

# BRIDGING THE

# GAP

Through Knowledge, Education, Understanding & Insight

December 2008 / January 2009, Issue 13



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Diversity Champions by CMSgt Barb Gossage.....	1
Becoming Citizens of the World - One Country at a Time: Customs in Egypt.....	2
National Recognition for Excellence in Equal Opportunity.....	4
Upcoming Events.....	4
CJTF 101 Equal Opportunity Office's 88th Annual Women's Equality Day - Celebrating Women's Right to Vote.....	5
Hispanic/Latino Trivia.....	6
The Orphan Train.....	6
Hanukkah - The Festival of Lights.....	7
Recipe for Latkes.....	7
Culture and Ethnic Groups Web Site.....	8
Know Your Buffalo.....	9
We Have More In Common Than You Think.....	10
More Afghan Women Attending Shuras Shows Progress.....	11
Book Review: I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.....	12
Restaurant Review: El Mirador.....	13
La Musgafia Concert Review.....	14
Children's Book Review: Train to Somewhere.....	15
09L - Language and Cultural Specialist Program.....	15
2008 Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration Recap.....	16
2008 World Day on the Mall.....	17
Senior Leader Equal Opportunity Seminar.....	18
League of Women Voters - Lunch and Learn: "Affirmative Action".....	19
Unusual, Unique and Uncommon Facts About Religion.....	21
Diversity Dates.....	22
Diver-cipe Corner: Pumpkin Pie Bread.....	23

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

## DIVERSITY CHAMPIONS

By CMSgt Barb Gossage



As the Nebraska State Command Chief, I have been asked about my military career and what I did to prepare myself to lead the enlisted members of the Air National Guard. Some have commented on my appointment as the first female State Command Chief. I never set out to make a mark as a woman any more than I wanted to make a difference as an Airman. Gender, race and culture have often limited individuals either in their opportunities or their goals. However, this appointment proves there are opportunities for our diverse population.

My goal has always been to take care of our people, never to hold the top office for our enlisted force. Now that I am here, I certainly embrace the podium in which I can continue to accomplish my goal. The fact that I am a woman should have little to do with serving as a Command Chief, but as we look at diversity, I am grateful for the opportunity to be the first woman to arrive here. Our diversity, whether gender, race, or culture based, should be celebrated. We should learn from each other and use our different perspectives for the good of our organization. We should be champions of our diversity!

Our diverse workforce is certainly seen in the opportunities afforded to both men and women and in our ability to see beyond race and culture. Diversity is much more than that though. Everyone brings their own individual

background, skill and experience to our team. This uniqueness is what SMSgt Dallas Bartlett and I looked for when selecting members to attend the Diversity Champions course held in Lincoln, July 2008. Our 2008 Nebraska Champions team, "Husker Voices," embraced the opportunity to look deep within themselves to

discover just how uniquely diverse they are.

While attending the Diversity Champions course, we learned of the nine cornerstones of diversity:

1. Diversity is about inclusion and engagement – leaving no one behind.
2. Success is the ability to work together.
3. The most important issue is always human dignity and total quality respect.
4. Prejudice is eliminated by developing high performance teams.
5. True diversity is ensuring diversity of thought at all levels of the organization.
6. Everyone adds talent and value and each must be developed and offered full opportunity to achieve.
7. Diversity solutions must be situation specific.
8. Diversity is a philosophy and is everyone's responsibility.

*Continued on Page 23*

## PART 2: BECOMING CITIZENS OF THE WORLD – ONE COUNTRY AT A TIME! CUSTOMS IN EGYPT

By COL Roma Amundson

The third country in our series on unique customs and courtesies of different countries is Egypt. Again, we begin with Socrates' statement -- "I am not an Athenian or a Greek, but a citizen of the world." Soldiers, Airmen and other members of the Nebraska Military Department are making their presence known in many countries around the world, and Egypt is no exception. The Soldiers of the 209th Regional Training Institute of Camp Ashland just returned from a stint of conducting training in Egypt, one of the first places on earth



to develop civilization and centralized government. Egypt has a recorded history of more than 7,000 years and possesses outstanding examples of amazing skills in agriculture, architecture, art and literature and communications.

Generally, what we might need to be aware of is that the Arab Republic of Egypt is a democratic republic having executive, legislative and judiciary branches. Its legal system is based in European models, especially the French Napoleonic Code, all of which are impacted by Islamic law.

About 90% of Egyptians are Sunni Muslims, and most of the remaining 10% are Christians. As a result of the huge majority of people being Muslim and with the Islamic law influencing the legal system, it is important to understand that Islamic ideology forms

the basis for making decisions and building relationships. The following are basic characteristics of an Egyptian's cultural orientation:

- While Egyptians are more accepting of Western ideas than other Arabic cultures, they still adhere to Islamic law in most, if not all, situations. That law says that "one trusts brothers and cousins before outsiders because one must take care of one's own first."
- Because the Islamic relation is a critical component in Egyptian life, solutions to problems are based on the interpretation and application of the Islamic law. Decision making is usually done through consensus, subordinating the individual to the family or collective group. Because God controls the destiny of people, many decisions are based on what is perceived to be God's will. Status quo is usually accepted as God's will.
- Despite the belief that within Islam all believers are equal, there is in practice a great disparity between rich and poor, an ethnic bias against the Bedouins and a lack of equality between men and women.
- When no solution or hope is seen in economic or political avenues for social problems, Islamic fundamentalism, based in belief in God's will, comes to the forefront and gains strength.

### ***Business Practices***

- The Islamic calendar uses lunar months of 28 days, so an Islamic year of twelve months is only 354 days long. Holidays will vary; any listed Muslim holiday is only an approximate date, as the actual date will be based on actual lunar observation. Paperwork should carry TWO dates – the



*Cairo*

Gregorian or Western date and the Hijarah (Arabic) date. To confuse matters even more, the Christians in Egypt, although few in number, use their own calendar. So be certain to know what calendar is being used!!!

- Although Arabic is spoken by 90% of the Egyptians, many can conduct business in either English or French.
- Punctuality is not a characteristic of Egyptian business conduct. Your client may be late for an appointment or may not even show up at all.
- It is a standard Arab practice to keep "supplicants" – i.e., foreign businessmen – waiting. Don't schedule more than one appointment per day.
- Because Arabic is read from right to left, back to front, business people who

*Continued on Page 3*

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 January 2, 2009 for the February-March 2009 issue.

All submissions, due December 9, 2008 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.schmidtrodiguez@us.army.mil](mailto:m.schmidtrodiguez@us.army.mil)

*Customs in Egypt Continued from Page 2*

bring sales literature to Egypt should remember that even items printed in English should have a most distinctive back cover.

- The work week is from Saturday through Wednesday. Most people do not work on Thursdays, and Friday is the Muslim holy day.
- Business hours vary widely. A typical business schedule would be from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the summer, and from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the winter.
- Government hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; the offices are usually open Sunday through Wednesday.
- During Ramadan, the working hours of businesses, banks and government offices are shortened.

***Negotiating***

- Pace of business is slow; be patient and expect to visit about the journey and your health. Remember that an Egyptian likes to do business with friends, and until he knows and likes you, he may not even consider doing business with you unless you have something that he desperately wants and can only get from you. Social aspects of the business arrangement are very important to your success.
- Business cards should be printed in English on one side and in Arabic on the other.
- Coffee is often served at the end of a meeting and often incense is lit.
- Egyptians are used to close body space and speak at a much closer distance than North Americans are accustomed to. There is more physical contact and touching during conversations. Arab men often walk hand-in-hand, so if an Egyptian holds your hand, please view it as a sign of social acceptance and friendship.
- As a note on body space, Egyptians will choose the seat next to you even though there may be many other seats available. On public transportation, even though you may be all alone on a long bench, the Egyptian may sit right next to you. Don't assume, though,

that he wants to be social; this is just standard practice.

- Remember that Arabic is a language of exaggeration; "yes" may just mean "possibly." Make no assumption that the negotiating is complete.
- Do not discuss women or Israel. Both topics should be avoided.
- For small talk, discuss sports such as soccer, boxing and water-related sports, or Egyptian achievements, both ancient and modern.

***Business Entertaining***

- Egyptians view hosting visitors as a virtue, so they will take care of the entertainment.
- Watch your host, and if he takes off his shoes before entering a building, you should do so also.
- Alcohol and pork are forbidden items to strict Muslims. Ensure that nonalcoholic drinks and food other than pork are available at a social event.
- Only in the more Westernized Egyptians' homes will you find eating utensils.
- Leave some food on your plate, because this is an indication that you've had enough.
- If you add salt to the food when you are eating in an Egyptian home, you may insult your host, so don't add salt.
- Tipping is expected for services and courtesies.

***Greetings***

- Follow the lead of your Egyptian counterpart, as there are several styles of greetings.
- Some Egyptian men, particularly the Westernized ones, will shake hands with other men. Western businesswomen should wait for the Egyptian man to offer his hand.
- The more traditional Arab greeting between men is that each takes the other's right hand, puts the left hand on the other's right shoulder, and exchange kisses on each cheek.
- Public kisses are always between members of the same sex; men and women do not kiss in public, even in

business practices.

- Greetings are very involved; you can count on an Egyptian to welcome you several times during your first meeting.
- Women make up only 10% of the workforce in Egypt and are usually in the service and professional areas. Few are business executives, and if they are, you can usually figure that they are westernized in customs.
- A traditional Arab will probably not introduce his wife, and so if he acts as though she's nonexistent, you should do the same.

***Titles/Forms of Address***

- Arabic names can be confusing, so to be sure you are addressing them correctly, request that the names of any Egyptians you meet are written in English and find out how they are to be addressed in person.
- Generally, Egyptian names are written in the same order as are English names – title, with the first, middle and last names in order.
- Most Egyptians use the title and surname, as Dr. al-Barudi. In writing, use the full name. If an Egyptian does not have a title, just use Mr., Mrs. or Miss.
- The term al means "from" and should not be confused as a shortened form of Alex or Albert. The name "al-Barudi" means "from Barudi" or "son of Barudi."
- The setting often dictates how you will be addressed. At a party, you may be on a first-name basis; however, in a business meeting, you may want to use the title and surname of your friend.

***Gestures***

- Forget that you have a left hand; it's considered unclean in the Arab world. Don't eat with the left hand, don't gesture with the left hand; only utilize it when you have to. Only when it is absolutely essential to complete a task should you utilize the left hand.
- Don't point at another person; this is the height of rudeness.

## NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR EXCELLENCE IN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

By LaVonne Rosenthal

Fiscal Year 2008 has been a great year for the National Guard being recognized for our accomplishments. Not only did we receive the Governor's Award for Affirmative Action (see Bridging the Gap Issue 12), but we also received special recognition from National Guard Bureau (NGB), Office of Equal Opportunity (EO) and Civil Rights at the annual EO-Civil Rights conference in May this year.



The plaque we received for this honor reads, "In recognition for your outstanding initiatives in equal opportunity, diversity and minority outreach. Your efforts exemplify our

motto 'Excellence in Equal Opportunity.'" The credit for our success goes to the efforts of our Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Group for their tireless dedication in putting together superb heritage month celebrations. Kudos, Group!! To everyone in the Guard who supports these luncheons by their attendance – thank you!!!

Your presence at these events encourages us to find new and interesting programs.

The SEP Group continuously strives to go beyond the moniker of "the group that puts together luncheons," and has done so over the last two years with the publication of this professionally-

designed newsletter. Copies of this publication are disseminated to other states' EO offices as well as NGB. We proudly forward this newsletter to our counterparts in EO and diversity along with leaders in our culturally diverse communities.

Yet, we can't rest on our laurels and gaze at this year's awards. Our SEP Group is already looking ahead to new endeavors that will bring about a broader acceptance of those who don't necessarily look like us on the outside. Along with those external differences, this is also a time to recognize our diverse personalities and experiences that may set us apart from each other. This coming year, let's explore the strength in diversity, giving voice to what makes each of us unique and makes the Nebraska Military Department successful. 

### Customs in Egypt Continued from Page 3

- Keep both feet on the ground – don't cross your legs when sitting.
- Never show the bottom of your foot to an Arab, as this is insulting.
- When you take off your shoes when entering a building (remember to follow the lead of your host), place the soles of the shoes together so that the sole is not pointed at anyone.
- "Thumbs up" gesture is offensive in the Arab world.
- A gesture meaning "calm down" or "wait a minute" is done in this way: with your palm facing you, touch all your fingers to your thumb and bob your hand up and down (as though you are weighing something).

### Gifts

- Make sure that you give or receive gifts with the right hand, if the gift is of the size to give with one hand. If not, then use both hands.
- Small electronic gadgets, a beautiful compass (to point to Mecca), baked goods and chocolates are great gifts. Flowers are okay for very westernized Egyptians.

### Dress

- Wear your western clothing; do not wear the traditional native clothing, as Egyptians find it offensive to see foreigners dressed in their traditional clothes.
- Most of your body should be covered.
- Men, wear long trousers and a long-sleeved shirt buttoned up to the collarbone. A jacket and tie are usually required for business meetings. Men should avoid wearing visible jewelry.
- Women, you need to observe strict modesty! The neckline of blouses and dresses should be high, and the arms should be covered at least to the elbows. Hemlines should be below the knee and preferably ankle-length; an over-all "baggy" look is preferred



to a tight, tailored and streamlined suit. Pants and pantsuits are not recommended. It's usually wise to

have a hat and scarf with you, at the very least a scarf, because if Egyptian men stare lewdly at you, your dress is not sufficiently modest and you'd better put on either the hat or the scarf.

### Sources:

Morrison, Conaway, Borden, *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands*, (Adams Media Corporation, 57 Littlefield Street, Avon, Massachusetts, 1999) pp. 94-101. 

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**African-American Heritage Celebration**  
February 12

**Irish-American Heritage Celebration**  
March 2009

**Women's History Month Celebration**  
April 2009

**Asian-American Heritage Celebration**  
May 2009

## CJTF 101 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY OFFICE'S 88TH ANNUAL WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY - CELEBRATING WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE

*Held in Bagram, Afghanistan at the Four Corners Clamshell on August 26, 2008*

*Guest Speakers: Dr. Hussun Bano Ghazanfar, "Minister of Women's Affairs"  
and CPT M. Kate Vogel, "TF Troubleshooter"*

### **Biography of Dr. Hussun Bano Ghazanfar**

#### **Minister of Women's Affairs**

The Honorable Dr. Ghazanfar was born in Balkh and graduated from Sultan Razia High School in Mazar-e-Sharif. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts and Masters degrees in Literature and Sociology from Stawarpool Qafaqaz and her Doctorate of Philosophy from Petersburg. She has been a lecturer in the facility of literature at Kabul University, a member of the High Council of the Board of Directors of Hakim Naser Khesro Balkhi Association and head of the Literature Facility. She was appointed Minister for Women's Affairs in 2003. Dr. Ghazanfar is fluent in Dari, Pashto, Uzbek and Russian and knows a little Turkish and English. Her scientific articles and essays have been published in national and international newspapers. She is a poet and an author. She has written several books including *The Human Fate*, *Predations in the 21st Century* and *The Secrets of Beauty and Attraction*, and she has translated the book titled, *Self Realization*.

### **Biography of CPT M. Kate Vogel TF Troubleshooter**

CPT M. Kate Vogel is a native of Douglasville, Georgia. She enlisted into the United States Army Reserves in 1999 as an 88H, Cargo Specialist. CPT Vogel was commissioned in 2004 into the Army Transportation Corps. She received her commission through the Reserve Officer's Training Corps four-year scholarship program at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. CPT Vogel is currently in command of the Alpha Distribution Company, TF Troubleshooter, TF Destiny, CJTF-101. CPT Vogel's civilian education consists of a Bachelor of Arts degree, Magna Cum Laude, in German Foreign Languages and Literatures from East Carolina University,

Greenville, North Carolina. In the spring of 2008, she was recognized by East Carolina University during the university's centennial celebration as one of 100 Centennial Honorees. CPT Vogel's military education consists of the Transportation Officer Basic Course (Distinguished Graduate), Maintenance Management Course and the Unit Movement Officer course.

The program included a reading from the Qur'an, an invocation, a cake cutting ceremony, food tasting, a video presentation, band performance, speeches by both Dr. Hussun Bano Ghazanfar and CPT M. Kate Vogel, an awards presentation and a viewing of the Women's Empowerment Handicrafts by MoWa, USAID and NGOs.

### **Following are the remarks given by Dr. Ghazanfar.**

Bismillah-hirrahman-nirrahim.

On behalf of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, I would like to extend my warm welcome to all of you present this morning and in particular to our



*SFC Kim Moore and  
General Khatol Mohammadzai*

distinguished hosts.

We are gathered here today to celebrate Women's Equality Day and I would like to begin with the history of this remarkable day which happened in the United States.

### **The Story of Suffrage**

The right to vote is also called suffrage, and the women who fought for their voting rights are called suffragists. You might have heard some of their names in history. Originally involved in the anti-slavery movement, they got together at the first Women's Rights Convention in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York. The suffragists wanted all kinds of rights for women, but they believed that voting was the most important and would lead to other rights.

The suffragists had to take some extreme actions – including getting arrested and going on hunger strikes – to call attention to their cause.

It took 72 years after Seneca Falls for women to finally get the right to vote in 1920. Only one, 19-year-old Charlotte Woodward, from the 1848 convention, lived to see women win the vote.

### **Women Status and Voting Rights in Afghanistan**

The Afghan people face continued struggles in rebuilding their government and the nation. But the days when women were beaten in streets and

*Continued on Page 22*



*Mojgon Mostafavi First Deputy Minister of MoWA  
(Ministry of Women's Affairs) in Kabul  
and her translator*

## HISPANIC/LATINO TRIVIA

*Compiled By Peggy Brown*

1. Dr. Ellen Ochoa is the first Hispanic American woman to do this.
  - a. Sail around the world
  - b. Fly in space
  - c. Become the United States Surgeon General
2. What historic event is remembered in Puerto Rico on September 23rd?
  - a. El Grito de Lares
  - b. Día de los Reyes Magos
  - c. Día de los Muertos
3. Hernando de Soto discovered what river in the United States?
  - a. Missouri River
  - b. Rio Grande River
  - c. Mississippi River
4. What two states are home to the most Hispanic-owned businesses?
  - a. California and Texas
  - b. California and Florida
  - c. Florida and New Mexico
5. Nancy Lopez was one of the world's best female \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. golfers
  - b. basketball players
  - c. swimmers
6. Franklin R. Chang-Diaz, a Costa Rican-American, became the first Hispanic person to do this.
  - a. Host a talk show
  - b. Become a United States Senator
  - c. Become an astronaut
7. What event do Mexicans and Mexican-Americans celebrate on September 16th?
  - a. Juan Pablo Duarte Day
  - b. Flag Day
  - c. Mexican Independence Day
8. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen became the first Hispanic woman to do this.
  - a. Be elected to Congress
  - b. Become an astronaut
  - c. Become Treasurer of the United States
9. What is Cinco de Mayo?
  - a. A Mexican holiday that honors the dead
  - b. A Mexican holiday that honors the Mexican victory of the French Army
  - c. An official holiday that commemorates Mexico's Constitution
10. If you had the most common Hispanic last name in the United States, what would your last name be?
  - a. Rodriguez
  - b. Martinez
  - c. Garcia

*Trivia Answers on Page 21*



Between 1854 and 1929 an estimated 200,00 orphaned, abandoned and homeless children were placed through what is know today as the Orphan Train Era. The name is derived from the children's situations (not all were orphans) and

the mode of transportation used to move them across 47 states and Canada.

This controversial effort to rescue poor and homeless children began in New York City during a time in history when Welfare and Child Protection Laws did not exist. Children had no rights. With over 4,000,000, newcomers to America between 1841 and 1860, these children roamed the streets of New York in search

## THE ORPHAN TRAIN

of money, food and shelter. Many sold matches, rags and newspapers to survive. Children as young as six years old were working to help support the family. As these families dissolved (either due to the deaths of parents or mistreatment by parents) city officials and police were faced with the growing problem of what to do with these children.

Two charity institutions, The Children's Aid Society and The New York Foundling Hospital, were determined to help these children. These aid institutions developed a program that placed homeless city children into homes throughout the country. A young minister, Charles Loring Brace, founder of the Children's Aid Society, believed solid, God-fearing homes could be found for children in the west and mid-west. These children were transported to their new homes on trains.

The first group of children went to

Dowagiac, Michigan in 1854, and the last official train ran to Texas in 1929. By 1860, 30,500 miles of railroad track had been laid. By 1870 the trains ran from the east coast to Omaha, Nebraska.

The history of the railroads is deeply tied to the history of the Orphan Train Era. Railroads were the most inexpensive way to transport children westward from poverty filled homes, orphanages, poor houses and off the streets. This period of mass relocation of children in the United States is recognized as the beginning of documented foster care in America.

[www.orphantraindepot.com](http://www.orphantraindepot.com) - The Museum and Research Center are dedicated to the preservation of the stories and artifacts of those who were part of the Orphan Train Movement from 1854-1929.

[www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/orphan](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/orphan)

National Orphan Train Complex, Inc.

300 Washington Street

Concordia, KS 66901



## HANUKKAH-THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

By Kari Foote

Hanukkah is a religious celebration for people of the Jewish faith, and has deep historical and religious significance. It's perhaps the best known of the Jewish holidays, and because of its close proximity to the Christian Christmas holiday it has become a holiday representation of modern Jewish identity and tradition in the United States and around the world.



*Menorah*

was only enough oil for the lamps to be lit for one day, but miraculously, the temple menorah burned continuously for the entire eight days required for rededication. The number eight holds special significance in Jewish theology, as it represents the Infinite

day feast was declared by the Jewish sages to commemorate the event.

### *Modern Tradition*

The lighting of a nine-branched candelabrum, called a Menorah, became a traditional way to celebrate Hanukkah. Tradition holds that the lighting of the Menorah and commemoration of Hanukkah is not for "lighting the house within," but for "illumination of the house without." The Menorah is traditionally placed in a window so that passersby can see the lights and be reminded of the miracle of Hanukkah. Only during times of anti-Semitic persecution were the candles hidden from view. The candles are lit each night right at sundown. Each night one candle, called the servant candle, is lit first and used to light an additional candle each day of the Hanukkah celebration. The candles are only allowed to burn out, and should not be snuffed out, as doing

### *History*

In 200 BCE (Before Common Era; the equivalent of BC in Christian history), the Jewish people were living in Judea, which was under the control of Syria at the time. For 25 years there was relative peace and harmony. However, in 175 BCE, Antiochus ascended to the throne of the Syrian kingdom and began to put pressure on the Jewish people. Under his reign, the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem was looted and the practice of Judaism was outlawed. In 167 BCE, Antiochus ordered an idol of Zeus be erected in the temple.

Antiochus' actions spawned a widespread revolt. Led first by Mattathias, a Jewish priest, and later by his son Judah Maccabee, the rebellion was ultimately successful in liberating the Temple.

The Temple was the most holy of worship sites for the Jewish People, and to have it looted and desecrated was an abomination. The first priority for Judah was to cleanse and rededicate the temple according to Jewish law and tradition. This required the burning of oil through eight nights of rededication. In the traditional story, Judah found that there

and new beginnings. The miracle of Hanukkah was seen as a major triumph of monotheism over Hellenism. An eight-

*Continued on Page 8*

### Recipe for Latkes

Makes approximately 12 palm-sized latkes



4 medium potatoes  
1 medium onion  
2 eggs  
3/4 cup matzah meal (flour or bread crumbs can be substituted)  
salt and black pepper to taste  
vegetable oil

Shred the potatoes and onion into a large bowl. Press out all excess liquid (if using a food processor, use the chopping blade for 2 or 3 seconds after pressing out liquid to avoid stringy fly-aways). Add eggs and mix well. Add matzah meal gradually while mixing until the batter is doughy, not too dry. (You may not need the whole amount, depending on how well you drained the veggies.) Add a few dashes of salt and black pepper (don't taste the batter -- it's really gross!). Don't worry if the batter turns a little orange; that will go away when it fries.

Heat about 1/2 inch of oil to medium-high heat. Form the batter into thin patties about the size of your palm. Fry batter in oil. Be patient, this takes time, and too much flipping will burn the outside without cooking the inside. Flip when the bottom is golden brown.

Place finished latkes on paper towels to drain. Eat hot with sour cream or applesauce. They can be reheated in a microwave, but not in an oven unless you cook them just right. 

## CULTURE AND ETHNIC GROUPS WEB SITE

By Denise Anderson

I personally love the internet. You can get e-mails from a list server or Google anything that sounds interesting.



I recently received an e-mail from [www.USA.gov](http://www.usa.gov) which lists topics on history and ethnic culture ([http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/History\\_Culture.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/History_Culture.shtml)). At this site you can find a plethora of information including:

- American culture with categories including: American Folklife, American Holidays, American Social and Cultural History, Center for the Study of Southern Culture, Documenting the American South, Facts About the U.S. Flag, Local Community Roots, Legacies and Celebrations, National Park Museums and Resources for New Immigrants.
- African American history and culture with categories including: African American Documentary Resources, African American History Month Resources, African American Resources from the Smithsonian, Black Family Research – Records of Post Civil War Federal Agencies at the National Archives; Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial, National Day of Service, Teaching and Learning Resources; and National Museum of African American History and Culture.
- Asian American history and culture: Asian Reading Room from the Library of Congress.
- Hispanic and Latino history and culture with categories of GobiernoUSA.gov and the Hispanic Reading Room, Library of Congress.
- Native American history and culture with categories including: Gateway to

Native American Resources, History and Culture, Mohawk Iroquois Village About 1600, National Museum of the American Indian,.

One of the links relates to Native Americans and the United States Military where you can learn about the accomplishments of the Navajo Code Talkers. An example listed from their dictionary is the Navajo word CHIDO-TSO, whose literal translation is big auto, represented the word truck (<http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq61-1.htm>).

Another link titled the American Folk Life Center discusses traditional songs many in the United States sing, listen and dance to (<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/>). The United States has a long history and an affinity with the past. My family loves to sing (sometimes off key) and tell tales of relatives, and tell of what life used to be like. 

Hanukkah Continued from Page 7

so would be symbolic of extinguishing the light of God.



Hanukkah celebrations vary around the world, but are always a time of fun. Traditional foods include doughnuts, potato pancakes (called latkes) or any other



food fried in oil. Dairy foods are also customarily eaten. Traditionally "gelt" or money coins, were given to children. In modern times, chocolate gelt is often given in addition to small gifts on each night of Hanukkah. Also, it is traditional

for children at this time, to play a game with a dreidel. A dreidel is a four sided spinning top with a Hebrew letter inscribed on each side. The four letters, pronounced "nun," "gimel," "hey" and "shin" create an acronym which stands for "A great miracle happened here." The top is spun, and depending on the letter that the dreidel shows, the spinner may win, or lose some of their Hanukkah gelt, or whatever marker the players are using.



Gelt

In 2008, Hanukkah begins on December 22, 2008. Jewish days always begin at sundown so the first candles of Hanukkah will actually be kindled at sundown on December 21. 

Dreidel



While Hanukkah is a very fun family holiday, many adults use the eight days of Hanukkah as a symbolic "feast of dedication" to renew themselves spiritually and prepare for the future.

## KNOW YOUR BUFFALO

*By Ben Wittler of Wittler Enterprises.com*



### *Why Raise Buffalo?*

There are a lot of things that went into the decision to raise buffalo—#1 was that Mary (MSgt Mary Wittler with the Air National Guard) didn't divorce me after the first two showed up!

They are an incredibly strong, fast, unpredictable animal that you have to truly love raising or you will hate it—no middle ground. That being said, they are the most nurturing, protective, graceful and family-oriented animal in the world.

Every one of them has a very distinct personality. Part of their behavior is letting people know that they are not needed. Buffalo were here before we were and they plan on being here after us.

They are as much a part of America and freedom as blue skies and eagles, and to be a part of that is a great experience.

There are less than 5,000 people in the world who raise buffalo. Unfortunately there are still less than 500,000 buffalo in existence. I and my family are glad to be a part of seeing that this animal is a part of our world today and will be in the future world of our children.

### *Basics of Bison*

First off they are known as both buffalo and bison—talk about an identity crisis!

All of them have horns—the calves develop visible horns at about three months of age.

Like cattle, bison have four stomachs and are a ruminant animal. This means bacteria do the digesting in place of stomach acid.

Bison make two sounds. The most common sound is a grunt. The second is a throaty growl made by just the bulls—similar to a large dog.

Bison rut like deer. The females are in heat late July through September. Feeding grains and other high protein, high fat food will cause breeding year round.

Calves are typically born around Mothers Day in May.

There are three types of bison in the world. Plains bison, with curved horns are the heaviest. Woods bison—typically in Canada - have horns that point up and are the tallest. Wisent are found only in Europe and look more like a cross between cattle and bison and are smaller.

### *Some Little Known Facts*

Cattle crossed with bison are called beefalo.

Bison have no top front teeth.

Bison can run over 35 miles an hour for great distances.

Bison are faster than most horses and can easily run further at top speed.

Bison are NOT domesticated!

Bison indicate their mood with their tails.

Bison herds are typically led by females. Under attack, males will stay behind to fight.

Bison females weigh 1,200 pounds when mature. Bison bulls will exceed 2,200 pounds when mature.

Females are mature at two and can reproduce in excess of 20 years.

Bulls are done growing at seven but are reproductive at two.

Bison can live to be 40.

Bison are extremely curious and have great sight, smell and memory.

Bison can jump more than six feet from a standing position. 

## WE HAVE MORE IN COMMON THAN YOU THINK

By 2LT Rafael D. Lantigua, Jr.



*Pilgrims circumambulating the Kaaba during the Hajj*

To many, Islam and Muslims are still a mystery. One may wonder how this may be, due to the vast amount of coverage that the two have received via the media because of various political, social and economic events around the world. The fact remains that many people in the United States have had some form of interaction with Muslims, whether it be by way of a medical professional, a coworker, a neighbor, a teacher, a professor, a convenience store owner or employee, et cetera. What they have come to learn through personal interaction with Muslims is not necessarily in alignment with what they view on the television screen or read in the newspapers, magazines or internet blogs.

Muslims have been a part of the American mainstream throughout our country's history. As a matter of fact, Muslims have been serving in the United States Armed Forces and have been a part of every major campaign since the Revolutionary War, and several Muslim military service members are buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Although the common claim is that America was established upon Judeo-Christian principles and concepts, the truth of the matter is that America was established upon Judeo-Christian-Islamic principles and concepts. Keep in mind that many

of the slaves that were brought to America from West Africa were Muslims and they served as the economic engine of the South.

In his *Letter on Toleration*, John Locke\* insisted that Muslims and all others who

believed in God be tolerated in England. Thomas Jefferson, who campaigned for religious freedom in Virginia, demanded recognition of the religious rights of the Mahamdan (Muslims), the Jew and the pagan. Richard Henry Lee supported Jefferson and made a motion in Congress on June 7, 1776, that the American colonies declare independence and stated, "True freedom embraces the Mahomitan (Muslims) and the Gentoo (Hindu) as well as the Christian religion."

Islam is based on one foundation consisting of six pillars of faith and five pillars of action. The six pillars of faith are:

- 1) Belief in God.
- 2) Belief in His Angels.
- 3) Belief in His Prophets and Messengers.
- 4) Belief in His Scriptures.
- 5) Belief in the Judgment Day.
- 6) Belief in His Divine Decree.

The five pillars of action are:

- 1) To declare that there is none to be worshipped but God alone.

- 2) To establish the five daily prayers.
- 3) To pay the annual charity.
- 4) To fast during the daylight hours of the ninth lunar month of Ramadan.
- 5) Make a pilgrimage to the Ka'bah in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, at least once in one's lifetime if they are able to afford it, and have the health to endure the journey.

A cursory study of Islam will reveal that many of its teachings are similar to that which is taught in Judaism and Christianity. This should come as no surprise. Many tend to forget that the great personages that were the first advocates of these religious traditions were from the Middle East. In other words, Moses was from Egypt, Jesus was from Palestine and Muhammad was from Arabia. One also need not look far to notice that whenever world religions are categorized, these three seem to always find one another: the Abrahamic religions or the monotheistic religions.

Looking back to the pillars of faith and the pillars of action, one can see that Jews, Christians and Muslims all believe in God, although the concept of God differs slightly between the three. Jews, Muslims and Unitarian Christians are "absolute monotheists" while Trinitarian Christians believe in God's oneness through a trinity. Additionally, God is referred to as *eloh* or *elohim* in Hebrew, *elah* in Aramaic, and *allah* in Arabic.

*Continued on Page 11*



## MORE AFGHAN WOMEN ATTENDING SHURAS SHOWS PROGRESS

By Army 1st Lt. Lory A. Stevens - TF Warrior Public Affairs

8/15/2008 - BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan - More than 100 local women attended the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Women's Shura in Anaba District, August 4, 2008. They participated in the welfare of their villages and addressed ongoing issues.

Air Force Captain Jillian Torango, Panjshir PRT, and Miriam Panjshiri, director of women's affairs, represented their organizations at the shura.

Shuras are important for the PRT as well as local government representatives because they ensure that local voices are heard by both groups, said Captain Torango, who explained the Panjshir PRT tries to conduct women's shuras once a month to ensure that the voices of Afghan women are heard and their concerns are addressed.

Essentially, shuras serve as a platform to allow Afghan women the freedom of speech.

"Every time I meet with the women of Panjshir, I leave with two very distinct feelings," said Captain Torango. "First, I appreciate the freedoms I have as an American. Second, it makes me feel very positive about the way women feel empowered to help with their families and communities."

The successful turnout of Afghan women, along with the eagerness to speak their minds about what is going on in their

families and communities is a credit to the DoWA and PRT.

Panjshir is a highly-conservative region where women typically interact within the same small groups. The interaction at the Panjshir PRT Women's Shura testifies to the relationship between the women of Panjshir, DoWA and the PRT.

An Air Force medical technician, Tech. Sgt. Dawn Tiemann, attended the shura with Captain Torango to answer medical questions and make the Afghan women feel more at ease. Feeling comfortable is essential to promote a free flow of ideas, said Captain Torango.

"These women all have great ideas about what can be done to make their villages better," she explained. "For instance, they talk about the need for power, drinking water and schools."

With many widows and large families in Panjshir, humanitarian assistance and vocational training is very important.

"The women talk about wanting to learn skills that will help generate money for their families and villages," said Captain Torango. "Women want to work and



A group of Afghan women and Air Force Capt. Jillian Torango of the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team, participate in a Women's Shura in Sangee Village, Anaba District, Afghanistan, Aug. 4. Approximately 100 women attended and discussed their issues with the Panjshir PRT Woman's Affairs team. (Courtesy photo)

little by little, they're being able to."

The DoWA and PRT are supported by the Afghan government, said Captain Torango, who explained that the Ministry of Women's Affairs, located in Kabul, is the lead agency promoting advancement for women in Afghanistan.

The ministry's mission is to ensure women have legal, economic, social, political and civil rights including the right to be free from all forms of violence and discrimination.

Women's shuras, such as those held monthly in Panjshir province, are a medium for continued progress, said Captain Torango. 

*We Have More In Common Than You Think Continued from Page 10*

Jews believe that the Tanakh is a revelation from God, consisting of many books revealed to various prophets. Christians believe in the Tanakh (with some variations) and refer to it as the Old Testament, in addition to the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the remaining New Testament books, and other books believed to be part of the scriptures. Muslims believe in the Scrolls given to Abraham, the



Torah given to Moses, the Psalms given to David, the Gospel given to Jesus and the Qur'an given to Muhammad.

As one can imagine, the list of commonalities and similarities is quite long. Although there are differences, the fact remains that while we should respect those differences, we should also celebrate our commonalities and realize that we have more in common than we think.

\*<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/locke/>



## BOOK REVIEW: I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS

*Written by Maya Angelou; 1969; Random House*

*Book Review By COL Roma Amundson*

We have two cockatiels, Pearl and Opal, and there's many a morning I hear them singing and chirping up a storm, obviously happy about the morning and totally oblivious of their cage wires. Being confined to their cage doesn't seem to bother them.

Before Pearl and Opal, though, we had a different cockatiel, Little Mate. She was a tame little bird that bonded with humans and was easy to catch. Whenever I came home, she would recognize the sound of my car and would screech incessantly and beat her wings against the cage wires. She knew the pleasures of being out of her cage and would persist in her screeching until I released her from the cage.

Pearl and Opal have no concept of the freedom of flight that Little Mate enjoyed in our house, and because they don't know what they're missing, they'll never miss that freedom. So they sing, oblivious to what could be theirs to have. This is precisely the issue that Maya Angelou addresses – one must look beyond the present and what's visible to imagine what may be possible, and have the determination to get it.

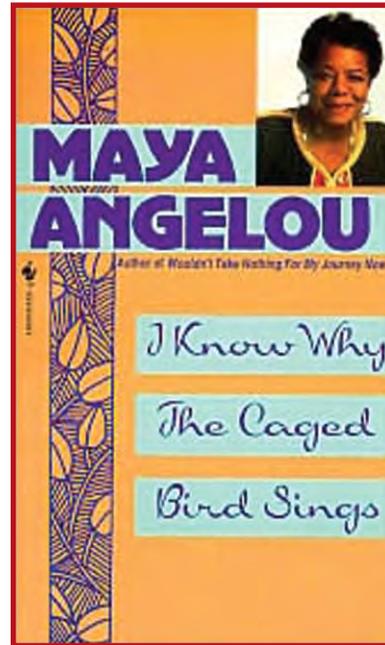
This thought brings me to the review of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou. This book is about one young woman's experience of stepping outside the limitations placed upon her by society and learning what lay beyond them. Maya Angelou talks about the freedom of overcoming the societal barriers of gender, race, economic level, education, psychological bruises and single parenthood that could have potentially restricted her freedom of personal development.

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is the first of six autobiographical books\* by Angelou recounting the growth of a young African-American girl born in the late 1920's who grew to become the woman who now is recognized as one of the leading Black feminists of the century. To truly appreciate her work, one

must realize that Maya Angelou is now a "poet, educator, historian, best-selling author, actress, playwright, civil rights activist, producer and director and world-renowned speaker," and holds the lifetime position of Reynolds Professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University. She is recognized world-wide for her contributions to African-American literature and women's studies.

Maya Angelou was born as Marguerite Ann Johnson, in April 1928, to Bailey Johnson, a doorman and naval dietitian and Vivian Baxter Johnson, a real estate agent, surgical nurse and entertainer. When Marguerite was three years old, her parents divorced. Her father sent her and her brother to live with his mother Annie Henderson in Stamps, Arkansas, and there is where Maya Angelou begins the story. She writes of her arrival in Stamps, "When I was three and Bailey four, we had arrived in the musty little town, wearing tags on our wrists which instructed—'To Whom It May Concern'—that we were Marguerite and Bailey Johnson, Jr., from Long Beach, California, en route to Stamps, Arkansas, c/o Mrs. Annie Henderson."

There the children observed the ebb and flow of life around the agriculture cycle of planting and cotton-picking, the coming and going of patrons at their grandmother's general store and listening to their stories, school and church activities and finally, the discriminatory practices of the town. Maya Angelou describes the situation from a child's point of view: "People were those who lived on my side of town. I didn't like them all, or, in fact, any of them very much, but they were people.



These others, the strange pale creatures that lived in their alien unlife, weren't considered folks. They were whitefolks."

For four years, she and her brother lived with their paternal grandmother, and then suddenly her dad came, picked them up, and took them to their mother (Vivian Baxter Johnson) in St. Louis, where they lived with their maternal grandparents and later with their mother and her boyfriend.

Disruptions were

common. Maya became accustomed to moving around a great deal. As she described it, "We lived in a big house on Caroline Street with our grandparents for half the year before Mother moved us in with her. Moving from the house where the family was centered meant absolutely nothing to me. It was simply a small pattern in the grand design of our lives." This was indeed the pattern of their lives, as they later moved back to Stamps, Arkansas, with another move to San Francisco, California to live with their mother again. So, really, as a young child, Maya Angelou was not accustomed to stability or a strong family support system.

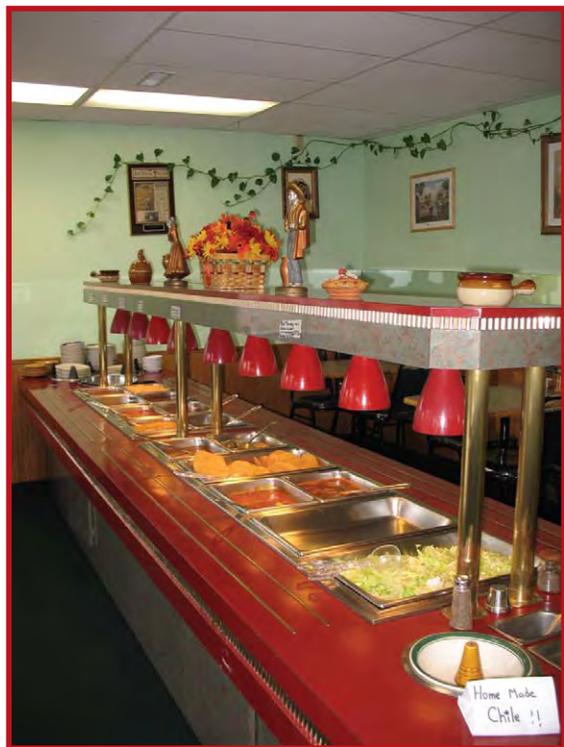
While in St. Louis, Maya was sexually abused by her mother's boyfriend. This event contributed to her becoming mute for five years, and it wasn't until Bertha Flowers, a friend and teacher in Stamps, introduced her to classical literature that she began speaking again. This rape incident could have inhibited the growth of a remarkable woman if it had not been for Bertha Flowers, who stimulated the thought and intellectual desires of this

*Continued on Page 13*

## RESTAURANT REVIEW: EL MIRADOR

1317 North 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska, 402-742-9597

By 2LT Allen Wald



“El Mirador was one of the earliest known Mayan cities, dating from B.C. 150 - A.D. 150. It was discovered in 1930 as a result of an aerial survey of the Maya Lowlands.”\* In Lincoln, it represents a forward movement in restaurant evolution: a Mexican buffet. El Mirador resides just north of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Memorial Stadium bridge and is a short drive from the Military Road complex.

El Mirador takes pride in being a locally-owned restaurant offering authentic food. They specialize in a variety of Mexican dishes, hard to find gorditas and a variety of truly authentic Mexican foods. Each entree has its own unique flavor.

I experienced the lunch buffet, which consisted of rice, beans, fresh tortillas, chicken, fish and pork dishes, ingredients for hard tacos and fresh corn chips. For the more adventurous, they also offer menudo (red chili with tripe), al pastor Verde (green chili pigs feet) or mojarra

dorada (fried fish with avocado).

The quality of food is fantastic and the taste is unique to each dish. The host is gracious and very courteous. Although moderately staffed, El Mirador remains clean and appealing, and everything you might expect from a small town diner. The lunch buffet costs \$9.99 per person. Platters and single serving prices vary. The children's menu includes enchiladas, quesadillas, tacos, tostadas, sope, chili relleno and gorditas.

When you're hungry and a sandwich simply won't do, stop by El Mirador for a truly unique taste of Mexico. I would definitely recommend this restaurant for those looking to experience something other than just a taco. The buffet allows the adventurous diner a selection of many distinctive dishes.

\**Danien, Elin C. and Robert J. Sharer. New Theories on the Pyramids, Kingfisher New York 1996.* 

*I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*  
Continued from Page 12

young girl by exposing her to such writers as Charles Dickens, William Shakespeare, Edgar Allen Poe and Black women artists such as Frances Harper and Anne Spencer.

Education played a most important role in the life of Maya Angelou, and she continually pushed against the constricting limitations of her race and gender. When she was a teen, she studied dance and drama at a California Labor School and became the first female Black streetcar conductor in San Francisco. At this point of time in her life, she writes that her mother was a strong emotional support for her and encouraged her in her endeavors to get a job after the depression and the country's entrance into World War II. Her mother would say to her, "Life is going to give you just what you put into it. Put your whole heart in everything you do, and pray, then you can wait." Maya's determination to get a streetcar conductor job paid off. That early experience of focused determination to overcome hardships and succeed was important for her, as she became pregnant and a single parent while yet a teen. It is with the birth of her son that this book closes.

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* is a recounting of the powerful forces pulling at Maya and threatening to limit her – gender, race, economic level, education, early childhood neglect, sexual abuse and single parenthood. Her tale is one of a person looking beyond the limiting influences hovering around her to potentially cage her, and striving to overcome those influences. Her success is based on her determination and the support of key people in her life, and she has told that story powerfully. Maya Angelou is, as one of her reviewers wrote, "...able to survive through trial and error, while at the same time defining herself in terms of being a Black woman."

\* *Gather Together in My Name* (1974), *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* (1976), *The Heart of a Woman* (1981), *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (1986) and *A Song Flung Up To Heaven* (2002). 

## LA MUSGAÑA CONCERT REVIEW

By Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez



Wow! That's one of the first words that came to my mind when La Musgaña took the stage for a concert at Lincoln High School on September 25th. The concert was free and open to the public due to the generous assistance of several Lincoln area businesses: Southeast Community College, The Lincoln Community Foundation, Lincoln Public Schools, Noodles and Company, Billy's Restaurant and Wal-Mart SuperCenter South.

I love all different types of music, so I thought it would be fun to take my four-year-old to a concert that featured music not heard on our local radio stations. La Musgaña was a perfect opportunity and I'm very glad we went. They put on a lively concert with a great mix of Castilian music. They play Spanish music like no one else I've heard perform Spanish music. They want to educate and entertain. They educate by teaching their audiences that all music from Spain isn't Flamenco or bull fighting, and they entertain by putting their hearts into the



was the first time they performed to Spanish music that was not Flamenco. They were beautiful.

This is La Musgaña's second visit to



*Hurdy Gurdy*

Nebraska. The last time through they played in Beatrice during the winter, which was very different from what they are used to in Spain. There are four members of the group who are touring the United States. The instruments they play include the violin, accordion, Castilian guitars, several different styles of flute, drums, clarinet, bagpipes and the Hurdy Gurdy. I had never heard of the Hurdy Gurdy which uses a spinning wheel, a crank, 4-5 strings and a keyboard. They called it the synthesizer of Medieval times. It was wonderful to listen to. One of the members played a three-holed flute – the musician blows into the flute at different strengths, allowing for many different sounds. This flute also allows the musician to play a drum with their free hand.

La Musgaña explores the essence of Castile's rich tradition of a cultural heritage with a racial mix. Europe, Africa, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic have

music they play.

A local dance group out of Omaha, called Dances of Spain, performed during several La Musgaña songs. This

all left their mark on the center of the Iberian Peninsula, and any reference to their art or music finds its reflection in the Castilian culture, enabling a tradition which, far from being static, has imbibed every source it has found on its way.

Even though we only stayed for the first half of the performance and one song after intermission, I am glad we experienced this music. I so loved the music, I purchased two of their compact discs. My son liked



them so much that when we got home he had me play one of them so we could dance to their music in

the kitchen. He also likes listening to the music in the car! It's quite a change from listening to children's music! In fact, over one month after the concert my son heard some Celtic music on the radio and said it "sounded like music from the concert."

When La Musgaña tours again in the United States, please attend their concert; you won't be disappointed. Additionally, a larger attendance will insure that groups like this will continue to enjoy the sponsorship of local businesses.

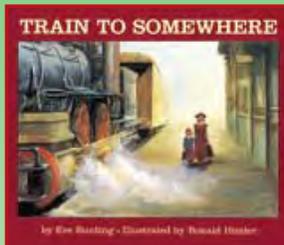


## CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEW: TRAIN TO SOMEWHERE

*Written By Eve Bunting, Illustrated by Ronald Himler; Clarion Books; April 17, 2000*

*Book Review By Denise Anderson*

How many people pick up a book because of the picture on the front cover or because of a catchy title? This one caught my eye because there were two little girls on the front that look as though they are waiting for a train. Since I have two little girls it made me wonder where the parents were, where is the train going, did they just drop them off or are they waiting to be picked up. It also made me think about my own family.



Porterville, Illinois to Somewhere, Iowa. Marianne is one of the oldest children in Miss Randolph's charge and she is hoping that her mother is waiting for her at one of the stops. Her mother left her at an orphanage in New York City to go out West to make a new life and told her she would be back to get her.

At each stop, children are paraded in front of the adults and then one by one the children are adopted. Marianne doesn't want to be adopted because she dreams of being reunited with her mother. This keeps up until they reach their last stop in Somewhere, Iowa, where all the kids have been adopted except for Marianne. When Miss Randolph and Marianne reach the final destination, there is only one elderly couple (Mr. and Mrs. Books) holding a small wooden train as they are waiting for the train. Marianne could tell the couple was disappointed that there were no boys left to adopt, and she tells them this. She also realizes that her mother is not there. She gives Mrs. Books a feather that belonged to her mother and she notices that it "nestles in her hat as if it belongs, as if it

had found its place at last." Mrs. Books says, "Sometimes what you get turns out to be better than what you wanted in the first place." Marianne decides to live with Mr. and Mrs. Books and that is where the story ends.

My heart broke and I cried when Marianne was forced to grow up and let go of the dream of being reunited with her mother. She was strong enough to be able to move on and find a home for herself in the end.

This book reminds me of my family because my Great Aunt Mabel was adopted from an Orphan Train which came from a Catholic Orphanage in Brooklyn, New York that stopped in northeast Nebraska. She was a strong woman who always had a smile on her face and was quite independent for her time. My father found her contract a few years ago. The contract was addressed to my Great Grandparents and said, "Baby girl comes to you with a white dress, underwear and a holy Bible. Any time before she is eighteen years old, you may return her with the same items. After that, she is legally yours." 

This book is centered around the Orphan Trains which ran from the mid-1850s through the late 1920s. During this time, about 100,000 homeless children, many of different nationalities, were sent by train from New York City to small towns and farms in the Midwest to be adopted.

The adult in the story, Miss Randolph, is taking fourteen children on an orphan train which begins its journey in New York City, New York. They begin visiting prospective parents in

## 09L – LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL SPECIALIST PROGRAM

*By 1LT Juan Vidal*



The 09L program is the newest and one of the most diverse Military Occupational Specialties in the

Army National Guard. The majority of the Soldiers being recruited for cultural and translator duties are either from North African, Middle Eastern and Southwest Asian countries or first-generation Americans.

This program will provide the Nebraska Army National Guard (NEARNG) with Soldiers having valuable skill-sets, including language and cultural expertise. Soldiers will directly strengthen the NEARNG's ability to effectively operate

and successfully complete missions in locations where English may not be the primary language of the community.

The 09Ls are a vital asset to units deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq and have repeatedly proven their effectiveness in the field. Briefing and advising leadership on culture and traditions of local populations, translating important documents, day-to-day interpreting of conversations from target languages into English and vice versa, teaching unit Soldiers basic language skills, educating troops on local cultural nuances, customs, traditions and religions, the 09L is there, ensuring maximum situational awareness.

It's important to recruit people with this

qualification in order to enhance the NEARNG. If you know anyone with these skills, please contact the following personnel:

CDT Haidar Hamoud  
402-560-0060  
haidar.hamoud@us.army.mil

SGT Bassem Alkhafaji  
402-525-6453  
bassem.alkhafaji@us.army.mil

SGT Anthony Bazalaki  
402-421-8160  
anthony.bazalaki@us.army.mil

2LT Rafael Lantigua  
402-616-5237  
rafael.lantigua@us.army.mil

1LT Juan Vidal  
402-657-8926  
juan.f.vidal@us.army.mil 

## 2008 HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATION RECAP

*By Denise Wald*

This year the Nebraska National Guard (NENG) celebrated the 2008 Hispanic Heritage Month with a luncheon at the Spirit of 76 Armory in Lincoln. La Paz catered a wonderful meal and Ms. Luz Midence Ducharme hosted a display of many items from her native Honduras. Our featured speaker was Reverend Servando Perales, founder of the Victory Boxing Club in Omaha. Nebraska National Guard Hispanic Liaison, SFC Manuel Lopez-Inzunza, introduced Reverend Perales, as he helped Reverend Perales establish the Victory Boxing Club.

We have all seen examples of Latino gang members in the movies. Fortunately, for many of us we have not had to experience the rough life of poverty and crime. However, our speaker grew up in a community where it was hard to escape this destiny. Reverend Perales provided a very raw depiction of how the struggles of one young Latino growing up in south Omaha could triumph into something meaningful. Many luncheon attendees provided feedback that Reverend Perales' story was one of inspiration.

Servando Perales grew up in a household in which the destructive cycle of domestic

abuse would play a recurring role in his life. Early in his life his father abandoned the family and left his mother to support and raise the family on her own.

At a young age, Servando was drawn to the Downtown Boxing Club in Omaha. It was there he developed a passion for boxing and excelled at the sport. However, the temptation of having more money led him to life a crime. He was kicked out of high school for selling drugs. He became a gang leader, becoming addicted to meth and ending up in federal prison.

It was while he was in prison the grace of God helped him find a better path in life. After release from prison, many expected that he would revert back into his old gang life.

Instead, with his new found faith, he decided he would try his luck at a professional boxing

career. Even though his professional boxing career did not develop as he hoped, he achieved something much greater...

Servando became a minister. He returned to his south Omaha neighborhood, the one he used to terrorize.

This time, he is giving back to the community by combining his two loves: boxing and faith. He founded the Victory Boxing Club, a non-profit organization that encourages area youth to step inside the ring instead of being a statistic. He also encourages the youth through positive faith that they may not otherwise get in their lives.

Reverend Perales' enthusiastic and energetic message inspired many on how faith and passion can triumph over a violent history. Hopefully, his ministry will continue to inspire the youth of Omaha to overcome the

drugs and violence they have been exposed to in their community. 



## 2008 WORLD DAY ON THE MALL

By Jessie Bockelman

A bright afternoon greeted attendees of this year's World Day on the Mall. This was the first World Day on the Mall I'd ever attended, so I wasn't sure what to expect.

The smell of different foods floating through the air was definitely the first thing I noticed upon my arrival.

First, I took to walking around the different booths just to see what this event was all about. The theme of this year's event was "Weaving Cultures

Together," and there were various woven rugs, bracelets and blankets to solidify this theme. The booths that were most interesting to me involved nutrition. There were even quizzes available to test your knowledge on nutrition and health facts. I was especially interested in the booth giving out information for buying foods locally. Many more items than I realized are produced right here in Nebraska. More information is available on the website: <http://www.buylocalnebraska.org>.

After checking out all the information booths, it was time to eat. I had heard good things about Jan's Indian Tacos and decided to give that a try. A piece of fry bread is made right in front of you and topped with hot ground beef, lettuce and delicious salsa and sour cream. It was definitely a treat.

Bryan Wansink, Executive Director of



the USDA, took the stage to talk about the importance of nutrition to a family. One of the points he stressed is families eating dinner together. Family dinners were a long-held tradition in my house growing up and were something I always enjoyed and continue to enjoy looking back on. Mr. Wansink explained that families who eat together not only have stronger bonds, but also tend to be healthier. Family dinners are prepared in the home and pack more nutrition and fewer calories than just grabbing fast food on the go. He also discussed a tool the USDA has created online to help you see how you're doing with nutrition. It is found at <http://www.myfoodpyramid.gov>, and allows you to check off important daily foods like fruits, vegetables and dairy. It even has meal plans for many different dietary preferences and restrictions.

Rick Sheehy, Lieutenant Governor of

Nebraska, then took the stage. His speech illustrated just how important diversity is to our state. Our state, as well as our work force, thrives on different backgrounds, viewpoints and opinions to create the best ideas. He explained how diversity has grown in the State of Nebraska and he hopes that State employees will rally to appreciate and encourage this growth.

Our day at World Day on the Mall ended with the band Son del Llano taking the stage. Their music revives the sounds of 1950's and 1960's Havana mixed with a little salsa. Definitely something you could dance to, and something that personally made me want to take a vacation somewhere with a beach.

Our world is growing and changing each day. The importance of understanding and appreciating different cultures has never been greater. Attending World Day on the Mall opened my eyes to see that more diversity was right under my nose than I even imagined. Local restaurants producing ethnic foods, local farmers continuing the traditions that were handed down to them by their fathers and grandfathers, and musicians keeping their history alive with music is just a small part of that tradition. I was glad to see a great turn out this year for World Day on the Mall, and I hope the attendees walked away with more than just a full stomach and a few free items.



## SENIOR LEADER EQUAL OPPORTUNITY SEMINAR

*By LaVonne Rosenthal, Denise Wald, Pam Makovicka and COL Roma Amundson*

Memorial Hall at Camp Ashland was the site for the Senior Leader Equal Opportunity Seminar held 25-29 August 2008. The audience was a mixture of officers, enlisted and civilian employees from the Air National Guard (ANG) and Army National Guard (ARNG), a total of thirty individuals.

Instructors were members of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) mobile training team, coming from active Army, Navy and Air Force. Following are reports on the course from four attendees.

### *Overview by LaVonne Rosenthal*



The purpose of the course as defined by DEOMI was to explore key equal opportunity, human relations and diversity concepts

and their influence on unit cohesion and mission readiness. As with many Equal Opportunity (EO) training programs, instructors focused on discrimination, sexual harassment and diversity. Within each of those topics were small group discussion elements, which gave attendees an opportunity to further explore ideas related to communication, socialization and conflict management.

One of the more enlightening activities was for students to list their top three priorities under diversity dimensions.



*Lamp: Knowledge ; Circles: The red, yellow, brown, white, and black circles surrounding the lamp represent the diversity that comprise the Department of Defense; Scale: Justice and equality – "Infinite Dignity and Worth;" Sword: Truth ; Arrows: Readiness – "EO affects mission readiness"*

Dimensions were education, family status, culture, communication style, religion, gender, financial status and work ethic, with those headings placed on butcher block paper and posted on easels around the room. Students then moved to the topic that was third on their list of priorities and discussed why they chose that dimension, and what was a benefit or a hazard to that dimension. Students then rotated to the second and finally, their first priority. What was most interesting was how we as individuals shared many commonalities within the dimensions, allowing us

to learn more about each other.

During the week, students were asked to list three concerns they had with equal opportunity in the Nebraska National Guard. These concerns were written individually on 3x5 index cards and divided into categories for the final project. As the capstone event of the training, small groups were challenged to create action plans for the five different categories: mentoring/communication, equal opportunity, diversity, recruiting and retention and ops tempo. While the topic titles appear fairly bland and unassuming, the discussions centered around them were quite engaging. While groups discussed steps to improve these areas, it will

be important to put the ideas into action through implementation. Members of the Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Group that were in attendance at the training will be working with other SEP group members to craft an implementation plan

for review by senior leaders.

While the course began as any typical class begins, the end result was altered as the threat of Hurricane Gustav hitting the southern states pulled several students back to their offices to deal with the potential emergency. However, the intent of concerns shared by all students was communicated and addressed in final brief backs to the class as a whole.

It had been a number of years since this type of course was conducted, with this level of leadership as its audience. As a result of this course, we hope to make inroads to address areas for improvement in equal opportunity and diversity in the very near future.

### *Recap by Denise Wald*

The week started off with a pact between instructors and students to be honest and fair in our dialogues. The week of training was conducted by DEOMI



instructors who touched on subjects that required some critical thinking and provided information to assist with removing preconceived biases. The

lectures usually were followed by a group exercise that facilitated a lot of good discussion.

The class was made up of a diverse group of individuals, not only in terms of ethnicity, but

included gender, age,

ANG/ARNG, civilian/military, officer/enlisted and years of service within the NENG. These diverse individuals contributed to a lot of great dialogues and



*Memorial Hall*

*Continued on Page 19*

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS – LUNCH & LEARN: “AFFIRMATIVE ACTION”

*By LaVonne Rosenthal*

The League of Women Voters kicked off its lunch and learn series on 18 September 2008 with a presentation on Affirmative Action. This subject is getting quite a bit of attention recently due to an item on Nebraskans’ ballots concerning the end of affirmative action in the state. Guest speakers were Becky Gould, executive director of Applesseed legal firm, and Patrick D. Jones, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of History and in the Institute for Ethnic Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

As we finished our meal, Dr. Jones stepped up to the podium and gave an intellectually stimulating presentation on the history of affirmative action. He clarified that affirmative action policies give preference to a specific group based on race. The intent was (and still is) to address historical inequalities directed at

minorities and women.

In the early 1970s, President Nixon created the Philadelphia plan which required businesses working with the government to have affirmative action plans in place. Targets and timetables were set up to measure those organizations and businesses to ensure that attempts were being made to reach those who historically had been left out. Continuing in history, the 1970s and 1980s were seen as times where the focus of affirmative action was becoming narrower. In the 1990s, President Clinton’s policy was to “mend” affirmative action and not “end” it.

Ms. Gould provided insights on how Nebraska became the target for the American Civil Rights Initiative to

bring this initiative to our ballot. This organization looks to states that have a fairly easy balloting process and don’t have a firm, organized minority structure. According to Ms. Gould, the challenge to voters is to look beyond the deceptive wording that refers to anti-discrimination and hides the full intent – to eliminate the requirement for adherence to affirmative action policies.

Questions from the audience depicted concern for the passing of this controversial bill on this year’s ballot. Education of the bill’s full intent is important to prevent abolishment of affirmative action policies. At this point, it’s a matter of stressing the importance of going to the polls and exercising our right to vote as American citizens of all races and nationalities.



*Senior Leader Equal Opportunity Seminar  
Continued from Page 18*

sharing of view points.

The training was technically geared to senior leaders; however, the majority of the participants were at other levels in the Guard. Therefore, it was great exposure for us to hear the senior leaders’ views of how diversity plays a role in our workplace. The message I received from the senior leaders who attended is to encourage a dynamic and diverse workforce. As the demographics of the state change, recruiting and retention within the NENG needs to change with it. DEOMI has provided diversity training for a number of years. However, in my opinion, our organization will need to implement the training into our organization from the Joint Force Headquarters level down to the unit level for it to be effective.

By the end of the week we identified some key “human relations” issues that existed within our organization. Our groups were then required to identify the condition that existed, why the condition existed and the methodology to correct the condition. This exercise brought to light basic conditions that

need to be addressed before we continue to recruit and sustain a diverse and dynamic organization. Some of these issues included sexual harassment and mentoring of minority and junior members.

Overall, the training brought many individuals out of their comfort zones to discuss topics and find solutions to issues that have an impact on maintaining a diverse workforce. I believe most of those who attended left with a renewed energy of how we proceed into the future to educate and prepare our changing organization.

### *Notes from Pam Makovicka*



The DEOMI training topics included Socialization, Communications Across Differences, ISM’s, Sexual Harassment Awareness,

Dynamics of Power, Institutional Discrimination, Beyond Victimology, Religious Diversity, Capitalizing on

Diversity and Action Planning. The training incorporated the basic theories and concepts of the subjects, but what I really enjoyed was the interaction among participants.

Diversity has such a broad array of meanings and interpretations. The Coast Guard has the best: “Diversity is not a program or policy – it is a state of being. Each of you, regardless of who you are or where you sit in the organization, plays a key role in the success of the Coast Guard. You are our greatest Strength. Your creativity, commitment, experience and collaboration make the difference between getting results, and just doing the job.” This is what I see diversity means. Every person has their own unique dimension to bring to the organization.

The poker power exercise provided the group with an activity to focus attention on the perpetrator rather than the victim for signs of discrimination. Instructors provided the poker players with rules, after which the dealer and banker divided the poker players into the “haves and have-nots.” The rules were unfair, and the cards and chips were not dealt equally to

*Continued on Page 20*

*Senior Leader Equal Opportunity Seminar  
Continued from Page 19*

all. It was interesting to watch the adverse impact these unfair practices caused. When the victims of the unfair practices tried to protest, they were told to keep their problems to themselves. This activity really showed the importance of fair and equal treatment of all people.

I felt the most beneficial part of the training was the focus on development and discussion of strategies to address human relations challenges that affect our agency. We were asked to provide concerns or problems that we see in our agency on 3x5 cards. The cards were then distributed among the teams for discussion and workable solutions. Each team worked on each card and then solutions were discussed. All the cards along with our solutions will be forwarded to the Command Group.

The training was a good experience, and I hope to see this concept shared with middle level leaders also. We need to keep diversity and awareness of key issues a priority of the Nebraska Military Department.

**Summary by COL Roma Amundson**

Senior military leaders and civilian employees of the Nebraska Military Department experienced five days of EO training at Camp Ashland conducted by a team of three trainers from Patrick Air Force Base, Florida. This training, the first conducted

by an outside mobile training team in Nebraska since the 1980's, focused on the central point of how an organization deals with the question of offering equal opportunity among the protected categories of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, handicap status, familial status and age.

While EO issues have frequently been the focus of training for all attendees almost without exception, this particular

experience brought out additional concerns experienced as a result of the recent deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. A broad scope of experiences resulting from deployments were given as examples and presented for the attendees' consideration without naming any National Guard states or units. Examples showed that what was emphasized in training at home station was not being practiced during the deployment.

As a specific example, sexual harassment is still a significant concern for military personnel deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. In deployed settings, harassment of females could be anything from verbal abuse to physical assault. Accompaniment of females to shower facilities in many of the Forward Operating Bases (FOB) was a requirement in order to prevent the females from sexual affronts by male counterparts. With the significant number of females in the military and dependence upon their contributions to the war-fighting effort, it is imperative that all leadership be aware that sexual harassment is still a factor to be considered.

Discussion also focused on the continuing necessity to bring people of different ethnic groups and religions into the military in order to develop ways and means to deal with enemies of the United States. Versatility in languages and cultural awareness only adds to the capability of the military to complete its growing assignment of missions around the world in humanitarian services, nation building, security and peace keeping. For example, observe our 09L effort - there is a growing movement to attract people with language skills in Arabic languages into the military. Our NENG Soldiers and Airmen are sent to areas where an understanding of the Muslim faith is a necessity. Examples of this are the recent trip of the 209th Regional Training Institute to Egypt

and the continued deployments of our military members to Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo.

Finally, with the return of many Soldiers from war zones, many are experiencing both physical and mental problems. Dealing with handicapped military members who have served takes on a different nuance because of the source of the handicaps and our obligation to those suffering from them. Job identification, medical care, retraining, reintegration, et cetera, all become considerations for leadership. Equal opportunity is an extremely important facet of interpersonal relationships with those who serve or have served in our military and are experiencing handicaps as a result of that service.

In short, the senior leaders of the NENG who took this EO training were exposed to new situations testing the application and interpretation of EO laws. The current war experiences are bringing new challenges to leadership, requiring their continued emphasis upon EO to all people within the Nebraska Military Department. While it is a fact that the senior leaders may have received this type of training previously, it is also true that the current information shows the ever present need to extend training to all military and civilian members of the Guard.

The constantly changing environment requires that the senior leaders be aware of training available to the organization, new challenges to EO and the need to refocus on new concerns arising out of recent experiences. As mentors and leaders, senior leadership must ensure that the younger, less experienced members of the organization – who will eventually take their place – are aware of equal opportunity, practice it and become skilled in passing the concepts along. 

*Versatility in languages and cultural awareness only adds to the capability of the military to complete its growing assignment of missions around the world...*



Continued from Page 6

## HISPANIC/LATINO TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. b. Fly in space. Dr. Ellen Ochoa is a veteran of three National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Space Shuttle flights and has logged over 719 hours in space. She became an astronaut in 1991, and in 1993 became the first Hispanic-American woman in space.



Dr. Ellen Ochoa

2. a. El Grito de Lares (The Cry of Lares)—also referred as the Lares uprising, the Lares revolt, Lares rebellion or even Lares Revolution—was the revolt against Spanish rule in Puerto Rico on September 23, 1868, in the town of Lares, Puerto Rico.
3. c. The Mississippi River. Hernando De Soto (1500?-1542) was a Spanish explorer who sailed the Atlantic Ocean and was the first European to explore Florida and the southeastern United States.

4. b. Together, California and Florida are home to about 52 percent of all Hispanic-owned businesses.

5. a. Golfer. In her first full season on the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour in 1978, Lopez won a total of nine titles, including five tournaments in a row. She made the cover of Sports Illustrated, won the Vare Trophy for lowest scoring average, LPGA Rookie of the Year, Player of the Year and was named the Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year. Lopez is the only woman to win LPGA Rookie of the Year, Player of the Year and the Vare Trophy in the same season (1978).



Nancy Lopez

6. c. Become an astronaut. Franklin Chang-Diaz was raised in a poor family in Costa Rica. He studied hard to become a scientist. He also became a United States citizen and became the first Hispanic person to enter the space program, becoming an astronaut in 1981. He is a veteran of six space missions and has spent nearly 1,300 hours in space.



Franklin Chang-Diaz

7. c. Mexican Independence Day. On this day, Mexicans all over the world celebrate Mexico's independence from Spanish rule.

8. a. Be elected to Congress. In 1989, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen became the first Hispanic woman and first Cuban American to be elected to Congress. In 1982, she was elected to the Florida State House of Representatives, becoming the first Hispanic woman in that body.



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

9. b. A Mexican holiday that honors the Mexican victory of the French Army. The holiday commemorates an initial victory of Mexican forces led by General Ignacio Zaragoza over French forces in the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862.

10. c. Garcia. Followed by Martinez and Rodriguez.

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[http://www.educationworld.com/la\\_lesson/lesson/lesson023.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/la_lesson/lesson/lesson023.shtml)

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## UNUSUAL, UNIQUE AND UNCOMMON FACTS ABOUT RELIGION

"Allah Akbar, Allah Akbar, La Allah Il Allah, La Allah Il Allah U Mohammed Rassul Allah" is heard by more people than any other sound of the human voice. This is the prayer recited by muezzins from each of the four corners of the prayer tower as Moslems all over the world face toward Mecca and kneel at sunset. It means: "God is great. There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God."

The Hindu holy day begins at sunrise, the Jewish holy day begins at sunset, and the Christian holy day begins at midnight.

The first United States Mormon temple was dedicated in Kirtland, Ohio in 1836.

The patron saint of dentists is St. Apollonia. She reportedly had her teeth pulled out in 249 AD by an anti-Christian mob.

The longest name in the Bible is Mahershalalhashbaz (Isaiah 8:1).

Strict Puritan laws had their origins from practical reasons. Smoking was banned - farmers would raise badly needed food crops instead of tobacco. Cooking was banned on Sundays - to prevent house fires during the long hours the family was at church. Young men were banned from hunting - to prevent weapons from falling into Indian hands.

<http://www.corsinet.com/trivial/c-triv.html>

## DIVERSITY DATES: DECEMBER 2008/JANUARY 2009

December 1..... National Day (Romania)	December 21..... Solstice (International)	January 7..... Christmas (Coptic and Eastern Orthodox Christian)
December 1..... Rosa Parks Day (U.S.)	December 21..... Yule (Celtic, Pagan)	January 7-8..... Ashura (Islamic)
December 3..... International Day of Disabled Persons (U.N.)	December 21-22..... Hanukkah (Jewish)	January 10..... Traditional Day (Benin)
December 5..... Discovery Day (Haiti)	December 23..... Tenno Tanjubi (Japan)	January 11..... Hostos Day (Puerto Rico)
December 6..... Independence Day (Finland)	December 24..... Independence Day (Libya)	January 13..... St. Knut's Day (Sweden)
December 6..... St. Nicholas Day (International)	December 25..... Christmas (Christian)	January 14..... Seijin-no-Hi (Japan)
December 7..... Earthquake Victims' Memorial Day (Armenia)	December 26..... Boxing Day (International)	January 14..... Makar Sankranti (Hindu)
December 8..... Bodhi Day (Buddhist)	December 26..... Junkanoo (Bahamas)	January 16..... National Day of Peace (El Salvador)
December 8..... Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Christian-Catholic)	December 26..... Kwanzaa (U.S. African-American)	January 19..... Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (U.S.)
December 8-9..... Eid al-Adha (Islamic)	December 28-29..... Hijra (Islamic)	January 20..... Martyrs' Day (Azerbaijan)
December 10..... Constitution Day (Thailand)	December 30..... Rizal Day (Philippines)	January 20..... World Religion Day (Baha'i)
December 10..... Human Rights Day (U.N.)	December 31..... New Year's Eve (International)	January 21..... Errol Barrow Day (Barbados)
December 12..... Fiesta of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Mexico)	January 1..... New Year's Day (International)	January 21..... St. Sarkis's Day (Armenia)
December 12..... Jamhuri Day (Kenya)	January 1..... Independence Day (Haiti, Sudan)	January 21..... Altagracia Day (Dominican Republic)
December 13..... Luciadagen (Sweden, U.S.)	January 4..... Independence Day (Myanmar-Burma)	January 21..... Tu B'Shevat (Jewish)
December 15..... Bill of Rights Day (U.S.)	January 5..... Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday (Sikh)	January 26..... Chinese New Year (China)
December 15..... Navidades (Puerto Rico)	January 6..... Carnival Season Begins (Christian, International)	January 26..... Australia Day (Australia)
December 16..... Bijoy Dibash (Bangladesh)	January 6..... Epiphany (Christian)	January 26..... Duarte Day (Dominican Republic)
	January 6..... Old Christmas Day (Armenia)	January 26..... Republic Day (India)
	January 6..... Three Kings Day (Christian, International)	January 31..... Sadeh (Iran)
		January 31..... Independence Day (Nauru)



Women's Equality Day Continued from Page 5



*Mrs. Qadria Yazdanparast, Member of the Parliament and SFC Kim Moore*

executed in soccer fields are over. In Afghanistan, the Taliban used violence and fear to deny Afghan women access to education, health care, mobility and the right to vote. But now, we have restored fundamental human rights and freedoms to Afghan women, and all the people of Afghanistan. Young girls in Afghanistan are able to attend schools for the first time after five years. Women have been appointed to important posts in the Afghan government; 28% of the military police are women. Afghan women have made considerable strides and thousands attend universities and hold professional jobs.

Although we've made good progress, in some rural areas, women's lives have changed little. There are still many people who think that women aren't as smart as men and that their husbands should speak and vote for them. They are also worried that families will fall apart if women start to get involved in the political process, but we are encouraging women to be quick in grasping the

importance of elections for their future, and we will tell all Afghan women for the next upcoming election: If you are old enough to vote, you should take advantage of the freedoms we have.

Four years ago, ten-million Afghans were registered to vote in the presidential election that took place on October 9. For the first free presidential election in the history of Afghanistan, women voted just like men. In fact, more than

40% of the registered voters were women. A woman ran for President for the first time in Afghan history.

In the meantime, the doors of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and its 34 provincial departments were open in the last presidential and parliamentary elections. We helped women to understand their important role in Afghanistan political life, we educated them about all election processes and issues that are important to Afghanistan women, we encouraged women in rural areas to believe in themselves and to run for election, we taught them that voting is a privilege and a right. Everyone understood the critical role of women in the political process and voting.

This is just the beginning for a better future for Afghanistan women and their important role in political participation. Ministry of Women's Affairs has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Independent Election Commission in 2008 to make sure that the Ministry can still play its role in election public awareness raising and supporting the active participation of women in elections. 

***This is just the beginning for a better future for Afghanistan women and their important role in political participation.***

*While growing up, my brother and I were blessed with a Mom who didn't stick to the traditional birthday cake for our parties. My brother's birthday is in July so he had a watermelon as his birthday cake. My birthday is in October and I love pumpkin pie, so you guessed it, I got pumpkin pie instead of a cake.*

*Below is a recipe for a quick bread that tastes like pumpkin pie. It is easy to make and is moist and flavorful. This bread tastes best when served the day after baking.*



- 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 3 to 3 1/2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups white sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil (to make it a little healthier you can use 1/2 cup natural applesauce and 1/2 cup oil and still have the same consistency)
- 4 eggs
- 1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin
- 1/2 cup water

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease two 9x5 inch loaf pans. Sift together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt and pumpkin pie spice. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl, beat together sugar, oil, eggs and pumpkin. Stir in flour mixture alternately with water. Divide batter evenly between the prepared pans.
3. Bake in the preheated oven for 60 to 70 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. For best flavor, store wrapped in plastic wrap at room temperature for a full day before serving.
4. You can also make muffins (bake 18-20 minutes) or use a bundt pan (bake 50-60 minutes) for a different presentation. 🌍

*Diversity Champions by CMSgt Barb Gossage  
Continued from Page 1*

9. You do not have to be one of, to stand with.

Of the cornerstones, the last one is most profound to me. There is a diversity exercise which involves listing stereotypes of different races. The people of that race stand in front of the group while the

stereotypes are read out loud. Sometimes there is only one person of a particular race in the class, standing alone. Can you imagine how this person feels, standing alone? Of course, the right thing to do is go up and stand with this individual, demonstrating by your actions that you don't need to be of the same culture or even believe in what they do to stand along side them. This speaks to the quote

by Voltaire: "I disagree strongly with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

I challenge you to think about the diversity cornerstones, pick one that resonates within you and live by it. Together, as individuals, we can be the ones who make a difference. 🌍

## 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

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CPT Dale Burrage	MSgt Anne Krotz	2LT Carlos Van Nurden
1SG Reynold Castaneda	SFC Kim Moore	SGT Adrian Velez
MSgt Kim Davila	MSG Melissa Oehm	Denise Wald

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