Latino Heritage Month: EMU’s Got Rhythm

By Galen Wenger  
Staff Writer

"Let us be united in one rhythm," said Professor Moira Rogers at the conclusion of the opening chapel for Latino Heritage Month.

Beginning on Sept. 15, the Independence Day for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, Latino Heritage Month provides a time for celebrating the Latino culture in the United States.

The theme for this year’s celebration at EMU is “Unidos En Un Ritmo,” or “United in One Rhythm.” The activities of the month show both the diversity within the Latino culture and the unity of the Latino community. So how should the average EMU student react to Latino Heritage Month?

"Have fun. Be able to enjoy it," said senior Angela Cordova. "Develop more of an open mind." To help open the minds of EMU students and the surrounding community to Latino culture, a full selection of movies, music, dances, and exhibits have been planned for the month.

Moines Angustia, an alumnus of EMU, will conclude the celebration in the Oct. 17 chapel by sharing how he embraced his Latino heritage at EMU and how he continues to do so.

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35,000 cataloged books, but she said the process is "coming to a screeching halt," because she is unable to spend the time needed in the library. Reese called the library "the finest Anabaptist/Mennonite historical library in the eastern United States." The Historical Library has gathered quite an extensive collection of books and periodicals about eastern US Anabaptists and Mennonites. The latest budget cuts mean the library has to rework its mission, which means focusing more on Mennonites in Virginia and in the southern U.S.

With just a quick glance into the Historical Library, it may appear that it does not get much use. Bowman said, "Maybe we don’t have the crowds we do in the Main Library, but people do depend on this library ... it’s used in a lot of ways that aren’t obvious.

The Historical Library has been used by many community members, and even people coming from out-of-state for historical or genealogical research. In addition, the library frequently receives e-mails and phone calls from all over the country with requests for books and information. The Historical Library is a big contributor to the Interlibray Loan service as well.

The Menno Simons Historical Library, located on the third floor of the library, has recently changed its hours of operation due to the cutbacks. The new hours are now 1-5 p.m. on Mondays through Fridays.

Heritage Month Calendar

Tuesdays, Sept. 16, 23, and 30 at 8 p.m., Common Grounds. Race: The Power of an Illusion is a three-part video series exposing the false truths behind racism and how it still affects our life today.

Friday, Sept. 19 at 9 p.m. and Saturday, Sept. 20 at 7 p.m., EMU Science Center. Real Women Have Curves contricts the societal belief that women must be thin to be beautiful.

Saturday, Sept. 20, from noon to 6 p.m., Hillandale Park. Harrisonburg’s annual International Festival provides food, arts, crafts, and music from around the world.

Howard Zehr should probably have seen it coming.

By Danielle Steckly  
Staff Writer

The EMU professor of Sociology and Restorative Justice is widely considered a pioneer in his field, and his life’s work was recently honored by the Prison Fellowship International (PFI) Centre for Justice with the first International Prize for Restorative Justice.

Zehr directed the first victim-offender reconciliation program in the U.S. during the 1970s and has since made restorative justice his life’s work, as he has written a number of books and is an international speaker.

Zehr was one of 24 nominees for the $5,000 award offered by the PFI, an organization that is involved with prison ministries in over 100 countries worldwide. "I feel very honored," said Zehr, "but also a bit chagrined as there are so many people making a contribution to the field. I have been particularly concerned that women and people of color be recognized – us old white guys tend to get too much credit."

Zehr has been on the EMU faculty since 1996, and is the co-director of Conflict Transformation Program (CTP). The CTP was established at EMU in 1994, and builds on the university’s Mennonite traditions of nonviolence and service. Its purpose as described in its philosophy is "to support the personal and professional development of individuals as peace-builders."

CTP also encourages international peace-building efforts, of which Zehr said, "As I travel, I find that CTP is widely known internationally for its pioneering, value-based approach. It’s an honor to be part of it."

As an expert in the peace-building field, Zehr was called to assist attorneys of the Oklahoma City bombing case in the area of victim relations. He assisted in the development of a program that arranged visits between the survivors of the Oklahoma City bombing and the U.S. embassy bombing in Kenya.

Zehr has written several books, including Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice, which has become a standard in the restorative peace field. More recently, his book Transcending: Reflections of Crime Victims, which was called "essential reading," by Tom Kennedy of the Washington Post.

The list of Zehr’s achievements are indeed what won him the distinguished award from the PFI, as he was told when he heard that he had received that honor. Zehr said that he "...questioned the person who called to tell me about the award; he said that there had been much debate, but felt that to establish the credibility of the award, it made more sense to give it to [Zehr] the first time, then reach out after that."