

Southeast Asians Form Kite Alliance

Reflecting a resurgence of interest in traditional culture, eight of the countries that make up the ASEAN confederation have taken the first step in establishing a kite council. ASEAN stands for Association of South East Asian Nations and is a trade group with sports and cultural components. Formation of a pro tem working committee to organize the council occurred at the recent Pasir Gudang festival in Johor, Malaysia.

Brainchild of Orlando Ongkingco, of Manila, president of the Kite Association of the Philippines, the committee selected Hussin Haron of Malaysia as its president. Haron is a top official in the city of Pasir Gudang, president of the Johor Kite Association, and one of the founding fathers of the imaginative Pasir Gudang kite museum. Ongkingco was chosen vice president, Gadis Widiyati of Singapore secretary, and Maidin bin Ahmad of Brunei Darussalam treasurer.



Hussin



Ongkingco



Widiyati



Maidin

All photos by Ben Fathe

Committee members are Sim Sarak of Cambodia, Handayani Ningsih of Indonesia, Yusni Yusof of Singapore, and Sakda Pandee and Zainal Abidin, both of Thailand. Vietnam fliers were on hand at the festival but did not attend the meeting, apparently because of a language problem. When informed of developments, they gave their blessing to the proceedings.

The missing ASEAN nations are Laos and Myanmar (Burma). The committee will contact kite fanciers in those countries in due course.

For rules, the ASEAN group is having the Malaysian Kite Council's constitution translated from Bahasa Malaysian by Maidin bin Ahmad and will use it as a starting point in drafting its own aims and regulations.

In a statement, President Hussin Haron said: "Traditional kites among ASEAN countries have some similarities which are close to their cultures. The spirit to form the ASEAN Kite Council is to make the ASEAN community and the world know of the 10 nations' unity, tenderness, and harmony. Through kite activities, the body will promote the strength of ASEAN arts and cultures, while it colors and lights up the skies. Among other objectives, the council hopes to make kites a popular sport for competition among member countries, as well as the world kite community."