



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

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May 28, 2024
Calendar Meeting

President's Report - Antonia Ferraro Martinelli

Good evening everyone. Welcome to CEC15's May Calendar meeting. I hope you all enjoyed the Memorial Day weekend. I wish to take a moment to recognize that the day is not just about barbeques, but honoring those who gave their lives in the line of duty. I learned recently that the first recorded memorial day event in the US was organized in 1865 by recently emancipated African - Americans to honor fallen Union soldiers. They paraded to honor the soldiers on a race track in Charleston, SC, but this piece of important history went unnoticed until a historian stumbled upon a record of the event in 1996.

It makes me think about all the important history we may not know because it was buried or not taught to us in high school. This is why it is so important to have access to books, especially banned books. Tonight we are here in the lovely Sunset Park High School. CEC15 doesn't often have the opportunity to hold our meetings in high schools. So I want to speak directly to high school students and my message is READ BANNED BOOKS. Read as many as you can get your hands on.

So I offer two book recommendations in honor of Jewish Heritage Month and Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, one that is banned and one that is not. I read Elie Wiesel's "Night" in high school. It is the author's personal experience of the holocaust as a teenager and it is a banned book. I also recommend Grace Lee Boggs', "Living for Change". This book is not banned, as far as I know. but Grace Lee Boggs was considered a dangerous woman in her day. She was a Chinese American activist who fought alongside her African American husband during some of the most pivotal movements of the last century.

Principal Negron, it is a pleasure to be in your beautiful auditorium. We are grateful to you for hosting us. The floor is yours.