



A newsletter from the Holmes Cultural Diversity Center and the Office of Diversity and Equity Programs

## National Hispanic Heritage Month September 15 – October 15

### THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Aretha Jones-Cook and Carson C. Cook, Jr.

In 1968, Congress authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to proclaim a week in September as National Hispanic Heritage Week. The observance was expanded in 1988 to a monthlong celebration (September 15-October 15). During this month, America celebrates the culture and traditions of U.S. residents who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America and the Caribbean. September 15 was chosen as the starting point for the celebration because it is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries — Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively.

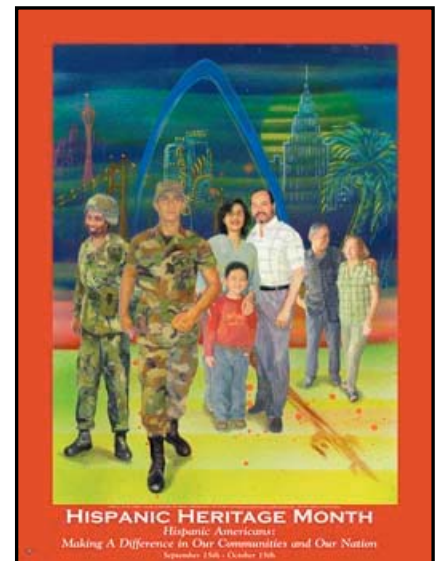
The term Hispanic, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, refers to Spanish-speaking people in the United States of any race. On the 2000 Census form, people of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin could identify themselves as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or "other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino." More than 35 million people identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino on the 2000 Census.

National Hispanic Heritage Month provides an opportunity to focus national attention upon the contributions of the Hispanic community to American society. During the observance of National Hispanic Heritage Month, we recognize Hispanic Americans for helping to shape our national character and strengthen our communities. The warmth and vitality of the Hispanic culture are great gifts to America and are part of the unique fabric of our country.

The theme for 2004 National Hispanic Heritage Month is "**Making a Difference in Our Communities and Our Nation.**"

Hispanics have profoundly impacted the history and development of the United States. The Hispanic people were among the earliest settlers in the New World, and the accounts of their ventures into the uncharted territories of the southeast and southwest form part of our literary and historical heritage. From the beginning, Hispanic Americans have served as leaders in business, government, law, education, science, sports, and the arts. Hispanic Americans have served bravely in the United States Armed Forces, earning more than 3 dozen Medals of Honor and numerous distinguished military decorations for their leadership, courage, and patriotism. Today, Hispanic Americans in our Armed Forces, National Guard, and Reserve units continue this proud legacy as they stand watch on the front lines of freedom.

We invite you to discover and celebrate the extraordinary accomplishments and rich cultures, traditions, and ancestry of Hispanic Americans.



## !WOW! Facts

**The Latino population in the U.S. reached 38.8 million on July 1, 2002.** (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003)

**40.2% of the Hispanic population in the U.S. was foreign born.** (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003)

**The majority of Latinos living in the U.S. are of Mexican origin (58.5%).** (*American Demographics*, 2002)

**More than 40% of adult Latino immigrants in the U.S. send money back home regularly. In 2003, the money sent back home totaled \$30 billion.** (DiversityInc. 2003)

**There are 1.4 million Hispanic-owned businesses,** which generate \$200 billion in revenues, and employs over 3.5 million workers. (U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Business Roundtable, 2001)

**Fifty-four percent (54%) of all U.S. Latinos reside in the suburbs.** (*Hispanic Business*, 2002)

**Twenty-eight million U.S. residents age 5 and over speak Spanish at home.** (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002)

## National Disability Employment Awareness Month

To recognize the contributions of Americans with disabilities and to encourage all citizens to help ensure their full inclusion in the workforce, the Congress, by joint resolution approved August 11, 1945, as amended (36 U.S.C. 121), has designated October of each year as "National Disability Employment Awareness Month."

For Americans with disabilities, employment is vital to independence, empowerment, and quality of life. During National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we recognize the many contributions citizens with disabilities make to our society, and we reaffirm our commitment to helping them achieve their full inclusion in our workforce.

Today, Americans with disabilities enjoy improved access to education, government services, public accommodations, transportation, telecommunications, and employment opportunities. The landmark Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) removed barriers and enabled many individuals with disabilities to find more opportunities to use their gifts and talents in the workplace. This progress has made our Nation stronger, more productive, and more just. People with disabilities still encounter challenges, however, to their full participation in American society.

Advertising by U.S. companies targeting the Latino population surged 24 percent in 2003, compared with 8.6 percent for the general market.

--Media Economics Group, Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies

## RAMADAN

Ramadan is the most sacred holiday of the Muslim year and is mandated by the Qur'an (2:183). It occurs in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and is the holy month of fasting. Fasting is considered to be the third pillar or religious obligation of Islam and provides many benefits including learning self-control. This results from a lack of preoccupation with satisfying bodily appetites during the daylight hours. Ramadan is a time of worship, reading the Qur'an, charitable acts, and the purification of individual behavior. This is also the time in which the Qur'an was revealed to Mohammed as guidance for the people.

Ramadan begins when a trusted witness testifies that the new moon has been sighted. Consequently, the fasting may be delayed if the moon is not visible. During this period, Muslims must abstain from food, drink, and sexual intercourse from dawn until dusk each day. Ramadan is a time of atonement somewhat similar to Yom Kippur and Lent.

Ramadan ends with Eid-al-Fitr or the Festival of Fast-Breaking, which is a joyous celebration, marked by special gifts of charity. Muslims dress in holiday apparel and attend a community prayer in the morning.

## Did They Register This Year?

54% of eligible Latinos and African Americans were not registered to vote as of July 2004.

This compares with 30% of whites.

(U.S. Census Bureau and Democratic National Committee)

61% of Americans believe a woman will be president within the next 20 years.

51% believe a man of color will attain that position before a woman.

(American Association of University Women)

## Naturalized vs. Native-Born Latino Citizens

In the last presidential election, 50 percent of eligible naturalized Latino citizens voted, compared with 44 percent of eligible U.S.-born Latino citizens.

(U.S. Census Bureau)

## How They Voted in 2000



	Bush	Gore
Whites	54%	42%
African-Americans	10%	90%
Hispanics	35%	62%
Asians	41%	55%

(CNN, Time Magazine, www.allpolitics)

## Health Care Most Pressing Concern for Working Women

Ninety-eight percent of working women say that health-care costs are of major or moderate importance as a political issue, according to a survey by the Business and Professional Women's Foundation. Only 2 percent say it is of minor or no importance as a political issue. As an employer benefit, health insurance ranks first with 86 percent of working women.

## Hispanic Trivia: Geography, Customs, and More

1. The longest mountain range in the world is found in South America. What are the mountains in this range called?
2. What do archaeologists call the basic unit in the Aztec and Maya system of writing?
3. What is the name of the city in Mexico where the great pyramids of the Sun and Moon are located?
4. Who came to power in Cuba in 1959 and turned that country into a communist dictatorship?
5. What would your occupation be if you were a torero or a torera?
6. Which Latin American country leads all others in sugar production?
7. What is the national flower of Panama?
8. What name is given to the Central American musical instrument that is similar to a xylophone?
9. Brazil shares its boundaries with all of the countries in South America except two. Name these two countries.
10. Which two crops are Puerto Rico's leading exports?

*Answers appear on next page*

# “With an Even Hand” Brown v. Board at Fifty



On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court issued a decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, declaring that “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” This decision was pivotal to the struggle for racial desegregation in the United States. The Library of Congress has prepared an online exhibit commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of this landmark judicial case ([click here to view](#)). The physical exhibition will be on view at the Library through November 13, 2004, Monday - Saturday, 10:00am to 5:00pm.

Forty-one percent of women say being in the military is the source of a great deal or a fairly large amount of stress. Women in the Navy report the highest rate of stress among the armed services (49 percent), followed by women in the army (46 percent), the Marine Corps (44 percent), and the Air Force (31 percent).

--The Pentagon

## Diversity Factoid

More than three in four Latinos (76.8 percent) live in only seven states (and each of those states have more than 1 million Latinos) - Texas, California, New York, Florida, Illinois, Arizona and New Jersey.

**Native-born Latinos** are enrolling in college at a higher rate than foreign-born counterparts. About 42 percent of U.S.-born Latino immigrant children in the 18 to 24 year-old range are attending college, just slightly lower than the rates for whites (46 percent).

(Pew Hispanic Center)

## Best Hiring Practices

- Advertise positions widely and in specialized publications to ensure equal opportunity.
- Include detailed activities that will be used to recruit Blacks, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans and women.
- Include creative web site listings, mailings to target groups, or contacts made with professional organizations.
- Keep evidence and documentation of all methods used i.e., copies of ads placed, letters sent and a log of phone calls made.

## Answers to Hispanic Trivia

1. The longest mountain range in the world is the Andes.
2. The basic unit in the Aztec and Maya system of writing is called a glyph.
3. Teotihuacan is home to the great pyramids of the Sun and Moon.
4. Fidel Castro turned Cuba into a communist dictatorship.
5. A torero is a male bullfighter, and a torera is a female bullfighter.
6. Cuba produces the most sugar of all the Latin American countries.
7. The white orchid is the national flower of Panama.
8. The marimba is similar to a xylophone.
9. The two countries with which Brazil does not share its boundaries are Chile and Ecuador.
10. Copper and sugarcane are Puerto Rico's leading export crops.

Contributions to *Diversity Matters*, preferably via e-mail, are welcome at any time.