NUESTRA COSA

1810 Wars of Creole Independence of “Latin America” in Indigenous Anahuac

1910 Mexicoh Revolution

2010? Civil War in Mexico?
Nochtinomekayotzin: To All My Relations
As a Movement, the Macehualmeh (Indigenous People) seek Liberation through Education. Nuestra Cosa is a vehicle for documenting Our own History in Our own Words. We are the Tlacuilo. We are the Tlahtoani. We are the Descendents of the People who built Anahuac. We are Maya, Mexicah/Azteca, Tawatinsuyu/Inka, Lakota/Dakota, Haudensaune/ Iriqious, Apache, Navajo, Ayamara. We Are All One

People divided by transcontinental and imposed borders. We are the People of Anahuac, Nican Tlac (The People Here, Indigenous People). We are First Nation Peoples, Native “American” Peoples, Mexican People, Central and South “American” People. America does not exist for us, only Anahuac, Aztlan, Turtle Island does. This is Our Land and we have a Right to Self-Determination. We Are Freedom Writers for Our People.

The Nuestra Cosa Staff:

Faculty Advisor
Richard Lowy

Staff Advisor
Estella Acuña

Student Editor
Miguel Nuñez

Staff Writers
Joel Godoy
Mario Gueverra
Rocio Hernandez
Jaime Matute
Patricia Muñiz
Miguel Nuñez
Jorge Salazar
Penelope Quintero

Contact Info: maestracosadeucr@yahoo.com

NUESTRA COSA

SPRING 2010
Chicano and Latino Education: A Legacy of Broken Promises
By Jorge Salazar

Chicano and Latino education has long suffered the effects of poor schooling conditions in public schools. The Chicano and Latino community have always been exposed to unfair and poor budgeting within the public school system. Within the last years, the schooling experience in California has become overwhelming with the increasing number of students per class and the increasing number of teachers being laid off. In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act was signed into law by President Bush’s administration. The No Child Left Behind Act would provide extra funding for schools based on students’ academic performance in State Standardized testing for five years. Despite the fact that many schools improved their scores, the funding promised was never really seen by students or schools. Not only did the No Child Left Behind Act fail in keeping its promises to students, it also failed in assuring students enough qualified teachers. Though it has not been reauthorized, the No Child Left Behind Act has been temporarily extended following the completion of its first five years.

Through the broken promises of the No Child Left Behind Act, schools have received less budgeting for keeping their teachers. In his article “Mass Teacher Layoffs Loom Again for California Schools” Robert Cruickshank reports that “This time last year, in the wake of the Legislature's decision to slash $9 billion from the K-12 education budget, schools sent out nearly 30,000 layoff notices to teachers” (Cruickshank). This demonstrates that the government has lost its priority of educating the children in the United States. Some school districts across the country have closed down entire schools and some have reduced their school week to four-days. With a deficit in teachers, students are not receiving fair education since they are forced into classrooms that do not meet their needs. Many “Opponents of NCLB, which includes all major teachers’ unions, allege that the act hasn't been effective in improving education in public education, especially high schools, as evidenced by mixed results in standardized tests since NCLB's 2002 inception” (White). Opponents of the No Child Left Behind Act acknowledge that even though there are regulations that have been set, they are not being followed, which in the long run has continued to hurt Chicano and Latino students. Some of the new proposed changes to the No Child Left Behind Act include more testing and tougher testing.

With all the cut backs, students are not given the opportunity to receive a proper education, yet they are still held accountable for their lack of progress. With the lack of attention that Chicano and Latino students receive through the increasing numbers of students per classroom, the drop out rate amongst the community continues to grow. Through the broken promises of the No Child Left Behind Act and with the massive budget cuts in public schools, the possibility of attending college to further their education seems like an unreachable dream for many Chicano and Latino youth. This feeling of losing hope and faith has also reached many university campuses in California. The budget cuts in California’s public universities has also impacted the Chicano and Latino community. With the increase in tuition and financial aid not being able to keep up, many Chicano and Latino students are struggling with the idea of not being able to finish college since they have no means to pay for school on their own. With budget cuts left and right, the legacy of poor schooling among Chicanos and Latinos continues to limit the options and opportunities for self-improvement.
The Courageous Four on a “Trial of Dreams”
By: Rocio Hernandez

“The Trail of Dreams,” a 1,500 mile march which began on January 1, 2010 was initiated by four undocumented college students to encourage legislators to pass the Dream Act. The Dream Act is a “bill [that] would offer undocumented minors a pathway through education or military service to permanent residency status.” (VIE! Magazine, 2010, March 26) which would definitely help those other thousands of students who graduate from college without knowing what future awaits for them. These four immigrant students from Miami, Florida began their walk on New Year’s Day with the hope of arriving in Washington D.C. on May 1. Their intent is to bring awareness and to get President Barack Obama to sign this bill. Carlos Roa, Gaby Pacheco, Juan Rodriguez, and Felipe Matos are the four students who are walking an average of 15 miles per day during their five month trek with the persistence to make a difference, even though they face the risk of being arrested and even deported with every step they take.

These “dreamwalkers” continue to walk daily striving to reach Washington D.C. but, throughout their journey, they have experienced acts of hatred and racism. For example, while passing through the state of Georgia, they encountered the Ku Klux Klan who they confronted with the help of the NAACP. They were able to rally against the Ku Klux Klan and demonstrate that they are hard working human beings who came to America with a dream that they want to pursue in order to improve their lives and status. The families of these students immigrated to this country in hopes of escaping hardships or poverty and with the dream of better opportunities and the start of a new life for themselves and their children. However, the dreams that these students once wished for have been overtaken by daily struggles in life. We may know that these students go through hardships and struggles every day however, we may not really understand how complicated these hardships can become for these undocumented students who literally have been raised in this country and consider it their home even though they may not be legalized citizens.

A statement by one of the students, Felipe Matos, was quoted on WECT TV 6 news. Through Felipe’s words, one realizes how much fear these students face when they think about the possibility of leaving a country that they have adjusted to, and consider to be their home, despite having to hide.

He stated: “Imagine waking up every day not knowing if someone was going to come, knock on your door in the middle of the night and take your family and yourself, from the only place you’ve known—this is how my life is”. Throughout their journey, the dreamers have expressed the hope that their struggle and their courage to step out from the shadows of hiding will help motivate other undocumented students, people and supporters to come out, march with them and help them pursue their goal of reaching Washington D.C. and fulfilling their mission for meaningful social reform through the passage of the Dream Act.

Community Health Fair: Celebrating our health, celebrating our future!
By: Jaime Matute

The César Chávez Community Center, off of University Ave., was host to a community health fair in celebration of the legacy of César Chávez. The event was held on Saturday, March 27, 2010. The goal of the fair was to provide the local community with health related resources as well as to connect health agencies with their community. The parking lot was converted into a fair with a wide variety booths, games, free resources, and entertainment. All of the material was provided in English and Spanish by the staff at each booth. This strategy proved very resourceful and effective since the local community is pre-dominantly Chicano and Spanish-speaking. There were several agencies represented at the health fair including: the Red Cross, local hospitals, health insurance representatives, along with a handful of community representatives such as attorneys and government officials.

A celebration of health and wellness is something the Chicano community is in definite need of. Given the passage of a new health care reform bill and a sluggish economy, we must focus on our future, which in turn means, a focus on our health. Many Chicanos, in attendance, worked primarily under hazardous conditions and most of them had no health insurance for themselves or their families. For this reason, the Red Cross was provided a mini-workshop on basic first aid for families who stopped at their booth. They demonstrated various simple techniques one can use in case of an emergency. This was not a case of neglect regular doctor visits or hospital visits in response to a major emergency. Instead, the Red Cross recognizes how expensive even minor treatment can be, therefore, they provided families in attendance with options to help treat simple emergencies in an effort to help families to avoid going to the emergency room in case where family members could use knowledge to help themselves.

The environment was warm and welcoming with an overall celebratory feeling. There were multiple activities for both children and adults to enjoy. Inflatable bouncers, face painting, and fun science crafts were some activities provided to the children. The adults had their choice of a plethora of resources at the various booths which most often included free printing material about community resources and potions for discounts for health services. The fair also had its share of community based entertainment. A local elementary school performed folklorico and cumbia dances; there were singers, a raffle with free give-aways, and a performance from the local Zumba group. The Zumba performance was an hour-long and gave attendees a taste of a general Zumba class, which is offered at both the César Chávez Community Center and down the street at Bordwell Park, free of charge, to all who are interested. Zumba is a high energy aerobic that incorporates Salsa, Cumbia, Reggeton, Bachata, and various other Latin/Indigenous genres. Zumba members demonstrated that anyone can participate in the classes as they are enjoyable. “The only requirement is that you have fun,” claimed Zumba instructor, Ninfa Delgado.

These free Zumba classes are part of a program that encourages the community to exercise, eat healthy, and have fun while promoting a healthy life style. The people who sponsored the Community Health Fair run several health-inspired outreach programs, and provide bilingual resources to the Riverside area. Overall the fair was very successful in providing resources and entertainment to the community. With a variety of booths, fun activities, and enjoyable entertainment the fair truly fulfilled its goals of promoting health and laying the foundation for future family and community fulfillment.
THE BEST CONFERENCE EVER

Tomás Rivera Conference: Latino Health 2010
By Jaime Matute

On March 23, 2010 the University of California, Riverside hosted its 23rd Annual Tomás Rivera Conference. A conference established to honor pioneer, poet, educator, and the first Chicano Chanceller in the UC System, Tomás Rivera. The annual conference’s overall goal is to continue the late Rivera’s legacy towards education and opportunity for all Chicanos; it is an annual commitment to his legacy and to the community. “This year’s conference focuses on Latino Health,” commented Tomás Rivera Endowed Chair, Professor Juan Felipe Herrera “It is an issue which not only is key to the quality of life in our communities but also is pivotal in insuring the progress of generations to come”. The annual conference is sponsored by the Tomás Rivera Endowment and the Department of Creative Writing at the University of California, Riverside. In addition, the conference had several co-sponsors including: UCR Tomás Rivera Library, C.H.A.S.S FIRST, UCR Sweeney Arts Gallery, The Inlandia Institute, Chicano Student Programs, and Leer Es Triunfar part of the Riverside County Library System.

Keynote speaker Dr. Estela Diesfeld, Anesthesiologist/Internal Medicine & Pain Management from Ventura, California, began the conference with a short life story followed by her plight to providing excellent healthcare to her community. Her speech resonated with a single problem she has witnessed over and over again, “The problem is not that the resources are not present, it is the fact that the resources are not reaching the community.” Today, most of the resources are found on the internet, however not all of the community has access or knowledge of computers. For this reason, she encouraged the audience to take some time to outreach to the community and provide such resources that are generally not available or are hard to access. Dr. Diesfeld focused the later half of her speech on the recently signed Health Care Bill. Giving a brief synopsis of the long bill, she commented that in her professional opinion she did not believe the bill would benefit the patients as assumed. Instead she referred to the bill as the Health Insurance Reform bill not the Health Care bill, further stating that at the heart of the legislation is a reform on insurance a mere guideline for companies to follow which is a step toward the right direction. She closed her speech by commenting on what the next step was, sharing her story about opening her own clinic. Leading by example Dr. Diesfeld mentioned that the best approach to this health crisis was to practice preventative medicine in an effort to avoid future health problems. Simple steps such as annual exams, follow-ups, etc. could make a world of difference in our Chicano communities, and the only way we can achieve this is through access, education and commitment.

Dr. Luz Elvia Becerra, International & Community Nutrition from UC Davis, followed Dr. Diesfelds inspiring keynote speech as she offered an insight to the parallels between Chicanos in Mexico and those in the U.S. Dr. Becerra’s focus was on childhood-adult obesity offering eye-opening statistics about the growing epidemic in both countries. With 20%-30% of children in Mexico and 15%-20% of children in the U.S. being obese Dr. Becerra urged the audience that the time is now to create change in regards to healthcare on both sides of the border. Childhood obesity more often times then not leads to adult obesity which in turn results in various complications such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart attacks, etc. Childhood obesity could be prevented if given proper nutrition, exercise and guidance; all of which are often times not accessible to the Chicano community therefore resulting in these staggering numbers. With a fast-food industry taking over our communities, most families find it easier to buy a combo meal to feed a family of 4 then they do to buy more expensive nutritious food. “Most families in Mexico drink soda at each meal,” she mentioned, “When I did the research I discovered that this had to do with the cost of water. Can you believe water is more expensive than soda?” Shocked by her own research Dr. Becerra and other committed health professionals in Mexico helped establish a campaign to end childhood/adult obesity providing the essential guidance, access to exercise, and nutritional food vouchers to the community of Leon, Guanajuato. Although the program is in its first year, it is already generating success as Dr. Becerra concluded this is just the beginning they hope to take this program to other states in Mexico in the future.

A panel of Chicano health professionals concluded the day-long health discussion. Among the panel where both Dr. Diesfeld and Dr Luz Elvia Becerra, in addition to Dr. Martha López, Nutrition, Family & Consumer Sciences Educator UCR Emeritus, Dr. Raúl Ruiz, Emergency Medicine in Rancho Mirage, CA, and National Book Award Winner author Victor Martinez who read his personal poems about healing and health. The distinguished members of the panel spoke about various issues under the umbrella of health care for Chicanos. Some topics discussed included: Access to health care for uninsured patients as well as undocumented patients, the language barrier for some patients including those indigenous members of the community, the overall cost of healthcare far exceeding the average family income, and lastly the urge for future Chicano health professionals. The panel closed the discussion with an emphasis on preventative medicine urging once again that education, access, and commitment will not only reduce the amount of healthcare costs but most importantly save lives.

The conference concluded with a small ceremony to celebrate Rivera’s legacy awarding the late Tomás Rivera the Inlandia Literary Laureate Award sponsored by the Inlandia Institute. Rivera’s widow, Concha Rivera a pioneer in her own right continuing her husbands’ commitment to higher education accepted the award on her late husband’s behalf. She mentioned, “Tomas would have been so happy to receive this, commenting further, “My family and I are very proud to be a part of this conference to honor him.” UCR Professor Susan Straight also received the Inlandia Literary Laureate Award for her influential writings about Riverside. The conference was both informative and empowering. All of those in attendance would agree that although we are currently in a health crisis, the healthcare professionals’ that were part of the program offered powerful insight and undeniable hope that change is possible if we all work together.
Chicano Student Programs is responsible on a yearly basis to organize and host the Chicano/Latino Youth Conference which is modeled on the 1969 Crusade for Justice National Youth Liberation Conference that was convened in Denver, Colorado in March by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales.

The UC Riverside Youth Conference provide high school students representing numerous Inland Empire and Southern California high schools the opportunity to visit the UCR campus in order to collectively hear prominent keynote speakers, Chicano Student Programs staff, and volunteer Chicano/Latino students to conduct sessions with the hope of motivating Raza youth to aspire to achieving the goal of seeking to attend colleges and universities while also promoting Chicano/a cultural pride, political consciousness, and leadership skills that can be developed on their high school campuses and in their communities.

The preparation and organization of the conference is all done by a group of committee members who take charge of this conference by taking time out of their busy schedules to meet regularly to organize and put together all the elements that make up the conference. For this year’s 21st Annual Chicano/Latino Youth Conference, four main individuals dedicated their time to organize the conference. The four individuals who took responsibility and dedicated themselves to plan the Youth Conference are: Roberto Rodriguez, Brenda Olguin, Jessica Rojas, and Ana Hidalgo. And of course, throughout the whole preparation process the student organizing committee had full support from Chicano Student Programs, Raza Assembly, and UCR students.

However, special thanks and recognition are due to Elena Perez (CSP’s Social and Cultural Programmer) who Ana Hidalgo (one of the members of the Youth Conference committee) praised: “Elena Perez was a very important figure in helping make this conference a success.” These individuals worked extra hard to make the conference possible, even though they faced the massive obstacle of budget cuts in the UC educational system which affected the committees efforts to organize the logistics of the efforts to organize the logistics of the conference. This year it was not possible to provide Youth Conference participants with T-shirts, however that minor set-back did not impede the organizers from completing their hard work and dedication to raise needed funding through numerous weekly and monthly fundraisers.

The 21st Annual Chicano/Latino Youth Conference took place on Saturday April 24, 2010. About 750 students attended. As a volunteer, I was impressed by how many students actually arrived to the conference early that morning. The sheer size of the conference indicates just how important this event was for all the students who attended. All the students who do attend the conference do so in the interest of gaining a better understanding of how they can learn about higher education in order to apply to college. For this year’s Annual Conference, the theme chosen was “Lucha por tu mañana a través de tu educación/Fight for your tomorrow through your Education.” The theme chosen ties in with the committee’s overall message of the Conference which is to inform and educate the youth. By making educational decisions and taking action to make a difference in their lives, students will not only improve their general knowledge but our gente will be able to move forward and to impact the future generations of young people who will emerge after them.

The students attending this year’s Youth Conference were welcomed to UCR at 9:15am. Dr. Raul Ruiz, who was the keynote speaker, eloquently shared his insights and experiences with the students. While growing up, he encountered numerous barriers that could have caused him to fail in his efforts to obtain quality higher education. However, Dr. Ruiz told the high school students that no barriers or obstacles were able to prevent him from accomplishing his academic, professional, and activist goals which is what enabled him to become the inspirational leader he is today.

As the keynote speaker, Dr. Raul Ruiz provided strong motivation to encourage the youth to pursue a higher education: “…[the youth of today are] the promise for a better tomorrow [because as the future agents of change they need to] take the initiative, despite the odds, that no hope will come…”

I believe that the committee made the correct choice in asking Dr. Ruiz to be their primary speaker because he comes from a Chicano/Latino background, a working class, and his parents were farm workers. Dr. Ruiz is able to motivate and inspire students of color to pursue higher education because they see someone whose roots were similar to their own backgrounds and circumstances. Raul Ruiz concluded by telling the students that “All things are possible!”

Following the keynote address, students listened to additional speakers, watched cultural presentations, and attended a variety of workshops. Among the workshops that students participated in were: Law, Education, Culture, and Engineering. The students were mentored by university Raza or professional in the various fields. All the workshops highlighted specific knowledge while encouraging the students to pursue higher education while empowering themselves to become active and to learn about issues that impact their neighborhoods, their schools, and their communities.

Throughout the conference, the students, advisers, counselors, and teachers who attended seemed very satisfied with what they were learning and experiencing. Ana Hidalgo mentioned to me that a day after the conference, they received a number of emails from several teachers and counselors who expressed how pleased they were with the conference and how unique and fantastic the experience was for their students. The Chicano/Latino Youth Conference was hugely successful and it allowed a large number of students to participate in it. As one of the main organizers of the conference, Ana expressed how amazing the experience was for her. She stated “I had an amazing experience organizing the conference. It represented a lot of collective hard work and dedication. The planning for the conference began in the fall and culminated with a successful day. We were able to bring a large number of students and inform them as well as encourage them to pursue a higher educational career.” In general, the conference was efficacious and rewarding to all of the participants, volunteers who attended the conference, and those who planned it. It is now up to the youth who participated in the conference to decide how they want to utilize the information that they were presented with in terms of either using it to benefit our gente or to use it as motivation to become agents of change who will continue the duty of encouraging future generations of young people to move forward and aspire to gain higher education and to achieve their professional goals.
The Salvi-Chicano Conecta: Coverage of the U.S.E.U. State Conference
By Mario Guevara

“For as long as the world shall endure, the honor and the glory of Mexico-Tenochtitlan must never be forgotten.” – Chamultzin Quauhtlehuatzin

“To be Chicana/Chicano is to be Indigenous” – Vivian Lopez, Yaqui/Apache

Q-vole Gente. In the spirit of resistance and Chicanism; as a first-generation American of Salvadoran descent, I declare that to be Salvadoran is to be Nahuaupiltin. If you are from Aztlán-Chichimotzoc, as our ancestors referred to the lands north of the urban centers of Mesoamerica, or the Southwestern United States you may be familiar with the Salvadoran community.

In metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Houston Salvadorans follow Mexicans as the most represented “Latino/Hispanic” ethnic demographic, nevertheless Salvadorans in large part remain an unknown and underrepresented community in the collective American consciousness (Bailey 129). Most American youth seem to know about the infamous “MS13” gang from mainstream media sources which glorify images of locotes covered in tattoos; a reality representing an “importation of Cholo culture” which originated in the Chicano homeland; in the manner that Salvadoran gangs such as the MS13 and MS18 are mirrors of the Sueños 13 and the 18th street gang. From personal experience, I have always been taken to be of Mexican-descent even to the point that it has been commonplace for people to ask me: “Where in Mexico is El Salvador?” While my identity may be ambiguous to the dominant “black and white” American society, it is further a dividing point when it comes to Mexican and Salvadoran identity politics. (Reproducing Salvadoran Transnational Geographies Adrian J. Bailey, et al. Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. 92, No. 1 (Mar. 2002), pp. 125-144

On April 10, 2010 a group of over three-hundred students, composed of Salvadorans, Mexicans, and other central American-descendants; ranging from campuses such as UCLA, UCSB, UCR, CSULA and UCSD converged for two days at the University of California Berkeley for the 2nd Annual U.S.E. (Unión Salvadoreña de Estudiantes Universitarios) State Conference. In an attempt to address the aforementioned cultural disparities the Salvadoran community experiences, the conference aimed to frame the student-organized USEU discourse under the ideal of “Paradigms of a New Consciousness: (Re)Defining the Salvadoran Diaspora in the 21st Century.” The highlights of the event were the national and international renown presenters which included: Marvin H Andrade; Executive director of the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), an immigrant rights organization; the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador or CISPES (grassroots organization focusing on relevant economic policies), and Carlos Gamez; member of the FMLN and the Communist Party of El Salvador among others who directed workshops such as “Decolonizing Education In Times of Crisis”; “La Mujer En El Proceso Revolucionario (1921-Present)” and “Gold Mining, CAFTA & The Diaspora’s Political Responsibility.”

For the majority of the attendees, the convergence was among the rare occasions Salvadorans, most us being first-generation, have come together to speak as a “Salvadoran people,” rather than as “Latinos” or “Hispanos” which in most cases is the identity most of us have embraced as a result of being an “unknown people” in American society; further accompanied by the emerging “anti-Mexican” political climate the immigration debate has caused, which equally affects Salvadorans, Guatemalans and other central Americans. In the film A Day Without A Mexican there is a scene in which the expression “Illegal Mexicans from Guatemala” characterizes the manner in which most of our people are viewed by the conservative right and American culture in general.

We learned a lot about the civil war of the 1980s and the recent right-wing-to-democratic-socialist shift of political conditions in El Salvador, with the FMLN now being in power. Stories from my parents which tell of how when they grew up. Everyone around them couldn’t afford to go to school, further designating them to the agricultural-subsistent economy are not as relevant today, as all children now have free education and health care reminiscent of the Mexica-Aztec tradition of offering compulsory education to all genders and classes. Following the presenters were interactive educational workshops. Each USEU chapter prepared for the attendees, including UCR’s own USEU members which presented a lecture focusing on Salvadoran culture & identity in the 21st century. In our open forum many students expressed that they had never been surrounded by so many Salvadorans before to the point that many students began crying in the spirit of joy and a cultural cathartic experience.

I learned a lot personally, moreover I returned to UC Riverside with the spirit of resistance. In MECHA and other progressive Chicano circles and organizations there seems to be an overemphasis on political mobilization which is needed of course. However, much of our traditional culture is not promoted to the same degree, and in doing so we may break the border-delineated divisions among us. Shedding the light on Nahuas (aka the “Mexican-language” spoken by the Aztecs) which was made illegal to speak in 1932 in El Salvador as a result of La Matanza; a massacre of 30,000 (outright genocide despite it being a “hidden” memory to most) Nahuas-speaking peoples who rose up along with the Communist party in response to hegemonic land-reforms; and furthermore discovering that Salvadorans as a result of our Nahuas share the same Toltec heritage with our Mexican brothers and sisters has allowed me to view ourselves in much the same manner the first Europeans who arrived in Mesoamerica viewed us (Mexicans/central Americans)—not as a separate people, but one culture (Ching 206). Adelante gente, Tiahui (Nahuatl for Forward)! In Search of the Party: The Communist Party, the Comintern, and the Peasant Rebellion of 1932 in El Salvador. Ching, Eric. The Americas, Vol. 55, No. 2 (Oct., 1998), pp. 204-239

Nahuapiltin: refers to the Pipil of El Salvador who speak the southernmost Nahuas variant, a language which is part of the Uto-Aztecan Language group which includes other languages such as Cabuilla (Riverside). Hopi (AZ). Yaqui (Northern Mexico) among others, which are from the Chicano homeland (Aztlán-Chichimotzoc, the Mexico-Aztec point of origin). Source: The Cultural Evolution of Ancient Nahua Civilization by William Fowler (Cont. p.3)
**Chicanismo 101: Basic Concepts of Mesoamerican (Mexican/Central)**

**By Mario Guevara**

Prior to the European expansion and colonization of the western hemisphere in the sixteenth century, the complex urban cultures of Mexico and Central America — the civilizations of Mesoamerica — shared a cosmological tradition derived from the Olmec civilization, which stems from the corn cultural complex of 2300 B.C. (Austin 80). As agricultural subsistence of corn gave way to growth of village clusters and ceremonial centers, trade networks provided the diffusion of cultural and religious ideas that can be identified in the varying mosaic of the Mesoamerican cosmological framework, in the same manner as the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are referenced as “Abrahamic” religions. *Mexico’s Indigenous Past (The Civilization of the American Indian Series)* Alfredo Austin

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<th>Representation of the ‘Time Overlords’: Yaxchilan Stela 10 (Markman 158)</th>
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<td>Among the principal cosmological ideas that span temporal and spatial spheres in Mesoamerica is the concept of the four directions or axis mundi, which first appears in the archaeological record as the Olmec cosmogram, delineated on the bodies of zoomorphic (were-jaguar) “baby” figures, indicating an early form of ritual involving the acknowledgment of animal spirits intertwined (united) with the environment (the four directions) and the human physical form (Soustelle 64-66). The “cross” therefore predates the arrival of Christianity in the Americas and provides a context as to why post conquest indigenous religious conversion was so swift. <em>The Olmec: The Oldest Civilization in Mexico. Jacques Soustelle</em></td>
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**In the context of the larger Mesoamerican tradition, the discipline of anthropology tells much of how ancient societies in pre-Colombian Mexico shared the cognate religious notions of teotl, representing cultural-embedded ideologies which deeply structured their societies; as noted in the article *A Dark Light: Reflections on Obsidian in Mesoamerica*, as Nicholas J. Saunders explores the varied pre-Colombian aesthetic tradition noting that: “in the worldview of... Mesoamerican peoples, the natural world was infused with spiritual essence and animated by cosmic forces... universe was governed by powerful gods who were repaid for creating the world by a seemingly endless round of ritual... (220).” *A Dark Light: Reflections on Obsidian in Mesoamerica. Nicholas J. Saunders* World Archaeology, Vol. 33, No. 2, Archaeology and Aesthetics (Oct., 2001), pp. 230-236. **Direct historical studies of pre-Colombian Mesoamerican religion provide examples that highlight this aspect of animatism (teotl), such as Archaeology and Religion: A Comparison of the Zapotec and Maya in which Joyce Marcus’s notes how “the most crucial concept in Zapotec religion was that of *pe*... the vital force that made all living things move... deserving of respect were the great (manifestations of pe) natural forces (174).” To the south of the Zapotec, Marcus further elaborates on this animatist orientation as he further notes how in “the Maya version of animatism, the word *ku* (sacred, divine) played a role as important as did the concept of *pe* among the Zapotec... *Ku* transforms a house or structure into a temple” in effect redefining an item or place via perceived “divine” attributes from “utilitarian” (ordinary) to a ceremonial item (180).” *Archaeology and Religion: A Comparison of the Zapotec and Maya, Joyce Marcus, World Archaeology, Vol 10 No. 2, Archaeology and Religion, (Oct.1978)* **The concepts of teotl, “pe” and “ku” in ancient Mexico-Aztecs, Mayan and Zapotec societies organized public ritual which involved ritual-bloodletting and the infamous practice of ritual execution or human sacrifice as central to Mesoamerican warfare, which in large part represented the self-reciprocation functions of life and death:**

*We consume from the earth (what it gives to us, whether via fruits gathered or animal hunted for consumption) what it gives life to, and in our consumption we act of “taking from the earth” we in turn process the calories, vitamins, sugars, proteins etc. to provide us “energy” or in a sense more life. Mesoamerican rituals based on veneration of these forces maintained the balance and functionality of the cosmos and were seen as divine contracts between the cosmos and the participants who offered their lives as warriors in ritual sacrifice or via their energy via “bloodletting,” Huey Tonantzintzin, Huey Tonatiuh!*
Are You “Illegal”? 
By Jorge Salazar

Arizona’s new immigration law, SB 1070, has caused a lot of controversy around the country. This new law was created and put into practice in order to “fix” the immigration issues. Police officers and other government officials have received the right to legally racially profile people of color who they might consider to be “illegal.” Though the law is meant to hunt down all immigrants in the state, it is clear that only Latino immigrants are the immigrant population being targeted. The claim to get rid of those who are illegally taking advantage of, and abusing government programs, is not a legitimate excuse to legalize discrimination and promote racial profiling. Many right wing groups fail to accept the fact that undocumented workers are also tax-paying workers who are not eligible to receive the full benefits of employment opportunities. Despite the fact that Latino’s are unwanted, they are still recruited by major companies and corporations as a source of cheap labor. Classifying humans as “illegal” does not make it all right to exploit them before imposing extreme discriminatory laws on them. We must break away from the stereotype of Latinos as the only immigrant population in the country.

Border patrol along the Mexico-United States border has increased over the years. Yet, no one considers immigration issues from other countries or continents such as Asia, Europe, and Canada. Many other immigrants residing in the U.S. enter the country with their passports and never return home. Why then, are Chicano and Latino the only racial group who will suffer from this evil law? Physical characteristics will be used to profile, in conjunction with other factors. Those who look white and speak English will have nothing to fear since they will not fit the stereotype of an Indigenous migrant. The practice of this law will not only violate human rights, but it might also grow to point in which U.S.-born children will also suffer the consequences. We see this law becoming more unjust when Republican Rep. Duncan Hunter told a conservative crowd that he supports the deportation of children of illegal immigrants - even if they were born in the United States (Sacks). Though there are many supporters of the SB 1070 law, there are also political leaders who do not agree with it.

Despite all the efforts to frighten the “illegal” people of Arizona, many people around the country have shown their support. St. Paul, Minnesota’s mayor, has shown his support by stating, “we are a country of immigrants and SB 1070 is an affront to our Constitution and the values we hold dear as Americans” (Sacks). California, New York, and Colorado have also been very supportive and consider this law unacceptable. This support demonstrates that humans should not be labeled as “illegal” and that characteristics of illegalness do not apply to all people. If a person can have “illegal” characteristics, then we should ask every individual, are you illegal? In order to assure that SB 1070 was not designed to target one racial group.

Boycott in Arizona
By: Patricia Muniz

After the controversial new measure in the state of Arizona that compels police officers to determine the immigration status of anybody they suspect of being an undocumented immigrant, Democratic Senator of Arizona, Raul Grijalva launched an economic boycott of businesses in the state of Arizona and he would like to encourage visitors to Arizona to boycott the state as well.

On Friday, April 23, 2010, Governor of the state of Arizona, Jan Brewer, signed the bill, SB1070, subsequent to its approval in the state legislature earlier in the week. After signing the bill, she stated, “This is what’s best for Arizona”, making opponents furious. Opponents call it an anti-immigrant measure in the country and a license for racial profiling.

Senator Raul Grijalva explains what exactly the SB1070 law is by stating that, “This legislation is unconstitutional”, therefore his boycotting campaign will be asking all types of religious, national, civic, and political organizations not to have conferences or conventions in the state of Arizona, “There has to be an economic consequence to this legislation”, he points out. “Organizations religious, national, civic, and political organizations not to have conferences or conventions in the state of Arizona, “There has to be an economic consequence to this legislation”, he points out. “Organizations across this country and decent ones in others that agree that the bill is not only unconstitutional but racist as well, should refrain from bringing their businesses to the state.” President Obama denounced the newly signed law and suggested the need for federal government interference to stop this outrageous and unconstitutional law. “Our failure to act responsibly at the federal level will only open the door to irresponsibility by others, that includes the recent efforts in Arizona which threatens to undermine basic notions of fairness which we cherish as Americans as well as the trust between police and their communities.”

According to Raul Grijalva, Governor Brewer, has sent the state of Arizona into an economic black hole, with respect to tourism, imports, exports, and a potential lawsuit that could cost seven hundred state taxes charged to immigrants living in the state of Arizona.Due to the motivation of Raul Grijalva, many others have declared the need for a boycott against Arizona, including: Darrel Steinberg, President of the California Senate, and Joe Baca, Democratic Representative of Congress. Boycotting the state of Arizona will be effective according to Grijalva and hopefully it will help those who are against him and are anti-immigrants, to reason. The boycott option is still active and open to those who would like to join.Representative of Congress. Boycotting the state of Arizona will be effective according to Grijalva and hopefully it will help those who are against him and are anti-immigrants, to reason. The boycott option is still active and open to those who would like to join!
Chicano Park Day: Self-Determination via Arts & Culture
by Mario Guevara

The park celebration’s central area and stage for the main speakers and Danza Azteca performance (hosted by the Toltecas en Aztlán, est. 1975) can be described as a teocalli (sacred temple) with native aesthetics and Pueblo motifs. Attendees were easily able to go from the vendor, car show, and central area with ease across the park grounds. As vendors from as far as Arizona displayed their independent crafted jewelry, amulets, organic and incense goods; as well as traditional items such as day of the dead art, dreamcatchers, and flutes; the scents of Mesoamerican foods filled the air—tortillas, tacos, and columnas. The Brown Berets initiated the event by introducing the crowd to the history behind the event and how the park came to be; thereafter they were followed by Nita Gonzales, famous daughter of the author of I am Joaquín, Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales. Nita stressed the significance of the actions of those who came before us and their precedence for our presence at the gathering: If Barrio Logan had been apathetic there would no longer be a barrio.

“Chicano power”, “si se puede,” “que viva Mexico” and “que viva la mujer” (as well as que viva Trotsky!) were chants that were shouted often as Nita Gonzales further called for acknowledgement of the unjust racist implications of the tensions resulting from the US-Mexico immigration debate, instructing the youth to see the connections between her father’s era and our generation’s role. The event was then finalized by the largest Danza Azteca performance I’ve witnessed, chiefly directed by the oldest Chicano (i.e. established in the U.S.) danza group Toltecas en Aztlán along with troupes from all parts of Aztlán (the U.S. Southwest). Over a hundred danzantes performed along the stage with an overwhelming crowd taking pictures and taking note of the children and parents in the native artistic expression. No mainstream news outlets or stations were on-site documenting the event, further making evident the reality of the need for more community spaces of consciousness and knowledge which only la comunidad can create rather than wait to have it created as was the case with Chicano Park.

The Civil Rights movement of the 1960’s brought the reality of racial inequality to the forefront of American society, as evident with the emergence of activist movements such as the Black Panthers, Brown Berets and the American Indian Movement. The resistance harvested by the generation of the movement contributed to the student-led mobilization which demanded the establishment of Ethnic and Multicultural Studies departments implemented in American academic institutions; and, as a result, made possible the growth of Chicano film, literary, and artistic aesthetic expression. The movimiento however was not one event or solely in one barrio or canton, but rather a part of a mosaic of many movements throughout Aztlán. The 40th Annual “40 Años De La Tierra Mia” Chicano Park Day celebration on April 24th, 2010 in the Barrio Logan of San Diego, Calitzalán represents one among the many triumphs of self-determination and solidarity that the Chicano movement inspired.

The park is located in Logan Heights approximately 17 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border, moreover it represents one of San Diego’s oldest communities and longest established Chicano barrios early on characterized with a distinctive ethnic identity which; as Martin D. Rosen notes in Chicano Park and the Chicano Park Murals: “came to represent a major center for Chicano culture and social activities.” The park was created on April 22, 1970 when residents of Barrio Logan united in opposition to plans for a Highway Patrol facility being built beneath the Coronado Bridge (which hosts the mural work) by participating in occupation of the land and calling out for the need of a public space in response to the historical marginalization of the community (92; 94). Every year the event “Chicano Park Day” is celebrated in commemoration of the struggles of the past, as depicted in the mural work animated by references to Mexican cultural heroines and heroes such as Adelita, Zapata, Pancho Villa, and imagery of the revolutionary struggle represented by the United Farm Workers and Che Guevara. Experiencing Chicano Park Day for the first time welcomed an inspiration of community solidarity as the event was reminiscent of the ecstatic cultural carnalism found at events such as Dia de los Muertos and Aztec New Year celebrations,

The event began at 10 am, which by then was attracting a large multicultural crowd, with various local and national (Vegas, Arizona) Car Clubs exhibiting Chicano urban culture via their bllaring Motown beats, custom ranflas, and lowriders in the Car Show hosted by the San Diego chapter of Amigos Car Club (est. 1977). The custom rides shown portray art pointing to the continuity of our roots (“Aztlán Warriors” and native imagery) in the modern-day “Chicana” era of an emerging immigration debate and burgeoning economic recession. The local police made its presence well-known as numerous patrol trucks and cars remained near the park grounds while officers stood near the cross-streets, while the Brown Berets circled the event in militant regalia and shades bringing to mind the motto “patrol the police,” in reference to the creation of the park.

which can be said to be modern day examples of “raza-think-tank” spaces for our generations’ political and cultural awareness in the context of Chicanismo.
Why do we celebrate 5 de Mayo?
By: Patricia Muniz

As almost everyone knows, Cinco de Mayo is very popular among the Mexican and Chicano community. In México, “El Cinco De Mayo” is an important day, celebrated with a big fiesta. In the United States, it has evolved into something big as well. Students in schools celebrate it and even perform popular Mexican dances throughout the day. The one thing that some people are concerned is the fact that most people are celebrating this day without even knowing the history behind it and the reason why it is celebrated.

“Why are you celebrating El Cinco de Mayo today?”, a question was asked to a 7th grader in Los Angeles, CA. He responded, “Because it is the (creole)”independence day” of Mexico.”

“When I think of celebrating Cinco de Mayo, my first thought goes immediately to Coronas, salsa and guacamole. Going further than the yummy food, I always assumed the significance was the "Mexican Independence Day." – Jackie Fo, member of the “gather news” website.

This is a common misconception among most people in the United States. The biggest misconception about Cinco de Mayo is that it honors México's Independence Day. That holiday is, in fact, celebrated on September 16. Many people don’t know the history behind El Cinco de Mayo. On the day of May 5, 1862, France invaded México, with the purpose to make it part of the French Empire. Outnumbered Mexican forces had to face the French at Puebla and managed to defeat the overconfident French army. After this event, México has celebrated this victory every year. Eventually it became such a big and full of pride event that it got passed to the United States. But this is when people misunderstand the true meaning of why this day is celebrated.

Now that you know the real meaning, you can celebrate with all your family and Mexican food you like. Plus you can impress your friends with all of your knowledge about the history of México.
Gutierrez Bill: A New Immigration Bill With Bigger Potential than the DREAM ACT?
By: Penelope Quintero

Almost no one is aware of a new bill introduced in Congress December 15, 2009. Representative Luis V. Gutierrez is a Senator from Illinois who introduced the comprehensive bill, HR 4321, that covers everything from border control to legalization of Indigenous Migrants (“without papers”). Many know about the ever popular Federal & California DREAM Act. First the distinction needs to be made between the two, which is very big. The Federal DREAM Act would allow undocumented immigrants between 15-35 years of age, who arrived in this country before age 17, and have been here at least 5 years, to gain temporary residency. The California DREAM Act, on the other hand, would, simply allow undocumented students, or AB 540 students, to receive financial government aid for school.

So what does the Gutierrez Bill have to do with this? The Federal DREAM Act is already enacted into the Gutierrez Bill and if one qualifies for the DREAM Act the process of legal residency status would be speeded up. Along with additional provisions and a background check, the bill would allow non-US resident Migrants already in the country to pay a $500 fine as long as they can prove that they have been working. They would also be required to learn English. One thing very different about this bill compared to others is that the person would not be required to return to their country for a grace period. This might be something that could hurt the approval of republicans and even some democrats. Randal C. Archibald of the New York Times mentions that, “the measure also calls for additional training and equipment for border guards, though not the hiring of new ones, and would require the Homeland Security Department to improve immigration jails and eliminate a program that deputizes local and state officers as immigration agents.” This might be a positive for the Latino community; As we stand now, ICE (Immigration and Custom Enforcement) formally known as the INS, can legally train local police to distinguish those who are in this country as Indigenous People (“without papeles”) in order to go about asking questions regarding their legal status.

The Bill also asks seeks to secure the U.S.- Mexico border in order to minimize crime by creating “a Southern Border Security Task Force that is composed of federal, state, and local law enforcement officers” as the bill itself states. The bill also addresses the issue of human trafficking, U.S.- Mexico Partnership in communication, protecting family unity by not allowing the easy separation of family members, and provides for a 24 hour transfer process for children found crossing due to necessity (considered “illegally” by the fascist US government). It would also prevent Indigenous parents (sin papeles) of Indigenous “legal” children from separation as long as the parents do not represent a security threat to the United States.

Workers and new immigrants must “establish presence” as the bill puts it, in this country from the day they arrive and a continuous presence after that. A visa may not be given but the person would be granted 6 years as a qualified undocumented worker. During this 6 year period the person would have to maintain their good moral character, meaning a clean record. After the grace period one can begin the process to become a legal resident of the U.S. Now that Obama has signed the health care reform, immigration supporters are hopeful that immigration reform will be the next issue on the presidents legislative agenda. The bill is extremely extensive and there is so much more to it than I have covered in this brief article. So do yourself a favor and look it up...

THEN GO OUT AND CALL YOUR REPRESENTATIVE TO TELL THEM YOU SUPPORT THIS BILL OR ANY IMMIGRATION REFORM:
Obama-
(866) 956-8590
Boxer-
(213) 894-5000
Feinstein-
(310) 914-7300

Empowering Indigenas
By: Penelope Quintero

Saturday, April 17, 2010, Lambda Theta Nu Sorority, Inc. hosted their annual “Latina” Youth Leadership Conference. This organization was the first Latina based sorority to be established on the West Coast & at UCR and seeks to promote the advancement of Latina women in higher education. But this is not about the organization itself, it is about the conference’s potential to reach females who may not understand the importance of higher education or who may be looking for more resources to reach their goals and reach their full potential. The conference was granted over $2,400 last year by the Outreach Office at ASUCR and this year was awarded another $1,000. Without these grants high school and middle school females may not have had the chance to meet and make connections with those that believe in the strength of not just Latinas, but any woman.

The conference was open to any and all female high school and middle school students. It is a day long event filled with workshops, food, and entertainment. Some of this year’s workshops included: AB 540 (presented by P.O.D.E.R. at UCR), Professionalism, and Self Defense, Nutrition, & Sexual Education. The girls were empowered by keynote speaker, Dr. Tiffany Lopez, who is a professor here at UCR and was the first Chicana with a PhD in the English department. They were also entertained during lunch by sorority members who performed a stroll (party walking).

The conference is offered yearly during the Spring quarter free of charge. The responses from the students were all very positive. One girl in particular who did not speak English was very thankful to a member of P.O.D.E.R. who translated the AB 540 workshop one-on-one and gave more information and support on the subject. The organization also awards a scholarship at the end of the year to one female high school senior (regardless of legal status). For more information on the scholarship or the conference visit the official website, www.lambdathetanu.org or the UCR chapter www.marvelousmulambdas.org or myspace.com/marvelousnu.

NUESTRA COSA

SPRING 2010
César Chávez: What We Should Know
By: Joel Godoy

The annual César Chávez 5k run at the University of Riverside California has inspired me to develop a brief biography on Chávez since many do not understand the actual struggle that this Civil Activist had put forward.

Chávez was born on March 31, 1927, in Yuma, Arizona. Chávez was the leader of the United Farm Workers (UFW) and co-creator of the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). He was born into a family of migrant workers who worked in the fields of Arizona and California. His father, a tenant farmer, was a laborer who worked hard to provide for his family. His mother was a farm worker and a skilled seamstress. His parents instilled in him the value of hard work, perseverance, and the importance of fighting for justice.

Chávez’s father was imprisoned for 20 years for participating in a work stoppage during a time of great social upheaval. This period of incarceration left a deep impact on Chávez and inspired him to dedicate his life to the fight for workers’ rights.

At the age of 18, Chávez joined the United Farm Workers as a fieldworker. He quickly rose through the ranks, becoming a union organizer and eventually the leader of the union. He was instrumental in the creation of the National Farm Workers Association, which later merged with the United Farm Workers. Chávez’s leadership and determination were key to the success of the union, which fought for better wages, working conditions, and the right to collective bargaining for farm workers.

Chávez’s most famous moment came in 1968, when he and Dolores Huerta led the first walkout of the Delano Strike, where farm workers demanded higher wages and better working conditions. This strike eventually led to the creation of the United Farm Workers Union and a significant improvement in the lives of farm workers.

Chávez’s legacy is not only in his work for farm workers but also in the principles he fought for. He believed in nonviolent direct action, civil disobedience, and grassroots organizing. His work laid the groundwork for future civil rights movements, including the sit-ins, which he actively participated in at the time.

Chávez understood the interconnectedness of all struggles for justice and human rights. He worked closely with other civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr., and was instrumental in the creation of the United Farm Workers Union. He also helped to organize the San Joaquin Valley Strike in 1965 and was a key figure in the Chicano Movement.

Chávez’s work continues to inspire people around the world. He is remembered for his tireless dedication to the cause of justice and human rights, and his legacy lives on through the United Farm Workers Union and the National Farm Workers Association, which he founded.

Chávez passed away on April 23, 1993, at the age of 66. His legacy lives on through the work of the United Farm Workers Union and the National Farm Workers Association, which continue to fight for the rights of farm workers.

Despite his many accomplishments, Chávez never stopped fighting for justice. He was a true pioneer in the fight for workers’ rights and his legacy continues to inspire people around the world.
Language and Study Abroad Programs Info: *(Fall, Spring, and Summer)*

Indigenous Languages:
Maya “Yucateca” (Mexico) For More Info:
http://clas.uchicago.edu/language_teaching/yucatec.shtml
http://www.mayas.uady.mx/
http://asociacionmayab.org/index.html
http://www.osea-cite.org/resources/Maya_Language_Immersion_Summer_Program.pdf
http://www.osea-cite.org/program/maya_overview.php

K’iche’ Maya (Guatemala)
http://clas.uchicago.edu/language_teaching/kiche.shtml
http://www.vanderbilt.edu/clas/guatemala-mayan/
http://www.yale.edu/macmillan/lais/summer.html

Kaqchikel Maya (Guatemala)
http://www.tulane.edu/~maxwell/
http://www.yale.edu/macmillan/lais/summer.html#guatemala

Nahuatl (Mexico)
http://www.yale.edu/macmillan/lais/summer.html

Aymara (Bolivia)
http://clas.uchicago.edu/language_teaching/aymara.shtml

Mixteca and Zapoteca (Mexico)
http://latinamericanstudies.sdsu.edu/oaxacasummer/academicprograms.htm

Why learn an Indigenous language(s)? There are many reason to learn a Macchualmesh (Indigenous) Language, such as by knowing a language (whether Nahuatl or K’iche’ Maya) one can independently read colonial text as they were written by Indigenous Tlacuilo/Ah Tz’ib (escritores) and others, as well as read the Pre-Invasion “texts” that are in Amozati/Juan (books) or on sculptures, teocalli (“pyramids”), and elsewhere.

Also, it is to better understand Ourselves (as Indigenous People/Macchualmesh) and know where we are headed. It is like people say, “If you do not know where you come from, then you do not know where you are going.” The Maya and Mexican talked about the Sixth Sun, in which a new beginning would be inevitable in which all Indigenous People of Anahuac, Cemanahuac, Macchualalpan, Turtle Island would unite (the Eagle and the Condor Story) and Liberate their People through Education.
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