

Cultural News

Volume 16, Issue 11
November 2018



EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

The Day of the Dead in Mexico

By Paula Pena, Spanish Medical Interpreter

Halloween is often confused with the “El Dia de los Muertos” because the dates are so close together. Halloween is celebrated on October 31 and originates from the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced sow-in). The Celts celebrated their new year on November 1 - a day that marked the end of summer, harvest and the beginning of the dark winter.

Dia de los Muertos has its origins on the pre-Hispanic agricultural calendar. It is celebrated on two consecutive days. Starting on November 1, we celebrate All Saints Day. The Saints include Virgin Mary, the apostles, all deceased baptized infants and all those who lived an exemplary life.

On November 2, all of the deceased adults are remembered whether they are family or friends, by placing food and a special bread baked for the occasion called “Pan de Muerto” at the “altar” as shown in the picture on the right.

In my hometown of San Miguel Zapotitlan, the celebration is held at the cemetery. The Municipal officers make all arrangements including a musical group for the festival. Family members of those that have passed away take candles, food and drinks to decorate the grave sites. Trios and duets are contracted by family members to serenade the departed with what once were their favorite songs.



NOVEMBER 2018 CALENDAR

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH
MILITARY FAMILY APPRECIATION MONTH
NATIONAL DIABETES MONTH

- 1- Samhain- Beltane (Wicca/Pagan)
- 2- All Souls Day (Catholic Christian)
- 6- Election Day (US)
- 7- Diwali (Sikh, Jain, Hindu)
- 8- Intersex Day of Remembrance (US)
- 9- World Freedom Day
- 11-17- National Nurse Practitioner's Week (US)
- 12- Birth of Baha'ullah (Baha'i)
- 18-24- National Family Week (US)
- 21- Mawlid an Nabi (Islam)
- 22- Thanksgiving USA (Interfaith)
- 23- Guru Nanak Dev Sahib birthday (Sikh)
- 26- Day of the Covenant (Baha'i)
- 28- Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha (Baha'i)
- 30- St. Andrew's Day (Christian)

TIP FOR WORKING WITH HEALTHCARE INTERPRETERS

- Greet the patient first, then greet the interpreter.
- Focus on and speak to the patient, not the interpreter.
- Speak at an even pace and pause often to allow the interpreter to interpret.
- Pay attention to the patient's body language.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Use plain English, avoid slang, jargon, technical terms, and acronyms. These can be difficult to interpret.
- Remember that humor is very difficult to interpret!
- Pay attention to cultural issues.
- Assume that everything you say and everything that the patient says will be interpreted.

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- If you need to talk directly to the interpreter about an issue of communication or culture, tell the patient first what you're going to be addressing with the interpreter.
- Do not hold interpreter responsible for what the patient does or does not say; the interpreter is the medium of the message, not the source.
- Understand that in some languages the interpreter may need to "paint word pictures" of some of the terms you may use; this may take longer than your original speech.
- Many concepts you express have no linguistic or conceptual equivalent in other languages
- If your patient is focusing excessively on the interpreter, you can use the following techniques to get the patient to focus on you:
 - Use the patient's name;
 - Move your chair closer to the patient;
 - Make eye contact as often as possible;
 - Use facial expressions and body language that communicate interest and attentiveness.
- Make no assumptions about the patient's education level. A patient's inability to speak English does not necessarily equate with a lack of education.
- When working with the telephonic interpreter, remember that the interpreter is "blind" to whatever is happening in the room. Narrate for him/her what is necessary about what's happening in the room.



New Staff Translator Profile: Carolina Vita Shepherd

Carolina is a native of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Her grandparents are Italian and Yugoslavian. Since the day she was born, she was surrounded by people from different cultures in her everyday life. Her parents constantly told her stories about their families, and what it meant to be sons and daughters of immigrants.

When she was in first grade, she became fascinated by her English language teachers who were very fluent in speaking a language that was so foreign to her. English was so different than Italian and Spanish. It was a mystery to her. Soon she became aware that there was a different world that her teachers could access by speaking a different language. She told herself she wanted to be just like them.

She later attended a high school that specialized in foreign languages and there she learned Latin, English and French. Then, she attended the American Translators Association- recognized translation college in Argentina before moving to the United States in 2001. She received a BA in Psychology and a Master of Arts in Teaching Spanish, both from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She also received national certification from the American Translators Association (ATA) in 2014.

In her career, she worked as a language teacher, interpreter and translator. She is currently working as a translator only and loves it! Her main areas of expertise are medical and psychiatry. She has experience working for hospitals, health departments and mental health services agencies.

Her biggest accomplishments are her family (husband and two little girls), and being able to create a successful and happy life

in a foreign country. Carolina's first years in the US were rough, really tough, but today she feels grateful for that experience because it allowed her to evolve as a person.

During her spare time she loves spending time with her family and her cat. She loves taking walks on a sunny day and meeting new people and getting to know them.

We asked Carolina how does she feel about joining the UCDMC Medical Interpreting department? In her own words, "I feel so honored and so lucky to be a part of this team of wonderful, supportive, language experts. With every project, I learn something new from my peers: translation techniques, technical vocabulary, language subtleties. The work environment is very supportive and allows me to enjoy the work that I do and love. I hope that love and enjoyment for language is transmitted eventually to the recipients of our translations, bringing people together, uniting cultures".

Welcome aboard, Carolina! We are happy to have you as part of the UC Davis Medical Center's Written Translations Team.

