

by Sheila Covarrubias

Zamboanga City teems with activities starting today, October 1st, as it kicks off with Fiesta Hermosa Festival 2015, the grandest fiesta celebration to commemorate the feast of Nuestra Senora la Virgen del Pilar, the city's patron saint on the 12th of the month.

Themed "Junto y Unido: Celebracion de Harmonia y Buen Amistad", the Hermosa Festival 2015 will formally open with the grand parade and program at the City Hall grounds at 5pm today. The colorful street dance sneak peek with high school and college students participating and the Pink October Walk with employees and representatives from both the government and non-government sectors as participants, will precede the opening program.

As in the previous years, the Hermosa Festival will be a myriad of activities reflective of the diversity of the Zamboanguenos. Aside from the City-sponsored activities, private groups and organizations have also included their activities in the Fiesta Calendar.

Topping the list of city-sponsored activities is the Zamboanga Grand Midnight Sale that will be held from Oct. 1-10 at the city proper area (pueblo). Zamboanga's native cuisines will be rolled out in the "La Cocina Chavacano- Zamboanga Smoke Out: Grilled Food fiesta" which will happen from Oct. 2-9 at the R.T. Lim Boulevard starting at 5pm. The City's best of the best agricultural and fishery products will be showcased in the Cosechas de Zamboanga that will be held at Plaza Pershing from Oct. 2-15.

The Novena masses at the Fort Pilar Shrine will start will start October 3 and will culminate October 12, the feast day of Nuestra Senora La Virgen del Pilar.

The pet parade and blessing, organized by the City Veterinarian Office will be held Oct. 4 at the Jardiin Maria Clara at 3pm.

Oct. 5-7 will be the Zamboanga Art Exhibit back to back with the 2nd Conferencia de Cultura, Artes y Historia at the Centro Latino, Paseo del Mar. Una Noche de Bailes will be at Centro Latino at 7pm on Oct. 6.

The original chavacano music festival will be on Oct. 7 at the Centro Latino at 7pm and Oct. 8 will be the Servicio Medical na Fiesta Pilar, a medical outreach mission organized by the City Health Office at the CHO compound in Pettit Barracks from 8am-12noon. Also the same day will be the dance sport competition at the WMSU gymnasium at 1pm.

The ZAMPEX 2015-Regional Trade Exposition will reel off on Oct. 8 until Oct. 11 at the Garden Orchid Convention Center.

The Parade of Lights, a float competition will be held on Oct. 9 at 6pm from the R.T. Lim Boulevard to Paseo del Mar.

October 10 will be the Zamboanga Hermosa Streetdance Competition that will start from Canelar to Paseo del Mar at 1pm to be followed by the street dance showdown and fiesta main program at 4pm.

The Danza La vida Street party! The Metamorphosis will be held at the butterfly garden in Pasonanca starting at 8pm on Oct. 10.

The competition of vinta sails called Regatta will be at 8am on Oct. 11 at the R.T. Lim Boulevard while the Mascota de Zamboanga / Samba Night (Balikbayan Night) will be at 7pm the same day at the Centro Latino in Paseo del Mar.

October 12, the feast day of La Virgen del Pilar will be a special holiday in Zamboanga and will be devoted to religious activities. The grand procession will be at 3pm from the Metropolitan Cathedral to Fort Pilar with the Pontifical Mass at the shrine taking place at 5pm.

October 13 will be the Sardines Festival 2015 with various activities taking place prior to the sardine eating spectacle at 5:30pm at the Centro Latino in Paseo del Mar.

The activities will run until the end of the month. For a complete list of the Fiesta activities, please visit the facebook page Zamboanga Hermosa Festival. — Sheila Covarrubias