

El Laberinto

THE CHICANO CAUCUS
NEWSLETTER-VOLUME I, ISSUE II
WWW.COLUMBIA.EDU/CC/CHICANOCAUCUS/

Letter from the Editor:

Hola Chicanos! I am Evita Mendiola, CC '05. To begin this semester's El Laberinto, I would like to personally thank Edgar Castellanos, our previous Head Editor, for creating such a wonderful newsletter with which I work from. Second, I would like to welcome everyone to celebrate our 25th Anniversary by participating in all that Chicano Caucus has to offer. This semester holds quite significant festivities, prospective visitors, insightful discussions, and cultural movies, just to name a few items on our agenda. We also have many wonderful new goals to reach as Chicano Caucus kicks off the year 2002. Your involvement is vital in our progress. Have a great semester!



2002 Caucus Board Members & Contacts

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Quieres Comida? Mexican Cuisine

Looking for Authentic Mexican food and don't have time to cook your own? Then try Taqueria De Mexico. This restaurant claims authenticity and reasonable prices. Lunch specials run at \$5.95 and food choices include burritos, grilled vegetable tortas, huevos rancheros, cornbread, and of course, rice and beans.

**Located on 93 Greenwich Avenue between Bank and W 12th Street. (212) 225-5212.
Found at www.newyork.citysearch.com*

Chicano Caucus Updates

March 8- 25th Anniversary
March 9- El Regreso
March 27- Fresno H.S. visit

April 1- MRC Phone-A-Thon
April 12- Engineering Perspectives
April 13-14- Perspectives of Color

Nuestras Metas: Caucus Goals

*To provide its members with a Chicano environment that will help them to fulfill their educational goals, to promote their cultural consciousness, and to help them become active in serving the needs of their community.

*To inform Chicanos from every region of the United States about higher educational opportunities, with particular emphasis on the strengths and weaknesses of an education at Columbia, and at other east coast universities, encouraging them to apply, and assisting them in the application process.

*To initiate and participate in activities that will foster inter-group relations, interaction among the Chicano Caucus, the Columbia Community, and the east coast Chicano Community.

*To contribute through our active participation to the general well being of Latinos, and towards the proper resolution of the problems facing these analogous peoples.

Recognizing your Roots Columbia Students Answer:

Why do you think it is important to understand the history of your ancestors?

It's essential to know what the history of your ancestors is. In a sense, we are what they were and a fulfillment of their aspirations. It's not only necessary but it is essential that the link is never lost.

-Sara Vasquez, CC '05

It's important to know your background so that you have reasons to be proud of it reasons to desire to bring about changes. If you don't know what's happened before, how can you move forward? How can you explain to other people about your culture if you don't know it yourself?

-Lizet Lopez, CC '05

Chicano Changes Around the Nation: An Exclusive Interview with Jimmy Santiago Baca, the Producer of "Blood in, Blood out"

By Danny Delgado of *El Placazo*

Jimmy Santiago Baca wrote, enclosed by tons of cement and steel bars. He was just another statistic that daily life labeled, as the typical Chicano. While incarcerated, he read and wrote as much as possible, trying to keep his mind out in the open instead of within the enclosed walls of the prison. His pinta time lasted five years. While in prison he was mocked for his writing and reading by a prison guard, who tore up all his writings and his reading materials.

Baca continued his writing after he was released from prison and got his work published. While in prison, Baca promised a cellmate that he would write a screenplay about life in prison. He kept his promise, and the film "Blood in, Blood out", was shot inside of a real prison. In the vista, more than half of the actors are from San Anto, and the paintings shown in the flick are by local San Anto artist, Adan Hernandez.

Recently, we had the chance to sit with Jimmy Baca one on one and hear what he had to say. We first met him at a "Poetic and Cinematographic Session", held at the Instituto Cultural Mexicano, where he read from his book, *Healing Earthquakes*, a collection of poetry. The next day, we interviewed him at the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center. They were hosting a free film screening of "Blood in, Blood out." When asked what he thought was the most important message of the film he said, "If the United States thinks the Twin Towers were a surprise, then wait till they find out that 70% of its population is being criminalized."

After being locked up for years, Jimmy Baca was able to break away from the expectations of the (in)justice system and traveled all over the world, learning plenty about the outside world. He did not let the fact that he had been incarcerated keep him from reaching his potential.

**From the January 2002 issue of El Placazo, a San Antonio, TX Cultural Arts publication. Their goal is to establish a "creative and soulful outlet of the people." For more information, look up consafos@sananto.org*