

## Take advantage of diversity opportunities

**While creating a diverse community has probably not been on the top of the list for many of us, diversity must be developed, and Diversity Week offers many opportunities, The Free Press editorializes.**

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Creating a diverse community has probably not been on the top of a list of personal goals for many of us. We're too busy keeping up at work, making sure the kids do well in school while paying the mortgage, soccer team fees and the heating bill. The passive attitude toward cultural diversity stems from the reasoning that most of us are in favor of cultural diversity and think that's pretty much enough. We have good intentions, and acceptance of the diversity idea certainly can be lauded as an important first step. Still, diversity in a community has to be developed, just as much as a community's education or business environment. The Mankato region has a good start in the development of cultural diversity. Mankato Area Public Schools along with a number of community organizations has developed a Diversity Council, a group of individuals who have set up a short one-day curriculum for public schools. The program helps teach young people the importance of cultural diversity as a concept, but also helps them through role playing understand the actions or situations that might undermine cultural diversity. Cultural diversity is more than a nice idea. A community rich in cultural diversity will resolve conflicts peacefully instead of violently. We need only examine the situation in France to see a community that probably could use a little more training in cultural diversity. A community rich in cultural diversity will increase its options for business development. A more diverse employee base will give business organizations more options to solve business problems. The American culture, much as we might like to think, does not have a monopoly on the best way to run a successful business. The economic success of China, Japan and India are just a few examples that different cultures are good for business. History also offers us an example of why acceptance, tolerance and education of another culture can benefit the progress of a society in general. American immigrants from the Irish to the Japanese were met with unbelievable violence when they arrived on American shores decades ago. They did not have the advantages immigrants today have in a willingness of many of their host countrymen to embrace and understand their culture. We have an opportunity to develop our cultural diversity base this week with a number of events at Minnesota State University, which is celebrating Diversity — International Education Week. A listing of events appears at the Web site [http://www.mnsu.edu/cultdiv/Diversity\\_Week.pdf](http://www.mnsu.edu/cultdiv/Diversity_Week.pdf). Take in one of the events. Make cultural diversity more than a nice idea. Make it more of a reality.