

opinions

column **LEFT**

MLK Holiday

Costs Vs. Benefits

By **Charlie Ara, President-emeritus,
Hubert Humphrey Democratic Club**

A few weeks ago I received a 2005 calendar in the mail. It was filled with beautiful pictures telling the story of the city of Cerritos.

The calendar reminded me of how fortunate I was to live in such a well-developed city.

Whatever the cost, I am sure the value of this calendar is worth every penny put into producing this daily reminder of our city.

On second thought, now that cost is an issue in the MLK holiday, I am wondering exactly how much it did cost the city to put out this calendar. There would be staff time involved, photography costs, printing and mailing costs. Would I be far off base if I came up with the figure of \$50,000?

One objection to a fixed MLK holiday expressed by some councilmembers is the financial cost. But what exactly would be the cost? Have the costs been itemized? There would be no employee costs, as they would be paid whether it was a holiday or not.

In fact, there would be savings on a number of items. The city would not be paying for staff mileage, or for utilities such as telephone, gas and electricity.

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If open on MLK Day, workload would be limited as there would be no mail, most other government offices would be closed and many citizens would think that the City Hall would be closed along with the schools.

As to the value of a MLK holiday, I am reminded of a talk I heard today at the noon Cerritos Rotary meeting. The speaker reminded us that the value of Christmas was not in the present from the store but in the meaning of our relationships with others.

The values signified by a fixed MLK holiday in Cerritos have been eloquently expressed at the November 22 and December 9 meetings of the Cerritos City Council. Central to these values are our common humanity in the midst of our diversity. We will all benefit from a fixed holiday honoring Dr. King, and let it begin on January 17, 2005

Text of Article

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President Emeritus, Hubert H. Humphrey Democratic Club

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