

# MAY

## *National Physical Fitness Month*

National Physical Fitness and Sports Month is sponsored annually by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. This observance is designed to make the public aware of the benefits to a lifelong program of regular moderate physical activity as prescribed by the Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health.

## *Seven (7) days following May 4: Asian Pacific American Heritage Week*

The United States is a nation comprised almost entirely of immigrants and their descendants. The interaction of different cultures, each of which has become a vital part of a culture uniquely American, constantly revitalizes our national spirit and heritage. Six of the top 10 sources of legal U.S. immigrants are Asian countries --Vietnam, the Philippines, Korea, China, India, and Laos. On May 7, 1843 the first Japanese immigrants arrived in the United States. Since 1990 the USA has set this week aside to commemorate Asian Pacific Americans contribution to our nation.

## *May 5: Cinco De Mayo*

Cinco de Mayo is a date of great importance for the Mexican and Chicano communities. It marks the victory of the Mexican Army over the French at the Battle of Puebla. Although the Mexican army was eventually defeated, the "Batalla de Puebla" came to represent a symbol of Mexican unity and patriotism. With this victory, Mexico demonstrated to the world that Mexico and all of Latin America were willing to defend themselves of any foreign intervention. Especially those from imperialist states bent on world conquest.

Cinco de Mayo's history has its roots in the French Occupation of Mexico. The French occupation took shape in the aftermath of the Mexican-American War of 1846-48. With this war, Mexico entered a period of national crisis during the 1850's. Years of not only fighting the Americans but also a Civil War, had left Mexico devastated and bankrupt. On July 17, 1861, President Benito Juarez issued a moratorium in which all foreign debt payments would be suspended for a brief period of two years, with the promise that after this period, payments would resume.

In the United States, the "Batalla de Puebla" came to be known as simply "5 de Mayo" and unfortunately, many people wrongly equate it with Mexican Independence which was on September 16, 1810, nearly a fifty year difference. Over the years, Cinco de Mayo has become seen by many people to be a holiday a time for fun and dance. Oddly enough, Cinco de Mayo has become more of Chicano holiday than a Mexican one. Cinco de Mayo is celebrated on a much larger scale here in the United States than it is in Mexico. People of Mexican descent in the United States celebrate this significant day by with parades, mariachi music, folklorico dancing and other types of festive activities.