

LATINO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

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Newsletter

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If your agency or your Neighborhood Resource Team needs help or support with any service provided by the Latino Community Engagement Team in the city of Madison, please contact us to see if we can help:

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October 12, the evolving nature of Día de la Raza in Mexico

by Martin Alvarado

Día de la Raza, literally “Day of the Race” is a holiday that has shaped the identity for those of us who grew up in Latin American countries. Closely related to Columbus Day, it is another perspective on the events of October 12, 1492. As such, it is not free from controversy and its meaning continues to be reinterpreted.

Competing Visions

Having its origin in Spain in 1912 as a celebration of the shared linguistic and cultural heritage that Spain had with its former colonies in the American continent, the holiday spread to Latin American countries. Beyond the cultural elements, the meaning of the day was used by Latin American governments and intellectuals to create new national identities, especially true for Mexico during the 20th Century. These identities have their origin in the mythologized “encounter” of Spanish explorers with the original inhabitants of the Americas that resulted in a new race, the “mestizos” that incorporated the best traits of both groups.

This vision was largely unchallenged for most of the 20th Century, but its contradictions became more evident as the continent celebrated 500 years of its “discovery” in 1992. The first fundamental problem was the benign characterization as an encounter or discovery, instead of the genocide, dispossession and enslavement of indigenous peoples from Alaska to Patagonia.

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Anonymous, 18th Century

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Who are we?

The second problem is that it presents a narrow vision of who we are. By reducing the question of identity to “one race” it erases the indigenous peoples, their languages and cultures. It marginalizes them from being fully considered in policy debates and allocation of resources and imposes a need to conform and be accepted by becoming part of a culture that has treated them as second class citizens. Along these same lines, the vision of simple unity has served to suppress other identities and heritages that shape who we are as Latina Americans, most significantly, our African roots. Colonial Mexico (known then as New Spain) had an elaborate system of castes that was based on the permutation of “indian,” “black” and “white” parents as can be seen in this excerpt from a chart defining gradations of race.

Interesting Fact!

“Mexico had its first Afro-Mestizo president in 1829 under the short-lived administration of Vicente Guerrero.”

Fast forward to the 20th Century and we find this black identity suppressed by the governments that succeeded the Mexican Revolution of 1910. It is only until this decade that the category of Afro-Mexican has been introduced in the census and that this identity has been re-recognized by the government. With DNA testing becoming more common, many of us are discovering the places in Africa where our ancestors were born, but the link to our cultural heritage has been severed in all but a few cases. As an interesting fact, Mexico had its first Afro-Mestizo president in 1829 under the short-lived administration of Vicente Guerrero.

Much like the City of Madison has recognized October 12 as Indigenous Peoples Day, an important step in coming to terms with the past, so must we contend with the complicated story of our heritage in order to move forward.



El Abrazo by Jorge Gonzalez (1980)

October 12

“City of Madison has recognized October 12 as Indigenous Peoples Day.”



Textbook Illustration

What's up with the X in Latinx?

By Amy Deming

This year, the Merriam-Webster dictionary added the word “*Latinx*” (pronounced La- teen- ex or Lah-teen-ex), defining it as “of, relating to, or marked by Latin American heritage — used as a gender-neutral alternative to *Latino* or *Latina*.”

In the Spanish language, every noun has a grammatical gender—people, places, things, ideas, and even feelings. Speaking very generally, nouns ending in *-o* tend to be masculine and nouns ending in *-a* tend to be feminine. In traditional grammar, *Latino* is male, *Latina* is female, a group of women are *Latinas*, and a group of men or people of mixed genders—even one that is mostly women—are *Latinos*.

Latin LGBTQ communities have championed *Latinx* as a term that is inclusive of those outside the male/female binary. Many feminists have also adopted it, rejecting the male-centric nature of the “*-o*,” especially when referring to groups that include women. Over the last ten years, *Latinx* has vaulted from its beginnings in online forums and academic papers to a word you might encounter in mainstream media and common use.

For me personally, I refer to myself as a *Latina*, but I say *Latinx* when referring to other people or the community as a whole. I switched in 2016 as I was grieving the Pulse nightclub shooting. I know that saying *Latinx* isn't going to magically make the world safe for queer people of color, but I still believe that words have power. Visibility and representation matters.

Latinx is not without controversy, including among Hispanic/Latinx people. Like the singular “they” in English, it breaks grammatical rules and centuries of tradition. Nevertheless, this millennial English major hopes that *Latinx* continues to gain momentum as a more inclusive term for Latin Americans of diverse identities and orientations.

Thanks!

The Latino Community Engagement Team (LCET) wants to thank you for all the messages that we received about our first Newsletter; it means a lot to us. We also thank you Mayor Paul Soglin, the Common Council, the Multicultural Affairs Committee (MAC) and the Racial Equity & Social Justice Initiative (RESJI) for their support during the Hispanic Heritage Month.

A special thank you to our team members, Martin Alvarado, Amy Deming, Angela Puerta, Erin Nunez and JoseMaria Donoso, and, last but not least, to Document Services for their collaboration to make the newsletters a reality.

Thank you all.

Araceli's Biography

Araceli Esparza is a poet and teacher she explores art, writing, and healing. She was born and raised in Madison, WI and her parents were migrant farm workers from Guanajuato, Mexico, from whom she still gathers her strength from. Mrs. Esparza has been published in many anthologies and journals, she now focuses her efforts on empowering other women to start their businesses and gain confidence in their creativity! Araceli believes every woman is a creative diva! You can learn more at www.wisconsinmujer.com.

*There are ghosts walking out
here
Who used to work
Who fixed cars,
cleaned houses,
Who cared for their children
This has never happened to
me, but I see ghosts of my
people walking
Out here on these streets.*

*Have you seen my sister, she's
named after mi Abuela
She never came home after
school
Her boyfriend says, he hasn't
seen her in days.*

*We checked in the hospitals,
but they said no one was there,
by that name.
I see ghosts walking out on
these streets
Who took them? We all knew
but won't say.*

*Last night, I prayed for her, but
there hasn't been an answer,
Back in the day, we ate in the
same places, but today those
seats are empty
Yesterday, they were on the
diner TVs 5 o'clock news, but
now they've become hauntings
of our ties to third world
countries, with only 3 degrees
of heart.*

*Everyone was watching on their
phones and forgot to look at the
faces*

*Of who cleaned,
Who fixed,
Of who walked on these streets.*

*Who were part of our nation,
Who are part of our families---*

Tell me where she is?

*Cuz, I see ghosts walkin' on
these streets.*

Thanks

*"Thank you Mayor
Paul Soglin, the
Common Council, the
Multicultural Affairs
Committee (MAC)
and the Racial Equity
& Social Justice
Initiative (RESJI) for
their support during
the Hispanic Heritage
Month."*

What's Happening?

*Explore the
Upcoming Events
on pages 5-6!*

My Mother Is A Social Worker Who Works In A Hospital

Poem by Oscar Mireles

My mother is a social worker who works in a hospital

*she makes daily visits
checks her charts
and shares small talk with the patients
as she brightens up their rooms*

My mother is a social worker who works in a hospital

*she is always the first one at the scene
just like the television doctors
whether in the birthing room
at my niece Amanda's arrival
or at the operating table
medicines trap door*

My mother is a social worker who works in a hospital

*my mother translates for the Spanish patients
especially after surgery
she touches their fear
with words that can heal*

My mother is a social worker who works in a hospital

*Surprisingly there is little blood
on her pink uniform
just a day's sweat and dirt
you wouldn't know
she was a cleaning lady
if you looked in her eyes*

My mother is a social worker who works in a hospital

Oscar's Biography

Oscar Mireles is a published poet and editor. Mireles' poetry has been published in over 50 different publications. Oscar has been writing poetry for the past 35 years. Mireles is the editor of three anthologies titled 'I Didn't Know There Were Latinos in Wisconsin: 20 Hispanic Poets' (Focus Communications, 1989) and 'I Didn't Know There Were Latinos in Wisconsin: 30 Hispanic Writers' (Focus Communications, 1999). 'I Didn't Know There Were Latinos in Wisconsin: 3 Decades of Hispanic Writing' (Cowfeather Press, 2014) He also produced a chapbook titled 'Second Generation' (Focus Communications, 1985). Reviewer Tim Forkes writes "the compilation stands as not only as a picture of Wisconsin's Hispanic community... but also the latest of Mireles' many contributions to society as a whole... he was the fire in the oven."

Oscar Mireles has received grants for his writing activities from the Wisconsin Arts Board, Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission, Wisconsin Humanities Committee, Wisconsin 150th Sesquicentennial Commission, Madison Civic Center Foundation and Wisconsin Center for the Book. He received a fellowship to spend a month at the Vermont Studio Center, an artist colony. Mr. Mireles was selected as the 6th Poet Laureate of the City of Madison for the years 2016-17.

Upcoming Events

Chican@ & Latin@ Studies Open House

Thursday, October 4, 2018

11:30 am – 1:00 pm

UW Ingraham Hall, 1155 Observatory Dr.

Join the Chican@ & Latin@ Studies Program for their fall open house and orientation. You will have an opportunity to meet the CLS faculty, staff and current students. Learn about CLS requirements and how to be involved with the CLS student government, ChiLaCSA. Most importantly, a free lunch will be provided for all in attendance. Feel free to bring a friend and you do not have to stay the whole time. Hope to see you then!

Zumba Night

Thursday, October 4, 2018

7:00 – 8:00 pm

UW Festival Room, Memorial Union, 800 Langdon St.

As an event for the Latinx Heritage Month, we are presenting Zumba Night with the Kappa Gamma Chapter of Sigma Lambda Gamma National Sorority Incorporated, the Chi Chapter of Gamma Alpha Omega Sorority Incorporated, the Alpha Kappa Chapter of Kappa Delta Chi Sorority Incorporated, and the Gamma Mu Chapter of Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority Incorporated.

Latinx Night at Wheelhouse: Beyond Frida Kahlo

Friday, October 5, 2018

5:00 – 9:00 pm

UW Wheelhouse Studio, Memorial Union, 800 Langdon St.

Join Wheelhouse studios and Latinx Heritage Month collaboration to Latinx-ify your month. Take a break from studying and embrace your inner artista! Let a teaching artist guide you in making a Guatemalan inspired Worry Doll, whisper your worries to it and they'll go away! Then, get up on your feet and join Ótimo Madison Brazilian Dance to learn some cool dance moves.

Somos Unidas Through Reading

Saturday, October 6, 2018

1:00 – 3:00 pm

UW MSC Lounge, Armory and Gymnasium (Red Gym), 716 Langdon St.

Join of Kappa Gamma Chapter of Sigma Lambda Gamma National Sorority Incorporated in Somos Latinas: Voices of Wisconsin Latina Activists read of the month presentation, discussion, and book signing featuring authors Andrea-Teresa Arenas and Eloisa Gomez.

Latino Art Fair

Saturday, October 6, 2018

5:00 – 9:00 pm

Overture Center, 201 State St.

Celebrate the rich roots of Latino art in culture at the sixth annual Latino Art Fair, organized and sponsored by the Latino Chamber of Commerce of Dane County in partnership with Overture Center. Talented artists from throughout South Central Wisconsin will exhibit and sell their artwork, including paintings, photography, pottery, jewelry, music and more. This year we will feature the art of spoken word and Afro-Peruvian performance by "Golpe Tierra"!

Indigenous Peoples Day

Friday, October 10, 2018

The Realities of the Immigration Systems from a Legal Perspective

Wednesday, October 10, 2018

12:00 – 1:00 pm

UW Law Building, 975 Bascom Mall

Join the Latino Law Student Association for a lunch panel of immigration attorneys, alongside law students who will be attending LLSA's trip to Dilley, TX in August to talk about issues in our immigration system.

Chican@ & Latin@ Studies Community Gatherings

Thursday, October 11, 2018

12:00 – 1:30 pm

UW Ingraham Hall, 1155 Observatory Dr.

The CLS Community Gatherings are weekly workshop luncheons where students have the opportunity to engage in lively discussions about academic life, learn about resources available to them on the UW-Madison campus, and build a strong sense of community. Each week, representatives of a department or resources unit on campus give short presentations and hold Q&A sessions for students. A free lunch is provided for all attendees.

Sisters in Solidarity

Thursday, October 11, 2018

6:00 – 7:30 pm

UW MSC Lounge, Armory and gymnasium (Red Gym), 716 Langdon St.

Sisters in Solidarity is an intentional community building space for women of color. This event would be an evening of connecting and reflection with other women on campus, including activities centered around the self and community. This event is intentionally set for women of color students and dialogue will be focused on toxic masculinity and Machismo. Dinner is included.

Book Talk: José Olivarez, Author of Citizen Illegal

Thursday, October 11, 2018

7:00 pm

Central Library, The Bubbler, 201 W. Mifflin St.

Citizen Illegal is a revealing portrait of life as a first generation immigrant, a celebration of Chicano joy, a shout against erasure, and a vibrant re-imagining of Mexican American life. José Olivarez is the son of Mexican immigrants. He is a co-host of the podcast, The Poetry Gods. A recipient of fellowships from Poets House, The Bronx Council On The Arts, The Poetry Foundation, and The Conversation Literary Festival, his work has been published in The BreakBeat Poets and elsewhere. He is the Marketing Manager at Young Chicago Authors.

Latinx Ball

Friday, October 12, 2018

6:00 pm – 12:00 am

UW Pyle Center, 702 Langdon St.

Join Latinx Student Union at the annual Latinx Ball-closing celebration to the Latinx Heritage Month. It is a night of bringing recognition to the accomplishments of our students and staff who have contributed to the success of the Latinx community. The event includes dinner and a dance to follow.

Book Talk: Natalia Sylvester, Author of Everyone Knows You Go Home

Saturday, October 13, 2018

4:30 pm

Central Library, The Bubbler, 201 W. Mifflin St.

From the acclaimed author of Chasing the Sun comes a new novel about immigration and the depths to which one Mexican American family will go for forgiveness and redemption. Born in Lima, Peru, Natalia Sylvester came to the United States at age four. As a child, she spent time in Florida and the Rio Grande Valley in Texas before her family set down roots in Miami, where she received a BA in creative writing from the University of Miami.

Latinx in Academia

Monday, October 15, 2018

6:00 – 8:00 pm

UW Festival Room, Memorial Union, 800 Langdon St.

Network with Latinx faculty at UW and learn more about Latinx in academia in this great discussion sponsored by WUD Society and Politics.

Racial Equity & Social Justice Initiative (RESJI) Distinguished Speaker Series

Monday, October 15, 2018

1:00 pm

City-County Building, Room 354

All are welcome. Presentation by Jessica Cavazos, President and CEO of the Latino Chamber of Commerce.

Bilingual Art of the Picture Book

Monday, October 15, 2018

3:00 – 4:00 pm

Pinney Library, 204 Cottage Grove Rd.

Kids ages 5-10 are invited to a bilingual storytime with great books and hands-on activities.

The Other Side of the Border opening event with Las Hormigas Bordadoras

Friday, October 19, 2018

6:30 - 8:30 pm

Central Library, 201 W. Mifflin St.

Kids in the Rotunda - Angela Puerta

Saturday, October 20, 2018

9:30 am, 11:00 am, 1:00 pm

Overture Center, 201 State St.

www.overture.org/events/angela-puerta

Spanish Storytime and Sweets

Saturday, October 20, 2018

10:30 – 11:15 am

Pinney Library, 204 Cottage Grove Rd.

Join us for stories and songs in Spanish, and enjoy yummy treats! For kids of all ages and families.

Saturday Family Movie Matinee: Coco

Saturday, October 20, 2018

2:00 – 4:00 pm

Alicia Ashman Library, 733 N. High Point Rd.

Aspiring musician Miguel, confronted with his family's ancestral ban on music, enters the Land of the Dead to find his great-great-grandfather, a legendary singer.

Building our Legacy Talent Development Conference

Friday, November 9, 2018

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

1701 Wright St.

Building our Legacy. The Latino Professionals Association (LPA) invites you to join us this event to facilitate the convocation of Latinx professionals and Madison-area employers for a day of inspiration, empowerment, and development.

Día de los Muertos Performance/Fundraiser

Saturday, November 10, 2018

4:30 – 8:00 pm

East High School, 2222 E. Washington Ave.

East High School's Latinx Student Union and Ballet Folklórico de María Díaz presents: Día de los Muertos Annual Fundraising event. Tickets required.