

# Dear Spirit,



In the midst of a fervent and controversial immigration debate in this country, the citizenship piece [‘The New Americans,’ July 2010] was an excellent reminder of the power of empathy. The immigration process, that most of us neither understand nor will ever confront, suddenly has been enhanced by those featured faces, names, and their stories. Congratulations to the *Spirit* team for this well-done article that touches on the human condition in a small yet incredibly powerful way.

—*Todd Carroll*  
Pollock Pines, California

*Thanks, Todd. That means a lot. Our newest citizens say volumes about America being the Land of Second Chances. And on that theme, we hope you enjoy this issue.*

## SEND 'EM IN

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## LOCAL POLITICS

I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed Jay Heinrichs' essay [“Citizenship in Five Parts,” July 2010]. It lightened up an otherwise boring late-night flight from Kansas City, Missouri, to Orlando, Florida. Many memories of town meetings came to mind and it was very entertaining. Keep up the good work.

—Jim Richards  
Lady Lake, Florida

*Here we compared American voters with Mongolian hordes and described the Constitutional Convention as “mission creep,” and we seem to have raised nary a hackle. Either Spirit readers are remarkably tolerant, or Flight Crews weren't telling enough jokes in July. Still, we'll take your letter as a compliment, Jim.*

## WORTH THE WAIT

“The New Americans” was inspiring! And timely for us, too, because a friend just recently took the Oath. We think other read-

ers will be interested to know that the citizenship process lasted more than 10 years and involved fees totaling \$10,000! Thanks again for great reporting.

—Judy and David Ellis  
Whittier, California

*Glad you mentioned it. Citizenship doesn't come cheap—particularly for most immigrants.*

## CHERISH IS THE WORD

In a world where there are so many detractors of America, it was very uplifting to read about new citizens [“The New Americans”]. This article reminded me of how great America is and how much I must cherish my own citizenship. Today, as a result, I am much less jaded about the United States.

—David Phelps  
Crestline, California

*Though citizenship is a pain in the neck when it's exercised properly, your letter should make us all less jaded, David.*