



Cedar Rapids

Civil Rights Commission Newsletter

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 10 OCTOBER 2011

SPECIAL DAYS, CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS IN OCTOBER

MONTH LONG CELEBRATIONS

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Domestic Violence Awareness
Month

Fair Trade Month

Filipino-American History
MonthGerman-American Heritage
Month (Sept. 15 - Oct. 15)Hispanic Heritage Month
(Sept. 15 Oct. 15)Italian-American Heritage
Month

LGBT History Month

Polish-American Heritage
MonthWorld Blindness Awareness
Month

OTHER CELEBRATIONS

Int'l Day of Non-Violence, Oct. 2

Yom Kippur (Jewish), Oct. 7-8

Columbus Day, Oct. 10

Nat'l Coming Out Day, Oct. 11

Sukkot (Jewish), Oct. 13-19

World Food Day, Oct. 16

Simchat Torah (Jewish), Oct. 19

Shemini Atzeret (Jewish), Oct. 20

United Nations Day, Oct. 24

Diwali (Buddhist, Hindu),
Oct. 26-30

Reformation Day, Oct. 31

Halloween, Oct. 31

October is LGBT History Month

LGBT History Month is a month-long annual observance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history, and the history of the gay rights and related civil rights movements.

In January, 1994, Rodney Wilson, a social science teacher in Missouri who was appalled at the failure of textbooks to address LGBT issues, organized a grass-roots network of teachers and community leaders toward creating a month of celebration that focused on the contributions of LGBT people. October was chosen because it built on already existing traditions such as National Coming Out Day (October 11) and the anniversaries of the first two LGBT marches on Washington in 1979 and 1987.

Each year in October, growing numbers of educators find ways to bring LGBT history into their curricula and school programming, opening up a dialogue that will hopefully lead to ongoing exploration of LGBT issues and a more integrative approach to exploring LGBT themes throughout the school year.

Each day in October you can read about the achievements of 31 lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender icons by going to:

www.lgbthistorymonth.com

Click on the name that corresponds with the date. Each link features a video, bio, bibliography, downloadable images and other resources about each person.

The 31 selected this year are:

1. **Kye Allums** - transgender basketball player
2. **John Ashbery** - poet
3. **Alison Bechdel** - cartoonist
4. **John Berry** - country music artist
5. **Dustin Lance Black** - screenwriter, director, film and television producer
6. **Keith Boykin** - broadcaster, author and commentator
7. **Rita Mae Brown** - writer
8. **Dan Choi** - former infantry officer in the US Army; served in combat in the Iraq war
9. **Aaron Copland** - classical composer
10. **Alan Cumming** - Scottish stage, television and film actor, singer, writer, director, producer and author
11. **Denise Eger** - Reform rabbi
12. **Lady Gaga** - pop singer-songwriter
13. **Michael Guest** - was U.S. Ambassador to Romania appointed by George W. Bush
14. **Neil Patrick Harris** - actor, singer, director and magician
15. **Daniel Hernandez Jr.** - intern for Gabrielle Giffords, credited with saving her life
16. **Langston Hughes** - poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist
17. **Frida Kahlo** - Mexican painter
18. **David Kato** - Ugandan teacher and LGBT rights activist
19. **Michael Kirby** - Australian retired judge, jurist, and academic
20. **Victoria Kolakowski** - lawyer and judge
21. **Dave Kopay** - former football player
22. **Ricky Martin** - Puerto Rican pop singer and actor
23. **Amelia Mauresmo** - former tennis player
24. **Constance McMillen** - suited Mississippi school for now allowing her to take her girlfriend to prom or wear a tux
25. **Ryan Murphy** - writer, film and television director and producer
26. **Dan Savage** - author, media pundit, journalist and newspaper editor
27. **Amanda Simpson** - Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the US Army
28. **Wanda Sykes** - writer, stand-up comedian, actress, and voice artist.
29. **Lilli Vincenz** - activist, gay pioneer
30. **Virginia Woolf** - author, essayist, publisher
31. **Pedro Zamora** - Cuban-American AIDS educator and television personality

Halloween Quiz

- 1) What is the predecessor of Halloween?
 - A. Thanksgiving
 - B. All Saints' Day
 - C. All Souls' Day
- 2) Halloween has roots in what ancient Celtic celebration?
 - A. Samhain
 - B. All Saints' Day
 - C. All Souls' Day
- 3) What did the Celtic people believe had magical properties?
 - A. Black cats
 - B. Turning points
 - C. Pumpkins
- 4) All Souls' Day lives on today as
 - A. Los Dias de los Muertos
 - B. Los Dias de los Guapos
 - C. Los Dias de los Santos
- 5) One Halloween custom in the United States involves collecting money for what organization?
 - A. World Wildlife Fund
 - B. Humane Society of the United States
 - C. UNICEF
- 6) Approximately what percentage of U.S. children go trick-or-treating or engage in other Halloween festivities each year?
 - A. 60 - 65%
 - B. 70 - 75%
 - C. 85 - 90%
- 7) jack-O-Lanterns first got their start as what vegetable?
 - A. Watermelons
 - B. Turnips
 - C. Potatoes
- 8) Which of the following is not one of the groups that have opposed Halloween?
 - A. Wiccans
 - B. Christians
 - C. Children
- 9) What was the goal of trick-or-treating before candy came into the picture?
 - A. Money
 - B. Apples
 - C. Soul cakes
- 10) What fruit took center stage in many Celtic divination rituals?
 - A. Cherries
 - B. Apples
 - C. Pumpkins



Source: <http://www.howstuffworks.com>

Answer to Quiz from Page 2

- 1) **B - All Saints' Day.** Also called All Hallows' Day, All Saints' Day started at sundown on October 31. The word "Halloween" is actually a shortened version of "All Hallows' Even", the eve of All Hallows' Day. At some point, people began referring to All Hallows' Even as "Hallowe'en" and then simply "Halloween".
- 2) **A - Samhain.** Samhain, the ancient Celtic New Year that fell around the end of October, provides us with many of Halloween's traditions.
- 3) **B - Turning point.** Celtic tradition held that turning points, times when things change from one state to another, held magical properties. The Celts believed the turning point of Samhain opened up a type of connection to the dead.
- 4) **A - Los Dias de los Muertos.** All Hallows' Eve, All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day are collectively observed as Los Dias de los Muertos (The Day of the Dead). This is a time when families fondly remember the deceased and participate in various festivities.
- 5) **C - UNICEF.** Many trick-or-treaters collect money instead of candy on Halloween and send it to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), an organization created to help the world's children.
- 6) **C - 85-90%.** Roughly 85 to 90 percent of children participate in some kind of Halloween celebration. Even adults get in on the fun. In 2000, about 65% of adults between the ages of 18 and 34 attended Halloween-themed parties.
- 7) **B - Turnips.** As part of the Samhain celebration, Celts brought home embers from the communal bonfire in hollowed-out turnips, creating lanterns that resembled modern-day jack-o'-lanterns.
- 8) **C - Children.** Some Wiccans get upset by Halloween because they feel it misrepresents their beliefs, and some Christian groups are uncomfortable with the holidays' satanic connotations.
- 9) **C - Soul Cakes.** Celtic children used to walk door to door to collect soul cakes in a custom called "souling". For every currant-topped dessert they collected, they said a prayer for the dead relatives of the cake's giver.
- 10) **B - Apples.** Due to their association with female deities and the pentagram shape appearing in their core upon being sliced in half, apples, were often the focus of Celtic traditions. Halloween activities like bobbing for apples, drinking apple cider, making candy apples and handing out apples to trick-or-treaters comes from this Celtic tradition.

Local Events in October

Journey to Freedom, October 1

Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Center, 6:00pm

Imagine you are a Freedom Seeker—a runaway slave traveling Iowa's Underground Railroad in 1853. On this journey, you'll encounter slave catchers, farmers, and bounty hunters, while trying to navigate Iowa's Underground Railroad to reach Canada. Who can you trust? Will your group make it to freedom? Or will you be captured and sent back into slavery? Let the African American Museum of Iowa and Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Center take you back in time to experience the journey's perils and triumphs in this interactive living-history event.

Hikes will last approximately 90 minutes. Due to the subject matter, participants must be 10 years of age or older. Please wear comfortable shoes and be prepared to hike approximately 2 miles on uneven terrain. Advance registration is required and space is limited. To register, contact Tenika Johnson at 319-862-2101 ext. 26 or tjohnson@blackiowa.org

Student Diversity Conference, October 19

Mount Mercy University, 1330 Elmhurst Drive NE

The Student Diversity Leadership Conference is designed for ALL High School students and faculty in the Corridor region, to provide thought provoking and cultural challenges. This conference will challenge and inspire a shift in how we perceive others and help our students succeed. Call Diversity Focus at 319-363-3703 or visit www.diversityfocus.org/studentfor for more information. **Phone :** (319) 363-8213

A Small Film at the Crossroads of Tragedy: 9/11 and the Crisis of Immigration in The Visitor, October 25

Mount Mercy University, 1330 Elmhurst Drive NE, Basile Hall's Flaherty Community Room, 7:00pm

In this interactive presentation, Professor of English Jim Grove Ph.D., will delve into the film *The Visitor* as a representation of America's struggles of anger, fear and grief after the September 11 attacks – and illuminates how the collective response to this trauma has led to backing away from international principles concerning human rights. The forum is free and open to the public, seating may be limited.

This modest American film, *The Visitor*, received much acclaim, winning a number of Spirit awards as the best independent film of the year and also receiving a surprise Academy Award nomination for its lead actor, Richard Jenkins. The film follows the story of a middle-aged professor who enters into an unlikely friendship with two illegal immigrants from Africa who he finds living in his long unoccupied apartment in post 9/11 New York City. These immigrants not only struggle to find some kind of economic stability, but also struggle to stay legal and to avoid detention and deportation.

New Books Out in October

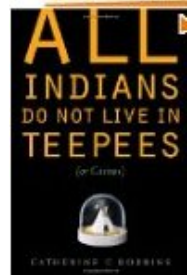
All Indians Do Not Live in Teepees (or Casinos)

Written by Catherine C. Robbins, Published by Bison Books (October 1, 2011)

Both a tribute to the unique experiences of individual Native Americans and a celebration of the values that draw American Indians together, *All Indians Do Not Live in Teepees (or Casinos)* explores contemporary Native life.

Based on personal experience and grounded in journalism, this story begins with the repatriation of ancestral remains to the Pueblo peoples of New Mexico. The 1999 return to Pecos of the skeletal remains of two thousand bodies excavated during an archaeological expedition nearly a century earlier was the largest repatriation in American history. In a united, purposeful, and energizing quest, the Pecos and Jemez Indians brought their ancestors home. This event, along with subsequent repatriations, has accelerated similar momentum across much of Native America.

In *All Indians Do Not Live in Teepees (or Casinos)*, Catherine C. Robbins traces this restorative effect in areas such as economic development, urbanization, the arts, science, and health care. Through dozens of interviews, Robbins draws out the voices of Indian people, some well-known and many at the grassroots level, working quietly to advance their communities. These voices speak against the background of the narrative's historical context. The result is a rich account of Native American life in contemporary America, revealing not a monolithic "Indian" experience of teepees or casinos, but rather a mosaic of diverse peoples existing on a continuum that marks both their distinctions and their shared realities.



Elizabeth and Hazel: Two Women of Little Rock

Written by David Margolick, Published by Yale University Press (October 4, 2011)

The names Elizabeth Eckford and Hazel Bryan Massery may not be well known, but the image of them from September 1957 surely is: a black high school girl, dressed in white, walking stoically in front of Little Rock Central High School, and a white girl standing directly behind her, face twisted in hate, screaming racial epithets. This famous photograph captures the full anguish of desegregation—in Little Rock and throughout the South—and an epic moment in the civil rights movement.

In this gripping book, David Margolick tells the remarkable story of two separate lives unexpectedly braided together. He explores how the haunting picture of Elizabeth and Hazel came to be taken, its significance in the wider world, and why, for the next half-century, neither woman has ever escaped from its long shadow. He recounts Elizabeth's struggle to overcome the trauma of her hate-filled school experience, and Hazel's long efforts to atone for a fateful, horrible mistake. The book follows the painful journey of the two as they progress from apology to forgiveness to reconciliation and, amazingly, to friendship. This friendship foundered, then collapsed—perhaps inevitably—over the same fissures and misunderstandings that continue to permeate American race relations more than half a century after the unforgettable photograph at Little Rock. And yet, as Margolick explains, a bond between Elizabeth and Hazel, silent but complex, endures.

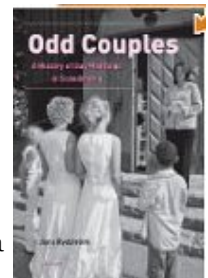


Odd Couples: A History of Gay Marriage in Scandinavia

Written by Jens Rydstrom, Published by Amsterdam University Press (October 15, 2011)

The concept of marriage as a union of a man and a woman was fundamentally challenged by the introduction of registered partnership in Denmark in 1989. *Odd Couples* is the first comprehensive history of registered partnership and gay marriage in Scandinavia. It traces the origins of laws which initially were extremely controversial—inside and outside the gay community—but have now gained broad popular and political support, as well as the positive effects and risks involved in state recognition of lesbian and gay couples.

Through a comparison of how these laws have been received and practiced in all of the Scandinavian countries, including Greenland and the Faroe Islands, the author presents a nuanced study of a fascinating political process that began in the 1960s and continues to change the way we understand family, sexuality and nation.



Continued Page 5

International Day of Non-Violence, October 2

The United Nations' (UN) International Day of Non-Violence is a global observance that promotes non-violence through education and public awareness. It is annually held on October 2 to coincide with renowned Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi's birthday.

What do people do?

Many people, governments, and non-government organizations around the world observe the International Day of Non-Violence through various events and activities such as:

- News articles and broadcast announcements promoting the day.
- Public lectures, seminars, discussions, and press conferences about non-violence.
- Photo exhibitions highlighting issues, such as the dangers of the illicit trade of small arms.
- Street awareness campaigns.
- Light ceremonies promoting non-violence and peace.
- Multi-faith prayer meetings.

The International Day of Non-Violence has strong connections with the works, beliefs, and methods of peace leader Mahatma Gandhi, who is known as India's "Father of the Nation".

Background

The principle of non-violence, also known as non-violent resistance, rejects the use of physical violence to achieve social or political change. Many groups throughout the world use this method in social justice campaigns.

There are three main categories of non-violence action:

- Protest and persuasion, including marches and vigils.
- Non-cooperation.
- Non-violent intervention, such as blockades and occupations.

The UN recognizes a philosophical connection between the human rights principles in its universal declaration and those that Mahatma Gandhi used. Gandhi was born in India on October 2, 1869. He is remembered today for his contributions towards India's freedom and for sharing with the world a doctrine for dealing with injustice and disharmony. He taught people the philosophy of *Ahimsa*, which encourages the use of non-violence as a tool for the peaceful resolution of differences. India gained its freedom on August 15, 1947, through Gandhi's efforts. He was assassinated on January 30, 1948.

The UN General Assembly came up with a resolution in 2007 to establish the International Day of Non-Violence. The day aimed to spread the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness, around the world. The resolution reflected universal respect for Gandhi and his philosophy. October 2, which is Gandhi's birthday, was allocated as the day's date. The first International Day of Non-Violence was on October 2, 2007.

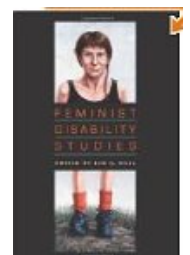


New Books Out in October (*continued*)

Feminist Disability Studies

Written by Kim O. Hall (editor), Published by Indiana University Press (October 17, 2011)

Disability, like questions of race, gender, and class, is one of the most provocative topics among theorists and philosophers today. This volume, situated at the intersection of feminist theory and disability studies, addresses questions about the nature of embodiment, the meaning of disability, the impact of public policy on those who have been labeled disabled, and how we define the norms of mental and physical ability. The essays here bridge the gap between theory and activism by illuminating structures of power and showing how historical and cultural perceptions of the human body have been informed by and contributed to the oppression of women and disabled people.



All book descriptions from www.amazon.com



Cedar Rapids
Civil Rights Commission
425 Second Street SE, Suite 960
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401

Phone: 319-286-5036

Website: www.cedar-rapids.org/civilrights

E-mail: civilrights@cedar-rapids.org

CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION STAFF

Karl Cassell, Executive Director

Darryl Lipscomb, Compliance Manager

Stefanie Robinson, Investigator

Janet Abejo, Investigator

Jayne Swanson, Administrative Assistant

CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSIONERS

Leland Freie

Barbara Gay

Salma Igram

Mitchell Levin

Indira Mysore

Bret Nilles

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Kavi Parupally

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Your Civil Rights

It is unlawful to discriminate in the areas of
**Employment, Education, Public
Accommodations, Credit, and Housing.**

Complaints of unlawful discriminatory treatment must be based on a person's **Age, Race, Color, Creed, Religion, Mental or Physical Disability, Sex (gender), National Origin or Sexual Orientation.** These categories are called *protected class characteristics.*

It is also unlawful to retaliate against a person because such person has lawfully opposed any discriminatory practice.

Additionally, the Commission enforces local civil rights laws in the areas of credit and housing on the basis of familial status (families with children under 18 years), and in the area of credit and education on the basis of marital status.

Contact Jayne Swanson, Newsletter Editor, if you wish to be added to the distribution list at j.swanson@cedar-rapids.org

Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission Meetings

*Commission Meetings occur the third
Wednesday of each month and are open to the public.*

Upcoming Meeting Dates

October 19, 2011	March 21, 2012
November 16, 2011	April 18, 2012
December 14, 2011	May 17, 2012
January 18, 2012	June 21, 2012
February 15, 2012	July 19, 2012

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held in the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission Office, 425 2nd Street SE, Suite 960, starting at 5:30pm

Agendas and minutes can be found on our website (see address above).

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