



ORION

Diversity & Inclusion Newsletter



ISSUE: JAN-MAR 2016

Diversity is the sum total of the differences which make individuals who they are, and their collective ability to contribute to the goals of an organization.

INTRODUCTION

Orion Team members:

<i>Chris Palmer</i>	281-333-6351
Andrew Grant	281-333-6085
Anna Kallay	281-333-6373
Judeene Edison	281-333-6675
Kat Coderre	281-333-6229
Mo Nyguen	281-333-6256
Roseann Drake	281-333-6274
Alex Saldana	281-333-6718
Sherry Salyer	281-333-6728
Kishen Raghunath	281-333-6576
Richard Wenzel	281-333-6012

Supporting Teams

FDOC: Jeff Boxell	281-853-3440
CMC: Jamie Carl	281-333-6128
BIO: Ramona Gaza	281-244-0059

The subcommittees could use your assistance! Please speak with your friendly council members about joining the team!

DEFINITION & OBJECTIVES OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Diversity is what makes individuals who they are, utilize their collective ability to contribute to the goals of an organization.

Diversity helps: improve corporate culture, improve employee morale, decrease complaints and litigation, enable the movements into emerging markets, decrease interpersonal conflict, improve client relations, increase productivity, and increases creativity.

Elements of Diversity: age, race, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities, parental status, education, geographic location, religious beliefs, military experience, class / income, ethnicity.

The objective of the Council is to organize and lead events that will engage employees and expose them to the wonders of a diverse workforce, gain senior leadership commitment, support local/community diversity groups, provide training as part of the journey, promote open communication to overcome behavioral resistance, improve understanding and gain acceptance of diversity as a cultural norm, support LM Employee Resource Groups, and leave diversity and inclusion training to Corporate.

Goals of the Orion D&I Team

- Organize and lead events that will engage employees and expose them to the wonders of a diverse workforce
- Gain senior leadership commitment
- Support local / community diversity groups
- Provide diversity training, not as the destination but as part of the journey
- Promote open communication and dialogue to overcome behavioral resistance, improve understanding and gain acceptance of diversity as a cultural norm
- Support as needed LM Employee Resource Groups (ERG)
- And above all...have fun!

Event Objectives

- Employees must have Fun!
- Events must be inclusive to all LM Employees in Houston
- Each event is led by a subcommittee
- Each member leads one event per subcommittee
- Events should require minimal effort to put together
- Budget is minimal so events must be low cost
- One major event per quarter
- Events must be sustainable



UPCOMING

February:

- Black History Month Events at JSC
- Deke Slayton Cancer Center Care Bag Drive
- Leap Year Candy!

March:

- St. Patrick's Day Dessert Potluck (3/17)
- Habitat For Humanity Volunteer Event

April:

- Food Trucks!

Upcoming Cultural Holidays:

Religious Freedom Day	January 16, 2016
National Black History Month	February
St. Rosa Parks Birthday	February 4
World Day of Prayer	March 4, 2016
St. Patrick's Day	March 17, 2016
Greek American Heritage Month	March

Upcoming Wacky Days:

Umbrella Day	February 10, 2016
Cherry Pie Day	February 20, 2016
Tennis Day	February 23, 2016
Hug a GI Day	March 4, 2016
National Pi Day	March 14, 2016

What did you think of these past events? Feel free to leave comments on our survey page on the SharePoint!

November: Guess the Manager Game

December: Global Holiday Potluck

Keep in the know by checking out our bulletin boards on the 3rd and 4th floor near the main entrances.

Follow us on our Eureka Stream:

<https://eureka.isgs.lmco.com/#activity/group/houdicouncil>

Check out our SharePoint:

https://isgs-gen.external.lmco.com/sites/HOUSTON_DI_ERG

Cowboys of Color

Adapted from AAA Magazine Texas Journeys
by Larry Bleiberg
January/February 2016 Issue

Harold Sheppard was a child in 1950s South Texas picking cotton when friends taught him how to rope a calf. “My dad thought this was foolishness,” the 67-year-old said. He continued anyway, saving 75 cents to buy his own lariat, and he soon began winning prizes in small-town rodeos. But Sheppard, who is black, couldn’t help noticing that none of the other competitors looked like him.

In 1975, he traveled to Dallas for the city’s first all-black rodeo. “I was shocked to see so many black cowboys, and I wondered where they all came from,” Sheppard recalled.

That event was produced by fellow horseman Cleo L. Hearn, who has dedicated his life to showcasing a slice of history overlooked by Hollywood. For many people, the image of the American cowboy calls to mind such stars as John Wayne, Gary Cooper, and Gene Autry. In reality, much of the West’s range work was performed by former slaves and their descendants. Historians say that at least one-quarter of the cowboys who rode the range were black.

“It’s a little heartbreaking to admit I didn’t know that until I was 30,” Hearn said. Telling that story—along with entertaining fans—inspired him to start a rodeo circuit he originally called the Texas Black Rodeo.

As Hearn continued researching the Old West, he found that the stories of American Indians and Mexicans were overlooked as well. In the 1500s, the Spanish introduced ranching in Mexico and recruited American Indians to manage the herds; later, Mexicans were commonly hired to work early-Texas cattle country. The range-workers from these two ethnic groups established rodeo traditions still popular today.



These findings led Hearn to change the name and mission of his production in 1995 to the Cowboys of Color rodeo series. These days, it produces 10 rodeos a year, including stops in Dallas, Fort Worth, Lufkin, and

Mesquite in Texas, as well as two appearances in Oklahoma. When the multicultural circuit started, many considered it a novelty. But now, the children of original participants, including Sheppard’s son, known as Little Harold, compete for glory. The event has built a strong fan base eager to see athletes who may someday qualify for major Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) events.

More Than Competitors

Before the rodeo at Fair Park in Dallas last June, Hearn gave the participants a pep talk, leaning over a metal rail like a trail driver preparing his crew for the range. The barrel racers and bull riders gathered in front of him might’ve been focused on winning cash prizes, but the real stakes are higher, Hearn said. “We’re here to entertain, but also to educate.”



While you’ll find the same starched blue jeans and Resitol hats as at a typical rodeo, between events at the Cowboys of Color productions, you’re more likely to hear Aretha Franklin belting out “Respect” or Will Smith’s ’90s hip-hop song “Wild, Wild West” than a tune from Garth Brooks or Alan Jackson.

The competitions vary, too. The Cowboys of Color series includes the Pony Express Relay, a team horse race inspired by the historic mail service. The fast-paced event, which pits Texas teams against Oklahoma ones, has crowds on their feet and cheering.

The rodeos start on a rousing note: a grand entry parade featuring all the athletes. At Fair Park, Jacob Cifuentes, 9, and his sister Jazmin, 8, threatened to steal the show as they galloped by on ponies and waved U.S. and Texas flags. They returned later in the evening with their mother, Cindy Chavarria, as part of an escaramuza demonstration. The Mexican drill team, which gets its name from the Spanish word for skirmish, is a group of female sidesaddle riders who perform elaborately choreographed routines.

Chavarria’s mom started Texas’s first team about 30 years ago, and now the daughter is following the tradition, leading her kids and relatives in an eight-

person group she calls Little Bit of Mexico. At the Dallas event, she wore a handmade cream-colored layered skirt, trimmed with lace and red and blue silk bows. Chavarria said many people assume she's a folklórico dancer, not understanding she's preserving a different Mexican tradition.

"My dad was a charro. He ran a pool-building company, but on weekends he rode," said the Ferris resident. "I want the traditions to continue. I want my children to know about their heritage."



Other Cowboys of Color rodeos may offer American Indian drummers and dancers, or Buffalo Soldier reenactors manning exhibit tables and a demonstration camp to show what frontier life was like for the legendary black military men. Hearn is always seeking new stories to tell. He's presently looking for a female rider to represent Johanna July, a prominent black Seminole Indian who tamed wild horses for the U.S. Army in the 1800s.

Once the show starts, announcer Kevin Woodson's job is twofold: calling the action and explaining the history. He shares tidbits of historical stories about black people who played a significant role in the early American West, such as cowboy Bill Pickett, who created the rodeo event of bulldogging (steer wrestling); bull rider Charlie "Peewee" Sampson, who was the first black man to win a PRCA world championship; and Bass Reeves, a black deputy U.S. Marshall who is believed to have inspired the fictional character of the Lone Ranger.

Woodson himself has a rodeo past. He attended his first in St. Louis as a child and immediately knew he wanted to ride. But when he shared his career plans with his fourth-grade teacher, who is black, she tried to steer him straight, telling him there were no black cowboys.

"I knew she was wrong, and I went home and did some research," Woodson said. "The next day she let me give a report."

He worked as a rodeo clown and a bull rider for years, even as he built a career in radio. And through his job as Cowboys of Color announcer, he's still sharing facts from that research project in fourth grade.

Family Traditions

For contestants, the rodeo offers prizes and a chance to earn experience that might lead to major competitions. That's partially what motivates, Ke'Elronn Hatley, who started roping as a kid. He says he stood out from his friends and not just because of his cowboy hat and dreadlocks. "They had footballs and basketballs," he said. "I had horses." It served him well, as Hatley went on to become quite successful in calf roping.

The Cowboys of Color event in Dallas was just the start of a tradition for Donna Pixler, who drove up from from Copperas Cove with a group of local riders to support her 14-year-old granddaughter, Sydney Carter. The teen is developing as a barrel racer, a daring timed race that's always a crowd pleaser.

"Every time I'm riding, it's just me and the horse," she said. "It's good knowing I can control a big animal." Dallas was one of her first major contests. In the preliminaries, she placed 11th. Only the top 10 proceed to the finals. Pixler, though, was pleased and knows her granddaughter will return. "She's only been barrel racing for two years," she said. "It was nerves. She's disappointed, but she knows what to expect now."

For the Sheppard family, the tradition is now on its third generation. Four decades after his first black rodeo, Harold is now joined by his son and his 6-year-old grandson, Jordan. Jordan is already riding, Little Harold boasted. "I can put him on a Shetland pony and he'll throw rope." And in just a few years, he'll likely follow his grandfather's path down to the arena floor.



Upcoming Events around Houston



Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo

What's There to Do?

Deeply rooted in Texas history, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo reigns supreme. The event features competitions of all kinds including livestock, culinary, wine and more as well as chart-topping live musical acts, making the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo an action-packed event that draws in crowds by the thousands.

When: March 1-20, 2016

Where: NRG Park
1 Reliant Pkwy
Houston, TX

Learn More: <http://www.rodeohouston.com/>



Houston Tea Festival

What's There to Do?

Follow us down the rabbit hole as we celebrate the world's most popular beverage with talks, workshops, tea tastings, tea and food pairings, vendors and shopping, tea samples, an elegant afternoon tea, live music, entertainment, children's activities, movie screening, murder mystery, and tea industry networking events!

When: Saturday/Sunday February 20-21

Where: Bayou Building – Atrium II and Forest Room
2700 Bay Area Boulevard
Houston, TX 77058

Learn More: <http://www.houstontefestival.com>



Arts in the Park

What's There to Do?

Enjoy an afternoon with family and friends at Rob Fleming Park! Bring lawn chairs and coolers and enjoy the music of talented teens. This FREE event features local vendors selling original artwork, fun activities and live performances

When: March 12, 2016

Where:
Rob Fleming Park
6055 Creekside Forest Dr.
The Woodlands, TX 77389

Learn More: <http://www.thewoodlandstowship-tx.gov/artsinthepark.com/>

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2100 Space Park Drive
Houston, TX 77058