official picture.

The fashion tea and show was presented the following day. This meant we had to return the next

morning to the salon to re-do Gemma's hair. This time, a different stylist was on staff. She had trouble recreating the look the other girl had done the day before. After fussing with it for a while, she re-shampooed Gemma's hair and started over. Finally an acceptable look was achieved. At any rate, it was lots better than what we got from the upscale joint from the morning before.

Most of the attendees at the tea were dressed in period clothing even if they weren't competing. It was fun to see everyone dressed in their various outfits sitting at the tables that filled the hall. The tables were nicely decorated and set with fine china and silver. The little



tea cakes and sandwiches that were served looked nice and were on the gourmet-side of the scale. All in



all, it was a nice affair.



After the tea, the contestants were taken backstage to wait their turn to go out on the runway. At last it was Gemma's turn. The audience was amazed at the description read by the presenters telling them about how the fabric of the dress was made of pineapple fiber. The speaker told the audience about Gemma as a person and her accomplishments. It was a very nice presentation.



It was while on the runway that the contestants learned what prize they were awarded. I was excited to hear them announce that Gemma won a first prize.

The prize categories are based on the number of points the judges gave to each contestant. The competition was not about who is first place, second and so forth, but the number of points earned. Therefore more than one first prize was awarded in each division.

The divisions were Original, Reproduction and Image. There were some who were outfitted in original clothing which is remarkable considering the age of the garments; not to mention that they fit right. One man

wore a complete original 1930 U.S. Army sergeant's uniform.

The reproduction division considers modern clothing made exactly the same as the originals including the right fabrics, patterns and designs.

The image division is new and it has opened up the era fashion competition to many more who would like to participate. One woman bought a dress from Ross the week before the competition and outfitted herself with accessories she had collected from yard sales and other sources. She knew what to look for in the store that would meet the judging criteria for her outfit. Gemma competed in the image division.

During the week after the show, many people came up to Gemma and commented about how they liked her dress. She had the only international example in the contest which was well liked by all who saw it.

It was a fun experience and not scary at all, although Gemma would admit that walking the runway was a bit intimidating. Having done it, we recommend that others give it a try. The judges are very helpful and professional. They know that they have to make the experience fun for the participants to be sure that the era fashions competition can continue to attract repeat contestants and new people, like Gemma, who would like to try.

