

South Bay Division Heritage Day Unites Different Cultures of MTA

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(May 27, 2003) Every year, Division 18 has separately commemorated Black History Month, Cinco de Mayo and Juneteenth. This year, the division combined all three events into one day, known as Heritage Day.



Traditional dancers were a highlight of South Bay Division 18's Heritage Day.

Division 18 Operator Andy Carter, Heritage Day's founder, says the scheduling for each individual celebration did not go as planned. Holding all the events on one day is more convenient and creates a sense of togetherness among MTA employees of different cultures.

Observed May 16, Division 18's Heritage Day consisted of an assortment of ethnic food and dances from around the world. Employees prepared the cuisine of their own culture, some of which included delicacies from Mexico, Japan and Belize.

Students from Jordan High School in Long Beach, John Adams Middle School in Los Angeles and Lynwood High School presented Aztec, Vaquero, African, Portuguese and belly dancing.

The event also highlighted the singing of John Adams Middle School student Shirley Jimenez, who performed the National Anthem, and an ensemble of Jordan High school students, who performed "Ain't Too Proud to Beg," by The Temptations.

'People of all cultures'

"We celebrated everybody today," Carter said following the festivities. "It was something that could interest people of all cultures."

Heritage Day, which took about two months to plan, was organized by Carter, Division 18 Transportation Manager Cynthia Karpman, the United Transportation Union, Division 18 Transit Operations Supervisor Charlene Carr and Division 18 operators Laretta Meadows, Cassall Scott, Andre Molette, Joann Poe, Sally Avelino and Janett Smith.

About 75 people attended the first-year event, which was open to MTA personnel and the public.

Carter says Heritage Day is important to the agency, as well as the community, because it provides the opportunity to unite people of different cultures and traditions.

"Maybe we can do this more often instead of separating everything all the time," Carter added.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)