



# EL BUQUI



NEWSLETTER ~ ARIZONA CHAPTER OF REFORMA

## ASLA ROUNDTABLE ON SERVICES TO THE SPANISH SPEAKING

Vol 2

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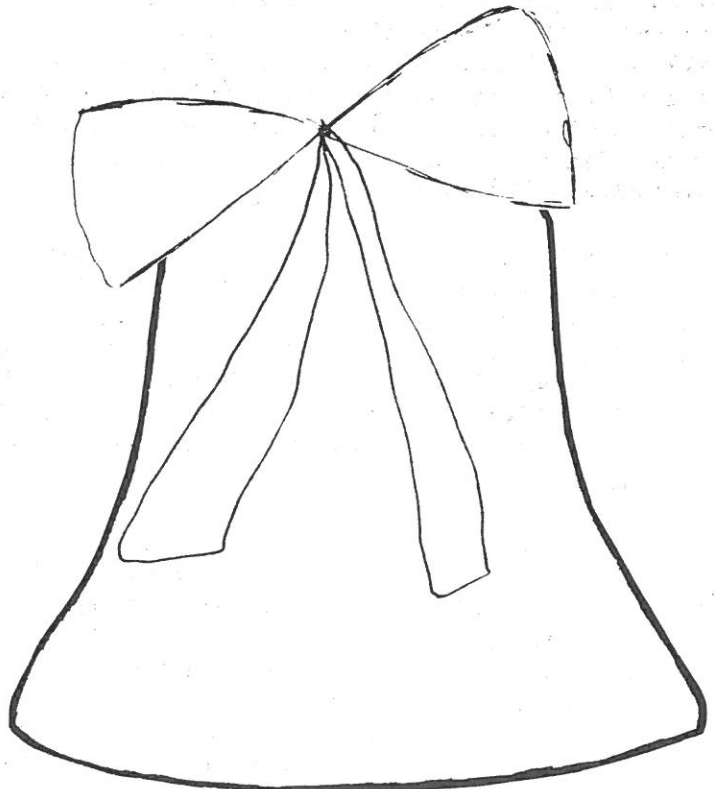
### EDITORIAL

Jose Armas gave an intelligent and provocative talk that left many of us with interesting thoughts and wistful smiles as we recalled our own efforts to mask our Mexicanismo and don the garb of the Americano (refried bean sandwiches for school lunch). Yet there was a disturbing thought or two that filtered in about the nature of Chicano literature and the subtle incestuousness of the Chicano intelligencia that is currently publishing. I use incestuousness only figuratively to describe the "sameness" in so much of Chicano writings that has resulted from an inbreeding of ideas and experiences. Perhaps this phenomenon of writing for each other, stroking familiar themes and phrases, is a natural consequence of survival in a hostile environment where the need to express the experience is all consuming. However therapeutic this may be to writer and reader, it does not in and of itself make for good literature and may perhaps even retard its development because a strong body of criticism is not allowed to develop. It seems from what appears in the Chicano press that anything published is noteworthy merely because there is so little Chicano material in print. Thus praise is given to works which are immature and didactic and whose authors could profit from more than just pats on the back. Is it our sense of carnalismo that prevents us from tearing apart the literary effort of a carnal that has bared his soul? Or is it that this is where Chicanos are: rooted to the expression of what life in the barrio was and how badly Chicanos have been treated by the Anglo. It's not only that the themes haven't changed since the late sixties in prose, poetry or drama but that the rendering of these themes is so sentimental and unimaginative.

Perhaps we don't have writers yet, writers who single-mindedly dedicate themselves to the written word and who are not the same people who are the community leaders; the teachers, lawyers, administrators, etc. Then again maybe it is that we lack the genius, whose sensitivity will fit our experiences into the human elements that are common to all great literature.

But, regardless of what we lack, we must make an effort to maintain a more critical stance toward Chicano literary efforts. If Chicano literature is to contribute to the body of great literature we must help to refine the skills of the writer.

Antonio Gomez



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## CHICANO LITERATURE - GOLDEN AGE OR ?

The following are the notes used by Jose Armas during his presentation to the Arizona State Library Association Conference on September 17, 1980.

Chicanos are in a state of underdevelopment. As a group they have not reached their full human potential. Reasons have included social, political, economic and racist oppression. But the most important has been the psychological oppression of Chicano culture.

Chicanos as a group go through developmental stages similar to individuals. Chicano culture is young. We could say that Chicanos are perhaps in the adolescent stage. Certainly not in a mature stage. This causes some problems. We are still groping for identity. Chicanos have more titles to identify themselves than any other group in the world; Chicano, Mexicano, Hispano, Latino, etc., etc., etc. On the other hand we have a lot to look forward to. Our "Golden Age" is still ahead of us.

Chicanos and whatever is to be Chicano culture is certain to affect the economy and the politics of this society as well as the fields of literature. Chicano literature is the newest form of American literature to appear in many years.

Chicanos since 1970 have grown 65% as compared to a 9% increase for the general population. Our family size is the largest - 3.7 vs 2.6; we are young - 21.7 vs 29.1 years for non Hispanics. Total Hispanic population is close to 20 million people. The Hispanics in the U. S. represent the fifth largest Hispanic population in the world. Our presence will be felt.

Literature is vital to our development simply because literature is the reflection of our community. Our past, our present, our future. Hopes, aspirations, fears, dislikes, etc., all are found in the literature. Literature is also important because it affirms our existence to the world. Of the two billion books printed in this country last year few are masterpieces (if any); few can be considered good literature. The majority are junk and only some are worth the paper they are written on. But yet they are important. Because those two billion books scream to the world HERE WE ARE, whether you like it or not, WE EXIST. So affirmation is crucial. The number of Chicano publications written by Chicanos in the last 132 years (since Chicanos became a part of the U. S.) would fit on a small shelf. Few people believe we exist because we are not reflected in the literature. It is interesting to note that Chicanos are still considered the "Invisible Minority".

Chicanos have not had much luck in being published by the major presses. We are not considered a lucrative market. But the major presses want to come to the small presses who take a chance on Chicano writers. They pick and choose from the "cream of the crop" and anthologize these writings. And in many cases they want permission to republish without payment. They are unwilling to take the chance, to discover and publish Chicanos. If they do take a chance, they are unwilling to promote the books and to cultivate a readership for Chicano writing. Or they don't want to pay. They still want cheap Mexican labor.

Chicano literature has in a sense benefitted from this benign neglect. Chicano literature is not commercial. That is, Chicanos have not been accepted by commercial presses and therefore have not had to compromise their writing for the sake of being accepted. What is being produced is the genuine expression of a people on the move, in the midst of self discovery and of establishing a relationship with the rest of the world. Now is the time for everyone to find the "virgin" literature. Chicano literature will become important. Latin American literature is the most important literature to appear in this century. It has now received international recognition. Chicano literature has the potential for following in the footsteps of our Latin American brothers and sisters. But this does

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not mean that we are identical to them. We are neither Mexicanos nor Anglos. We are outcasts of both societies. We must make our own way and we shall.

Last note: we must become legitimate among our own community. Chicanos are not supporting Chicano literature. Only a few people are buying the books. If they work for programs, they get the programs to buy the literature. That's okay, but they are unwilling to take money from their own pockets to support us. If this attitude continues we will only retard our own growth. Chicanos must shed the dependency syndrome. We must support the things we believe in.

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José Armas, editor of Pajarito Press, brought to the 1980 ASLA conference a tableful of books. Among the titles he hoped to sell were Chicano Perspectives in Literature: A Critical and Annotated Bibliography; El Hijo Pródigo: Index to XX Century Mexican Thought; Timespace Huran (Alurista's third book of poetry); Mestizo: A Chicano Anthology; Canto al Pueblo IV and V.

We are indeed, this seems to shout to the world, an articulate, intelligent race of people. However, what was missing were materials for children. All of us would have snatched up quadruplicate copies of picture books and readers in Spanish for children--but there were none.

The lack of materials for children in Spanish has been a constant source of concern and frustration for librarians, teachers and parents all over the country. The material from Mexico simply does not fulfill our needs. The problems of poor quality binding and availability are common knowledge.

The major publishing houses of the U.S. have thus far chosen to ignore the needs of the growing Hispanic population. In the past, the publishing of juvenile material in Spanish has been considered too regional and too narrow in scope to be profitable. With large Hispanic populations in Los Angeles, San Antonio, San José, El Paso, Chicago, New York, Miami, Phoenix, Tucson, etc., this no longer seems valid.

We should expect from the Chicano press an empathy and interest in the education of Hispanic children. However, the priorities of the Chicano presses seem to be oriented toward the scholar and the intelligentsia of the Chicano community. Nevertheless, Pajarito Press is to be lauded for publishing "the panorama of the expression, philosophy, and historical process taking place" in the Chicano community. That is an admirable and important function. But the publishing of children's materials in Spanish is equally important and vital to the Chicano community.

Pajarito Press has since published its first bilingual children's book--The Legend of the Bellringer of San Agustín. We congratulate them and hope this is only the first of many. Children's books could possibly be the big sellers for the Chicano presses and thus enable more of them to survive.

E.N.

REVIEWS

Alemendras, Herminio. Fiesta.  
Ilustraciones, Maria Dalz. Barcelona:  
Teide, 1978. \$5.32.

Many favorite children's stories are included in this title: The Little Red Hen, Goldilocks and The Three Bears, The Elves and the Shoemaker.

Illustrations abound on every page, some in color, some in black ink and brown wash. The book is a quality paperback with good paper and bound well. This is another title from Donars' catalogue which is a good buy. E.N.

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Lisson, Asuncion and M. Eulia Valeri.  
Pito, Pito Colorito. Barcelona:  
La Galera. Distributed by Bilingual  
Publications. \$7.50.

Fingerplays, counting rhymes, songs and poems are included in this title. Illustrations are colorful and attractive. Great for teachers, librarians, and parents.

E.N.

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Armijo, Consuelo. Los Batautos. Barcelona:  
Juventud. 1974. \$8.30.

Batautos are green beings with ears on top of their heads and feet at the bottom of their bodies. Fourteen short stories of their antics and funny business are here for everybody's enjoyment. Great stories to read aloud to children ages eight and up.

E.N.

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Perera, Hilda. Cuentos para chicos y grandes. Valladolid, Spain: Minon,  
1976. \$6.95

Enjoyable and funny stories by a master storyteller. Her language is a joy to the ears and her stories are fun to read aloud. Recommended for ages eight and up. E.N.

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Martin, Patricia Preciado. The Legend of the Bellringer of San Agustin/La Leyenda del Campanero de San Agustin. ~~Pajarito Publications, P. O. Box 7264, Albuquerque, N. M. 87104~~, 1980. Bilingual. Color illustrations. \$3.50. 8 years and up.

This is the first book in Pajarito Publications Children's Series and it shows. This beautiful legend, intended to reinforce the historical/cultural identity of Chicanos could be greatly enhanced by more meticulous editing. I found minor translating errors in the Spanish text as well as awkward phrases common to those attempting too literal a translation.

The editing problems, however, appear small in the face of so gentle a story which attains a great deal of local color through the use of well-known Tucson locations and personalities. The story centers on the beautiful brass bell hanging in the church of San Agustin. The old bellringer dies and the little town of Tucson soon discovers that not just anyone can carry on his duties. Neither the very strong, nor very rich, nor very wise are able to "make the bell sing" again. The town learns and grows from the lesson learned at the conclusion of the story. The illustrations are lovely. Unfortunately, the publisher neglects to give Desolina, a New Mexican artist, credit for them.

This is Pat's first effort, a learning experience no doubt, and we can only hope she will continue to write much more and that Pajarito Publications as well as other publishers will give children's Chicano literature the importance it deserves.

G.A-R.

**BOOKWORM, ETC.**  
**WHOLESALE CHILDREN'S PAPERBACKS**  
**1842 W. GRANT, SUITE 106**  
**TUCSON, AZ. 85705**  
**(602) 624-2400**

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Mendez, Miguel. Cuentos Para Ninos Traviesos/Stories for Mischievous Children.  
Translated by Eva Price. Berkeley, California. Justa Publications. 1979.

This collection of short stories is not really well suited for children. More than likely the book will find its way into the college classroom as have the author's previous works.

Senor Mendez informs the reader in the foreword that half of the stories are based on the folk narrative of the border and the rest are adapted from folk tales. He has cleverly set all of them in the Sonoran Desert region and as such are very unique. Nevertheless I find it difficult to appreciate completely the work of this writer. In this respect I am in a minority as he is highly acclaimed by many and his book Peregrinos de Aztlan is considered a classic in Chicano literature.

This book does show why the author is considered so highly. His ability to accurately render the speech of the Mexicano is probably without equal and his descriptions of the region have many poetic qualities. I don't quarrel with the fact that he is a good craftsman. However, I find his world view shallow and constricted. Most of the stories in this collection are joyless affairs, each characterized by despair, defeat, resignation and futility. It almost seems as if the very aridness of the desert has dessicated the life force of his characters and rendered them defenseless against life.

His first story, Dona Emeteria, depicts an old woman who suffers tremendous headaches when she is without coffee. Having been without for several days her expectations are suddenly raised when one of her grandchildren finds a batch of chicken eggs that can be traded for coffee. The author builds on this sudden luck and we read about the old woman's mounting anticipation and the grandchild's pride in discovering the eggs. Then comes the denouement as a gang of ruffians attacks the grandchild on his way back from the store and the prized coffee spills onto the desert floor.

In "Los Pollitos," a gang of ruffians is again the culprit. This time they kill and improvise a mock burial for a brood of baby chicks that are the pride and joy of a woman whose hopes center on her future chickens. And finally, in "Boquitas Rojas" a devilish kid brother tricks his sister and her friends into applying lipstick that has been smeared in dog feces and thus brings to an end their excitement and anticipation of the big dance for which they were preparing.

It is not that I like happy endings but I do prefer a story that has characters who are not as flaccid as those found here. In fairness to Mr. Mendez, some of the stories do not fall strictly into the above category. But generally speaking, the central theme in the majority is the triumph of evil over innocence. Life, of course, is much more and it is the lack of balance in his stories that I find hard to swallow.

A.G.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

MI PUEBLO

A bi-monthly magazine of contemporary Raza lifestyles

P. O. Box 7264, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87194

Telephone: (505) 242-2839

MI PUEBLO Magazine will emphasize upbeat and constructive activities and will focus on people: youth, ancianos, women, church leaders, business leaders, political and community leaders. It will focus on cultural aspects: curanderos, parteras and traditional medicine; the Low Rider culture of youth throughout the country, mural art, santero tradition, craftsmen who carry on traditions, organizations that are at the forefront of improving the status of the Hispanic. A "People" magazine for Raza.

## POSTERS, BUTTONS, DECALS

Begin a unique collection of Chicano, Mexican-American, or Bilingual Education posters, buttons or decals for your library. Farmworkers' buttons and posters can also enhance your library's visual aids materials. Posters which can be utilized in the classroom to stimulate discussions on various topics are also essential in understanding social issues in the community. Mount and frame the posters. Lend or rent out the posters for display purposes.

Write for a list of posters, buttons, decals or stickers from the following:

1. ANGEL ARTS DESIGN ASSOCIATES  
P. O. Box 1566  
Studio City, CA 91604
2. AZTLAN BOOKSTORE  
Crusade for Justice  
1567 Downing St.  
Denver Colorado 80218
3. BARRIO BILINGUAL COMMUNICATIONS  
P. O. Box 4214 Terminal Annex  
Los Angeles, CA 90051
4. BILINGUAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES  
P. O. Box 669  
1607 Hope Street  
South Pasadena, CA 91030
5. BILINGUAL MATERIALS DEVELOPING CENTER  
6000 Camp Bowie Blvd.  
Ft. Worth, TX 76116
6. CAMPANA BOOKSTORE  
1025 N. Grande Ave.  
Tucson, AZ 85710
7. LA CAUSA PUBLICATIONS  
P. O. Box 4818  
Santa Barbara, CA 93103
8. CENTRO CAMPESINO CULTURAL, INC.  
P. O. Box 1278  
San Juan Bautista, CA 95045
9. THE FREEDOM SOCIALIST  
Freeway Hall  
Second Floor West  
3815 Fifth Ave. Northeast  
Seattle, Wash. 98105
10. NATIONAL FARM WORK MINISTRY  
1430 West Olympic Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90015
11. THOFRA  
P. O. Box 308  
Sausalito, CA 94965
12. TALLER GRAFICO  
P. O. Box 128  
Tierra Amarilla, N. M. 87575
13. EL TECOLOTE  
P. O. Box 40037  
San Francisco, CA 94140
14. UNITED FARM WORKERS  
P. O. Box 62  
Keene, CA 93531
15. VAMONOS RECIO PUBLICATIONS  
P. O. Box 17111  
El Paso, TX 79917

## LOW RIDER POSTERS, GIFT CARDS, LOCO SHIRTS, ETC.

1. E-YA Publications  
P. O. Box 3366  
San Jose, Calif. 95156
2. Q-Vo Magazine  
Box 20345  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90006
3. Low Rider Magazine  
P. O. Box 28365  
San Jose, Calif. 95159
4. Loco Shirts  
19151 Parthenia St.  
Suite F  
Northridge, Calif. 91324
5. Nuestra Vida  
c/o Campana Bookstore  
1025 N. Grande Ave.  
Tucson, Arizona 85710
6. El Chuco  
821 Carmelita Ave.  
Montebello, Calif. 90640

LITERARY CAMPAIGN STIMULATES PUBLIC  
LIBRARIES IN NICARAGUA

For additional information on posters,  
buttons or decals contact or write:

Christine Marín, Coordinator of  
Chicano Studies Collection, Room 432,  
Hayden Library, ASU, Tempe, AZ 85281.

The successful completion of the recent literary campaign in the Central American country of Nicaragua has given rise to the creation of a Red Nacional de Bibliotecas Públicas (National Network of Public Libraries). On a recent trip to Managua, Nicaragua, I interviewed the director of the network, **Mayra Miranda de Pena**.

CHISTES -- JOKES -- CHISTES -- JOKES --

Jim Griffith, folklorist and friend, tells the story of an old Yaqui woman and her daughter who were busily making tortillas during one of Tucson's many fiestas. A couple of tourists came upon them and one of them, a self-credentialed anthropologist, who was rattling along all sorts of interesting information said "And those two over there are Navajos," pointing to the old woman and her daughter. The old woman sensing that they were the topic of conversation turned to her daughter and asked "Que dicen m'ija?" "Dicen que somos Navajos," the daughter answered. The old woman continuing with her tortillas looked innocently at her daughter and answered, "O si - no sabia."

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The aim of the network is to create new libraries in both the urban and rural areas where none presently exist, and to improve and expand the libraries in those areas where there is some infrastructure. It is hoped that the public library will raise the educational and cultural level of the Nicaraguan people so that they may better understand and participate in the country's social, political, economic and scientific activities. Mayra explained that the public library will serve as a support mechanism in the plan for Nicaragua's economic reactivation, as well as to further stimulate the recently literate population. With the help of the community-based mass organizations, libraries will adopt a new role as cultural promoters, encouraging dance, music, theatre and crafts.

The campesino from a small town in Mexico was complaining to his worldly wise friend about the impossibility of making a living. "Es imposible gana la vida mano," he said. "Pues debemos ir a trabajar en los Estados Unidos," his friend answered. "No, como, yo ni se hablar ingles!" "Es facil - casi hablan como nosotros," his friend answered, "mira, 'yellow' es amarillo y 'ice' son ojos."

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On a tour of the Centro Catalográfico Nacional (National Cataloging Center), I was stunned by the basic materials librarians must work with. For example, all catalog cards are individually typed and catalogers work with old editions of Dewey. There's an acute shortage of trained personnel, equipment and materials, and in an economy where food and health, housing, and education are priorities, the prospect for adequate public library services in the near future is not too promising. Still, I was much impressed with the enthusiasm and dedication of the librarians I met. If you have any ideas on getting aid to Nicaragua's public libraries, let me hear from you.

Cual es el santo de los hambrientos?  
Sanwiche!

Margo Gutierrez  
P. O. Box 3393  
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Anyone who wishes to receive El Buqui may subscribe by filling out the adjoining coupon and sending it together with a remittance of \$5.00 to: Arizona Chapter of Reforma, 202 W. Valencia Road, Tucson, Arizona 85706

The second revised, corrected and enlarged edition of Guide to Chicano Resources in the University of Arizona Library is now available. It was compiled by Iliana Sonntag (now at San Diego State), Shelley Phipps and Ross McLachlan. The 186-page work "does not attempt to cover materials related to the Hispanic culture per se; emphasis is on the Mexican American, his sociological, political and cultural milieu."

The Guide, free to the University of Arizona community, costs \$5.00 to all others and may be obtained by writing to:

Photocopy Center  
University of Arizona Library  
Tucson, Arizona 85721

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