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WEBSITES OF  
INTEREST:

- KWANZAA  
[www.officialkwanzaa.org](http://www.officialkwanzaa.org)
- FOOD SAFETY  
[www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)
- NEW YORK STATE  
ELECTION RESULTS  
[www.vote.nyc.ny.us](http://www.vote.nyc.ny.us)
- URBAN WORD  
TEEN POETRY  
[www.urbanwordnyc.org](http://www.urbanwordnyc.org)

KWANZAA: AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL HOLIDAY

Kwanzaa is an African American and Pan-African cultural holiday that honors family, community and culture. Established by Dr. Maulana Karenga, founder of the Organization US, in 1966, it is celebrated from December 26 through January 1. Kwanzaa's origins are in the first harvest celebrations of continental Africa. The name "Kwanzaa" originated from the phrase "matunda ya kwanza," which means "first fruits" in Kiswahili, a Pan-African language that is the most widely-spoken language in Africa.

Because Kwanzaa is a *cultural holiday*, it can be celebrated by anyone, regardless of religious or spiritual affiliation. Therefore, one can be Christian, Muslim, Jewish or a member of any religious or spiritual faith and celebrate Kwanzaa. Erroneously referred to as "Black Christmas," Kwanzaa, the cultural holiday is not a substitution for the Christian *holy day* of Christmas.

Kwanzaa was conceived to introduce and reinforce seven basic values of African culture – the *Nguzo Saba* - which contribute to building and reinforcing family, community and culture among Africans in America as well as Africans in the Diaspora. Each of seven days of Kwanzaa correlates with one of the *Nguzo Saba*:

1. Umoja (Unity) – December 26
2. Kujichagulia (Self-Determination) – December 27
3. Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility) – December 28
4. Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics) – December 29
5. Nia (Purpose) – December 30
6. Kuumba (Creativity) – December 31
7. Imani (Faith) – January 1

There are nine symbols of Kwanzaa, which are used to create a celebratory environment. Each symbol is a component of and reinforces the collective strength of community:

1. Mazao (The Crops) – the African harvest
2. Mkeka (The Mat) – foundation
3. Kinara (The Candle Holder) – roots of our people
4. Muhindi (The Corn) – the children



Traditional Kwanzaa table

WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR—JANICE C. BERTHOUD

Every evening towards the end of the Bill Lehrer news broadcast there is a moment of silence for the latest casualties of the Iraq war. Usually, when this segment is aired, I am in my car commuting home from work, so I am unable to actually see the names and faces of these brave soldiers. However, the long silence is a reminder of the great sacrifice our service men and women have made so that we can enjoy certain inalienable rights and freedoms.

It really doesn't matter if you are for or against the war, the silence is still deafening.

Every name called is someone's son, daughter, sister, brother, mother, dad, relative or friend of the family. Each is a hero who chose to serve our country and was, perhaps, inspired to serve a cause or defend a principal. Regardless of the motivation, each soldier served our country because s/he believed

it was/is an honorable thing to do.

My dad, Rudolph Berthoud, served in the United States Air Force during WWII. As a child I didn't think much about it. Having him take me swimming in the summer was more important than discussing war. As a teenager, I just figured his tour of duty was what he needed to do at the time.

**WHEN CAN WE EAT SPINACH AGAIN?**

From late August—early October, an outbreak of *E. coli* spread to 26 states, including New York. The origin of the outbreak had subsequently been traced to California Spinach processor Natural Selection Foods, which has voluntarily recalled its raw spinach. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the outbreak caused the deaths of 3 and sickened over 200 others, including 104 hospitalizations.

So what exactly is *E. coli*? It is a bacterium that causes diar-

rhea that may be bloody and is often accompanied by abdominal cramps and/or fever. Symptoms occur within 1-3 days of exposure. Healthy adults ordinarily recover from exposure within a week. However, young children and the elderly can suffer effects leading to kidney damage or even death.

The FDA's most current press release of 10/12/06 advises the public not to consume raw spinach or blends that contain raw spinach recalled by Natural Selection Foods or the five other companies that

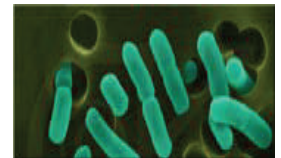
have issued secondary recalls because they received the recalled product from Natural Selection Foods.

Please visit the FDA's website at [www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/spinacqa.html#what](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/spinacqa.html#what) for a complete list of affected companies.

The FDA further advises that proper storage of leafy greens in a clean refrigerator at 40° F or below will maintain quality and safety. Also, cooking fresh spinach at 160° F for 15 seconds will kill any *E. coli* present.



The innocent conduit: fresh Californian spinach.



The condemned culprit: *E. coli* bacteria (magnified).

**THE ELECTIONS & YOU**

President George W. Bush labeled the results of the November 7 elections “a thumping.” Democrats will assume control of both the House and the Senate, leaving Bush a lame duck president for the remaining two years of his presidency. At primary issue was the War in Iraq. Voters dissatisfied with the progress of the war made their voices known.

In response to such strong voter opposition, Bush subsequently accepted the resignation of Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld. Bush

nominated Robert Gates, who served as the director of the CIA under Bush's father, as his replacement. Gates, currently president of Texas A&M University, will face confirmation hearings by Congress before the end of 2006.

Local election results reflected the political tide of the nation. The following are the 2006 election results for Harlem, West Harlem and Washington Heights:

- U. S. Senator – Hillary Clinton

- U.S. Congressman – Charles Rangel
- Governor – Eliot Spitzer
- Lt. Governor – David Paterson
- Comptroller – Alan Hevesi
- Attorney General – Andrew Cuomo
- State Senator – Bill Perkins
- State Assemblymen – Keith Wright; Adam Clayton Powell, IV; Daniel O'Donnell and Herman Farrell

For more information, please visit the official website of the Board of Elections at [www.vote.nyc.ny.us](http://www.vote.nyc.ny.us).

“If you look at (it) race by race, it was close. The cumulative effect, however, was not too close. It was a thumping.”

- President George W. Bush

**WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CONT'D)**

It was not until a few months ago, when he was honored by the United States Congress and Tuskegee University for his lifelong legacy of service as a Tuskegee Airman, that it all clicked. My Dad is no different from those nameless, faceless service men and women who serve this country for you and me each and every day. So, for all those faces with no names attached who have served this country, please always remember that every soldier

meant something to someone. In my case, it was MY father — a proud Tuskegee Airman!

In his honor, I am sharing a poem that was dedicated to my dad at the Congressional ceremony:

Because You Stood.

I stand tall, because you stood strong

I stand proud, because you never buckled

I stand safe, because you forged on through all that came before you

I stand free, Thanks to the battles you fought

I stand blessed, for I know you will always be there to make sure that I stay free

I stand with open arms and a warm felt heart, to welcome you

To enjoy that, which you help make possible

We stand, because you stood.



Cropped poster of Tuskegee Airman urging Americans to buy U.S. war bonds. (Circa 1942)

**KWANZAA (CONT'D)**

5. Mishumaa Saba (The Seven Candles) – the Nguzo Saba
6. Kikombe cha Umoja (The Unity Cup) – the practice of cultural unity
7. Zawadi (The Gifts) – the fruits of labor and love
8. Bendera (The Flag) – the national colors for African people in the Diaspora
9. Nguzo Saba Poster – the Seven Principles

A central location in the home should be the setting

for the Kwanzaa table, on which are placed the aforementioned Kwanzaa symbols; the Nguzo Saba Poster should be mounted on the wall. The Mishumaa Saba should be arranged in the kinara as follows: the black candle in the middle, the three red candles to the left and the three green candles to the right. The black candle should be lit on the first day of Kwanzaa. The remaining candles should be lit from left to right on following days.

During each of the seven days of Kwanzaa, a principle

should be discussed with the family, followed by a gift (homemade and/or educational) that represents said principle of the day. December 31 is traditionally the day of the karamu (feast). A gathering of family and community is strongly encouraged to reinforce the purpose of Kwanzaa as a time to reflect upon the strength and beauty of the African community of the Diaspora.

For further information on celebrating Kwanzaa, please visit the official Kwanzaa home page at [www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org](http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org).



Dr. Maulana Karenga, founder of Kwanzaa and the Organization US.

**TEENS & TWEENS**

**NOT A RHYME TIME!**  
- Brittany Jordan

sewn into my blanket  
of cultural thoughts  
what the heck is going into my mind?  
soldiers blowing off the heads of my people  
strapping down our women  
who hold the world in their very palms  
the supporters of human nature  
the ones called “Boriquas”  
because of what they are  
just like my beautiful abuelita  
who lives, breathes and smells  
of the Puerto Rican culture  
the afro natives easing into my head  
like a Tylenol  
helping me to calm the pain, the reality of it all  
what an experience to not only be black  
but to be a different kind of black  
Puerto Rican  
but not Puerto Rican  
the right word to call myself is “Boriqua”  
not that port of rich stuff  
that is simulated in our minds from  
the human trade of the natives

just call it jealousy  
why “jealousy” you ask?  
just the thought that we could rise  
higher than the Gods  
higher than humanity  
higher than them  
just the thought is burning in their minds  
killing them softly  
they couldn’t let that happen  
so they had to hurt, kill and sabotage  
the black culture, the Boriquas  
the Cubanos and many more  
what they didn’t know was that  
they could kill the people  
but they couldn’t kill the culture

*Brittany Jordan, an Afro-Puerto Rican, is an eighth grade student at the KIPP: Star Academy in Harlem. An avid writer and poet, Brittany is also a member of the Ghostwriterz literary collective, a component of the Junior Scholars program of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Notably, in October 2006, the Schomburg Center celebrated its 80th anniversary of service to the Black and research communities.*

“they could kill  
the people but  
they couldn’t kill  
the culture”



Brittany Jordan

**We are on the web!**

**[www.ecdo.org](http://www.ecdo.org)**

**JOURNAL OF ECUMENICAL  
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**ECDO ON THE MOVE!**

- Do you need help with organizing a tenant association? Please contact (212) 678-0037, extension 12, for technical assistance.
- Do you need assistance with finding employment? Please contact one of our employment coaches at (212) 531-3211, extension 36, for further information.
- You may be able to register for a free Metro Card if you are between the ages of 16-21 and currently employed. Please call (212) 531-3211, extension 38, for additional eligibility requirements.
- If you or someone you know needs assistance with reading a child's immunization record, please stop by the ECDO Community Partnership Center between 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (and receive a free gift). The ECDO Community Partnership Center is located at 413 W. 125<sup>th</sup> Street or you may call (212) 531-3211, extension 38, for further information.
- The ECDO Head Start/Early Childhood Development Daycare Center is currently enrolling infants through pre-school aged children. The Center is located at 249 W. 144<sup>th</sup> Street or you may call (212) 234-8135 for further information.

**OUR MISSION**

Ecumenical Community Development Organization is a not for profit organization dedicated to formulate and implement plans and projects that improve the housing, social, and economic conditions of low and moderate income residents and businesses of the West and Central Harlem communities. It is the organization's goal to assist residents of West Harlem with a sense of community and a sense of personal empowerment. ECDO is committed to community revitalization as housing development has been its primary purpose until the organization expanded its role in the community. ECDO has broadened and diversified its scope of projects that includes tenant and community organizing, technical assistance to community residents and organizations, counseling, education, youth and adult employment programs and services.