

On January 27, Howard Zinn died. He was 87 years old.

Zinn packed a lot into his 87 years, and he kept working right up until his death. He did too much over the course of his life to highlight here, but his main intellectual achievement and contribution to American life, *The People's History of the United States*, is of monumental importance to our work with civil rights teams.

The People's History revolutionized the way we understand history. Here's how:

1. Zinn's history is inclusive.

His work was multicultural before we'd even heard of that word. *The People's History* goes to great lengths to give the histories of Native Americans, black slaves and African Americans, Mexicans and Hispanic/Latinos, immigrants, religious minorities, women, people with disabilities, and people with different sexual orientations. His reasoning was simple: their history is American history, too, but is often neglected in the traditional American narrative. We all know about how history is dominated by dead white males. Zinn worked to change that. He saw America as a true multicultural society, to the point that any history focusing on white males is at best incomplete. At its worst it's simply inaccurate.



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2. Zinn's history values average, everyday Americans.

Traditional histories focus on the people in power, but Zinn understood that history matters most when it applies to average, everyday people. He thought that we learn too much about presidents and generals, and not nearly enough about people like ourselves. His telling of American history is more than just what happened in the halls of power. He went into the fields, into the factories, into the streets, and into people's homes to understand how major historical events and trends influenced real people. His telling of history is people-focused, and understands that average, everyday people matter.

3. Zinn's history shows us that average, everyday people are capable of making change.

This is inextricably linked with #2. In studying the lives of so many average, everyday Americans, Zinn understood that they were capable of doing great things. In fact, many of the great changes throughout American history were brought about because of average, everyday people demanding change. Not only do events and trends influence real people; real people influence major historical events and trends.

Imagine a history of the Civil Rights Movement focused exclusively on Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, Congress, and Martin Luther King. It's incomplete and inaccurate. To understand the Civil Rights Movement, you must understand that it was a *movement*, defined by average, everyday Americans taking action and organizing. Zinn's history understands this, as it's a people-based approach.

4. Zinn had, and has, his critics.

The number one complaint of Zinn has always been that he's biased. He never disputed this. He was *unapologetically* biased. His histories were filling a void that existed because of the traditional bias in American history towards powerful white males. All history is biased. Traditional history does not acknowledge its own bias, though, and feeds the myth that the white male perspective is unbiased and neutral.

Zinn has also faced criticism for writing "feel-good" history aimed at uplifting people's feelings of self-worth. Anyone who has ever read anything from *The People's History* knows that "feel-good" is not the right descriptor for his work. Zinn was unflinchingly critical, but fair. And it's not "feel-good" to acknowledge that all the people who make up America matter, that they, too, have history, and that their history is important.

Finally, Zinn has been called anti-American and unpatriotic. It's true that his histories have been critical of America. Sometimes the truth hurts. But Zinn dedicated his life to America and telling its story, and he wanted to get it right. Why? Because he loved America, believed in its ideals and its promise, and thought that we could all benefit from the truths he recorded as American history. He was critical, yes, but his criticism



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came out of love. And in that regard, we can think of no better patriot than Howard Zinn, who dared to tell the truth about America because of his unconditional love for it.

To honor the life and work of Howard Zinn, then, we present this poem by Langston Hughes:

I, Too, Sing America

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed--

I, too, am America.

* * * * *

To learn more about this marvelous man, check out his website at:

<http://howardzinn.org>

It's also worth looking at our "Relevant Resources" section this month, where we highlight some Zinn-inspired histories written for young people.

And finally, check out the documentary film, *You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train*, showing in Portland at the SPACE Gallery on March 15th at 7:30 pm. Admission is \$7.



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The Director's Cut: Thom sifts through some old enforcement files and can't help but think about the progress we've made in the last 20 years.

Civil Rights Teams in Action: The Calais Junior High and Deer Isle-Stonington Elementary School civil rights teams make some great short films.

Activity Ideas: The Super Bowl is over, but the memories of the advertisements will last us a lifetime! We offer activity ideas for analyzing one of the best and one of the worst ads from the big game.

Pop Culture Winners and Losers: February may be the shortest month, but it offered no shortage of cringe-inducing pop culture moments from a civil rights perspective. And we're not even including John Mayer...

FA Issues: What, if anything, can food teach us from a civil rights perspective?

Relevant Resources: The death of Howard Zinn in late January has us thinking about his *People's History* and other similar works written for young people.

Using Our Website: An aggressive and ambitious effort to catalog everything civil rights team do in our schools.

Upcoming Events: Plenty of great conferences to check out, including our own personal favorite, our own, on May 3rd here in Augusta.

Brandon Baldwin – Newsletter Editor, reachable at brandon.baldwin@maine.gov

This newsletter is written and distributed by the Civil Rights Team Project, a state-wide program under the auspices of the Maine Office of the Attorney General. The mission of the Civil Rights Team Project is to increase the safety of high school, middle school and elementary school students and to reduce the incidence of bias-motivated harassment and violence in schools.

Janet T. Mills—Attorney General

Thomas A. Harnett—Director, Civil Rights Education & Enforcement Unit

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Brandon Baldwin—Schools/Curriculum Coordinator



The Director's Cut

A monthly column from our Director, Thom Harnett:



I have been truly fortunate to spend so much time in a job that I love. While I certainly do not like all aspects of my job and it often calls on me to confront and redress some pretty bad behaviors, I still consider myself very lucky. For the better part of the last dozen years, I have had the chance to work for and with a remarkable group of colleagues and faculty advisors, all while getting to spend quality time with the thousands of wonderful and committed students who have participated in the Civil Rights Team Project. Rarely in that time have I sat back to really consider what we have accomplished together in our quest to make our schools places where everyone feels safe, valued, welcome, and respected.

A couple weeks ago, I needed to review all of the civil rights cases the Office of the Attorney General has brought to court since 1992. One of our civil rights teams in Aroostook County wanted to make their own video about the Maine Civil Rights Act and wanted it to be based on real cases that involved real students in real schools in Maine. To assist them, Brandon asked me to find some cases that illustrated the types of civil rights violations we have seen in Maine's schools over the years and I always do what Brandon asks me to.

(Editor's note: Oh, please.)

This review forced me to look back at hundreds of cases in which people, often students, had their civil rights violated by others due to hatred, bias, ignorance, or some combination of the three. I found myself reliving many of the cases I had handled and saw images of the young people that we sued and the victims that they targeted flash through my mind. Cases that I had brought over 15 years ago seemed as vivid to me as if they had happened yesterday. I wondered if the defendants that we sued had learned anything from their experiences with the judicial system and hoped that they had grown



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into people who respected others, even if they were different than them. I worried about the victims, the targets we tried to make feel some modicum of safety in a time when their lives were anything but safe. While I wished they had never had to experience what they did, I also found myself hoping that they were in a better place and that they were not overburdened by the awful memories that others had created for them.

I was not able to answer any of those questions fully. I do not really know what happened to most of the people who were targeted and I generally only know about the defendants who had violated Maine's civil rights laws again. This left me asking myself: how can we measure progress? Have we made things better than they were in 1992? Of course, I like to think the answer is yes, we have made some things better. I say that knowing that we still bring enforcement cases and every time we bring such a case, another person or persons have been made to feel unsafe and unwelcome in their school or community. We have not and probably cannot fix everything. Still, I was left feeling that we have made a positive difference.

Some of the changes that have occurred are tangible and easily identified. In 1996 when the CRTP began, it had 18 teams, all in high schools or middle schools. Since then, over 240 schools have participated in the CRTP and we still have more applying to join and form teams in their schools. In 1996 only students in grades 6-12 could join civil rights teams. Today, we have so many teams in elementary schools that we had to hold three separate trainings last fall just for students in grades 3-5! I now regularly meet students at trainings that tell me they have been on civil rights teams for 6, 7 and sometimes 8 or more years. That is real change; change that you have helped make. We have more students participating in the CRTP than ever before and that is making our schools better places and developing a generation of student leaders.

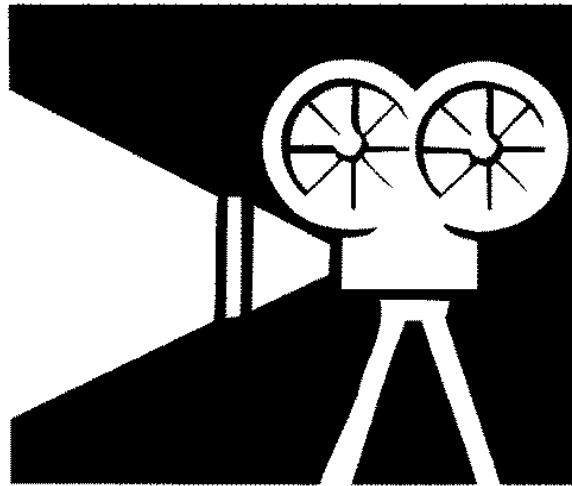
Reviewing all of our cases also revealed to me a more subtle, less tangible trend. Although my analysis was far from scientific, our cases from our earlier days of enforcement had a much greater level of physical violence than we see in most of our cases today. We still see violence and that is always unacceptable. But we do not often see, at least in schools, the serious violence that we encountered in the past. When we talk about bias motivated conduct in schools, we always point out that conduct escalates if not interrupted. At least a part of me thinks that the presence of so many students on civil rights teams in so many schools, combined with a greater awareness among faculty and administrators about the need to address bias in its earliest forms, most importantly bias laced language, are some of the reasons for this change.



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My recent trip through the past made me realize that the time and effort we all put into the CRTP does bring about change and reap real benefits. So on the days when you think you are just knocking your head against the wall and you feel that *the kids just don't get it* (and we all have those days), remember that you are making a real difference. Every time that you get your message through to one student or you see one of your team members make another student feel better about their place in their school, you are changing lives and that is the most important change any of us can hope to bring about.

In Honor of the Academy Awards, Student Films!



Just last month in our “FA Issues” feature of *The Torch* we looked at different ways to maximize the impact and effectiveness of civil rights presentations and assemblies. Our first recommendation was inclusion and/or integration of the school’s civil rights team.

Interesting timing. As the February edition of *The Torch* was going out, I was in Calais for an assembly with their Junior and Senior High School. Through some advanced contact with faculty advisor Jay Skriletz, we had arranged for both of the school’s civil rights teams to supplement my presentation on cyberbullying. Members of the high school team helped introduce the topic of cyberbullying with projected examples through instant messaging while the junior high prepared a short film for the occasion.

Both contributions were valuable in providing student voices to the presentation and giving the teams some visibility. I liked the film enough that I copied it onto my laptop’s desktop with plans to feature it here in our newsletter.

The idea for the video came late. The junior high students originally intended to do a skit based on a scene from Add Verb’s play *Make It Stop!* When they discovered that



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there audience would include older high school students, however, they thought that a short video might be preferable to a live performance.

Based on their impressive results, they might be right. Their short video shows a target of cyberbullying and her numerous attempts to get help. Unfortunately, no one seems to take her requests for help seriously. The short film then imagines an alternate reality where her requests are taken seriously. It effectively shows how little it takes for someone to make a difference, but also how important it is that they do so.

Filming and editing of this project took about two weeks. The great advantage to getting it on video is that they now have it forever. They don't have to worry about all the things that go wrong with a live performance. It's always available with the click of a button.

And we want to make it available, too. We've posted it online! You can view it at:

<http://civilrightsteams.org/mod/resource/view.php?id=230>

In early December we heard from FA Emily Wendell about a short film the civil rights team at Deer Isle-Stonington Elementary School has just completed. The process began at our fall trainings with students making signs with civil rights-related slogans. The finished film has images of these signs with students reading the text, complete with musical accompaniment. It's officially posted on the school's website, a wonderful way to increase the profile of the team. Unfortunately, I lack the tech skills to get any sort of version of it on our website, but you can always visit the school's website at:

www.dises.org

Filmmaking doesn't have to be a big, complicated process. You don't need big grants, professional know-how, or months of work to complete a good short film or public service announcement. Keeping it simple is smart. We highly encourage you to explore the possibilities of filmmaking with your team.

Ideally, we'd like to expand our online film resources to include your student-made films. If you have any films you'd like to get onto our site, contact Brandon! We'll figure out a way to get it there.

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We like to use this space to highlight the CRTP in the news. Here's some recent enforcement news:

www.sunjournal.com/content/citstaplesp020510



Super Bowl XLIV: The Commercials



There are really three categories of people on Super Bowl Sunday: sports fans, commercial watchers, and people without televisions. Over the years, it seems that America's biggest sporting event is really just a setting to provide fodder for the next day's water cooler talk. And that talk is less and less about football, and more about the commercials.

So in honor of National Water Cooler Talk Day, here's an activity that helps us analyze the best and worst of this year's Super Bowl commercials.

Super Bowl Commercial #1: Google's "Parisian Love"

Super Bowl commercials are not subtle. This year we were treated to Betty White getting body slammed, Danica Patrick and the usual GoDaddy smut tease, and a slew of Doritos ads that make *America's Funniest Home Videos* seem nuanced. So the ad that stood out for me was Google's wonderful "Parisian Love" spot. It's simple and quiet, and requires thoughtful engagement on the viewer's part. I love it.

In thinking about the Google spot, though, I found myself making certain assumptions important from a civil rights perspective. Consider the following activity for yourself and your team:

1. Watch the Google "Parisian Love" commercial:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnsSUqgkDwU&feature=player_embedded

2. Answer the following questions:



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- What is the basic storyline in this ad?
 - Who is performing the Google searches we see on screen?
3. Don't look at this unless you've completed the first two steps! Now, here we go:
- Did you assume that the main character, the one performing the searches, was male?
 - If so, how come?
4. Go back and watch the commercial again. Consider these questions:
- Why do most of us assume that it's a male performing the searches?
 - Couldn't it just as easily be a female?
 - What does this show us about assumptions we make based on gender and sexual orientation?

And it turns out that this ad is one of seven "Search Stories" Google created and put online. There's an exceptional story about high school, fitting in, and discovering your true self. Check out "High School" at:

www.youtube.com/searchstories?utm_source=en-us-ctxt-text-ss&utm_medium=ha&utm_campaign=en

Super Bowl Commercial #2: Dodge's "Man's Last Stand"

I guess I shouldn't be surprised by the hypermasculinity that was on constant display during the breaks in action from the testosterone-fest that is the Super Bowl. After all, we all know that only men watch sports. (Note the sarcastic tone, please.) But this year the ads seemed particularly gendered and ridiculous. Consider the following activity for you and your team, which analyzes an ad for the Dodge Charger:

1. Watch the Dodge "Man's Last Stand" commercial for the Charger:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RyPamyWotM&NR=1

2. Answer the following questions:

- What does this ad seem to be saying about men?
- What does it seem to be saying about women?
- The ad is titled "Man's Last Stand". Against what? Against whom?
- This ad suggests that man is under attack, and that it's hard being a man today. Is man under attack? Is it hard being a man? Why or why not?



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3. Another point worth considering is the actual car. Consider these questions:

- In what ways is the Dodge Charger considered a “manly” car?
- Why are some cars considered “manly” while others are not?

4. And it might be worth considering some other products that get gendered. Watch this companion Dodge Charger commercial, which mocks some things as being decidedly unmanly:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYLtSl6RiPQ&feature=channel

- Are there any other products that are marketed to men but seen as unmanly?
- Can you think of any products that have different male and female versions? How are they different?

5. And of course...

- What does all of this tell us about men, women, and gender in our society?

6. This just in! There’s a spoofed female response ad that shows how ridiculous this “masculinity under siege” idea really is. See it here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkBWWhrGa9gc

This spoof ad, and another one that we simply can’t post, effectively shows how ridiculous the concept behind “Man’s Last Stand” really is. They do such a good job, in fact, that we don’t have anything to add to it.

Except that we sincerely hope that our bailout tax dollars didn’t pay for any of this...

* * * * *

That’s all on the Super Bowl until next year! Congratulations to the New Orleans Saints, and let’s hope that their victory serves as a reminder of the devastation that has ravaged that city, and not an excuse to forget it.



Pop Culture Watch: February (Olympics Free)

The Pop Culture Watch is where we offer our opinions on what's going on in popular culture from a civil rights perspective!

And while the Winter Olympics in Vancouver had plenty to comment about from a civil rights perspective (women's ski jumping, ice dancing costumes, the official indigenous Olympic symbol, and those dreadful P & G commercials), we are on Olympics overload.



Hey! That's Not Betty, or Veronica!

OK... the picture is small, but squint. Is that Archie kissing a woman of color? This is certainly something new! It took only 608 issues of *Archie* comics to venture into the territory of interracial romance. This may not seem like a big deal, but Archie is an American institution that embodies the nostalgia many adults feel for 1950s America.

And this is part of a broader context that is contemporizing Archie comics. In recent years the comic has given more attention to African-American and Latino characters while adding Asian characters. While these characters aren't particularly complex, they aren't based on racial and ethnic stereotypes, either.

Granted, no one may actually read *Archie* anymore, but it's good to see an American icon reflecting some realities of American life in 2010.



Are Love and Romance Only for White People?

If you went and saw *Valentine's Day* and its ridiculously large all-star cast, you might think so. Roger Ebert, my favorite film critic, noted:



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There's one peculiarity. Usually in formula pictures with this huge a cast, maybe one couple will be African American, one Latino and one Asian. No such luck. There are no Asians at all. The black characters include a goofy TV sports reporter (Jamie Foxx) and a wise agent (Queen Latifah). George Lopez, a Mexican American, is relegated to the role of Ashton Kutcher's sidekick (i.e., the Tonto role).

No great surprises here. Just another movie that gives central roles to white people and relegates characters of color to supporting roles, there to help white people with their relationship troubles.



The White Sea on the Cover of *Vanity Fair*

Vanity Fair decided to profile some up-and-coming actresses on their March cover. Kristen Stewart, Anna Kendrick, Abbie Cornish, Carey Mulligan, Amanda Seyfried, Emma Stone, Mia Wasikowska, Rebecca Hall, and Evan Rachel Wood. Nine Hollywood actresses... and they're all white. Apparently if you're a young woman of color in Hollywood, you are not one of the "Fresh Faces of 2010".

We don't want to be over-critical of *Vanity Fair*'s selections. Some of these young women are great actresses and have bright futures. But did all nine of them have to be white? Now, granted, Hollywood has a whitewashing problem itself, but not *one* woman of color? Did no one notice this?

And where the heck is Gabourey Sidibe? Her starring role in *Precious* earned her an Oscar nomination. *Vanity Fair* even interviews her inside the magazine, but can't include her on the cover? What? Is it because she's too big, too black, or both?

The cover touts "A New Decade, A New Hollywood!" It sure looks like the same old, same old, though.



Beyonce's Always in Pain... Thanks for Sharing

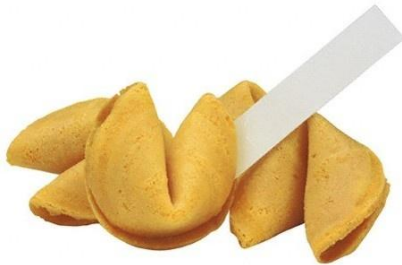
Here's Beyonce, quoted in the "Beauty Watch" section of *People Magazine*:

I'm always in pain! My earrings are heavy, and my heels are hurting – they hurt all the time. But you know you have to sacrifice for beauty. You just get kind of numb after a while.

Ugh. Why not just wear a t-shirt that says "REMEMBER, GIRLS: LOOKS ARE EVERYTHING!"

You don't *have* to do anything. But with quotes like this, it becomes a little bit harder convincing girls otherwise.

FA Issues: Civil Rights and Food



Black History Month always means several things. You can be sure that some buffoons will question why we need it, and ask why we can't have White History Month. And you can also be sure that some cafeteria or grocery store will try to honor black history through food, usually fried chicken.

Seriously, it happens *every year*.

But this year it was a bigger story than usual, because it wasn't some little grocer or a school cafeteria; it was the cafeteria at NBC. That's not a story we want to cover here, but it did get us thinking about civil rights and food:



What can we learn about civil rights-related issues through food?

Our first response? Not much. Consider this: there are about 41,000 Chinese restaurants here in America. You and probably everyone you know has had Chinese food in the last year. And yet... stereotypes, bias, prejudice, and racism against Chinese Americans, the Chinese, and *all* Asians persist. The act of eating Chinese food alone does little to change anything from a civil rights perspective.

But then we move towards our second response: people eat. And people of different racial, ethnic, religious, and geographic backgrounds often eat different foods in different ways. Food is a part of culture, and we can learn something from it, but only when we surround the food with context.

They are very different answers, and yet we'll stand by both of them. So now, let's look at some important things to remember about food and civil rights teams:

1. This tourist-approach to civil rights education doesn't work.

Think of it this way: how much can you really learn about people, cultures, and parts of the world just from eating their foods? There isn't some magical process whereby habanero peppers, couscous, turmeric, and fish sauce transmit cultural understanding through contact with our taste buds. Civil rights issues are about people, not food. Are you defined by the foods you eat?

But of even more importance is the fact that even if eating the foods made us understand different peoples and cultures, it wouldn't necessarily make our schools better places. Yes, if we look big picture, it makes sense that we might develop understanding and respect for those who are somehow different from us. But that's a pretty big jump. Does the average student participating in a Diversity Day celebration understand why they're eating food from a foreign country? Or are they just enjoying the food?

If they're just enjoying the food, then it's a tourist-based approach to civil rights education. It's like being a tourist: pretty superficial. You eat the foods, do some sightseeing, "take in" a little culture for entertainment... and then go right back to your regular life. When our civil rights teams focus exclusively on food, dance, music, and clothing, we do little to confront the bias and prejudices that exist in our schools.

2. Be careful that you're not just reinforcing stereotypes.

Food is often used in racial, ethnic, religious, and geographic stereotypes. Just think of some of the derogatory names targeting different groups in American history. The French are *frogs*, Germans are *krauts*, Mexicans are *beaners*. And think of how many



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stupid jokes you've heard about Asians eating dogs and cats. Food is often used to stereotype people.

That's why we have to be careful. If all students learn about Mexico is burritos, we failed. If all students learn about China is fried rice, we failed. And if all students learn about African-Americans is fried chicken, we failed. And not only have we failed, but we've reinforced stereotypes and possibly equipped students with information for their own biases and prejudices. That's a major failure.

3. Much of what we know about “ethnic” food is wrong.

Most people in our circles are well aware of the fact that the Chinese food we eat here in America is very different from food actually consumed in China. Some decry it as being “inauthentic” while others celebrate it as a unique Asian-American creation, an everyman's fusion food combining Asian elements for American tastes. Whatever your level of knowledge, we recommend reading Jennifer 8. Lee's *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles*, an entertaining look at American-style Chinese food.

OK... so Chinese food isn't Chinese. We already knew that. But what about some other stuff? Thai food is popular, and pad thai is probably the most well-known dish here in America. You probably assume that a dish called “pad thai” is pretty authentically Thai.

And a little research tells us that pad thai is indeed the national dish of Thailand, but that it was only introduced there in the 1930s. So the national dish of Thailand has only been prepared there for 80 years? A little more research reveals that the pad thai in Thailand is different from the pad thai here in America. The American version is heavier and oilier (shocking surprise, this). And at a recently-opened and unnamed Thai restaurant in the southern part of the state, the staff mocked pad thai as an Americanized version of true Thai food. So...

It's hard to say how “authentic” some of the “foreign” foods are that we eat. But it seems pretty clear that if the foods are American creations, we learn nothing about the foreign cultures they supposedly hail from through consumption.

4. It can be done well... but the food needs context!

We are not taking an anti-food stance here. We happen to love the stuff. Just don't think that consuming the food is a multicultural experience in itself. For food to have value from a civil rights perspective, we've got to engage the mind *as well as* the taste buds.

By understanding the limitations of food education, we can think about what the foods can tell us. And they can tell us a lot about stereotypes, prejudice, immigration, history, nationalism, geography, and diversity. But the food itself won't do the work.



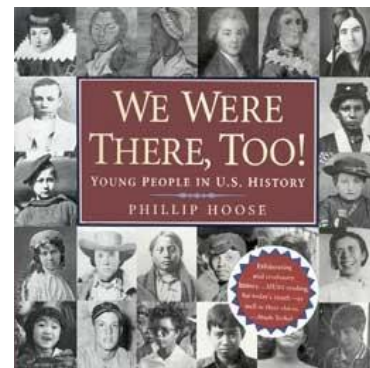
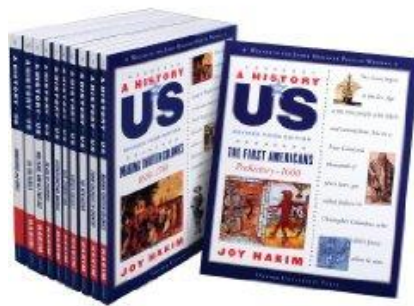
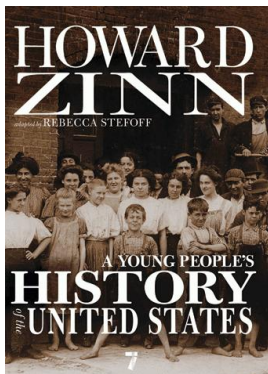
Our “FA Issues” question for the month, with several follow-up questions:

1. What can we learn about civil rights-related issues through food?
2. How has your team used food and food experiences to promote learning and respect for different peoples?
3. Any great food resources you’d like to share?

To weigh in, simply click on the link below and hit “Reply” in the lower righthand corner to give your response:

<http://civilrightsteams.org/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=44>

Relevant Resources: Zinn-Inspired History



As the introductory column to this month’s *Torch* should make clear, Howard Zinn transformed the way we view American history. His work is useful for civil rights teams and anyone interested in multicultural education. But *The People’s History of the United States* isn’t easy to digest. While it’s lauded for its readable prose, it’s more than 750 pages of text written for adults. What’s a young person supposed to do?

Here we offer three Zinn-style American history texts written for young people. We highly encourage you to check them out.



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A Young Person's History of the United States, by Howard Zinn

Condensed and made easy to read, why not equip students with the real deal? Get the untold stories of American history right here, and be ready for a healthy dose of radicalism, too.

www.zinnedproject.org

A History of US, by Joy Hakim

I used to teach with a social studies teacher who absolutely loved these books. Where they're particularly valuable is in their organization. The books are exceptionally well organized into a series of volumes. But their biggest selling point is the way Hakim makes history so readable. Her history is storytelling; she always finds the human interest in the history.

www.joyhakim.com/history.html

PBS is doing some good things with Hakim's work. Some very interactive elements are available at:

www.pbs.org/wnet/historyofus

We Were There, Too!, by Phillip Hoose

Maine author Phillip Hoose looks at American history through the eyes of young people, allowing them to tell their own stories. There are numerous benefits to this approach. It creates human interest. It avoids boring narrative structure. But perhaps most importantly, it allows young readers to connect with the words on the page. They are able to imagine themselves as a part of the history.

The connecting thread that runs through all these histories is their emphasis on people. (Even the titles of these books show the people-centric approach that the authors employ.) History is not worth studying if we don't examine how it affects the people who are living it. These books succeed because they understand this idea and extend it, making their best efforts to include the stories of all people in this country's history.

www.philliphoose.com/books_thereToo.html



Using Our Website: www.civilrightsteams.org

The Maine Civil Rights Team Project



We are often asked what civil rights teams do. We are also asked what *other* civil rights teams do. Many people out there, including many of you, are interested in knowing what civil rights teams are doing around the state.

On the state's website, we have a long list of potential project ideas. It's little more than a list, though, offering next to nothing in terms of access to useful information. You can see this very long list at:

www.maine.gov/ag/civil_rights/in_schools/best_ideas.shtml

We think that we can do much better than this. We envision an online resource that offers more than just ideas, and includes information and advice to make these ideas become a reality. We want a comprehensive guide to help you and your team initiate and implement project ideas.

But we need your help. We can offer ideas, information, and advice... but for this to *really* work, we need input, evidence, and examples.

And that needs to come from you.

We have begun what we hope is a long process of accumulating project ideas online. Months ago, we asked for some very basic input from you. We wanted pictures of your bulletin boards and t-shirts. We've received pictures of three bulletin boards and one t-shirt. Pretty underwhelming.

Here's a challenge. Go online and check out what we're trying to do. We think that you'll immediately see the value in this project. See the value, then contribute.

<http://civilrightsteams.org/mod/book/view.php?id=228>

From this link, you'll see some of our recommended project ideas. (We hope to add more over time.) For now, each idea has a brief description. Some of the ideas are blue,



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which means you can click on them and you'll get more information. Do that and you'll get a good idea of what we're trying to achieve: great projects made easy.

So... we're asking for information on the following to add to our site:

1. Pictures and basic information on civil rights team bulletin boards.
2. Pictures of civil rights team t-shirts.
3. Unique and interesting aspects of your Diversity Day celebrations.

Just a little work from individuals will contribute to an impressive resource for everyone.

Upcoming Events:



Every Wednesday: Series 360: Hollywood and the Holocaust

Augusta, Michael Klahr Center, evenings

Get a full schedule of these free screenings, lectures, roundtable discussions, and teacher workshops at:

www.hhrc.uma.edu/events.htm

March 13: "Practicing Nonviolence in Our Daily Lives and in the World"

Augusta, Pine Tree State Arboretum, 153 Hospital Street, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

This free conference will include a workshop session on nonviolence in our schools.

For more information, contact Larry Dansinger at 525-7776 or rosco@psouth.net

March 15: Wabanaki Initiative Teacher Workshop

Bar Harbor, The Abbe Museum, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm, free



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This day-long workshop will focus on contemporary issues facing Wabanaki people in Maine today and a survey of resources and materials available for teaching about the Wabanaki. The day's events include a tour of the Abbe's new exhibit, *Headline News: Wabanaki Sovereignty in the 21st Century*.

Space is limited and reservations are required. More information is available online at:

www.abbemuseum.org/pages/education/teacher-workshops.html

To reserve a space in this workshop contact Raney Bench at 288-3519 ex. 16 or educator@abbemuseum.org

March 15: Showing of *You Can't Be Neutral on Moving Train*

Portland, SPACE Gallery, 538 Congress Street, 7:30 pm, admission is \$7

Learn more about the life and work of Howard Zinn, the historian profiled in our introduction this month. Followed by a Q & A period on Zinn's legacy. Sponsored by the Maine Civil Liberties Union.

For information on the film, check out: www.firstrunfeatures.com/howardzinn.html

Maine Youth Action Network Conferences: Partnering for Change

March 25 in Bangor, Spectacular Events Center, 8:00 am- 2:00 pm

This training will provide you with a deeper understanding of why youth and adult partnerships are important and how you can build effective youth and adult teams to accomplish common goals. Geared towards high school age group.

Fees: waived! Now free of charge!

For more information go to: www.myan.org/?page=trainings

Maine Youth Action Network Conferences: Advocacy in Action

April 8 in Woodstock, Crosstone Restaurant and Conference Center, 8:00 am- 2:00 pm

April 13 in Augusta, Augusta Armory, 8:00 am- 2:00 pm

April 28 in Caribou, Caribou Inn and Conference Center, 8:00 am- 2:00 pm

A training for youth and adults. What is advocacy? What skills do you need? Learn how to make the change you want happen! Geared towards high school age group.

Fees: waived! Now free of charge!



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For more information go to: www.myan.org/?page=trainings

April 26: Maya Angelou at the Augusta Civic Center

Augusta Civic Center, 7:00 pm

The University of Maine at Augusta's Student Government Association is bringing renowned poet/author and civil rights activist Maya Angelou to Maine!

Tickets are \$25 and available by calling 1-877-862-1234 or visiting the UMA Enrollment Services Center in Robinson Hall.

For more information on this event, call 621-3133.

April 30: *Coming to America* Conference

Portland, University of Southern Maine, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm, registration fee is \$50 for teachers, but free for students

This one-day conference will explore the past, present, and future of immigration in America and Maine, including discussions of the many challenges that surround the issue. Presented by the Maine Humanities Council. CEU's are available.

For more information, go to:

<http://mainehumanities.org/special-programs/immigration>

May 3: Statewide Conference at the Augusta Civic Center!

More information about workshop presenters in next month's edition of *The Torch*!