

Cultural News

Volume 13, Issue 10
October 2015

Hispanic Heritage Month

The four weeks between September 15 and October 15 have since 1988 been designated as the National Hispanic Heritage month and, while a relatively new designation compared to other minority group months, it has quickly become a point of pride within the Latino community and been recognized by everyone from the president of the United States down to local community boards

But what many people may not realize is the meaning behind the mid-month to mid-month celebration and how the Hispanic Heritage Month first came about.

The origins of Hispanic Heritage Month date back to 1968, when the U.S. Congress and President Lyndon Johnson declared the week including September 15 and 16 Hispanic Heritage Week.

President Ronald Reagan in 1988 extended it to cover a 30-day period from September 15 to October 15.

It was enacted into law on August 17, 1988, on the approval of Public Law 100-402.

The reason why September 15 was chosen as the official start of the month was it is the anniversary of independence of a number of Latin American countries.

Back in 1968, [the White House proclamation about the week stated](#), "Wishing to pay special tribute to the Hispanic tradition, and having in mind the fact that our five Central American neighbors [Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica] celebrate their Independence Day on the fifteenth of September and the Republic of Mexico on the sixteenth, the Congress by House Joint Resolution 1299, has requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating the week including September 15 and 16 as National Hispanic Heritage Week."

Two other countries in the region celebrate their independence days during the current Hispanic Heritage Month, with Chile and Belize celebrating theirs on September 18 and September 21, respectively.

The 30-day celebration acknowledges the huge impact the Latino community has had on shaping the United States into the country it is today. From Christopher Columbus' first contact with the indigenous peoples of the Americas in 1492, to the Spanish colonies of the West to the fortress of St. Augustine, Florida — the oldest continuous European settlement in North America — founded in 1565, decades before Jamestown, Virginia.

Hispanics have been in this country longer than anyone beside Native Americans.

"Many Hispanic-Americans trace their roots to the cultures of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, including the Arawaks (Puerto Rico), the Aztecs (Mexico), the Incas (South America), the Maya (Central America), and the Tainos (in Cuba, Puerto Rico and other places)," the [National Hispanic Heritage Month's website states](#).

"Some trace their roots to the Spanish explorers, who in the 1400s set out to find an easier and less costly way to trade with the Indies. Other Latinos trace their roots to the Africans who were brought as slaves to the New World."

Latinos now are arguably more vital to the U.S. than they have ever been before, representing the fastest-growing minority group in the country and holding positions of power in government, business, sports and entertainment.

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.

<http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/lifestyle/2014/09/15/everything-always-wanted-to-know-about-hispanic-heritage-month-but-didnt-know/>



OCTOBER 2015 CALENDAR

GAY & LESBIAN HISTORY MONTH
CELEBRATING THE BILINGUAL CHILD MONTH
HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

- 1-7- Universal Children's Week (World)
- 4-10- Emergency Nurses Week (US)
- 5- Shemini Atzeret - Jewish (begins sundown on 4th)
- 6- Simchat Torah - Jewish ((begins sundown on 5th)
- 11-17- National Food Bank Week
- 13-21- Navaratri (Hindu)
- 14- Al-Hijra - New Year (Islam)
- 9/15 - 10/15 - Hispanic Heritage Month (US)
- 16- Boss's Day (or National Boss's Day)
- 20- Birth of the Báb - (Baha'i) and
Installation of Scriptures as Guru Granth - (Sikh)
- 22- International Stuttering Awareness Day
- 23- Dasara (Hindu)
- 24-30- Disarmament Week (US, UN)
- 25- Pavarana and End of Vassa (Buddhist)
- 26- Lung Health Day
- 27- World Day for Audiovisual Heritage
- 28- Milvian Bridge Day (Chrisitan)
- 31- Halloween or All Hallows Eve

New Staff Translator Profile: Elsa Figueroa



Elsa joined the MIS Spanish-language team in August of 2015. She is a native Spanish speaker. She was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where she lived until 2009. She graduated from high school and completed her undergraduate studies, receiving a B.A. from the University of Puerto Rico. In the United States, she continued her education in Monterey, at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies. She studied translation as an undergrad, and later completed her Master's degree program in translation and interpretation. She received interpreter training "on the job".

When it comes to working with languages, Elsa expresses that, she simply loves thinking about semantics and grammatical differences across different languages, and discovering the personality and unique aspects of language through the work of translation.

Apart from her translation and interpretation work, she has found a second life in Arabic music and dance. She has been studying belly dancing and Arabic percussion for five years, and has more recently started learning about other dance forms, such as jazz and modern.

We asked her, what are her thoughts about UC written translation projects so far? In her own words, "I am enjoying myself immensely. Even though I am working from home, I feel like I am part of a larger team that has my back and supports me. I also love the fact that UC really takes care of its patients by having these important materials translated".

Welcome aboard, Elsa! We are happy to have you as part of the UC Written Translations Team.

New Staff Interpreter Profile: Adriana Mortenson

Adriana Mortenson is the new Spanish-language interpreter with UCDHS Medical Interpreting Services. She was born and raised in Lapaz, Bolivia. During her childhood years, Adriana lived in New York City for three years, where she started learning English. She graduated from high school in Bolivia, and later attended the University of Utah.

Adriana continued working on her Spanish and English skills, and received her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Spanish. While working as a medical assistant, Adriana received the Bridging the Gap medical interpreter training, and has been working as a healthcare interpreter ever since. She enjoyed working for the University of Utah, and wanted to continue working for a University when she moved to California earlier in 2015.

Adriana's husband got a job as an agricultural economist in Davis, CA, and Adriana applied for a medical interpreter position at UCDHS. Her first impressions while working as a part of the Spanish team at UC Davis Health System are: "Compared to other states, medical interpreters are valued more here at UCDHS, and patients are also more aware of their rights because they receive language support." Adriana's hobbies in life include research, yoga, biking, and food preservation.

Welcome onboard, Adriana! We are glad to have you as a part of the Medical Interpreting team!



Navaratri - The famous Hindu festival



The word Navaratri literally means nine nights in Sanskrit. There are three Navaratri commonly celebrated out of which the Sharada Navaratri, which is celebrated during beginning of winter (Sept-Oct)

is the most popular and significant one.

Almost all Hindu festivals have a religious significance. Navaratri is no exception. During this festival nine forms of "Shakti" (literally meaning power) are worshipped. Shakti has been considered a female form in Hinduism. The nine female forms (the nine "Devis") worshipped during Navaratri are:

Durga, Bhadrakali, Amba or Jagadamba, Annapurna, Sarvamangala, Bhairavi, Chandī, Lalita, Bhavani, Mookambika.

The "Brihat Dharma Purana" describes the mythology of how these ten "figures" appeared. According to this mythology, Sati, wife of Lord Shiva, wanted to go to her father's house, because her father, Daksha, was organizing a huge "yagya" (fire sacrifice). However, Daksha had not invited Lord Shiva to go and attend, so Shiva advised Sati not to go there. This angered Sati so much that fire emitted from her third eye, and she changed into Kali, a dark skinned Devi. Scared Shiva also saw these ten forms at that time.

Navaratri is celebrated in different ways throughout India.

In the South Indian states of Tamil Nadu & Karnataka, Sharad Navratri is celebrated by setting up of Bombegalu.

The last four days of Sharad Navratri is celebrated as Durga Puja in the state of West Bengal. It is thought that Durga, the divine mother, had destroyed the evil force (in the form of the demon Mahisashura) during this period. This is the biggest festival of the year in this state.

In Western parts of India, Sharad Navratri is celebrated with the famous Garba dance.

In northern India, especially in Varanasi, Dusshera overlaps with "Ramilla" or "Rama Drama" - traditional plays in which scenes from the epic saga of the mythical Rama-Ravana strife are enacted by professional troupes. In Ramilla, the tenth day, popularly known as Dusshera, is celebrated as the day of defeat and death of the demon king Ravana in the epic Ramayana.

Navaratri is divided into sets of three days to adore different aspects of the supreme goddess. On the first three days, the Mother is invoked as powerful force called Durga in order to destroy all our impurities, vices and defects. The next three days, the Mother is adored as a giver of spiritual wealth, Lakshmi, who is considered to have the power of bestowing on her devotees the inexhaustible wealth. The final set of three days is spent in worshipping the mother as the goddess of wisdom, Saraswati.

http://www.shraddhananda.com/Navaratri_The_famous_Hindu_festival.html