can you live below the line?

By Noe Gonzalez

How many times do we worry about those who are less fortunate when throwing away leftover food? Have we ever been told, “Eat everything because the children in Somalia do not have anything to eat?” When we worry or complain about our lives, we are often told that there are those that have it even harder than us. With this in mind, how many times do we worry or even think about extreme poverty? Perhaps, we are a little too busy with work, responsibilities or our own economic situations to even wonder about extreme poverty in underdeveloped countries. However, it is an important global issue that also touches our communities. We may not even be aware of this problem because the media and society do not give it the importance that it so needs. To mainstream media, children dying because of starvation is at the bottom of their list of priorities. However, on April 19, 2011, I had the pleasure of attending a presentation by Bobby Bailey, co-founder of Live Below the Line, an initiative whose mission is to increase the number of people taking action against extreme poverty and one of the filmmakers of Invisible Children, a documentary that speaks about the abduction and enlistment of young children into military forces in Uganda.

Bailey’s presentation focused on exposing extreme poverty as well as explaining why people should care, how they can help, and what they can do to be a part of Live Below the Line. His main goal is to educate and enlist as many people as possible so that change can occur. Through statistics, passion, and critical analysis, Bailey expressed how severe extreme poverty is. He started by saying that he lived on $1.50 a day when he was in a displacement camp in Africa because he wanted to experience the hardships of being extremely poor. The initiative that Bailey started is to live below the poverty line, meaning to live on $1.50 a day in order to better sympathize with nations where people live at, or below, that level. He stressed how misconceived American society is about aid to nations who are undergoing a crisis because of starvation. Bailey mentioned how many people think that the United States is giving 25% aid to these countries for the use of ending extreme poverty, yet others believe that it is 10%. However, the sad truth is that the United States, as a whole, is only giving 1% of their aid to such countries. The statistics are saddening because we could be doing more if we only would spread the word, if we only educated the general public and stopped being so self-absorbed. According to Bailey, “the key to reform in underdeveloped countries is empowering the women of that country.” Treating women like equals would end extreme poverty, increase healthcare, decrease transmission of sexually transmitted infections such as AIDS, and increase infrastructure.

The revelation of extreme poverty expresses another global issue but how does this tie into our community? I think sometimes we are too critical of our own lives and have to realize that, compared to some parts of the world, we are in a prosperous state. Whether we have problems with school, family, relationships or friends; we have to remember that our living conditions are themselves a luxury and something that I believe, we take for granted. We have the freedom to wander the streets without the risk of being kidnapped and forced into military service. When we get up in the morning, we have the indulgence of a hot bath and a car ride to school. We are lucky and at the same time self-absorbed and naïve about what is going on in the rest of the world. We need to take action and do something that will actually make a difference instead of focusing our time on things that are not going to change lives. I believe that we can end extreme poverty, but we need to do something, not just talk about it, but actually take action.

During the week of May, there is going to be a LIVE BELOW THE LINE fundraiser in which, for five days, people are being challenged to live off of $1.50 a day and basically live in the shoes of those who live in extreme poverty. So why is it $1.50 a day? According to the website, “We’ve seen the statistic: 1.4 billion people are living on US$1.50 or less per day. But where did this number come from? The World Bank sets the “extreme poverty” standard. Since 2005, this living standard has been set at US$1.25 per day (adjusted to US$1.50 to account for inflation). This standard forms the “extreme poverty line”, an invisible boundary marking an area that 1.4 billion people occupy. The first step toward changing this dire situation for the better is developing an understanding of the issue. That’s where Live Below the Line comes in: it provides you with an opportunity to experience one challenge of living extreme poverty – the challenge of getting enough to eat. It also empowers you to take a stand and take action for something worth believing in.” Are you willing to take a stand and Live Below the Line? For more information on Live Below the Line, you can go to Livebelowtheline.org.
Cinco De Mayo Holiday or Profit$ for the White U.S?

By: Carolina Alvarado

Have you ever stopped to think who really celebrates and profits from Cinco De Mayo? We know first of all that Cinco De Mayo is not Mexican Independence day. Mexican Independence day is celebrated in Mexico on September 16. Mexico declared its independence from Spain in 1810. So why is everybody, both Anglos and non Anglos having a big fiesta on May fifth? If we know for a fact that Mexico is not celebrating on May fifth as extensively and expensively, then we know that this is a more Americanized holiday. It seems that everyone wants to have margaritas and eat nachos.

We can also see Mexican foods go on sale, restaurants even cater to Cinco De Mayo special menus, and of course very importantly, Mexican liquor and beer are highly promoted across bars, restaurants, and stores. Ironically or maybe not so ironically, we face brutal drug wars over the border, immigration issues in Arizona that legally force us to carry our documents at all times, yet how can the United States Celebrate or appropriate the significance of our holidays. The Unites States says we can wash their dishes, cut the grass on their laws, but we can not gain citizenship. The U.S. profits from undocumented workers and cheap construction workers, maids, nannies, day laborers but they do not want to consider our people as anything more than just a source of cheap labor. To consider the Mexican or immigrants of this country as more than labor would mean they are acknowledging that we are people.

This country honors May fifth with Margaritas and Nachos, drinks and parties, but they will not honor our hard working people with citizenship. Something about this just doesn’t seem right. In all actuality May 5th is a celebration of a small battle that occurred in the Mexico state of Puebla in 1862. Mexican forces defeated French forces at the Battle of Puebla. What really happened with this holiday was that somewhere around the 1980s the Latino/Hispanic community grew significantly to where American corporations began to realize that there was a Hispanic minority market that could be cashed in on. This misconception of May 5th being Mexican Independence day came because U.S. firms mistakenly thought our freedom from Spain occurred on that day. Now, with great commercialization of the Cinco De Mayo holiday north of the border, it has become what it is today. As Cinco De Mayo approaches people will anticipate good Mexican food, fiestas, kids breaking piñatas at school, and people eating, drinking, and partying while screaming out Ole! More Margaritas baby! Let’s try not to forget the reality and bigger picture at hand and what is really going on in this country concerning our people. Eating tacos and sharing some margaritas will not make the greater issues just go away. “La Raza unida jamas sera vencida”. Let’s unite, stop the parties and drinks, and make real sacrifices and demand real change for everyone, not just corporate profits, the perception of America’s collective ignorance of our history, and political disrespect for our Mexican/Chicano culture and the day to-day lives we continue to try to make in our families and communities.

Starting off right

By: Amanda Casalegno

Our future relies on people getting a good education. Through research we know that the first 5 years of a child’s development will affect the success that a child has in school. Children need a variety of new experiences and positive interactions to develop their ability to learn. Information on how the brain develops is now available providing quantifiable evidence that without the proper experiences, a child’s brain suffers (Nash, 1999). Factors in this development include; parenting skills, the family’s education level, poverty, lack of health services, over crowded living conditions and the positive experiences that are provided to a young child. According to the 2000 census, almost one-half of children ages 0-5 years are Latinos. One agency in Pasadena, California is trying to make a difference for Latino families.

In November 1998 California passed Proposition 10, the California Children and Families First Act. This Act allowed 50 cents from each pack of cigarettes sold to be set aside for early childhood development services for children under the age of five. 80% of this revenue is to be used by the counties on programs and services specifically related to early childhood development. One of the programs is the Universal Preschool Program. This program provides low cost or free education to children who are of pre-kindergarten age.

Counties in California are able to apply according to their needs, funneling most of the money to agencies that have “at risk children” usually in high Latino neighborhoods. In Pasadena, CA, a city in the San Gabriel Valley, one agency Mothers’ Club Family Learning Center received some of this funding through the Universal Preschool Program. The program is geared to high risk families. This agency provides education for both generations. The adults receive classes to learn English four days a week and weekly Parent Education classes to learn better parenting skills. The children are engaged in a curriculum that emphasizes learning in a nurturing environment. The pre-k classroom has 21 children for three qualified teacher and a parent assistant. This promotes the building of a strong relationship between child and teachers. If a child feels emotionally safe with their teacher then they have a better ability to engage in learning. The staff believes that a child can easily learn letters and numbers but if there is not adequate support at home then the child’s learning is hindered. They believe that a child’s learning involves the whole family. Parents are taught the importance of reading to their child. There are activities and classes that help parents learn the importance of education and how to support this desire in their child. Parents are encouraged to learn how to be leaders in their communities so that later they can be active members in the elementary school system and advocate for their child. This program facilitates events that are intentionally set-up to help parents learn how to work in committees, learn conflict management skills and communication skills. Fathers are encouraged to assist in classrooms on their days off. Families are provided mental health services, if needed, and families are assisted with health service through collaborating agencies.

Agencies such as Mothers’ Club Family Learning Center will not guarantee that Latino children will succeed in education. But it is a start to leveling the discrepancy that exists in education. Since Latino children are statistically at risk and in such high numbers it is imperative that the government target this population. Through the help of the Universal Preschool programs and other high quality educational programs for young children the hope is to successfully prepare all children to enter school healthy and ready to learn. Only this will help increase the number of Latino students that enter colleges and later the educated workforce.
Art In Society

muralists. He is greatly recognized for his magnificent paintings depicting scenes from Mexican history and everyday struggles of the Mexican working class in his canvases in order to show his cultural background as well as where he came from which was Guanajuato, Mexico. Additionally, he includes some of his personal experiences in his paintings such as a self-portrait of his wife Frida Kahlo, who in fact is another well-known female artist in Mexican art history. Through his paintings he demonstrates hard work and struggle.

In addition, he is known for adopting the “Fineline Style” tattoo art, which was developed in the California prison system” (Brown pride). Earning his nickname as an artist on the street, his art got him out of trouble and landed him a career. “He has explored many different types of artistic practice including sign painting, graffiti, automotive murals and magazine illustrations” (Wiki). A website called LatinRapper.com have interviewed Mister Cartoon and how his art has impacted his life.

“What distinguishes your work from other Artists”?

“I think what makes me different and original is that I draw every and every customer a custom original tattoo, I don’t do anything twice...Even if you want something already done, I’ll change it up. I specialize in black and grey, I don’t use any colors. One bottle of black and some water, that’s it. I don’t go out of my style, that’s me, that’s what I do. I wouldn’t do nothing on anyone that I wouldn’t wear. Personally I respect color tattoos, but I wouldn’t put any on me. That’s because of how I grew up, that’s our style” (LatinRapper.com).

As a well known artist in urban or street art, he has influenced many other artists, some of his client list includes Justin Timberlake, X-zibit, Eminem, Beyonce Knowles, Tyson Beckford, Travis Barker (Blink 182), Nas, Pharella Williams, Outkast and more.

Overall, art is portrayed in society as a marketing tool, a way to convey a message, a voice to the people, etc. Artists like Diego Rivera, Mister Cartoon, and other artists have used art in order to portray a message and a represent the working class, in order to show a side of society that is often neglected and brushed off. Additionally, although Diego Rivera portrays the Mexican working class in his paintings and murals; he does so with elegance, Mister Cartoon depicts the street element of that same class. Cartoon depicts the gangster tough guy images, the machismo element of gangsterism in the Chicano culture.

Some art can even be seen as a form of propaganda or advertisement in order to get the attention of the people about a certain cause or event. An example of this would be German Propaganda. Germans used this form of art as a medium in order to maintain power and to implement policies that were important to them. Being a communist, Diego Rivera used his art to portray the importance of the working class. Throughout time, we are able to see that art has been changing.

Many ask: “How has it been changing?”

By the new techniques that are being offered right now, such as Graffiti art which can be perceived as vandalism, yet to others, it is a form of expression. In addition, there have been new and up-and-coming artists that have been influenced by old artists such as Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, Gilbert Magu Lujan, just to name a few; in remaking art pieces in their own unique way. Moreover, art in society plays a role in the Chicano(a)/Latino(a) community in getting to know more about the history as well as culture of what it means to be a Chicano(a)/Latino(a). Well-known artists such as, Diego Rivera are known for being great Mexican painters and

By: Fatima Aliyani

Art can be seen wherever you are and wherever you go. Through freeway overpasses, walls are covered in colorful graffiti to the giant murals and sculptures that beautify a neighborhood park. Art transforms a certain area or location into a masterpiece filled with culture and good vibes. As you can see, art can be seen as a gateway into knowing about someone’s culture, in addition to knowing one’s own cultural history/ background through murals, paintings, photographs, etc. It also demonstrates one’s creativity in expressing oneself to others.

As an international artist, Diego Rivera was recognized for his different art pieces. A few of his famous art pieces that are well known today are “The Flower Carrier” and “Flower Seller”, which portrays an untrained and unskilled worker in a modern, capitalist economy. It also shows the daily struggle of people working to support their families.

The flower can be seen as a form of symbolism, symbolizing a luxury in which the worker, who is bending down, cannot see the beauty of the flower due to the heavy basket that he is carrying. On the other hand, the flower seller portrays a woman kneeling and fixing flowers that she is planning to sell. The flower in these paintings symbolizes an ancient Mexican tradition, by “dedicating the flowers to the god of flowers in addition to having them in festivities” (Diego Rivera). As you can see, “He was an artist who used his work politically to speak for the underprivileged masses in his home land of Mexico” (Diego Rivera Prints). Through his paintings, we are able to distinguish him from other artists, because of the way he perceives Mexican tradition as well history and by his communist ideologies that he believed in.

On the other hand, another artist that has been recognized in today’s modern society is Mark Machado, better known as Mister Cartoon/ Mr. Cartoon. Although, he uses a different form of art than Diego Rivera, he is considered a well known artist in the Hip-Hop/urban, Chicano/a community, due to his low-rider art, airbrushing, tattoos, as well graffiti art, through which his artistic skills developed. As a Mexican American artist, he began his artists work at the age of twelve by airbrushing shirts and low-riders.
The State of Arizona and White Supremacy
By: Carolina Alvarado

Currently the State of Arizona has been under attack for targeting Latinos. We first saw this with the anti-immigrant law, SB1070 allowing for the legalisation of racial profiling by requiring police to stop and question anyone who they think is a possible undocumented person. More recently, Tom Horne, the head of the Arizona education system made a public statement declaring that the Mexican American Studies program in the Tucson school district, one of four ethnic studies programs in that district, was in violation of a new state law that had just gone into effect. Horne who is also the newly elected Arizona state attorney general gave the Tucson school district 60 days to “comply” with the law. And the finding threatened that “the only way in which compliance can be effective within the next 60 days is by elimination of the Mexican American Studies program.” The Tucson school district could have 10 percent of its budget taken away, amounting to about $15 million, if it does not eliminate the program.

This law which went into effect January 1, states that no school district can include in their program, any course that promote the overthrow of the United States government; promotes resentment toward a race or class of people; is designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group; or advocates ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals. Although this law does not make ethnic studies illegal, those who have designed the law appear to be targeting the Tucson School district’s Mexican American Studies program and other similar ethnic studies programs within the state. It does seem that all of these new laws are part of the anti immigrant political attack. All people of color in Arizona are being targeted, but it looks especially like those that are Mexican. Why is it that the African American studies or the Native American Studies programs are not under attack but only the Mexican Americans? Are not all of these ethnic studies courses founded on the same basis and teach similar themes?

It is important to keep the ethnic studies program alive, not only in Arizona, but all over. For many students this is one of the only means for them to feel that they belong to something. We learn through our education system, history that we cannot and do not relate to. The Mexican or Chicano Studies program gives students a sense of belonging in history by teaching what most of the United States history books have omitted. Teachers in Arizona have filed lawsuits claiming this to be unjust. They claim their job is to rehumanize the experience for students through a culturally and socially relevant curriculum. It has been widely known that Latino, African American, Asian American and Native American students have been marginalized and ignored in main stream public school subjects and that dropout rates for our minority communities are much higher when compared to European American students as stated by some of the educators in the Arizona school district.

This is just a means to control the people because with the majority of the Arizona population being Latino the K-12 school population is sure to be high as well. Perhaps we could also see this as a way that Arizona is reassuring its White Supremacist domination over the lower classes. It has started by using the state of Arizona as an example, but it should make us stand up and fight to support these causes for our people. Budget cuts and UC fees increasing drastically could soon mean that we could also see the abolition of the Ethnic Studies major throughout the UC system as well.

Awarding the Linda Schele Award: The 2011 Maya Meeting Conference
By: Chimalcoatl (Miguel Nuñez)

Alfredo Lopez Austin, a notable Mexica and professor of la Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico (UNAM), was awarded the Linda Schele Award by David Stuart, director of the Maya Meeting Conference. He was presented by this well-recognized award for his corpus of Mexica/Nahuatl writings. Some of his classics and must read include El pasado indígena (2001), Cuerpo humano e ideología (1980), y Hombre-Dios (1972). He has contributed to the rich understanding of Nahuatl culture along with his great college and Huey Temachtiani (Great Teacher) Miguel Leon Portilla. His lifelong contributions could not go unnoticed by even Maya scholars who have drawn comparisons between Anahuac Peoples and Cultures (ie Maya, Mixtecah, Olmecah, Teotihuacqueh, Mexicah/Nahuatl). Nahuatl is the language with the largest corpus of documents surpassing those for Greeks and Romans and has aided the deciphering of Maya “glyphs” and Maya worldview, due to their extremely close relations via trade, cultural exchange, and interrelated origins/”history”.

The Award was significantly symbolic as they recognized the scholarly historic disconnection of Nahuatl from Maya cultures, which has slowed down Maya “scholarship”. The gap was symbolically closed in the honoring of the Linda Schele Award to Lopez Austin whose primary work focus on the Nahuatl and Nahuatl culture and worldview, of which was shared with the Maya. Nahuatl understanding and documents have greatly contributed to Maya “studies”. Afterwards, Lopez Austin presented on his findings about Nahuatl philosophical complexities and their implications to better comprehend the rich traditions of not only the Maya, but also of the Nahuatlhohqueh (Nahuatl-Speakers). The conference concluded with other talks by top Maya “specialists” and focusing in on the misunderstandings of 2012 and scientific evidence of the true implications of 2012.
Obesity in American is a serious chronic health concern. In fact, the United States (U.S.) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2004 ranked obesity as the number one health risk facing America. The Surgeon General Richard Carmona described the obesity epidemic as a “national crisis”.

To clarify some of the common terminology that is daily exchanged in discourse, the terms “obesity” and “overweight” do not illustrate the same concept despite the said words being constantly used as synonymous terms by the general public. The term “overweight”, according to the National Institutes of Health, is defined as referring to a situation where an individual’s weight is described to be at least ten percent over the recommended weight for that individual, which varies from person to person.

“Obesity”, on the other hand, describes a condition whereby there is a body weight that is at least thirty percent over the ideal weight—whatever that may be—in relation to the height of the individual. Note that the standards of measurement for weight are generated based on the body mass index (BMI). BMI is a calculation that assesses weight relative to height.

Obesity costs the U.S. national economy nearly $122.9 billion annually and has claimed four-hundred thousand lives a year . Aside from the death toll and the economic aspect of obesity, obesity affects a person in an individual complex level. On an individual level, to illustrate, obesity causes those who suffer from the said disease many issues to handle and overcome. It can cause depression, discontent in social situations, lead to lower self-esteem and significantly diminish quality of life for the obese self, for example. Obesity may also affect emotional health and academic performance among the younger population. Health wise, obesity increases a person’s chance of developing serious obesity-related health disease conditions like, though certainly not limited to, heart disease, metabolic syndrome, polycystic ovary syndrome, hypertension, asthma, sleep apnea and diabetes.

While obesity affects people of different backgrounds, obesity among the Latino community is much higher when compared to other racial and ethnic groups in California alone as both Latino males and Latino females of all ages have among the highest rates of obesity when compared to other racial and ethnic groups. For example, nearly seven out of ten California Latino adults are overweight or obese. Arguably equally disturbingly, the U.S. obesity rates have risen at such an increasingly alarming rate among the children population of all ages during the last forty years, especially affecting children of minority descent.

Currently, according to the national program Leadership for Healthy Communities report, 38.2 percent of Hispanic children from ages two to nineteen are overweight or obese compared to 31.7 percent of all children those ages. In other words, the number of Hispanic children ages two to eleven are more obese than their peers of other ethnic and racial category. Let us look at some more statistical evidence provided from the said report. 14.2 percent of children ages two to five and 25.1 percent of those of ages six to eleven are classified to be obese, all of whom are of Latino descent; in contrast, 9.1 percent of Caucasian children ages two to five and 19.0 percent of Caucasian ages six to eleven are obese. With the commonness and basically, much of obesity becoming a part of the Latino community, it has been predicted that the risk for diabetes will become so great that half of Latino newbons will be projected to likely develop diabetes during their lifetime.

The Overweight and Obesity Among Latino Youths (TOOALY) report conducted by the Leadership for Healthy Communities further this explanation of the obesity epidemic amongst the Latino community minority. The report explains that the conditions of nonexistent or insufficient exercise coupled with unhealthy eating habits are shaped by factors in the physical and social environments of communities.

The report explains that many Latinos live in communities where there is a discouragement to physical activity and an encouragement to make the decision to eat unhealthy food and eat unhealthy food choices. To explain, many Latinos live in special areas where there is a dominance of convenience stores with limited fresh produce but with more variety of sweets and snack items. Also within these living areas where many Latinos reside there are fast food outlets few well-equipped and safe areas for child (and other age groups) play and activity.

What all this high obesity prevalence amongst the Latino population means is that it places this said ethnic population at a higher risk of developing chronic diseases. With Latinos being the fastest growing population in California—one in three Californians being Latino and constituting forty-seven percent of children attending public schooling—and disproportionately being affected by obesity and the obesity related complications, “any efforts to stem the rising rates of obesity in California must address the needs of the Latino community”. The TOOALY report, in addition, adds and recommends that the greatest solution and opportunity to stop the obesity among Latinos lies in working with the entire Latino population “to promote the social and environmental conditions that favor healthy eating and physical activity and that prevent overweight from occurring in the first place”.

With the implications and relationship between obesity and the Latino population that currently exists, many have questioned the reason for the diabetes commonality that within the Latino population. The pervasiveness of obesity among the Latino population can be explained. Obesity in general is caused by the combination of determinants of insufficient, or absent, physical activity and excess consumption of calories.

The national rate of people with diabetes has increased 50% since 2000 and this increase is higher among Latinos—64%.

NUESTRA COSA

SPRING 2011
La Placita Olvera also known as Olvera Street is located across the street from Los Angeles’s well known train station known as Union Station and is located one block away from Chinatown. It can be seen as one of LA’s tourist sites to visit, due to its authenticity and the various cultural activities that occur during the weekends. It can be considered as the birthplace of the City of Los Angeles.

"Built in 1781 by 44 settlers, this historic landmark contains colorful village featuring 27 historic buildings with a traditional style plaza area" (Olvera-Street).

"Originally called Vine Street, in 1877 it was renamed after Agustin Olvera, the first judge of the county of Los Angeles" (Calle Olvera). Included in La Placita, are several monuments that have made it a significant place to visit in addition to preserving the Latino/a/Chicano/a culture, such as the Avila Adobe which is the oldest existing residence in Los Angeles. It can be seen today as a museum, which displays how rooms used to look and how people used to live when the Pueblo of Los Angeles was established.

This Mexican marketplace has become known as the center of historic and cultural influences, because of its genuine look on how Los Angeles has developed in the past and the diversity that this city has to offer.

It is a place where you get to learn more about yourself in knowing about other cultures. As you walk through La Placita you are able to capture a moment in time, the smell of came asada being grilled and tortillas being hand-made in preparation for an authentic Mexican cuisine.

On can also experience vibrant colors of handbags and guitars that are put on display at the little shops, for people looking around and seeing what they are interested in buying. From afar, you are able to see and hear Mariachi trumpets begin to play as the singer begins to sing, suddenly young girls with colorful, ruffled dresses and hair tied with ribbon come out as they commence the Baile Follklorica, which is a dance that emphasizes local folk culture that is derived from Mexico.

Crowds of people stand and sit on the walls of the plaza as the dancers swirl their dresses to the beat of the trumpet and guitar. Sounds of people whistling and clapping can be heard as the song comes to a finish and people wait until until show starts. Suddenly, you are able to hear the loud ringing of church bells, a sign that church has commenced.

Vendors start to fill the streets pulling their little, silver carts filled with hot dogs and/or fresh corn on the cob, calling to people about the food that they are preparing. This is the type of experience that you would get by visiting Olvera Street. Olvera/Plaza street is not only seen as an important historic and cultural symbol, it is also a vital area of recreation and religious life for the Los Angeles Mexican community.

Above all, however, the Plaza/Olvera Street serves as a unique prism through which Mexicans in Los Angeles can look back on their past as well as chart new courses for the future" (elpueblo).
The Mayan Calendar is one of the most widely known and perhaps arguably, most influential calendars of all time due to its complexity and remarkable accuracy. Not only did the Mayans use this calendar themselves, but it was adopted by other Mesoamerican nations like the Toltec and the Aztecs, who adjusted the mechanics of the calendar by changing the names of the days of the week and the months.

El Castillo, Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico. Aztec Calendar.
The Aztec calendar was an adaptation of the Mayan calendar. It consisted of a 365-day agricultural calendar, as well as a 260-day sacred calendar. (This is a digital composite. Color added for visibility.)

The Mayan calendar is not the only calendar system we utilize. Most nations in the world use the Gregorian calendar system today. The Mayan calendar is actually a number (a system) of calendars intermeshed with correlated data. The calendar is structured by using three different parallel dating systems; in other words, the Mayans marked the passage of time with three cycles that ran in parallel (Mayan Calendar 2003). The three systems are the following: the Long Count, the Tzolkin (divine calendar) and the Haab (the civil calendar, which is the only one that had a direct relationship to the length of the year). What follows is an example of how to read and write a date in Mayan Calendar terms:

- **Mayan Date**: 12.18.16.2.6, 3 Cimi 4 Zotz
- **Long Count**: 12.18.16.2.6
- **Tzolkin**: 3 Cimi is the Tzolkin date
- **Haab**: 4 Zotz is the Haab date.

For our purposes, we will focus on The Long Count. The Long Count is a linear count of days with a great cycle of thirteen baktuns. To explain, the Long count is represented as five place notation system of ascending cycles—kins (days), winals (20 day months), tuns (360 days), k’atuns (20 tuns) and bak’tuns (20 k’atuns) (Bamhart). Specifically, the Long Count Calendar is a non-repeating, vigesimal (base 20) calendar that identifies a day by counting the number of days passed since August 11, 3114 BC using a modified vigesimal tally (in Gregorian calendar terms). While the start day on the Long Count is stated to be on August 11 3114 BCE by the Mayans, the apparent end day is on December 21, 2012 CE. The Long count’s version of a year—the tun—is only 360 days and not the 365 day solar count that we are all familiar with.

**The Five Position of the Long Count Calendar**

- 144,000 days (20 K’atuns)
- 7200 days (20 Tuns)
- 360 days (18 Winals)
- 20 days (20 Kins)
- 1 Day

Note: most nations in the world use the Gregorian calendar system today instead. Continuing, the Mayan calendar is actually a number (a system) of calendars intermeshed with correlated data. The calendar is structured by using three different parallel dating systems; in other words, the Mayans marked the passage of time with three cycles that ran in parallel (Mayan Calendar 2003). The three systems are the following: the Long Count, the Tzolkin (divine calendar) and the Haab (the civil calendar, which is the only one that had a direct relationship to the length of the year). What follows is an example of how to read and write a date in Mayan Calendar terms:

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However, there are those who claim that the said anticipated day is a marker of a beginning of a new era where “humanity will evolve to a greater understanding of our place in the universe […]”

Ironically, for most of the living descendants of the ancient Maya themselves, it’s just the end of another calendar cycle or simply another day”. In equal disagreement with the 2012 Mayan Calendar End of Days Scenario, the vast majority of Mayanists scholars argue that the day most likely held no special meaning to the ancient Mayans beyond the fact that it was an end to the thirteenth Baktun cycle and thus a causal event for celebration. In fact, some claim that it will be the beginning of the Fifth Sun after the death of the Fourth Sun marked by the December 21, 2012 date.

Despite the disagreement that exists on the significance of the upcoming 2012 day, there is no denying the impact the Mayans—and thus by extension Latin America—has had in today’s modern time. Mayan cultural and economic impact can be seen through films, magazines, books and other commodities have been sold with the images of the Mayan calendar. Such books, for example, include The Mayan Prophecies for 2012, The Purposeful Universe: How Quantum Theory and the Mayan Cosmology Explain the Origin and Evolution of Life and The Mayan Code: Time Acceleration and Awakening the World Mind among many others. A plethora of

**Continued on page 10.**
Continued from page 9.

Despite the disagreement that exists on the significance of the upcoming 2012 day, there is no denying the impact the Mayans—and thus by extension Latin America—has had in today’s modern time. Mayan cultural and economic impact can be seen through films, magazines, books and other commodities that have been sold with the images of the Mayan calendar. Such books, for example, include The Mayan Prophecies for 2012, The Purposeful Universe: How Quantum Theory and the Mayan Cosmology Explain the Origin and Evolution of Life and The Mayan Code: Time Acceleration and Awakening the World Mind among many others. A plethora of websites have been dedicated to, though certainly not limited to, enriching the public on the Mayan civilization and on proclaiming or condemning the 2012 theory of doomsday.

What all this Mayan Calendar interest shows is that the cultural and economic influence the Mayans have on today’s time is a clear example of the weight Latin American cultures can and do have on other cultures that can transcend time and languages.

We are the fortunate

Everyone is talking about the rising cost of education and the difficulty of getting into colleges. The truth is, it is difficult to enter college, but for some Latino/as the challenges are even more daunting. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, in their study; “Status and Trends in the Education of Hispanics”, the Latino minority has historically underachieved in education.

Throughout the educational system Hispanic children are disadvantaged. For kindergarteners, the probability of academic success is measured by the number of many risk factors in a child’s life. Risk factors commonly considered include: (1) having a mother with less than a high school education, (2) low family income or the parent(s) are receiving welfare, (3) a single parent household, and (4) parents whose primary language is not English. Most kindergarteners with at least one risk factor scored lower on their reading and Math scores than children without risk factors. This study found that most Hispanic kindergarteners had at least two risk factors, which was five times greater than for white children. The study also showed that Hispanic children are less likely to be read to at home or to visit libraries. Throughout elementary and high school, Hispanic children attend public schools where minorities constitute 70% or more of the student body. Another challenge to Latino academic success is high rates of absenteeism compared to white students or other minorities. It is unclear why, but Hispanic students, between grades 8 to 12, were absent more often than white or black students. This outcome is directly correlated with the amount of teachable time the student is exposed to. Along with absenteeism is the issue of rates of retention in school and the number of school suspensions. 13% of Hispanic children between kindergarten and 12th grade had repeated at least one grade. This was less than the rate for blacks and American Indians, but greater than the rate for white students. And 20% of Hispanic students had experienced at least one suspension. Another major challenge is the drop-out rate for Hispanic students. Hispansics drop out of school at a rate four times greater than white students, and twice as often as African Americans. But even for those Latinos who make up the 64% who do successfully graduate from high school, there is yet another huge obstacle to gaining access to a college or university education. Hispanic students score lower on SAT or ACT exams than either white or black students.

Yet, even with all these challenges, the surprise finding was that there has been an increase in the number of Hispanic students attending college. More Hispanics attend two-year community colleges than whites or blacks. In 1999, Hispanics earned 7% of all Associate of Arts degrees. And in 1990’s the number of Hispanics receiving bachelor’s degrees rose by 68%. More Hispanic students are also seeking postgraduate education and even doctorate degrees. It is interesting that most of these degrees are in the fields of education or psychology, according to “Status and Trends in the Education of Hispanics”. I suppose that after overcoming so many challenges and beating the odds we want to give back to society. This includes teaching and serving as mentors to other at-risk or low-income students who need positive role models to encourage them not to quit or give up in the critical K-12 years. So remember when you are tired of assignments, readings and tests, remember you are the fortunate one.
Do More Numbers Mean More Degrees?

Marysol Aguirre & Yessica Garcia Hernandez

Latinos are the largest growing minority in America, yet they are not being fully represented in higher education. The 2010 census documents that America has become more diverse. The demographics in America are shifting from white to color, with the Latino population as the largest minority group. Since 2000 the Latino population has increased forty three percent, from 35.3 million to 50.5 million. Latinos make up sixteen percent of the total population in the United States, and are expected to triple by 2050. Latinos, especially Mexicanos have the youngest median age compared to other racial groups. The Anglo median age for example is 41 years old while Mexicans have a median age of 25. Very positive outcomes can come from these demographics, but what good does it mean to have the youngest population when many Latino youth are continuously being pushed out of the school systems? If our future is dependent on the young population, education among Latinos must also increase. The rates of Latino students going to college has increased, but not at the same rate of the fast pace growth of its population.

Education and schooling play an important role in the development of our society. When schools fail to provide basic resources for our students, how do we expect our students to succeed? Education is the opportunity to move forward. Instead of moving forward though, schools are taking steps back. The budget cuts are not only affecting the larger educational system, but also programs which serve those students who are underrepresented such as the Latino students. It is much more common for Latino students to begin their paths into higher education at a community college rather than at four year universities.

¡Sí, Se Puede!

The transition from high school to college is not easy. Many of the Latino students who are entering higher education institutions are first generation college students. Of these students, many enter without quite understanding how the school system works. For the past couple of decades the Puente Program has been very successful in serving Latino students preparing them for their path of higher education. Puente originally formed in community colleges and was later adopted in high schools. The program is made up of three fundamental components which include: English, counseling and mentoring. The literature presented in the classroom is based on Chicano/a Latino/a literature which engages students in the material they are analyzing. Counselors and mentors work closely not only with students but also their families to ensure their support system and success to higher education. The transition from high school to college may be challenging, but the program helps students get situated and understand how the school system works.

The program proves to be successful. The percentage of Puente students who transfer and complete a bachelor’s degree is higher than that of non-Puente students. A Puente student’s degree completion is twice as high compared to those students who were not part of the program. Attaining a higher education is important, but going back to serve their communities is also as important. Puente also orients their students to go back to their communities as mentors for students who also faced the challenges they once did. Our future depends on our younger generations. The budget cuts continue to harm the education of our current and future students. If the numbers of Latino students in higher education are to increase, programs such as Puente should be preserved and multiplied rather than eliminated.
What is AB 540?

Assembly Bill 540 was signed by Governor Gray Davis in 2001 which allows individuals who qualify (including undocumented students), to pay in-state tuition (resident) rather than out of state tuition for California public universities. (UCR tuition ’09-10- Resident: $10,016.25 Non-Resident: $32,756.25)

Who qualifies? Students who:

* Complete at least 3 yrs or graduate from a California High School
* Earn a GED equivalent
* Accepted to a CA community college, CA State University, or CA University
* Sign affidavit at the campus of attendance

For more information or support contact: P.O.D.E.R. at UCR
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NUESTRA COSA  SPRING 2011
Latinos in Ivy Leagues!

By Noe Gonzalez

A Latino in an Ivy League school! To some of us that may sound improbable or even impossible. The reality is however, this is indeed possible and has been accomplished before.

The news of someone entering into the Ivy League is in itself exciting, but once the news of a Latino or Hispanic is heard, there is great joy because it is not so easy. For a Latino to enter an Ivy League school is like challenging all the stereotypes that come with being Latino, not good at anything but manual labor, high school drop outs, workers at McDonald’s, etc.

But there are those that realize that they are more than just manual labor, they can rise and take the challenge. They can prove to those around them that staying comfortable is not enough, one needs to seek out their dreams and overcome the challenges that come from pursuing their dreams.

I think we should all be proud to be Latino or Hispanic and to pursue higher education. This, in itself, sets us apart from many others of our ethnicity, not to say we are any better than others, but that we definitely should feel proud and motivated to move forward. Whether you attend a community college, a public university, or a private university; we all understand the importance of an education. But let’s take a moment and recognize those of our color who have gone above and beyond; straight into an Ivy League school.

Ruben Navarrette is the author of “A Darker Shade of Crimson: Odyssey of a Harvard Chicano” A book that reflects on this man’s experience as a minority in arguably the nation’s most prestigious academic institution. What is even more impressive however, is the immense work he has done after his time in this prestigious school.

He has done doctoral work in education, has served the College Board as a consultant for Latino student affairs, and has worked as an assistant to a federal appellate judge. Mr. Navarrette has also taught in elementary and secondary schools and, at twenty-three, as an instructor at California State University, Fresno.

He has published nearly one hundred editorials for newspapers and magazines and his work has appeared most regularly in the Sunday "Opinion" section of the Los Angeles Times; though he has also written for the Chicago Tribune, Albuquerque Journal, Kansas City Star, Arizona Republic and dozens of other newspapers. His work is featured in several literary anthologies including Writing About Diversity (HarperCollins), Debating


On television, Mr. Navarrette has also served as guest host of public television's Emmy award-winning "Life & Times" and has appeared to discuss various issues including the New York Times Review of Books, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, and Publisher's Weekly.

Almost mirroring his experiences in the 1980’s as one of only 35 Mexican Americans in a freshman Harvard class of 1600, is Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor’s time at Yale in the 1970s. Just like Ruben Navarrette, Sotomayor has also accomplished great things since her time in an Ivy League school. She entered Princeton University on a full scholarship; there were few women students and fewer Latinos. In the fall of 1976, Sotomayor entered Yale Law School, again on a scholarship. This, too, was a place with very few Latinos. She was hired out of law school as an assistant district attorney under New York County District Attorney Robert Morgenthau in 1979. With this, Sotomayor became the youngest judge in the southern district of New York City and the first Hispanic federal judge in New York State. In 1997, Sotomayor was nominated by President Bill Clinton to a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals which was confirmed on October 2, 1998. In 2009, President Barack Obama nominated Sotomayor for a seat on the United States Supreme Court. On August 6, 2009, Sotomayor was confirmed by the full Senate by a vote of 68-31 and was commissioned by President Obama on the day of her confirmation.

They were able to overcome challenges, forget about discrimination and do something for themselves. They were both able to go to an Ivy League school where they were able to get a higher education which would then help them make a change. Sometimes we may feel overwhelmed with the pressures, responsibilities and difficulties of school, but this comes with the territory of being a student. Sometimes we also feel like there are not many of us on campus, and this may be true. But the numbers are changing and more Latinos are coming to universities. However, how do we get high school students to be interested in higher education? The answer is having the universities take an active role in going to high schools and talking to those in disadvantaged communities, or with high percentages of Latinos residing there. It is about getting them interested at a young age and being role models for them. Showing them that there is more than manual labor, that there is a world out there that has yet to be discovered and in which they can create change. Making Hispanic children see that their dreams of what they want to be when they grow up can actually be a reality as long as they do something about it and do not stay in a state of conformity like many of us tend to do. Education is an opportunity that we sadly have not taken full advantage of.

I would hope that a wise Latina senator with the sadness of her experiences would more often than not come up with a wiser line of questioning than a white male senator who hasn't lived that life.
Movie Review: La Mission

By Stephany Tellez

This movie takes place in the Mission District of San Francisco. The main character Che Rivera is played by actor Benjamin Bratt. In the movie he is a strong respected man of his barrio. He is also a single father to his son Jes Rivera, played by Jeremy Ray Valdez. When Che discovers his son is gay, his pride and anger become new obstacles in his life and eventually lead to the destruction in the relationship between Che and his son. Throughout the movie, Jes tries different methods to get his father to see that being gay is not something you choose to be, but it’s the way he was born and he wishes for his father to accept him. In struggling to find a place in the middle for the father and son relationship to work, Jes hopes to bring things back to normal.

Although Che is strong at heart and his character shows him to have had a rough life, he shows weakness in communication and lets his anger take over different situations. His role as a machista father is dead on. How Che chooses to deal with his son’s reality isn’t very different from how men in my family have or would react to this sort of situation. It is so important in the Latino community that men father children, boys in Che’s case, who will become strong men and carry on the family name with pride and later have a family of their own. This way of thinking is old fashioned and goes back many years, along with the tradition of machista personality. To be machista means to show no weakness, or feminine traits. The macho is usually stubborn and narrow-minded. This attitude that Che carries throughout the whole movie serves as the wall he puts up to separate himself emotionally from his relationship to his son. This is all ironic because he demonstrates his weak side when he seeks an escape from his feelings, rather than confronting them.

I found this movie to be extremely educational in that it brought awareness to the way families communicate in the Latino community. We often become so used to things being a certain way that it becomes normal and is not challenged. For example, the manner in which Che reacts when his son admits to being gay; would resonate with it many Latinos would nod and agree that it normal for a Father from our culture to react as Che did. Although the reaction seems to be normal the actual violence and aggressiveness is not normal at all. Many of us were taught to be fearful of our parents and that’s how they used their authority. Parental discipline would often involve getting a beating. In the case of Jes, he was being honest in admitting he was gay and his fathers immediate reaction was anger and aggression.

This is why that line of communication is so minimal in our community, because many children grow up in fear of the reaction of their parents. The children’s first instinct is to think:

The children’s first instinct is to think: “My parents won’t understand, and there is so much that needs be talked about and isn’t because we still live in old fashioned and traditional ways.”

Unfortunately, it’s hard enough being gay in today’s society since many people haven’t accepted the idea of same-sex relationships and are made uncomfortable should the topic ever come up. Jes’s character as a teen indicates the different pressures he has to deal with once he opened up about his sexuality. It is very difficult, especially not having support from your own family, to feel loved and human, rather than as an object to be made fun of. I am sure many cases and situations are hard to talk about with family members but it’s about keeping an open line of communication and without passing judgment, within one’s familia. Society does enough harm to humanity on its own. This movie is enjoyable because how relate able it is I am sure many will enjoy it and its many messages. So many people can relate to the themes portrayed and the honesty with which the character express the complexities of the family, gender roles, sexual orientation, and the universal desire we all have to see the fulfillment of a more inclusive humanity—of not in everyday reality, at least in the reality of the movie.
Juvenile Offender or Environment Offenders?
By: Delia Martinez C.

How come it is rare that we never hear in the news that wealthy communities have juvenile delinquency problems? In today’s world, this is a question that continues being disputed in society, as well as among the justice system. From 1992 to 1997, 44 states, including California, have passed laws that facilitate the transfer of juvenile offenders to the adult criminal system. In California, a juvenile offender is considered if he/she has committed a crime between the ages of 10-17. However, under judicial waiver, statutory exclusion and prosecutorial discretion, courts can decide whether or not to send juveniles to the adult criminal justice system. Juvenile offenders should not be treated as adults because prisons are not adequate places for juveniles, being with adult criminals will only reinforce juvenile offender’s criminal activities, and keep the minorities in poverty. Therefore, the cycle of crime among juveniles in poor communities is never going to end.

This system was designed to keep poor people, which are mainly Latinos, oppressed. It is proven that for the same felony it is four times more likely than a Latino or black person will get convicted than a white person (juvenile corrections).

If the system is so worried about high statistics of crime in poor neighborhoods, why doesn’t the government start by improving school conditions and implementing programs that will help students be occupied and not have time to get involved in delinquency? Instead the system spends millions of dollars in building prison but government never has money for schools.

Schools play a big role in juvenile’s future. Schools from poor communities in which Latinos are the main ones who attend are among the worst schools across the state of California. Therefore, youth is getting labeled already being among the worse students of the state. Youth figure out that their opportunities of success are minimized almost to nothing. After all, youth believe that they do not have another option than to give up; either they get involved in delinquency or they start working in the same jobs that their parents work. However, the same story repeats over and over again for so many years.

This is a chain were it is extremely hard to get out of because of the resources offered to us. Not only that, but the criminal justice system is making it even more hard by passing these type of laws were juveniles can spend long prison sentences with real adult criminals. However, the system does not realize that they are just reinforcing youth to become real criminals in the future, or they know what the system is doing and their goal is being achieved?

In order to understand why juveniles get involved in delinquency we need to understand their background, living conditions and opportunities offered to them. It is not new news that juveniles who tend to be mainly involved in criminal activities are those who come from broken homes, rural areas and who lack opportunities. With the implementation of these types of laws, the communities who are being targeted are poor communities which are mainly composed of minorities; Latinos and African-American. The criminal justice is targeting minority poor youth, not wealthy people who can afford a lawyer or paid the bail in order to get out of prison. The system is designed to let the people who can afford to pay, get away with delinquency and the people who do not be incarcerated.

Work cited:
“So the stereotype about Mexicans being lazy isn’t real?”
By: Leonor Gaytan

We all have encountered multiple forms of our people being stereotyped as lazy, layback, and with a acquiesce attitude. In forms of art such as the classic sleeping Mexican leaning on a cactus, or the anthropomorphous rat or mouse in cartoons who is drunk and during the length of its appearance in the show does nothing but tell jokes and takes things very lightly. We had been exposed to this type of categorization and in simple terms, humiliation for centuries. Has this conditioning created a major effect on our people? Has years and years of oppression actually made us lazy?

The answer is no. Our people now more than ever are the ones that work the hardest. In a recent study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), “Mexicans devote an average of 10 hours per day to paid and unpaid work, such as housework” (Booth, 1). The previous amount of information was taken from a report in which all nationalities were compared. This amount of hours could only be achieved by working a total of three jobs during day and going home still having to take care of your family. In an article by the Washington Post titled “Siesta? What Siesta? Mexicans work longest hours in world” when our fellow people were informed of this report they questioned the validity of it. Some that were skeptical even asked if they worked harder than the Japanese. According to the report presented by the OECD Japanese were second with total of 540 hours 376 paid and 164 unpaid, while Mexicans worked a total of 594 hours.

So where does this leave us? In reality we are not lazy at all, as you can see our people are the ones that work the hardest in literal terms. It’s already hard enough in our native country to survive, the necessity of wanting a better life in general is what pushes us to work ten hours a day. But you see that still isn’t enough at times for we were not given the same tools to stay ahead of the race. It is not enough to be in a well standing position in our country, even though that is difficult in itself and given the poor living conditions we are pushed out of our native land towards a place that is deemed “better” and something of dreams.

This place no matter how wonderful it may be portrayed still puts us behind politically, culturally, and economically. In order to achieve even the slightest wisp of well being we must once more start the same back breaking routine we previously escaped from. So why then are we seen in a manner that is described by the Washington post “Mexicans are always willing, capable and flexible” (Booth, 1). The reason is because we are willing to do anything in our power to push through. We are capable of creating complex things such as televisions, refrigerators, cars and endure the toll it physically takes on us. And finally we are flexible enough to always try and create new ideas to help us strive for greatest.

As the titles states, the stereotypes are not true. We are not lazy, we are not layback, and we do not possess an attitude of conformity. But what we do posses is a great value of sacrifice. The reason why our people work ten hours a day and still go home to give their family the attention they deserve is because our ancestors, grandparents and parents have sacrificed and will continue to sacrifice anything in their possession to help us, their children, close that gap in the disadvantage that was created since the beginning of our people. Just like they have endured and sacrificed their lives and dreams, it’s up to us now, to deliver a strong resolve; using this gift that is given to us day after day in the most physically draining way that can be imagined, working from dawn to dusk. By achieving higher goals in education and expressing our struggle in forms of literature such as this we can carry on our legacy and dismantle stereotypes such as this one, we can reduce the strain we have faced and prevail.

Hardest Workers are South

“Mexicans work the most each day, 9.9 hour, according to a report by the organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. A breakdown of those hours shows that they also do the most unpaid work and are passed only by the Japanese and South Koreans working the most paid hours.”
- The Washington Post

NUESTRA COSA
SPRING 2011
We Should Celebrate Mother’s Day Every Day!
By: Delia Martinez C.
It was Saturday, 3:30 A.M when my alarm clock went on. It was time for me to get up and experience an event that changed my way of viewing my mom’s hard work. I had to be ready by 4:00 A.M. because I decided to go with my mom and experience what she goes through every day at her work in the AAA packaging company. It was a very cold morning, but that did not make a difference.

My mom asked me, “Why did you want to come with me? It’s very early. Are you sure you want to go? This job is tiring, we have to work fast in order to finish early. Besides, it is a really cold morning, and the spinach is going to be really cold and wet.”

I answered, “I really want to have a feeling of what you go through each day and appreciate the effort you do in order for us to have the things we need.”

My mom has to wake up every morning at 3:00 A.M. I can see that she is tired of doing the same thing every day. She told me that all this effort of hers is because she wanted me to obtain a higher education. Her dream is for me to go to college and obtain a career. My mom does not want me to work how she is working, that is why she is sacrificing herself in order for me to go to college.

We arrived to the greenhouses, the place where my mom works every day. This place was dark and scary. Crickets and water drops were all the sounds I was able to hear. Since it was dark, it looked like an empty space, later on; I was able to see how the spinach looked. It was green, with some water on it. My mom gathered the working materials; cotton gloves, and a things called (rosadera) which are very similar to knives. With this type of knives we were going to cut the spinach. The knives (rosadera) felt sharp and they look very dangerous if not used properly. My mom does not want anything bad to happen to us, therefore she warn me to be careful because I could cut myself with the rosadera.

My mom said, “We wear these cotton gloves, but some people don’t wear them because it’s hard to work with them since they are very puffy and thick. Sometimes we do cut our self, but we are used to it already. We have to continue working like that.”

In that moment, I remember seeing my mom’s hands full of cuts and the feeling of her rough hands. My mom hands are of a hard working woman, who is willing to work overtime in order for me and my two brothers to have all the things we need. Not only that but she is always dedicated to us and making sure that we are on the right track to become good people.

My mom was working so fast, but I could not. The spinach was really cold and really wet, but it seemed that she was used to it already. When we were finished, we had to continue by putting the spinach in some wooden boxes.

By this time I was so tired, but I had to keep helping her. Workers as well as we were arriving to this big open house where we would have to pack the spinach. At 9:00 A.M we went to lunch, we had half an hour. When it was time to go back to work, just by looking at my mom’s facial expressions, I could tell she did not want to go back to work. We continued doing the same work throughout the day. At about noon it got really hot. The temperature was about 97 degrees Fahrenheit. Even though the temperature was high, we still had to continue working.

Our day ended at 3:30 P.M. I realize we had finish working early since most of the time my mom arrives home later than 4:30 P.M. At that time, we were starving and really tired. My mom told me that she was very tired. However she had to do the same routine of everyday; she rested for a bit, cooked dinner, prepared food for the next day, took a shower and went to sleep. The next day she had to repeat the same working routine from 3:20 in the morning until 4:00 or later in the afternoon. My mom seems very tired but she continues working hard each day; because of me and my brothers. She is a strong Latina woman who never gives up. She has been my role model because I see that she never gives up no matter the circumstances, therefore I should never give up either.

We can see that Latino women sacrifice themselves for their kids, in order for them to have a better life. How my mom has sacrifice for me. She lives for me, that is why May 10 (mother’s day) is not enough to thank all the moms for the things they have done for us. We should appreciate them more and thank them every single day. Our mothers live for us; they do everything for us, that is why we should be thankful that we have our mothers with us. Thank you mom!!!**
Tomás Rivera

By Stephany Tellez

Our most popular Library on campus is the Rivera Library renamed after Thomas Rivera on February 19, 1985 in his honor. Tomás Rivera was our first minority chancellor in the University of California system in 1979. He had many achievements as a novelist, poet and also an educator. His story is inspiring to many, but for those of us in the Latino community, it is a testimony that we can achieve and be more than just immigrants or part of the lower class. Higher that with effort and faith, one can overcome seemingly impossible odds. He obtained his college education in a time period when people of color weren’t granted the luxury of a higher education that was known as a privilege. Today education beyond high school for Raza is viewed somewhere between privilege and a right. It is a legitimate goal but costs keep escalating and the K-12 systems in inner cities and low-income neighborhoods are increasingly being underfunded and countless teachers are losing their jobs.

As a young boy Tomás Rivera worked in the fields along-side his parents in Texas where he was born. This wasn’t easy and he would also work during summer vacations; when the harvest season would overlap with the fall semester, he would have to miss school and still catch up on his missed schoolwork. Tomás knew as a child that he aspired one day to be a writer and he accepted his ambition when people in the Mexican community expressed extreme doubt. He worked the fields up until he reached junior college, at which point daily attendance was required for all classes. Rivera’s inspiration in life for wanting to help the members of his family and to achieve his personal goals was his grandfather who constantly supported and encouraged him.

He overcame countless obstacles and ultimately earned his college degree from Southwest Texas State University, which is now known as Texas State University. Tomás Rivera then went onto the university of Oklahoma where he earned his Ph.D. During his journey in education he recognized the importance and the need for Mexican-Americans to become educated as well. It wasn’t until the day he stopped working the fields that Tomás Rivera was able to embark on this new journey that would result in not only personal success, but opportunities to help the Mexican American communities of Texas and to serve as role model to people throughout the United States and beyond. Rivera’s first creative piece was penned at the age of eleven when he wrote about a car accident that he went through.

Rivera’s first creative piece was penned at the age of eleven when he wrote about a car accident that he went through. Even as a child Rivera had decided to be a writer, but at the time he assumed he would become a sports writer since that’s what he enjoyed to read at the time.

His most famous novel is ...y no se lo trago la tierra, translated in English as This Migrant Earth. He used his first hand experience from working in the fields as the basis for the book, about a young boy’s life as a migrant farm worker. It wasn’t easy getting his book published because it was written in Spanish and due to blatant racism against him as a Mexican-American author: about a young boy’s life as a migrant farm worker. It wasn’t easy getting his book published because it was written in Spanish and due to blatant racism against him as a Mexican-American author. He really wanted to find a way for Mexican-Americans to educate themselves as a way out of fieldwork. Before beginning his professional career Rivera began with teaching the fieldworkers English. He told farm workers to not limit themselves to conforming to Anglo expectations towards Mexicans. He encouraged Raza to seek out higher education opportunities and to be true to themselves along the way. Tomás Rivera used his educational success to become a respected educator, teaching in high schools throughout the Southwestern United States, before moving on to become a professor at the University level prior to being selected as chancellor at our University of California, Riverside until his untimely death in 1984. Thomas Rivera will be always respected and honored for his 48 years of life and the world of difference that he has made for his own community. He is still inspiring those who are willing to try to realize their personal dreams against every form of resistance, negativity, doubt, obstacle, racism, or impossibly long odds.

Congratulations to my girlfriend’s class of 2011 from UCR! - Telly
Jennifer Lopez and the “Diva” Debate  by Michael Dardon

On May 3, 2011 after a four-year hiatus, singer Jennifer Lopez, affectionately nick named J.Lo, returned to the music scene with the release of her highly anticipated seventh studio album “Love?”. Between magazine cover stories—she is pictured on the cover of “People” magazine’s “World’s Most Beautiful” list 2011 issue—and celebrity news programs such as “ET”, very little is left untold about the 41 year old Puerto Rican, American beauty. So exactly what was J.Lo up to during her break from the music industry? Well, let’s just say she can add mommy to the already long list of job titles found on her very impressive résumé; the multi-talented Latina is an actress, singer, dancer, television personality, fashion designer, producer and on February 22, 2008 she also became a mother to fraternal twins, Emme and Maximilian Muñiz. With children and husband Marc Anthony by her side, J.Lo’s seemingly limitless success—two ALMA awards, several Grammy Award nominations, three American Music Awards, and the only actress and singer in history to have a film and an album at number one in the same week—has earned her the title of the ‘richest person of Latin American descent in Hollywood’ by “Forbes” magazine and the ‘most influential Hispanic entertainer in America’ by “People en Español” magazine. With so much power and influence in Latino and non-Latino communities alike, many can’t help but wonder if Lopez is, in fact, using her position to make a positive difference in the world or simply “fattening her pockets.”

Having all her accomplishments safely secured under a surely bedazzled belt, Lopez has been accused of being guilty of possessing “diva behavior.” In a recent article for “People” magazine, Lopez was asked about how she feels about being called a “diva.” She says, “I kind of like it. We’ve kind of owned it now. But I certainly don’t like and I’ve never been a person who has what they call ‘diva behavior,’ which is something they tried to pin on me for a long time.” Still, those of us who don’t personally know Jenny from the Block, can’t really be sure of this and aren’t willing to just take her word for it either! So what can we do to debunk this “diva” debate once and for all? Well, it’s simple really, if we just consider the facts.

Jennifer Lopez is one of the three daughters of Puerto Rican parents Guadalupe Rodriguez, a kindergarden teacher, and David Lopez, a computer specialist. Although Lopez’s parents never let her or her sisters go without, they were not wealthy by any means, and they always taught their children that hard work was necessary to be successful in life. A lesson that undoubtedly stuck Lopez set out to pay for her own singing and dancing lessons after graduating from high school in the Bronx. While working in a legal office, Lopez financed dance classes and performed routines in Manhattan night clubs. In 1990 after several rejections and many sleepless nights, the young dancer’s hard work finally paid off when she was selected in a nationwide competition to appear in an episode of Yo! MTV Raps.

Later that year came her first high-profile job, Lopez was a “fly girl” for the television comedy program “In Living Color.” These early years truly demonstrate the relentless determination Lopez possesses and sends an inspiring message to young people everywhere that, with hard work and a positive attitude, anything is possible. She is commended by many for creating her own opportunities rather than being given an easy break like several other up and coming artists of her time.

Her career progressed onto the big screen where she earned a great deal of recognition as an actress in a leading role for the biographical film Selena (1997). Her portrayal of the late Tejana music star earned her an ALMA Award and a Golden Globe nomination for “Best Actress - Motion Picture Musical or Comedy.”

The movie’s performance in the box office made her the first Latin actress to earn $1 million or more for a film role, a large sum of money well deserved for the once struggling dancer. Since then she has starred in movies, such as Out of Sight (1998), The Wedding Planner (2001), Maid in Manhattan (2002), Shall We Dance? (2004), and Monster-in-Law (2005). Following her success in Hollywood, Lopez utilized her star power to expose “the brutal murders of hundreds of women” in the border city of Juarez, Mexico in the film Bordertown (2006). She received the Artists for Amnesty International award in acknowledgment of her work as producer and star in the film. The film also earned her special recognition and gratitude from Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa A.C. (“May Our Daughters Return Home, Civil Association”), an organization comprised of mothers and families of the women murdered in Juarez.

Lopez as an unknown dancer in an episode of Yo! MTV Raps.

Lopez with an actress portraying a woman from Juarez, Mexico in a scene from the film Bordertown.

Lopez also has made her mark as a musician with the release of her debut studio album “On the 6” (1999) followed by a second album “J.LO” (2001). Both albums were commercially successful, with the latter selling eight million copies worldwide and debuting at number one on the Billboard 200. “J to tha L-O!: The Remixed” (2002) became her second consecutive album to debut at number one on the Billboard 200. Five studio albums would follow—“This Is Me... Then” (2002), “Rebirth” (2005), “Como Ama una Mujer” (2007), “Brave” (2007), and the recent “Love?” (2011).

Continued on page 19
Continued from page 18

Her contributions to music have earned her a great deal of recognition, including several Grammy Award nominations, three American Music Awards, and Billboard ranked her as the 27th Artist of the 2000s decade.

Aside from her career in entertainment, Lopez also advocates for human rights, vaccinations, and is an avid supporter of Children's Hospital Los Angeles. In conjunction with Sounds of Pertussis and March of Dimes, she spreads awareness for the whooping cough disease and encourages adult vaccinations to prevent the spread of disease to infants. In September 2004 Lopez was presented with the Children's Humanitarian Award for her contribution to this cause at the hospital's inaugural Noche de Niños gala. Since then Lopez has attended the gala yearly and continues to make frequent visits to the hospital. In 2008 the humanitarian was involved in the Nautica Malibu Triathlon benefiting the hospital. The following year she established The Maribel Foundation in an effort to provide further support for the hospital and beyond that to improve health care internationally.

With all of her extensive experience as a singer and dancer, Lopez knows all too well just how difficult it is to make it in the industry as she dealt with her own troubles in getting her first real break. This made her a likely choice for “American Idol” producers last year when they were hunting for a new judge following the departure of Ellen DeGeneres. Having served as a mentor on the show seasons prior, Lopez decided to join the judging panel so that she could share her knowledge with other aspiring artists. It’s no secret, however, that some wondered if signing up for the show was some clever ploy to make her way back into the lime light. And prior to official confirmation, some even speculated that Lopez wouldn’t end up being a judge due to “outrageous demands.” The latter accusation was soon put to rest when “Idol” producer, Nigel Lythgoe, responded by saying “Jennfer] is in no way a diva, I’ve worked with her on quite a few occasions and I have never yet seen her be a diva.” As for the accusation of using the show as a platform to revive J.Lo’s career, many believe that’s irrelevant to what’s really important which is helping young, struggling artists realize their full potential and she is doing just that. Week after week Lopez offers meaningful advice to the competitors as she reveals all the tricks she has managed to garner up her sequenced sleeves over the years as an artist.

So what’s next for the Latina wonder woman seeing as it seems she is capable of doing almost anything? If you were expecting another four-year hiatus, well guess again because on April 27 Lopez with husband Marc Anthony and producer Simon Fuller announced that they are in the works of creating a new reality show titled “Q′Viva! The Chosen.” The premise of the show is for the couple to travel throughout 21 countries in search of the best performers in Latin music, dance, and other arts in an effort to showcase the vast talent yet to be discovered in these places. She says the show will go “to places where all of this talent lives and wouldn’t have otherwise been discovered” providing a platform to those who might not have otherwise had the opportunity to share their art with the world. Lopez believes the show will be revolutionary for the global entertainment industry seeing as “the Latin culture is a tapestry that is rich in passion, tradition and artistry.” Many praise J.Lo for creating a show that will undoubtedly shed a positive light on Latin culture!

All in all, Jennifer Lopez may be capitalizing monetarily on her career in Hollywood, but all the while she is inspiring young people across the globe, serving as an avid humanitarian, and bringing all the beauty of Latin culture to the forefront of global entertainment. And let’s face it, there are so few celebrities in her position that give back to the community in the way she does and even fewer who do so with genuine compassion and desire for change. A quote from a recent interview with “People en Español” magazine truly captures Lopez’s ideology and serves as a perfect closing to this long drawn out “diva” debate. She says, “Being an example to others is a big part of my work. It excites me to think that I could be capable of changing opinions, or of making people laugh or cry. It’s a beautiful facet of the work that I do.” So there you go, straight from Lopez herself that what’s really important is making a difference in the world by setting an example that speaks to people’s emotions, challenges their opinions, and ultimately brings about positive change.

Throughout her career Jennifer Lopez has and continues to make that difference!
2010 Baja California Earthquake

By: Juan Lopez

April 2nd, 2010, the strongest earthquake since 1992 hits the Baja California peninsula. The earthquake emanated from its epicenter a few miles outside of the town of Guadalupe Victoria, Baja California, México. The 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit the unsuspecting area on Easter and interrupted people’s celebrations. This tremor was so strong that it was felt as far away as Nevada. In Mexicali, the biggest city closest to the epicenter, a state of emergency was declared as a result of the massive quake. In the article “Massive Quake hits Baja California” Bill Hayes states “Buildings in Mexicali swayed back and forth for a minute and a half as people raced to open ground”. There were reports that people were left without power throughout the region for hours after the quake hit. In the smaller towns outside the city, people reported homes caving in, in the aftermath of the quake; and unfortunately two lives were lost after such homes collapsed on them.

Although Mexican officials say that aid was being distributed, the fact is that it was simply not true. In Sandra Ontiveros’ “Aid for Baja California” she states, “Much of the aid that arrived in the affected region was not adequate and sufficient to accommodate so many people”. She goes on to say that many people reported the lack of food and water given by the government to temporarily displaced citizens whose homes were affected by the quake. Indeed much of the food and bottled water that arrived in the area was not from the Mexican Government but from Family members living in the U.S. Although this is true of family members, the U.S. government itself did not provide much aid for the disaster. In the weeks that followed, the quake went mostly unnoticed by U.S. officials even though the event happened in close proximity to the U.S.-México border. In fact, the border city of Calexico was greatly affected by this tremor as well, but aid still did not find its way south of the border.

Rodriguez stated. Many accounts like this one have surfaced throughout the region, especially in the small towns outside of Mexicali where the population is of a lower income than in the city. Many homes have been abandoned after they were deemed unstable to live in.

To this day, the struggle of living in this area affected so much by the earthquake has taken a toll on the population. Many have since moved with family members away from the region or are still without homes. Even a year later, our world that we pride ourselves for being so advanced and civilized, cannot help a region that was basically reduced to rubble that is so close to our own border.

A family examines a huge crack in a road which shows the severity of the earthquake

The Mexican government’s slow paced effort to send aid to the region made the aftermath of the event even worse. Even now over a year later, relief efforts are still slow to build up the region once more. “The government told us they would give us material for a new home if we had lost it in the earthquake, but they still haven’t delivered it” said Leticia Rodriguez, a resident of Cucapah Indigena, a small town a mile from the epicenter. “The food they provided us was not sufficient for us, thank God my family from the U.S. brought so many supplies for us, it saved our lives”

A downed post in a residential area cuts electricity to the neighborhood

The Mexican government quickly responded to the state of emergency by mobilizing troops to distribute aid to the thousands affected by the tremor.
Class Division within California
By Juan Lopez

Throughout the world and especially in the United States, we see division of class within communities. These class divisions may not be intentional but they are clearly seen. Many argue that this occurs because of common cultural practices or similarities in income. A good example of this is in my hometown of Coachella, California. It is located in a valley about an hour east of Riverside, and is surrounded by other cities within the valley. As I grew up in this community, I witnessed the obvious differences in ethnicity and financial worth. To some scholars, this may be a perfect model of class division in California.

My parents live in the east end of the valley in the city of Coachella, which at a glance is a decent city with nice houses. At the same time, it isn’t a luxurious community, but it is adequate for a nice livable community. As you progress farther east though, you find the rural part of the valley, which is made up of the cities of Thermal and Mecca. In these communities you see a more humble and less wealthy community. Many of the people that live in this region are of working-class origin who make their living from work in the agricultural fields. Almost all of the people who live in these communities are Latinos who also work in agriculture, where a lot of the valley’s economic wealth is produced.

On the other hand, as you progress farther to the west within the valley you find the cities such as La Quinta, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, and Rancho Mirage, which are predominantly wealthier communities. Many of these communities are made up of upper middle class Caucasian individuals who make their living as white-collar employees. Palm Springs, in fact, is a major hub of tourism in Southern California especially in the winter when “snow birds”, people who have homes in the valley, come down from northern regions to escape the snow. “I have lived in the valley for 47 years” said Antonio Garcia, a resident of Coachella, “I have worked in a hotel in Palm Springs for many years and I have seen the class divisions firsthand”. Garcia goes on to say that a lot of people from the east end of the valley work in the wealthier cities in the valley and essentially for Caucasian employers. “Many of the people from the east side of the valley commute to Palm Springs or other cities and work for wealthier residents who in most cases are Caucasian” stated Garcia who knows this all too well.

Another great factor that lends legitimacy to this theory of class division is that people want to live in a community that they can relate too. Many Latinos want to live in a community where they can feel comfortable practicing their culture and this is true for other ethnic groups as well. In reality, we are the reason why we begin to segregate ourselves into different communities. There is no official law that states this, but it’s almost an unwritten rule that says that one will settle down with people who they can relate too. But as time passes, this notion of class division is being proven wrong as more and more Latinos are pursuing higher education, which leads to better careers and thus provides more diversity within the entire valley as they begin to move into the wealthier communities.

The Anasazi: A History of Research
By Javier Amaya

The latest news of the Anasazi people, more commonly known as the Ancestral Pueblo people, started appearing on the news by the end of 2010. Several media outlets claimed that, once again, it is suggested by researchers that the Anasazi people were cannibals. This, due to an archeological excavation conducted in 2005, thousands of bone fragments were discovered around the area of Durango, Colorado. After studying the bone fragments form the excavation, the evidence is discussed; crushed leg bones, mutilated human remains, the breaking and cutting of flesh as well prove cooking and pulverizing was found, all pointing towards cannibalism.

The Anasazi were an indigenous group of people who lived at what is now known as the four corners, which consists of southern Colorado, northwest New Mexico, southern Utah, and northern Arizona. The Ancestral Pueblo people are mostly known for their architecture and their great houses. Great houses were complexes that were made out of stone, adobe, and mud; some having up to 700 rooms. Descendants of the Anasazi are the modern-day indigenous people of the Hopi and the Zuni. For most people, the Anasazi are known as peaceful people who hunted, gathered, and had amazing architectural abilities.

Due to the political mood of the 1960s and 70s, the Anasazi became known as the group of people who were completely peaceful. Later, during the 1980’s archeological findings found the Anasazi as a normally violent culture. The main view of the Anasazi changed one day in the late 1990s when new evidence of cannibalism was found in a coprolite that belonged to an Ancestral Pueblo person. Christy Turner II had received a coprolite from an excavation site at Cowboy Wash, Utah. After analyzing the coprolite Turner II found traces of human myoglobin- proof that one person
evidence, he did not hesitate to conclude that all
the Ancestral Pueblo people were cannibals and
that they ate each other due to severe climate
conditions and drought. Turner II did not take any
time to make sure his theory was precise and
accurate; he did not seek any other professional
opinion and also claimed to be “…the guy who
brought down the Anasazi.”

Karl J. Reinhard is an archeologist from
the University of Nebraska that has been studying the
diets of the Anasazi for several years through the
study of coprolites or dried human feces. Reinhard
has studied over 500 coprolites from the Ancestral
Pueblo people and he admits that the one from
Cowboy Wash looks just like any other. After
studying the coprolite, Reinhard concludes that
the coprolite does not belong to a typical Anasazi
person. Soon after Reinhard leaves the country
due to work reasons and the coprolite is
transferred to Turner II at a lab in Colorado. Once
Turner’s theory got to the media, Reinhard found
out about it and felt surprised about Turner’s
conclusions. Due to his vast knowledge about the
Ancestral Pueblo people, Reinhard could not
understand how one coprolite can decide the past
traits of a culture. After studying more than 500
coprolites, Reinhard knew that the diet of the
Anasazi people was far from the one of cannibals,
or even carnivorous. The Ancestral People’s diet
was primarily based on herbs, the Anasazi were
largely vegetarian. According to Reinhard, the
coprolite showing cannibalism did not belong to
an Anasazi, the coprolite’s shown diet did not
match to those of the Ancestral Pueblo people.

The ancestral pueblo people, like any other
culture, were human- nothing more nothing less.
It is essential for researchers and the public to
see the Anasazi as any other indigenous tribe,
looking at them without any prejudice or
stereotype. The Anasazi were great people, who
lived in a very severe terrain. They, like any
other tribe, had a culture that had ritual,
customs, and beliefs. Archeologists have the
duty to present their research and findings in the
most accurate and adequate way. It is essential
for scholars to carry with them the responsibility
of the past, and do everything in their power to
recreate it as precisely and factual as possible. It
is unnecessary and negligent for an archeologist
to come to conclusions that might label a culture
as cannibals without the necessary knowledge.
In Turner’s case it is clear that, for one reason or
another, he decided to jump to the conclusion of
the Anasazi people as cannibals by completely
ignoring Reinhard’s expertise about the
coprolite.

Even though the idea of cannibalism among
the Anasazi is still being studied, it is clear that
the person who led the excavations at Ridges Basin, has taken the task of deciphering the bone
fragments very seriously. Ridge Basin was
found in 2005, while Potter’s results about the
excavations were publicized in 2010. Potter took
the time and resources in order to make an
accurate report. According to Potter, what
occurred at Ridge Basin was a “cultural
meltdown,” it was an ethnic conflict that led to a
massacre. Potter ended up ruling out starvation
cannibalism, he rejected climate change leading
to scarce resources as the cause of the massacre.
The Ridge Basin excavations did not show the
expected cannibals from the 800 B.C., but rather
a group of people who had ethnic conflicts, the
same kind of conflicts we still see today.

*This is an edited version of a paper presented at the
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Who are the Muiscas?
By Javier Amaya

The Muiscas, also known as the Chibchas, are
a native indigenous tribe of people in Colombia,
South America. Even though their population has
been decreasing steadily since European conquest,
a few Muiscas tribes still live around the
Colombian capital, Bogotá. Before Spanish
arrival, the Muiscas possessed a complex social,
political, and economic system in which they
defined their beliefs about religion and the
everyday life.

The Muiscas were believed to have arrived to
the Altiplano Cundiboyacense around 1,000 BC.
The Muiscas’ political structure was one of a
confederation. The confederation was divided in
two parts; each ruled by a monarch. The Zipa
ruled in the south of the Confederation, while
the Zaque ruled in the north. Each part of the
confederation was composed of several
autonomous groups of people called Cacicazgos,
whose leader was called Cacique. The Zipa and
Zaque respected their Cacicazgos’ autonomy, but
were considered the military chiefs of the
confederation. The Zapa was seen as the direct
descendant of the moon, while the Zaque was
seen as the direct descendant of the sun. Since
the confederation was clearly based on structure
and noble status, nobility took on an important role
in their culture. In their society, noble status was
only passed down through the mother. For
example; if the Zapa had a son, the next Zapa
would not be his son, but the Zapa’s sister’s son;
this because the one with the noble blood is the
female, not the male.

As in any structured state, the Muiscas
possessed an economic system. Trueque was the
main economical exchange seen in the
confederation. Trueque is the exchange of objects
or services for other objects or services. There
was no use of currency involved in the
confederation. The most valuable objects used for
Trueque were gold, salt, emeralds, and coal. The
Muiscas were an agricultural state, primarily
surviving by the harvesting of beans, corn,
potatoes, and yucca. Textiles also played a major
part in their economic system, the Muiscas wove
textiles made out of cotton or fique (agave) that
were for personal use, or for trueque. Goldsmiths and artisans also played a major role in the economy of the confederation.

Chibchano was the language spoken in the confederation, a language from which the name Chibcha came to be, when referring to the Muiscas. Formal writing for the Muiscas has not been found, except for numerous drawings of symbols on rocks. Musica’s houses were primarily made using a building method called Bahareque. In this process, houses were made by using canes and clay in order to create soundproof and secure walls.

Religion was a very important aspect of the Muiscas. With the Zipa and Zaque as gods’ descendants in earth, the Muiscas saw the sun and the moon as their primary gods. The Muiscas called the sun god Bochica and the moon goddess Chia. According to their belief, Bochica was the highest god and he was married to Chia. Like any other culture, the Muiscas had a creation story called Bachue. According to the story, a woman walked out of a lake with a baby in her hands and that is how human kind began. The Muiscas had priests who conducted ceremonies, human sacrifices were performed and were a very important ceremonial aspect. One child from each family would be given to a priest to raise; at age fifteen the child would be sacrificed during a ceremony. Muiscas were buried in a mummy style using the Andean style; they were buried with Estolicas (wooden sticks) to protect them in the afterlife.

As the last Zipa and Zaque died, the Caciques and the people fought the Spaniards until almost the eradication of the Muiscas. Currently, there are small Muiscas communities who live under the Colombian government and constitution.

Emasculation and the Silent Killer

Marysol Aguirre & Yessica Garcia Hernandez

Latino Theater stages many issues that affect our community. The stage productions often reflect the cycles of violence Latinos often fall into and become victims of. Theater serves as an important approach to raise awareness of such issues that are often ignored, yet so present, in our daily lives. Theater goes a step further, by helping to understand the consequences, find similarities, & sometimes even give hope or alternatives to such issues. The theater also helps create a language for such issues. A reoccurring theme in Latino communities is the cycle of violence of machismo and the affects of it. Machismo is very important, yet difficult, to address.

When addressing issues dealing with the “Macho,” and Machismo, the woman is usually portrayed as the victim, but what most forget is that the man is also the victim. In Shadow of a Man, a play by Cherrie Moraga, Manuel is portrayed as a stereotypical Mexican who suffers from alcoholism. The play revolves around la familia Rodriguez: Manuel, Hortencia, Leticia, Lupe, and Rosario. The play stages many issues regarding Latino families, the most important issue is the one dealing with masculinity and machismo.

Studies show that Latinos are identified as a high-risk group for substance abuse, depression and anxiety. Also, studies have found that a “long –term residence in the United States significantly increased rates of mental disorders” which cause a dramatic increase in substance abuse. Manuel suffers from depression which leads him to make the decision to end with his life. Men in society, especially Latino men, feel the need to prove their manhood. Comparing himself to his compadre, who was very successful, Manuel felt as if he had failed in reaching the “American Dream.” There are many scenes which reflect Manuel’s obsession of his compadre’s success. In one scene he describes how he wished he could be with him. Many people automatically assume by those lines that Manuel is gay, but he is not. Manuel is depressed because he believes he is a failure.

For those men who identify themselves with Manuel, they feel the pressure of living in a patriarchal society. Judgments and attacks made against their masculinity when they do not fulfill the expectations. They get judged and their masculinity is attacked when they do not meet their role expectations. Patriarchy is a toxic structure. It is within the family that it is developed and conceptualized. Within the family, one learn how to rank the oppression of males and females. We automatically assume that the male will be the oppressor and the female will be the oppressed. We have embraced the idea that men are usually the ones who cause harm in a family, yet a male is also victimized and oppressed. As victims of heteropatriarchy, men sometimes kill themselves over feelings of worthlessness, shame, silence, and despair. Manuel’s inability to meet the expectation of society led him to his death.

It is important to understand the different types of violence, such as the physical, emotional, or psychological, in order to prevent the death of a man. Cherrie Moraga underscores that through our families we build the foundation of who we are. The values of parents are passed down to their children. Children replicate those values which later are passed down to their children. If it is through families that we encounter such lessons, why do we continue to consume such toxic ways of living? In order to break away from the continuous cycles of violence, it must begin the household.

When a man dies of depression to emasculating he is not the only one who is victimized. Those who are also victimized include family members and relatives. They too are responsible for the death of the victim. Latino theater helps the audience visualize and become critical witnesses to issues involving the community.
Introduction to Maya Hieroglyphs
By: Chimalcoatl (Miguel Nuñez)

The People who have come to be known collectively as the Maya are part of one of the few original civilizations to develop in the world. It is a Great Heritage to be Proud of and to promote due to its unsurpassed accomplishments and unique creation of record keeping systems (ie writing, calendrics, etc.). The Maya are and have been “Classical” for thousands of years beyond those years imposed by European fanaticism during the supposed Classic Period, roughly AD 200 to 900, in what is today called Yucatan, Chiapas, Tabasco, and much of Tlaco-Ceanahuac (“Middle America”). Known for their impressive cities built thousands of years ago, while Europeans lived in their worst uncivilized times, the Maya were writing poetry, narratives, calendrics, dedicating buildings, honoring their Ajaw (political representatives).

The Maya independently of all Other World influence created an innovated writing system. It was and is composed logograms, ideograms, syllables. Logograms are simply words, or images, that depict the reading of a ‘character’ as such examples demonstrates:

Each ‘sign’ can be read. The reading is simply based on what the object is or represents, whether it transcends European aesthetics or is considered “abstract” by European and colonized eyes is another research all in itself. For example, IX means ‘woman’ and is rendered by the head of a Maya Woman, distinguished by a facial marking of what to some looks to be the Latin representations of “IL”. Another is considered an ‘ideogram’, which simply entails an idea is depicted. CHOK is the Maya word for ‘scattering’ and based on interpretations by scholars, incense is what is being scattered. A more difficult Maya word to convey to some eyes is the use of TOK, or ‘flint knife’. However, when one compares Nahuaatl as written originally, one sees a clear similarity (and thus the importance of a cross-cultural approach is essential in the ‘study’ of Anahuac Peoples, Cultures, and Languages). The Maya is not limited to simply logograms and ideograms.

The Maya were also capable in their language to use phonetic renditions to “spell out” a word or to complement a specific reading to not confuse the reader with other words. Over the last century, a Maya syllabic chart has been created, adapted, and modified. The Maya syllabic chart is essential to learning to ‘read’ or write in Maya.

As demonstrated above, each sign independently carries a phonetic reading. The top left ‘compound’ for example, is a combination of tzu + lu; and when combined they sound out tzu; however, the Maya would not pronounce the final vowel (in most cases, especially if the second to last vowel was the same as the last one). Therefore, we would not read this word as tzu, but as tzu, meaning ‘dog’. The second example is tz’ib, written as tz’i + bi, which in turn combine to make tz’ibi and the final –i is not pronounced, rendering it as tz’ib, or ‘writing’.

We also have what is known as ‘phonetic complements’. Using a phonetic ‘sign’ one reinforces the reading of a word. For example,
the right hand ‘word’ is composed of SIH-ji-ya. Here the final vowel is not read, leaving us with SIH-ji-y, or sijhy, meaning ‘was born’. The above examples are verbs which also have the tenses infixed into them (the tenses in English do not reflect all aspects of Maya tenses, but can ease the understanding of Maya tenses). On the second example to the left we have u-CH’AM-wa; here the final vowel is not lost. The meaning of this word is u ch’amwa, or ‘he/she/it grabs’.

The language is vastly complex and therefore required years of studying and learning and relearning (as new findings offer different readings or interpretations). The Maya Meeting Conference held annually in Austin, Texas and other similar conferences are essentially vital to learning the Maya languages as they were written originally. Basic readings include Breaking the Maya Code and Reading the Maya Glyph by Michael Coe and How To Read Maya Hieroglyphs and Dictionary of Maya Hieroglyphs by John Montgomery, among others. Knowing the language in which the Maya wrote is essential and will ease the capacity and capability of all to better comprehend and read Maya writing as it was intended. While debates continue, it is generally believed that the Maya ‘script’ was based on the Mayaa T’aan (or “Yucateca” Maya of Yucatan, El Peten, and Belice) and/or a Chol variant or language.

For People of Nican Tlacah (literally “We The People Here”, or Indigenous People) Descent, it is essential to learn the tools to be able to independently read one’s creation narratives, calendrical calculations, philosophical complexities, and ultimately one’s own Heritage of which no Other World people has rivaled.

“Our Word Is Our Weapon”: The Maya Meetings Conference
and Understanding Maya to Break the Misunderstandings of 2012
By: Chimalcoatl (Miguel Nuñez)

The best weapon of a person has sometimes been knowledge. If we possess knowledge then we are lethal. If we lack information, then we are at a disadvantage. When Europeans first Invaded the Maya, no one could predict the destruction that would ensue. With the European grip on some areas of what they called Yucatan, Europeans began to pillage Maya axocalli (libraries), which contained tzontli (400, or countless) juun (books) along with a rich writing tradition. In this very sophisticated recording keeping system, the Maya wrote about everything they could think of in their language and appropriately from their cosmovision and worldview without outside infiltration or foreign ideas imposed. With the burning of most of the juun, we were stripped of one of Our Languages (at least for a couple of centuries). Mayaa T’aan (Language of the Maya) as it is appropriately called, along with other related languages such as a Chol variant/language(s), documented what the Maya had to say. For this reason and its the implications it is essential to learn the thousand year old languages of the Maya (both spoken and written in their original script) to be able to read what was said about 2012.
Population Control: The Politics under SB1070

By Elvira Rios

It is important to acknowledge that there is an anti-Immigrant and anti-Mexican/Chicano atmosphere that is largely seen in the state of Arizona where the Latinos comprised majority of the population. The state of Arizona depicts a clear image of the population control on Latinos by welcoming laws like SB 1070. The crackdown down of illegal immigrants is highly visible in states like Arizona. Various states have tried to pass various measures with different immigration planks. The issue is whether one immigrant agenda is appropriate in diverse states with diverse demographics, different distances from the Mexican-U.S border, and jobs like crop picking and labor related jobs are not being filled by American citizens or legal residents. Another issue is the federal government’s jurisdiction on immigration, the border, naturalization, and other enforcement issues given the congress unwillingness to deal with comprehensive immigration reform for the nation.

The Obama Administration sued Arizona over SB 1070, and presumably will do the same with Utah. However, this shows how crucial Arizona was to the fight. All national attention was taken away from states like Utah, which quietly followed up. States such as, Florida, Kansas, Oklahoma, and South Carolina have seen their attempts to penalize undocumented immigrants hesitatingly, Utah did not. Arizona-style bills died early in Colorado, and Nebraska decided in March to end its debate on one. Arizona’s law requires state local police officers to inquire about the immigration status of anyone they stop, if they have a “reasonable suspicion” the person is an illegal immigrant. With respect to the actions that have been occurring among these states, other states with Republican-heavy legislatures might eventually follow suit eventually.

The bill’s sponsor in Utah must comprehend that his law is no different from the Arizona law. The guest worker program, which would need a federal waiver that currently does not exist, is certainly complex; the sponsor of the law enforcement measure opposed it artfully. A third law creates a pact with Nuevo Leon State in Mexico to funnel Mexicans into the guest worker program. Because a state can not create a guest worker program on its own, two bills have been dismissed by immigrant rights advocates. Immigrant advocates in many states say the debate clearly shifted in favor of tougher enforcement. Ultimately, you end up with a law that is in many respects a mirror of the Arizona law, with some of the controversial pieces softened.

New Mexico’s Governor Susana Martinez, a Republican and a Hispanic, promised a move in her campaign last year. A bill she supported was defeated by the Democratic-controlled State Senate in March. Instead, New Mexico approved a bill that added requirements, including fingerprinting, for immigrants without a Social Security number who apply for licenses. If the Bill wins final approval and the Governor’s signature, it will create a two-tiered system with licenses issued to people without proof of legal residence will be distinctively marked. Ms. Martinez vowed to continue to fight for the repeal, although this is the final week of the legislative session. She called the current law “dangerous” and accused Democrats of “Partisan political gamesmanship” for blocking its repeal. It might be a good sign that we will be able to maintain licenses for individuals who are living, working, and paying taxes in our states regardless of their statuses, nothing is taken for granted so it seems.

Utah’s approach involves enforcement measures paired with an opening to legal status for illegal workers. In Texas, the biggest news from the immigration debate was a bill by State Representative Debbie Riddle, a Republican. Her legislation would penalize employers hiring illegal immigrants, with an exception for family households employing baby sitters or gardeners. Immigrant groups and Democrats accused Ms. Riddle of hypocrisy, saying she wanted to deport illegal immigrants, except for her friends’ nannies.

The Conference of the Maya Meetings of 2011 in Austin, Texas was themed around the 2012 and the Maya. In it, we had Maya epigraphers and knowledgeable present on the importance of a date in December 2012 for the Maya for it is documented in the Maya words themselves; However, it is made clear that the Maya did not make prophetic predictions based on Christian mythological ideas about a apocalyptic destruction of the world. For those that have an interest in learning about a more appropriate understanding of the 2012 date, highly recommended is 2012: Science And Prophecy of the Ancient Maya by Mark Van Stone and the Order of Dates by David Stuart. However, to not take others word for it, take the Maya’s word for it and learn their languages and their written system to read for yourself. Michael Coe’s Reading the Maya Glyph and Breaking the Maya Code are two classics that break down the reading of the Maya written script and the history of “decipherment” respectively. Then, when this is done, go back to the sources that document the 2012 date and read what was said and not said about what would and would not happen in December 2012. One will find no reference to the end of the world apocalyptic-style myths and instead an important date indeed for the Maya, for if it was not, then they would not had documented it in more than one time and place, thousands of years before the date. Other recommended readings include John Montgomery’s Maya-English/English-Maya Dictionary and Phrasebook, Dictionary of Maya Hieroglyphs, and How To Read Maya Hieroglyphs as well as Reading Maya Art by Andrea Stone.
Student Press Release
By: Edward Arelano

Students taking an Ethnic Studies Chicano Education class were given the opportunity to organize and fight for their education in a protest against more University of California budget cuts. Inspired by a class that showed interest, Professor Enrique M. Lopez allowed his students to think of a project that would potentially make a difference in their lives.

On Friday, May 27, 2011, Students from UCR organized a press release at the offices of State Assembly man, Brian Nestande in hopes of potentially acquiring his vote for Governor Brown’s tax extension package. The governor’s tax extension proposes to close the state’s deficit gap of over $26 billion by cutting approximately $12 billion in state funded programs and extending the current vehicle license tax, personal tax, and sales tax for an additional 5 years to create another $12 billion in revenue. The tax extension would secure many safety net programs that are vital to many low income families. In addition, for students, the extension would preserve tuition hikes to remain at current levels of 8%. The 8% increase of tuition hikes was already approved and the UC as well as the CSU experienced $500 million in cuts, in each campus. Community Colleges also took cuts equaling to $400 million.

If the tax extension does not pass, students and state funded programs will take the brunt of the consequences. Students in particular will feel the consequences when it becomes too late to do anything about it. Facing up to 32%-40% tuition increases, every California student will be affected. These tuition increases are representative of the state breaking away from its promise of providing an affordable public education. Last academic year was the first time in California’s history where students in “public” education paid more out of their own pockets than what the state contributed to public education. What begins to happen is the privatization of higher education where those who can afford to go to college will go and those who cannot, will not.

Among the most important objectives of the press conference was to acquire Republican legislature Brian Nestande’s support for the tax extension. Considering the political gridlock between Republicans and Democrats, Nestande’s vote becomes crucial to the success of the tax extension. Nestande’s position on the governor’s tax extension is not good. According to the student held press conference, Nestande thinks that there is a better way to approach the states deficit and extending taxes is not one of them. The majority of California Republican legislatures believe in a cut all approach, that will have serious implications on students and communities’ dependent on state funded jobs and services.

Romina Sanchez a graduating senior and Business/Econ major felt the importance of the press release. “La unida hace la fuerza, when individuals come together they are able to not only let their word be known, but they are able to build a sense of leadership that may serve as a relevant example for others, but more importantly they are able to create a sense of bonding by carrying on a probable cause”. For many, the probable cause reflects avoiding the serious consequences the tax extension implies if it is not successfully passed.
It is clear that the United States has been undergoing demographic changes and its population and people are no longer the same. As Professor Navarro refers to it, the United States is in the midst of a Re-Mexicanization/Latinoization. The browning of the nation has become more prevalent than ever, nonetheless, it has arisen many racist nativist movements throughout the country especially in the state of Arizona.

In general Latinos are a young population; its high fertility rates and high entry of immigrants to the country have contributed to the transformation of the U.S. to one with different political views, customs, cultures, languages, and traditions. On a similar note, data gathered by researchers denotes that Latinos are indeed the youngest growing population in the U.S. through which it was found that the median age for Mexicans is 25, Latinos (non-Mexican) 27, and in comparison to the white population, which is 41, their population has been relatively decreasing. Moreover, the Pew Hispanic Center revealed that the number of Latino children in the U.S. over a decade—the year 2000 through 2010—has grown 39%.

Furthermore, the Census also demonstrated that the state of California houses approximately 14 million Latinos; of which Latinos make up 37.6% of California’s population. Likewise, Texas has a large Latino population of 9 million, like California, also constituting 37.6% of its inhabitants. Research has indicated that Latinos continue to live in the following states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, and Texas.

Although in previous years the number of Latinos living in these states was higher and has diminished over the years their presence has been recorded in other areas of the southeast like Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, and South Carolina as the states with the largest percent growth.

In 2010 the U.S. Census revealed that the Latino population had grown to 50.5 million, which Professor Navarro states that the actual number represents an undercount and is a conservative figure. Moreover the 2000 Census revealed a nationwide Latino population of 35.3 million, which demonstrates that within the ten year gap between the 2000 Census and the 2010 Census, there was 15.2 million Latino population growth. The Pew Hispanic Center announced in March that Latinos make up 16.3% of the nation’s total population of which it grew 56% in the time lapse of ten years.

People of color presently constitute 91.7% of the nation’s population; whereas whites make up 8.3% of the total population. However of the 50.5 million Latinos that the Census counted in 2010, the majority falls in the Mexican or of Mexican descent category adding up to 66% of the Latino breakdown. The Latino population has surpassed that of the black population making up 37.7 million, a 12.8 million difference between the two.

In conclusion, there is no better proof than the Census count itself to demonstrate the demographic change that the U.S. is undergoing. Just like Mexicans and Native Americans were outnumbered in their own land before the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Latinos are rapidly outnumbering them in their own country as well. To prove this, just take a look at the 17.1 million children below the ages of 17 that were introduced to the U.S. throughout the ten years after the 2000 Census…
U.S. Intervention & Mexico Drug Cartels
By Bianca Berriozabal

There has been a lot of talk about a possible U.S. military intervention in the war against drugs in Mexico. Many have concluded that the U.S. should intervene since they too are at fault; primarily because they are the largest consumers and secondly because they are the largest artillery provider. Another reason they give is that Mexico is next door to the U.S. and that we should help because we could too become affected, also because of fear of terrorism, and violence slipping through the border. Furthermore, others believe that the Mexican government has not been able to control or end the war on drugs with rival cartels even with the 45,000+ troops dispatched. Instead, they argue that Felipe Calderón and his administration have been unsuccessful at solving any of Mexico’s problems. In addition, they believe that Mexicans are incapable of sustaining a government.

In contrast to those who believe that President Calderón has been unsuccessful at creating a more strategic plan against the drug cartels, there are those who argue that he has accomplished more than previous presidents. His administration along with the armed forces have been successful at capturing several members of Mexico’s organized crime, like Edgar “La Barbie” Valdez, Vicente Zambrada, Teodoro García Simental, Ignacio “Nacho” Coronel, Arturo Beltran Leyva, and Carlos Beltran Leyva, among others. Also, there are those who strongly believe that the U.S. should not intervene because of economic and budget purposes.

However what these commentators have not taken into consideration is that like this country, Mexico too, has governmental policies that cannot be violated or overruled just because the United States says so. For instance, one of them prohibits foreign military troops to step on Mexican soil. In my opinion if the United States were to intervene in the war against drugs in Mexico not only will it be unsuccessful, it will be disastrous, chaotic, and fatal. First of all the drug cartels will retaliate against the U.S. military troops. Secondly, the cartels would search for other measures that would get rid of the U.S. troops, for example, extortion, torture, murder, and kidnap, among others, of tourists and soldiers. Thirdly, Mexico’s citizens could feel repressed, uncomfortable, and unwilling to cooperate. The presence of the U.S. military in their country could mean a list of things to them; instead of feeling that the U.S. may be going in to help out, they may get the idea that it is with the sole purpose of gaining further access and establishing themselves there like they have done in other countries.

Furthermore, this can also produce other effects like resentment among the Mexican military and police towards the Mexican government and could possibly cause the military and police to join forces with the cartels. On a similar note, tourism has declined throughout the past years due to organized crime and drug wars. The intervention of the U.S. military could mean the end for tourism in Mexico. It is important to fully explore the possibilities and probabilities of events that could arise, such as the ones mentioned, before making any decision. Although, the U.S. is far from being invited into Mexico we have got to impede the U.S. from ever entering Mexico since it could bring us more misfortune than what we already know.

Chicanos/Latinos face a condition of political and legislative warfare. Arizona’s senator Russell Pearce has been the igniter of this hostile political wildfire. Across the nation, states are developing laws that target Latino’s who are perceived to be undocumented. At the forefront of this political movement is conservative, tea party based republicans who feel insecure about the nations changing demographics. As a result, republicans are politically organized and have perpetuated Chicano/Latino’s as a national threat. As the target and victims of legislative onslaughts, Chicano/Latino’s need to establish a countervailing movement that will secure the civil rights of Latino’s from conservative aggressors. UCR Ethnic Studies professor, Armando Navarro describes a paradigm for constructing a new movement based on the conditions reflecting climate of change, leadership, organization, ideology, strategy/tactics and power capability. Considering the six conditions, Chicano/Latino’s accomplish only the climate of change, a condition that requires nothing for Latino’s to do as a community.

The objective for Chicano/Latino’s to build a countervailing movement is to recognize the politically hostile atmosphere. As a people, Chicano/Latino’s could not be more divided and unorganized. Unity and organization has become a thing of the past. For many, people have become complacent with what little they have, blinded by a chauvinistic nation that advocates freedom, consciousness for a better tomorrow has become obscured. Leadership has manifested into organizations that consider social movements too radical for mainstream America. In addition, Chicano/Latino’s have become fragmented into different ideologies that often do not consider the betterment of their people. Instead, 21st century Chicano/Latino as well as other ethnic groups articulate their ideology based on interest or “Viva Yo” mentality. Strategically constructing a social movement and allowing it to have it’s power capability is non-existent in Latino communities.

With the increase of population, specifically, Mexican/Latino’s, conservative America is not prepared to release their dominant influence on the nation. Chicano/Latinos should recognize the importance of constructing a movement that will slow the conservative-rights’ political legislative war, which endangers our brown communities across the nation. Will you be ready to get involved?

Conditions for a 21st Century Social Movement
By Edward Arellano

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Spring 2011
John McCain's Wildfire Accusations

By: Roberto Dr. Cintli Rodriguez

The Arizona senator accuses Mexican immigrants of starting wildfires, but he is fanning the flames himself – of prejudice

John McCain said there was 'substantial evidence' linking wildfires in Arizona to illegal immigrants. Photograph: Jonathan Ernst/Reuters

Does it surprise anyone that Arizona Senator John McCain has blamed undocumented immigrants for the wildfires in his state?

Hard economic times drives desperate people to do desperate things. Throw in the subject of immigration and a little bit of xenophobia… and shazzam! You have the recipe for a political ideology: blame the Mexicans! Send that recipe into Arizona and you have the perfect storm:

- Uneducated and unable to find a [high-paying] job? Blame the Mexicans.
- Social security and Medicare going broke? Yup, it's the Mexicans.
- Terrorism in the Middle East has you up at night? Blame the Mexicans for your insomnia, send troops and wall the US-Mexico border.
- Crime, drug usage and communicable diseases on the rise? You know the answer.

Blaming Mexicans, or "illegal aliens", is a tradition here; and in Georgia and Alabama, too … the whole country, really. Last year, McCain claimed that "illegal aliens" were intentionally causing accidents on freeways.

McCain's charges read like comedy but here in Arizona, immigration is serious business – and so is scapegoating. It is [Sheriff Joe] Arpaio country, where racial profiling is American as apple pie. It is this state that gave us SB 1070 – based in large part on the unproven allegation that Arizona rancher Robert Krentz was killed by "illegal aliens". Amazingly, another whopper was conjured up one week after SB 1070 was signed – that a Pinal County sheriff's deputy had been shot by Mexican drug smugglers (the incident was self-inflicted).

And two weeks before SB 1070 was set to go into effect, Governor Jan Brewer began to warn people about finding headless bodies in the Arizona desert. But the fantastical tales don't end there: in this state, it's not even that Mexican migrants are falsely blamed for real problems; they are also blamed for invented problems. Dana Milbank from the Washington Post writes about this:

"Border violence on the rise? Phoenix becoming the world's No 2 kidnapping capital? Illegal immigrants responsible for most police killings? The majority of those crossing the border are drug mules? All wrong."

Per the FBI, we know that the border region is safer than it was a decade ago, and that many of the safest US cities are along the US-Mexico border. But when it comes to fueling xenophobia in this country, facts never get in the way.

For example, Tucson's highly successful Mexican American Studies programme is on the verge of being eliminated because our current attorney general, Tom Horne, has long maintained that the classes foment revolution ("Viva Che!")). A recent independent audit found all the charges against the programme to be false.

"Illegal aliens" causing Arizona wildfires? While the US Forest Service has made no such claim, McCain and his ideological supporters would have us accept his speculation as fact. What's next? Blaming Mexicans for increased sun spot activity?
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Anatomy of a Tragicomic Educational Witch-hunt
By: Roberto Dr. Cintli Rodriguez
Reprint: Blogspot, June 17, 2011

Arizona’s vicious politics in regards to the legality of Tucson’s highly successful Mexican American Studies (MAS) program have now reached the level of tragicomedy.

Despite an independent audit giving MAS two thumbs up – finding that “no observable evidence was present to suggest that any classroom within Tucson Unified School District is in direct violation of the law” – Arizona State Superintendent, John Huppenthal, still managed to give both the program and the $110,000 audit two middle fingers.

Advocate the overthrow of the United States government.
- promote resentment toward a race or class of people.
- are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic race.
- advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals.

It is Huppenthal that found MAS in violation of the last three provisions of the law. Reminiscent of the Inquisition, MAS has been declared to be illegal not because it is illegal, but rather, because Huppenthal has unilaterally declared it so.

When Governor Jan Brewer signed HB 2281 into law on May 12, 2010, the very next day, TUSD officials proudly proclaimed that the district’s MAS program was in full compliance. Since then, there has been no study to contravene this finding, including Huppenthal’s own audit. How he arrived at his determination is obvious; he moved the goalposts. What is missing in this process is transparency (The ACLU has sued to obtain the audit records to determine what criteria he used to ignore the audit). Huppenthal is the same man who campaigned to “stop La Raza.” In his own finding, contrary to the audit, he found that MAS materials “repeatedly refer to white people as being ‘the oppressors’ and ‘oppressing’ the Latino people.” If the term “oppressors” bothers him, perhaps we can come up with another term. Yet, it is obvious that it is the historic relationship of inequality that he objects to being taught.

By ignoring his own audit, Huppenthal has, in effect, issued a 1500s-era Auto de Fe – a witch-hunt and a call to censor books, curriculums and classrooms. The tragicomedy of this situation is that TUSD’s school board and its superintendent, John Pedicone, have been seemingly racing to dismantle MAS from within, (attempting to make MAS classes electives), even resorting to the massive use of force (May 3 school board meeting) to enforce their proposed changes. Incidentally, the audit recommends that the classes remain part of the core curriculum.

Beyond the hate that HB 2281 has unleashed, still to be determined in a courtroom is whether MAS is in compliance with HB 2281, but rather, whether the law is constitutional (The Acosta lawsuit). The audit does not actually tackle that question. Compliance assumes that MAS should adhere to Horne’s Greco-Roman values. The notion that MAS should treat students as individuals is a canard; they are treated as individuals, and at the same time, all individuals possess a culture and all culture is collective. And in case Huppenthal, Horne and Pedicone have not also noticed, the right to culture, education, language, history and identity are protected by at least 9 international human rights treaties and conventions.

While the audit is actually a resounding affirmation of Mexican American Studies-TUSD, the report does have another major flaw that cannot go unanswered; it advocates that the words “Raza Studies” be removed from the program’s documentation (this was already done in 2010). It does not explain why and reads like a cave-in to right wing ideology. The adoption or rejection of such terminology – which connotes the mixture of all races and the anti-thesis of purity – should be up to peoples and communities to decide, rather than as directives to be imposed by auditors unfamiliar with the discipline.

By inference, compliance connotes that promoting unity amongst [all] peoples is bad and that critical thinking and fighting for social justice are also bad. To comply with such a law sets a bad precedent.

Despite this and despite Huppenthal, the audit sounds like victory for MAS-TUSD. Rodriguez, a professor at the University of Arizona, can be reached at: XColumnn@gmail.com

A lot of us are starting to miss Huppenthal’s predecessor, Tom Horne. With him, you could always count on him for a good laugh – like the time (always) he claimed that he was attempting to dismantle Ethnic Studies in Arizona in the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr., or the time he claimed that labor leader, Dolores Huerta, had been Cesar Chavez’s girlfriend.

With Huppenthal, on the other hand, you don’t know whether it’s Ground Hog Day, or Theater of the Absurd. After sitting on the results of the 120-page audit by Miami-based Cambium Learning for some 6 weeks, he held a press conference on June 15 to discredit his own commissioned audit. When asked to produce the audit, it was conveniently unavailable. For good reason. The audit actually praises MAS. Despite this, he unilaterally declared MAS to be outside of the law, giving the district 60 days to comply or else lose $15 million.

If this were a play, it would be titled: “Johnny can’t read” or “Say it ain’t so, John.”

It cannot be forgotten that HB 2281 was designed by Horne with one specific purpose in mind; to declare Tucson’s MAS program illegal. Thus on its face, HB 2281 is unconstitutional.

The second thing to remember is that the purpose of the audit was “to determine whether the Mexican American Studies Department’s curriculum is in compliance with A.R.S. 15-112 (A)” – (page 4 of audit). And what the audit found is that the program is in compliance because it does not violate any of the four provisions of HB 2281 (page 53). The provisions prohibit classes that:

- advocate the overthrow of the United States government.
- promote resentment toward a race or class of people.
- are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic race.
- advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals.

In Huppenthal’s and Horne’s America, topics such as genocide, land theft, slavery, lynchings, forced removals of populations and mass deportations, Jim Crow segregation and legalized discrimination are apparently out of bounds. And the human rights struggles to overcome these injustices are apparently also out of bounds.
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