

ACCESS AMERICA



Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

Sep 15-Oct 15

Hispanic Heritage Month honors the diverse people of Spanish-speaking backgrounds in the United States. From September 15 to October 15, a multitude of special programs, events, exhibits and Web sites celebrate the heritage, culture, spirit and extraordinary contributions of Hispanic Americans.

The celebration of Hispanic Heritage began on a national scale in 1968 with Public Law 90-498, which authorized an annual Presidential Proclamation making the week of September 15 and 16 Hispanic Heritage Week. The designated week was selected to coincide with Costa

Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua's Independence Day celebrations on September 15, and Mexico's on September 16.

The 1968 Proclamation called upon the people of the United States, especially the educational community, to observe the week with appropriate ceremonies and activities. To encourage participation, in his 1974 Proclamation, President Gerald R. Ford called for schools and



human rights organizations to participate more fully in the Week. And in 1988 President Ronald Reagan

American Mexican Cuisine of Refried Beans and Rice.

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From the Ambassador

Long before English colonists settled their first colony on the shores of what is today the United States, Hispanics (Spaniards) founded the first European settlement in St. Augustine, Florida. Then as today, many Hispanics came to the United States to pursue freedom and opportunities for themselves and their families. Since their arrival on American shores, Hispanic influence has shaped American people and society. Americans are proud of their Hispanic roots and embrace cultural traditions, language, food, and customs. Tex-Mex along with authentic regional cuisines from throughout the Spanish-speaking world can be found in many towns and cities across the United States. Many schools provide bilingual education. America cherishes its Hispanic sports figures, actors, and musical stars.

Like the beautiful mosaics we enjoy in Tunisia, America is a mosaic of diverse peoples, cultures, and heritages, of which Hispanics are an important part. This month, as President Bush reminds us, "we celebrate the diversity that makes America stronger, and we recognize the many ways Hispanic Americans have enriched our Nation."

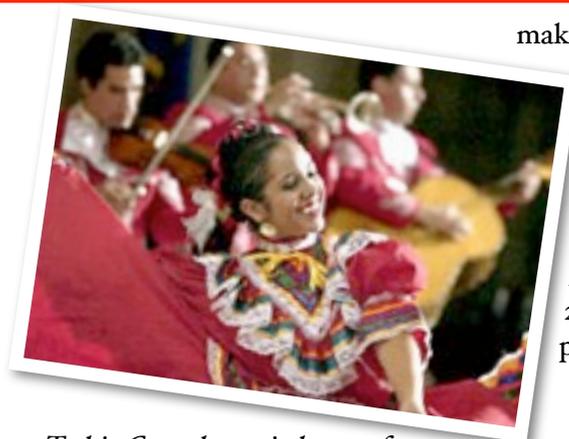
-Robert F. Godec

Seeds o Peace f, cont'd from p. 1

repeated Ford's call for more recognition of Hispanic Americans by approving Public Law 100-402, which expanded

the celebration to Hispanic Heritage Month -- to run from September 15 to October 15.

Today, more than ever, Hispanic Americans play an integral role in shaping the American experience. They serve as leaders in government, law, business, science, sports, the arts and many other occupations. The influence of Hispanic culture is reflected in every aspect of American life, from politics to education to



Tasbia Cruz dances in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month in Lincoln, Nebraska

music and television. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates the Hispanic population of the United States at 42.7 million people as of July 1, 2005 --

making them the nation's largest race or ethnic minority, and 14 percent of the U.S.'s total population. By July 1, 2050 the Bureau estimates Hispanic Americans will make up 24 percent of the U.S. population.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site:

<http://usinfo.state.gov>)

Spanglish in America



The growth of the Latino minority in the United States, some 43 million strong according to 2005 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, is at a juncture, forging a unique identity. Spanglish, the mixing of Spanish and English, used indistinctly on the street, in classrooms, among politicians, in the religious pulpit, and, of course, on radio, television, and the Internet, is the most distilled manifestation of that identity.

period,

Southwest. Up until 1848, when Mexico sold almost two-thirds of its territory (Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, California, Utah) to its neighbor, Spanish was the tongue of business and education. It interacted with aboriginal languages. With the arrival of Anglos, Spanish and English began a process of hybridization. This process was reinforced at the end of the 19th century with the advent of the Spanish-American War. Americans arrived in the Caribbean Basin, bringing English along with them.

Whereas Spanglish is also heard in various parts of the Hispanic world, from Catalonia in Spain to the Pampas in Argentina, it is in the United States where it thrived. One is likely to hear it in rural areas, but it is in the major urban centers where Hispanics have settled such as Los Angeles, California; San Antonio and Houston, Texas; Chicago, Illinois; Miami, Florida; and New York City where its strongest influence is felt. However, there isn't one single Spanglish but different types: Chicano, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Dominican, etc. Its usage varies from one place to another and from generation to generation. A recent immigrant from Mexico in nearby El Paso, Texas, for instance, is likely to use certain elements that distinguish her from a second-generation Colombian-American in the northeastern state of New Jersey.

Ozomatli's Hispanic Heritage

Uli Bella, member of the band Ozomatli, talks about his Hispanic heritage.

How do you identify yourself ethnically?

My mother is Mexican and my father is from Spain .

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Hollywood but i grew up in the Southeast of Los Angeles.

Did you grow up speaking Spanish?

Yes it is my first language.

How does having Hispanic/Latino heritage influence who you are?

I think I got the best of both worlds....music, culture, history, art, and of course the food.

Do you write music for Ozo?

Yes, I write for the group.

In English, Spanish, or both?

Both.

What makes you choose to write in one or the other?

Some rhythms and music flow better in a certain language than others...it's a matter of taste.

How do you think the ethnic diversity of your band has impacted who you are as a group?

Being in a band like this helps us keep an open mind...trying to see things in different perspectives always. Since we're all from different backgrounds we can concentrate on what we have in common rather than our differences.

What was your impression of your visit to Tunisia ?

It was a blessing to visit such an impressive place such as Tunisia.

What was your most memorable experience from that visit?

Playing the festival in the roman theatre.

Think we could get you back here?

I truly hope we can return.



Ozomatli rocks AMIDEAST and welcomes Tunisian student musician.

IRC Tips

Here are some selected U.S. Web sites and books that look at Hispanic culture in the United States of America, courtesy of the Information Resource Center.

<http://latino.si.edu/virtualgallery/OJOS/OJosTitle-draft.html>

<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5237.html>

http://www.gale.com/free_resources/chh/index.htm

<http://www.neta.com/-1stbooks/index.html>

<http://www.census.gov/pubinfo/www/NEWhispMLI.html>

<http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/region/hispanic/>

--On New Ground: Contemporary Hispanic American Plays, edited by M. Elizabeth Osborn (REF 812.5408 ON)

--Thirty Million Strong: Reclaiming the Hispanic Image in American Culture, Nicolas Kanellos (REF 973.0468 KAN)

--Latinos in the United States, edited by Carlos E. Cortés (973.0468 LAT)

--Hispanic Firsts: 500 Years of Extraordinary Achievement, Nicolas Kanellos (REF 973.0468073 KAN)

--Chronology of Hispanic American History: From Pre-Columbian Times to the Present, Nicolas Kanellos and

Alumni Spotlight

Name: Mehdi Rhaïem

Program: Fulbright Foreign Student

Years: 2005-2007

Home in Tunisia : Tunis and Bizerte

Home in the U.S. : Northridge/ Los Angeles County / California



Best memory of U.S.: The day of my graduation Thursday May 31st 2007; obtaining my Masters, having my mother in the audience and also dedicating my achievement to my Grandfather who passed away the day before on Wednesday May 30th at the age of 94.

Most important thing learned from experience: Through friendship we can make the world a better place to live in.

Advice for someone thinking about going on the program: Get to know more about your own culture.

Miss about the U.S: The friends and the family: My roommate Arthur of 2 years. His sister Lourdes , her husband Seth and their baby Joaquin Owen.

September Events

All events take place at the American Corner

All Month:

Free English Friday's

American Corner at AMIDEAST

22, Rue Al Amine al Abassi, Cite des Jardins, 1002 tunis-Belvedere, tel. 71-790-563 ext. 106

Alumni Website

ALUMNI.STATE.GOV!



The American Center

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