History of Native American Heritage Month

The celebration of National Native American Heritage Month has happened every November since a resolution was signed in 1990 by President George H.W. Bush. But how did the month-long celebration of Native culture and history start?

It began as just a day. The first state to recognize an American Indian Day—the second Saturday of May—was New York in 1916, but the history of Heritage Month goes back even further.

One of the early proponents of American Indian Day was Dr. Arthur C. Parker, Seneca. He was the director of the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Rochester, New York. “He persuaded the Boy Scouts of America to set aside a day for the ‘First Americans’ and for three years they adopted such a day,” says information from the Bureau of Indian Affairs about the history of the month.

In 1915, the Congress of the American Indian Association approved a plan concerning American Indian Day at its yearly meeting in Lawrence, Kansas. They directed their president, Rev. Sherman Coolidge, an Arapahoe, to call up on the country to observe a day for American Indians.

Coolidge issued a proclamation on September 28, 1915 declaring the second Saturday of each May as American Indian Day. The proclamation also contained the first formal appeal to recognize Indians as citizens.

The year before the proclamation, Red Fox James, Blackfoot, rode horseback from state to state trying to get approval for a day honoring Indians. He presented the endorsement of 24 state governments on December 14, 1915 at the White House. But, according to the BIA history about the month, there is no official record of such a national day being proclaimed.

Aside from New York being the first to declare an American Indian Day, several states celebrate the fourth Friday in September—Illinois enacted such a day in 1919. Several states also celebrate Columbus Day as Native American Day. But the day continues to be celebrated without recognition as a national legal holiday.

“This month is a time to recognize everyone of Native American heritage and [their] achievements and accomplishments,” Gunnery Sgt. Curtis Bradley, equal opportunity adviser for MCB Hawaii, told the Defense Video & Imagery Distribution System. “It’s a heritage that can [not] be forgotten. Remembering the individual heritage makes us great, because everybody has something different.”

The Hispanic population of the United States is around 53 million, constituting 17 percent of the nation’s total population. And that does not even the 3.7 million residents of the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico.

“This commemorative month honors the influence and impact of Hispanics in all spheres of U.S. society, including science, art, politics, culture and the economy,” Mariana De Maio of Catholic Relief Services wrote on its website.

Read more at: http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/11/30/history-native-american-heritage-month-152307

The Medical Interpreter: An Integral Part of the Health Care Team

By Roseanne de Vlaming, M.A., CSC

“How long have you been coughing?” asked the doctor? “About two weeks,” replied the deaf patient through the interpreter. The doctor looked at the interpreter and said — “I was asking her, not you!” This is one of many humorous situations that occur when a hearing person has a first encounter with a deaf person and interpreter. Even though the interpreter was introduced briefly as the Doctor entered the room – it takes a few exchanges before everyone gets the hang of it.

(continued on the next page)
New Staff Translator Profile: Lue Vang

Lue Vang was born in a village called Thamlin, Xiengkhouang province in Laos. Lue attended the Lao Primary School in Laos and then in 1976 he came to the United States. He graduated from high school in 1983 and continued his education at the National University, which he graduated in 1990. Lue’s education did not stop there. He went on and continued his education at the University of San Francisco, receiving his Ed.D. in 1995.

Lue’s native language is Hmong. He learned Lao while attending the Lao Primary School and he learned English in the United States.

Lue’s interpreting and translating career started when the community came calling. Because of his bilingual skills, Lue was approached by various organizations to assist with different projects and encounters.

When it comes to working with written translations, Lue expresses that all translation projects have a crucial impact on communication with LEP patients. When translating, he gears his thought process towards the audience by maintaining professionalism and by relaying the message at a level suitable for all members of the Hmong community.

Apart from his translation work, Lue loves to travel and browse the internet, catching up on news from all around the world. He also loves to relax, especially back to his homeland where many of his relatives still reside.

Welcome aboard, Lue! We are happy to have you as part of the UC Davis Health System’s Written Translations Team.