

*Return to Jose Roberto's Chante**Cesar Chavez Day on KXCI and other reminiscences*

Cesar Chavez is one of my heroes. I first heard of him when I was nine years old. His speech at the 1968 Democratic Convention was broadcast live all over the country. While I didn't really understand what was going on politically at the time, I did notice that his being on t.v. was a huge deal for my family and neighbors, as back then it was rare to see a Mexicano or Chicano speaking on television, let alone one talking about unions and boycotts.

While in high school in the mid- 70's, my best friend Richard and I got involved in supporting the United Farmworkers movement. We both attended Salpointe High School, and at the time a lot of the clergy and teachers were also involved in supporting the UFW. Two of our teachers and mentors, Ron and Jane Cruz, took us with them to march in picket lines at various liquor stores in support of the Gallo wine boycott. We also formed a UFW support club.



Boycotting Market Spot on Speedway and Park



The Cruz Family: Jane, Elida, Ron, and Beto.



Homemade pins



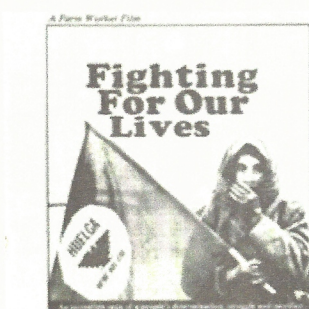
Made at Salpointe...



Original 70's bumper sticker

One day we came up with an idea: we were going to convince the school administration to stop buying and serving "scab"/iceberg lettuce in the school cafeteria. We circulated a petition, eventually signed by a majority of students, demanding that the school no longer serve non-union lettuce. Because we had the support of practically the entire student body, we thought we had easily won this battle, but were soon disappointed when we were informed that the food service folks did not have the time or the equipment to chop and shred any kind of lettuce other than iceberg, so in the end the status quo prevailed. However, we both learned a great deal that year about what happens when you take a stand over something. You learn who your friends are real fast. The school did recognize our efforts, and in the end we received certificates of merit for our involvement as supporters of the UFW. (see below).

In 1975, Richard and I were privileged to meet Cesar personally. Ron Cruz, our teacher, took us to a fundraiser at St. Cyril's Catholic Church where Cesar would be speaking, and we were introduced. Ron took the opportunity to tell Cesar about our efforts to get scab lettuce out of the cafeteria at school and he soon sent both me and Richard letters thanking us for our work. (See below). That night, we also watched the movie, "Fighting For Our Lives". It featured a song called Pastures of Plenty, recorded by Joan Baez. I was crazy about her, and bought the album "Gracias A La Vida" at Penney's downtown shortly thereafter. The record was dedicated to the farmworkers, and included the song, "De Colores", one of the most popular anthems of *el movimiento*.



Tucson Premiere
 May 24, 1975
 St. Cyril's Church
 4725 East Pima
 7 p.m. Reception
 8 p.m. Fighting
 For Our Lives
 Special Guest: Cesar Chavez
 Donation \$5





UNITED FARM WORKERS OF AMERICA AFL-CIO
National Headquarters, La Paz, Arizona, California 91331
602-922-5077

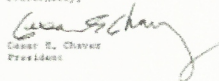
July 25, 1975

Bob Diaz
c/o Cruz
434 South 4th Avenue
Tucson, AZ 85701

Dear Brother:

It was good to meet you at the benefit in Tucson. I wanted to thank you for all the hard work you did in getting the seed lettuce out of Salpointe.

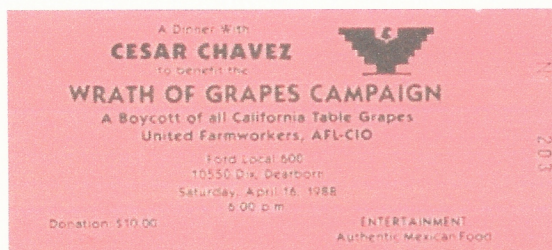
Fraternally,


Cesar E. Chavez
President

CEH:ejr



I met Cesar Chavez again in the late 80's while I was living in Michigan. My cousin Turi worked for him for many years, and was living in Detroit at the time, building support for the UFW among the Detroit labor community. Cesar came to Detroit to speak at a UFW fundraiser, and my cousin asked me to help with the event. My aunt Helen even flew in from Tucson to cater it. It was a great honor to hear Cesar speak and to shake his hand once again.



Cesar died in 1993, a few years after I last saw him, and even though many years have passed since his death, his commitment to non-violence and to the struggle for social justice and decent wages for farmworkers continue to this day to be an inspiration for all working people. Every year in Tucson, for example, the community, with the leadership of the Cesar Chavez Coalition, celebrates his birthday and legacy with marches, teach-ins and guest speakers like Dolores Huerta.

One year, at the invitation of the Cesar Chavez Day organizers, I and my friend Ted Warmbrand, along with another local musician teamed up to perform "El Corrido de La Huelga" inside the sanctuary of the Southside Presbyterian Church. I sang lead, Ted played the banjo and sang harmony, and our third musician played the conjunto-style accordion and also sang harmony. The song has a rousing chorus: "**Viva La Revolucion, Viva Nuestra Asociacion, Viva La Huelga En General!**". Everyone in the audience sang along. We had a blast, and when it was over, the entire sanctuary erupted in applause. It was one of those peak moments of my life. I'll never forget it.



Cesar Chavez was a humble, quiet man, who didn't seem all that comfortable in the spotlight, but he did what he had to do for his people. In honor of this great leader, each year since 2006, KXCI has provided special programming on Cesar Chavez's birthday, (March 31). I have been very fortunate to have contributed by being one of the programming hosts each of those four years. Below is the play list I put together for my part of the 2009 program. The music was interspersed with spoken word segments produced by Amanda Shauger, a member of the KXCI staff. These consisted of interviews with individuals who either knew or were inspired by Cesar Chavez. All told, it was a

Previous shows

- [2008 Cesar Chavez Day Program playlist](#)
- [2008 News Story: Cesar Chavez Day. \(appeared in Democratic Underground\)](#)
- [2007 Cesar Chavez Day Program playlist](#)
- [2007 News Story: Cesar Chavez Day on KXCI.](#)

¡Si Se Puede!

[Return to Jose Roberto's Chante](#)



day filled with moving stories and inspiring music.I was honored and privileged to be a part of it.

2009 Cesar Chavez Day Radio Program
10am to 12pm
KXCI 91.3 FM, Tucson Az.

Produced and hosted by Bob Diaz

PLAY LIST

Name	Song Title	Name of CD	Notes
El Teatro Campesino	El Corrido de Cesar Chavez	Huelga en General	This is one of several corridos written about Cesar Chavez. It appeared on an album produced in the late 70s by the renowned Teatro Campesino.
Lola Beltran	La Mananitas Tapatias	Peerless	In Mexico this song is traditionally sung very early in the morning to someone on her Saints day. It is also sung for someone's birthday. Happy Birthday, Cesar Chavez!
East L.A. School children and Los Lobos	De Colores	Rolas de Aztlan: Songs of the Chicano Movement	De Colores can easily be considered the theme song of the United Farmworker movement. This was one of the first recordings made by Los Lobos. Joan Baez has also recorded the song.
El Vez	Aztlan	Graciasland	El Vez is a very underrated talent. This song, a takeoff on Paul Simon's song Graceland, speaks volumes about the plight of the Mexican American people today.
Los Lobos Del Este de Los Angeles	Flor de Huevo	Just Another Band from East L.A.	This instrumental is from Los Lobos first full-length album, released in the late 70's. It features mostly traditional Mexican tunes sung in the jarocho(features the harp)and huasteca (features the violin) styles.
Daniel Valdez	America De Los Indios	Mestizo	Daniel Valdez is a multi-talented singer/songwriter and actor and one of the founding members of Teatro Campesino. He was featured in the film, Zootsuit and also sang with Linda Ronstadt on her Canciones de Mi Padre album. This song is about the indigenous roots that all Mexicanos/Chicanos share.
Ritmo 7	Dona Juana	Mi Adoracion--San Fernando	Since this is a birthday celebration, a few cumbias are in order. This one is a 70s standard a time when Ritmo 7 was at its peak.
Selena	Corazoncito	Anthology	This little gem is one of Selena's lesser known, but very danceable cumbias. She was a teenager when this one was recorded.
The Royal Jesters	Yo Soy Chicano	Tejano Goldies	A danceable, Chicano community anthem by the legendary group, the Royal Jesters, out of Texas.
Lalo Guerrero	El Corrido de Delano	45" single	Lalo Guerrero was a big supporter of the United Farmworkers Union, and he recorded a handful of songs about the farmworker struggle including this one.
Carmen Moreno and Friends	El Corrido de Dolores Huerta	Si Se Puede	Dolores Huerta was the co-founder of the UFW and a hugely instrumental individual. To this day, she is revered as a great heroine in the Chicano community. This song is a tribute to her and her legacy, Si Se Puede!

Steve Jordan	La Marcha del Campesino	The Return of El Parche	The farmworker struggle is not just confined to California, but extends to places wherever there are vegetables and fruit that need picking. This song is about a march held in Texas. Steve Jordan is one of Texas's musical legends.
Soledad Bravo	Punto y Raya	Cantos Revolucionarios de America Latina	This song acknowledges the similarities between different communities and promotes unity in the face of adversity.
Los Calchakis	Plegaria a un Labrador	El Canto de Los Poetas Revolucionarios	This South American folk tune, written by the great Victor Jara, is an inspiring revolutionary call to solidarity to all the working people of the world.
Mercedes Sosa	Cuando Tenga la Tierra	Corazon Americano	Mercedes Sosa, the world's most famous Argentinian, has a voice that is considered a world treasure. Her story is one of survival and courage amidst authoritarian military rule.
Dr. Loco's Rockin Jalapeno Band	Cumbia Del Sol	Con/Safos	A song to celebrate the day. Cumbias are the best for dancing.
Santana	Lightnin'	Havana Moon	A little instrumental from the ever talented wonder of the guitar, Carlos Santana.
Ozomatli	Guerrillero	Embrace the Chaos	Ozomatli has a huge progressive following. This is a very upbeat song about being a warrior for love and peace.
Lila Downs	Pastures of Plenty/This Land is Your Land	Border/La Linea	The phenomenal Lila Downs melds these two Woody Guthrie classics into a totally new and exciting artistic experience.
El Teatro Campesino	No No Gallo	Huelga en General	This was one of many inspiring songs that came out of the farmworker movement. In English it means "general strike!"
Joan Baez	No Nos Moveran	Gracias a la Vida	This song dates back to the Spanish Civil War, and has an English language equivalent called, We Shall Not Be Moved. It appeared on Baez's wonderful Spanish language album, Gracias A La Vida.
Amparo Ochoa	Chicanita de Aztlan	Mujer	Amparo Ochoa was one of Mexico's top proponents of "la nueva cancion". She borrowed this song from El Norte, more specifically the farmworker movement.
Los Lobos and Friends	Mujeres Valientes	Si Se Puede	This song celebrates the role of women in "el movimiento", and appears on the UFW recording, Si Se Puede.
Perla Batalla	La Barca de Oro	Discoteca Batalla	Played in memory of Consuelo Aguilar, a Chicana activist whose life was shortened by cancer.
Lalo Guerrero	El Corrido de Cesar Chavez	El Chicano Inolvidable	Known as the father of Chicano music, Lalo Guerrero, a native Tucsonan was a big supporter of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Worker movement. This is one of several songs that he wrote about the struggle in the fields.
Conjunto Jardin	Telingo Lingo	Nuevo Son Jarocho	This is a lively son jarocho is interpreted by one of my favorite ensembles, the hugely talented ensemble Conjunto Jardin.
Los Lobos and Friends	Huelga en General	Si Se Puede	This corrido describes the early days of the UFW and the important role Filipino workers played in inspiring workers to strike.
Los Lobos	A Matter of Time	Will the Wolf Survive?	Los Lobos are now one of our country's premiere rock bands, whose roots go back to the groups days with the UFW.

News about the programming...

- [Cesar Chavez Day on KXCI, 2009](#). (appeared in Democratic Underground, a popular political news site).