**"Discovery Five Hundred" Newsletter of the International Columbian Quincentenary Alliance - Volume I, Number 1, May, 1986**

**MAY, 1, 1486 - MAY 1, 1986: ACT I OF THE COLUMBIAN QUINCENTENNIAL**

Exactly 500 years ago this month, Christopher Columbus pleaded his case with Queen Isabella for the first time -- on May 1, 1486 -- in Cordova, Spain. The 33-year old Columbus had failed to gain support from King John II of Portugal for a voyage of discovery westward to the Indies. Even after his initial meeting with Queen Isabella, it would take another six years to convince her and her advisors that his plan was worthy of support. During this period he belabored Ferdinand and Isabella with petitions, requests for audiences and entreaties from every influential friend he could muster. But his price was high for a kingdom still trying desperately to rid itself of Moslem domination: Not just one ship but three; not merely a reward if he reached the Indies but also a title, a coat of arms, a tenth forever of all the wealth that would accrue to Spain if he should find a short route to the Orient.

While the queen always listened sympathetically, her advisors countered with a variety of arguments in opposition to the plan. Finally, on April 17, 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella issued a royal authorization for his voyage of discovery.

This very special anniversary seemed to be an appropriate time to launch a newsletter dedicated to the celebration of the quincentennial of all things related to the voyages of Columbus, particularly the discovery of America in 1492. During the next six years -- the same period it took Columbus to gain the support needed for his project -- we will be keeping the world informed of everything that is going on in conjunction with the Quincentennial.

**THE PIONEER SPIRIT**

Columbus symbolizes the spirit of discovery. The Quincentennial will afford us an opportunity to generate a great deal of interest in exploration -- modern style. In Columbus's time, it was the exploration of uncharted seas; today it is the frontier of outer space.

When NASA was looking for target dates for the construction of a permanent space station, 1992 jumped out as an ideal goal. It seemed to fit the time-frame necessary to complete the work, and it tied in nicely with the 500th anniversary of the Discovery of America.

However, NASA is now feeling some of the frustration Columbus felt during the six years leading up to 1992: budget concerns, opposition from politicians, internal disagreements, delays -- even disasters -- which may force a postponement of the original target date.

Under the original schedule set out in 1982, development and construction of space station hardware is supposed to start in fiscal 1987 (Oct. 1, 1986 through Sept. 30, 1987). By late 1992 or early 1993, the shuttles will begin taking parts of the station into space. The whole operation is expected to require between seven and eleven launches over about eighteen months. According to Robert F. Freitag, director of policy and plans for NASA's Office of the Space Station, "Our goal is to be occupied and ready for business by January, 1994."

Others feel that because of the Challenger disaster and prospective federal spending cuts, there may be further delays. Nevertheless, tying the space station project to the Columbian Quincentennial is still appropriate, as Columbus's second voyage was in 1493, the third in 1498, and the fourth in 1502. Celebrations and commemorations are expected to continue throughout the period.

**INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE QUINCENTENNIAL**

The Quincentennial is certainly an international event. Columbus was an Italian; he lived for a time in Portugal; he sailed under the flag of Spain; and he landed in the Bahamas.

**Genoa, Italy**, for the moment, seems to be the epicenter of much of the preparatory activity for the anniversary celebra- tions. Rinaldo Magnani, former president of the province of Genoa, is very much concerned with making this anniversary celebration a popular event by bringing Columbus and his times to life. He sees a parallel in the role Italy played in exploration in the latter fifteenth century with what the United States is doing in space today.

In addition to Italy, **Spain** is very interested in the Quincentennial -- mainly as a boost to tourism. The Italian government has spent about $20 million on organizing the various commemorative events, but Spain has already outspent Italy five times over.

Finally, the **United States** is just beginning to organize for 1992. Perhaps the preoccupation with the restoration of the Statue of Liberty and its re-dedication has delayed our going all out for the Columbian celebration. One can anticipate increased interest in the Caribbean during the next several years, with Puerto Rico and San Salvador serving as centers of the activity.

**PLANS FOR DISCOVERY FIVE HUNDRED**

During the next seven years, ***DISCOVERY FIVE HUNDRED*** will serve as a clearinghouse for information concerning the Columbian Quincentennial. We expect to follow a progressive publication schedule: 1986, two issues (May, Oct.); 1987, two issues (May, Oct.); 1988, three issues (Feb., June, Oct.); 1989, three issues (Feb., June, Oct.); 1990, four issues (Jan., Apr., July, Oct.); 1991, four issues (Jan., Apr., July, Oct.); and 1992, four issues (Jan., Apr., July, Oct.).

**The Newsletter will contain a variety of departments:**

* **INFORMATION SERVICES:** Publications, bibliographies, book reviews, etc. dealing with Columbus and the Quincentennial.
* **TEACHING/LEARNING MATERIALS:** Reviews of teaching aids and audio-visual materials for teachers.
* **EVENTS:** Details about all the international activity and celebrations associated with the anniversary.
* **TRAVEL:** We'll list tours and travel packages planned as a part of the celebration.
* **PERSONALITIES:** We'll carry an international "Who's Who" of people involved with the Quincentenary.
* **COLLECTIBLES:** As with every major commemoration, we anticipate the creation of a variety of Columbian souvenir items. You'll find lists, reviews and addresses for your information.
* **HISTORICAL DATA:** We'll re-tell the story of Columbus as it unfolded 500 years ago, with emphasis on the novel and little known facts.
* **MODERN EXPLORATION:** You'll be kept abreast of the progress on the Space Station and other NASA activities in conjunction with the anniversary.

**We already have a number of feature articles planned:**

* Meet Captain Luigi Cappellini who set out in late 1984 with a crew of five on the same route Columbus took in 1492 in a 95-year old banana-shaped lateen-rigged sailing vessel, the Felice Manin.
* Learn how the world celebrated the anniversary a hundred years ago in 1892: the Columbian Exposition in Chicago; the collectibles worth a lot of money today.
* Join the search by Archeologists on Hispaniola's north coast for the exact location of La Navidad, the first settlement in the New World by the 39 Spaniards left behind by Columbus after the Santa Maria went aground on Christmas, 1492.
* Go behind the scenes for the filming of the 1985 epic mini-series, "Christopher Columbus" as shown last May on CBS.
* Read about the plans of a descendant of the Admiral of the Ocean Sea, Christopher Columbus XVII, to supervise the building of replicas of the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria at a cost of $2 million for a re-creation of the 1492 voyage under the direction of his son, Christopher Columbus XVIII.
* Learn of the ongoing controversy between Seville and Santo Domingo over the actual location of the remains of Christopher Columbus.

**NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS**

DISCOVERY FIVE HUNDRED is available on a subscription basis. An initial subscription for combined Volumes I and II (two issues in 1986 and two in 1987) is $15.00. Enter your subscription via check, money order, VISA or Master Card and mailing to: DISCOVERY FIVE HUNDRED Box 1492 Columbus, NJ 08022.

**THE INTERNATIONAL COLUMBIAN QUINCENTENARY ALLIANCE, LTD.**

The International Columbian Quincentenary Alliance, Ltd. (ICQA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of popular educational activities in conjunction with the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. Among the projects under consideration are the following:

* **THE COLUMBUS CADET CORPS** - A club dedicated to inspiring young people to have the same vision and daring that Christopher Columbus had with regard to new frontiers, particularly space.
* **THE COLUMBIAN QUINCENTENNIAL SPEAKERS BUREAU** - A national network of certified speakers who will promote interest in the life and times of Christopher Columbus.
* **THE QUINCENTENNIAL MEDIA INFORMATION CENTER** - Providing the press with up-to-date information on Quincentennial happenings.
* **DISCOVERY FIVE HUNDRED** -The official newsletter of the ICQA.

As a not-for-profit corporation, the ICQA depends on donations. A $100.00 donation will provide the donor with charter membership, the first ten issues of the Newsletter (1986 through 1989), an official charter membership certificate, a wallet membership card, all mailings from the ICQA through 1992, and a variety of other information services. Send $100.00 (VISA, Master Card, Check or Money Order) to ICQA, Box 1492, Columbus, NJ 08022.

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