

# BRIDGING

## THE GAP



ISSUE 26 ❖ FEBRUARY - MARCH 2011



**TRADITIONAL VALUES IN A  
NON-TRADITIONAL CAREER**



**THE BLEND**



**WREATHS ACROSS  
AMERICA**



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*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.*

**HELP WANTED – REWARDS UNLIMITED** *By LaVonne Rosenthal*

The Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Group extends an invitation to Nebraska Military Department employees (State employees, technicians and AGRs) to join with us in the continuing quest to expand our diverse horizons. The SEP Group and its activities are endorsed and supported by The Adjutant General, MG Lyons, as well as other Command Group staff. SEP Group members are asked to commit to attend monthly meetings, assist with luncheons and be involved in writing and publishing our newsletter. No specific experience is required for membership; just a sincere interest in learning more and sharing ideas about diversity. Involvement in these rewarding activities needs to be approved and supported by your supervisor.

Hour-long monthly meetings entail planning upcoming events to include an annual training day. We are always on the lookout for new ideas for newsletter articles from members and others, guest speakers, entertainment and caterers for special heritage celebrations. Our current members are great resources, and we hope to enhance and revitalize our Group through adding new people. Some of our members have also had the opportunity to travel to national conferences, as their job allowed.

Stephen Covey said, "Synergy is the highest activity of life; it creates new untapped alternatives;

it values and exploits the mental, emotional and psychological differences between people." Through the differences in our members' background, experiences, education, etc. our organization reaps the benefits of these synergistic relationships. When Thomas Edison was asked why he had a team of 21 assistants, it is reported that he said, "If I could solve all the problems myself, I would." The SEP Group sorts through "problems" such as which articles to write for the newsletter, when to host the next heritage celebration and who could cater the next event. One person can't do it alone.

You may be asking yourself, why do we need more people to be on the SEP Group? Some might think that it's my job to educate the organization about diversity of race, gender, ethnicity, generations and thoughts. I could do a fairly good job on my own, but the team of SEP members are the ones responsible for the tremendous success of our special events and our newsletter. I agree with the Rev. Halford E. Luccock, Professor of Homiletics at Yale's Divinity School, as he said "No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an orchestra to play it."

If you are interested in joining our orchestra, please contact me or one of the SEP Group members listed below. We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting! 

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 March 4, 2011 for Issue 27: April / May 2011.

All article submissions, due February 11, 2011 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.*

# TRADITIONAL VALUES IN A NON-TRADITIONAL CAREER

*By CMSgt Susan Turner - 155th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron*

When I joined the Air Force in May 1979, my recruiter gave me several career field options to choose from; most were administrative, but one was Crew Chief. Intrigued by the description, I listened as he went on to explain that not many women work in this career field. A Crew Chief launches, recovers, refuels and inspects aircraft. They typically are in charge of one aircraft and oversee the daily maintenance and mission requirements for that aircraft. Whenever a KC-135 leaves station to go anywhere around the world for two or more days, three crew chiefs go with the aircrew/ aircraft to provide servicing. My dad (retired Air Force Air Traffic Controller) could only watch in dismay as his daughter enlisted in the Air Force as a Crew Chief. He wanted me to become an air traffic controller.

My first assignment was Williams Air Force Base, Arizona, where we worked on T-38A aircraft. I was one of four women in the squadron. During 4.5 years time in service, I worked through the ranks, tested and earned the rank of Staff Sergeant. At 4.5 years time in service, this achievement was unusual in most Active Duty career fields. A common thread shared among my counterparts who also met this milestone, was commitment to our Air Force core values:

- Service Before Self - possessing a strong work ethic.
- Integrity First - doing our job to the best of our ability.
- Excellence in All We Do - maintaining a positive attitude.

I transferred to the Nebraska Air National Guard in 1986. This is where I first heard the term non-traditional career field. A non-traditional career field is one that

normally a man/ woman would not choose, such as male nurses or female mechanics. I chose to become an aircraft mechanic for the challenge and my Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) scores were very high in the mechanical area.

I obtained a full-time position in 1987 and soon after was asked to consider being interviewed by local college students who were studying non-traditional career fields. I agreed to participate in these interviews for a short period of time. After the third-wave of interviewers finished taking notes, I politely declined any more interviews. I had not, up to this point in my career, ever experienced the discomfort of being singled-out for my choice of career.

As a Crew Chief, I crewed the RF-4C and have flown around the world with the KC-135. This period of time was one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. Again, I worked diligently through the ranks; I sought out various positions, working with an increasingly diverse group of people throughout the Maintenance Group. This prepared me for my first supervisory position on the flight line which I held for 6.5 years. Through these experiences I quickly learned the number one item that



should be on any supervisor's mind: take care of your people. There is no doubt in my mind that by mastering this trait, your people will take care of you when you need them the most.

As the Superintendent of the Aircraft Maintenance Squadron I am privileged to work for the men and women who are the front line of our refueling

mission. Respect and trust are not automatic with this position. They must be earned.

I also work for my Commanders, keeping them advised of personnel issues affecting the enlisted members of my squadron. It is extremely important to have open communication with your commander.

So why am I writing this article? It is not about a woman in a non-traditional career field. It's about a member of a diverse Nebraska Air National Guard. This article is about the basic characteristics and efforts necessary for an Airman to be successful: achieving goals through a strong work ethic, doing your job to the best of your ability, maintaining a positive attitude throughout and, most importantly, always taking care of your people.

And yes, my dad is very proud of me. 

# CHINESE NEW YEAR

By LTC Shawn Edwards



The Chinese New Year is the longest and most important holiday in China. First celebrated around 2000 BC, it begins on New Year's Eve and last for fifteen days. Under different emperors the celebrations were held at different times. They started to celebrate Chinese New Year on the first day of the lunar calendar based on Emperor Wu Di's almanac of the Han Dynasty.

The Chinese Lunar New Year is the longest chronological record in history, dating from 2600 BC, when Emperor Huang Ti introduced the first cycle of the zodiac. Like the Western calendar, The Chinese Lunar Calendar is a yearly one, with the start of the lunar year being based on the cycles of the moon. Therefore, because of this cyclical dating, the beginning of the year can fall anywhere between late January and the middle of February. A complete cycle takes 60 years and is made up of five cycles of twelve years each. The lunar calendar is represented by twelve animals, with each year represented by one

animal. The animals in order are: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, ram, monkey, rooster, dog and pig. Legend has it that the Lord Buddha summoned all the animals to come to him before he departed from earth. Only twelve came to bid him farewell and as a reward he named a year after each one in the order they arrived. The Chinese believe the animal ruling the year in which a person is born has a profound influence on personality, saying: "This is the animal that hides in your heart." This year the celebration will begin on February 3, 2011 and is the *Year of the Rabbit*.

The Chinese New Year is now popularly known as the Spring Festival because it starts at the beginning of spring. Its origin is too old to be traced. Several explanations are available. All agree, however, that the word nian, which in modern Chinese solely means year, was originally the name of a monster beast that started to prey on people the night before the beginning of a new year (do not lose track here: we are talking about

the new year in terms of the Chinese calendar).

The legend goes that the beast Nian had a very big mouth that would swallow a great many people with one bite. One day, an old man came to their rescue, offering to subdue Nian. To Nian he said, "I hear say that you are very capable, but can you swallow the other beasts of prey on earth instead of people who are by no means your worthy opponents?" So, swallow it did many of the beasts of prey on earth that also harassed people and their domestic animals from time to time. After that, the old man disappeared riding the beast Nian. Before the old man left, he told people to put up red paper decorations on their windows and doors at each year's end to scare away Nian in case it sneaked back again, because red is the color the beast feared the most.

The first day is for paying reverence to the gods, followed by younger family members paying their respects to their living elders. New clothes are worn, and visits are made to friends, neighbors and relatives to exchange good wishes of kung-hsi fa-tsai which means "congratulations and prosperity." As an occasion for reconciliation, it's a time when old grudges are cast aside amidst an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness.

Some families may invite a lion dance troupe as a symbolic ritual to usher in the Lunar New Year as well as to evict bad spirits from the premises. The heads of these fearsome beasts are supposed to ward off evil, and the nimble movements of the dancers provide a grand spectacle enjoyable to everyone.

Day two is for married daughters to visit their birth parents. Traditionally,

*Continued on Page 5*

*Chinese New Year Continued from Page 4*

daughters who have been married may not have the opportunity to visit their birth families frequently. The Chinese also pray to their ancestors as well as to all the gods. They are extra kind to all dogs and feed them well as it is believed that the second day is the birthday of all dogs.

The third day is known as “chì kǒu” (赤口), directly translated as “red mouth.” Chì kǒu is also called “chì gǒu rì” (赤狗日). “Chì gǒu” means “the God of Blazing Wrath” (熾怒之神). It is generally accepted that it is not a good day to socialize or visit your relatives and friends. According to a charming legend, it is also the day when mice marry off their daughters. Thus, on that night, people are supposed to go to bed early so that the mice can perform their wedding ceremonies.

On the fourth day, people prepare offerings of food to welcome the return of the Kitchen God from his trip to the Jade Emperor’s court. The Kitchen God’s return signifies the end of freedom from spiritual surveillance, hence the popular Chinese saying: “It’s never too early to send off the gods, and never too late to invite them back.”

Day five almost brings the Chinese New Year festivities to a close. All offerings are removed from the altars and life returns to normal.

Day seven is traditionally known as renri (人日), the common man’s birthday, and the day when everyone grows one year older. It is the day when tossed raw fish salad, yusheng, is eaten. This is a custom primarily among the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, such as Malaysia and Singapore.

Day eight consists of another family dinner to celebrate the eve of the birth of the Jade Emperor. However, all government agencies and businesses stop celebrating by this day and everyone should be back to work.

On the ninth day, numerous offerings are set out in the forecourt or central courtyard of temples to celebrate the birthday of the Jade Emperor, who was

believed to have been born immediately after midnight on the ninth day.

The tenth through twelfth days are when friends and relatives should be invited for dinner.

On the thirteenth day people will eat pure vegetarian food to clean out their stomach due to consuming too much food over the last two weeks. This day is dedicated to General Guan Yu, also known as the Chinese God of War. Guan Yu was born in the Han dynasty and is considered the greatest general in Chinese history. He represents loyalty, strength, truth and justice. Almost every organization and business in China will pray to Guan Yu on this day.

The fourteenth day is set aside for preparations to celebrate the Lantern Festival which is to be held on the fifteenth night.

The fifteenth day of the New Year is the Lantern Festival. Rice dumplings (a sweet glutinous rice ball brewed in a soup) are eaten this day. Candles are lit outside houses as a way to guide wayward spirits home. On this day families walk the streets carrying lighted lanterns.

Chinese New Year is also celebrated annually in many western cities with significant Chinese populations. Among the cities whose celebrations include parades are San Francisco, Los



Angeles, New York City, Wellington and Vancouver. However, even smaller cities that are historically connected to Chinese immigration, such as Butte, Montana, have recently hosted parades. Both London and San Francisco claim to host the largest New Year’s celebrations outside of Asia. Sydney also claims to have the largest Chinese New Year celebrations outside of Asia with over 600,000

people attending the celebrations in Chinatown in 2009. The events there span over three weeks including the launch celebration, outdoor markets, evening street food stalls, Chinese top opera performances, dragon boat races, a film festival and multiple parades. The festival also attracts international media coverage, reaching millions of viewers in Asia.

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# FROM NASHVILLE TO NEW ORLEANS

## Down the Natchez Trace to Antebellum Mansions, the WWII Museum, and Battlefields of 1812 and 1863

By BG Roma Amundson



*Natchez Trace Parkway*

Trace Parkway, this road returns us to people and their activities from centuries ago. Choctaw and Chickasaw Indian Tribes left their imprint upon the Natchez Trace Parkway through the paths their moccasins wore as they hunted and returned home to their earthen dwellings marked by the remaining mounds. Later, farmers, merchants, boatmen and tradesmen from the Ohio

For those who love road trips along historical highways and byways, the 444 mile trip from Nashville, Tennessee to Natchez, Mississippi is an absolute treasure! Called the Natchez

River regions of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Kentucky transported supplies down to ports in Natchez and New Orleans at the beginning of the 1800s.



*Dogtrot House*

This scenic drive through the rolling hills of Tennessee and Mississippi offers tourist stops along the way at the places where “one night stands” were located – “stands” referring to roughly built inns where travelers stayed for one night only before moving on – and where dogtrot houses were constructed. A dogtrot house consisted of two log cabins with a breezeway or dogtrot between them under a common roof. Typically one cabin was used for cooking and dining while the other was used for private living space such as bedrooms.



*Longwood Plantation*

a town overlooking the Mississippi River. When cotton became king in the South, Natchez became home to more millionaires per capita than any other city in America. The wealth that was present in Natchez is still obvious by simply observing the multitude of antebellum homes that were built in the Federal and Greek Revival type styles. In one day you can see unimagined grandeur in splendid homes of Rosalie, D’Evereux, Melrose, Dunleith, Stanton Hall, Magnolia Hall and Longwood, just to name a few. These homes are just blocks apart or are very close to

At the foot of the Natchez Trace is Natchez, Mississippi. The town is named for the Native American tribe that was displaced by Spanish, French and British colonists who, in the eighteenth century, built

### *Antebellum Homes*

Natchez, so one can travel easily to them. Visitors will be amazed at the spaciousness of the rooms, the soaring ceilings, rich tapestries and rugs, mirrors and amazing furniture.



*Greenwood Plantation*

Each of these homes has its own story, one of the more interesting being the mansion called Longwood. It is an octagonal mansion begun in 1859; plans called for three stories with a basement living area to include 32 rooms. In 1861, when the Civil War broke out, workmen tossed aside their tools and went off to fight in the war, leaving it with only nine rooms finished. No further work was done on it until preservation efforts were begun decades later, and now tourists can go through the finished basement and through the first level. The first level is like a time capsule where one can see the tools and the building materials laying around just as the workers left them.



*Houmas Manor Interior*

*Continued on Page 7*

From Nashville to New Orleans Continued from Page 6

### National World War II Museum

From there, it's just a short drive to New Orleans, and of course, everyone knows of Bourbon Street and the French Quarter, chicory coffee, beignets and Jackson Square. But close to this area is the WWII museum, and this is an absolute must-see. Located at 945 Magazine Street in New Orleans, the museum first opened its doors on June 6, 2000, and by 2015 a \$300 million expansion will take place.

The purpose of the National WWII Museum is to tell the story of the American Experience in the "war that changed the world" – why it was fought, how it was won and what it means today. The founders' intent is to help all generations understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn.

This intent is carried out through an incredible number of memorabilia, uniforms, weapons, interactive displays, 3-D movies, aircraft, landing vehicles, Higgins' boats, etc. As people move through the museum, they are totally engrossed in the multi-media displays that graphically tell the story of America's involvement in WWII.



Display of a C-47 in the museum lobby

### Sugar Cane Plantations of the Delta

While cotton was the staple crop of the mansions to the east of New Orleans, sugar cane was the primary crop of those located just to the north and west of the city on the way to Baton Rouge. Again, the wealth that existed at the time is still evident in the old homes, some of which are located on working plantations, notably the St. Joseph Plantation which is owned and operated by descendants of the original owners. What's interesting there are the displays on how sugar was made by using three boiling

tubs, and the tour through the old mansion conducted by owners who can tell stories about each room.

Destrehan Manor is one of the more amazing homes, as it is the oldest plantation home left intact in the lower Mississippi Valley. Its construction, influenced by the West Indies, shows

a raised main floor where the living area was. The windows were from floor to ceiling and could be opened as doors onto the long balcony that wrapped around the house. The ground floor was the working area of the mansion. On Destrehan, indigo was also raised, which provided for the rich blue colors of the cotton cloth that was woven on the plantation.



Oak Alley Plantation



Other plantations to see include Oak Alley that has a long driveway lined by dozens of live oak trees that are between 350-450 years old; Houmas Home which is occupied by its owner and is a museum of both antiquities and modern art – which includes original paintings by Monet and one of the four existing busts of Lincoln.

### Battlefields of Chalmette and Vicksburg

In 1812, the Battle of New Orleans was fought on the site of Chalmette Plantation. While not a large battlefield – the driving tour is only 1.5 miles – it was the site of the greatest American land victory of the War of 1812. The

Vicksburg, of course, was the site of the Union victory following the siege of Vicksburg which was waged for 47 days beginning on May 18 and ending on July 4, 1863. Its surrender on July 4, following the simultaneous defeat of the Confederates at the Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania, were defeats from which the Confederacy could never recover. Victory at Vicksburg and at Port Hudson, also on the Mississippi River, gave the Union control of the river, reconstructed forts, trenches, gun pits and iron-fortified river gunboats which are now located over rambling hills overseeing the Mississippi River. And of course, because the Soldiers were buried on site, the National Cemetery shows the cost of war by its rows and rows of white headstones.

Thus ends my description of a ten-day road trip through Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana. I encourage you to take a similar one – it's a great window to our fascinating American history and the many groups of people who influenced its culture. 



Lady using indigo at Destrehan Plantation



Iron-clad River Gun Boat

Battle of New Orleans, the last great battle ever fought between England and the United States, preserved America's claim to the Louisiana Territory. By securing America's claim to this land, it also initiated the wave of migration and settlement along the Mississippi River and bolstered America's sense of pride and unity. On the battlefield one finds monuments, mortars, cannon, a national cemetery and the Malus-Beauregard House. Although the house was built in 1830, well after the battle, it is a beautiful example of French-Louisiana architecture.

# OUR HISTORY IS OUR STRENGTH

By Pam Makovicka

MARCH 2011: WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The stories of women's achievements are an important part of our history. Knowing these women's stories provides essential role models for everyone. Role models are genuinely needed to face the extraordinary changes and unrelenting challenges of the 21st century. I'd like to share what I learned through research into women who are role models specifically from Nebraska.

Ruth Etting, born in David City, Nebraska on November 23, 1897, was renowned for her great beauty and her gorgeous voice. She starred on Broadway, made movies in Hollywood, had numerous hit records, and was known as *America's Sweetheart of Song*. Ruth left home at age 17 for Chicago and art school. She got a job designing costumes at a night club and when the tenor became ill, she was pulled into the show since she was the only one who could sing low enough. That led to dancing in the chorus line and eventually featured solos.

In 1926 she was discovered by Columbia records, which led to nation-wide exposure. In 1927 she went to New York and was an instant success. Irving Berlin hired her for the Ziegfeld Follies, and she starred in *Whoopie* and *Simple Simon on Broadway*. Ruth had over sixty hit recordings. Among her best were, *Button Up Your Overcoat*, *Mean to Me* and in the depression, *Ten Cents a Dance*. Her versions of *Shine on Harvest Moon*, *Let Me*



Ruth Etting

*Call You Sweetheart*, *You Made Me Love You* and *Love Me or Leave Me* became her signature songs.

Ruth Etting made her first record in 1926 and her last in 1937. In 1955 her story was made into a movie, *Love Me or Leave Me*, ultimately nominated for six Academy Awards and winning the Award for Best Story.

Another interesting role model is Louise Pound, a distinguished scholar, renowned athlete and a feminist pioneer. She was a member of a distinguished Nebraska family and completed her undergraduate education at the University of Nebraska.



Louise Pound

When American universities would not admit her for graduate studies, she went to Heidelberg, Germany to obtain a PhD. She returned to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to teach in the English department for forty-five years.

As a scholar, Louise crusaded for the serious study of American English and founded the field's leading journal. Additionally, she fought tirelessly to open athletic and professional opportunities

for women. She was, in short, what some called a universal woman. She also befriended and played an influential role in the life of Willa Cather during Cather's years at the University of Nebraska.

The final woman I am featuring is former Governor Kay Orr. Kay Orr began her political career when she volunteered as a



Kay Orr

Republican Party worker in 1964. Her early political view was to curb big government in Washington and increase support for local government. Early in her political career she worked for Richard Nixon, Carl Curtis, Roman Hruska and Norbert Tiemann. In 1969 she was named an *Outstanding Young Republican Woman* in Nebraska. In 1984 she made Republican Party history when she was named co-chairman of the GOP National Platform Committee.

In 1977 she became campaign coordinator for Charles Thone in his fourth-term bid as first district representative. The next year she directed Thone's campaign for the governorship and was appointed the first woman Chief-of-Staff to a governor after his election. In 1982 she became the first woman ever elected to a statewide constitutional office in Nebraska, that of State Treasurer. In 1986, Kay Orr emerged victorious to become the first Republican woman in the nation's history to be elected as a governor.

These are stories of just a few of the Nebraska women who are role models for all, making their history our strength. 

# TRIVIA: IRELAND

*“It is easy to be pleasant when life flows by like a song, but the man worth while is the one who will smile when everything goes dead wrong. For the test of the heart is trouble, and it always comes with years, and the smile that is worth the praises of earth is the smile that shines through the tears.”*

- In which decade of the 19th century did the Potato Famine occur in Ireland?
  - 1830s
  - 1860s
  - 1850s
  - 1840s
- Which city in Ireland has the nickname *The Maiden City*?
  - Belfast
  - Derry
  - Cork
  - Galway
- What famous Hollywood symbol was designed by Dublin native Cedric Gibbons?
  - The Hollywood Sign
  - Grauman's Chinese Theatre
  - The Oscar Statuette
  - The Hollywood Walk of Fame
- What could couples legally do on St. Brigid's Day (February 1st) in Teltown, County Meath as recently as the 1920s by simply walking towards each other?
  - Get married
  - Kiss a stranger in public
  - Smack each other across the face
  - Sell their house to another person
- What is the national symbol of Ireland?
  - Celtic Harp
  - Shamrock
  - Bagpipes
  - Potato
- A leprechaun is really an Irish \_\_\_\_\_?
  - Thief
  - Potato Farmer
  - Magician
  - Shoemaker
- What is a shillelagh?
  - An Irish ballad
  - A big stick
  - A magical coin
  - None of the above
- This Irish playwright wrote more plays than Shakespeare and was awarded both a Nobel Prize for Literature and an Oscar.
  - Seamus Heaney
  - George Bernard Shaw
  - F. Scott Fitzgerald
  - Arthur Conan Doyle
- This Irish band “doesn't like Mondays,” but their lead singer did like to raise awareness for the poverty stricken African country of Ethiopia.
  - U2
  - The Cranberries
  - The Boomtown Rats
  - The Pogues
- This Irish-American was responsible for construction of telegraph lines from the Nebraska Territory to Salt Lake City.
  - Edward A. Creighton
  - Patrick Healy
  - Paul David Hewson
  - William Henry McCarty
- Kissing the Blarney Stone is supposed to do what for you?
  - Give good luck in love
  - Make you rich
  - Remove warts
  - Remove shyness
- How many letters are in the Irish uncial alphabet?
  - 26
  - 18
  - 22
  - 30

*“If you're lucky enough to be Irish,  
then you're lucky enough.”*

# RESTAURANT REVIEW: THE BLEND

*Review By Mary Schmidt-Rodriguez*

*4900 North 26th Street, Suite 102; Lincoln, NE 68521; 402-742-5363*

For those of you who have attended one of the Special Emphasis Program Group's luncheons, you are already aware of the wonderful food Yvette at The Blend is capable of serving. For those of you who have not been so fortunate, I'm here to tell you about one of the best local sandwich shops available in the Lincoln area.

The Blend is a local, woman-owned shop, tucked away behind the former Alltel store on North 27th Street, directly across from Wal-Mart. Although it's a bit tough to find, it is well worth the effort.

When you first walk in the door you are greeted by a little shop of hidden treasures to the right of the door. It's similar to the store at Cracker Barrel, but with a smaller selection of merchandise and not so overwhelming.

The menu board is handwritten on a large chalkboard (with multiple colors of chalk) in case changes must be made to their menu. The menu consists of sandwiches, incredible homemade soups (two per day on a rotating basis), breads, salads and even a children's menu. My personal favorite sandwich is the Blended Sow (pulled pork topped with



smoked peppered bacon, onion and provolone cheese served with a side of barbeque sauce). I never seem to get enough. I am also a big fan of the egg salad sandwich, so it's hard to choose. Other sandwiches on the menu include California, Club, BLT, Beef Eater, New York Classic, lemon pepper chicken and a Reuben, just to name a few. You get your choice of bread (croissant, sourdough, rye, kaiser, foccacia, wheat or asiago cheese). I like the asiago cheese with the egg salad and the Kaiser with the pulled pork.

The choice of salads include Tuscan, smoked

salmon, Peter Rabbit's favorite and a stuffed tomato with your choice of dressing. The daily specials are a must if you want to try more than one item on the menu as they include half and half choices (1/2 sandwich and soup) or a half sandwich and a side. Speaking of the sides, you can't go wrong with the baked potato salad, which is served warm. Yum. One person in our

party got a fruit cup and was amazed at how fresh the fruit tasted (for the end of November) and the fact that the majority wasn't cantaloupe!

The Blend also serves breakfast. The menu includes bagels, breakfast croissants, Belgian waffles and Strata (an egg casserole). Since the restaurant's name is The Blend, they obviously have a good selection of coffees, espressos (which I have heard are the best on the planet!), teas and hot chocolate. The person in our group who ordered the coffee said it was very good and liked the different flavor offerings.

The last item on the menu is the great selection of desserts. A must try is the gelato (Italian ice cream) when they have it available. The gelato is homemade and since it's a bit time-consuming to make, they don't always have it on hand, but when they do, be sure to make room for it at the end of your meal. It's a must try.

The décor of The Blend has a very homey and inviting feeling. The swivel chairs are very comfortable (and a great way to keep the kids entertained!). There is also a fireplace to keep you nice and toasty warm during the winter months. If you are going just to sip coffee, read and partake of the free wi-fi, there are very comfortable chairs and a small sitting area for lounging.

Yvette is one of the friendliest and humblest people you will ever meet. Both the quality of her food and the atmosphere of her restaurant earns her an A+.



# FORMER NEBRASKA SOLDIER SHARES PERSONAL STORY

By *LaVonne Rosenthal*

AT 2010 DISABILITY AWARENESS EVENT

Our first ever disability awareness event was held November 16, 2010 at the Spirit of 76 Armory. It was hosted by the Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Group, keeping with their tradition of educating fellow Guard members and employees on topics related to diversity. Ben Marksmeier, former Soldier with the Nebraska Army National Guard, candidly shared his experiences during and following a deployment to Iraq in 2006. As a heavy equipment driver, he was a passenger in a vehicle that hit an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) on July 31. As a result of this accident, Marksmeier was seriously wounded, and eventually lost his right leg above the knee. In addition to numerous injuries, Marksmeier lost a fellow Soldier, and the driver of the vehicle – Joshua Ford – who was killed in the accident.

After attendees enjoyed the meal catered by The Blend (see page 10), COL Kevin Neumann, Nebraska Army National Guard Chief of Staff, introduced Marksmeier and told of the visits he had made many times during Marksmeier's recovery at Walter Reed Medical Center. Most poignant was COL Neumann's final introductory remarks in inviting Marksmeier to the podium to speak: "Please join me as we welcome one of the many heroes of the Nebraska National Guard." I was honored to be in the presence of such a hero.

Ben's personal fortitude was evident as he told of his experiences in dealing with

post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) along with physical pain. He endured numerous surgeries at Walter Reed Medical Center, and was frequently visited by one of their chaplains who always seemed to sense when Ben needed to talk. This helped in his mental and emotional recovery from the accident. Referring to the loss of his leg, Ben put things in perspective for himself and others in saying "it's only a leg." The anger he felt when he returned was abated thanks to assistance from the Veterans' Administration. I personally saw that Ben was not afraid to seek help, and became a better person in receiving professional guidance. His advice to employers was to realize that when Soldiers come back injured, employers



*Ben Marksmeier and COL Kevin Neumann*

is one of Ben's favorite phrases to help him keep things in perspective. He shared the importance of setting goals, which he personally practices. He told us how he had to rethink his original career plans of being in the Army National Guard, and is now finding another career path with a financial company where he can continue to be himself and help others.

Ben's humor and light-heartedness was displayed at the closure of his presentation when he showed us how he could twist around on his prosthetic leg.

This "parlor trick" not only garnered a hearty laugh from the crowd, but also our respect and admiration for a young man who has risen above adversity. We wish him all the best in the future! 

***"Congress acknowledged that society's accumulated myths and fears about disability and disease are as handicapping as are the physical limitations that flow from actual impairment."***

***~ William J. Brennan, Jr.***

need to be more of a coach to their wounded Soldiers/employees, and be patient with their recovery back into the workforce.

"To live for tomorrow and plan for today"

# ASIAN COOKING CLASSES

AT THE ASIAN COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL CENTER

## VIETNAMESE FRIED SHRIMP EGG ROLLS

By TSgt Sharon Okra-Goll

[www.lincolnasiancenter.org](http://www.lincolnasiancenter.org)



My son Alex wants to be a chef. Hmm...that's a far cry from last year's career choice of wanting to be a comedian! So what to do? What any mother who wants to support her child's dreams would do...sign up for a cooking class. It just so happened that I had recently received an email advertising the Asian Community and Cultural Center's series of

Asian cooking classes. It was a four part series (once a week, for about an hour) that featured a different Asian dish each week: Vietnamese, Thai, Chinese and Japanese. The class itself was held inside of the Asian Community and Cultural Center at 2615 "O" Street in Lincoln. Perfect! What better way to experience a diverse cooking class than in a small, welcoming environment?

I called the community center and talked with Josh Snowden, the point of contact for the cooking classes. It was easy to pre-register with Josh on the phone, but to secure our spot, the \$12 per person fee had to be paid in advance. The small fee included

all of the supplies necessary for the class. We chose to take the Vietnamese eggroll class.

The class itself was very informative, as Ms. Ha Nhieu and Ms. Cuc Phung explained the different ingredients (some I've never experienced cooking with) and also the correct technique to roll the egg rolls. This class was very basic and easy to understand, even for people who may not know their way around the kitchen. One thing that I really liked was Ms. Nhieu and Ms. Cuc already had some of the ingredients prepared. This was a plus because as a large group it would have taken quite some time to cut, chop and season the ingredients for the egg rolls.

I would recommend this cooking class to anyone who would like to learn the basics of preparing egg rolls and learn a little about the Asian culture. The recipe was fairly easy and the egg rolls were amazing (I think my son ate 10 – at least). The class we attended was filled to capacity, so I would recommend reserving early. Alex and I not only enjoyed the egg rolls but we also enjoyed meeting other people, learning a little about a different culture, spending time together and doing something fun! My son may not grow up to be a chef (he's already eyeing a drum set) but he talks about this class often and will no doubt remember this experience for many years to come.

### Ingredients

Shrimp (1 for each roll you'll be making)	1 Carrot	Dried black mushrooms	Black pepper
1 Jicama	1 White onion	Chicken broth bouillon	Sugar
1 White sweet potato	Oil for frying	1 egg	Garlic to taste
1 Taro root	Rice paper	Salt	Shallot to taste

1. Mince garlic and shallot. You can vary the amount according to your taste. About 2-3 cloves of garlic and 2-3 shallots should be good.
2. Wash, peel and devein (remove the dark dorsal vein) the shrimp. Create a dry marinade by rubbing the shrimp with mixture of salt, chicken bouillon, sugar and black pepper and the minced garlic and shallot from step one. Refrigerate for 20-30 minutes.
3. Reconstitute black mushrooms in warm water for about 20 minutes, until the mushrooms are soft.
4. Cut sweet potato, carrot, jicama and taro root into julienne strips. Note: it is important to cut all of the vegetables in the recipe as fine as you can, as this will help with the texture of the egg roll.
5. Dice onion into small pieces. You must squeeze some of the liquid out of the onion after cutting it.
6. Combine sweet potato, carrot, jicama, taro root and onion into a mixing bowl. Add some chicken bouillon, sugar and salt. Don't add too much as the shrimp is already seasoned.
7. Roll egg rolls with vegetable mixture and shrimp into the rice paper with the tail of the shrimp sticking out of the roll. Use slightly beaten egg to seal the rolls so they don't open up.
8. Fry egg rolls in very hot oil until the egg roll browns and becomes crispy.



# SEP MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

# TSGT SHARON OKRA-GOLL

## DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION EDUCATOR

Hi, my name is Sharon Okra-Goll and although I was raised in Lincoln, Nebraska, I was born in Topeka, Kansas. I only lived in Kansas for about three months before we moved to The Cornhusker State.

I have two brothers, one sister and my parents have been married for almost 46 years! My parents and my extended family are from Texas (Go Cowboys).

If you haven't noticed, my last name is quite unique (to say the least). The okra plant is known to have originated from present day Ethiopia, spread to North Africa, and then moved throughout the Mediterranean, eventually making its way to the United States. My dad used to tell me that after the emancipation, former slaves would oftentimes take their slave-owner's last names, combine last names or use names that reminded them of home (Africa). As far as I know, there are very few Okras in the United States. One day I hope to do a genealogy tree and trace the origin back as far as I can. The hyphenation in my name comes from my ex-husband (who is of German descent). I mostly keep the hyphenation to have a connection with my son (who thinks it's pretty cool).

I'm a single mom, with an adorable ten-year-old little boy. He plays indoor/outdoor soccer, basketball, flag football, violin, sings in the chorus and is in the gifted program at school. Needless to say, he keeps me on my toes. We have a very naughty two-year-old Chocolate Labradoodle, who we've discovered loves chocolate (and other off-limit treats) and is a great escape artist! He always finds a way out of the backyard, just to come to the front porch, sit and stare in the window.

I graduated from Lincoln High School, joined the Air Force when I was 18 and began my military career as an Air Surveillance Technician (AST) aboard the Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) airplane. I did surveillance work for a few years then cross trained into Aviation Resource Management (ARMS)...wow, those sure are a lot of acronyms. I've been to Saudi Arabia, Germany (for five years), Italy, Iceland, Malta, Norway, New Mexico and many other countries and states; most recently I filled in for a unit in Iraq (earlier in 2010).

While I was active duty, I did a lot of mentoring and tutoring in several school systems to include inner-city schools. I've tutored math and science at all levels, but really found that I liked elementary school ages the best. I am currently going to school for a degree in Behavioral Sciences but would like to eventually get a teaching certificate and teach (or at least do some type of counseling in schools). To say I love children is probably an understatement.

After 14 ½ years, I left active duty and came back to Lincoln to spend time with my parents. I joined the 155th Air Refueling Wing (more specifically, the



173rd Air Refueling Squadron), as an ARMS technician in Operations. Fortunately my return to Lincoln allowed me to spend time with my parents doing normal things before they both suffered major strokes within two months of each other. They are living each day to its fullest but quality time has now taken on a whole new meaning for us.

I recently interviewed for the Drug Demand Reduction Educator position with the J3 Counterdrug unit. I literally did a phone interview as I was on my way to Iraq. Luckily, that didn't deter the powers to be from hiring me. It is by far one of my favorite assignments in the military. The kids keep me engaged as I strive to get better and better at my job.

Last but not least, my five seconds claim to fame, is my appearance as an extra in the blockbuster movie *Transformers*. Yes, it's true, if you look closely at the very beginning of the movie you will see me sitting in the command center, acting. Well, actually I'm pretending to work on the computers. Please everyone - don't rush to get my autograph!

I'm excited to continue my traditional job with the 173rd ARS, be a new member of the Counterdrug unit and am also very excited to become a SEP member. I feel diversity is the key to our future! 

# CULTURAL EDUCATION

## DIVERSITY TRAINING FOR BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

By *Angela Guenther*

*Fusion Project Coordinator; Asian Community and Cultural Center*

The Fusion Project hosted its third annual Lunch and Learn Cultural Education series in the fall of 2010, every Friday between October 8 and November 5. They hosted a panel discussion focusing on a different refugee or immigrant group residing in Lincoln: Asian, Eastern European, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern and African. The series brought general information about many of the ethnicities residing in Lincoln through a panel of refugee and immigrant presenters. The panelists all experienced firsthand the transition from their home country and culture to life in the United States. The Lunch and Learns previously invited Human Services agency representatives, but this year the Fusion Project broadened the scope of their outreach to include human resources and business professionals, with 25 attendees registered for each session. This series covered topics relevant to leaders in business including information about the economy and employment of their home country, skills and training opportunities of their home country, the employability of populations settling in Lincoln and differences in employer's expectations between the U.S. and their home country.

The Asian panel introduced the audience to both the first wave of refugees to Lincoln, the Vietnamese, and to the newest refugee arrivals, the Karen refugees from Burma. The Karen people are an ethnic group who have been persecuted by the Burmese government for over 20 years. The panelists shared that many in their community have spent their entire lives in refugee camps on the border of Burma and Thailand. They shared that



*Eastern European Panel (left to right) Amela Lipnicevic, Sanela Ganic and Nataliya Swanson*

because of the similarity in pronunciation of their ethnicity they are often mistaken for Korean. There are currently an estimated 400 Karen people living in Lincoln and this number continues to grow.

The Vietnamese began arriving in Lincoln even before the federal government had established the formal Refugee Resettlement Program in 1980. As we heard echoed on all the refugee and immigrant panels, the Vietnamese mentioned that learning the English language was the most difficult barrier to finding a job in the United States. They shared that they came to the U.S. with valuable skills, abilities and training but that if they couldn't speak English, they were of no value to the U.S. employer.

The Eastern European panel had representatives from Bosnia and Ukraine. While the situations that brought these individuals to the United States were very different, they had some of the same experiences in resettling. They reported that understanding the health care system in the U.S. was one of the biggest challenges. Panelists shared that in Bosnia, everyone who works has health insurance since it is a requirement. So, when Bosnians begin working in

the U.S., they won't take a job that does not offer health insurance since it is perceived as a basic necessity. In the Ukraine, on the other hand, health care is free, so navigating the health care system in the U.S. is a challenge for a completely different reason.

The Hispanic/Latino panel discussed the differences and similarities between Latin American countries.

Representatives from Honduras, Venezuela, Cuba and Mexico discussed how the immigration reform debate has affected the members of their community across the country. They mentioned that it is a mistake to assume that everyone from Latin America is from Mexico, and that everyone has come with the same experience. They shared that each of their countries has a wide range of opportunities for skill building, especially in agriculture; and that many people are employed which keeps the unemployment rate down but the wages are often too low for them to support their families.

The Middle Eastern panel focused on how Iraqi's have adapted to the U.S. workplace and raising their families in a different culture. Panelists shared that it is a religious requirement for Muslims to take time to pray during the workday. There have been some stories of employers being reluctant to permit them to take their breaks but most have been accommodating. As for raising children, panelists revealed that they plan to take the best from both cultures and pass those practices onto their children.

# VISIT TO THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

1420 P Street; Lincoln, Nebraska; 402-477-4000

By MAJ Drey L. Ihm

I had my sister and her daughter (my niece) visit me in Lincoln for the first time and I wanted to do activities that we could all enjoy. Since my niece



is only four years old, that was a wide spread to cover. The first day we decided to visit the Lincoln Children's Museum because it provides great opportunities for children to play, laugh, learn and thoroughly enjoy themselves.

When we first entered the museum we were met by many choices of things to do. Should we go shopping, visit the doctor's office or take our pet to the veterinarian first? My family had never seen such a museum and they were impressed. It took us four and a half hours to get through all three floors. My niece really enjoyed the doctor's office and the airplanes.

During that visit I learned it is a non-profit organization, and is also a member of the Association of Children's Museums. All proceeds go to the upkeep of current displays as well as the development of new ones. The entire space (three floors) encompasses over 45,000 square feet with many activities for children to do at every turn. It is no wonder that it has

been named one of Nebraska's outstanding attractions.

The museum has many different activities on each floor. Some of them include experiencing life as a fireman or policeman, getting a chance to be

an astronaut at the lunar mission control area, and much more. Kids and parents can learn about weather and communications at the news unit, and study various types of science, including learning about what keeps hot air balloons afloat. We conducted the hot air balloon experiment. My niece thought it was fun, but I believe the science aspect of it was not fully captured by this young four year old.

There are many different types of role-play that children can try out in wonderful settings. They can attempt hundreds of different experiments to learn about cause and effect and the world around them. The Lincoln Children's Museum also has interesting and fun activities going on at the museum all the time, so visitors can continuously experience something new. Children of all ages can enjoy interacting in this great hands-on environment (and I do mean all ages; you are never too old!).



Admission prices are \$6.50 for everyone over the age of two, \$6.00 for seniors, and free for members and children under the age of two. The hours for the museum are Tuesdays through Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. On Sundays, it is open from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. From October to April, the museum is open until 7:30 p.m. on Family Thursday nights and it is generally closed on Mondays. It is also closed on holidays and for one week during the month of September for a complete cleaning. Parking is usually found at several area parking garages, and museum patrons can ask for discounted parking rates when paying for admission. The facility is also available for birthday parties, field trips and other events.

*Cultural Education Continued from Page 14*

The African panel discussion centered on the political unrest that has plagued the Sudan since its independence. They discussed the upcoming Sudanese referendum vote that is to take place in January 2011 which will decide if the south of Sudan will become independent from the North. This vote will impact both those living in Sudan and international relations. Depending on how the results of the vote are handled by

the Sudanese government, it could cause an increase in the number of refugees resettled around the world.

The training series gave an introductory understanding of the different populations sharing our community and working alongside us in a range of fields. The series was co-sponsored by El Centro de las Americas, which allowed for a Hispanic/Latino panel in addition to those populations served by the Fusion

Project. Bryan LGH Medical Center also co-sponsored the training and held the event at their west location.

The Fusion Project's mission is to collaborate to empower our new American populations to achieve success and self-sufficiency and to promote equitable access to services. For more information on the Fusion Project, visit their website at: <http://lincolnasiancenter.org/fusion/>.



# VETERAN'S DAY SPEECH 2010

By CSM Eli Valenzuela

The following speech was given to students and staff of Metropolitan Community College along with Omaha community leaders on November 11, 2010.

Thank you Metropolitan Community College for your generous invitation to be here with you today as we honor our nation's veterans.

Good afternoon and thank you for being here today. Your presence tells me that you are all aware of the significance of this day...this special day.... this Veterans Day! That it commemorates the end of the "The Great War" with the armistice signed on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

You all could have chosen to be somewhere else, but you came to intentionally recognize this historic event.

We don't mark this day each year as a celebration of victory; but rather, as a celebration of those who made victory possible. It's a day we remember the brave men and women of this young nation -- generations of them -- who above all else believed in and fought for a set of ideals. And we recognize the dedication and devotion of those who have donned a uniform of the Armed Services whether the nameplate read U.S. Army, U.S. Marines, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force or U.S. Coast Guard.

In this time of war, we gather here mindful that the generation serving today deserves a place alongside previous generations for the courage they have shown and the sacrifices they have made. In an era where so many act only in pursuit of narrow self-interest, they've chosen the opposite. They chose to serve



the cause that is greater than themselves, many knowing they'd be sent into harm's way. For the better part of a decade, they have endured tour after tour in distant and foreign lands; they have protected us from danger; and they have given others the opportunity for a better life.

I have a Cavalry Soldier from Papillion who is currently on his way to Afghanistan with the 1-134th Cavalry Squadron who is a great example of the kind of warrior I'm speaking of. This Soldier volunteered for this deployment and re-enlisted for the opportunity to serve overseas. His wife and two children anxiously await his return.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our men and women who serve, for they are a small percentage of our population. If you take the entire population as a whole, east coast to west coast, north to south, the entire population; less than 1% "elect" to wear a uniform of the armed services. It is a small group of patriots who have served at any given time throughout history who protect the freedoms we all hold sacred.

And they step forward now as they have throughout history, reciting the Oath of Enlistment...

*"I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."*

We ask a great deal of our service men and women; for the life of a Soldier, Marine, Sailor, Airman and Coast Guardsman is difficult...but for most of them, that's exactly why it appeals to them. In a movie I saw recently, the main sports character quit without reason. When the coach asked why he was quitting, he responded, "It just got too hard." The coach responded, "It's supposed to be hard. It's the 'hard' that makes it great. If it wasn't hard everyone would do it."

Those words ring true for those who serve in uniform. There are times when many of us would just as soon quit than go on, but we remain for each other... we support each other...and would die, if need be, for each other. What other occupation requires such devotion?

Martin Luther King said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

To veterans, patriotism is much more than just a word. It reflects a way of life. For example, to the patriot, the U.S. flag is much more than just a symbol. It is a living and breathing being. Alive as it waves to its citizens. I am well aware that there are those who would choose to desecrate the flag because to them it is just that...a flag. While serving in Iraq, my battalion was tasked with conveying supplies through some of the

*Continued on Page 17*

# WEBSITE REVIEW: GIRLS ON THE RUN

## EDUCATING AND PREPARING GIRLS FOR A LIFETIME OF SELF-RESPECT AND HEALTHY LIVING

<http://www.girlsontherun.org/>

Review By Denise Anderson

Some individuals run because they love the feel of the wind in their hair or enjoy the pounding of the pavement. Some individuals run because they are in the military and it is part of their physical fitness test. I enjoy running when I have the chance, but I also know I have a goal, which is to maintain my military membership.

Of all the running I do, one thing I love is to go running with my two elementary school aged daughters. The Lincoln Track Club (<http://www.lincolnrun.org/>) has a great program for children called Kid's Grand Prix. It consists of seven one-mile runs in and around Lincoln for elementary school children and goes from March to October each year, with up-to-date information provided by the

participating elementary schools. Children love to be active and can easily run one mile, and time does not matter.

A program available especially for girls that our school participates in is called *Girls on the Run*. It is for girls between the ages of 8-13 to help empower them with a healthy self-esteem and lifestyle. They work with girls to try to prevent at-risk behavior (e.g. substance/alcohol use, eating disorders, early onset of sexual activity, sedentary lifestyle, depression,



suicide attempts and confrontations with the juvenile justice system).

Helping girls to like who they are in today's world is vitally important.

The program combines self-

esteem training and practice running. At the end of the season, girls will participate in a 5K run with other program participants. I really enjoyed this website because of its core values and the fact that it is geared to girls, and I look forward to my daughter's participation next time it is offered. 

### *Veteran's Day Speech Continued from Page 16*

most dangerous roads in the world... through the city of Baghdad. We traveled in the dark of night for it gave us the best possibility of survival. As we neared U.S. Forward Operating Bases we could see the stars and stripes flying in the distance. If we could just make it there, we would tell ourselves, we knew we'd be safe...If we could just make it there.

As I was watching Game One of the World Series the other night, they mentioned in the pre-game comments that "the object of the game was to 'come home.'" After I heard that it came to me that that is the same objective of those serving today. And home is wherever we find this beacon of safety.

When veterans serve, so do their families. It's an old Army axiom that Soldiers write the checks but families pay the bills. War increases both the accuracy of that statement and the cost families pay. In the current conflicts, by year's end, I will have 1,064 soldiers serving in Iraq

and Afghanistan and each of them have families they left behind. Let us not forget that those who remain behind also serve.

Not all veterans have seen war, but a common bond they share is the oath in which they expressed their willingness to die defending this nation, which I shared with you earlier. What about those veterans who served proudly and honorably without receiving the call to deploy overseas? Did they not make sacrifices? Do we not owe them a huge debt of gratitude for their service as well? Yes - This nation owes ALL veterans a debt of gratitude for their service to this great United States.

So while it is important and proper that we mark this day with humble and silent reflection, it is far more important we spend all our days celebrating their service and reminding ourselves that because of our veterans, our country still stands, our founding principles still shine and the nations around the world that once knew nothing but fear now know the blessings

of freedom.

Perhaps most significant in preserving our way of life are the battles that America does not have to fight because those who wish us harm slink away in fear of the Coast Guard cutter, Air Force fighter jet, the Navy aircraft carrier or the Marine or Army Soldier on patrol.

In my office at Camp Taji, Iraq, there was a wall painting with an inscription over the top that I read every morning as I walked in. It reads, "FOR THOSE WHO FIGHT FOR IT, LIFE HAS A SPECIAL FLAVOR THE PROTECTED NEVER KNOW..."

So to all of them - to this day's veterans - to the fallen, and to their families - there is no tribute, no commemoration, no praise that can truly match the magnitude of your service and your sacrifice.

Thank you. God bless you. And may God continue to bless the United States of America. 

# BOOK REVIEW: 10-MINUTE FENG SHUI

## EASY TIPS FOR EVERY ROOM

*Written by Skye Alexander  
Sterling Publishing; March 2009 and  
Metro Books, 2002*

*Book Review By BG Roma Amundson*

Who wouldn't like to "increase prosperity, enhance relationships, improve health, and attract good luck?" Sounds like those New Year's Resolutions we all make.

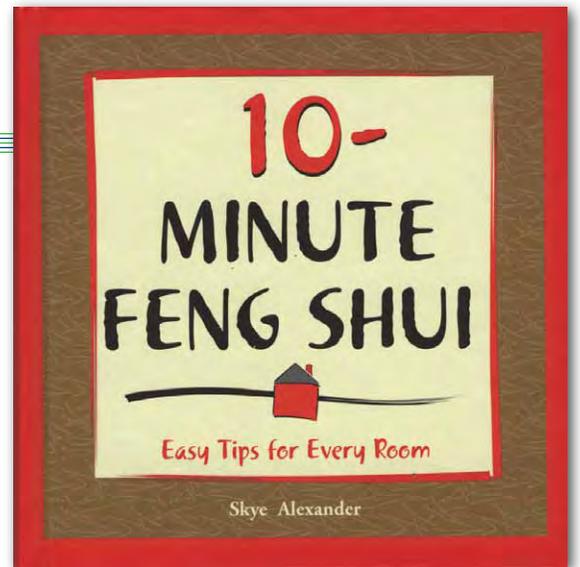
The Chinese really intended to attain these goals, and they created a philosophy about accomplishing them through the principles of feng shui (pronounced "fung shway") as described in the book *10-Minute Feng Shui*.

This little book of 247 pages is filled with numerous tips on interior decorating, placement of furniture, use of objects representing the essential elements of fire, earth, metal, water and wood, and color

combinations.

Delightfully fun and easy to read, this little book has hundreds of tips on how to organize and decorate your home using the ancient Chinese art of placement called feng shui with the intent of improving your health, wealth, and happiness – in general, our comprehensive fitness and well-being.

I think that all of us have had the experience of walking into houses that seem to enfold us and make us feel



comfortable, places where we could live very easily and where we could entertain our friends and raise our family with happiness and joy. Other houses, on the other hand, just really seem to be ones we can't get out of fast enough. Why is that?

People are realizing that their homes are really an extension and reflection of their internal and emotional states. They are beginning to study and practice the art of feng shui.

Essentially, feng shui is a methodical manner of selecting and arranging objects in your living environment in a manner that is in balance and harmonious with nature. The philosophical idea is that ch'i (pronounced "chee") is the energy or life force that emanates from the location in which you find yourself. Depending upon how you arrange furniture and other objects in your kitchen, living, dining, recreation and family rooms – even your garage and basement – either positive or negative energy will flow from that environment to affect you in corresponding ways.

### *Samples of feng shui tips for your home*

#### *Health and Well-Being*

- Put green or blue sheets on your bed. These colors have a calming effect and can help you relax so you sleep better.
- Place a piece of amethyst on your nightstand. The soothing vibrations in amethyst can have a calming effect and help you rest peacefully.

#### *Prosperity*

- Clean your office of all clutter. Clutter that accumulates on your desk and in other parts of your office creates obstacles to your prosperity. Clearing away clutter also improves your comfort level and your efficiency, so you are more productive at work.
- Install an aquarium and put nine goldfish in it. Nine is the number of fulfillment. Water, which nourishes all life, is associated with prosperity. And the goldfish connection is obvious.

#### *Good Luck and Happiness*

- Place a circular, glass bowl or jar near your front door. This provides a place for you to put your keys, sunglasses, and other items that you take with you when you leave the home. Symbolically, circles represent harmony and glass improves communication between the inhabitants of the home.
- Wash a window in your living room. Light – and ch'i – stream into your home through the windows. Clean windows allow more of both to enter your living space and brighten your life.

#### *Love*

- Clean under the bed. This cure helps you clear away obstacles and problems – especially unspoken grudges or resentments – from your relationship.
- Hang a glass wind chime in your bedroom window. This cure improves communication between you and your partner and encourages compromise.

*Continued on Page 19*

# 2010 NAACP BANQUET

By LTC Shawn Edwards

## NOTES FROM THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER: STATE SENATOR BRENDA COUNCIL

On November 7, 2010, the Lincoln branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) held its annual Freedom Fund Banquet, with the theme of *One Nation One Dream*. Nebraska State Senator Brenda Council was the keynote speaker and during her speech she asked us to ponder if



BG Roma Amundson, LTC Shawn Edwards, State Senator Brenda Council, MAJ Dale Burrage, BG Daryl Bohac

*One Nation One Dream* was a statement of fact or a question that requires undivided attention to transformation.”

In 1967 the Kerner Commission was established by President Lyndon B. Johnson to investigate the causes of the 1967 race riots in the United States. The report warned “Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white - separate and unequal.” Senator Council quoted the following statistics:

- 1 out of 3 African American children in Omaha lives in poverty. This is the highest in the nation; and 1 out of 5 African American adults in Omaha live in poverty which is the third highest in the nation.
- Racial injustice continues as male and female African Americans receive longer sentences than Whites for the same crimes.
- 60% of African American males

who don't finish high school will be incarcerated.

Since the release of the Kerner report, Senator Council said “the nation has experienced a shift, not a reversal from post-racial America and we are moving toward two societies, the haves and have nots. Education disparity is linked to funding disparity and the smartest poor kid is the same as the dumbest rich kid. High level wealth and income inequalities is a formula for the have and have nots.”

Senator Council states that we, the people, have failed to guard the change with the passing of Amendment 242 which ended Affirmative Action and the passing of rigid immigration laws (possible re-creation of Sundown Towns\*) in Fremont, Nebraska, which were voted on by the people. To truly be *One Nation One Dream* “there has to be a realization of common opportunities for all, within a single nation, a single society. We as a people have to be compassionate, develop a new understanding, new attitude and a new will. We have to transform.”

\* [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sundown\\_town](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sundown_town) 

*Feng Shui Continued from Page 18*

As examples, a dark and disorganized foyer, a poorly arranged deck, a cluttered living room, illogically organized kitchen – all of these influence how the people living and working in these environments feel. These types of environments create, according to the ideas of feng shui, obstructions to positive life force, the one that causes a person to feel relaxed, more confident and effective. Chinese practitioners of this ancient art believe that these negative forces in a person's environment need to be eliminated in order to create the free-flowing, harmonious and life-fulfilling surroundings.

In order to eliminate obstructions to the positive life force – ch'i – one must create cures, and that's exactly the focus of this book. Alexander attempts to bring common sense feng shui concepts to the Western mind by discussing how arrangement of furniture, selection of colors, composition and juxtaposition of objects and use of symbols can influence people's outlook on life.

The author points out that people have the opportunity to create environments that help to cultivate luck and direct it to improve one's health, wealth and overall happiness. They can do this by creating cures which are the action steps people

take to eliminate obstructions in their personal living environment.

I read this book in about an hour, and in that time, I identified several easy-to-accomplish cures to obstructions of chi within our home. I plan on doing them, because I, like everyone else, want to increase the odds of improving my health, wealth and happiness. Much of what is discussed is just plain common-sense ways of organizing and maintaining pleasant homes, but the great thing about this little book is that it forces the readers to examine their surroundings with new emphasis on furniture placement, color selection, use of plants and water, crystal, metal and other objects. 

# 2010 HEARTLAND LATINO LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

*By MSG Reynold Castaneda*

I have attended the Heartland Latino Leadership conference for the past four years and enjoyed it each time. There have been a couple of times that I have gone and noticed people protesting this event and said to myself "Why would people carry signs saying 'The Heartland

Latino Leadership Conference is Racist?'" This year I didn't see any protesters but it made me wonder if people really understand what this event is all about. It's not for promoting extremist Latino power, but it's a way to promote some of the accomplishments the Latino people have achieved for this great community and the glorious nation in which we live. With that in mind I am going to talk about some of the guests who were at the 2010 event and what they have achieved.

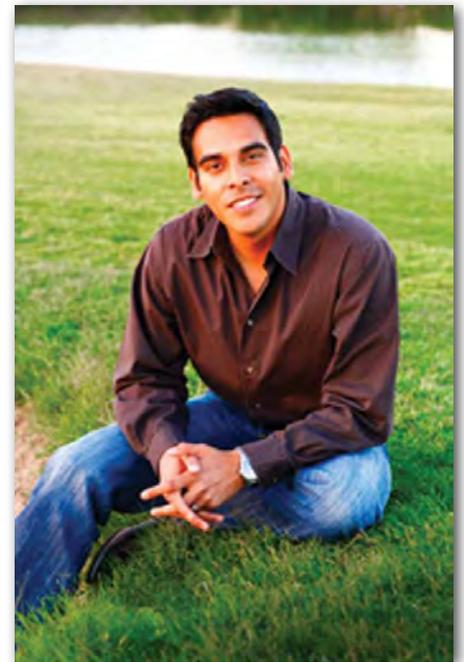
The keynote speaker at this event was a woman named Deborah Rosado Shaw. The biography of this woman is impressive, beginning with the fact that she was raised in one of the nation's poorest congressional districts, the Bronx, New York. She said staying safe, being warm and eating a meal were the top priorities in her early years. This woman received a full-ride scholarship to a prestigious college at the age of sixteen, but only attended one year, as she left due to racial hatred at the school. This didn't stop her though as she got her start answering phones for an



umbrella company and today is the founder of Umbrellas Plus, LLC and Dream BIG! Enterprises. She has closed multi-million dollar deals with some of the toughest buyers in the world. Ms. Shaw's companies have delivered successful sales

programs to accounts that include Costco, Toys-R-Us, Wal-Mart and the Walt Disney Company. She said she turned down a job that offered her over a million dollars saying "being rich isn't one of her goals in life." She also appeared on the Oprah Winfrey show (which is pretty cool in my eyes).

Miss Shaw said, "Don't wait your turn. The biggest invitation you have in life was when you were born." By this, Miss Shaw was stating that the opportunity to succeed in life has always been there for you, but only if you apply yourself and work hard. I think one thing that stood out the most for me was how she was afraid to speak at a conference at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York and her mom pushed her into doing it. The surprising thing about this was that her mom used to be a maid at this hotel and now her daughter was one of the guest speakers there. Even though this woman was born in a poor environment, she proved that, yes, Latinos are an asset to the United States.



The next speaker was Mr. Gabe Salazar, whom I enjoyed the most. He is an internationally recognized youth speaker and has visited more than 150,000 students throughout his activities. He told one story of a man in Texas who had a neurological condition which caused him to walk backwards. Everyone used to make fun of this man which made his life a living nightmare. His wife, a reporter for one of the local television stations, did a story on him. There were some doctors who saw the story, were touched by it, and performed surgery on him. They were able to correct this man's disability and today he is able to walk normally. Mr. Salazar stressed that bullying is a bad thing, which is a problem we face in the U.S. that has drawn much attention lately.

Another story Mr. Salazar told was of a young high school girl who had a child at a young age. Because of this, her parents

# AIR GUARD REVITALIZES DIVERSITY PROGRAM

*Reprinted from National Guard Bureau*

*By Air Force TSgt John Orrell*

The Air National Guard has revitalized its diversity program beginning with the hiring of a new program director.

Air Force Lt. Col. Shirley Raguindin was introduced at the 2010 Air National Guard senior leadership conference held November 18.

“The Air Force recently has said that diversity is essential for combat capability, I agree, so we’re going to do something about that, we’re reinvigorating our diversity initiatives,” said Air Force Lt. Gen. Harry M. Wyatt, director of the Air National Guard.

“I took a look at our diversity initiatives, and while we in the past made some significant progress, it appeared to me that we had kind of stalled out.”

Wyatt said the Air Guard in all 54 states and territories will devise new and different ways of thinking about diversity.

“The fact is, if you consider the traditional metrics of diversity - race and gender, but you don’t limit yourself to those restrictive definitions ... but

you expand it to socioeconomic, religious, marital status, geographical status ... that might be considered diversity,” he said.

Raguindin said she is looking forward to the “journey towards this cultural transformation.”

The Air Guard has achieved great success, but there is “room for improvement as we face a myriad of challenges now and in the future,” she said.

“One of the most important priorities in the Air National Guard is developing adaptable Airmen, and to also develop and mentor our Airmen ... in the pipeline for leadership success,” Raguindin said. “If we don’t take care of our Airmen, it could lead



*Air Force Lt. Col. Shirley Raguindin, the new Air National Guard director of diversity, speaks to about 2,000 members of the Air National Guard’s senior leadership at the 2010 Air National Guard senior leadership conference in Washington D.C., November 18, 2010. This year’s conference is about preparing for challenges the Air Guard will face in 2025. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. John Orrell, National Guard Bureau)*

to grave consequences to our current and future new missions.”

Wyatt said that Raguindin will lead the Air Guard into the future and pledged to her the resources that she needs, because “diversity ... is that important to this organization.” 

*Hearland Latino Continued from Page 20*

treated her badly. She said she was going to take her child’s life along with her own, but it was Mr. Salazar’s background of also being born to a high school student and then going on to accomplish good things for the community that made her change her mind. She said, “Mr. Salazar, if you can do something good for mankind, then I think I owe it to my child to give him the chance to do the same thing.”

I attended the breakout sessions *Latino Power in 2010 and Beyond* by Luz Robles, and *Diversity Sprinters* by Sue Outson and Patty Martinez. Miss Robles was

the first elected Latina State Senator in Utah and talked about how the Hispanic vote is going to be one of the most important votes in politics. She said it was the Hispanic vote that got Harry Reed elected in Nevada. The message in the presentation given by Miss Outson and Miss Martinez, was to take big steps



not small steps. They said to push management if you want to accomplish diversity and be passionate about your dreams with diversity.

From the little I wrote about in this article, I hope people understand that this conference isn’t focused on Latino power but about what the Latino community

has done. Diversity is a great thing, and each and every race, religion, gender,

etc. has something to offer which we should be proud to accept. 



**Heartland  
Latino Leadership**

# INDIA-BORN GUARDSMEN BRIDGE CULTURE GAP DURING YUDH ABHYAS 2010

*Story courtesy of U.S. Army Alaska*

<http://www.ng.mil/news/archives/2010/11/110910-India.aspx>



*Cpl. Balreet Kaur, a medic for the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the California National Guard, discusses exercise communication procedures with an Indian Army soldier at the battle command training center during the combined training exercise Yudh Abhyas 2010 on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, November 4, 2010. Balreet and her sister, Spc. Jasleen Kaur, also a medic for 79th, are cultural liaisons for the 14-day exercise that began November 1. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Ashley M. Armstrong)*

Military operations between two nations can be challenging with the diversity of language, cultures and traditions.

U.S. Army Alaska found an untraditional method of alleviating those challenges when they discovered India-born sisters Cpl. Balreet Kaur and Spc. Jasleen Kaur, both medics for the 79th Infantry Brigade

Combat Team of the California National Guard, who served as cultural liaisons between the armies of India and the United States during exercise Yudh Abhyas 2010.

The 14-day exercise started in Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska on November 1 and served as an opportunity to strengthen military cooperation between the two countries.

“This brings our two countries much closer together and anytime we have experts from the other country it brings us much further along. They understand their customs and courtesies, so they help us out tremendously and make sure that we do not violate any of the normal policies that they follow,” said U.S. Army Alaska Deputy Commander Col. Mark S. Lowe, the acting exercise director.

The Soldiers were specifically chosen for the exercise because of their background, knowledge and experience - providing a common ground between the two armies. The Soldiers also serve as medics and are involved in role playing.

“Our commander knew that the Indian Army and the U.S. Army were working together and he wanted something beyond just the exercise. He wanted the cultural aspect to mesh as well,” said Jasleen.

They also speak Hindi, which helps with communication during the training events.

“When we speak to them in Hindi they feel a little closer to home. Their faces light up to know that we can speak their language and that one barrier is down,” said Jasleen.

Jasleen and Balreet have provided guidance to USARAK on different accommodations that were necessary for the Indian soldiers to feel more comfortable in an unfamiliar environment.

“In India, we shower with buckets that we fill with tap water and we use a mug to scoop the water out, so they wanted to make sure that the Indian soldiers in the field had the right mugs,” said Balreet.

“They really have given 110 percent here. They have even offered Indian meals at the chow hall,” added Jasleen.

Initially, they were nervous about how the Indian Army would respond to them and were surprised with the attention they received.

“We are Indians representing the United States, so I think that they feel more comfortable coming up to us because they can relate to us more and ask us questions about America,” added Balreet.

The sisters and their family left India in 2001 because of religious conflict in their home village and they haven’t

# WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

## “REMEMBER, HONOR, TEACH”

By LTC Shawn Edwards

On December 11, 2010, I, along with CW3 Roland, SGT Kirkpatrick and SGT Andersen had the honor and privilege of participating in the Wreaths Across America ceremony in honor of United States Veterans. It was a cold, snowy, blustery day but not even the weather could stop volunteers from showing up to lay wreaths on gravesites of Veterans buried in Wyuka cemetery. Wreaths Across America is a nationwide effort to remember the fallen, the prisoners of war, the missing in action and to honor those who have served and are still serving in our Nation's Armed Services.

The tradition of laying wreaths to honor veterans began in 1992, when Morill Worcester of Worcester Wreath Company (Harrington, Maine) was left with a number of excess wreaths at the end of the season. Remembering a boyhood trip to the nation's capitol and the sacred grounds of Arlington cemetery, he donated 5,000 wreaths to be placed on the headstones of an older section of the cemetery.

Since then over 500 locations worldwide participate in this event. This ceremony was an historic event as this is the first



year there has been a location in Lincoln. Currently over 1,500 veterans are buried in Soldiers' Circle, the Grand Army of the Republic and the more recent New Soldiers' Circle in Wyuka Cemetery.

The main ceremony was held in the New Soldiers' Circle in Wyuka Cemetery. Former Adjutant General of Nebraska Lieutenant General (retired) Roger Lempke was the guest speaker.

The Vietnam Veterans, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Lincoln AFJROTC, UNL Arnold Air Society

and Silver Wings, Air Force Association, and Wyuka Historical Foundation collected donations to purchase the wreaths. Even with their donations we still fell short 1,200 wreaths.

Other cemeteries in Nebraska who participate in the Wreaths Across America program are: Forest Lawn Cemetery (Omaha),

Fort McPherson National Cemetery (Maxwell), Pawnee City Cemetery (Pawnee City), Mt. Hope Cemetery (Valentine), Nebraska Veterans Memorial Cemetery (Grand Island) and Elmwood Cemetery (Elmwood).

For more information on the Wreaths Across America Program please visit <http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org>

### References

<http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/education.html>



### India-Born Guardsmen Continued from Page 22

returned since, so the experience during the exercise has been refreshing and educational for them, they said.

“With this experience, we actually get to learn more about where we came from and we get to learn about the Indian military. It's been discussed many times how key this exercise is with the Indian Army and the U.S. Army, so for us to be a part of that and to be exposed to this sort of setting is beneficial to us and, of course, to both parties,” said Balreet.

They have already learned many differences with rank structure,

equipment and combat operations from conversations with the Indian soldiers, said Jasleen.

“Everyone knows those two young soldiers and they've been very helpful at the senior-officer level, the NCO-level and the soldier-level, so they have established great rapport with the Indian Army. If anything, it will bring our countries much closer,” said Lowe.

Yudh Abhyas is a regularly-scheduled bilateral, conventional-forces training exercise, sponsored by U.S. Army, Pacific and the Indian Army. The exercise is designed to promote cooperation between

the two militaries to develop U.S. Army Pacific and USARAK relationships with India and promote interoperability through combined Military Decision Making Process, battle tracking and maneuvering forces, and exchange of tactics, techniques and procedures.

During the exercise, U.S. Soldiers and their Indian counterparts will conduct a command post exercise, airborne operations training, marksmanship and tactical training and take part in cultural exchanges to improve partnership readiness and cooperation between the armies of India and the United States. 

Irish Trivia Continued from Page 9

## IRISH TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. d. 1840s. Between the years of 1845 and 1849 fungus attacked the large potato crops of Ireland resulting in what would later become known as the Irish Potato Famine. The Famine began quite mysteriously in September 1845 as leaves on potato plants suddenly turned black and curled, then rotted, seemingly the result of a fog that had drifted across the fields of Ireland. The blight spread throughout the fields as fungal spores settled on the leaves of healthy potato plants, multiplied and were carried in the millions by cool breezes to surrounding plants. The attacked plants fermented while providing the nourishment the fungus needed to live, emitting a nauseous stench as they blackened and withered. There had been crop failures in the past due to weather and other diseases, but this strange new failure was unlike anything ever seen. Potatoes dug out of the ground at first looked edible, but shriveled and rotted within days. The potatoes had been attacked by the same fungus that had destroyed the plant leaves above ground.



2. b. Derry is often called *The Maiden City*. Derry or Londonderry (Irish: Doire or Doire Cholm



Chille, meaning Oak Wood of Colm Cille) is a city in Northern Ireland. The old walled city of Derry lies on the west bank of the River Foyle, and the present city now covers both banks (cityside to the west and waterside to the east) and is connected by two bridges.

3. c. The Oscar Statuette. Born Austin Cedric Gibbons in Dublin, Ireland, he is probably one of the most celebrated and influential production designers in the history of American films. In 1924 he joined the staff of the newly formed MGM studios and remained with the company for 32 years as supervising art director. As one of the founders of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), he designed Oscar, the Academy statuette, which he was awarded eleven times.



4. a. Couples in Ireland could marry legally on St. Brigid's Day (February 1st) in Teltown, County Meath, as recently as the 1920s by simply walking towards each other. If the marriage failed, they could divorce by walking away from each other at the same spot on St. Brigid's day the following year. The custom was a holdover from ancient Irish Brehon laws, which allowed temporary marriage contracts.

5. a. Celtic Harp. While the Shamrock is probably the most identifiable symbol of Ireland, the Celtic Harp is actually the national symbol or coat of arms of Ireland and has been since medieval times.



6. d. A leprechaun is a type of fairy in Irish folklore, usually taking the form of an old man, clad in a red or green coat, who enjoys making mischief. The leprechauns spend all their time busily making shoes, and store away all their coins in a hidden pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. They have a reputation for being rich, but mean. If ever captured by a human, the leprechaun has the magical power to grant three wishes in exchange for their release. The leprechaun is said to be a solitary creature, whose principal occupation is making and mending shoes, and who enjoys practical jokes.



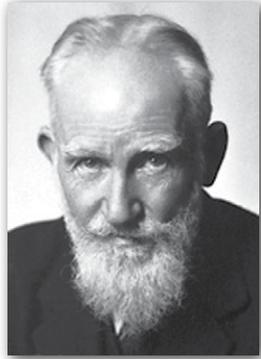
7. b. A shillelagh is a wooden walking stick (and club or cudgel) typically made from a stout knotty stick (traditionally blackthorn wood or oak) with a knob at the top, associated with Ireland and Irish folklore. Although originally used for settling disputes in a gentlemanly manner (like pistols in colonial America or the katana in Japan), the shillelagh eventually became a symbol of stereotypical violent Irish behavior.



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Trivia Answers Continued from Page 24

8. b. George Bernard Shaw, born in 1856 in Dublin Ireland, was an Irish playwright. His main talent was for drama and he wrote over 60 plays (compared to Shakespeare's 37). He is the only person to have been awarded both a Nobel Prize for Literature (1925) and an Oscar (1938) for his contributions to literature and for his work on the film *Pygmalion*, respectively.



Seamus Heaney is an Irish poet, writer and lecturer. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995 and the T. S. Eliot Prize in 2006. He currently lives in Dublin.



Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle was a Scottish physician and writer, most noted for his stories about the detective Sherlock Holmes, which are generally considered a major innovation in the field of crime fiction, and for the adventures of Professor Challenger. He was a prolific writer whose other works include science fiction stories, historical novels, plays and romances, poetry and non-fiction. His mother and father were of Irish descent.



Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald (September 24, 1896 – December 21, 1940) was an American author of novels and short stories, whose works are the paradigm writings of the Jazz Age, a term he coined himself. He is widely regarded by many as one of the greatest American writers of the 20th century. Born in St. Paul, Minnesota, to an upper middle class Irish Catholic family, Fitzgerald was named after his famous second cousin, three times removed, Francis Scott Key.

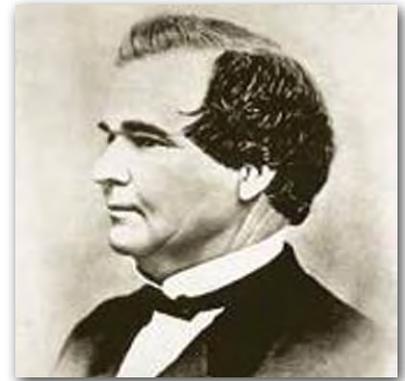


9. c. The Boomtown Rats were an Irish rock band led by vocalist Bob Geldof. *I Don't Like Mondays* was released in 1979 and was written in response to a school shooting that happened in California. It was a worldwide hit, reaching #1 in the United Kingdom, but fears of lawsuits and charges of

bad taste kept it off most radio stations in the U.S. The Boomtown Rats became a notable band, but much of their success was overshadowed by the charity work of lead singer Bob Geldof. Geldof co-organized (with Midge Ure) the charity concerts *Band Aid*, *Live Aid* and *Live 8* in order to raise money for famine relief in Ethiopia and around the world. All six members of the band were originally from Dun Laoghaire, Ireland.



10. a. Edward A. Creighton was a well-known businessman in early Omaha, Nebraska. Born in 1820, he was the fifth of nine children from Irish parents James Creighton and Bridget Hughes. Edward was one of the most successful businessmen of Irish ancestry to settle in Nebraska. Although the Creightons were responsible for founding many institutions that were central to the growth and development of Omaha, Edward is most intimately associated with the telegraph. On July 4, 1861, Edward Creighton began building the Nebraska company's line westward from Julesburg, Colorado, toward Salt Lake City. Creighton University is named after him.



11. d. Kissing the blarney stone will remove shyness and is said to give you the gift of gab. The origin of this custom is unknown, though the word blarney means flattering talk or to deceive without offending, to wheedle. Five miles northwest of the small city of Cork is the village of Blarney. Near the village, standing almost 90 feet in height is the castle of Blarney with its world-famous Blarney Stone.



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Diversity Dates Continued from Page 26

March 1 ..... Nebraska Statehood Day  
 March 1 ..... Martenitza (Martsior)  
 (Bulgaria, Romania)

*An ancient Thracian celebration marking the end of winter and arrival of spring blossoms. People wear pins with red and white tassels, symbolizing health and happiness.*

March 1 ..... Samiljol (South Korea)  
 March 1 ..... St. David's Day (Wales)  
 March 3 ..... Hinamatsuri (Japan)  
 March 3 ..... Maha Shivaratri (Shiva's Night)  
 (Hindu)

March 3 ..... Throne Day (Morocco)  
 March 4 ... Casimir Pulaski Day (Poland, U.S.)  
 March 5 ..... Losar (Tibet)  
 March 6 ..... Independence Day (Ghana)  
 March 7 ..... Great Lent begins  
 (Eastern Orthodox Christian)

March 8 ..... International (Working)  
 Women's Day

March 8 ..... Shrove Tuesday (Christian)  
 March 9 ..... Ash Wednesday (Christian)  
 March 11 ..... Restoration of Statehood Day  
 (Lithuania)

March 12 ..... Moshoeshoe's Day (Lesotho)  
 March 13 ..... Daylight Savings Time Begins  
 (U.S.)

March 15 ..... Memorial Day for the  
 1848 Revolution and War of Independence  
 (Hungary)

March 15 ..... Charshanbesuri  
 (Last Wednesday Festival) (Iran)

March 17 ..... St. Patrick's Day (Ireland, U.S.)  
 March 19 ..... St. Joseph's Day (Christian)  
*An international festival honoring St. Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary and foster father of Jesus. In Italy, Dia de San Guiseppe is a day of feasting and sharing with the poor. In Valencia, Spain, Fallas de San Jose (Bonfires of St. Joseph) is a weeklong festival. St. Joseph is considered the patron of the Catholic Church, fathers and carpenters.*

March 19-20 ..... Purim (Jewish)  
 March 20 ..... Equinox (International)  
 March 20 ..... Independence Day (Tunisia)  
 March 20 ..... Ostara (Celtic, Pagan)  
 March 20 ..... Hola Mohalla (Sikh)  
 March 20 ..... Holi (Festival of Color)  
 (Hindu, Sikh)

*Celebration of spring throughout Northern India that is a time of fun followed by relaxation. During the morning, brightly colored powder and water are thrown at passersby and the afternoon is spent relaxing in a river or bath.*

March 21 .... Benito Juarez's Birthday (Mexico)  
 March 21 ..... International Day for the  
 Elimination of Racial Discrimination (U.N.)  
 March 21 ..... Noruz (New Year) (Iran)  
 March 22 .... Emancipation Day (Puerto Rico)  
 March 25 ..... Independence Day (Greece)  
 March 26 ..... Swadhinata Dibash  
 (Independence Day) (Bangladesh)  
 March 26 ..... Earth Hour (International)  
 March 29 ..... Boganda Day  
 (Central African Republic)  
 March 31 ..... Cesar Chavez Day (U.S.) 

BTG  
DIVER-CIPE  
CORNERPERUVIAN  
TOSTADAS 

Submitted by  
 MSG Reynold Castaneda

*I grew up in a Mexican household where every now and then I used to watch my mother cook. One of the things we used to eat on a daily basis was pinto beans. Now you ask yourself, why would someone want this as part of their daily diet? It's real simple: beans are cheap to buy and you can mix and match them with almost anything. We had beans with eggs and bacon for breakfast, and at night we would have beans with fried potatoes, tortillas and pork chile. Probably the best thing you can do with pinto beans is make an entree out of them. One of my favorites is tostadas.*



*For a great tostada topping, see Bridging the Gap, Issue 6 (October/November 2007) for Marcella Castaneda's Pork Chile (<http://www.neguard.com/SEP/bulletins/index.html>).*

### Ingredients

2 dozen corn tortillas	10 oz shredded cheese (your choice, I prefer sharp cheddar)
2 cups cooking oil	½ head of lettuce, chopped
2 cups pinto beans	1 tomato, diced
2 tablespoons salt	3 strips uncooked bacon
1 teaspoon cumin	

1. Spread your pinto beans out on a counter and look for any debris that may be in them and toss the debris out. Usually you will find a small rock or two. Put the beans in a strainer and rinse under cold running water. Once beans are cleaned, put in a slow cooker and add cold water (about 3 inches above the beans).
2. Dice the bacon and add this with the cumin and salt to the slow cooker and cook at High (325°) for about 8 hours. Drain the water from the beans using a strainer then put back in the slow cooker. Get a masher and mash the beans like mashed potatoes.
3. In a small frying pan heat the cooking oil on medium heat. Fry the corn tortillas one at a time flipping occasionally until tortilla is hard. Put the tortilla on a plate lined with paper towels to absorb extra oil. Get a spoon and spread the mashed beans onto the fried corn tortilla. Put some lettuce on top of the beans then sprinkle with cheese. Top with tomato or any other ingredient you may prefer such as salsa or sour cream.

Makes approximately 14 to 18 tostadas. 