

## **DIVERSITY AT WORK**

### **June 2007**

(for interest/information purposes only)

**June - August Pride Celebrations** (North America). Pride events celebrating the lives of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, their Family and Friends, take place all over North America and around the world at different times during these months. Many cities choose the weekend closest to June 27-29 so that the celebration will coincide with the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in New York City, which is considered to be the turning point of improved civil and human rights for this community.

**Aboriginal Spirituality: Miso'o** The season of Sockeye, the most important food source for the coming year. Dried and smoked, the salmon is both a staple and a trade item.

**June 1-3: Red Earth Fair** (Aboriginal, American). Cultural festival takes place in Oklahoma City for three days. Over 150 Native tribes from U.S and Canada gather in Downtown Oklahoma City to share and participate in their rich and diverse heritage through highest quality original art, drum and dance juried competitions.

**June 4: Dano** (Korea). On this day, Koreans pray for good fortune towards agricultural affairs. Women swing on swings "Guneh" and men usually engage in Korean Wrestling, "Ssi-rumm".

**June 16: Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji** (Sikhism). Arjan Dev Ji is the first martyr in Sikhism and the fifth Guru. He is remembered for contributing to and compiling the Sikh Scriptures. He built the Harimander (Temple of God) with doors facing all four directions to emphasize that the Sikh way is open to all regardless of caste.

**June 17: Father's Day** (Canada, USA). Honours fathers. Louise Dodd of Spokane, Washington, began the tradition in 1909.

**June 18-24: Pride Week** (Canada). Up to a million people take to the streets to enjoy this week-long, fun festival of arts and culture celebrating humanity's diverse sexual and gender identities, histories, cultures, families, friends and lives. Toronto's Pride Week, the largest in Canada and one of the largest in the world, commences with The Pride Week Proclamation and Flag Raising Ceremony at Toronto City Hall at 12 noon

**June 19: Juneteenth** (African American/Canadian). This is the oldest known celebration of the official ending of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19<sup>th</sup> that the Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and that all slaves were now free. Until that date, slaves in Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas were not told about their freedom, even though other Southern states had known since April 1863. Today this holiday, also called the National Freedom Day is observed in African-American communities through out the country with concerts, rallies and fairs.

**June 19: Dragon Boat Festival** (China, Hong Kong). This Honours the patriot poet Qu Yuan who drowned on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month in 277 BC. in the Mei Lo River, south of China in protest of the political injustices. This festival is a significant holiday celebrated in China and the one with the longest history. 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. They also threw bamboo leaves filled with cooked rice into the water so the fish would eat the rice and not the remains of the hero poet. This has now turned into the custom of eating tzungtzu and rice dumplings. The celebration is a time for protection from evil and disease for the rest of the year. It is done so by different practices such as hanging healthy herbs on the front door, drinking nutritious concoctions, and displaying portraits of evil's nemesis, Chung Kuei. If one manages to stand an egg on it's end at exactly 12:00 noon, the following year will be a lucky one.

This event is now not only the one of the most important Chinese traditions second to Chinese New Year, but now is an annual event held in over 40 countries. All around the world people have embraced this water sport and formed dragon boat racing clubs.

IN Canada the two most established races happen in Toronto and Vancouver in June every year drawing up to crowds of 125,000 and more in Toronto alone.

**June 20: World Refugee Day** (United Nations). For years, many countries and regions have been holding their own Refugee Days and even Weeks. One of the most widespread is Africa Refugee Day, which is celebrated on 20 June in several countries. As an expression of solidarity with Africa, which hosts the most refugees, and which traditionally has shown them great generosity, a special UN General Assembly Resolution was unanimously adopted in 2000 which designated 20 June every year as World Refugee Day. This day celebrates the incredible courage and perseverance of refugees who refuse to give up hope in the face of extreme and unimaginable adversity.

**June 21: Litha** (Wicca). Falls on the summer Solstice. The Latin word solstice means, "The sun stood still". Wicca celebrate the Sun at the height of its power providing good harvests.

**June 21: National Aboriginal/First Nations Day** (Canada). First Nations people created this day in 1982, a day of celebration of solidarity and culture. June 21 is the longest day of the year and marks the changing of the seasons. It is a time when the seeds of our future and sustenance have been sown and grown in a land, which is ours since time immemorial. This is an event, which is growing in importance in Canada, when the outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Metis are being recognized. In 1996, the Governor General of Canada proclaimed June 21 of every year to be known as National Aboriginal Day.

**June 24: St. Jean Baptiste Day** (French). He is the patron saint of French-Canadians. It is a national holiday and there are parades, bonfires and fireworks to celebrate his birthday.

**June 26: Int'l Day in Support of Victims of Torture** (UN). The Assembly in 1997, on the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council (decision 1997/251), proclaimed 26 June United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (resolution 52/149 of 12 December). The Day aims at the eradication of torture and the effective functioning of the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which entered into force on 26 June 1987.

**June 27: Multiculturalism Day** (Canada). The Government of Canada officially recognized June 27<sup>th</sup> as Canadian Multiculturalism Day on November 13, 2002. This day acknowledges the contributions that various communities make to Canadian society and to celebrate the country's richness and diversity.

**June 28: Stonewall Riots** (LGBTT/USA). Commemorates the U.S. anniversary of the protest against police harassment in New York City's Greenwich Village in 1969. The event has been commemorated by Pride Parades and Festivals held each year in New York City on the last Sunday in June. Events and parades are held in many metropolitan cities through out Canada and United States.