MAY 2017 INTERNATIONAL/NATIONAL DIVERSITY/CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month – USA and Canada
Asian Pacific Americans, a term that encompasses many ethnic groups, worked tirelessly to build a national railroad infrastructure, paving the way for western expansion. The first Asian Pacific Heritage Week was celebrated in 1979, in response to little or no recognition of this population in the 1976 bicentennial celebrations. By 1990, the celebration was a month long and then made official in 1992. For more information visit http://www.capaa.wa.gov/. For a time-line of selected dates and events for Asian Pacific American’s history visit the following website located on the State of Washington Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPPA) http://www.capaa.wa.gov/data/timeline.shtml.

Posters (I want the wide American Earth – An Asian Pacific American Story) about Asian American history in the U.S. will be posted in SAC first floor during the month of May. Created by the Smithsonian and exhibit supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and distributed by Teaching Tolerance. Take a few minutes to read about their journey in the US.

Jewish American Heritage Month
In 2006, President George W. Bush designated May as the month to teach about Jewish history and culture and to recognize the important contributions of Jewish Americans to U.S. history. For more information visit http://www.jewishamericanheritagemonth.us/index.aspx. In addition visit the Washington State Jewish Historical Society at http://www.wsjhs.org/ for information about Jewish people in WA State.

Older American’s Month - USA
It was established by Presidential Proclamation in 1963. The entire nation is encouraged to pay tribute in some way to older persons in their communities. It is celebrated across the country through ceremonies and events.

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May 1 International Labor Day - International
Observed in more than 140 counties under various names, this day is a celebration of the central contributions of workers to the economic life of their nation, and of worker solidarity. The day was designated by the international Socialist Congress of 1889, though it had been observed earlier, partly in commemoration of the Haymarket massacre in Chicago in 1886.

Vappu Day – Finland
Known as May Day around the world.

Yom HaZikaron (Memorial Day) – Israel
Israel’s Memorial Day honoring soldiers who died fighting for their country.

May 1 Beltane – Wicca
Greets the summer. It takes its name from the Celtic God Bel who mates with the Earth Goddess on this day. It was a midsummer fertility festival in Celtic paganism. Maypole dances are presently held.

Santa Cruzan Day – Philippines
Filipinos consider this the first day of spring. It commemorates the corresponding day in the 4th century A.D. when St. Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine of Rome, found the holy cross on which Jesus was crucified.

Mother’s Day – Portugal and Spain
May 1  National Day of Prayer – USA
May 2  Yom HaAtzma’ut (Independence Day) - Israel
May 3  World Press Freedom Day – UN
A day to promote press freedom in the world and to remind the public that many journalists brave death or jail to bring people their daily news.

Constitution Day - Japan
Commemorates the 1947 democratic constitution.

Constitution Day - Poland
Commemorates ratification of the first constitution in 1791.

Buddha’s Birthday – Hong Kong, China
Buddhism, the fourth largest religion in the world, being exceeded in numbers only by Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, founded in Northern India by the first known Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama. In 535 BCE he attained enlightenment and assumed the title Lord Buddha (one who has awakened).

May 4  Midori-No-Hi – Japan
Previously known as Showa Day stemming from the celebration of the Emperor Showa’s birthday on April 29, this celebration was moved to May 4 in 2007 and renamed Greenery Day, acknowledging the emperor’s love of plants and to appreciate nature.

Memorial Day - Netherlands
Celebrates the day on which Nazi forces were driven out of Holland by the Allies in 1945.

May 5  Cinco de Mayo – Mexico, USA
The 5th of May in Spanish. It marks the victory of the Mexican Army over the French at the Batalla de Puebla in 1862. Although the Mexican army was eventually defeated, it came to represent a symbol of Mexican unity and patriotism. It is celebrated on a much larger scale in the US than in Mexico. People of Mexican descent in the US celebrate this significant day by having parades, mariachi music, folkloric dancing and other festive activities.

May 5  Kodomo-No-Hi (Children’s Day) - Japan
A national holiday that was once known as Boy’s Day but since 1948 has been a day to honor both boys and girls. Some still practice the old custom of flying wind socks in the shape of carp (a symbol of strength, courage, and determination show in its upstream journey).

May 7  Mother’s Day – Portugal, Spain

May 8  World Red Cross Day - International

May 9  Victory Day - Russia
Commemorates the 1945 surrender of German forces in Eastern Europe and honors the 20 million Soviet people who died in World War II.

Liberation Day – Channel Islands
May 9  
Akshaya Tritya – Jain  
Celebrates the day when Lord Rishabha broke his first year-long fast by drinking sugar cane juice. To begin anything new is considered very auspicious on this day.

May 10  
Wesak – Buddhist  
The most important Buddhist festival, Wesak celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of Buddha as one event. Different cultures observe this day with different customs: Sri Lankans light lanterns, Vietnamese purchase captive animals and release them, and Koreans host a lantern parade.

May 13  
Our Lady of Fatima – Portugal  
On May 13, 1917 in Portugal, three shepherd children saw and conversed with the Virgin Mary in a vision. This occurred on the 13th day of the month for six months in a row.

May 14  
Mother’s Day - USA, Canada, Australia, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Denmark  
In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson set aside the second Sunday in May as an official holiday in honor of mothers. Anna Jarvis of Philadelphia first suggested a day on which to honor mothers and motherhood.

May 15  
Independence Day - Paraguay  
A two-day celebration of independence from Spain in 1811.

International Day of Families – UN  
Proclaimed in 1993 and reflects the importance the international community attaches to families. Provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase the knowledge of the social, economic, and demographic processes affecting families.

May 17  
Constitution Day – Norway  
The Constitution of Norway was signed on May 17, 1814 declaring it to be an independent nation. Referred to syttende mai (meaning May 17th).

May 17  
Ázamat (4th Month) – Bahá’í  
The first day of the fourth Bahá’í month. The English translation of Azamat (Arabic) is Grandeur.

International Day against Homophobia – LGBT  
May 17 was chosen as the day of the event because homosexuality was removed from the International Classification of Diseases of the World Health Organization (WHO) on May 17, 1990. Idaho seeks to raise awareness of LGBTQ rights and violations.

May 19  
Ataturk Commemoration and Youth and Sports Day - Turkey  
Commemorates the landing at Samsun in 1919 of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and the beginning of a national movement for independence. On this day, young athletes carry torches to the sites of the athletic contests.

May 19  
Day of the Patriots-Quebec – Canada  
Commemorates the French patriots of 1837-1838 for their contributions to freedom and national recognition.

May 20  
Armed Forces Day – USA  
Proclaimed in 1949 to pay tribute to those serving in all the US armed forces.

National Day - Cameroon  
Commemorates the establishment of the Republic of Cameroon on this day in 1972.
May 21  World Day for Cultural Diversity – UN
The day provides us with an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to learn to live together better.

Navy Day – Chile

May 22  International Day for Biological Diversity – UN
The goal is to raise awareness and promote the conservation of biodiversity on a local and global level. Biodiversity is a measure of the health of ecosystems on Earth.

Victoria Day – Canada
Queen Victoria’s birthday was declared a holiday in Canada in 1845. The UK celebrates her birthday in June.

National Day – Yemen

Day of the Patriots – Quebec, Canada
Commemorates French patriots of 1837-1838 for their contribution to freedom and national recognition.

May 23  Aboriginal Awareness (May 23-26) – Canada
Aboriginal Awareness Week, first introduced in 1992, is held on the four days following Victoria Day long weekend. It was designed to increase awareness of Aboriginal peoples among federal public service employees.

Declaration of Báb - Bahá’í
The faith began in Persia (now Iran) on this day in 1844 by the prophet Báb, who announced his mission as the founder. The event is celebrated about two hours after sunset.

May 23  Labour Day – Jamaica
This holiday is in commemoration of Alexander Bustamante who led a labour rebellion, leading Jamaica to independence on May 23, 1938, however it was not until 1961 that this day was officially celebrated as Labour Day.

African Liberation Day - International
Anniversary of the 1963 formation of the Organization of African Unity by 30 African leaders. The day is marked by sports contests, political rallies, and tribal dances.

May 24  Yom Yerushalayim – Israel
Marks the anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem.

Independence Day - Eritrea
Independence from Ethiopian rule in 1993 after a 30-year civil war.

May 24 Bermuda Day – Bermuda

May 25 Independence Day - Jordan
Commemorates the 1946 treaty that established the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and independence from Great Britain.

Ascension – Christian-Coptic & Eastern Orthodox
Commemorates the ascension of Jesus into Heaven.
May 25  Revolution Day - Argentina

May 26  Independence Day - Guyana
Independence from British rule in 1966.

National Sorry Day – Australia
Also known as Journey of Healing Day; commemorates the history of forcible removal of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children from their families and the painful repercussions of that action. In 1998, over half a million Australian people responded, signing Sorry Books and taking part in ceremonies on Sorry Day.

May 27  Ramadan Begins – Islam
This is the holiest month in the Islamic Year and begins at the sighting of the new moon. It commemorates the period during which Prophet Mohammad received divine revelations. Observing Muslims fast between the hours of sunrise and sunset during the entire month, read the Qu’ran, and worship in the mosque or at home. The dates vary by a day, depending on whether the Saudi Arabia or North America calendar is being observed. This calendar follows the North America date, which is a day later.

May 28  Mother’s Day – France, Sweden

Republic Day – Azerbaijan, Nepal
Celebrates the founding of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan in 1918.

May 29  Memorial Day - USA
A day of remembrance for those who died in service to their country. The 3rd U.S. Infantry places American flags at about 260,000 gravestones at Arlington National Cemetery.

May 29  Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh - Bahá’í
Commemorates the 1892 death near Haifa, Israel of the prophet-founder of the Bahá’í faith. The event is observed at his actual time of passing at 3 a.m.

Peacekeepers Day – UN
This pays tribute to the men and women who have served and continue to serve in UN peacekeeping operations and honors the memory of those who have lost their lives in this service.

May 30  Joan of Arc Day – France
St. Joan of Arc is the patroness of soldiers and of France. A peasant girl who, believing that she was acting under divine guidance, led the French army in a momentous victory at Orleans. She was burned at the stake on May 30, 1431 at the age of nineteen.

May 30  Dragon Boat Festival – China, Hong Kong
This day honors the patriot poet Chu Yuan who drowned himself in the Milo River, south of China, in protest of the political injustice in 277 B.C. The villagers raced to the river and jumped into dragon boats but never found him. As they searched, they beat drums to scare off fish and dragons that might attack his mortal remains. It is a holiday celebrated by racing boats in the shapes of dragons.

May 31  Shavuot – Jewish
Begins previous sundown at 6 p.m. It is called the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost which means 50 and therefore celebrated on the 50th day at the end of Passover. Shavuot celebrates the time when the Ten Commandments were given to Moses on Mount Sinai. This feast lasts 2 days.
World No-Tobacco Day - UN
The global tobacco epidemic kills nearly 6 million people each year, of which more than 600,000 are non-smokers dying from breathing second-hand smoke.