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# American Spaces

## BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

**September 2023**

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*With just over 600 locations, ECA's Office of American Spaces engages people worldwide through programming and resources. American Spaces support U.S. foreign policy goals and strategically promote public diplomacy.*

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*The September theme for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) is Representation Matters. American Spaces strive to ensure our efforts reflect the diversity of the United States and societies abroad. We seek and encourage the inclusion of people from historically underrepresented audiences. Representation matters!*

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*As always, thank you for sending in your comments and suggestions to [americanspaces@state.gov](mailto:americanspaces@state.gov). We hope you enjoy this issue!*

**U.S. Culture**

## Representing the Land of Enchantment

*Miquela Burke joined the **Office of American Spaces** as a **Regional Public Engagement Specialist** in Fall 2022. She previously served as in Tallinn, Estonia as an EPAP (Expanded Professional Associates Program) in public diplomacy, and in La Paz, Bolivia in American Citizen Services. In this month's lead story, Miquela shares about [National Hispanic Heritage Month](#) and her home state of New Mexico which is part of the [American Southwest](#).*

I couldn't help but laugh when, on a recent trip to Santa Fe, my husband pointed to a sticker at one of my favorite shops and whispered to my daughter, "Look, this one's about your mom." It read, "Hecho en Nuevo México." (English Translation: Made in New Mexico.) He's not wrong. My ancestors have been living in Northern New Mexico for centuries--Ortiz, Luceros, Quintanas, Senas. I love my home state and as a proud Hispanic, I'm particularly excited to sing its praises during [National Hispanic Heritage Month](#), which runs September 15 to October 15 every year.

It's also fitting that the "Land of Enchantment" (as New Mexico is known) is especially magical in September and October. Why? Fall in the state is a feast for the senses. Imagine crisp mornings with mugs of piñon coffee, yellow aspen and cottonwood leaves against turquoise skies, and the [scent of roasting green chile in the air](#). Combine all this with the annual festivals and seasonal events listed below and, in my opinion, you won't find a better time to learn what the 47th state is all about.

### **Fiestas de Santa Fe**

New Mexico's capital city, Santa Fe, has been holding [Fiestas](#) since 1712. Originally an event commemorating the "peaceful" reconquest of the city by the Spanish over the local Pueblo people (the original indigenous inhabitants), it has transformed over the years to better reflect all of the state's cultures and peoples while locals continue to grapple with the area's history of colonization. The week-long festival begins with the burning of a giant puppet named [Zozobra](#) and includes parades, cultural performances, and an arts and crafts fair in the central plaza.



REPS Miquela Burke and her daughter at Santa Fe's [Loretto Chapel](#), which one of their ancestors helped to build.

### Balloon Fiesta

The [International Balloon Fiesta](#) in Albuquerque, the state's largest city, has been taking place since 1972. Once a fairly small affair, it is now the largest ballooning event in the world. Each year, hundreds of hot air balloons participate in mass ascensions from the 78-acre Balloon Fiesta Park. It's a stunning and absolutely unforgettable experience!

### National Hispanic Cultural Center

The [National Hispanic Cultural Center](#) in Albuquerque offers a place for Hispanic, Chicano, and Latinx artists to share their work. A gigantic [fresco](#) by Santa Fe native and world-famous frescoist Fred Vigil charts the Hispanic experience on the center's walls and local performing arts companies, such as [Opera Southwest](#), stage Hispano-centered productions like an opera based on New Mexican writer Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima*.

I hope that everyone has the opportunity to experience New Mexican hospitality one day, but I also realize it's a long journey for the majority of our American Spaces community. Therefore, I'm sharing a recipe for the state's

official cookie, the [biscochito](#), so you can get a taste of New Mexico wherever you are.

## Spotlight:

### Music Diplomacy Resources

Is your American Space still looking for great ways to participate in the **2023 ECA GLOBAL MUSIC DIPLOMACY INITIATIVE LAUNCH**?

Here are some dynamic resources, lesson plans, and ideas for programs!

Visit the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#). Resources under the heading of "Music" include lesson plans on [Jazz Ambassadors: A Model for Cultural Diplomacy](#), [Learning the Blues](#), and [The Freedom Riders and the Popular Music of the Civil Rights Movement](#).

[Visit TeachRock and the Rock and Roll Forever Foundation](#): Check out the lessons under [The Music that Shaped America](#) collection, or the [Civic Environmentalism](#) collection.

The [Kennedy Center](#) in Washington, D.C. has developed a number of free arts education tools. Notable music-related lessons include [Learning from Lyrics](#), [Poetics of Hip-Hop](#), and [Adapting a Musical](#). [Digital resources](#) in their collection include videos and interactive media about American music.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's educational site, [Rock Hall EDU](#), includes music videos from prominent artists, curated playlists, research guides, powerpoints, infographics, [short guides](#), and even a [core concepts](#) video collection where you can learn about music and social justice.

Perhaps you wish to take visitors at your American Space on a [virtual field trip](#) to the Country Music Hall of Fame. There are so many possibilities! **Check out the special resource list on the website!**

And please let us know how you are celebrating #musicdiplomacy in your American Space.

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## From the Field:

### Countering Disinformation in Chile



**U.S. Speaker Luis Botello** (second from the right) engages with **American Spaces** in Chile

The **American Spaces in Chile** hosted a U.S. Speaker, **Luis Botello**, as part of their strategic annual program on countering disinformation “Verifica Tus Medios” in mid-August.

The **American Space at Universidad Diego Portales** engaged with university and high school students with a panel featuring Mr. Botello, and a Tech camp alumnus.

The **American Space Moneda** hosted a roundtable with academics from schools of journalism. Besides Mr. Botello, an IVLP alumnus and the American Space Moneda coordinator participated in the panel.

Panelists highlighted the importance of free, independent, and credible media outlets, the importance of critical thinking, ethics in journalism and news literacy. Audience members asked questions of the panelists and were highly engaged by the discussion.

Lastly, Mr. Botello recorded an episode of the [American Spaces on air podcast](#), where he shared his views on journalism and how the Fulbright scholarship largely influenced his professional trajectory. Listen to the podcast (recorded in Spanish) and share it with your American Spaces!

Many thanks to **Marketa Charvatova, Experiential Learning Coordinator, American Spaces in Chile**, for hosting such a

successful visit and for sharing this success story! For more about hosting a speaker at your American Space, please check out the **U.S. Speaker Spot** later in this newsletter issue.

## Faces of American Spaces: Celebrating Success!



**ECA/EX/IT**, the office that managed OASIS development on behalf of the **Office of American Spaces**, hosted an office-wide August 17 in-person celebration of the launch of **OASIS** (Office of American Spaces Information System). In addition to hosts **EX/IT Director Shobha Mahabir** and the development team, guests included **ECA PDAS Scott Weinhold** and **ECA/EX Executive Director Yolanda Robinson**. The Office of American Spaces was represented by **Acting Office Director Kit Bartels**, **Policy and Planning Officer Grant Phillipp**, and **Data Science Manager Rubab Mandaliya**. PDAS Weinhold spoke about how OASIS is an important part of ECA's efforts to collect and use data to inform policy and respond to ever-increasing demands for data. Kit also thanked EX/IT and shared how OASIS is being used actively by our Field Support team to produce up-to-date and quick-response country reports.



*Many congratulations to **László Vizsy, Emerging Voices Specialist, U.S. Embassy, Budapest, Hungary** for receiving **The Lois Roth Foundation's Gill Jacot-Guillarmod Awards for Career Achievement.***

During László's 30-plus years of service, his innovative leadership in outreach to tens of thousands of students, management of five American Corners, interpretation skills, and supervisory skills have been instrumental in furthering cultural understanding and educational opportunities for both countries.



**Alesia Krupenikava, American Spaces Turkmenistan**

Last month, Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) announced the recipients of the **2023 Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad (SOSA)**. For the SCA Region, **Alesia Krupenikava, EPAP for Public Affairs** who works with **American Spaces in Turkmenistan**, along with her husband, **Foreign Service Officer William "Ed" O'Bryan**, were named co-recipients.

They helped break barriers for women and girls in Turkmenistan through their work with a global tech innovation nonprofit. Since 2022, more than 400 Turkmen girls have participated in the non-profit's programming, and two teams from Turkmenistan have progressed through a pool of 1,000 teams to reach the semifinals of the organization's global competition. The SOSA award winners will be honored at a ceremony later this year. Many congratulations to Alesia and Ed!

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**Did You Know?**

**Community Colleges**

EducationUSA has produced and shared a new #StudyWithUS EducationUSA video, [Community Colleges in the United States](#). Please use this new resource to encourage students at your American Spaces to consider studying in the United States! Perhaps a program leading up to [International Education Week](#) in November?

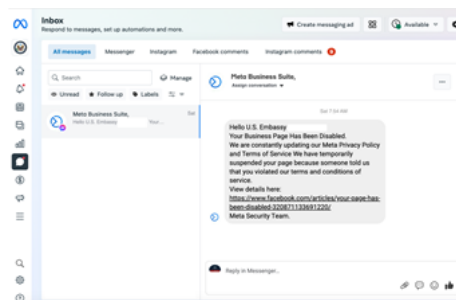
## Did You Know?

### Prevent Phishing Attempts

Department of State social media accounts are common targets for hackers and other malicious actors. Department social media managers must remain vigilant and take steps to decrease the likelihood of unauthorized access to official accounts.

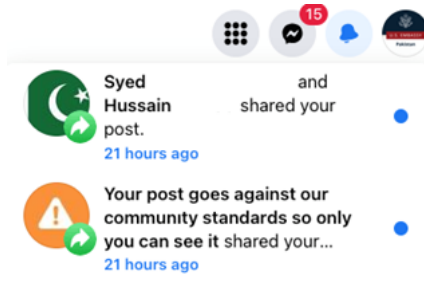
Consider the following recent examples of phishing attempts directed at official Department of State Facebook pages:

- **Meta will never communicate regarding page issues in your page's inbox:** Multiple posts have flagged a suspicious message in their Facebook page's inbox. The message is from a profile named "Meta Business Suite." It states your business page has been disabled and includes a link. This is not an official communication from Meta. It is instead from a false profile named Meta Business Suite with a profile image of a Meta logo.



- **Meta will never communicate that a Facebook page will be deactivated via a page notification:** Other posts have reported a notification with a deceiving icon and name, implying that a page will be removed or has violated a Facebook policy.





Read more about protecting your Facebook account from Phishers [here](#).

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## Bunche Library Resources

If you have access to SharePoint, please remember to check out the new resources available at the Department's [Ralph J. Bunche Library](#)! It is a resource for the Department world-wide!

## U.S. Speaker Spot

*As a partnership with the [Office of the U.S. Speaker Program](#), the American Spaces Newsletter is featuring selected speakers available for virtual programs with professional audiences on priority themes. For more information about the U.S. Speaker Program, and to submit a program request, please reach out to your local Public Diplomacy Section.*

The following three speakers are featured for October programming:



Schedule Sian for [World Space Week](#) and beyond! [Sian Proctor](#) is a geology, sustainability, and planetary science professor at Arizona's [South Mountain Community College](#). She is also an analog astronaut, a person who conducts activities in

simulated space conditions. Currently, she is featured on the show *Strange Evidence*.



For [Cybersecurity Awareness Month](#), consider scheduling [Sam King](#) to speak at your American Space. Sam is the chief executive officer of Veracode, a computer application security company. She is responsible for company leadership and the creation of secure software for clients. Sam is a recognized expert in cybersecurity, the emerging practice of DevSecOps, managed vulnerability protection services, penetration testing, and on-demand security services.



Schedule Scott for [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#) as well as accessible technology related programs. [Scott Kupferman](#) is an assistant professor at the [University of Colorado in Colorado Springs](#). He also directs the National Collaborative for Disability and Technology, which works on increasing the availability of accessible technology for people with disabilities. Scott's expertise includes assistive technology, transition from secondary education to postsecondary education, employment, and independent living, and accessibility and universal design.

## Calendar of Events

As always, the full calendar is available on the American Spaces [website](#).

**September:** [National Wilderness Month](#)

**September 2:** End of WWII - [History Channel](#)

**September 4:** Labor Day - see official [site](#)

**September 6:** Read a Book Day

**September 8:** International Literacy Day - see official [site](#)

**September 11:** Patriots Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance (9/11 Anniversary) - see official [site](#)

**September 15 - October 15:** [National Hispanic Heritage Month](#)- see [toolkit](#)

**September 15:** [International Day of Democracy](#)

**September 17:** Constitution Day - see [toolkit](#) and [English language resources](#)

**September 21:** [International Day of Peace](#)

**September 22:** [World Rhino Day](#)

**September 27:** [World Tourism Day](#)

**September 27:** ECA Global Music Diplomacy Initiative Launch!  
More about: [ECA Music Programs](#).

**September 28:** [International Day for Universal Access to Information](#)

**September 29:** [World Heart Day](#)

**October:** [Cybersecurity Month](#), [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#)

**October 1:** [International Day of Older Persons](#)

**October 2:** [Child Health Day](#)

**October 4 - 10:** [World Space Week](#)

**October 9:** Columbus Day (United States Federal holiday also known as Indigenous Peoples' Day)

**October 11:** [International Day of the Girl Child](#)

**October 16:** [World Food Day](#)

**October 17:** [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#)

**October 24:** [United Nations Day](#)

**October 25:** [National Art Day](#)

**October 27:** [International Religious Freedom Day](#)

**October 29:** [International Internet Day](#)

**November:** [National American Indian and Alaskan Native Heritage Month](#),

**November 3:** [Sandwich Day](#)

**November 6:** [International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict](#)

**November 9:** [World Freedom Day](#), [Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall](#), [Go to a Museum Day](#)

**November 11:** [Veterans Day](#)

**November 13 - 19:** [Global Entrepreneurship Week](#) and [toolkit](#)

**November 13 - 17:** [International Education Week](#) and [toolkit](#)

**November 15:** [Locally Employed Staff Recognition Day](#)

**November 16:** [International Day for Tolerance](#) and [Democracy and Human Rights Resources](#)

**November 19:** [Women's Entrepreneurship Day](#)

**November 20:** [World Children's Day](#)

**November 23:** [Eat a Cranberry Day](#) and [Thanksgiving Day](#)

**November 25:** [International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#)

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Thanks to all of you who have shared your programming ideas and highlights with your colleagues through our American Spaces FB page. You can continue to share your news and information by emailing us at [AmericanSpaces@state.gov](mailto:AmericanSpaces@state.gov). If you have any questions or content to add, email Karlene Noel Jennings at [JenningsKN@state.gov](mailto:JenningsKN@state.gov).

To add someone to this newsletter, email us at [AmericanSpaces@state.gov](mailto:AmericanSpaces@state.gov).

## Engage & Grow (Social Media Playbook)

### September ECA Theme: Representation Matters

#### SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS (from ECA PASC):

Sample posts are written for X (formerly known as Twitter); if your American Space posts on a different platform, please use the appropriate handles.

- Music diplomacy illustrates the significance of **#RepresentationMatters**. Whether attending concerts, dancing, or sharing a playlist, music promotes a sense of togetherness across borders, barriers, and generations worldwide. Let's keep the harmony going.  
**#MusicDiplomacy**
- **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY (9/15)**: Today is **#InternationalDayofDemocracy**. Supporting democracy and human rights aligns with **@StateDept**'s commitment to a more inclusive, prosperous, and peaceful world.  
**#RepresentationMatters #AmericanSpaces**
- **HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH (9/15-10/15)** Let's celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month by honoring the positive impact of generations of Hispanic Americans on our nation and society. **#RepresentationMatters**  
**#AmericanSpaces #HispanicHeritageMonth**
- **2023 GLOBAL MUSIC DIPLOMACY INITIATIVE LAUNCH EVENT (9/27)** "Everybody, no matter what vocation they're looking at, should add music as an essential to their curriculum. Music can be a very important part of your soul and your growth as a human being."  
**@QuincyDJones** Stay tuned with **@ECAatState** as they support young musicians! **#MusicDiplomacy**  
**#AmericanSpaces**

## October 2023 ECA Theme: The Power of Partnership

- **Cybersecurity Hashtags**
  - **Cybersecurity:** #CyberSecurity #ProtectYourData #DigitalDefense
  - **Critical Infrastructure:** #CriticalInfrastructure #Resilience
  - **Threat Actors:** #ThreatActors #DisruptAndDismantle
  - **Security Market Forces:** #SecurityMarketForces #ResilientFuture
  - **Invest In Resilience:** #InvestInResilience #FutureReady
  - **International Partnerships:** #InternationalPartnerships #SharedGoals
- **Breast Cancer Awareness**  
**Month:** #BreastCancerAwarenessMonth
- **October 10 – Columbus Day:** #ColumbusDay
- **October 31 – Halloween:** #Halloween

Please find additional hashtags in Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Arabic, Ukrainian, and Russian [here](#).

Finally, we have recently introduced digital assets for social media managers to use for our most common observances. We currently have images formatted for Facebook and Instagram for upcoming themes. The assets are currently available in the [American Spaces Facebook Group's albums](#) and the [American Spaces SharePoint page](#). (Please work with your REPS if you cannot access either platform.) You can customize these assets to fit your local community's needs.





# American Spaces

Want to learn about more events in your area or causes you care about? Tell us about yourself and your interests here:

[Update My Preferences](#)

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