

# BRIDGING THE

# GAP

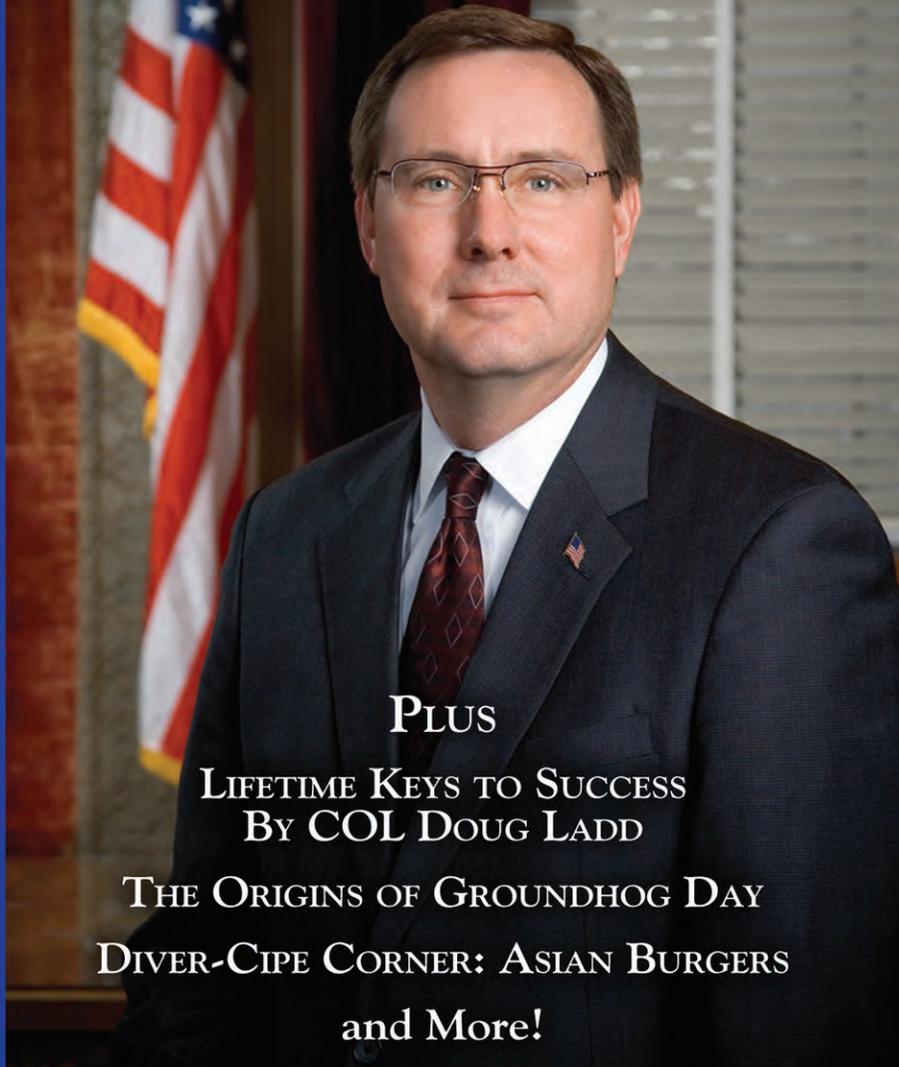
Through Knowledge, Education, Understanding & Insight

ISSUE 20 ❖ FEBRUARY - MARCH 2010



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PLUS

LIFETIME KEYS TO SUCCESS  
BY COL DOUG LADD

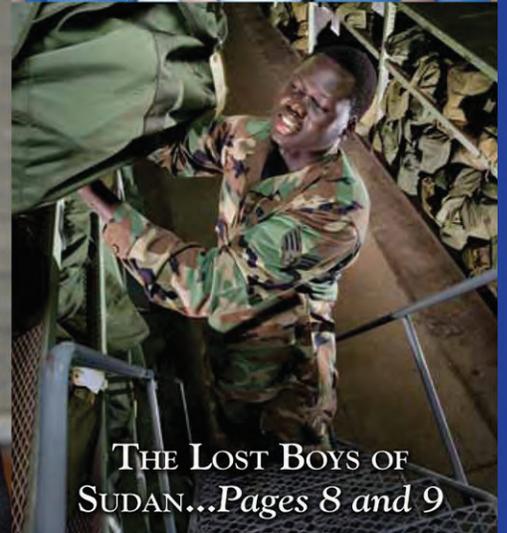
THE ORIGINS OF GROUNDHOG DAY

DIVER-CIPE CORNER: ASIAN BURGERS

and More!



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## 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.*

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

### MESSAGE FROM THE ADJUTANT GENERAL BG JUDD LYONS

It is a pleasure to announce that 2010 has been designated the *Year of Diversity* in the National Guard as pronounced by General McKinley, Chief, National Guard Bureau. This will serve to energize national and local efforts to foster an inclusive organization where all Soldiers, Airmen and civilians feel they are welcome.

I recently reviewed data related to our Air and Army National Guard composition. While statistics are valuable measurement tools, our efforts must stretch beyond simple data points. Since we live in a competitive environment, we need to ramp up our engagement in all of our communities with our unique message of service to state and nation. This takes time, effort and focus.

I am concerned that we may have allowed our operational tempo to diffuse our time, effort and focus from our objective of capitalizing on the existing diversity of our organization. I believe there is work to be done in our effort



to make the Nebraska National Guard reflect the communities we serve and to give our members the opportunity to contribute and succeed to the best of their abilities. I look forward to engaging our leadership to remove barriers, challenge perceptions, sustain a culture of respect for others and continue to develop our organization as one that attracts a variety of talent and delivers the diverse array of capabilities needed by our communities.

We can take an introspective look at ourselves to determine where our gaps and weaknesses lie and then take steps to address them. This look should span our recruiting, retention, advancement and structural paradigms. Our Special Emphasis Program Group and Diversity Discussions at Lunch are two valuable enablers in this effort. More will follow as we begin a new year together. Let's get to work! 🌍

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 February 24, 2010 for Issue 21: April-May 2010.

All submissions, due February 11, 2010 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.schmidtrodriquez@us.army.mil](mailto:m.schmidtrodriquez@us.army.mil)

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



# ARE YOU PREPARED?

*By Lt. Governor Rick Sheehy  
State of Nebraska*

Frequently, sometimes daily, we hear, read or watch intently about natural, accidental or intentional events which adversely affect the lives and property of individuals. We have all been touched either physically or emotionally by these events or disasters. Think back to the coverage of September 11 and other terrorist attacks around the world. Recall the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and other floods, tornadoes, fires, shootings, infrastructure failures and structure collapses. Let's not forget the current discussions of the outbreak of the H1N1 virus causing a Global Pandemic Flu. Whether we realize it or not, these natural, accidental or intentional events have changed the way we live our lives. Our lives are time stamped and measured by them. Dinner table and coffee shop conversations across the country take place asking, "Where were you during this event?" Each of them has also created significant public discussion of how well or how will your government respond to these events in your community or state. The measure of public expectations has been significantly elevated.

Let me assure you in the State of Nebraska, officials from local, state and federal agencies are working diligently to meet these new expectations. Every day dedicated professionals across all agencies work in partnership to prevent, prepare, respond and recover from disasters. These professionals plan, exercise and train

to be prepared to respond to all types of hazards. Being prepared is nothing new. Homeland Security is not new. Homeland Security is the 21st Century means of providing coordination of the agencies responsible for the public safety and health of our citizens. I frequently have the opportunity to meet with and give remarks about our Homeland Security programs to professionals as well as everyday citizens throughout our state. The message is not exciting, nor is it sugarcoated, but I believe instills in the minds of people where we are today in our lives and represents the real threats, vulnerabilities and consequences we face as a state and a nation.

The message I deliver goes as follows. As Americans and Nebraskans, we have learned many lessons since September 11, 2001. Chief among these is the lesson that any catastrophe, whether a natural event or a terrorist attack, is not confined to any single infrastructure or community. We are all collectively affected, and we must all collectively work together to, if possible, prevent such incidents. In those cases when prevention fails, we must collectively respond to protect our communities, our state and nation. Take the time to discuss the challenges you face with others, and listen to the challenges faced by them. If you do this, we will all better understand that together we are stronger than we are divided. Learning this is the first and most important step in meeting the challenges we face.

Nebraska has been recognized for its anti-terrorism efforts and homeland security initiatives. This has been accomplished due to the ability of Nebraskans to have a CAN do attitude. All of the agencies, state and local, have taken a cooperative approach to the issue of Homeland Security. This has allowed Nebraska to have a comprehensive and integrated

plan which has allowed our state to deal with many issues that other states and the federal government are attempting to resolve. Another reason Nebraska has been so effective is due to the oversight structure for Homeland Security. Nebraska was the first state in the country to have the Lieutenant Governor serve as its Homeland Security Director. Other states are beginning to follow the Nebraska model. Nebraska's executive branch understands it is the Governor who is ultimately responsible for the health and well-being of its citizens. This structure has allowed the Governor's office to continue to be intimately involved with the guidance and direction of the Homeland Security Senior Policy Group and its programs.

Nebraska is proud to have been recognized for its efforts in the creation and utilization of Tele-Health (<http://www.hrsa.gov/telehealth/default.htm>, <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/init/ehealth.html>, <http://www.healthmgttech.com/index.php/news/front-page-feature-story/telehealth-network-connects-rural-nebraska.html>), the Health Alert Network (<http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/han/hanindex.htm>), the Biocontainment Unit ([http://www.nebraskamed.com/health\\_news/bio\\_containment\\_unit.aspx](http://www.nebraskamed.com/health_news/bio_containment_unit.aspx)) located at the University of Nebraska Medical Center and the establishment of public health agencies statewide. Nebraska has been a national leader in the discussions of pandemic influenza. Through the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, a response system has been developed to respond to an agricultural or livestock emergency through the Nebraska Livestock Emergency Disease Response System (<http://www.agr.state.ne.us/division/bai/ledrs.htm>). Most notable has been the work to develop a Statewide Interoperable Communications System. By late in the year 2010, Nebraska's first

*Are you Prepared by Lt. Governor Rick Sheehy  
Continued from Page 3*

responders will have the capabilities to communicate statewide using voice and data for day-to-day operations or in response to a large incident. This will provide a great amount of coordination and safety for our Hometown Heroes. All of these successes have been accomplished due to the strong cooperation among many individuals and organizations. The strong foundation we have in place will allow us to meet the challenges of what lies ahead.

We know that the question is not IF there will be other acts of terrorism, but rather WHEN. The potential for a bio-terrorism attack is as real as a conventional weapons attack. Many sectors will play a vital role in responding to this long-term threat. We must continue to be vigilant in our efforts with Homeland Security.

The current situation in which we live has been called the new normal, a permanent condition. We know this isn't just a short-term proposition we are facing. We are living with a new reality for the foreseeable future and that reality is the potential for terrorism, including terrorist attacks using weapons of mass destruction. We can't let today's work fade away. New realities call for new approaches. The world is not going to go back to the 20th Century; we need to continue moving forward into the 21st Century. That means forging meaningful, substantive partnerships for the long term.

The enemies we face spent years planning the attacks of September 11. We need to have partnerships that understand this fact, and that work together in a committed way. The threats are not going away, and each of us must remain vigilant. It needs to become standard practice for the government to assist our infrastructure providers in a variety of meaningful ways, from information-sharing about threats to increasing awareness of and visibility on critical systems. Over the last couple of years

I have had the opportunity to co-host with the U.S. Attorney's Office the Nebraska Infrastructure Security Forum. This forum provides an educational opportunity as well as information-sharing between government, public and private providers of many sectors

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to discuss many issues dealing with Homeland Security. In addition, an Executive Council which allows for a higher level conversation with key state and private business leaders from across the state has been formed. Development of these relationships is essential in a non-crisis situation. It is too late to develop relationships or get ready when a catastrophe strikes. We must be ready to respond now and in the future. If we can do this, we will be prepared to face the future in this quickly changing world.

Although there has been much work accomplished, there is still work to be completed. Recall, Homeland Security's primary function is to prevent and prepare for an incident derived from the nexus of terrorism. The work that has been completed in the State of Nebraska in preparation for an event has had a positive effect on how our professionals respond to everyday events. Your community, state and national government can only do so much. That is why it is necessary for all citizens to prepare, plan and exercise at your home, work and school. We need the cooperation of each and every person

to prepare for all types of disasters, just as our first responders plan, exercise and train. It is still apparent across our country that everyday citizens are not as prepared as they should be to take care of themselves during a time of emergency or disaster. The threats we face today are real. We live each and every day with the real threat of disaster, including a natural or accidental disaster or an intentional act of terrorism. We have become accustomed to having everything at our fingertips. In other words, we live in the now.

A prior survey conducted by the Opinion Research Corporation found that only 49 percent of respondents have purchased emergency supplies. Only 46 percent of those believed they had enough supplies to help them through an extended emergency. The 51 percent of respondents who

have not yet purchased supplies for an emergency cited procrastination and do not think they will be affected by an emergency. Those who have neither purchased supplies nor begun to put a plan together, say they would be motivated to do so if warned about an impending crisis by their local, state or federal government. A large majority would also be more likely to prepare for an emergency had they already lived through one. If you are part of the large majority waiting for someone to tell you to get prepared, *Get Prepared Now*. As individuals we need to return to the time of being self-reliant and self-sufficient. We all have the responsibility to be prepared. Imagine that all the businesses are closed and you are without any type of emergency service. What will you do until help arrives?

Over the last several years, Nebraskans have experienced destruction from tornadoes in the southeast, fires in the northwest and ice-storms in the central region of the state. Communities came together in a time of need to assist their neighbors. That is what makes Nebraska such a great place to live, work and



# LIFETIME KEYS TO SUCCESS

By COL Doug Ladd  
J8 / Deputy USPFO

*This is the fourth in a series of articles that will give us insight into the personal accomplishments of a variety of individuals, and the keys that allowed them to rise to their current positions in the Nebraska Military Department. Authors provide a glimpse into the barriers they may have faced and about those mentors who had a positive impact on their career.*

powerful or with a combination of any or all three.

Now with that said, I believe we have to add happiness to the mix of wealthy, famous, or powerful with a combination of any or all four. There are people in the world who truly do not seek wealth, fame or power. I know for some of us that is hard to believe but I am sure all of us can attest to the fact that we probably know someone for whom this is true. Some people just want to be happy or have contentment in their life and if you were to ask them, they would define success for themselves as obtaining happiness or being content. That makes our definition of success the attainment of something planned that makes you wealthy, famous, powerful, happy, or a combination thereof. So, now that we have success defined, let's get into the keys to getting there.

## The Keys

The keys to success are not only multiple but they may very well change depending on where you are in your life span. I believe one can obtain or can try to obtain success multiple times in one's life based on where we are in the stages of life. For the most part, we think of life as having four stages: Infant, Child, Adolescence, and Adult. For discussing the keys to success, I suggest we modify our definition of life stages as I do not believe many think of keys to success as an infant or for that matter even as a young child. Let's define our five stages in life as: Teenage (13 to 18 years of age), Young Adult (19 to 29 years of age), Adult (30 to 45 years of age), Older Adult (46 to 60 years) and of course Senior (61+ years of age).

## The Teenage Years

Ah yes, the teen years. When we look back on our teen years, (and yes, I know what you are thinking, "if I only knew then what I know now," but come on, that's another subject and a different article), success for most of us was probably not that complicated. Most of us focused on junior/senior high school employment, high school graduation, being accepted to college, or perhaps even something a little less long-term, like meeting the right boy or girl or finding someone to go with or take to the prom.

My focus during my teen years was given to employment, high school graduation, college acceptance and yes, probably meeting a nice girl, too. My keys at this stage in life were challenging like most. I was born and raised in the Detroit, Michigan area, the son (one of three and a sister) of a blue-collar worker. If I wanted anything, I had to work at it and provide it myself. When I did work, I had to give the family some of the money, or at the time, we called it paying room and board. This meant help the family meet its expenses. Therefore, my keys to success during my teen years were maximize employment or net income, go to school no matter how tired I was, which would allow me to keep my grades halfway decent in order to get into college, find a college scholarship and hopefully impress a girl or two along the way.

When I was too young to obtain regular employment, I had two paper routes (I delivered the *Detroit Free Press* before school and the *Detroit News* after school).

The keys to success, hmmm... When I stop and think about the keys to success, the first thing that comes to my mind is that success for one person may not necessarily be success for another. In fact, when I looked up success in the Encarta Dictionary (the one linked to Microsoft Word), I found four definitions listed for the word success.

1. Achievement of intention – the achievement of something planned or attempted.
2. Attainment of fame, wealth or power – impressive achievement, especially the attainment of fame, wealth, or power.
3. Something that turns out well – something that turns out as planned or intended.
4. Somebody successful (now, I am not so sure that this should count as one of the meanings of success when it uses part of the word to define the word) – somebody who is wealthy, famous, or powerful because of a record of achievement.

Therefore, as you can see, there is quite a bit to success. Now for the sake of this discussion, I would like to define success as the attainment of something planned that makes you wealthy, famous or

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*Lifetime Keys to Success Continued from Page 5*

I then worked for McDonald's when I was old enough. I kept my grades up and obtained a four-year grant to college. Therefore, one would think I had my keys to success and they were turning the locks to everything I wanted at the time, but as we all know, things change.

### ***The Young Adult Years***

After one and a half semesters in college, I got bored and joined the Army. Okay, I probably joined the Army to avoid the draft. You see, the word on the street was if you voluntarily joined versus being drafted, you would most likely not go to Vietnam. Well, so much for most likely! I joined in January 1972 and eight months later in September of 1972, I was in Vietnam. Now, I did stop and get married along the way, in August of 1972. So, for successes in my young adult years, I would say I was focused on challenges and commitment.

A cease-fire was reached in Vietnam in February 1973. By April of 1973, my new wife (Virginia) and I found ourselves stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas living in a small trailer in Ogden, right outside the post. Life in the Army was good. I cross-trained as a legal clerk, processing Article 15s and Courts Martial, and Virginia got a job in Ogden at the local dry cleaners pressing fatigues (a hot job, but someone has to do it). My commitment to the military and Virginia was strong and the challenges of both continued.

In January 1974, we had our first of four children (our only daughter though), and thus we became a family with all those challenges and responsibilities. I started going to school at night at Kansas State in Manhattan. When I was discharged from the Army in December 1976, Virginia and I stayed in Manhattan having moved there a year earlier. I finished my degree, and graduated in May 1979; I was 26 at the time. I was hired by a firm (Centel) located in Lincoln, Nebraska. Virginia, our daughter Donna, our son Doug II (born April 1979), and I moved 130 miles north.

### ***The Adult***

My focus at this stage of my life was providing a good home for my family and financial security. I would have to say the keys to success for me at this time were to become secure in the firm, obtain upward movement over time, and continue to be a good and loving husband and father. Virginia and I went on to have two more children, both boys, in October 1980 (Mark) and April 1982 (Jacob).

My adult years, ages 30 to 45 kept me on my toes. Our security changed and so did life's challenges. In June of 1994 (when I was 41), Sprint purchased Centel and they closed the Lincoln office. Over 550 people lost their jobs. But the good news was that for every year you were with the company, you received a month of severance pay not to exceed two years. Since I had been with Centel for 14 years, I received 14 months of salary, lump sum. Now like most people, immediately after being forced out of employment from a large firm, I thought, "Fine, I'll just work for myself. I'm sure I will be better off anyway."

Since I love to cook, I purchased a small restaurant (formerly called Heidi and Harold's) in Crete, Nebraska and began working for myself. We called the restaurant Ladd's Family Restaurant, and we were open seven days a week. My focus at this stage in my life was success in the new business, which of course translated to financial security for my family, independence for me and raising three teenage boys. Donna had already gotten married in September of 1993. It did not take long before Virginia and I realized that working eighty plus hours a week, trying to raise three teenage boys and making just enough money to pay all the vendors and employees was not much fun, and provided very little financial security.

By the grace of God, someone wanted to buy the restaurant and I was happy to sell it for exactly the same price I paid for it. I had put a tidy sum into it when I remodeled before it opened, but I thought that was a small price to pay to get out from underneath it. Many people I know have lost their shirts in

these kinds of deals. Two years later almost to the date, we sold it and I began an aggressive search for employment, I should add I did include large firms in my search.

### ***The Older Adult***

At this time I was only 44, but I believe I was entering my older adult stage in life. In January 1997, I was fortunate to be selected (from nine other candidates) as a new full-time hire Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Officer in the position of Brigade S-4 (manages the battalion's logistical support); this was utopia for me. Prior to this, I was an M-day (Traditional) logistics officer for 14 years. Now I was the top full-time logistics officer in the Brigade. Wow! Life was definitely good, and although I found challenges at work, I felt truly blessed.

The challenges did continue though as eighteen months after I was hired, I was command directed to be the Administrative Officer (AO) of the Forward Support Battalion. Then eighteen months after that I was command directed again to be the Training Officer in the G3 (operations and training). My full-time assignments and command directs continued and by the time I became the Deputy G4 (logistics), I had been full-time for nine years with seven different assignments. I was doing either one heck of a job or ONE HECK of a job; either way, the glass was half-full for me as I believe life is what you make it. In addition, these older adult years also included me obtaining an MBA (2001-2003), completing War College (2004-2006) and a tour in Iraq (2005-2006) as the Deputy Commander of the 67th Area Support Group (ASG).

Now as I wrap up my older adult years, I find myself three years away from a mandatory military retirement and the start of a new job as the J8 / Deputy United States Property and Fiscal Officer. However, even though I know there will be challenges, I again find myself in utopia: a leader who loves numbers (Bachelor of Science degree in Finance and Accounting) and one who gets to

*Continued on Page 20*

By Pam  
Makovicka

# WRITING WOMEN BACK INTO HISTORY

*Let's encourage our girls to dream of  
being extraordinary women.*

give testimony to the tireless work of thousands of individuals, organizations, and institutions to write women back into history.<sup>2</sup> The month of March will celebrate women's history, hoping to spark a new interest in uncovering women's forgotten heritage.

Let's encourage our girls to dream of being extraordinary women. Young girls should be encouraged to find role models who will build their self esteem. We need to challenge them and help them create a world that allows their spirit to flourish. In order to be a successful person it is not always the ability

or knowledge, but the inner drive, the willpower and the focus that makes you an extraordinary woman. We also need to let them know that winning is not everything. If you don't turn out to be a straight A student, lead ballerina, or the fastest swimmer, you are not a failure. Success is not measured by first place prizes. It is measured by the road you travel and the way you have dealt with challenges.

An article written by Rebecca Lobo gives girls ten steps to a game plan for success:

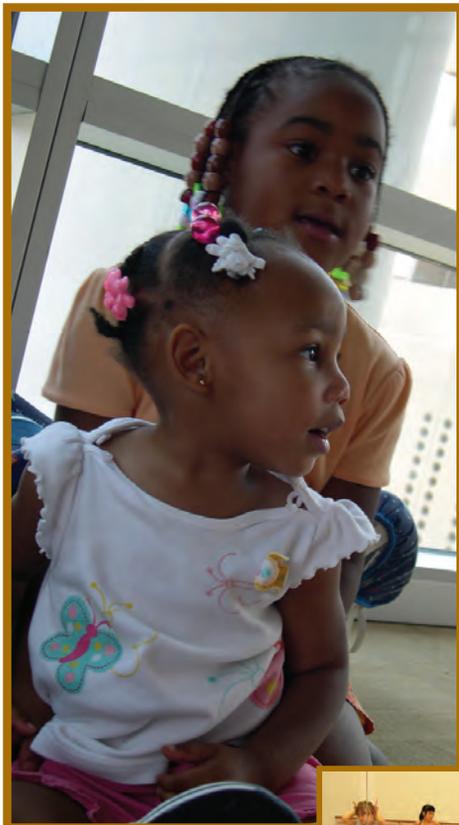
- Dream – if you work at that dream it will come true.
- Treat others the way you want to be treated – everyone has feelings and deserves respect.

- Surround yourself with positive people – positive people influence a positive energy.
- Do the right thing – feel confident that you have made the right decision.
- Stand up for what you believe – speak out when people are doing the wrong thing.
- Be the best you can be – if you have tried as hard as you can you are a success.
- Smile – a smile is infectious and you make others feel better.
- Have faith – someone always loves you and will protect you.
- Challenge yourself – the only way to become better at anything is by accepting challenges.
- Be positive – setbacks are inevitable. Learn from them and they can be your silver lining.

Girls have the right to be themselves - people first and females second. Let them express themselves with originality and enthusiasm. Girls have the right to take risks and strive freely, taking pride in their success. Let's give our girls the right to prepare for interesting work and economic independence. The worst thing a girl can do is to hide her mental muscle. People respect, admire and rejoice at intelligence. Encourage that mental muscle. Once young girls accept their uniqueness and see it as something special, a deep love of self empowers them to excel.

## Footnotes

1 and 2: <http://www.nwhp.org/wbml/index.php>



The year 2010 marks the 30th anniversary of National Women's History Month. The theme for this year is *Writing Women Back into History*. It often seems that the history of women is written in invisible ink. Even when women are recognized for their contributions, they are left out of the history books. In the 1980s, the topic of women's history was limited to college curricula, and even there it languished. At that time, less than 3% of the content of teacher training textbooks mentioned the contributions of women and when included, women were usually written in as mere footnotes. Women of color and women in fields such as math, science, and art were completely omitted. This limited inclusion of women's accomplishments deprived students of viable female role models.<sup>1</sup>

Today, when you search the Internet with the words "women's + history + month," you'll find more than 40,500,000 citations. These extraordinary numbers

# BOOK REVIEW

## WHAT IS THE WHAT?

### THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF VALENTINO ACHAK DENG

Book Review By  
LaVonne Rosenthal

Written By David Eggers;  
Publisher: Knopf Doubleday  
Publishing Group;  
October 2007

Fact or fiction? While this is an important question to answer, readers of the book *What is the What?* will find themselves drawn into the life of Valentino Achak Deng as written by David Eggers. Many of the details for this book are taken directly from Deng, one of the Lost Boys of Sudan, as a result of interviews and discussions with Eggers. Despite the controversy surrounding the accuracy or embellishment of the book's contents, the story of this young man's struggle is valuable in itself.

Deng and his family live a comfortable life in Marial Bai in southern Sudan in the mid-1980s. Civil war breaks out, bringing soldiers who raid and destroy his village. Deng is separated from his family and becomes a refugee. Yet the book doesn't begin at the start of the conflict in Sudan when Deng is a young boy. The story begins in Atlanta where Deng resettled after his journey through Sudan, Ethiopia and then a refugee camp in Kenya.

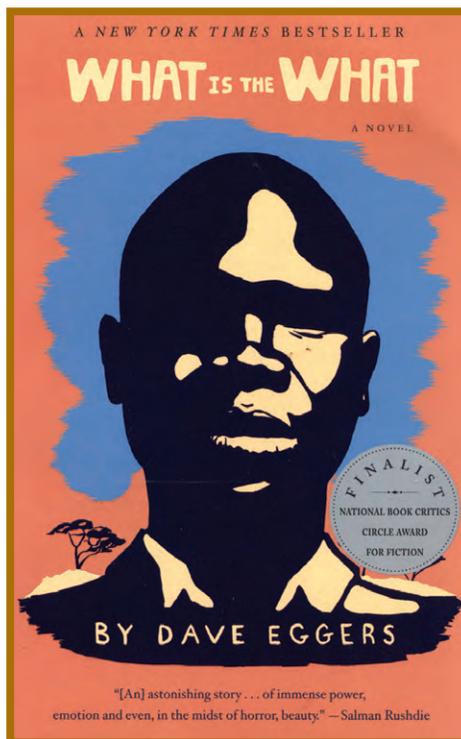
The book opens when Deng innocently opens the door of his apartment to a woman who asks to use his phone to call for help, claiming her car broke down. Deng is beaten and robbed by this woman's accomplices, and held hostage in his own apartment where he is tied up with a telephone cord. While in this predicament, Deng recalls his youthful experiences, describing his early life, his village friends and the tragedies he endured to arrive in the United States.

One recollection is his father's telling of the beginning of creation. "After God created men and women, according to local legend, he gave them cattle, the source of 'milk and meat and prosperity of every kind.' But God offered mankind a choice: 'You can either have these cattle, as my gift to you, or you can have the

What.'" *What is the What?*, you may ask, as many do when hearing this Dinka proverb. The man and woman chose the cow, something they could actually see over the mysterious What, something we are unable to fully grasp until it is discovered by Deng himself at the end of his story.

The style of this autobiography alternates between the telling of past events with current events throughout the book. At some points it becomes a bit confusing to make the switch, as I became so engrossed in visualizing what was happening to the young boy that I was caught off-guard when the storyline changed.

It's not enough to hear about the Lost Boys of Sudan. It's necessary to read about their struggles and accomplishments as thousands of boys walked across the desert to reach Ethiopia, hoping to find respite only to be treated with disdain and eventually chased out of the country. The boys resume their trek to Kenya, where Deng and others stay in a refugee camp. "There is a perception in the West," Deng says with biting understatement, "that refugee camps are temporary." After thirteen years in camps in Ethiopia and Kenya, Deng is one of 4,000 Sudanese granted sanctuary in the U.S., arriving in late 2001. While



the expected hope of the boys is that tragedy and trouble are left behind in Kenya, their life in America is not easy.

The feelings of sadness, despair and triumph may not be temporary for those who finish reading this book. Visually explicit descriptions don't easily leave your mind when hearing how children were mistreated, and how many died along this journey. There are humorous segments to lighten the tone of the book, as Deng is quoted: "The horror was so overwhelming

that for many years I never thought that I had this fun," he says. "But there are moments when I no longer recall missing my family. That was the time when I had fun."

Reading *What is the What?* made it impossible for me to pretend that the fate suffered by Valentino Achak Deng and thousands of other Lost Boys (and Lost Girls) wasn't real. It provided names and descriptions of children who endured tragedy to find a peaceful life, and hoped to return to their families one day. The storytelling style of this novel will carry you along the journey, where you share the joys and sorrows of this young man and his fellow travelers.

This book was one of the choices for the One Book – One Lincoln. Although it wasn't selected as the finalist, it provides a broad view of a globally historic event. 🌍

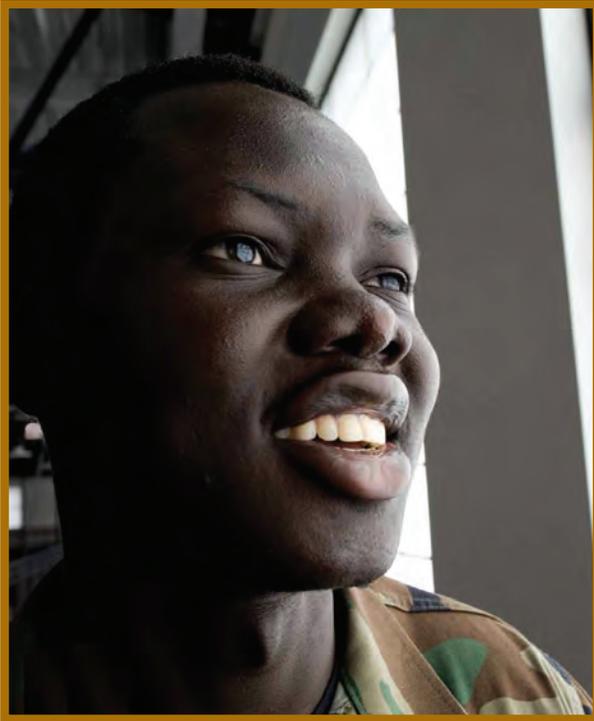
Story by Staff Sergeant  
J. Paul Croxon

Photo by Lance Cheung

Reprint from *Airman Magazine*;  
November-December 2009

# AN IMMIGRANT'S TALE

## BORN INTO CONFLICT: A 'LOST BOY' FINDS STABILITY IN AIR FORCE



*Airman Deng grew up in war-torn Sudan during the second Sudanese War without knowing any comfort or education. He immigrated to the United States in 2001 as one of the Lost Boys of Sudan. In a few short years he learned English, graduated high school and joined the Air Force.*

For most Airmen, the journey to the Air Force begins around the corner at the recruiter's office where they hear about the various benefits of serving. College tuition assistance, learning a skill, leave and others are all worth the trip. For other Airmen, the trip to the Air Force begins in another country and can entail hardship and obstacles but, there is one additional benefit to service.

According to the Immigration and Naturalization Act, military service streamlines the process to citizenship. Immigrant Airmen are able to waive about \$600 in application fees. But more valuable than that, they get to waive a long wait.

Immigrants who join the service after September 11, 2001 do not have to undergo the typical waiting period. They are eligible to immediately file for citizenship. Additionally, Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) staff work with immigrants to answer questions and assist

them during the naturalization process.

"At any one time there are about 1,000 Airmen serving without citizenship," said MSgt James Murphy, an AFPC personnelist who works with non-citizen Airmen. "Each quarter we contact them with checklists and information to help them obtain citizenship. We are there to answer questions and make the process as easy as possible."

Though the citizenship process is complex and potentially intimidating, it is well worth it. For some, like Senior Airman Deng Deng, just getting to the U.S. and joining the Air Force was the difficult part. For him, the Air Force not only taught him a skill and helped him obtain citizenship; it also was the first real home he ever knew.

Born in a Sudanese refugee camp, uncertainty was the only certain piece in Airman Deng's life. Each day, his next meal, next shelter and next breath were threatened. His parents were displaced from their home in the 1980s at the start of the second Sudanese war, a cultural and ethnic war for control of the country. With no safe place to go because of the ongoing conflict, Deng and his family moved constantly.

"We were nomadic, traveling from place to place to escape the danger," he said, a thick Sudanese accent coloring the perfect English. "When we crossed the border to a different country we could take a breath for a moment. In southern Sudan, until 2005, there weren't any safe places."

In constant danger since birth and with no basis for comparison, the realities of how bad his situation was never occurred to him.

"Aircraft would fly by," he said. "They looked like United Nations planes but they weren't. They would look to drop bombs and whenever they saw a hut or tent they would drop that thing there. It was fearful but we were born into it. There was no memory of comfort so that made it not so scary."

Airman Deng, under the leadership of his brothers, constantly moved with his family. They traveled thousands of miles along the Sudanese border, crossing frequently. The longest Deng stayed in any one place was two years in Uganda. However, like everything else in his life, his interpretation of things was tainted by past experience. To him a single place was hundreds of square miles. He said he spent time living in Sudan, Uganda and Kenya; always coming back to Sudan but always moving.

*Continued on Page 10*

*An Immigrant's Tale Continued from Page 9*

This life of constant nearby conflict and continuous instability left Deng with no formal education and little understanding of the geography of the greater world around him.

"I never heard of the United States until I got here," he said. "I saw the United States written on a bag of grain or food rations. It would say 'USA' and at the bottom it said it was from China. I thought the United States was a place in China."

In 2000 Deng left Sudan for the United States. He was one of the Lost Boys of Sudan. The program began in 1998 for orphaned boys and was later expanded. It addressed the need for safety for displaced boys and young men from Sudan. The goal was to bring them to the U.S., Australia and the United Kingdom, provide them with education and stability in hopes that they would one day return to Sudan as a stabilizing influence for their home country.

Airman Deng, once old enough to travel, left Uganda with a group of brothers and cousins. First they made it to Kenya and eventually went to the U.S.

"I didn't really know where the U.S. was," he said. "But as long as it was safe I didn't care."

After traveling on foot, by car, buses and aircraft, Airman Deng and his fellow Lost Boys landed in Philadelphia. Soon they were enrolled in a one-year language school to learn English. However, the shock of transitioning into a busy eastern metropolis was too much. The group, now a family, decided to move again.

Throughout his life, Airman Deng was always mentored and led by a "big brother," usually cousins. In Philadelphia he didn't have a good home to settle down. So, after completing the English course, he and some of the other Sudanese boys decided to find one.

"It wasn't easy to adjust to the culture there," he said. "We needed someplace quiet to focus on our life and education.

### ***For Airmen Deng and other immigrant Airmen, the dream of citizenship is a complicated process made easier and quicker through the help of the Air Force.***

Our older cousin lived in Michigan so we moved there."

Once in Michigan under the leadership of his cousin, Airman Deng finished high school. Airman Deng knew there was only one thing he wanted to do after high school. "Because of my background, I wanted to be a soldier back home — but my parents didn't want me to be one," he said. He added that his parents felt a Sudanese soldier's life was too inconsistent. "Here it is professional with specialized skills and I thought, 'yeah, I'll join the United States Air Force and when I get out I'll have this skill.'"

Airman Deng's skills are in logistics. He has learned how to get what is needed to the right place. For Airman Deng, military life is a good fit. He enjoyed basic training and said it was something he would do again. In the Air Force, Airman Deng earned his citizenship and because of his military service he didn't have to pay the costs to apply as a civilian. Additionally, because he didn't have his citizenship when he joined, Airmen from the ADPC routinely contacted him and walked him through the citizen application process.

Though the Air Force has given him a new life, his heritage will dictate his future. The decision on whether to reenlist isn't his alone. He is now the big brother.

"That choice is not my choice . . . it's going to be my family's choice," he said. "They are back there (Sudan) and most of them are depending on me . . . little brothers and sisters who need my attention. I've been here since 2001 and have not seen them since. I joined the Air Force and provide for them but the decision is theirs."

For Airman Deng, the Air Force was the first certainty he knew. The stability it offered gave him a much welcomed home away from his homeland. Having earned his citizenship this year, his focus remains service before self as he leads his family. He calls them every week and is a main source of support for an extended family of more than twenty.

"Now that I have these skills I can help my brothers and sisters in Sudan," he said. "Maybe once that is done I can come back and serve in the Air Force again." 

## **NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD RECOGNIZED BY NAACP**

*By BG Roma Amundson*

On November 14, 2009, the Lincoln chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) recognized the Nebraska National Guard (NENG) as an organization that practices inclusion and promotes understanding of diversity.

CPT Dale Burrage and BG Roma Amundson attended the NAACP evening banquet at the Cornhusker Marriott. On behalf of the Nebraska National Guard, BG Amundson received a plaque from the organization that recognized the NENG in promoting the interests, supporting the involvement

and celebrating the accomplishments of African-Americans within its membership.

The president of the local NAACP chapter, Mr. LeRoy Stokes, praised the NENG for its concern about equal employment opportunities for people representing all facets of diversity. He particularly noted that through the employment and educational benefits provided by the military, many people with diverse backgrounds have been able to achieve significant employment and attain higher education levels. 

**TRIVIA: THE 1990s***Compiled by Denise Anderson*

1. Which of the original five flavors did LifeSavers advertise in 1999 as “not Y2K compliant”?
  - a. Pineapple
  - b. Cherry
  - c. Lime
  - d. Orange
2. What future Baywatch babe replaced Jenny McCarthy on MTV’s Singled Out?
  - a. Pamela Anderson
  - b. Carmen Electra
  - c. Yasmine Bleeth
  - d. Nicole Eggert
3. What song did MC Hammer not release in the 1990s?
  - a. Let’s Get it Started
  - b. Have You Seen Her
  - c. U Can’t Touch This
  - d. Too Legit to Quit
4. What sequel has Charlie Sheen using his nose to nudge a meatball towards his lady love?
  - a. Hot Shots!
  - b. Hot Shots! Part Deux
  - c. Money Talks
  - d. Scary Movie 3
5. What U.S. governor proclaimed Rolling Stones Day and vetoed National Prayer Day?
  - a. Governor Jesse Ventura
  - b. Governor Ben Nelson
  - c. Governor Gray Davis
  - d. Governor John Engler
6. What iconic article of Michael Jackson’s apparel was stolen from the Motown Museum?
  - a. Hat
  - b. Glove
  - c. Pants
  - d. T-shirt
7. What did Shannon Lucid spend 188 days aboard, setting a world record for a woman?
  - a. Space Station
  - b. Discovery
  - c. Mir
  - d. Sputnik
8. What historical role earned Madonna her first Golden Globe Award for acting?
  - a. Eva Peron in *Evita*
  - b. Mae Mordabito in *A League of Their Own*
  - c. Breathless Mahoney in *Dick Tracy*
  - d. Rebecca Carlson for *Body of Evidence*
9. What mustachioed union leader became president of Poland in 1990?
  - a. Lech Kaczyński
  - b. August Zaleski
  - c. Bolesław Bierut
  - d. Lech Walesa
10. Who was red-faced after wearing blackface to roast his girlfriend Whoopi Goldberg at the Friar’s Club?
  - a. David Claessen
  - b. Patrick Swayze
  - c. Ted Danson
  - d. Frank Langella
11. What star of Loaded Weapon 1 made 44 movies in the 1990s, more than any other thespian?
  - a. Mel Gibson
  - b. Samuel L. Jackson
  - c. Tim Curry
  - d. William Shatner
12. What does LOL mean to amused online chatters?
  - a. Laugh Out Loud
  - b. Living on Lunchmeat
  - c. Lost our Lunch
  - d. Love on Land
13. What restaurant is known as Mai Dang Lao in China?
  - a. Burger King
  - b. Jack in the Box
  - c. McDonalds
  - d. Wendy’s

*Trivia Answers on Page 18*

*Are You Prepared by Lt. Governor Rick Sheehy  
Continued from Page 4*

raise our families. As Nebraskans we must remain vigilant and ready for the unexpected. We must stay in tune with our situational awareness. Pay attention to information distributed from your local emergency management officials. Preparedness is a continual effort. The month of September has been established nationally and is recognized in the State of Nebraska as National

Preparedness Month. During this time, it is a great opportunity to bring attention to Nebraska’s disaster preparedness activities and encourage more families and businesses to plan as part of a wide national campaign to increase our disaster readiness. There are many opportunities for you to learn more about how you can be prepared for a disaster or serve your community and state. For information on how you can learn more about disaster preparedness for yourself or

business, search the site of [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) or contact your local Emergency Manager, Public Health District Office or the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency. The Nebraska Volunteer Commission has information available on how you can be prepared and how to assist your community, state and nation in a variety of ways.

I ask you the question: **ARE YOU PREPARED?** 

# 10TH ANNUAL HEARTLAND LATINO LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

By MSG Rey  
Castaneda



*Leading the Way: The realities, voices, lives and dreams of Latinos in the Heartland*



I attended the 10th Annual Heartland Latino Leadership Conference and Expo which was held on November 13, 2009 in LaVista, Nebraska. This was the second conference I have attended, and I came away with mixed feelings. I think my biggest disappointment was that I felt the time should have been managed better so attendees would be able to attend more than two breakout sessions during the day. There were protestors picketing this event, which irked me because I'm not an illegal, I am not racist and I wear my uniform proudly. Other than this, I was very satisfied with all the speakers at this one-day conference. With that in mind, I will give a brief review of this event and speakers.

Registration for the event was held between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., and Mariachi Zapata, a mariachi band, entertained us during this time. To signal the start of the event, the National Anthem was performed by a young girl from this same band. This girl has a tremendous voice and was given a standing ovation; but what impressed me most was the respect and patriotism

shown by the attendees. It made me proud knowing that these people, who shared a similar heritage as myself, cared as much for this country as I do.

The first speaker was Maria Marlin, an author, radio host, columnist and motivational speaker. Her speech was good and addressed primarily to women. She talked of having dreams/goals and making a commitment to them. She also talked about the excuses women make as far as not following through with their goals. The biggest were "This is not the right moment" and "I don't have enough experience." The funniest moment from Maria was when she said that a man recognized her at an airport and told his child that she was Charo.

I then attended a breakout session entitled *Footprints in the Sand*, presented by Mr. Carlos Ojeda. This was the most meaningful session to me during the day. Mr. Ojeda told his life story of growing up in New Jersey and moving out when he was young because of the violence. He resettled in Pennsylvania and went

to college on a full ride scholarship, becoming the first in his family to achieve a college degree. What's impressive about Mr. Ojeda's story is that he is legally deaf and he didn't even know it until he was 23-years-old. He made it through school reading peoples' lips.

His father passed away a couple of years ago and the photo he cherishes the

most is of his dad hugging him after he graduated from high school. I think what grabbed me was that his father knew that he had a special son who could achieve something in his life. I think all fathers want their kids to do better than they did. Probably what impressed me the most was that Mr. Ojeda turned down a six-figure salary to accept a lower paying job where he could work with the underprivileged in his neighborhood. If there's one thing in life I have not done, it is giving back to my community in a personal and significant way.

Mr. Ojeda explained the source of the session title *Footprints in the Sand* came from a dream he had where he saw some footprints in the sand and they were washed away by the tide. He said that his dream was telling him that his footprints needed to be etched in stone in order to leave a lasting impression of his life. With him contributing to his community the way he has, he has



By TSgt Casey  
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# RESTAURANT REVIEW: MAZATLAN II

I recently noticed a new building going up near 27th and Superior Streets and discovered that a new restaurant would be opening. I am always receptive to new things, so I decided to try it out now that Mazatlan II is open for business.

We were greeted immediately with “Hola Amigos,” and taken to our booth. We were given chips and salsa. The chips and salsa were a nice surprise. The chips were warm and crisp and arrived with two bowls of salsa; one mild and the other spicy. The salsa is made fresh daily from fresh tomatoes, scallions and cilantro. They are not stingy with the appetizers - we never saw the bottom of a basket of tortilla chips or bowl of salsa.

We ordered a couple traditional menu items – a shredded beef burrito, ground beef hard shell taco and a chicken soft taco. The burrito was stuffed full of shredded beef and covered a good portion of the plate. The hard shell taco was a

little sparse on the vegetables, but not on the ground beef. The soft tacos are offered with a choice of flour or corn tortilla. We chose flour because we had ordered a hard shell taco, also.

The flavor of the beef was an excellent mix of seasonings, but, in my opinion, the chicken could have used a little more kick.

Each entrée was served with refried rice and beans. The beans were everything that I expected them to be and the rice had



good flavor with an interesting rough texture. When the plates came I thought I would need a to-go box, but I enjoyed the food so much that I left uncomfortably full instead.

The atmosphere was festive and clean.

They were even playing Spanish Christmas songs for the holidays! The walls were open and could use a few more decorations, but they

had only been open two weeks and my server said that they have plans to make the atmosphere more festive in the future. On a scale from one to ten, I give it an

Ocho!

## WEBSITE REVIEW:

<http://www.teachthechildrenwell.com/>

Review By Denise Anderson

My oldest daughter Anna is in second grade and is starting to use the Internet more and more to search for tools to help her in school. She likes to work on her math,

reading, spelling and learn about animals and many other topics. She also loves to learn about different countries and cultures, and to ask the question “Why?” which comes up often when things do not fit exactly into her view of the world.

While trying to research different topics for her to check out, I came across this



wonderful website called *Teach the Children Well*. It has many different subjects you can review including animals, language arts, arts, social science, math and many more. The opening page tells us what it was

designed for: “Teach the Children Well is a collection of links to sites carefully selected by a teacher for students as well as their parents and teachers. The site was designed for elementary grades but many of the sites will also be of interest to older students. Elaine M. Doolittle, M.Ed.” One thing I noticed in particular is that this site is well-maintained, as she

checks her links often to make sure they still work.

If you click on social science, you can narrow your search down to different countries and people (i.e. Germany, Africa, Australia, Native America, Egypt, Flags, and much more). Another cool subject is under Other Topics which includes sports, people and holidays. It also lists search engines designed just for kids, and there is a button for parents and teachers that deals with different special needs (e.g. sign language and ADHD).

Please share this with your friends and family. I know Anna will be enjoying this site.

# THE ORIGINS OF GROUNDHOG DAY

By Kari Foote

*“This is one time where television really fails to capture the true excitement of a large squirrel predicting the weather.”*

*-Phil Connors from the movie Groundhog Day*

Celebrated on February 2, Groundhog Day folklore was brought to America by early German immigrants of Pennsylvania. According to the legend, if a groundhog comes out of its burrow and sees a shadow, we are sure to have six more weeks of winter. If there is no shadow, there will be an early spring. But how did this curious fable begin?

It actually has its origins in European weather mythology, where it was more likely a badger or bear who saw his shadow to foretell the weather. German immigrants probably changed the story to a groundhog due to the relative lack of badgers or bears in southeastern Pennsylvania and due to the fact that the Delaware Indians, who already settled Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, considered groundhogs honorable ancestors. According to the original creation beliefs of the Delaware Indians, their forebearers began life as animals in “Mother Earth” and emerged centuries later to hunt and live as men. The date for Groundhog Day is linked to the medieval Catholic celebration of Candlemas, which coincides with the pagan observance of Imbolc, one of the four seasonal celebrations of some of the Celtic cultures.

An early American reference to Groundhog Day can be found in a diary entry dated February 5, 1841, of Berks County, Pennsylvania storekeeper James Morris:

“Last Tuesday, the 2nd, was Candlemas day, the day on which, according to the

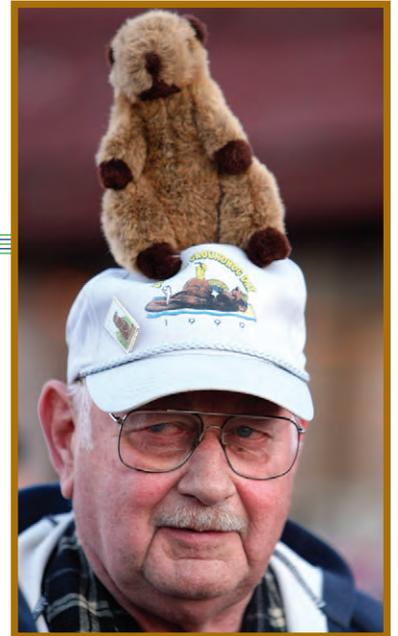
Germans, the groundhog peeps out of his winter quarters and if he sees his shadow he pops back for another six weeks nap, but if the day be cloudy he remains out, as the weather is to be moderate.”

In the United States the tradition may also be derived from a Scottish poem:

*As the light grows longer  
The cold grows stronger  
If Candlemas be fair and bright  
Winter will have another flight  
If Candlemas be cloud and snow  
Winter will be gone and not come again  
A farmer should on Candlemas day  
Have half his corn and half his hay  
On Candlemas day if thorns hang a drop  
You can be sure of a good pea crop*

According to the now defunct Julian calendar the spring equinox always fell on March 16, which is exactly six weeks after February 2. The modern Gregorian calendar has the equinox as a floating day that occurs around March 20 or 21, which is about seven weeks after February 2. One of the theories as to the adoption of Groundhog Day as an observance is the attempt to bring an arbitrary measurement into the spring equinox when these two calendar systems conflicted.

In agrarian society it's easy to understand why this is such an important distinction since farmers needed to have some reliable sense of when to begin the spring planting. It was an understood belief that the winter would either be a long, cold



*Photo by Rebecca S. Gratz (Omaha World-Herald) taken February 2, 2008, showing Jim Eisenbauer at the Unadilla Groundhog Day Festival.*

affair, or have a period of sunny weather sandwiched between two episodes of winter weather. The legend of an animal determining the start of spring comes from the belief that if a hibernating animal emerges from its den and does not see a shadow, it foretells the end of a long winter cycle. Alternatively, a shadow would suggest that there is only a sunny break, and another cold system is on the way.

The most popular American Groundhog Day celebration occurs in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania made famous by the 1993 movie, *Groundhog Day*, starring Bill Murray. The accuracy of the groundhog's ability to predict the weather is in question, with the National Climate Data center stating that the overall accuracy is about 39%.

In January 1988, the Lieutenant Governor of Nebraska signed a proclamation declaring Unadilla the “Groundhog Capital of Nebraska.” The day is celebrated under the watchful eye of Unadilla Bill and with a parade (weather permitting).

## Sources

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groundhog\\_Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groundhog_Day)  
<http://www.stormfax.com/ghogday.htm>

By *LaVonne  
Rosenthal*

# 2009 NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE EVENT RECAP

The sounds of Native American music welcomed guests to 2009's heritage event on November 5th. While only a recording, the music set the tone to hear more about Native American history from Matthew "Sitting Bear" Jones. Our speaker was provided through support from the Nebraska Humanities Council.

Buffalo meat provided by Wittler Enterprises ([www.wittlerenterprises.com](http://www.wittlerenterprises.com)) was transformed into a tasty stew by the chefs at Hy-Vee on 27th and Superior Streets. The generous provisions allowed attendees to enjoy second helpings. In addition, Mary Wittler provided us with very tasty buffalo jerky.

Following an introduction by master of ceremonies MSG Colin Jones, Matthew Jones regaled the audience with stories of his youth. He told of the challenges he faced having to speak his native language at home while learning to speak English in school. His grandfather's strong spirit kept tribal customs and language alive and vital to Mr. Jones throughout his life.

This celebration concluded the heritage events for 2009. We look forward to bringing more educational and entertaining opportunities to the National Guard on a quarterly basis in 2010. The herculean efforts of the Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Group have made great strides in opening doors of diversity in the minds of National Guard members and employees through the numerous special events. "Thank you," SEP members for your dedication to educating others. "Thank you," as well, to each and every one of you who consistently attend the heritage celebrations. We look forward to seeing you in 2010! 



*BG Roma Amundson accepting Eagle Feather gift from Matthew "Sitting Bear" Jones*



*Mary Wittler and CW2 Robrenna Redl serving buffalo jerky*

## MATTHEW "SITTING BEAR" JONES

Matthew "Sitting Bear" Jones is a member of the Kiowa/Otoe-Missouria tribe and an internationally known Native Storyteller, as well as a Lewis and Clark Native Historian and Vietnam veteran.

During his tenure at the University of Nebraska, he lectured in the area of multicultural education. He is a produced playwright and published author, with articles appearing in "Native America in the Twentieth Century: An Encyclopedia," "Wicazo Sa Review" and "American Indian Places – A Guidebook."

Mr. Jones is also an award winning television producer, being nominated for an Emmy as a producer for his Public Television documentary on Indian boarding schools. He has been a Native content consultant on many television programs, and was also a script consultant for Kevin Costner's film, *Dances With Wolves*.

His awards include The Mari Sandoz Award and Indian Faculty Person of the Year. Mr. Jones is currently working on a book for the Nebraska State Historical Society on the Otoe-Missouria nation of Nebraska.

# SEP MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

# SGT ADRIAN VELEZ

## DETACHMENT (DET) 4, 934TH SUPPORT BATTALION SUPPLY SERGEANT

My parents were born and raised in Puerto Rico. Due to family situations they moved to New York City where they had three boys. Franky was the oldest and passed away due to medical conditions when he was in his early 20s. Jose is the middle child and is one year older than me. I was born November 1, 1966 at Bellevue Hospital, New York.

We lived in an apartment complex on the Lower East side, also referred to as Alphabet City or Hell's Kitchen.

People would refer to us as The Lower Eastiders. I went to St. Brigid's Catholic School until the eighth grade. I attended Brooklyn Technical High School for my high school years.

I joined the Navy in 1985, and was stationed aboard the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Forrestal CV-59, where I worked in Primary Flight Control. The main function of Primary Flight Control is to maintain all the statistics of the aircraft and to assist in the aircraft launching and landing. I did this job for approximately two years, after which I transferred to Aviation Structural Mechanic, where I finished my military obligation.

When I got out of the Navy, I went back to New York for a short period of time. In 1990 I made the decision to move to California where I met my wife Edith (I call her Eda because she doesn't like the name Edith). My stay in California was short-lived. We decided to make



a change and chose to move to Idaho. While we were in the process of moving we decided to stop in Nebraska to visit family members. We arrived in Nebraska with our five-year-old niece (also named Edith) who had been living with us in California. Eda had raised Edith since she was two weeks old, since her biological mother, Celia, left her with my wife stating she did not want the child. We decided to visit Celia so that she could see her daughter for the first time in almost five years. Celia decided that she wanted custody of the child, so we had to stay in Nebraska until the court proceedings were over. The judge deemed that Celia was not fit to raise Edith and that we could not leave the state of Nebraska until Edith reached the age of adulthood. With this new challenge, and our big family (as you can see in the family photo which includes children, their wives, their kids and my parents), we made Nebraska home.

From 1991 until 2004, I worked as an industrial mechanic for companies like Monfort Beef Packing. I then joined the Nebraska Army National Guard in November of 2004 in the Try-One option. In May of 2005 I took a position with Recruiting and Retention as the Hispanic Liaison. This position involved working with the Hispanic communities of Nebraska to inform and educate them on what the Nebraska National Guard is about and all the wonderful

benefits it has to offer. I also did translations and verification of documents of people from Hispanic countries, and assisted recruiters (who were in the process of recruiting a person of Hispanic origin) to translate for parents who spoke limited English. In doing so the parents became an integral part of the recruitment process and understood what the benefits were, which helped them become comfortable with their children's decision to join the Guard. In February 2009 I became a full-time Recruiter.

I enjoyed my years as the Hispanic Liaison and working with Recruiting and Retention, but in October of 2009 I took a position as the Supply Sergeant for DET 4, 935th Support Battalion. My life has been a challenge but very rewarding. I plan to finish my career in the Nebraska Army National Guard, but as we all know, we cannot predict the future, so I will leave it in God's hands to finish writing my autobiography. 🌍

# SEP MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

## SUSAN STEVENS

### HUMAN RESOURCES SPECIALIST

I was born and raised in Nebraska. After high school I was stuck working low income jobs. My original plan was to join the job corps so I could learn a skill for better employment. A close friend serving with the 43rd Army Band mentored me and said, "Don't do that. Join the Guard and go to college." So I did. On October 16, 1981, I joined the Army National Guard and was off to Basic Combat Training the following January.

I served in the administration field my entire career. On November 1, 1994, I was hired full time as an Active Guard Reserve employee serving for the HHC 67th Infantry Brigade as their Unit Administrator. The 67th Infantry Brigade was a huge unit with approximately 350 members. To say the least, I was completely overwhelmed. For the next year I worked in crisis management mode, learning everything I could about the vast, complex administrative field. It was after my first year of employment that I was able to realign my work load. I developed tracking methods and began to work in a proactive style. Being proactive completely reduced my stress level and I work to always maintain that style. Some of the positions I have held include Unit Administrator, Personnel Records Specialist, Battalion S-1 NCOIC, Initial Active Duty Training Manager and the Enlisted Personnel Manager for

Nebraska. I retired from the Active Guard Reserve program on May 1, 2004. It is an honor to serve our State and Nation and I am proud to call myself a Veteran.

Upon retirement, I started serving the Nebraska Army National Guard in a civilian capacity, working for the Recruiting and Retention Office as the Initial Active Duty Training Manager. I currently am serving the Air National Guard as the Active Guard Reserve Human Relations Specialist.

One of the best days of my life is when I married my wonderful husband, Lieutenant Colonel Chad Stevens on June 21, 2001 in upstate New York. He is currently serving the Nebraska Army National Guard as the Military Personnel Officer. In the summer of 2000, my son, Jonathan Musilek decided to join the National Guard and enlisted on March 19, 2001 and now serves as the Unit Administrator for the Training Site Command. Both my husband and son mobilized to Iraq with the 67th Brigade, and served together from September



2005 through September 2006. I also have a beautiful 14-year-old stepdaughter, Deidre Stevens, who is busy with school activities and coming into her teen years. We have a cat named Murray and two dogs named Morgan and Molly. They are so spoiled!

I love spending time with my family. We spend as much time outside as we can. We go camping, water skiing, golfing and work in the garden. Most summer nights, we just sit out on the deck enjoying the sunsets and watching birds eat from the feeders. Christmas is my favorite holiday because all the preparation, gift buying and sending cards allows me to reflect on what is really important, what our blessings are and the people I truly love. 

## DIVERSITY DATES: MARCH - APRIL 2010

February 2..... Candlemas (Christian)  
 February 2..... Groundhog Day (U.S.)  
 February 2..... Imbolc (Celtic, Pagan)  
 February 3..... Setsubun (Japan)  
 February 3..... Suyapa Day (Honduras)  
 February 4..... National Day (Sri Lanka)  
 February 5..... Constitution Day (Mexico)  
 February 6..... Waitangi Day (New Zealand)  
 February 11..... Kenkoku Kinen-no-Hi (Japan)  
 February 12..... Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)  
 February 14..... Lunar New Year (International)  
 February 14..... Race Relations Day (U.S.)

February 14..... St. Valentine's Day (U.S.)  
 February 14-16..... Losar (Tibet)  
 February 14-20..... Brotherhood/Sisterhood Week  
 (Christian, Jewish)  
 February 15..... Great Lent begins  
 (Eastern Orthodox Christian)  
 February 15..... National Day (Serbia)  
 February 15..... President's Day (U.S.)  
 February 16..... Independence Day (Lithuania)  
 February 16..... Shrove Tuesday (Christian)  
 February 17..... Ash Wednesday (Christian)  
 February 18..... Independence Day (Gambia)

February 19..... Rashtriya Prajatantra Divas (Nepal)  
 February 21..... Shaheed (Martyr) Day (Bangladesh)  
 February 22..... Abu Simbel Festival (Egypt)  
 February 23..... Republic Day (Guyana)  
 February 25..... Fiesta sa EDSA (Philippines)  
 February 25..... National Day (Kuwait)  
 February 25-26..... Mawlid al-Nabi (Islamic)  
 February 26..... Ayyam-i-Ha begins (Baha'i)  
 February 27..... Independence Day  
 (Dominican Republic)

*Continued on Page 20*

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## 1990s TRIVIA ANSWERS

*While the creative works from the 16th century can still be accessed and used by others, the data in some software programs from the 1990s is already inaccessible. Lawrence Lessig*

1. a. Pineapple flavor was deemed to be “Y2K-incompatible,” and consumers were offered a chance to vote on a solution to this oh-so-pressing problem. The options: strawberry, watermelon, or retain pineapple by “upgrading its Y2K-compatibility.” The real story, of course, is that focus groups had indicated that pineapple was the least-popular flavor in the roll. So LifeSavers set up a website and toll-free phone number where people could vote, ran an ad blitz to publicize the election, and then sat back, secure in the knowledge that the voting results would match up with the focus group data. But a funny thing happened on the way to pineapple LifeSavers’ demise. When the votes were tabulated at the end of March, pineapple had won with 54% of the vote -- more than the other two flavors combined (watermelon clocked in at 25%, while strawberry limped in with 21%). A LifeSavers’ press release described the outcome as “stunning” and “an upset win.”

2. b. Carmen Electra. *Singled Out* is a game show that ran on MTV from 1995-1998. Each episode featured a group of 50 men and a group of 50 women competing for a date with one main contestant of the opposite sex. The original hosts were Chris Hardwick and Jenny McCarthy. When McCarthy left the show in early 1997 to star in her own sketch-comedy series (*The Jenny McCarthy Show*), MTV hired Carmen Electra to replace her for the last season and a half.



3. a. *Let's Get it Started* was released and played on the air in the spring of 1988. *Have You Seen Her* and *U Can't Touch This* were both released in 1990 and *Too Legit to Quit* was released in 1991.



4. b. *Hot Shots! Part Deux* was released in 1993 and directed by Jim Abrahams. It was the sequel to *Hot Shots!* which was released in 1991.

5. a. Governor Jesse Ventura ran for Governor of Minnesota in 1998 as the nominee for the Reform Party of Minnesota.

6. b. A glove. An article dated October 3, 1991 from the Chicago-Sun Times writes “The white, crystal-beaded glove worn by Michael Jackson during his *Thriller* tour was stolen

Tuesday from the Motown Museum in Detroit. It's irreplaceable. We want to recover it, no questions asked,” said a spokesman for the museum. “There is no value on it. It's a one-of-a-kind piece.” The glove was recovered within 48 hours.



7. c. Mir. A veteran of five Space Shuttle flights, Lucid was among the first

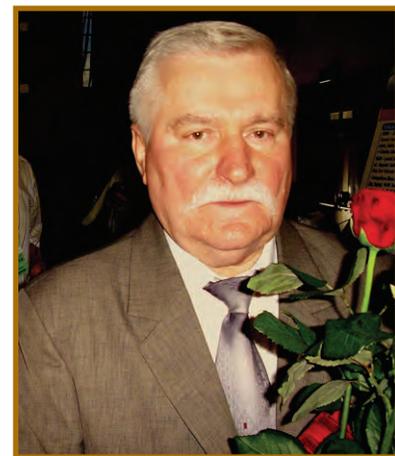
six women ever selected to become an astronaut. She currently holds the United States single mission flight endurance record as a result of her mission to the Russian space station Mir in 1996. Cosmonaut Valery Polyakov set the record for the longest stay in space on Mir - 438 days in 1994-95.



8. a. Eva Peron. The 54th Golden Globe Awards, honoring the best in film and television for 1996, were held on January 19, 1997. Madonna won the Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture - Comedy/Musical category for *Evita* (which was released in 1996).



9. d. Lech Walesa was born on September 29, 1943 in Popowo, Poland. After graduating from vocational school, he worked as a car mechanic at a machine center from 1961 to 1965. He served in the army for two years, rose to the rank of corporal, and in 1967 was employed in the Gdansk shipyards as



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Trivia Answers Continued from Page 18

an electrician. In 1969 he married Danuta Golos and had eight children. In April 1990 at Solidarity's second national congress, Walesa was elected chairman with 77.5% of the votes. In December 1990 in a general ballot he was elected President of the Republic of Poland. He served until defeated in the election of November 1995. Walesa has been granted many honorary degrees from universities, including Harvard University and the University of Paris. Other honors include the Medal of Freedom (Philadelphia – U.S.), the Award of Free World (Norway), and the European Award of Human Rights.

10. c. Ted Danson was born Edward Bridge Danson III in San Diego, California, the son of an archaeologist. He was raised outside of Flagstaff, Arizona. In 1961 he was sent to Kent School where he was a basketball star. He became interested in drama while attending Stanford University. He transferred to the Carnegie Institute of Technology (now known as Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), where he received his Bachelor's degree. Danson, while still married to his first wife, was involved with Whoopi Goldberg. Whoopi broke off the romance soon after he appeared at a Friar's Club roast in blackface and proposed to her. However, credible reports state that Whoopi acknowledged that she wrote some of Ted's blackface skit, so this was most likely not the cause of their separation.



11. b. Samuel L. Jackson is an American actor who has appeared in over one hundred films. The collective total of all box office receipts for films that Jackson has appeared in (including minor roles and cameos) is the highest of any on-screen actor. Jackson's film career started in 1972 with a role in the film *Together for Days*. Over the next nineteen



*I was just thinking that of all the trails in this life  
there is one that matters most.  
It is the trail of a true human being.  
Kicking Bear from the movie Dances With Wolves*

years Jackson was cast in multiple films as minor characters up until his breakthrough role as Gator, a crack addict, in the 1991 Spike Lee film *Jungle Fever*, for which he won a special jury prize for best supporting actor at the Cannes International Film Festival.

12. a. Laugh Out Loud. LOL, an abbreviation for laughing out loud or laugh out loud, is a common element of Internet slang. It was used historically on Usenet but is now widespread in other forms of computer-mediated communication, and even face-to-face communication. It is one of many initialisms for expressing bodily reactions, in particular laughter. Other unrelated expansions include the now mostly historical "lots of luck" or "lots of love" used in letter-writing.
13. c. McDonald's. In October 1990, the first McDonald's opened in mainland China, in the city and Special Economic Zone (SEZ) of Shenzhen, Guangdong province.



*McDonald's Chinese New Year meal, grilled chicken sandwich and twisted French fries. Tray liner has an image of the Chinese zodiac.*

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*Lifetime Keys to Success Continued from Page 6*

work in the property and fiscal arena the last three years of his career, life just does not get any better than this.

### ***The Senior Years***

As for my senior stage in life, well, retirement is looking good. I am sure retirement or semi-retirement employment will bring new challenges and opportunities. I am a man of strong faith, and I have four constant priorities in life: God, my Wife, my Children, and Financial Security. I focus my life on five of God's Red Flags for Daily Living:

1. Don't ignore instruction or rebuke: listen to everyone whether they are trying to reinforce you or constructively assist you.
2. Guard your mouth: don't share everything you know, it is better they think you a fool than to open your mouth and prove it.
3. Beware of the pursuit of riches: don't work for the sake of money, money is not the answer to all.
4. Avoid dishonesty: be honest even if it hurts.
5. Don't disrespect God's Word: that should speak for itself.

*Heartland Latino Leadership Conference  
Continued from Page 12*

certainly etched his footprints in stone and made his father very proud.

Between this session and the next speaker, a group of Colombian dancers performed some of their native dances. A group at one of the tables was enthusiastically waving their cloth napkins in the air. I believe they were of Colombian descent because they were the only ones waving, and I have never seen it done before.

The next speaker was Dr. Juan Andrade whose accomplishments, including six college degrees, are pretty impressive. Mr. Andrade said that America needs to understand diversity and that the Latino community offers a lot to the United States. He said that the Latino community is here to stay and is not just taking up space. His most significant

In conclusion, I know the ups and downs in my life are not so different than the ones in yours. Consequently, I believe it becomes apparent that the real key to success is keeping a positive focus. I am sure we have all heard the cliché, when life gives you lemons, make lemonade. I am convinced that that is exactly how we should handle all of life's challenges. I like to look at the glass and think of it as always being half-full versus half-empty. I am a true believer that most of us have more than we realize, and when we stop and look at others around us all over the world, our glass really is half-full.

The Keys to Success for each one of us lies within each of us. Life is what we make it. I challenge all of you to keep a positive focus, see the good in people, treat people better than you treat yourself, post your priorities in life so you can read them often, challenge yourself, and continually reset your goals so you have to reach just a little higher each time. It is that continuous positive reaching for those things in life that are the most important to us that will enable us to be successful over and over again. Thus, our Lifetime Keys to Success. 

point was that the Latino community needs to educate themselves and become leaders. This is very true from my perspective, also.

The last breakout session I attended was titled *Making Diversity Delicious* presented by Miss Catrice Jackson. Her speech was aptly titled since she argued that companies need to make the work environment a place where diversity is something that is good and beneficial to all. Miss Jackson stated that we as leaders need to go out and connect with the community. She also stated that all companies need to have a goal of diversity within their organization. Being a member of the Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Group, I can honestly say that the Nebraska National Guard is trying to promote diversity.

The final speaker was Mr. Tim Sandos,

*Diversity Dates Continued from Page 17*

February 27-28.....	Purim (Jewish)
February 28.....	Memorial Day (Taiwan)
February 28.....	Lantern Festival (China, Taiwan)
March 1 .....	Hola Mohalla (Sikh)
March 1 .....	Holi (Hindu, Sikh)
March 1 .....	Independence Day (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
March 1 .....	Martenitza (Bulgaria, Romania)
March 1 .....	Samiljol (South Korea)
March 1 .....	St. David's Day (Wales)
March 3 .....	Hinamatsuri (Japan)
March 3 .....	Throne Day (Morocco)
March 4 .....	Casimir Pulaski Day (Poland, U.S.)
March 6 .....	Independence Day (Ghana)
March 8 .....	International Women's Day
March 11 .....	Restoration of Statehood Day (Lithuania)
March 12 .....	Moshoeshe's Day (Lesotho)
March 14 .....	Daylight Savings Time Begins (U.S.)
March 15 ...	Memorial Day for the 1848 Revolution and War of Independence (Hungary)
March 16 .....	Charshanbesuri (Iran)
March 17 .....	St. Patrick's Day (Ireland, U.S.)
March 19 .....	St. Joseph's Day (Christian)
March 20 .....	Equinox (International)
March 20 .....	Independence Day (Tunisia)
March 20 .....	Ostara (Celtic, Pagan)
March 21 .....	Benito Juarez's Birthday (Mexico)
March 21 .....	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (U.N.)
March 21 .....	Noruz (Iran)
March 22 .....	Emancipation Day (Puerto Rico)
March 24 .....	Ramanavami (Hindu)
March 25 .....	Independence Day (Greece)
March 26 .....	Swadhinata Dibash (Bangladesh)
March 28 .....	Palm Sunday (Christian, Coptic & Eastern Orthodox Christian)
March 29 ...	Boganda Day (Central Africa Republic)
March 29 .....	Passover begins (Jewish)
March 31 .....	Cesar Chavez Day (U.S.)

Senior Vice President of Diverse Segments for Wells Fargo. He attended college at the University of Colorado and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Mr. Sandos gave a great speech and it was a shame that many people left early. Mr. Sandos emphasized education, leadership and diversity like Mr. Andrade.

I truly recommend going to this conference if you want to learn about the Latino community, which is the fastest growing minority in the United States and brings much to the table. This conference was not a rally promoting Latino power but was about promoting diversity, education and leadership. Diversity needs to be promoted since the United States is one big melting pot, and education and leadership need to be emphasized within the Latino community. 

BTG  
DIVER-CIPE  
CORNERSubmitted by  
MAJ Steven Collins

ASIAN BURGERS

*I can't take credit for these burgers as the original recipe and inspiration comes from my darling wife. Like numerous authentic Asian recipes, little if any formal measuring is involved. Thus, experience with the recipe and knowledge of the ingredients play a large part in the recipe's success.*

*Also, the age old argument of grilling with gas versus coal is just that and I don't wish to rekindle it, pardon the pun. I personally make all my burgers on coal as any other way is, in my humble opinion, 1) un-American, and 2) robs the recipient of the taste that coal brings out of the burgers.*

*Note: Hot Thai spices are involved and should be adjusted to the taste of the recipients. I make them a lot different for TAG Association cookouts than I do at home. The recipe I am providing is closer to the authentic recipe I use at home.*

*Prep time 15-20 minutes, and as always, cook the meat all the way through.*

### Ingredients

- 1 lb ground hamburger
- 1 lb ground Chuck
- 1-2 cups freshly cut mushrooms (personally, I don't like portabella but choose the kind you like best)
- 2 cups finely cut cilantro
- 1 ½ cups finely cut green onion
- 2-4 teaspoons fish oil (Three Crabs or Thai Kitchen if no Three Crabs)
- 3-6 teaspoons oyster sauce (Dynasty is fine)
- Onion powder to taste (can't use too much really), I use around a handful, add more or less to taste
- 1-2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 2-4 oz of Huey Fong Sriracha Hot Chili Sauce. If you can't find it, substitute Dynasty or Thai Kitchen brand. With or without garlic, up to you. Not for the lame at heart!
- Fresh garlic to taste

Mix everything together in a large bowl then make into patties. Let sit to around room temperature before grilling. If you find the meat falls apart too easily, you can try a little egg, olive oil, etc. or whatever else you normally use to keep it together. On the grill, you can add additional onion powder. Like I said, it's almost impossible to use too much. I avoid salt and pepper as the fish oil has enough and the garlic adds plenty of natural salt flavor. Cook until the meat is finished. I often add a slice of colby jack cheese to my burgers as well right before pulling them off the grill.

Buns: I prefer onion buns or you can choose your favorite hamburger bun (white petite rolls for mini burgers). Light coating of mayonnaise on the bottom bun and some yellow mustard for the top bun.

Enjoy and make the recipe your own. Makes around 8 burgers. 🌍

## WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

<http://www.army.mil/women/index.html>

Women have served in the United States Army since 1775. They nursed the ill and wounded, laundered and mended clothing, and cooked for the troops in camp on campaign; services that did not exist among the uniformed personnel within the Army until the Twentieth Century. Women are an invaluable and essential part of the Army. Currently, women serve in 91 percent of all Army occupations and make up about 14 percent of the active Army. Women continue to have a crucial role in the War on Terrorism and their sacrifices in this noble effort underscore their dedication and willingness to share great sacrifices.

### BG Elizabeth P. Hoisington

Elizabeth Hoisington advanced through the ranks of the WAC. She served as the Director of the Women's Army Corps from 1966 until 1971. Hoisington was the second woman and first WAC officer to be promoted to the rank of general officer in 1970. Later on the same day that Anna Mae Hays was promoted to Brigadier General, Elizabeth Hoisington was also promoted to that rank.



### COL Oveta Culp Hobby

From 1942 to 1945, Oveta Culp Hobby served as Director of the Women's Army Corps, and as a result of the success she achieved at this position, was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. Following World War II, Hobby returned to Houston to help her husband run the Houston Post, and a newly acquired television station. In 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower named her head of the Federal Security Agency and later that year she was elevated to a Cabinet position in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare as its first Secretary, a position she held until 1955 when she resigned and returned to Houston to take care of her ailing husband. 🌍

