Diwali, also known as “the festival of lights,” is one of the most important religious festivals in Hinduism. It lasts for five days, from the 13th day of the dark half of the lunar month Ashvina to the second day of the light half of Karthik. This year Diwali begins on November 3rd and continues until November 7th. During the festival, small ceramic lamps, called diyas, are filled with oil and lit. They are then placed in rows along temples and houses and later set to drift down rivers and streams. The lighting of the lamps occurs on the night of the new moon to honor the presence of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. Ganesha, the foremost of the Hindu gods, is also celebrated and honored during the festival. During the fourth day, the main Diwali festival is held because it marks the new year according to the Vikrama calendar. It is also a major festival in Jainism, another major Indian religion, because the days commemorate the passing into Nirvana of Mahavira. It is a time for visiting family, exchanging presents, decorating, feasting, setting off fireworks, celebrating the religion, and dressing up. Diwali is a holiday of joy, when Hindus gather to celebrate their friends, family, and the good fortunes that the Gods have given them.

by Lauren Emory
In 2012, President Barack Obama proclaimed, “In paying tribute to Native American achievements, we must also acknowledge the parts of our shared history that have been marred by violence and tragic mistreatment. For centuries, Native Americans faced cruelty, injustice, and broken promises. As we work together to forge a brighter future, we cannot shy away from the difficult aspects of our past. That is why, in 2009, I signed a bipartisan resolution that finally recognized the sad and painful chapters in our shared history. My Administration remains dedicated to writing a new chapter in that history by strengthening our government-to-government relationship with tribal nations while enhancing tribal sovereignty and tribal self-determination.

Because we know that the best ideas for tribal nations come from within, my Administration has continued to engage tribal leaders in developing an agenda that respects their expertise on matters affecting American Indians and Alaska Natives. In collaboration with tribal nations, we are making critical investments to improve health and education services, create jobs, and strengthen tribal economies. In July, I was proud to sign the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership (HEARTH) Act into law, which will enhance tribal control over the leasing of Indian lands. Last December, I signed an Executive Order to expand educational opportunities for Native American students. It aims to preserve Native languages, cultures, and histories while offering a competitive education that prepares young people to succeed in college and careers. And under the Tribal Law and Order Act, and the Safe Indian Communities initiative, we are continuing to work with tribes to build safer communities. My Administration also supports the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

The “cruelty, injustice, and broken promises” that President Obama spoke of can easily be seen when viewing the decline of ancient Native American religions. Native Americans took great pride in their gods, traditions, and religions during their ancient times. With those times came order, peace, and consistency. The Natives’ once rich ways of life slowly diminished as meanings were lost, faiths were shaken, and sacred beings and places were seen as currency or commodities.

Fur trades targeted many of the sacred animals that were worshiped within the ancient religions. Such disrespect eventually took a toll on the Native Americans. While the Natives were better at hunting, the Westerners had pots, metals, and steel weapons. So there was a great desire between both sides to gain what the other side had, causing many trades to occur. Over time, the Natives started to kill more, especially the beavers. Beavers were well known to be a sacred animal to the Native Americans and worshiped as a god of sorts. When trades began between the two sides, the beavers became commodities. In a literal sense, the gods became money during this particular time. One of the main things the beavers produced after being processed was cheap rum, which was made from their pellets. Once introduced to alcohol, the Natives became addicted to it. They desired more and more of it. The more hunting they did, the more alcohol they received. Since the Natives were not very tolerant of alcohol, fights and problems broke out often. Religion eventually lost its meaning and the beavers were wiped out. Another example of sacred animals being disrespected and then forgotten is the buffalo.

During the 1880s the population of the buffalo collapsed. White over-hunting of the buffalo occurred for the sake of sport, tongues, and hides. During the Battle of Little Big Horn, the Sioux depended on the buffalo for food. In Native American religion, the buffalo was a god, representing fertility and strength, which was strongly worshiped, especially in the Sun Dance ritual. So when the army wiped out the buffalo in order to kill off the Sioux easily, the meaning and the existence of this sacred creature was wiped out. The lack of sacred creatures, such as the buffalo, made it difficult to pay respect and worship them. The buffalo eventually lost its sacred value and thus, another aspect of their religion was lost.

Many of the sacred places were lost due to greed. Once these types
of places were lost, there was no way to get them back and that meant that the Natives would lose yet another piece of their religion. Sacred places were another aspect in life that they worshiped, aside from sacred creatures. The Earth was deeply connected in their religion – it was seen as their grandmother and everything within it was special and, in a way, related to them. Whatever grew out from the ground was seen as a gift from the Earth, their grandmother. This included sacred places such as mountains. During 1860 to 1880, Sioux treaties caused loss of land. The Black Hills is one of the sacred places that was taken due to this. Others sought after the Black Hills because there was gold in them. Sometimes, the white people would make Natives drunk in order to make them sign a treaty. After that, the Natives were removed and placed elsewhere. Eventually, the sacred place lost its meaning. Other sacred places that fell victim to this sort of trickery also lost their meanings within the Native religion. Sacred spaces are essential to rituals. Without those sacred spaces, the Natives can no longer hold their rituals. Even if the rituals were still held, it would have little to no value because the sacred spaces in which the rituals were held were no longer available. The rituals were nothing without the proper sacred places.

For such a rich culture to endure so much cruelty, struggle, and still strive today to keep their heritage alive, we owe it to them to be recognized. All that can be done is to preserve this type of knowledge in literature or museums so that others can learn what the elders knew and to recognize the current generation of Native Americans in our society today.

by Ariel Velasquez

HENRIETTA LACKS STILL LIVES

BY JAMIE ARGUETA
FIRST YEAR SEMINAR: SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE WIRE

Henrietta Lacks not only changed medicine for the better but also made an impact on today’s medical ethics. However, in 1951 she was not known as Henrietta Lacks, in fact she was not well known at all. The cells taken from Henrietta, named HeLa, were cultured within laboratories, and to this day, are providing extraordinary medical remedies. Given no recognition or compensation, Henrietta continues to play a crucial role in advancing science. Today, following the release of Rebecca Skloot’s The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, the Lacks family travels the world speaking to audiences on how it feels to be a part of Henrietta Lacks’ family and their feelings about learning that Henrietta did not consent to the use of her cells.

On Wednesday, October 9, 2013, Veronica Spencer and David Lacks, came to Marist College to share the experiences they had when they found out their family member, Henrietta Lacks, changed the medical field forever. Opening the Inaugural First Year Seminar Lecture, Veronica Spencer and David Lacks presented pictures of the Lacks’ family and home in the 1950’s. Ms. Spencer and Mr. Lacks answered questions provided by the varying sections of the First Year Seminar courses. A crowd consisting of Marist students, alumni, faculty and community members intently listened as Henrietta’s relatives answered questions. Veronica and David were able to paint a vivid picture of Henrietta Lacks and the Lack family and shared stories that were passed down from the family.

The story of David Lacks and Veronica Spencer’s experience is an inspiration for all. Continuing to provide Henrietta with the justice and recognition she deserves, David and Veronica continue to give speeches and share Henrietta Lack’s story with the world.
In 1966 Maulana Karenga, a professor of black studies and a revolutionary advocate for the Black Freedom Struggle, added an ‘a’ to the end of the name to distinguish Kwanzaa as an adaptation of the African harvest festival Kwanzáa, so it could be recognized as a primarily African-American festival. In Swahili Kwanza means “First Fruits.” Kwanzaa is a seven day-long celebration from December 26th to January 1st that honors African heritage in the African-American culture. For a week, each day is dedicated to the seven principles of Kwanzaa: unity, self-determination, collective responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. Each day, families come together to light one of the candles in the kinara, a decorative candleholder, and to discuss the principle of that day. The candles are red, green, and black, the colors of the Pan-African flag. Near the end of the celebration, on December 31st, families come together for a community dinner called the karamu. Some wear traditional African clothing and decorate their homes with traditional African art and fresh fruit that represent African idealism.


FAMOUS NATIVE AMERICANS

JOHN HERRINGTON
NASA ASTRONAUT
Of the Chickasaw Tribe, he was the first enrolled member of a Native American tribe to fly in space in a Space Shuttle mission in November of 2002.

CORY WITHERILL
RACE CAR DRIVER
Of the Navajo Tribe, he was the first full-blooded Native American to race in the Indy 500. He is now attempting to become the first Native American in NASCAR.

NAOMI LANG
FIGURE SKATER
Of the Karuk Tribe, she was the first Native American female to participate in the Winter Olympics in 2002. She is a 5 time U.S. National Champion.

EVENTS:
Look for our events on posters around campus, in your e-mail, in the Marist Portal, or by visiting our Facebook at:

facebook.com/maristcollegecma

COMMEMORATIVE DAYS:

- **NOVEMBER 1st**: Dia de los Muertos (Mexican Holiday)
- **NOVEMBER 11st**: Veterans Day (U.S. Holiday)
- **NOVEMBER 12th**: Birthday of Bahá’u’lláh (Founder of the Bahá’í Faith – of Persian and Arabic Origins)
- **NOVEMBER 14th**: Day of Ashura (Islamic Holiday)
- **NOVEMBER 27th- DECEMBER 5th**: Hanukkah (Jewish Holiday)
- **DECEMBER 8th**: Bodhi Day (Buddhist Holiday)
- **DECEMBER 12th**: Virgin of Guadalupe (Mexican Roman Catholic Holiday)
- **DECEMBER 16th- DECEMBER 25th**: Las Posadas (Mexican Holiday)
- **DECEMBER 25th**: Christmas (Christian Holiday)
- **DECEMBER 26th**: Kwanzaa (African-American Holiday)

Kwanzaa

by Lauren Emory
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HISPANIC, SPANISH, LATINO, & LATIN AMERICAN ETHNIC GROUPS

After releasing the article on Hispanic Heritage month in our last issue, we have found that a substantial number of students are often confused as to which national group Spaniards, Hispanics, Latinos, and people of Latin America belong to. This October we had the pleasure of interviewing Dr. Patricia Ferrer-Medina, Assistant Professor of Spanish in the Modern Languages and Cultures Department here at Marist. Dr. Ferrer-Medina gave us a wonderful explanation of the differences between these ethnic groups, which we have paraphrased below.

“Though these all seem like straightforward simple questions, in truth their answer is very complicated, since each term has its own history of reception and adoption by different national groups and its usage is still in flux. I’ll begin by saying that the terms Hispanic, Latino, Latin American, and Spanish are all used mostly in the U.S. or at least they have a special meaning here that they don’t have anywhere else in the world. In most of the countries that belong to the Spanish-speaking world, people don’t call themselves Hispanic or Latino, rather they call themselves Colombian or Peruvian or whatever the adjective appropriate to their national or regional identity...

**HISPANIC**  The origin of the term Hispanic is Hispania; the Latin word given to the Iberian Peninsula by the Romans. The term was adopted in government documents during the early 70s. In practical terms a Hispanic is someone in the U.S. that has Spanish language and culture heritage. It is understood that not all Hispanics speak Spanish but the language is seen as part of their background. Its usage invokes cultural and linguistic affinity with Spain. The term is heavily criticized by politically minded Latinos because it emphasizes the White, European origins of the language and culture, diminishing the Amerindian and African heritage. Furthermore, it glosses over the repression and violent control that the Spanish Empire had over the region.

**LATINO**  The term Latino is embedded in the civil rights movement of the 60s and as such it is an ethno-political term. It is not so much assigned, but adopted, consciously by people that have a Latin American-Spanish speaking background (Case in point: Portuguese-speaking Brazilians are Latin American but not Latinos). In contrast to Hispanic the term emphasizes the mixing of the various African and Amerindian races and cultures that produced the Latinos. Advocates claim that it allows for a more nuanced conception of the identity of a people that cannot be defined by one race and one language.

**SPANISH**  The term Spanish is used in colloquial or popular U.S. English language and more so in the eastern U.S. to describe someone that comes from a Spanish-speaking background. It is a term wrongly used since Spanish, like Spaniard, refers only to the people from Spain. However, out of approximately 40 million people that live in Spain there are around 10 million that do not identify themselves as Spanish-speaking since they prefer to speak other languages.

...In the U.S. these terms are widely used from official federal documentation to colloquial parlance. Here they do not refer to national provenance or citizenship, but rather to a shared culture that is or was at some point Spanish-speaking. Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans are the three most influential national groups that make up this population in the U.S., and each shows preference for one term at any given point in time though internal discussion of terminology is never ending.”

By Dr. Patricia Ferrer-Medina
WHAT DO YOU CURRENTLY DO FOR A LIVING?

I am currently Vice President for International Business Development (Caribbean Basin) for ASR Group. Our company is the world’s largest sugar refining group with sugar production facilities in USA, Canada, Mexico, Belize, United Kingdom, Portugal, and soon Italy. My responsibilities include growing our export sugar sales business, portfolio of products into the Caribbean, and identifying other opportunities for growth in the region. I am currently writing to you from Havana, Cuba where I am attending a conference covering Cuba’s plan to again emerge as one of the largest sugar producers in the world – it’s been a wonderful experience so far.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU WERE EXPOSED TO AS A STUDENT ON MARIST CAMPUS THAT COULD HAVE BETTER PREPARED YOU FOR THE GLOBAL WORLD COMMUNITY?

I can honestly say that I took advantage of many of the tools that Marist gave me to prepare me for the outside world. Most important for me was studying abroad. Going to Spain for a semester was key for me in many respects. First and foremost, I developed a sense of independence that gave me the confidence to eventually and successfully venture out into other international destinations and to deal with particular stressful situations that I otherwise would not have been comfortable in. Going abroad showed me (at that time) how truly small the world was – and the scary part is that with our global connectivity today, the world has gotten even smaller. So you need all the tools you can have at your disposal to confront this world community. While you eventually will have a broad and global network of friends, associates and colleagues, you also have direct competition for a limited number of good jobs. Chances are that as the global talent pool gets exponentially higher, folks from all over the world, especially the large emerging markets, will also have access to those opportunities. Take advantage of all you can while at Marist – the sky is truly the limit – and prepare yourself with tools that will enhance your chances at a great career. In my opinion, a second language and international exposure as a student is a great base, but Marist has so much more to offer. MIPO, for example is another program that has catapulted Marist into the heart of public opinion in our nation’s capital. It is amazing to me, and makes me proud, how many folks at all levels of politics in Washington, and in my dealings, know that I have graduated from Marist because of the work done by Dr. Miringoff. So again, the key is to break out of your shell and explore all the school has to offer. After graduating 20 years ago, I am so pleased with how Marist prepared me for the real world and I took advantage of all the windows of opportunity. You don’t want to face any regrets later on...

RECOUNT ON SOME EXPERIENCES WITH MULTICULTURALISM AND DIVERSITY WHEN YOU WERE A STUDENT AT MARIST COLLEGE...

Having the opportunity to be elected as President of the Hispanic Club back in 1991 (now ARCO) was very important for me, as I took advantage of the opportunity to promote & showcase cultural activities with the campus community that would enhance and enrich the college experience for students of both Hispanic and non-Hispanic backgrounds. Amongst these was the creation of a newsletter (“El Trovador” or “The Troubadour”). Troubadours was a group of actual people back in the Middle Ages that would travel great distances from village to village, passing on recent news affecting nearby areas, usually by way of singing. We organized “El Trovador” as a forum for students to highlight successful stories of Hispanic-origin folks in all areas of society (from politicians, business people, entertainers, educators and overall role models) as a way to keep motivated towards completion of our college careers and eventual immersion to the working world. Some of those students greatly excelled in their writing through “El Trovador”, and have actually written books as professional writers after their Marist experience. We complemented the newsletter with other tidbits, like a recipe section, where we featured a prominent Spanish dish to share with our readership. I think we sometimes underestimated how we can connect with people from all backgrounds when we sit down to break bread together while sharing our culinary backgrounds. I am very proud to have worked with all my friends that were key in getting “El Trovador” started – classmates that took their Hispanic heritage very seriously and promoted it as such.
John Lu’s Impression

Having lunch with Pedro L. Figueroa, class of ’93, was an unexpected but much needed experience. As a Business Finance senior, my mind is full of uncertainties. I wonder what is next in my life and if I have the potential to be successful in this world. Right in the midst of my deep thoughts I received an invitation to have lunch with Mr. Figueroa, Marist/HEOP Alumnus, and his wife, a Marist alumni. I figured this would be a good opportunity to see how life will be after college and give me a chance to pick his brain on what to do and what not to do.

As we were introduced and began eating, he spoke about his life and experiences. He grew up and went to school in the Bronx. After he graduated, he joined the Marist family and began working on his undergraduate Communications Degree. After pursuing a career in the communications, sports broadcasting field, he soon realized that it was not what he expected. He was then offered a job in the business management division of a sugar company. He expressed that he had never taken a single business course at Marist, but that did not stop him from stepping out of his comfort zone. He felt that Marist had given him the tools he needed to commit to new experiences. He expressed that sometimes stepping out of one’s comfort zone could lead to success, because an individual does not know what potential he or she has until placed in a new situation. This is why it is always important to keep your options open. Today, Mr. Figueroa is a Vice President at American Sugar Refining and has worked around the world. It is obvious that he is an extremely busy man, but he took time out of his schedule to come talk to current students and give them advice and offer his help.

Learning about Mr. Figueroa’s humble start in life, and how far he has come, has impacted me greatly. He is definitely a man that should be looked up to because he worked hard to earn everything he has. Despite the time and energy demands of his career, he has not forgotten where he came from and what he values. During our lunch, his phone rang, but instead of answering it, he silenced it and continued to focus on the group of students he was talking to. The question in my mind now is not, “Do I have the potential?” it is rather, “Where do I want to focus my potential?” because anything is possible with dedication and motivation.

Megan Morelli’s Impression

As a Marist sophomore majoring in Communications, I was honored to have the opportunity to meet Marist alumnus Pedro L. Figueroa on Marist Alumni weekend. Pedro, his wife, also a Marist alumna, and a few members of the Center for Multicultural Affairs Office met to hear Pedro’s journey.

Pedro L. Figueroa is one of the most down-to-earth people you will ever meet. He recognizes that and says that it is because of his humble background. He knows first hand what it is like to strive for what you want to accomplish in life. Pedro began by telling us how he is where he is today because of Marist College. He stated that Marist College gave him the knowledge and opportunities he needed throughout his journey.

Even though both he and his wife studied in Spain their junior year, one regret Pedro and his wife had was that they wish they had branched out more on campus. College is a time to connect with people of different cultures because, essentially, that is what the real world is. The real world is made up of different kinds of people with different backgrounds, and college is the perfect opportunity to broaden your horizons to do things and talk to people you would have never imagined. It is important to be open-minded to things because you can, in fact, learn a lot from your peers.

While he may have majored in Communications and Spanish at Marist College, he is currently employed at the American Sugar Refining Inc. as the Vice President of the International Caribbean Basin. Prior to his current occupation at the American Sugar Refining Inc., Mr. Figueroa was a teacher for a year, and had other positions in business departments in other companies. Not only has Pedro worked in the United States, but he has worked in several countries around the world as well.

Overall, Pedro and his wife left us with valuable advice and knowledge that resonated with all of us. I enjoyed hearing Pedro’s journey- a journey that is still continuing. It was an honor to have met him, and I have no doubt about the successes that are in his future. I took a lot of knowledge away from meeting with Mr. Figueroa and his family. It was very comforting to hear that what you choose to major in will not hold you back from potential positions in your future. As only a nineteen-year-old, it is difficult to know exactly what I would like to be doing for the rest of my life, or if I chose the right major. It is reassuring to hear that if you take advantage of all the opportunities around you, challenge yourself, and perform to the best of your ability, you will be successful. And I can thank Mr. Figueroa for that reassurance.