Celebrations, Holidays, & Traditions for February 2009

*Black History Month*

**February 2:**

**Groundhog Day:** (United States/Canada)- recognizing the old belief that if the sun shines on Candlemans Day, or if the groundhog sees its shadow when it emerges from its den, we will experience six more weeks of winter

**Carnival:** (Brazil, Panama)- festival season that occurs immediately before Lent. involves a public celebration or parade combining some elements of a circus and public street party. People often dress up/masquerade during the celebrations. The world's largest carnival celebration is held in Brazil

**February 3:**

**Transfiguration Sunday:** (Christian)- commemorates Jesus’ experience on Mount Tabor when his physical appearance became radiant as his connection with traditional Jewish holy figures became obvious to the disciples

**February 4:**

**Carnival:** (Andorra, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Luxembourg, Panama, Uruguay, and Venezuela)- a festival season that occurs immediately before Lent. involves a public celebration or parade combining some elements of a circus and public street party. People often dress up/masquerade during the celebrations

**Liberation Day:** (Angola)-

**Carnival Monday:** (Aruba, Dominica, French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Trinidad, and Tobago)- a festival season that occurs immediately before Lent

**Constitution Day:** (Mexico) - a holiday to honor the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States of 1917. This is presently Mexico’s constitution

**National Day:** (Sri Lanka)
February 5:

**Carnival:** (Brazil, Ecuador, and Uruguay)- a festival season that occurs immediately before Lent

**Unity Day:** (Burundi)- a public holiday to celebrate the start of a transition to democracy 8 years ago that led to the country’s first freely elected president, Melchior Ndadaye

**Carnival Tuesday:** (Dominica, Trinidad, and Tobago)- a festival season that occurs immediately before Lent

**Mardi Gras (French for Fat Tuesday):** (French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Panama)- the day before Ash Wednesday and the final day of carnival. The most famous cities known for their Mardi Gras celebrations are New Orleans, Louisiana; Mobile, Alabama; Venice, Italy; Sydney, Australia; France; and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

**Kashmir Day:** (Pakistan)- marks the day that everyone in Pakistan marches in the streets in “solidarity” with the “freedom fighters” in Kashmir and their quest for “independence”

**Shrove Tuesday:** (Portugal)- the last day before Lent. Many people celebrate this day or days prior to it by having carnivals such as Mardi Gras. In England it became known as “Shrove Tuesday” because people went to church to “shrove” or “confess” their sins

**Liberation Day/Saint Agatha’s Day:** (San Marino)- the anniversary of the liberation of San Marino from occupation by the invading forces of Cardinal Alberoni in 1739. The day is also dedicated to Saint Agatha, the “co-patron” of the city
February 6:

**Ash Wednesday:** (Brazil, Cayman Islands, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica, and Panama)- marks the beginning of the 40 day season of Lent; the time that Jesus spent in the wilderness. Ashes are typically used to mark worshippers to show atonement and remorse

**Waitangi Day:** (New Zealand, Niue, Tokelau)- public holiday to celebrate the Treaty of Waitangi established British sovereignty over New Zealand

**Seollal:** (South Korea)- Lunar New Year’s Day is one of the most important traditional events of the year in South Korea, more significant than January 1st

**Chinese New Year’s Eve:** (Taiwan)- the day before the lunar new year and the most significant festival for ethnic Chinese in the world. The celebrations are typically several days, the festival is about three weeks long

**Tet Eve:** (Vietnam)- a colorful family occasion, Tet, or Chinese New Year, marks the most important time of year for the people of Vietnam. Tet means "festival of the first day" and celebrations take place for weeks leading up to the last day of the lunar year

February 7:

**Chinese New Year:** (China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand)- According to the lunar calendar of 2008, it marks the “Year of the Rat”

**Independence Day:** (Grenada)- In 1974, Grenada gained full independence from Britain becoming the smallest independent country in the Western Hemisphere

**Tet (Vietnamese New Year):** (Vietnam)- a colorful family occasion, Tet, or Chinese New Year, marks the most important time of year for the people of Vietnam. Tet means "festival of the first day" and celebrations take place for weeks leading up to the last day of the lunar year

February 10:

**Chinese New Year 2008 Golden Week Holiday:** (China)- in the mainland of the People’s Republic of China was the name given to three annual 7-day national holidays, implemented in 2000. Chinese people currently enjoy 10 days of legal holidays Three days each are given for the May Day, National Day and Spring Festival breaks, and one day for New Year's Day
**February 11:**

**Youth Day:** (Cameroon) - a national holiday to observe the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, one of the most famous and influential spiritual leaders in India. Youth Day is observed all over India at schools and colleges with processions, speeches, music, and competitions in essay-writing.

**Vasant Panchami:** (India) - celebrates spring, or Basant, and Sarasvati, the Hindu goddess of learning and the arts. This is the time when some children begin learning the 50 letters used in the Sanskrit alphabet.

**Revolution Day:** (Iran) - In 1979, Iran was transformed from a monarchy to Islamic Republic.

**Foundation Day:** (Japan) - a national holiday to celebrate the founding of the nation and the imperial line by its mythical first emperor, Jimmu, who established his capital in Yamato.

**Armed Forces Day:** (Liberia) - a day to recognize the military of Liberia.

**February 12:**

**Lincoln’s Birthday:** (United States) - the birthday of President Abraham Lincoln.

**Union Day:** Myanmar

**February 14:**

**St. Valentine’s Day:** United States - a celebration nearly all over the world by the exchange of gifts that convey affection and love.

**February 15:**


**National Day** - (Serbia) - statehood day in Serbia.

**Nirvana** - Buddhist - celebrated by some Buddhists on Feb 8. Commemorates Buddha’s death when he reached the zenith of Nirvana, at the age of 80.
February 16:

**President’s Day:** American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, United States, Virgin Islands (US)- a day to celebrate and honor Presidents Washington and Lincoln. Today it is a day to recognize the contributions of all Presidents

**Independence Day:** (Lithuania)- In 1918, gained independence from Russia and Germany

February 18:

**President’s Day:** American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, United States, Virgin Islands (US)- a day to celebrate and honor Presidents Washington and Lincoln. Today it is a day to recognize the contributions of all Presidents

**Independence Day:** (Gambia)- In 1965, gained independence from the United Kingdom

February 19:

**Prajantra Diwash (Democracy Day):** (Nepal)- observed as a vow to end any form of autocratic rule

**Flag Day:** (Turkmenistan)- established in 1997 to coincide with the birthday of then President Saparmurat Niyazov

February 21:

**Shaheed Day:** (Bangladesh)- observed with great solemnity, starting from midnight to remember the students and youth protesters whom lost their lives while protesting against the imposition of Urdu by the then government as the lone state language of Pakistan

**Meak Bochea Day:** (Cambodia)- commemorates the spontaneous gathering of monks to listen to the Buddha’s preaching

**Guru Ravidas Jayanti:** (India)- Ravidas was a great saint, who symbolized social unity and equality. Guru Ravidas was born in a village near Varanasi in 1376
**Makha Bucha:** (Thailand)- religious holiday that marks four events that took place during Lord Buddha’s lifetime

**Lini Day:** (Vanuatu)- commemorates Father Lini

**February 22:**

**Independence Day:** (St. Lucia)- In 1979, gained independence form Great Britain

**Washington’s Birthday:** (United States)- a federal public holiday to observe the birthday of the 1st American President(1789-97), affectionately called, the father of his country

**February 23:**

**Republic Day:** (Guyana)- Commemorates the anniversary of the establishment as a sovereign democratic state within the British Commonwealth in 1970

**Defender’s Day**-(Kyrgyzstan, Russia)- a day Russia honors those who are presently serving in the Armed Forces and those who have served in the past. During the era of the Soviet Union, it was called "Red Army Day"

**Maha Shivaratri**-(Nepal)- a Hindu festival celebrated every year the most significant practices on this day are offerings of Bael (Bilva) leaves to the Lord Shiva, fasting and all night long vigil many people consume bhang lassi, which they believe is lord Shiva's favorite drink

**February 24:**

**Independence Day:** (Estonia)- In 1918, gained independence from Bolshevist

**Mardi Gras (French for Fat Tuesday):** (French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Panama)- the day before Ash Wednesday and the final day of carnival. The most famous cities known for their Mardi Gras celebrations are New Orleans, Louisiana; Mobile, Alabama; Venice, Italy; Sydney, Australia; France; and Rio de Janiero, Brazil
February 25:

Ash Wednesday: (Brazil, Cayman Islands, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica, and Panama) - marks the beginning of the 40 day season of Lent; the time that Jesus spent in the wilderness. Ashes are typically used to mark worshippers to show atonement and remorse

National Day: (Kuwait) - celebrates the creation of Kuwait as a nation in 1961

February 26:

Liberation Day- (Kuwait) - celebrates the liberation of Kuwait by a multinational force from seven months of traumatic Iraqi occupation on February 26, 1991

Magal de Touba- (Senegal) - celebration commemorating the return from exile of Mouridism’s founder Cheikh Amadou Bamba

Intercalary Days- (Baha’i) - an insertion of a leap day into the calendar to make the calendar follow the seasons or moon phases

February 27:

Independence Day- (Dominican Republic) - In 1844, gained independence from Haiti

February 28:

Memorial Day- (Taiwan) -