BRIDGING THE GAP

Through Knowledge, Education, Understanding & Insight

April / May 2009, Issue 15

Inside This Issue:

History of Armed Forces Day by COL Roma Amundson 1
What is International Women's Day? 2
Astronaut Peggy Whitson 4
Children's Book Review: Yoshi's Feast 4
Choices of the Journey, Part 3 5
Festivals in Japan 7
Chinese New Year Trivia 8
Licorice International 9
My Perspectives: Looking Forward From the Past 10
Jewish American Heritage Month 11
Restaurant Review: International Cafe 12
Becoming Citizens of the World - One Country at a Time: Customs in Nicaragua 13
Cinco de Mayo 15
Movie Review: Slumdog Millionaire 16
The 2009 Greater Middle East Heritage Luncheon Recap 17
Restaurant Review: Sinbad's Restaurant 18
African-American Heritage Luncheon Recap 19
Four Weeks in Balmy Florida (Not!) 20
SEP Member Highlight: SrA Winston Sanniola 21
Diversity Dates 21
Chinese New Year Trivia Answers 22
Upcoming Events 23
SEP Group Membership 23
Diver-cipe Corner: Asian Orange Chicken and Spicy Orange Beef 24

Publisher

Special Emphasis Program *(SEP)* Group

Creative Director

Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez

Editors

MSgt Paul Dion
Pam Makovicka
SFC Troy Redl
LaVonne Rosenthal
Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez

Assistant Editors

Peggy Brown
Sharon Rezac

The SEP Group provides opportunities for positive exchange among diverse groups through community outreach, education and cultural diversity awareness.

History of Armed Forces Day

By COL Roma Amundson

Armed Forces Day is celebrated annually on the third Saturday in May, which in 2009 occurs on May 16. Armed Forces Day is intended as a day to honor the people of the Armed Forces of the United States, to acknowledge the sacrifices that they have made in the preservation of our nation.

The first Armed Forces Day occurred on May 20, 1950, following President Truman's Presidential Proclamation of February 27, 1950, at which time he proclaimed:

"Armed Forces Day…marks the … combined demonstration by America's defense team of its progress, under the National Security Act towards the goal of readiness for any eventuality."

Armed Forces Day was created on August 31, 1949, by Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson as a single day celebration of the unified forces of the United States. Prior to this, the nation had celebrated separate events for the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

Following World War II, all military services were placed under the Department of Defense. In order to promote and celebrate the unified effort of all military services with the common goal of protecting the nation, the services were asked to drop their specific celebrations in favor of the combined one.

President Truman announced the creation of Armed Forces Day by "praising the work of the military services at home and across the seas… [Their] work is vital to the security of the nation and to the establishment of a desirable peace."

Presidents and other leaders over the decades have noted the vital service done by military members in the preservation of our nation:

"It is fitting and proper that we devote one day each year to paying special tribute to those whose constancy and courage constitute one of the bulwarks guarding the freedom of this nation and the peace of the free world." President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953.

"…Our Servicemen and women are serving throughout the world as guardians of peace—many of them away from their homes, their friends, and their families. They are visible evidence of our determination to meet any threat to the peace with measured strength and high resolve. They are also evidence of a harsh but inescapable truth—that the survival of freedom requires great cost and commitment and

Continued on Page 6

What is International Women's Day?

By Pam Makovicka

International Women's Year was celebrated in 1975, and since then March 8 is celebrated as International Women's Day (IWD), *"to commemorate the historic struggle to improve women's lives."* It is celebrated around the world at both local and national levels as a major day of global celebration for the economic, political and social achievements of women. Annually on March 8, thousands of events are held throughout the world to inspire women and celebrate achievements. A global web of rich and diverse local activities ranging from political rallies, business conferences, government activities and networking events through local women's craft markets, theatrical performances, fashion parades and more, connects women from all around the world

Textile workers demonstrating in New York after a fire in a workshop had killed many of their comrades.

Some form of IWD has been observed since the early 1900's, a time of great expansion and turbulence in the industrialized world that saw booming population growth and the rise of radical ideologies. Starting as a political event, the holiday blended the culture of many countries (primarily Russia and the countries of the former Soviet bloc). In some celebrations, the day lost its political flavor, and became simply an occasion for men to express their love to the women around them in a way somewhat similar to Mother's Day and St. Valentine's Day combined. In other celebrations, however, the political and human rights theme designated by the United Nations runs strong. Political and social awareness of the struggles of women worldwide are brought out and examined in a hopeful manner.

International Women's Day, a holiday celebrated worldwide, honors working women and women's struggles everywhere. As many were taught that women's accomplishments in history were relatively undistinguished, it should be a real source of pride and inspiration to American women to know that International Women's Day originated in honor of two all-women strikes which took place in the United States.

The labor struggle in the United States is an exciting one, but it traditionally concentrates on men. With a little examination, historical records show that women carried their weight and their share from the beginning. They supported the men's organizations and quite soon, after realizing that women's needs were ignored in the existing unions, formed women's caucuses or all women's unions. The first all women strikes took place in the 1820's in the New England tailoring trades. The idea of women striking and demanding better conditions, decent wages, and shorter hours, apparently provided great amusement to the townsfolk of the peaceful mill towns. It would be interesting to know how our sisters a century and a half ago felt about not having their lives and aspirations taken seriously.

The 1932 Soviet poster dedicated to the 8th of March holiday. The text reads: "8th of March is the day of the rebellion of the working women against the kitchen slavery" and "Down with the oppression and narrow-mindedness of the household work!"

The most famous of the early strikes took place at the Lowell cotton mills in Massachusetts. Here young women worked 81 hours a week for three dollars, one and a quarter of which went for room and board at the Lowell company boarding houses. The factories originally opened at 7:00 a.m., but foremen, noticing that women were less "energetic" if they ate before working, changed the opening hour to 5:00 a.m., with a breakfast break at 7:00 a.m. (for one-half hour). In 1834, after several wage cuts, the Lowell women walked out, only to return several days later at the reduced rates. They were courageous, but the company had the power. A poor record or disciplinary action could lead to blacklisting. In 1836 they walked out again, singing through the streets of town:

"Oh, isn't it a pity such a pretty girl as I should be sent to the factory to pine away and die."

Again they returned to work within a few days. In l844, serious organizing led to the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association. Their prime demand was the ten hour day. The leadership and activity of this union is credited with initiating some of the earliest reforms in the conditions of the textile industries.

On March 8, 1857, garment workers in New York City marched and picketed, demanding improved working conditions, a ten hour day and equal rights for women. Their ranks were broken up by the police. Fifty-one years later on March 8, 1908, their sisters in the needle trades in New York marched again, honoring the 1857 march, demanding the vote, and an end to sweatshops and child labor. The police were also present on this occasion.

In the period of intense labor activity following the Civil War, widowhood and general hard times forced thousands of women into the labor force. This caused

Continued on Page 3

International Women's Day Continued from Page 2

panic and hostility on the part of men, and women found themselves excluded from most of the national trade unions, so they formed their own, including the Daughters of St. Crispin, a union of women shoemakers. During this era, unions were formed by woman cigar makers, umbrella sewers, and printers, as well as tailoresses and laundresses.

The clothing workers formed some of the most famous unions in United States history, notably the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, founded about 1900. The garment trade shops in the big cities such as New York, were deplorable. Fire hazards were common, light was scant, the sound of machinery deafening and the environment polluted. Women were fined for virtually anything - talking, laughing, singing, machine oil stains on the fabric, stitches too large or too small. Overtime was constant and required, but pay was not. With the support of the National Women's Trade Union League, founded in 1903 (a combination of working women and middle-class, often professional women who supported the working women's struggle), the shirtwaist makers launched a series of strikes against Leiserson and Company and Triangle Waist Company, two of the most notorious shops in New York. Called the "Uprising of the 20,000," these actions culminated in the first long-term general strike by women, putting to rest the tiresome arguments that they were unable to organize and carry out a long, hard struggle.

For thirteen weeks in the bitter dead of winter, women between 16 and 25 years of age picketed daily, and daily were clubbed by police and carried off in "Black Maria" police vans. The courts were biased in favor of the sweatshop owners. One magistrate charged a striker, "You are on strike against God and Nature, whose prime law it is that man shall earn his bread in the sweat of his brow. You are on strike against God."

The strike was ultimately broken, as settlements were made shop by shop, but the talent and endurance of the women made it impossible for people to go on claiming that labor organizing was for men only. One year after the strike was broken, the infamous Triangle fire occurred. Trapping women on the upper floors (the fire doors had been bolted from the outside to prevent walkouts by the workers), the fire took l46 lives, most of the women between the ages of 13 and 25, most of them recent emigrants to the United States.

Bread and Roses

"As we come marching, marching, in the beauty of, the day
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts gray
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses
For the people hear us singing, Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses
As we come marching, marching, we bring the greater days
The rising of the women means the, rising of the race
No more the drudge and idler that toil where one reposes
But a sharing of life's glories, Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses."

The employers were tried; one was fined $20. A settlement was made to the families of the dead women for $75 per death. Rose Schneiderman, a Garment Workers organizer, berated the community for supporting the law and institutions that made such tragedies possible. "I know from my own experience that it is up to the working people to save themselves," she proclaimed. "The only way they can save themselves is by a strong working-class movement."

This is but a fraction of the history of American working women, and this fraction was enough to inspire an international holiday. Russia first celebrated March 8 after the Revolution. It is not often recognized that one of the major sparks of the Russian Revolution was a mass strike in 1917 by Russian women textile workers. Chinese women began celebrating in l924, paralleling a strong women's movement in the Chinese Communist party. When the women's liberation movement began in the United States and Britain, Women's Day was rediscovered and revived as a feminist holiday. In 1970, the revolutionary Uraguayan Tupamaros celebrated March 8 by freeing thirteen women prisoners from Uraguay's jails.

The stories of American working women are often symbolically recognized by referring to great heroines of the movement such as Mother Jones, Ella Reeve Bloor, Kate Mullaney, Sojourner Truth, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. These were remarkable women and so are their stories. A good cure for depression is to read an inspiring chapter of Flynn's autobiography or reread the account of Mother Jones terrorizing scabs and participating in the 1919 steel strike at the age of 90. But it should not be forgotten that these were individual women, and that the bulk of the organizing, struggling, as well as succeeding and failing, was done by ordinary women whom we will never know. These were women who realized the tactical necessity of standing and working together lest they be destroyed individually, women who put to shame the ridiculous theories of "a woman's place." These are women who in the famous Lawrence textile strike carried picket signs reading "We want Bread and Roses, too," symbolizing their demands for not only a living wage but a decent and humane life, inspired James Oppenheim's song "Bread and Roses."

Astronaut Peggy Whitson

By Pam Makovicka

On March 25, 1999, our speaker for Women's History Month was Astronaut Peggy Whitson. Her theme was *"Pursuit of a Dream."* She spoke to National Guard members and Lincoln Public School students about her desire to become an astronaut and the resistance she faced as a female astronaut.

Since her visit to Nebraska in 1999, she has made two - six-month tours on the International Space Station (2002 and 2007-2008). Astronaut Peggy Whitson has gone way above the glass ceiling by being the first woman commander in space. A former Iowa farm girl, Astronaut Whitson has racked up 377 days in space on her two missions, more than any other United States astronaut. Her space walks total nearly 40 hours. Now she is a walking laboratory for the long-term effects of zero gravity on the human body.

Peggy Whitson stated that finesse is more important than strength in space, as you have to move objects differently. During her second journey to the station she adapted and got comfortable much quicker. The now 48-year-old astronaut stated "the best zero gravity side effects are that everything is lifted while you're up there, so you look younger." She said that with no gravity for resistance, muscles and bones deteriorate quickly. Every day she did an hour of cardiovascular exercise on a specially designed cycle or treadmill and another hour of resistance training. She said she needed the strength for the space walks, as every motion works against the pressure of the space suits they wore.

Astronaut Whitson speaks poetically about her moments in space. As she orbited every ninety minutes, the view of the earth's curvature was incredible. She could see the layers of the atmosphere extend beyond the surface to meet with the blackness of space. The sight carried all the shades of blue from blue-like sunlit water to the deepest blue-purple mixture.

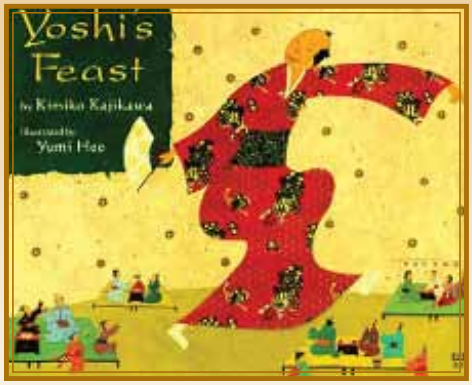
She spoke about returning to gravity, and that being back on earth was not pleasant at first. Her agility and quick motions were severely hindered. After a month she was back to preflight norm.

Peggy Whitson is an inspiration to all. She has literally expanded our horizons, and the time spent at the International Space Station shows that she has accomplished her dreams.

Children's Book Review: Yoshi's Feast

Written By Kimiko Kajikawa; Illustrated by Yumi Heo; DK Publishing, Inc.; February 2000

Book Review By Denise Anderson



My daughter is able to pick up books from the school library every Friday. Recently, she brought home a wonderful book called Yoshi's Feast.

This story develops around two neighbors from Yedo, Japan. One is a fan maker named Yoshi and the other is a merchant named Sabu who sells broiled eels. Because of the location of the merchant, not many people buy the broiled eels. Yoshi, on the other hand, is able to sell his fans because of the wonderful smell of the eels. Yet he refuses to buy the broiled eels from Sabu. He would rather smell the eel than spend his money.

Sabu decides to make Yoshi pay for just smelling the eels. Yoshi refuses to pay, and dances around Sabu's establishment jingling the box of coins. Sabu retaliates by boiling Sammas, which is the stinkiest fish in all of Japan.

Yoshi comes up with an idea to make everyone happy. He dances around the hibachi while Sabu broils eels, so the customers come to watch Yoshi's dance and buy Sabu's broiled eels.

Everyone is happy in the end.

Choices of the Journey

By Paul Ha Le

Paul Le spoke at the 2008 Asian-American Heritage Celebration event. This article is the third of three telling his family's story from March 1975 through their orientation into life in Omaha, Nebraska. The first part in the series appeared in Issue 12, the second in Issue 14.

Bill Smith grew up in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and with his first wife had Gordon, Leah and Bill Junior. In 1960 he married a woman from Omaha named Hattie Dakiniewicz. She grew up in the city and from her previous marriage had children as well (Joe and Joette). Together, Bill and Hattie Smith had two children, Annie and Evette, and lived in a ranch-style home in mid-south Omaha, Nebraska.

In May of 1975, the Smiths took a trip that would change their lives. They visited Hattie's daughter Joette, who owned a restaurant called Buffalo Gals in Ben Lomond, California. Their next venture was to drive to Oceanside, where Hattie's nephew served in the armed forces. He told them about the refugee camp and proceeded to give them a tour around the facility. Hattie's first reaction after seeing the thousands of refugees was "Oh my god, that's no way to live." The refugees were living in crowded tents, some sprawled out and hanging on the inside of the chain linked fence, not knowing what fate had in store for them, waiting for their turn to see the real America.

As for the Smiths, they had seen enough. Surely they felt, there was something they could do to help. After they drove back across the country to their home in Omaha, they contacted Bernice Labedz in Lincoln. Ms. Labedz was their connection to the government who would explain to the Smiths the procedure for becoming a sponsor, and she directed them to a contact at Catholic Charities.

By the end of June 1975, the Smiths were connected with a refugee family who had two children (which fit their criteria) and were prepared to sign off on the paperwork. But this family, perhaps because of the family's relation with another refugee family in another city, declined the offer. So the coordinator from Catholic Charities asked Bill and Hattie if they would be willing to talk to a family with five kids. "What are we getting into?" thought Hattie. By the grace of God and the hearts of Bill and Hattie Smith, they said "Sure, let's talk to them."

Two months after living in a refugee camp in Pennsylvania, my father got a call from Bill Smith. This could be the match he was waiting for…

During their conversation on the phone, my father expressed three wishes. First, the sponsor family would have a Catholic background or have a Catholic community that we could belong to. Second, he wanted a job that he could start immediately to provide for his family. And third, a separate living arrangement because of our large family. Bill's response to my father was to not worry about it, because those would be taken care of. Their family belonged to Holy Ghost Church, Bill owned an auto supply store, and they had a friend whose house, which was very close to theirs, was for rent. Everything seemed right. So my father agreed, and on August 1, 1975, our plane arrived at Eppley Airfield in Omaha, Nebraska. We were greeted at the gate with two big smiles from Bill and Hattie Smith. To this day, my mother mentions how happy she was to see Hattie's smile when they greeted us, because she saw a family similar to ours go to another sponsor, and apparently the woman from the sponsor family looked really, really mean. We immediately went to the Smith's house to visit the rest of their family, and they ordered hamburgers, pizza, ice cream, and pretty much all the American food we could eat. What a great initiation.

From that day forward, from that wonderful smile, and that loving couple with their caring family, our new life really started in America. We were in our new home, in a new country, and we had these wonderful people to help us. It was as if God had sent another angel in the form of a family to take us under their wings.

At the time we were settling in our new home, I was about five months old and still suffering from tuberculosis or pneumonia. The Smiths took me to St. Joe's Hospital, where I was given the proper treatment that literally saved my life. The staff there was very supportive and understanding, and treated our family and the Smiths with a great deal of care. After my treatment, when Bill went to their front office to pay the medical bill, they said "Don't worry about it. We'll take care of it." They saw the kindness in the Smith's hearts and how they took this refugee family in and cared for them, so this was their way of doing their part. It's

Continued on Page 6

Choices of the Journey Continued from Page 5

amazing to see the affects of good people, and it's even better to know how many good people there are in this world.

Once again, another choice was made in our journey. However, this one was not my father's alone. We needed help from Bill and Hattie, and God's blessing. The help that we received from our sponsor family goes beyond words. They have become, without question, a part of our family. There are no words to describe what they've meant to us and our family's gratitude. We are forever indebted to them. We appreciate so much of what they've given to us. They made the choice to help us get on our feet, and walk a new course of our lives to live the American way…which is to be free.

In the last few years, I have been fortunate enough to return to Vietnam twice. The first time was a personal trip with my father. The second trip was a professional trip as an ambassador and translator for the behavioral health field I work in. Both trips were incredible, for different reasons. But both times, I fell in love with my native country. I loved the people, their resilience, the culture, the language, the landscape and the food. OH MY did I love the FOOD. And contrary to popular belief, the country is doing well, considering where it's been. It's growing, it's rebuilding, it's getting there.

What was significant about my trip with my father is that it allowed me to get to know him, and REALLY understand our story, but more importantly, understand him.

While we were in Vietnam, I told him I needed to see for myself, what could have been. What IF? What would I be like if I grew up here? What would I be doing? I wasn't saying I wish I would have grown up there. I discussed with him my "what if" theories and my appreciation for what I have today, which is a reflection of my appreciation of him, for looking out for us, for risking his life, our family's lives, and the decision he made to get us to a place where we would be better off. I told him how much I appreciate the United States military and the troops that fought for us, because if they weren't there, who knows where we'd be. I told him how much I appreciate our sponsors and everything they've given us. I told him how much I appreciate both him and my mom, for sacrificing a lot to make sure my siblings and I had a good education. It was one of the best conversations I've ever had with him in my life. I felt connected. I felt inspired. And most of all, I felt proud. I was proud to be Vietnamese, to be his son, to be in this family, and be a part of this story.

I told him how thankful I am for what I have, and realize because of ALL these events, ALL of these people that affected our lives, I was able to meet my wonderful wife Gina, and have two incredible children Megan and Ethan, and even have a beautiful dog (Buddy). I take none of these for granted because they may have never existed without these events, these 'choices.' Most importantly, as we ended our conversation, I thanked him for never losing HOPE...because that was essentially the driving force, the core that got us here. He could have easily given up at any time, and who knows where we would be today.

I told him how much I appreciate the United States military and the troops that fought for us, because if they weren't there, who knows where we'd be.

Then he told me something that meant the world to me. He thanked me for understanding him. And he told me how proud he was of me. That he appreciates and enjoys what he sees in me: my passion, my spirit, my soul…because it is also within him.

As I went through this incredible journey of discovery which led me to write this story, it made me think quite a bit of the many reasons why I shouldn't be here, however, it always makes me appreciate even more, the many reasons why I am here.

History of Armed Forces Day by COL Roma Amundson Continued from Page 1

great personal sacrifice." President John F. Kennedy, 1963.

"Armed Forces Day…honors the dedicated individuals who wear the uniforms of their country. Each (service member) contributes directly and importantly to the defense of the nation. The task of each one is the task of all the Armed Forces: to protect the freedoms which underlie the greatness of America." General Earle G. Wheeler, Former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1967.

"At home and abroad, military men and women are showing purpose and dedication in defending American ideas. They are performing in our country's best traditions under circumstances both difficult and complex. Thanks to their determined spirit of patriotism and professionalism, our country has a powerful and unified defense team, employing its forces in the constant quest for peace and freedom." The Honorable Melvin Laird, Former Secretary of Defense, 1972.

All of these comments are universal and timeless, applicable to the service and sacrifices of our military members who are presently serving. Armed Forces Day is one day that we consciously say "Thank You!" to everyone who wears the military uniform and their families and loved ones who support them in their chosen profession.

On Saturday, May 16, 2009, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Triwest of Nebraska will host Armed Forces Day at The Strategic Air and Space Museum located at I-80/ Exit 426 featuring entertainment and free admission. At 11:00 a.m. and at 2:00 p.m., a special Science Saturday "Super Sized Show" will take place.

Special events are intended to show appreciation to military members from fellow Nebraskans. We as individuals can also show our support by flying the flag.

Let's all fly the flag on that day, because when our military men and women see it, they'll know we care for them and we are thankful for their service.

Festivals in Japan

By Peggy Brown

Japanese festivals, known as Matsuri, are a time for celebration. Many festivals feature decorated floats (dashi), which are pulled through town and accompanied by drum and flute music. While some festivals are calm and meditative, most are energetic and noisy. Some have their roots in Chinese festivals, but over the years have transformed dramatically and now incorporate many local customs.

Being stationed at Misawa Air Base in Japan for four years gave me the wonderful opportunity to experience many Japanese festivals. A little geography lesson for those not familiar with the area: Misawa is located on the main island of Honshu, in the Aomori prefecture, about three miles from the Pacific Ocean. Some of the closer towns are Aomori (about an hour's drive away) Hirosaki (about three hours away) and Tokyo (about 400 miles south of Misawa).

Misawa holds several festivals throughout the year: the Tanabata Festival, the Yosakoi Dance Competition, and the Summer Festival, to name a few. The two festivals that were the most memorable for me while I was stationed there were the Cherry Blossom Festival in Hirosaki and the Nebuta Festival held in Aomori.

Hirosaki's Cherry Blossom Festival (Sakura Matsuri) is probably the most popular of all the Cherry Blossom activities in the northern portion of Honshu. Sakura is the actual cherry blossom flower and Matsuri is the word for festival. You may also hear this referred to as Hanami. This means "flower viewing." Therefore, Sakuri Matsuri is the event and Hanami is the activity of enjoying the beautiful cherry blossoms. This festival takes place around the end of April (the date varies depending on the weather), and the best time to get there is usually the last weekend in April. The festival is held on the grounds of the Hirosaki Castle, where there are over 2,500 cherry trees in bloom. The trees are beautiful and the aroma is magnificent. During a typical cherry blossom festival in Japan, tea ceremonies, traditional Japanese music or dance performances take place. Also, cherry blossoms are often illuminated at night as part of the festival.

The other festival I remember attending every year while in Japan was the Nebuta Festival in Aomori. This festival, one of the most famous in Japan, is known as Japan's fire festival. It is held yearly from August 2 to August 7. Over twenty large floats called Nebuta are pulled by people in the streets. Visitors are encouraged to participate in the festival as dancers called Haneto. Costumes are required if you want to participate, and are available to rent or purchase. I never participated (too busy taking pictures), but several of my friends danced in the parade.

Nebuta floats are made with a wooden base and wire frames. Japanese papers (washi) are then glued onto the frames. Finally, Japanese historical figures, such as warriors or Kabuki characters, are painted on the paper. It takes almost a full year to complete a Nebuta float, so preparations for next year's floats are usually started right after the completion of the current festival.

During the evening hours, the completed floats are illuminated from inside and paraded down the streets of Aomori with the Haneto dancers spinning to the sounds of Taiko and festival music. The first two days of the festival are aimed at children who take part by pulling smaller floats themselves. The main festival is held over the following three nights. On the last day of the festival, August 7th, the Nebuta floats are loaded on a barge and are towed around in the sea. This is said to be reminiscent of the lantern floating practices dating back to the middle 1800's. There is also a large fireworks show that signals the end of the festival.

There are two theories explaining the origin of the Nebuta Festival. The most generally accepted theory tells of the subjugation of rebels in the northern Tohoku area by General Tamuranaro.* He had his army create large creatures, called "Nebuta," for

Continued on Page 8

Chinese New Year Trivia

Compiled by Peggy Brown

1. January 26, 2009 marked the beginning of the Chinese New Year. What animal is being celebrated this year?
   a. horse
   b. ox
   c. snake

2. How many animals are represented in the Chinese calendar?
   a. 12
   b. 10
   c. 14

3. When does the Chinese New Year begin?
   a. The first new moon after the beginning of winter
   b. The first full moon after the beginning of winter
   c. The second new moon after the beginning of winter

4. What festival marks the end of the New Year celebration?
   a. Ancestors Festival
   b. Dragon Festival
   c. Lantern Festival

5. When does the New Year celebration end?
   a. At the first full moon following the first day of the new year
   b. At the first new moon following the first day of the new year
   c. At the second full moon following the first day of the new year

6. What emperor do historians believe invented the Chinese calendar?
   a. Huangdi
   b. Liu Bang
   c. Pu Yi

7. The Chinese New Year is also known as…
   a. The New Moon Festival
   b. The Spring Festival
   c. The Cherry Blossom festival

8. Food plays an important role in the Chinese New Year celebration with certain "lucky" foods served throughout the two-week celebration. What fruit, representing luck and prosperity, is traditionally one of the most popular to serve for the Chinese New Year?
   a. pineapple
   b. tangerine
   c. star fruit

9. This color is lucky and is generally worn on New Year's Day. What is it?
   a. green
   b. white
   c. red

10. This should be accomplished prior to the New Year and never done on New Year's Day. What is it?
    a. house cleaning
    b. traveling
    c. wearing red

Trivia Answers on Page 22

Japanese Festivals Continued from Page 7

frightening the enemy.

Another theory is that the Nebuta Festival was developed from the Tanabata Festival in China. One of the customs during the festival was a float called a Toro. A Toro is a wooden box wrapped in Japanese paper. The Japanese light a candle inside the Toro and put it out to float on the river or into the sea. The purpose of this is to purify themselves and send the evil spirits out to the sea. On the final night of the Tanabata Festival, Toro floating is accompanied by a large display of fireworks. This is said to be the origin of the Nebuta Festival. Over the years, the floats grew larger and so did the festivities.

There are countless festivals held throughout Japan. Almost every shrine celebrates a festival of its own. These festivals are held yearly and celebrate the shrine's deity, or a seasonal or historical event. Just like our county and state fairs, there is never a shortage of food vendors and shops wanting to sell you a souvenir to help you remember the festival.

http://nebuta.culturalnews.net/2008aomori.html

http://www.misawajapan.com/festivals/nebuta/nebuta.htm

http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2063.html

http://gojapan.about.com/od/japanesefestivals/Japanese_Festivals.htm

*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sakanoue_no_Tamuramaro

Licorice International

803 Q Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508; 402-488-2230

By WO1 Robrenna Redl

Not many people know this about me but I love licorice. It was a childhood favorite of mine. It started with candy coated black licorice called Good and Plenty. I progressed from Good and Plenty® to black licorice, which some argue is the only true licorice. I shifted to red licorice and eventually formed a slight addiction to Strawberry Twizzlers®. Some would not call this licorice, hence the term Twizzlers®. During my family's bi-annual visit to Texas, we stopped in Dallas to visit my childhood friend Anne, and her husband Roland, before driving to my mother's home in Killeen. Roland is also a bit fanatical about licorice. I shared a few pieces of strawberry-flavored Australian licorice with him that I carried with me on the trip. By the second piece he was hooked and asked where I acquired such a find. I told him in Lincoln. He was surprised.

While looking for a Christmas gift for my friends, I ventured into Licorice International. I thought it would be a treat if I sent them licorice from around the world. I perused the bins and sampled flavors from nations such as Finland, Italy, Ireland, Germany, New Zealand and yes, the good old USA. I became curious by how such a concept of multicultural licorice came to be, so I asked one of the owners, Ardith, how she and her business partner Elizabeth became known as the "licorice ladies."

Ardith, with her friendly disposition, was more than happy to tell the story of such a clever business venture. Elizabeth's husband, Doug, received licorice as a Father's Day gift from his mother every year. When Doug's mother could no longer provide the treat, he asked Elizabeth to continue the tradition. Elizabeth decided to do one better so she contacted the original owner who lived in New York. As a result, Elizabeth and Ardith bought the business. I called co-owner Elizabeth and asked what made them buy the business. "Ardith and I were looking for a business," Elizabeth said. "It had to have the following criteria: It had to be a product, not a service; something people could buy on the internet; something that could be easily sent through the mail; and a product that people wanted but could not find very easily."

In February 2002, Licorice International moved to its new headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska. Initially the ladies filled website orders out of their homes. They soon realized they would need a commercial property to grow. "We knew the business was fairly successful," Elizabeth stated, "and it became clear once we had to add employees." They selected the College View area, however, by 2005 it became obvious that Licorice International had outgrown its College View location. Ardith and Elizabeth began looking around again and soon discovered a location in Lincoln's historic Haymarket district.

Licorice International offers nearly 160 types of licorice from twelve different countries. A line of fine chocolates as well as other gourmet foods and candy dishes are also available. The categories of licorice available are American, Australian, Canadian, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Irish, Italian, New Zealand, Swedish and Swiss. Within each category or country there are different types and flavors to choose from. My favorite so far is Darrell Lea Raspberry Australian Licorice. When I asked Elizabeth what she thinks attracts people to the store, she turned the question on me and asked, "What attracted you?" The simple answer is curiosity. My curiosity of what flavors were awaiting inside lured me in. When I entered the store and tasted the samples I was delighted.

Elizabeth and Ardith have been friends for twenty years. They have a satisfying friendship and enjoy working together. They see Licorice International as a place to reach out to other people. Elizabeth states, "We are both Christians and want to extend our kindness and love for people. There is joy in building something together. Ardith and I have different skills that we use to enhance the business." I for one am grateful, since every once in a while I am able to indulge my sweet tooth for a childhood favorite all because of the love of licorice, and two people's enduring friendship.

Licorice International in conjunction with National Confectioners Association designated April as National Licorice Month.

Governor Dave Heinemann has proclaimed April 12th as Nebraska Licorice Day. Enjoy!!

Check out the website www.licoriceinternational.com

My Perspectives: Looking Forward From the Past

By CPT Dale Burrage

CPT Burrage is Supply Officer, G-4; and a graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Consumer Science and Education and Broadcast Journalism.

Throughout history, race has played a critical role in shaping politics, international policies, and the everyday experiences of a vast majority of individuals around the globe. Sociologists define race as a human population considered distinct based on physical characteristics. However, scientists have discovered that only two percent of our genes are ultimately responsible for visible differences such as skin color. Therefore, we are all 98% identical. Although it is not an exact science, social groups play a very important role in defining the rules of race.

...scientists have discovered that only two percent of our genes are ultimately responsible for visible differences such as skin color.

In some ways, we have never talked more about race in America than during the 2008 presidential campaign. Forty years after the civil rights movement began, the first African-American has won the presidential race. While the topic of race has not played the same prominent role in every person's life, the recent election provides a seminal opportunity to think about how much life has really changed from the past and look ahead to the future.

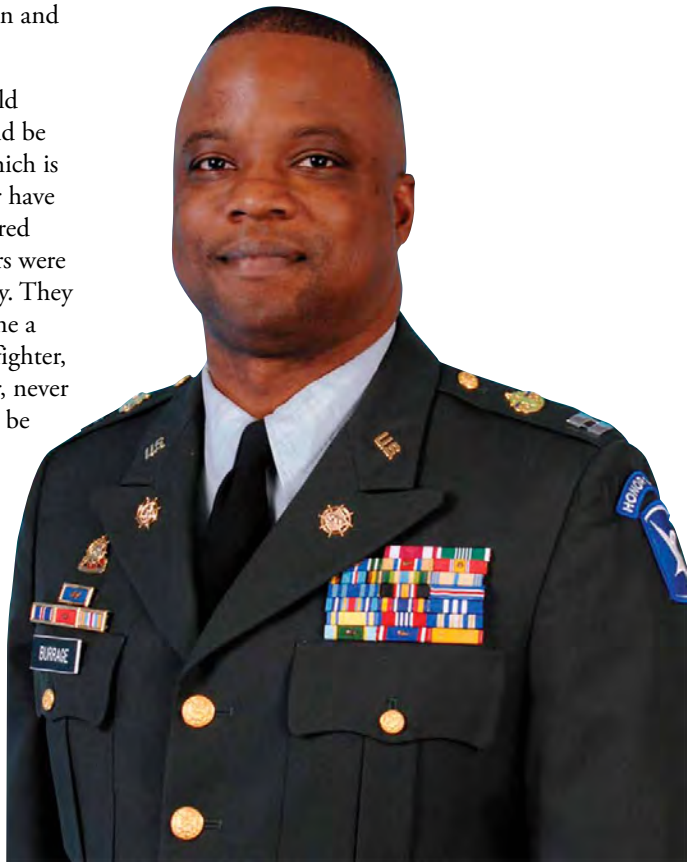
As I watched the election results in my living room with my youngest son in my arms, and as I heard the Cable News Network (CNN) announcer report that the 44th president of the United States would be Barack Obama, I found it extremely difficult to fight back the tears as I pondered just how far we have come in my lifetime. I thought about the long days I had in the fourth grade, as my brother and I were bused over twenty miles to go to schools in a predominately White neighborhood. I remember the stories my grandfather told me about the abuse he took from sailors while he was a cook in the Navy and the anger he felt each time one of them called him "boy." I thought about my grandmother showing me the photos of her parents and the scars they sustained during slavery. I thought about a classmate of mine from elementary school who called me the "n" word once (and only once) on the bus, and the bus driver corrected him only to tell him how to pronounce it correctly. I thought about being the only Black family in our neighborhood and the police stopping my brother and me or following us home whenever we were out after dark. I wondered, as a kid, why I was so different. I thought about how fortunate I am to have traveled to just about every state in our Union and overseas.

I looked at my eighteen-month-old son and told him that he too could be President of the United States, which is something my father would never have thought possible for me. I wondered how many minority fourth graders were changing their plans for career day. They may have been planning to become a construction worker, teacher, firefighter, military member, or police officer, never thinking that they could aspire to be the leader of the free world.

What has changed in our society to enable President Barack Obama to defeat Senator John McCain, and what else might change as a result? Civil rights leader Jesse Jackson said his satisfaction at Obama's success was conditioned by a sense of history. Jackson witnessed the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968 and twice ran for president in the 1980s. "His (Obama) winning means America's getting better. We are more mature. We are less anxious around each other," he said in an interview with an Atlanta newspaper.

Jackson put the election in the context of the movement to end racial segregation in the South in the 1950s and 1960s and win voting rights for Blacks in the teeth of violent opposition. "I know so many people - White, Black and Jewish who marched and were martyred. I wish that those who paid the supreme sacrifice could see the results of their labors," he said.

There are those who still stereotype citizens of this great nation by the color of their skin and not the content of their character. One day, we as a nation will not see race, but see people. I can't wait for that day. I hope I live to see it.



Jewish American Heritage Month

By Pam Makovicka

On April 20, 2006, President George W. Bush proclaimed the first Jewish American Heritage Month in May. The announcement was the crowning achievement in an effort by the South Florida Jewish community leaders urging the President to proclaim a month that would recognize the more than 350-year history of Jewish contributions to American culture. The month of May was chosen due to the highly successful celebration of the 350th Anniversary of American Jewish History in May 2004. The faith and hard work of Jewish Americans have played an integral role in shaping the cultural fabric of America. During Jewish American Heritage Month we celebrate the vital contributions of Jewish Americans to our Nation.

National Museum of American Jewish History
Polshek Partnership Architects

Throughout our history, Jewish Americans have contributed to the strength of our country and the preservation of our values. The talent and imagination of these citizens have helped our nation prosper, and their efforts continue to remind us of America's gift of religious freedom. Jewish Americans have worked to promote civil rights and build bridges of mutual understanding among the world's religions. Their deep commitment to faith and strong ties to family enrich our country and set a positive example for others.

Jewish involvement influencing immigration policy in the United States is especially noteworthy as an aspect of ethnic conflict, as it has certain unique qualities that distinguished its interests from the interests of other groups favoring liberal immigration policies. Throughout much of this period, one Jewish interest regarding liberal immigration policies stemmed from a desire to provide a sanctuary for Jews fleeing anti-Semitic persecutions in Europe and elsewhere. Anti-Semitic persecutions were a recurring phenomenon in the modern world beginning with the Czarist persecutions in 1881, and continuing into the post-World War II era in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. As a result, liberal immigration has been a Jewish interest because survival often dictated Jews seek refuge in other lands.

Some of the important dates of Jewish immigration are:

1921-1924... The National Origins Quota legislation passes, restricting the number of immigrants allowed into America to no more than two percent of the number of each nationality residing in the United States in 1890. Due to the National Origins Quota of 1924, few Eastern European refugees were allowed into the United States during World War II.

1930's... Jews of Yemen granted visas to the United States.

1939... About 70,000 Sephardi Jews live in the United States, a majority of who live in New York City.

1924–44... 100,000 refugees fleeing Hitler, pre-Holocaust, arrive in the United States.

1945–60... 250,000 Holocaust survivors arrive.

The Holocaust is used to describe the genocide of approximately six million European Jews during World War II, as part of a deliberate extermination planned and executed by Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler. In late January 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of the German Reich. Immediately, members of Hitler's Nazi Party began a campaign of violence against German Jews, socialists, communists and other Nazi opponents.

When word of the assaults reached America, representatives of the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress met in New York. The conferees established a joint committee to monitor the situation, but agreed that organized public protests in America would further undermine the already precarious position of German Jewry. However, less than a month later, the American Jewish Congress changed its mind and called on its partners to help organize an American protest campaign. On March 12, 1933, the American Jewish Congress resolved to hold a mass protest rally at Madison Square Garden in New York City. A week later, the organization convened an emergency conference of Jewish organizations that 1,500 individuals attended.

The Nazi apparatus denounced the American complaints as slanders generated by "Jews of German origin."

Continued on Page 12

Buchenwald, 1945. Eli Wiesel is on the second row from the bottom, seventh from the left.

Restaurant Review: International Café

2416 Farnam Street; Omaha, Nebraska; 402-345-1568

By CPT Dick Jones

East African cuisine is one of the world's best kept secrets. The history of the Horn of Africa region is as old as human kind. The spice trade routes of antiquity brought all of the flavors of the Middle East and even a noticeable Indian influence to the flavors of the region. This history combined with the region's substance farming and religious diversity provides dishes which are prepared with a blend of unique spices.

The International Café is an East African (Ethiopian/Somali) restaurant close to downtown Omaha. The owner/operator is Ahmed Muheel. He started the restaurant in 2006 as an extension to his family's small market located next door to the restaurant.

Traditional Midwestern diners will be pleasantly surprised walking in to the International Café. You are not overpowered by spicy smells you do not understand. The restaurant is clean and the staff provides very friendly service that makes you feel welcome. Even experienced diners who have been to a more formal Ethiopian restaurant will enjoy the laid back, café style service and inexpensive menu.

The lunch and dinner menu is broken into various meats served as either rice plates, pita bread plates, injera (traditional flat bread), pasta (spaghetti) or wraps and sandwiches. They also offer vegetarian dishes, a breakfast menu, desserts and even a kid's meal.

Our party ordered four rice plates and a chicken gyro plate. For the sake of this review, we chose a mix of goat, lamb and beef stew. All of the rice plates were deliciously prepared with saffron-seasoned, light rice covered with a red gravy-like spiced sauce. Similar spices were used on each of the different meats. Essential components of this cuisine are berbere, a spicy red pepper paste and nitter kibbeh, a spice-infused clarified butter. The beef stew added more overtones of green peppers, onions and some form of curry base. All were wonderful. You will need some time to relax after the meal due to the size of the portions.

Beef Stew (front); Chicken Gyro (back)

The only non-traditional component of these plates was the lettuce salad with ranch dressing. While not traditional, it blended well with the other foods offered, and most Americans will never turn down ranch dressing.

I was lucky enough to order a (real) Ethiopian coffee with my meal. This was served very, very hot, but will be cool enough to sip by the time you finish your meal. The original wild coffee plants were from Ethiopia, and they have carried their coffee tradition through the ages to provide a cup that is very full and bold flavored, but smooth with very low bitter after-taste. I would compare it to a café Americano you would order at one of the premium coffee chains, but much better.

The International Café has more photos and information on their website at www.internationalcafe01.com. They are open daily from 9:00 a.m. through 9:00 p.m., and take cash or credit cards.

Jewish American Heritage Continued from Page 11

Joseph Goebbels announced a campaign of "sharp countermeasures" against these attacks. Goebbels was a German Nazi Party member who became Adolf Hitler's propaganda minister, giving him power over all German radio, press, cinema and theater. He accused German Jewry of engineering a worldwide boycott of German goods to destroy the German economy. To give Jews a taste of their own medicine, Goebbels announced that the following Saturday, April 1, all good Aryan Germans would boycott Jewish-owned businesses. If, after the one-day boycott, the false charges against the Nazis in the overseas press stopped, there would be no further boycott of Jewish businesses. If worldwide Jewish attacks on the Nazi regime continued, Goebbels warned, "The boycott will be resumed … until German Jewry has been annihilated."

The boycott came off as planned. German police and S.S. troops enforced store closings. Protestors smashed the windows of some Jewish-owned shops and department stores. Others were forced to close when Nazis set off stink bombs inside their stores.

Urged by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise to protest to the German government, United States Secretary of State Cordell Hull issued a mild statement to the American Ambassador to Berlin complaining that "unfortunate incidents have indeed occurred and the whole world joins in regretting them." He expressed his personal belief that the reports of anti-Jewish violence were probably exaggerated. Unimpressed

Continued on Page 23

Becoming Citizens of the World – One Country at a Time
Customs in Nicaragua

By COL (P) Roma Amundson

The fifth article in our series on unique customs and courtesies of different countries is about Nicaragua, a country where we've had Soldiers on several Overseas Deployment Training (ODT) events in the past. We have sent soldiers to Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador to conduct medical care and training, air evacuations, road construction and medical facilities and school construction.

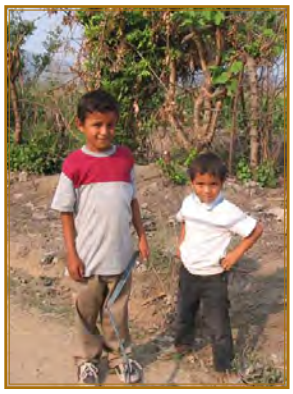
Nicaragua is known as the land of lakes and volcanoes, pictured is Concepción volcano located in Maderas.

Our continuing involvement in these ODT's is critical because it is through these agreements that the United States (US) can counter influences from other nations seeking to undermine our relationships with target nations. We always need to keep in mind that the most visible and immediate example of United States foreign policy is often American military personnel. Because Nebraska Army National Guard (NEARNG) Soldiers will more than likely continue to conduct ODT's to Central America, it is imperative that we understand something of the culture. Nicaragua is a prime example of a country where we have a need to serve in order to change local perceptions of Americans.

Nicaragua has a history of political instability, and the United States has provided military forces at various times in support of political leaders who are friendly to the United States. US Marines were sent there in 1912 to maintain order in the elections and remained there until 1925. After their removal in 1925, civil war immediately broke out and continued for six years. The Marines were again sent in and joined forces with the Nicaraguan National Guard. In fact, at this time, the United States Marines were the first in military history to use aerial dive-bombing tactics.

After supposed stabilization, the United States forces left in the early 1930's, with the country then coming under the control of the Nicaraguan National Guard commander Anastasio Somoza Garcia, who ruled Nicaragua until 1956. After his death, his sons continued to rule and brought a brutal style of governing in the form of torture and killing government opponents.

The Marxist Sandinista National Liberation Front fought against the Somoza sons and succeeded in taking control of the government. Their success, however, only brought another totalitarian rule to the country, and one which the United States also found unsatisfactory. In 1984, the United States imposed a damaging trade embargo against the country and supported the Contras who fought against the Sandinistas.



Finally, after years of fighting that drastically damaged the fragile economy of the country and hurt the people tremendously, peace came in 1990 after the Costa Rican president proposed the Central American Peace Plan. This was followed by elections and the establishment of a multi-party republic calling for a president, vice president, cabinet and a 92-member National Assembly.

The United States political and military involvement in Nicaraguan affairs and its damaging trade embargo is remembered by many Nicaraguans, and did not create good relationships with the country's people. Relations have been very strained since 1990, even when the United States backed President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro's election, and the United States ended the trade embargo following her election. The current president is Daniel Ortega Saavedra, who was elected January 10, 2007, and was the Sandinista leader in the 1980's. His election caused consternation and dampened international investments in Nicaragua, which has the second lowest per capita income in the Western Hemisphere.

The embargo and the fighting, with one side backed by the United States, negatively affected many Nicaraguans' view of the United States. Because of its poor economic situation, Nicaragua sought international economic assistance. It has an environment ripe for the money and influence of such countries as China, Venezuela and other oppressive South American countries. For that reason, the United States is attempting to use military assets in a "soft power" type of approach to improve its relationship with Nicaragua.

Continued on Page 14

Customs in Nicaragua Continued from Page 13

The official language is Spanish, although many dialects are spoken unique to Black and Indian populations. English is spoken among people living along the Atlantic coast. Nicaragua has a population of 5,785,000 people, composed of 69% Mestizo (a mix of European and Indian), 17% European, 9% Black, and 5% Amerindian.

Their tumultuous history affects their way of thinking. They rely on personal perspectives based on experience and seldom refer to rules or laws to resolve their problems since rules and laws have changed so frequently in their history. Personal feelings usually determine the outcome of decisions and negotiations.

Nicaraguans base their decisions on the needs of the family and the public group to which they belong. Self-identity is based on a person's place in the family and the relative success of performance of duties. Family organization and the church provide social and psychological support. Extreme contrasts exist between the rich and the poor, with the poor creating a large group. Women's rights are subordinate to those of men, although the election of a female president in 1990 did boost the status of women to a degree.

Business Practices

- Nicaraguans write the day first, followed by the month and year. June 1, 2009 is written as 1.6.2009.
- Business hours are usually between 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with a two hour siesta taken between 12:00 and 2:00 p.m.
- The best time to visit Nicaragua is between February through July and September through November.

Negotiating

- Business does not occur at lightning speed. Allow for a much slower pace and delays.
- Building relationships first is important before doing business. Don't start talking business until you have established a relationship.
- Having contacts will move the business process along. Contact embassies, banks, and the United States International Trade Administration for names of people who could introduce you.
- Business is conducted in an office or over a meal in a restaurant, never in a home or around family. If invited to a home, do not talk business.

Business Entertaining

- Business breakfasts or lunches are preferred to dinners.
- The main meal is at noon and usually consists of black beans, tortillas or meat, and fruits and vegetables.
- Talk about the sights of the area, family, job, and sports. Avoid political and religious topics.

Greetings

- Men shake hands in greeting, or in the case of close male friends, may embrace each other briefly.
- Women will often pat each other on the right forearm or shoulder, or in the case of close friends, hug and kiss each other on the cheek.
- At parties, shake hands and greet everyone individually.

Titles/Forms of Address

- Only children, family members and close friends use first names when referring to each other.
- As do most Latinos, Nicaraguans have two surnames: one from their father, which is listed first, followed by one from their mother. Only the father's surname is commonly used when addressing someone. Examples: Señor Juan Antonio Martínez Garcia is addressed as Señor Martínez. Señorita Ana María Gutiérrez Herrera is addressed as Señorita Gutiérrez.
- When a woman marries, she usually adds her husband's surname and goes by that. Example: If Ana María Gutiérrez Herrera marries Juan Antonio Martínez Garcia, she would be known as Señora Ana María Gutíerrez Herrera de Martínez. Informally, she would be called Señora de Martínez or Señora Martínez.
- When a person has a title, use it along with the surname. Example: A person with a PhD or a physician is called "Doctor." Teachers prefer "Professor," engineers use "Ingeniero," architects use "Arquitecto," etc. Example: if you meet with a professor, you would say, "Señor Professor."

Don't take pictures of people or religious ceremonies without first having permission.

Gifts

- Business gifts are generally not given on the first trip to Nicaragua. At the end of the trip, ask if there is something you could bring from the United States on your next visit.
- Remember to stay in favor with secretaries and receptionists – they are the gatekeepers who can let you in to

Continued on Page 15

Cinco de Mayo

By 1LT Juan Vidal

Battle of Puebla

Contrary to popular belief, Cinco de Mayo is not Mexico's Independence Day. Cinco de Mayo marks the victory of the Mexican militia over the French army at the Battle of Puebla in 1862, which was a remarkable day in Mexican history. While it is not recognized as a national holiday in Mexico, it is celebrated as a regional holiday throughout the Mexican state of Puebla, to include its capital city, Puebla. The largest and most popular celebrations of Cinco de Mayo take place along the United States-Mexico border and in parts of the United States that have a high population of people with a Mexican heritage. It is seen as an opportunity to celebrate Mexican heritage, culture, food, music, beverages and customs unique to Mexico.

At the beginning of the month of May, the community of South Omaha, which has a rich Mexican heritage, enthusiastically celebrates Cinco de Mayo. The festivities start on Thursday evening with an appreciation banquet for the sponsors. Friday evening, a young lady from the community is crowned queen for the Cinco de Mayo celebration. On Saturday morning the parade is the highlight of the weekend's festivities. It attracts thousands of people to South Omaha. The final event is a car show on Sunday.

The parade starts at the intersections of B Street and 24th Street, and ends at P Street and 24th Street. As the parade comes to an end, people start to gather at the Plaza la Raza which is located at the heart of the South Omaha area, where the rest of the festivities take place. There is a full carnival, food court and different types of businesses that bring excitement and entertainment for kids and adults. Food is the main attraction as everyone enjoys fresh watermelons and orange juice, tacos and chalupas, snow cones and custard and even gelatin or cotton candy, followed by traditional drinks, for a classic taste of true Mexican cuisine.

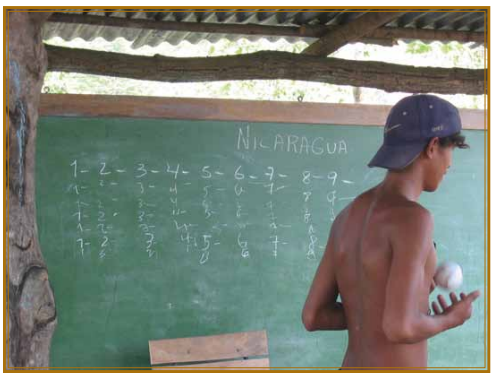
In May 2008 the Nebraska Army National Guard opened the parade with five High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs). Each of the HMMWVs carried war veterans, and were escorted by the Honor and Drill Team from Benson High School, who marched alongside each vehicle. The HMMWVs and their passengers quickly got the attention of the crowd as the enthusiasm was shared among the people, including adults and kids who could not stop waving their hands, making V signs or giving thumbs up and taking pictures. The Army National Guard Recruiter's Blazer also got the attention of onlookers. The Nebraska National Guard was followed by political figures of the community, marching bands, businesses, and other parade participants.

The May 2008 celebration had over 40,000 people attend, making it the biggest event in the region. This year the Cinco de Mayo festivities will be held the first weekend of May. You will really feel the festive atmosphere, so come and enjoy the Mexican cuisine and music.

Customs in Nicaragua Continued from Page 14

see your business contact. Bring a scarf or perfume or candy to help you get and stay in favor.

- If invited to a home, flowers or candy are appropriate. Remember that white flowers are reserved for funerals.



Dress

- Businessmen should wear a conservative dark suit and tie, although a jacket is not required in the hottest season. Women should wear a dress or skirt and blouse.
- Lightweight clothing is appropriate for casual wear, although avoid short pants or jeans. Women should not wear pants or revealing clothing, and men may wear a light shirt not tucked in.

Things-to-Know

- Don't make a fist with the thumb between the index and middle fingers; this is considered very bad taste.
- To gesture to have a person come to you, use your hand with the palm down and make a scooping motion with the fingers or the whole hand.
- Don't take pictures of people or religious ceremonies without first having permission.
- Don't take pictures of transportation depots or bridges, as these might have military significance.

Sources:

Morrison, Conaway, Borden, "Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands," (Adams Media Corporation, 57 Littlefield Street, Avon, Massachusetts, 1999) pp. 251-257.

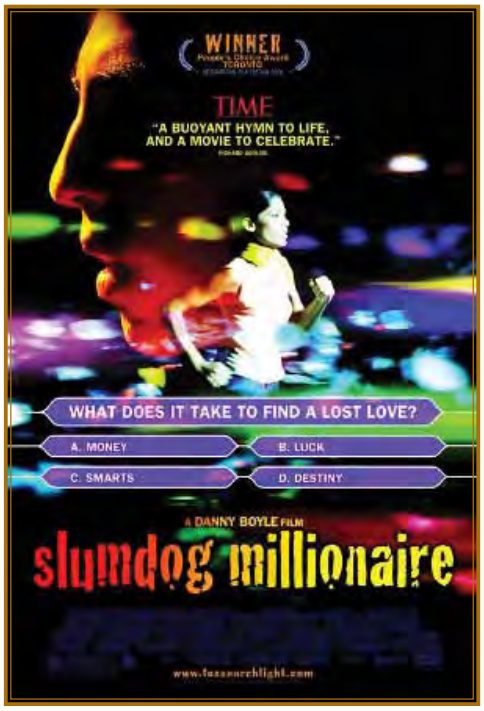
"The World FactBook," Central Intelligence Agency, www.cia.gov/library/publications.

Movie Review: Slumdog Millionaire

Directors: Danny Boyle and Loveleen Tandan (co-director: India)
Writers: Simon Beaufoy (screenplay) and Vikas Swarup (novel)

Movie Review by Jessie Bockelman

If you're like me, you might have felt a little overwhelmed at the end of 2008 with so many critically acclaimed movies in theatres. With Clint Eastwood in *Gran Torino,* Mickey Rourke in *The Wrestler,* Sean Penn in *Milk* and of course Brad Pitt in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (just to name a few), I wasn't quite sure how to select one movie.



I happened to notice that the movie Slumdog Millionaire was playing at the Ross Theatre. After unsuccessfully trying to get tickets to an afternoon showing, I made it to the 7:00 p.m. showing and filed into a packed theatre. According to employees at the Ross, each show had been selling out since it came to the theatre, so I had to see what all the hype was about.

Slumdog Millionaire is set and filmed in the slums of Mumbai, India. The film is directed by Danny Boyle and shows the story of Jamal Malik, a child raised on the streets who ends up winning India's version of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire.* Because of his humble beginnings, his win strikes the suspicions of the host of the show as well as police in India, and he is accused of cheating.

Director Danny Boyle placed the money to be paid to the 3 lead child actors in a trust that is to be released to them upon their completion of grade school at 16 years of age.

Jamal is then tortured by Indian police in attempts to get him to reveal that he cheated, but instead he begins to tell a story for each question that explains why he knew the answer. At the heart of most stories is Latika, his love since childhood, beginning when he was sent to an orphanage with his older brother Salim. Salim serves as a father figure for Jamal when the boys are orphaned. The children at the orphanage are taught to beg on the streets and even maimed in order to get more money from sympathetic passersby. The children eventually escape and return to their previous lives on the streets with no one but each other to rely on to survive.

Jamal, Latika and Salim are such good friends throughout childhood that they compare themselves to the Three Musketeers, a fact that later comes up as a question on Who Wants to Be a Millionaire. The stories Jamal draws knowledge from range from humorous to horrifying, to say the least. At one point he watches his mother being killed, and in another story he's diving through a latrine to get an autograph from his favorite movie star. Life in the slums of Mumbai isn't easy for Jamal, but he somehow makes it through. He eventually ends up losing touch with his brother as well as his love, Latika, when he gets into a fight with his brother, and sees a side of him he never wanted to see. This is a foreshadowing of events to come for Salim.

When Jamal grows up, he gets a job delivering chai tea to employees who work at a call center. He is asked to cover a co-worker's computer and phone line briefly, where he searches the computer's database for Latika and Salim. He discovers their addresses in hopes of reuniting, and eventually learns that they are both involved with the mob. Salim tries to get Jamal a spot working for the mob, but Jamal declines. After reuniting with Latika and finding her living as the girlfriend of a mob boss, he loses her again when the mob boss moves to another home and takes Latika with him. Jamal learns that Latika enjoys watching *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* and tries out for the show, hoping to reach her once again.

This is the first film since Schindler's List (1993) to win Best Picture, Director and Screenplay at the Golden Globes, BAFTAs and the Oscars.

I'll stop there to avoid spoiling the ending, but I do recommend this movie. It gives you a great perspective on life in the slums of India, and a great love story to boot. It was nominated for ten Academy Awards, and won an impressive eight. Among these was a big win for "Best Picture" and another for "Best Director" by Danny Boyle. It has also done quite well at other award ceremonies including a "Best Picture" win at the Golden Globes and "Best Cast" at the Screen Actors' Guild Awards. This film is definitely worth seeing to find out what all the hype is about.

The 2009 Greater Middle East Heritage Luncheon Recap

By 2LT Rafael D. Lantigua, Jr.

Dr. Naser Alsharif, 2LT Rafael D. Lantigua, Jr., BG Timothy Kadavy (has since been promoted to MG)

In the past several months, many have been blessed to be participants in several significant landmarks in both our state and nation's histories. These events are reflective of the fact that we are a nation and a state that are united. As a nation, we elected the first African-American president of the United States who also has familial ties to the Muslim World; the Nebraska Army National Guard enlisted and witnessed its first 09L (Language and Cultural Specialist), who is from Morocco, a graduate from Advanced Individual Training (AIT) at Fort Jackson, South Carolina; and the Army National Guard commissioned the first Muslim chaplain candidate in its 372-year history. January 29, 2009 was another significant landmark in that it was the day that the Military Department held its first ever Greater Middle East Heritage Celebration.

It was a momentous occasion in which Soldiers, Airmen, Federal and State employees, community leaders and civilians of various ethnic backgrounds and nationalities came together to celebrate and recognize the historical accomplishments, achievements and aspirations of those who are of Greater Middle East Heritage. The presence of the Adjutant General, the Director of the Joint Staff, the State Command Chief Warrant Officer, and the State Command Sergeant Major made the event all the more dignified and grand. Also present was the featured speaker and distinguished guest, Dr. Naser Alsharif, who was accompanied by his lovely wife, Linda.

Dr. Alsharif received his Ph.D. from Creighton University Medical Center (CUMC) in Toxicology, 1992; M.S. degree in Pharmaceutical Sciences from the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), 1988 and Pharm.D. from UNMC, 1987. He joined CUMC in 1994 and is currently an Associate Professor of Pharmacy Sciences. He served as the Associate Director of the Web-Based Pharmacy Pathway (2001-2006). Dr. Alsharif is of Palestinian ancestry and is active in the community to educate the people of Nebraska about Arabs and Muslims, their culture and the portrayal of those groups in the American media. He is President of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (Omaha Chapter); Member, Islamic Speaker Bureau (Nebraska); and a Board Member of the Conference for Inclusive Community (Midlands Region).

Dr. Naser Alsharif with his wife Linda

The event began with 2LT Rafael Lantigua welcoming those present to the luncheon and providing the invocation. Soon thereafter, the drill floor was filled with the aromas of Middle Eastern food being catered by Sinbad's Restaurant. Lunch included hummus with bread, chicken and beef Teka over colorful yellow rice, a small salad and a beverage. After the audience was satiated by the flavorful cuisine, Dr. Alsharif began his presentation.

Dr. Alsharif gave a brief summary of what constitutes the Greater Middle East, general demographics, the history and cultures of the Greater Middle East, a perception on the demographics in Nebraska and a discussion of the hopes and concerns of Americans of Greater Middle East origin. "People of Greater Middle East origin have the same hopes and concerns as Americans: safety, security, education for themselves and their children, and the opportunity to be successful in achieving their goals and aspirations," explained Dr. Alsharif.

During the presentation, he highly recommended the acquisition and reading of *Who Speaks for Islam?: What a Billion Muslims Really Think,* authored by John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed. Dr. Alsharif explained that this book is the product of the Gallup World Poll's massive, multi-year research study in which Gallup conducted tens of thousands of interviews with residents of more than 35 nations that are predominantly Muslim or have significant Muslim populations. Dr. Alsharif welcomed several questions from the audience related to his personal views about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the differences between Sunnis and Shi'ites, and the direction of future relations between the United States and the Arab/Muslim World.

The lunch ended with closing remarks of gratitude by Brigadier General Kadavy (has since been promoted to Major General) and the presenting of a certificate of appreciation by him to Dr. Alsharif.

Many felt that the event opened their minds to our nation's and state's growing diversity, and highlighted the need to continue coming together in order to celebrate our commonalities, while respecting our differences.

Restaurant Review: Sinbad's Restaurant

2630 Orchard, Lincoln, Nebraska; 402-477-4141

By Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez

The first thing you notice when you walk through the doors of Sinbad's Restaurant is the incredible aroma of authentic Middle Eastern cuisine. The smells cause your mouth to water in anticipation of tasting the unique foods behind the smells.

The food is even better than the aromas would have you believe. On a recent visit, a friend and I tried the Sinbad Combo (large size) which includes Chicken and Beef Tekas, Falafel, Byriani, soup and salad. We were hooked from the first bite of the meat! We ordered the eggplant and the bean soups. They both have a tomato base and are very good.

From the moment they put the main plate of food down in front of you, you will be making yummy sounds! At least I was. The spices (not a hot spice) are just right. They blend together to bring out the flavor of the meat. The meal is also served with a side of bread that looks like a tortilla, but is larger with a different texture, and is an excellent compliment to the meal. After we had eaten much of the platter, we discussed putting the different meats and Byriana (a rice dish) in the bread and making it into a type of sandwich. Any way you eat it, you will like it. The meal is also served with garlic sauce for dipping. I could have eaten more than twice the amount we were served.

Sinbad's is owned by a very friendly gentleman, Ali AlBasam. Ali has been the owner and one of two cooks for over seven years. Ali came to Lincoln from Southern Iraq (Samawah). Before settling in Nebraska, he spent approximately four years in a refugee camp in Saudi Arabia then came to the United States via California. He first learned to cook from his mother while growing up. He gained more cooking as an Iraqi soldier, also by necessity of being a bachelor in the camps and when he first arrived in the United States.

He first arrived in the United States in San Diego, California, staying for eight months. Unable to find work there, he relocated to Lincoln. He already had friends here, so they were able to help him find a place to live and to find work with National Crane as a painter. One day, he drove by the restaurant, stopped to eat, and noticed that the restaurant was for sale. It was then and there he decided to buy it. He asked a friend of his whether he thought it was a good idea to buy, and his friend replied, "Let's give it a shot!"

He expanded the restaurant to make more room for seating. He hired his long-time friend (they grew up together in Iraq) as a cook. Ali cooks four days a week and his friend cooks three days a week. They learned more cooking techniques from each other as well. Ali's beautiful wife, an immigrant from Russia, helps in the restaurant as a server four days a week. Ali and his wife take weekends off to spend time together and with their four-year-old son.

Sinbad's serves Middle Eastern food with only Halal meat (properly butchered according to Islamic laws) from a Halal company in Kansas City. For dessert they have mouth-watering baklava. They also have a small retail sampling of cookies, desserts and teas from the Middle East.

Sinbad Combo (Large)

Sinbad Combo (Small)

Sambosa

Fattoush Salad

African-American Heritage Luncheon Recap

By WO1 Robrenna Redl

Pastor Evan Brown and Mrs. Te Anna Brown, W01 Robrenna Redl, CPT Dale Burrage, Fire Chief Niles Ford

COL Thomas Schuurmans and Fire Chief Niles Ford

Fire Chief Niles Ford's wife, Carrie Ford and his Assistant

This year's national theme for African-American Heritage month was "The Quest for Black Citizenship in the Americas." Captain Dale Burrage set the celebration in motion by reading the Presidential Proclamation. He was followed by an invocation given by Pastor Evan Brown of Abiding Grace Community Church. Next, lunch was served (shredded BBQ pork or chicken sandwich, beans, drunkin' apples and a beverage), catered by Famous Dave's. The speaker, Lincoln Fire Chief Niles Ford, gave a new perspective on overcoming obstacles, providing leadership and being a citizen in every community.

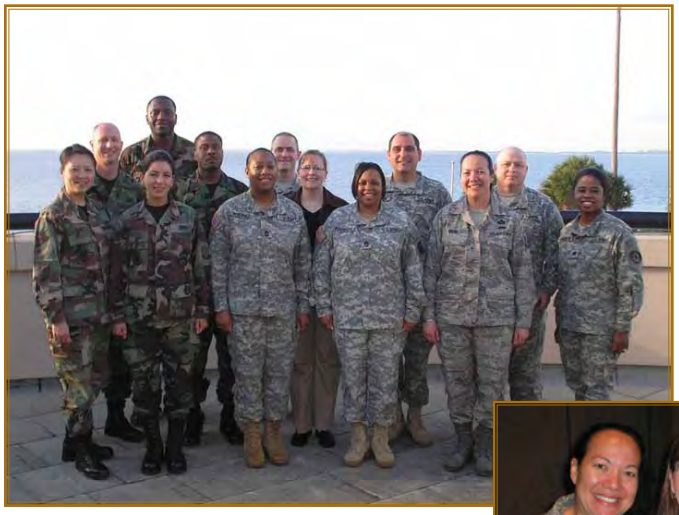
Chief Ford spoke about his father who served in the military and how this caused the family to frequently relocate. Due to this experience, he learned to adapt to new surroundings and environments, and he gained an appreciation for the military, which was his first choice for a career. Unfortunately, spousal abuse led Ford's parents to divorce; and, subsequently his mother became a major influence in his life. Ford was also fortunate to have teachers who noticed the potential he did not know he possessed. Ford stated through the encouragement of his mother and those teachers he began to set goals and strive to achieve excellence.

As a young man he became interested in becoming a firefighter. Two criteria he had to meet to enter the fire department were the written test and a physical agility test. He scored among the highest on the written test, and he received the highest score of all candidates who participated in the agility test. As he told the story "as I walked away from the testing site the Deputy Chief saw me limping and ran up to me to see if I had been injured." He said at that time he had to reveal something he had not told anyone while pursuing his dream. Chief Ford was not willing to start his career with a lie, so he told him about his left leg prosthesis. The Deputy Chief was surprised and impressed. Chief Ford asked if this would take away his chances of becoming a firefighter, and the trainer said "no" since he had passed the job qualification tests. Chief Ford has never allowed his physical challenge to hinder him from pursuing his goals. It actually gives him strength and determination to overcome obstacles.

Ford began to work toward the education and experience he would need to reach new heights in the fire department. With eighteen years experience in public administration and his ability to be innovative in leading, training, adn building community relationships combined with his hard work and determination. He became the first African-American Fire Chief in Lincoln. He is also the only African-American currently serving on the City of Lincoln Fire department. Chief Ford credits his success to his strong faith in God, his wife, Carrie and their two girls, and to those who believed in him. As he stated several times in this inspirational speech, "No One Succeeds Alone."

Four Weeks in Balmy Florida (Not!!)

By LaVonne Rosenthal



When I told family, friends and associates that I was going to Florida for a four-week training course, they sighed with envy that I would be gone during January, one of the coldest months in Nebraska. That was my reasoning for traveling south during this timeframe. I didn't imagine that several nights in Florida would be as cold as Nebraska during January. Good thing I wore my lightweight winter coat on the flight form Omaha to Orlando!

I attended the Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA) Reserve Component training program at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, from 11 January to 6 February along with 87 other National Guard and Reserve members. The campus at DEOMI is world class (both in curriculum and equipment), and provides training in a variety of subjects surrounding equal opportunity. Formerly known as the Race Relations Institute, DEOMI staff and instructors provide professional service to all students regardless of race, gender, religion or service status. While I was the only civilian in the class, I was treated with mutual respect (I've never been called "Ma'am" and "Ms. Rosenthal" so many times in my life) by my fellow classmates.

The first week of the four-week training program was focused on mediation. After receiving in-seat training, we were able to test our newly acquired skills in practice sessions. The challenge was to stay neutral and not be drawn into the argument between the two parties, who were often role playing to the point of being eligible to win an Academy Award.

Week two began an intense learning period with the focus on self-awareness, communication, discrimination, racism, sexism, victimology, extremism, religious diversity and sexual harassment. Alternating between classroom presentations and small group discussions, students were challenged to face their personal biases that many had never been aware of before (including myself). Much of the learning that occurred during these two weeks was during periods of honest internal assessments. Students were told by instructors that the processing and learning will continue to occur long after we leave DEOMI. One phrase that became embedded in my psyche is "speak for self." This means that when I talk about my viewpoint, I speak for myself and not say "we believe…." Or "our opinion is…." Rather, "I believe this…" or "my opinion is…" When I use plural pronouns, I'm forcing my beliefs and opinions on others that may not agree with my values. It is more respectful of others to honestly speak for self, preventing the projection of generalizations or stereotypes onto groups I am associated with because of my nationality and gender.

One phrase that became embedded in my psyche is "speak for self."

Students were divided into their specific service groups for the fourth and final week of the training, with an additional week for Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve students. Regulations were pored over and examined as to the correct process to take when a complaint of harassment or discrimination is raised. Frustrations escalated among students, as the regulations don't provide an explicit step-by-step process for each and every kind of complaint. To cement our education, actual staff assistance visits were conducted at area units.

For those kind souls who mentored me prior to going to DEOMI – thank you! I wish I would have paid closer attention to your warnings of how difficult the tests were. Perhaps I would have gained the recognition of Distinguished Graduate, rather than only Done Graduated. However, the learning achieved through this four-week experience will be drawn upon consciously and subconsciously for the rest of my life. My eyes have been opened to see people who are different than me in a more enlightened way. It's hard to describe in writing, so I'll just have to explain it in person to those who ask.

I've only given a broad brush of the activities that make up the curriculum at the EOA course, as we have a number of Soldiers who are slated to attend the course in the near future. I wouldn't want to spoil the experience for them and others who may find themselves appointed as an EOA. It's a mark of distinction to have completed the intense training, which prepares Soldiers for their role as an EOA prior to deployment. The depth of the course is necessary to fully prepare them for situations that may come up in country. The rest of us will put the training to good use in our daily interactions with family, friends and co-workers.

SEP Member Highlight

Senior Airman Winston Sanniola - Ground Support Systems Technician and MXS (Maintenance Squadron) Unit Safety Representative

When I first visited Nebraska, I was thirteen. I knew very little of what the Midwest was like except for what I had compiled in my imagination. With a small glimpse outside of the airplane window it didn't take much to paint the picture; seeing so much green and farm life for the first time had never made me more skeptical. When I returned for the second time to Nebraska at the age of fourteen, it would be a permanent move.

I was born and raised in Temple City, California, a small suburb outside of Los Angeles. Having been raised in a large city like Los Angeles, I never really knew what life outside of a big city was like. I had many friends of a few ethnicities, primarily Asian or Hispanic, the dominant nationalities where I grew up. I didn't know that the diversity of Nebraska would be ten fold.

My mother moved to Nebraska because the fast-paced life back in California produced too much stress on her. My mother also realized that the great education Nebraska had to offer a young child would give her a calmer state of mind for my future. I attended Lincoln High School. My goodness, do you want to talk about a melting pot. This is mostly where my great diverse journey began. Throughout my growing years in high school I learned to adapt well, accept, and even overcome some of my lack of knowledge of different nationalities and personalities that I may have never known about.

Throughout high school I was part of many clubs, gatherings and after-school programs which included Asian Caucus, Chinese Club, Hip Hop Club, Multicultural Club, and DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America). Attending the large variety of classes, clubs, and outside school programs helped me build great relations with many different people; hence overcoming my shyness that I had when I was younger. Not to say that I was forced into these types of programs, but the willingness that I put forth helped me expand my view on the diverse world I see today. Right through my senior year I developed great relationships with many of my teachers, whom I still talk to today, and whom I call my friends, mentors, and companions.

I've taken advantage of what this great state has to offer. I'm currently attending Doane College in Lincoln as a junior, full-time, non-traditional student pursuing a Bachelors Degree in Business Management. I greatly believe with any education you can shed a positive light on people, their perspectives, and even benefit from one another. There is always room for growth in a person which is something I have noticed. Not only have I taken advantage of the educational benefits here in Nebraska, but my mother has as well; she is attending Doane College in Lincoln, part-time.

Now that I am grown up and able to look upon the past, I do not regret my mother's move to Nebraska to provide a better life for us here in the great Midwest. I still speak to many of my friends from California and they always ask me, "Why Nebraska?" I always reply to them, "It's not what you think it would be. I promise you'd be surprised at what Nebraska has to offer. It's not called the Good Life for nothing."

The canvas for my picture has grown larger, and much has been painted; although the picture is never ending with the possibilities Nebraska and the Midwest have to offer. Through it all I have developed a greater perspective of this area of green grass and farms I've come to love.

Diversity Dates: April / May 2009

April 1 ..... All Fools' Day (International)
April 2 ..... Sizdebedar (Iran)
April 2 ..... World Autism Awareness Day (International)
April 3 ..... Ramanavami (Hindu)
April 4 ..... Independence Day (Senegal)
April 4 ..... Qing Ming Festival (China, Taiwan)
April 5 ..... Palm Sunday (Christian)
April 6 ..... Chakri Day (Thailand)
April 6 ..... National Tartan Day (Canada, U.S.)
April 8 ..... Buddha's Birthday (Buddhist)
April 8-9 ..... Passover (Jewish)
April 9 ..... Maundy Thursday (Christian)
April 10 ..... Good Friday (Christian)
April 12 ..... Easter (Christian)
April 13 ..... Buddhist New Year (Buddhist)
April 13 ..... Easter Monday (Christian)
April 13 ..... Vaisakhi (Hindu, Jain, Sikh)
April 14 ..... Pan American Day (Latin America)
April 16 ..... De Diego's Birthday (Puerto Rico)
April 17 ..... Independence Day (Syria)
April 18 ..... Independence Day (Zimbabwe)
April 20 ..... Sham el-Nessim (Egypt)
April 20-21 ..... Festival of Ridvan (Baha'i)
April 21 ..... Tiradentes Day (Brazil)
April 21 ..... Yom Ha-Shoah (Jewish)
April 22 ..... Administrative Professionals Day (U.S.)
April 22 ..... Discovery of Brazil Day (Brazil)
April 22 ..... Earth Day (U.S.)
April 23 ..... National Sovereignty Day and Children's Day (Turkey)
April 23 ..... St. George's Day (Christian)
April 23 ..... Take Our Daughters & Sons to Work Day (U.S.)
April 23-25 ..... Gathering of Nations Powwow (U.S. Native American)
April 24 ..... Armenian Martyr's Day (Armenia)
April 24 ..... National Arbor Day (U.S.)
April 25 ..... Anzac Day (Australia, New Zealand, Samoa)
April 25 ..... Liberation Day (Italy)
April 25 ..... Sinai Day (Egypt)
April 26 ..... Union Day (Tanzania)
April 27 ..... Freedom Day (South Africa)
April 28 ..... Yom Hazikaron (Israel)
April 29 ..... Showa-no-Hi (Japan)
April 29 ..... Yom ha'Atzma'ut (Israel)
April 30 ..... Beltane (Celtic, Pagan)
April 30 ..... Koninginendag (Netherlands)
May 1-31 ... Jewish American Heritage Month (U.S)
May 1-31 ..... Older Americans Month (U.S.)
May 1-31 ..... Flores de Mayo (Philippines)
May 1 ..... International Labor Day (International)
May 1 ..... Lei Day (Hawaii)
May 1 ..... May Day (U.S.)
May 1 ..... Vappu (Finland)
May 3 ..... Kempo Kinen-Bi (Japan)
May 3 ..... Swieto Trzeciego Maja (Poland)
May 4 ..... Hana-to-Midori-no-Hi (Japan)
May 4 ..... May Bank Holiday (Ireland, Republic of U.K.)
May 5 ..... Cinco de Mayo (Mexico, U.S.)
May 5 ..... Dutch Liberation Day (Netherlands)
May 5 ..... Kodomo-no-Hi (Japan)
May 5 ..... Urini Nal (South Korea)
May 7 ..... National Day of Prayer (U.S.)
May 8 ..... V-E (Victory in Europe) Day (U.S.)
May 9 ..... Vesak (Buddhist)

Continued on Page 23

Continued from Page 8

Chinese New Year Trivia Answers

1. b. 2009 is the year of the Ox.

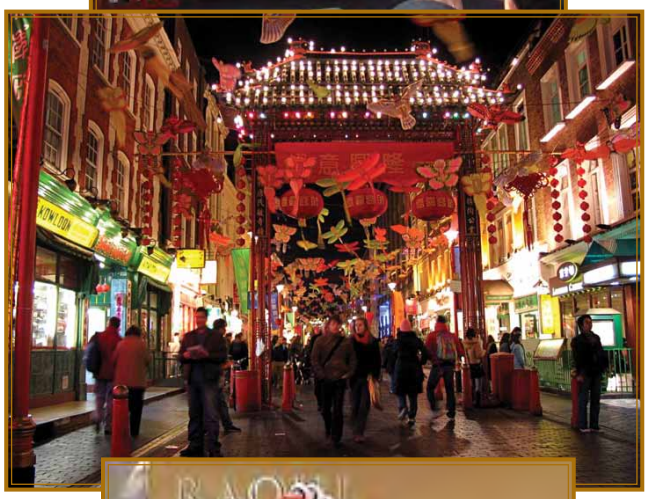
2. a. There are twelve animals represented in the calendar. According to legend, a god asked all the animals to meet him on Chinese New Year. When twelve came, he named a year after each animal, declaring that people born in that year would have some of that animal's personality. Visit http://www.chiff.com/home_life/holiday/chinese-zodiac.htm to read about your specific sign.

3. c. Chinese New Year begins with the second new moon after the beginning of winter. The Chinese calendar is a solar/lunar combination calendar, based on a number of rather complex astronomical calculations, including the longitude of the sun. Chinese New Year falls on the second new moon after the winter solstice (all months begin with a new moon).

4. c. The Lantern Festival marks the end of the New Year celebration. The fifteenth day of the new year is called the Lantern Festival, which is celebrated at night with lantern displays and a parade of children carrying lanterns. Some of the lanterns may be works of art, painted with birds, animals, flowers, zodiac signs, and scenes from legend and history. In many areas the highlight of the lantern festival is the dragon dance. The dragon, which might stretch a hundred feet long, is typically made of silk, paper, and bamboo. Traditionally the dragon is held aloft by young men who dance as they guide the colorful beast through the streets. This day often marks the end of the Chinese New Year festivities.

5. a. The first full moon following the first day of the new year is the end of the New Year celebration.

6. a. Huangdi, also known as the Yellow Emperor, is believed to have invented the Chinese calendar which can be traced back to the 14th century B.C.E. (before common era). Legend has it that Emperor Huangdi invented the calendar in 2637 B.C.E.



7. b. The Chinese New Year is also known as The Spring Festival, the most important festival in China. It is a holiday that is equivalent to Christmas in the United States. Spring Festival begins on the first day of the Chinese lunar month, which on the Western calendar is usually sometime in late January or early February, and continues for fifteen days. Officially, Spring Festival begins on the first day of the Chinese New Year at 00:00:00 (midnight), but the festivities actually begin on the Eve of the Chinese New Year.

8. b. Tangerine. Tangerines and oranges are passed out freely during Chinese New Year as the words for tangerine and orange sound like luck and wealth, respectively.

9. c. Red is generally worn on New Year's Day. Red is a lucky color and is said to drive away bad luck and evil spirits.

10. a. The entire house should be cleaned before New Year's Day. On New Year's Eve, all brooms, brushes, dusters, dust pans and other cleaning equipment are put away. Sweeping or dusting should not be done on New Year's Day for fear that good fortune will be swept away.

Source

www.infoplease.com/spot/chinesenewyear1.html

http://www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/CHINA/taboos.html

http://www.worldbook.com/wb/Quiz?Chinese_New_Year&sc=1

Jewish American Heritage Continued from Page 12

by Hull's tepid response, the Jewish War Veterans renewed their call for a boycott of German goods. Of course, the American boycott did nothing to deter the Nazis. Violence escalated against Europe's Jews until the settling of the Final Solution, which was the Nazi's plan to exterminate the Jewish people.

There are many books on Jewish History that will touch your very soul. A young girl who hid from the Nazis during the Holocaust, Anne Frank has touched many who have read her famous diary "Anne Frank and the Children of the Holocaust." During the two years and one month that Anne Frank spent hiding in a secret annex in Amsterdam during World War II, she kept a diary of her experiences. I have also read the books by Jewish author and Nobel prize winner Elie Wiesel, "Night" and "Against the Silence," which are excellent portrayals of the Jewish struggles.

The story of Jews in America is the typical immigration story with freedom and transformation as its theme. Since 1976, the National Museum of American Jewish History has committed itself to sharing the American Jewish experience at Independence Mall in Philadelphia. Its collections have grown. Its vision has expanded and its collections have grown. The opportunity to share, the complete engaging story has emerged, and the dream has taken hold.

In the fall of 2010, that dream will become reality when the National Museum of American Jewish History opens the doors of a state-of-the-art museum on Independence Mall. Situated between Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell and designed by James Stewart Polshek, this brand-new 100,000 square-foot facility will feature five floors of interactive exhibition space as well as one of the nation's largest collection of Jewish Americana.

Diversity Dates Continued from Page 21

May 9 ..... Victory Day (Russia)
May 10 .... Golden Spike Day (U.S. Asian American)
May 10 ..... Mother's Day (U.S.)
May 14-16 ..... Independence Day (Paraguay)
May 16 ..... Armed Forces Day (U.S.)
May 17 ..... Anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education Decision (U.S.)
May 17 ..... Syttende Mai (Norway)
May 18 ..... Victoria Day (Canada)
May 19 ..... Ataturk Commemoration and Youth & Sports Day (Turkey)
May 20 ..... Independence Day (Cuba)
May 20 ..... National Day (Camaroon)
May 21 ..... Ascension Day (Christian)
May 21-22 ..... Yom Yerushalayim (Israel)
May 22 ..... National Day (Yemen)
May 22-23 ..... Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i)
May 23 ..... Labour Day (Jamaica)
May 24 ..... Independence Day (Eritrea)
May 25 ..... African Freedom Day (International)
May 25 ..... Independence Day (Jordan)
May 25 ..... Memorial Day (U.S.)
May 25 ..... Revolution Day (Argentina)
May 25 ..... Spring Bank Holiday (U.K.)
May 26 ..... Independence Day (Guyana)
May 28 ..... Day of the Republic (Azerbaijan)
May 28 ..... Tuen Ng (China)
May 28-29 ..... Ascension of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)
May 28-29 ..... Shavout (Jewish)
May 31 ..... Pentecost (Christian)

Bridging the Gap welcomes your submissions of article ideas and written articles.

To have your upcoming event published in Bridging the Gap, please notify us by April 20, 2009 for the June-July 2009 issue.

All submissions, due April 10, 2009 for the above issue, will be considered for publication. We reserve the right to edit submitted material.

Please send your submission to Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez at m.schmidtrodriguez@us.army.mil

Upcoming Events

Women's History Month Celebration

April 2, 2009

Featured Speaker: Cheryl Zwart

Asian-American Heritage Celebration

May 19, 2009

Featuring the Kokyo Taiko Drummers

The Nebraska Military Department Values Diversity

The purpose of the SEP Group is to work with leadership and management in carrying out their joint responsibility to identify barriers to the recruitment and advancement of special emphasis groups, devise solutions and draft plans to implement the solutions.

Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Group Membership

MSgt Paul Dion ..... paul.dion@us.af.mil
Pam Makovicka ..... pam.makovicka@us.army.mil
Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez .. m.schmidtrodriguez@us.army.mil
LaVonne Rosenthal ..... lavonne.rosenthal@us.army.mil

COL (P) Roma Amundson
Tiffany Albanez
Denise Anderson
Jessie Bockelman
Peggy Brown
CPT Dale Burrage
MSG Reynold Castaneda
MSgt Kim Davila
Kari Foote
Capt Amy Johnson
CPT Richard Jones
SFC Kim Moore
WO1 Robrenna Redl
Ann Reicks
SrA Winston Sanniola
Susan Stevens
SSgt Casey Svitak
1LT Carlos Van Nurden
SGT Adrian Velez
1LT Juan Vidal
Denise Wald

Interested in becoming a member of the SEP Group? Please contact one of the members with an email address listed above.

Peggy's Diver-Cipe Corner

Orange Chicken & Spicy Orange Beef

In many countries food has a symbolic meaning. As I was researching the Chinese New Year (also known as The Spring Festival), I came across some interesting facts about the food served during this festival. Many of the dishes are symbolic of something positive and hopeful.

Noodles represent longevity, therefore, they should never be cut!

Chicken and fish, for example, symbolize happiness and prosperity, especially when served whole.

Dishes made with oranges represent wealth and good fortune because they are China's most plentiful fruit.

Bean curd or tofu is avoided because the white color suggests death and misfortune.

Dishes are also chosen based on homonyms - words that either are spelled the same or sound the same as other words. Fish (yu) is served because it sounds similar to the Chinese word for plenty; whole fish represents abundance. Turnips are cooked because their name (cai tou) also means "good luck."

Even though this year's Spring Festival is past, it is always a good time to bring some luck and happiness to your dinner table.

Asian Orange Chicken

1 1/2 cups water
2 tablespoons orange juice
1/4 cup lemon juice
1/3 cup rice vinegar
2 1/2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon grated orange zest
1 cup packed brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon minced fresh ginger root
1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
2 tablespoons chopped green onion
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes, or to taste
3 tablespoons cornstarch
2 tablespoons water
2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1/2 inch pieces
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
3 tablespoons olive oil or sesame oil

Pour 1 1/2 cups water, orange juice, lemon juice, rice vinegar, and soy sauce into a saucepan and cook over medium-high heat. Stir in the orange zest, brown sugar, ginger, garlic, chopped onion, and red pepper flakes. Bring to a boil to dissolve the sugar. Remove from heat, and cool 10 to 15 minutes.

Place the chicken pieces into a re-sealable plastic bag or large bowl that can be covered. When contents of saucepan have cooled, pour 1 cup of sauce into container with chicken. Reserve the remaining sauce. Seal the bag or cover the bowl, and refrigerate at least 1 – 2 hours.

In another re-sealable plastic bag, mix the flour, salt, and pepper. Drain the marinade and add the chicken pieces, seal the bag, and shake to coat.

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Place chicken into the skillet, and brown on both sides. Drain on a plate lined with paper towels, and cover with aluminum foil.

Wipe out the skillet, and add the sauce. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Mix together the cornstarch and 2 tablespoons water. Slowly stir the cornstarch/water mixture into the sauce until you get the desired thickness. Reduce heat to medium low, add the chicken pieces and simmer, about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. If you want to add vegetables to the dish, you can either stir fry them separately and add before serving or you could add them in the last five minutes of cooking.

*Note: When I made this dish I added fresh broccoli at the end and served it with white rice.

Spicy Orange Beef

2 tablespoons vegetable or sesame oil
1 pound round steak, cut into thin strips on the diagonal
2-3 cloves fresh garlic, finely chopped
½ teaspoon fresh ginger, finely chopped
1 tablespoon orange peel, cut into thin slivers
2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 cup beef broth
1 cup orange juice
¼ cup each: soy sauce, orange juice and sweet orange marmalade
2 tablespoons brown sugar
½ teaspoon red pepper flakes (or to taste)

Marinade sliced beef in 1 cup orange juice for about 1 hour (30 minutes to 2 hours is fine).

In a wok or skillet, heat oil over medium high heat. Drain the marinade from the meat and add the beef strips 1/3 at a time; stir frying for about 3 minutes or until browned. Remove cooked beef to a plate; set aside.

If adding vegetables to your dish now is the time to stir fry them.

Add one more tablespoon oil to skillet and add vegetables of your choice (I used pea pods and bamboo shoots). Stir fry vegetables for about 2-5 minutes, then add beef back to the pan. Stir in garlic, orange peel and ginger, and stir fry for another minute.

In a medium bowl combine cornstarch, broth, soy sauce, 1/4 cup orange juice, marmalade, brown sugar and red pepper flakes. Stir well. Pour mixture over beef, stirring constantly. Bring to a boil over medium heat and cook for one minute. Serve hot with rice.

www.allrecipes.com and www.about.com