

en ACCIÓN

The Latino Student Feature Newspaper of Stony Brook University

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F.Y.I.

RE: Transfer Students

Dorca Almanzar

Possessing the eagerness of a freshman tempered by the experience of an upperclassman, a group of hybrids have taken Stony Brook by storm. According to Admission records, last semester alone, this campus welcomed a total of 1,374 of them. I'm talking about the new transfer students.

This figure represents both those who are full and part-time students. Out of these lucky 1,374 only 89 identified themselves as Hispanic. I am one of these students.

Although I was accepted by Stony Brook my senior year in high school, I felt I wasn't ready for a big school and I didn't want to stay close to home. Instead, for two years I resided at Trenton State College, in Trenton, NJ, where I majored in biology. However, circumstances changed and so did my attitude. When I applied to Stony Brook a second time, it was because I definitely wanted to come to this university, not because I was indecisive. Plus I thought it would be wise to keep my options open.

I knew what I was giving up by changing schools, but I realized that I stood to gain much more academically, financially and possibly socially. On the other hand, for some new transfers like Olga Rodriguez, coming to Stony Brook

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Waking up the Sleeping Giant...

Melinda DeJesús

Fuerza Latina: Latin Power, Latin Force, Latin Strength, whatever you want to call it, this undeniable feeling was present the weekend of February 24-26 in Albany. At least six hundred Latinos, of every age, race, background, and social standing went to Albany to unite for one reason...Our Future.

This weekend forty students collaborated by the Latin American Student Organization from Stony Brook, went to Albany to learn more about the Latino future, and most of all about themselves.

Fuerza Latina kicked off on Friday with a Unity Jam held by the Latin Greek Council. Saturday, all the events of Fuerza Latina began bright and early with a continental breakfast. At 11:30 am, the ceremonies began with a welcome and an introduction to what the day had in store. Artist, such as Welfare Poets and Sisters of the Underground, delighted all of those present with a little bit of flava and Latino Righteousness.

At approximately 12:30pm, the conferences/workshops began. Some types of workshops included Reform vs.



The students from the Latin American Student Organization

Revolution, Al Pacino no es Latino, and Ghetto Scholars. The conferences touched many aspects of what it is to be Latino. From politics and the Latino to Latino representation in the arts, such as movies. Conferences encouraged participation from the audience to give individual insight and experience on the topics. Through these conferences people were able to relate and develop ideas of how to overcome.

That same day starting at 7:00 pm everyone came dressed their best to attend a banquet and a dance for the evening. Awards were given to those who were in charge of organizing this years event. And expressions of gratitude were given to everyone who came and supported Fuerza Latina.

Following the banquet, the merengue band, Ravel y su orquesta, delighted everyone with a spectacular performance.

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Santeria: Our Misunderstood Religion

Gaudys Sanclemente

On Tuesday, February 20th, in celebration of Black History month, Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha Inc., in conjunction with the Latin American and Caribbean Center sponsored a workshop entitled, "Santeria and Voodoo: Similarities and Differences; Their African Origins", presented by Dr. Angel P. Campos, Associate Dean for the School of Social Welfare at Stony Brook University. Based on what Dr. Campos spoke about, Santeria is a religious tradition from Africa that, basically, started in the Cuban population and has spread throughout the Caribbean and the United States. It is a religion that is a

mixture of Iberian Catholicism and Yoruba religion. *Santeros*, as the followers are called, believe that before they are born they have a destiny or a walkway with their god. The religion's main objective is the personal relationship they have with an "Orisha." This is a natural force or deity who leads them to their own destiny. There is also one supreme God, called Oludumare and lesser deities, such as Shango and Elegba. Followers of Santeria define their lifestyles by particular saints, and have specific saints to address specific issues. In America, there are places such as Botanicas, which are small stores that sell certain herbs and ritual merchandises, that when used properly are

believed to keep evil away.

Voodoo, as Dr. Campos defined it, is a Haitian religion originating in Africa that is very complex. It is a mixture of French Catholicism and the religion of the Magos, Ibos, and Dahomeans. *Voodoo* is a West African word which means god or spirit. Its beliefs and practices have spread to many parts of the West Indies and to some parts of the United States. In voodooism, the spirits of the dead live in a world of ghosts, but can visit the world of the living to curse or bless people. According to Dr. Campos both Santeria and Voodoo are similar in the rituals that are performed and in the way that they are played out; Examples of this would be the

drums, chants, tobacco, sacrifices, alcohol, and the way people act and get involved. Aside from these two religions, he briefly mentioned a third element called "espiritismo." This is not a religion, but a belief system of the spiritual world, where those who follow it believe there are spirits living among us.

Voodoo and Santeria exist in America today; why a person practices it depends on the individual, whether it be for bad or good. An article is not a sufficient medium of information to be given on Santeria and Voodoo that encompass the subjects. There are good reference books in the library to learn more about Santeria and Voodoo.

Latin American Student Organization Semi-Formal

On Saturday April 20, 1996, the Latin American Student Organization will be holding its Annual Semi-Formal. The activities begin at 7:00 pm with a dinner. After the dinner a dance will follow. All events are to take place this year in the ballroom. Come one and come all and enjoy this year's activities.

For more information contact Candice Camilo @ 632-4388 or Amaralys Alvarez @ 632-1299. If you want to be involved with the event come every Tuesday to the General Body meeting held in room 237 Student Union at 8:00 pm.

*Let's help make this year's
event a successful one!*



The U.S. Obsession with Cuba

Juan David Gomez

For the 200 some odd years that the North American Babylon has existed there have been men and countries which have served as counterpoints off which the American identity could assert itself. Through the invasion and oppression of foreign countries and people these modern day Babylonians have found unity. Nationalism, solidarity, and this sense of unity have always been associated with war.

Slave owning colonialists decided they were tired of paying high taxes and thus rallied behind the popular "freedom" cause to do war against the English monarchy. From its origins and until the Civil War the United States generally restricted its aggressions toward Native Americans, Black Slaves, and Mexicans. Later came the Spanish, then the Germans, again the Germans with Italian and Japanese friends, finally the Soviets and anything the State Department chose to call Communists.

Through all these confrontations Babylon has united. The decades that followed these conflicts were often prosperous. The Civil War brought unity and the completion of the Industrial Revolution to all (except the South that lost the War), the first World War ended a depression and left the roaring 20's. The second World War ended all questions of the American international position and left in its wake fishtailed convertibles and Leave it to Beaver. Since the last big one, they've been in a rut. Korea didn't succeed, "Nam" was a disaster, and then came the recession. There were small shimmers of the good old days thanks to a senile old man and other old men who had things to prove. It's not hard to remember the sense of righteousness felt when F-14's bombed that hated terrorist in Tripoli leaving his young daughter as "collateral damage." There was a decent boost when the Tyrannical empire of Grenada (the size of Rhode Island) was toppled after trying to install an air strip to improve it's tourism. Hitting the drug dealers where it hurts by invading Panama felt good, and the dramatic effect that had on the drug trade felt even better.

Lately there have been almost no countries to bomb (openly) or small

states to invade, what to do? Answer, Fidel.

The Cold War gave Babylon hundreds of targets to deem Communists and thus justify all actions taken against them. It's 1996 and the list has grown thin. But there's still good old Fidel, the last remnant of the fallen "evil" empire. To the average American, the anti-Castro propaganda that has been dished out for almost forty years has been thoroughly effec-

pride and for his conviction. Fidel Castro has never bowed to the colossus of the north. Like Bolivar, Sandino, and Touissant, he has defied the ruling power successfully for over three and a half decades. What he wants is to be treated like any other member of the international community, to be free to lead as he and his people see fit. Without American intervention, oppression, and economic discrimination if his policies

don't happen to fall between the lines of what the state department considers good policies for Cuba. Who the hell are they? Have African countries been consulted on the issues of civil rights in this country? Should John Major put in his two cents as to what he believes would be a good balanced budget policy? I have seen American Military helicopters over a major city in my country, can you fathom seeing a Colombian military helicopter hovering over the pond in Central Park?

The next time you hear proponents for the isolation and denunciation of the Cuban state ask yourself why you're sneakers say "made in China"

One of the U.S.' largest trading partner is China, a country with deplorable record of human rights abuses. When was the last time Cuban soldiers were accused of opening fire on thousands of students? Have you yet heard of Cubans testing nuclear weapons (which *are* a global threat) as the French are doing? Individual and civil rights they cry! Ask Korean immigrants in Japan if the racist abusive regime they live under is civil to them! But we can't isolate them, I drive a Toyota. Are you aware of the expansive individual and civil liberties available to Saudi Arabian women? Oh, right, the oil and gas for the Toyota. Point made.



tive. Fidel Castro is thought to be everything from Communist to a psychotic tyrant. The truth is he is none of these, nor is he Christ in fatigues.

Yes, he is a Communist-Socialist but so is the Republic of China whose population of over one billion persons should call more attention to itself (if fighting Communism is the objective as claimed) than the fifteen million Cubans. What Fidel Castro is and what has caused all American action against the state of Cuba from the invasion attempt at Giron to the current crippling embargo held on the island, is a sovereign leader of an American country. He has had many triumphs in improving Cuba, he has also failed and committed injustices against his people. He is not condemned for his errors but for his

Slick Willy II

John D. Gomez

On Saturday February 24th, two Cessna 337's were shot down by Cuban Mig's in the Caribbean, four men died. These are the only disputed facts which the Nation's press has provided. In order to castigate the "communist regime" President Clinton has decided to plant his lips on the ass of the accommodated Cuban-American community by increasing the embargo held on the island.

Cessana's are small bi-planes that can fly at about 190 mph, they can carry six passengers and a small pay

load. Mig 23's and 29's are fighter planes which can reach speeds of 23 times the speed of sound. A Mig needing to shoot down a Cessna is comparable to an MI Tank blasting a Geo Prism to ashes because it seemed threatening. There is no logical reason for Cuban fighters to down passengers planes unless their air-space was infringed upon.

Fidel Castro has been vigorously campaigning to have his economy "readmitted" into the international community. State Department common sense will have us believe that

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CAMPUS SPOTLIGHT

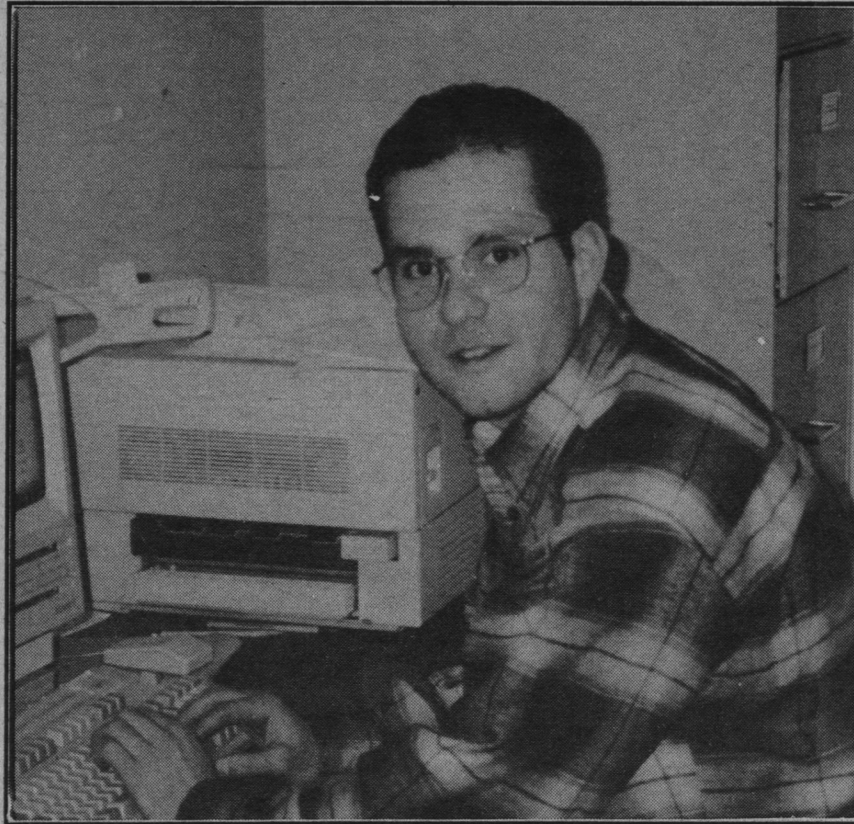
Alexander Saviñon

Julie Castano

Mr. Saviñon is a prime example of an over-achieving Stony Brook student. Currently, he is a senior with a double major in Mechanical Engineering /Applied Mathematics & Statistics. When you look at him, some of you will recognize him as the 'boatman'—L.A.S.O.'s designer and captain of the boat *Arroz con Pollo* which was entered in last year's annual Roth Regatta.

Alex was born and raised in the Bronx and as he was growing-up, he always knew that someday he would be and Engineer; that dream is now becoming a reality. He first came to Stony Brook in 1992 as an E.O.P. student and since then has been very successful.

While maintaining high grades, Alex has been very active in the community. In the past, he has been a peer mentor for the EOP program, a tutor for Math, Physics and Engineering courses and has worked for Intermurals as a game official. He is a member of the Society of Hispanic Engineers (S.H.E.), the American Society of Mechanical Engineering (A.S.M.E.), and Pi Tau Sigma ($\Pi\tau\Sigma$)-the Mechanical Engineering Honor Society here at Stony Brook. Furthermore, in the field of engineering, he has worked on absorption refrigeration and as a lab assistant for a Fluid & Solid Mechanic



Our Campus Spotlight of the Month: Alexander Saviñon

lab. Presently, he is doing research on Computational Fluid Dynamics and serves as a teacher assistant for a lab offered to high school seniors through the Science & Technology Entry Program (S.T.E.P).

Throughout Alex's college career, he has been recognized several times for academic achievement. He has been awarded a scholarship from the Research Careers for Minority Scholars Program, another from the Department

of Applied Mathematics & Statistics and received the S.A.I.N.T.S. Outstanding Achievement Award as a sophomore.

As a pass time, Alex likes to motocross and play soccer. He is a music lover and enjoys playing the *güira*, the maracas, the drums and the trumpet. He is a true believer in conserving and keeping his Dominican culture alive. Alex takes great pleasure in spending quality time with his family and close friends; he loves making people happy and always desires to be a 'good' person and to keep his morals high. He is ambitious, hard-working and an excellent team player. He is always eager to learn and is intrigued by scientific phenomena. Alex never hesitates to ask *why?* and when faced with a challenge, he never gives up. When he is asked who is his role model, he will never hesitate to answer with pride, my father.

The Latino community should be very proud of this fine fellow Latino for all his accomplishments and, most importantly, for breaking the stereotypes. Mr. Alexander Saviñon definitely proves to us that Latinos have the potential to accomplish anything they wish as long as they have the determination to do so!

en ACCIÓN

The Latino Student Magazine

If you like what we are doing or better yet if you don't like what we are doing and think you can do a better job contact us @ 632-4681 ask for Melinda
or 632-4199 ask for Jose

A Farewell to Andre Serrano

Julie Castano

Andre Serrano, the Residence Hall Director (R.H.D.) for Mount College in Roth Quad, was completing his Masters of Science in Technical Systems & Management but after receiving great news at the beginning of February, he resigned from his position to pursue one of his goals. Andre was offered an opportunity he could not resist; he was hired as the new member of the Technical Support Division for Information Builders. This is a prestigious international company that develops software and is located in the Corporate Offices of Manhattan.

In addition, after he completes his Masters Degree in May, he is going to continue his education at Columbia University. He has been accepted into the certification program for Database Management & Administration which is a very competitive and intensive program that lasts 16 months. Mr. Serrano is very excited and is looking forward to this change.

Andre first came to Stony Brook in 1985 as an AIM/EOP student and after exploring many different areas, he realized that his main interests were in Economics and Sociology. He developed strong relationships with faculty and administrative members who in turn guided him and became his mentors. With the help of his mentors, he created his



own curriculum that was directed toward fulfilling the requirements needed to enter a Masters in Business & Administration Program.

As an undergraduate, Andre became very involved in the community. He became a member of L.A.S.O., the vice-president of Malik Sigma Psi Fraternity, a senator for Polity and a Residence Assistant (R.A.). Through these organizations, Andre was exposed to so many things that he learned to interact with different people and to understand different cultures. Stony Brook opened his eyes.

Within 4¹/₂ years, Andre received his Bachelors of Art in Liberal Studies with a concentration in Economics and Sociology which gave him the business and people skills he desired. After working with Campus Residences for a few months, he was offered the position of R.H.D. He saw

this as a great opportunity, accepted the job, and started attending graduate school part-time.

Mr. Serrano's career as a Hall Director was very successful because he had the ability to develop many new programs and ideas. For example, he created the Spend-a-Night Program which gives commuters the opportunity to experience campus life, and the Wellness Program which is sponsored by the Mount Living Learning Center. He also served on many committees such as the Student Affairs Committee, the Hispanic Heritage Month Committee, and the Student Staff Selection Process which was his favorite. He enjoyed this the most because he was able to relate to the students very well since Stony Brook is where he started as an undergraduate.

After ten years, Andre has moved on to another stage of his life and has left Stony Brook. He is grateful to USB for giving him an education that will last forever, for the "hands-on" experience and confidence needed to be successful, and for all the student experiences that taught him about life. In return, Andre enhanced the community with his positive contributions and is very proud to see how his influences helped the campus grow and change, specifically, the quality of life for students.

Andre is sad to leave behind all the close relationships and bonds he

developed throughout the years, but at the same time, he is happy to know that he is always welcomed at this university and has the option to come back if he wishes. Mr. Serrano sincerely thanks the Division of Campus Residences; the School of Health, Technology and Management; Malik Sigma Psi Fraternity; and all those individuals who throughout the years helped and supported.

Andre is creative, assertive and very self-confident. He is a firm believer in the phrase "slow and steady"—take your time, do things carefully and eventually, this will lead to success. He enjoys playing sports and is a big Knicks fan; he loves to go see them play. Furthermore, his mother has always been his inspiration.

Andre Serrano would like to leave the Latino community with a few words of advice: "Always appreciate your culture and where you come from, but respect and value others from different cultures as if it were your own. Be active and help your community. Never settle for less and always go after what you want. Prepare yourself with and education because we can all be successful!"

We can all learn much from this 28-year-old Colombian because Andre Serrano is definitely a role model. The Latino community would like to take this opportunity to wish him the best of luck and great success always!

Slick continued from page 3

Castro on a terrorist whim decided to shoot down two non threatening passenger planes thereby jeopardizing his shaky relationship with the US and the influx of dollars into his country's economy.

Counterproductive? Illogical? Bull shit!

The planes belonged to the "Brothers to the Rescue" group who patrol Caribbean waters for exiles and sneak into Cuban airspace to drop Anti-Castro propaganda. I think we could all expect say...a Syrian plane to be shot down if it was seen flying over Fort Bragg.

Mr. Warner Christopher denounced the incident as a "blatant violation of international law and a violation of the norms of civilized behavior." It is a medical fact that the elderly tend to lose their memory. Mr. Christopher can be

reminded that on July 4, 1988, the USS Vincennes fired two surface to air missiles at an Iranian air bus. Iron Flight 655 exploded 200 bodies into the Persian Gulf and Captain Will Rogers of the Vincennes was praised by Vice President Bush.

President Reagan called it an "understandable accident" while Saddam Hussein (with whom Iran was currently at war with) thought it to be a regrettable one. According to Captain Rogers, the air bus was mistaken for a fighter jet. The airbus 300 is almost three times as wide and more than twice as long as a F-14.

Bill Clinton is again showing his susceptibility to tides and his deplorable lack of conviction. The 600,000 Cuban-Americans in Miami are a political force. They are avid contribu-

tors to campaigns and exercise their vote effectively. Bill clearly fears that they may ruin his election prospects by; withholding contributions, voting Republican, and protesting. Last year's May protest over Clinton's change of Policy over the admittance of Cuban refugees, nearly paralyzed the city of Miami.

Although I adamantly despise the Republican Presidential candidates for their political platform, I'm more disturbed by the resurfacing of the indecisive Clinton and his lack of platform. Dependable as ever Little Bill is surrendering his character to the bullies in Miami and Washington in the hope that they'll let him play President again

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drug therapy is combined with psychotherapy.

It is essential that the depressed individual seek medical help, and it is also very important that family and friends provide emotional support and encourage the individual to stay with the treatment that has been prescribed, as it takes several weeks for the symptoms to get better or go

Even a person with relatively mild depression who talks about suicide or death is asking for your help. Tell the depressed person's friends, family members or take them to a doctor immediately.

Editors' Notes...

Melinda-

Well here it is folks the next issue of En Accion. This issue was inspired by many things that are happening globally and directly affect us, the Latino community.

As you now many productive things occurred in the month of February. This month we celebrated the Independence of the Dominican Republic. This month was also Black History Month, a month that we should all reflect on considering that many of us are made up of African Heritage. The Fuerza Latina Conference was held in Albany also. I know for myself that I learned some new things and I hope for the people that went that they too, learned some valuable information. For those of you that missed Fuerza Latina, there is always next year.

Finally I do not have to chase people down for articles and that everyone was so willing able to contribute. Sincerely-it is a good feeling when people come knocking at your door wanting to do something or your phone mail is flooded with fifteen minute long messages about an article that someone has written or is going to write. This is so overwhelming that the people I take so much pride in want to be involved.

Everyone wants to change the way things are run in government, however most people are all talk. But when something happens like two planes being shot down by Cuba. The world is in an uproar. The protest, the anger, and the tensions are elements that are always there, all that is needed is a spark to surface them. Cuba is a very debatable topic and when an incident like the past one occurs, it can not go unignored.

Everyone is a scholar and everyone has knowledge- it all depends on how it is used.

Stay Latino/a!!!!

Thanks for all your support.

Melinda DeJesús
Editor-In-Chief

Jose-

Welcome everyone I hope you all did well on your midterm exams. This is the second issue of En Accion this semester. One big difference between this issue and the last issue was that more people contributed to this issue with articles and suggestions. This is something myself and the staff of En Accion greatly appreciate and hope that it continues to increase as time goes on.

First February is Black History month and may us latinos not forget that part of our culture comes from Africa. Many African slaves were brought over to South America and the Caribbean after the Indian populations in certain countries were almost completely killed, and a new kind of slave labor was needed. An events this month pertaining to latino practices with African origin was the workshop on Santeria and Voodoo, two religions practiced mostly in the Caribbean with origins from Africa.

Once again the battle between the United States vs. Fidel Castro fires up. Two planes flying over Cuban waters get shot down. First I feel that no country has the right to shoot down planes unless they are being attacked. Even though, this incident should not prompt the U.S. to take certain actions against Cuba like tighten up the embargo. Four U.S. citizens die and now the U.S. wants to stop people from talking to their families in Cuba. How about Vietnam, a country in which hundreds of thousands of American men died and there is no restrictions with family member stalking to each other. Also China, the largest communist country in the world, a country with which the U.S. has trade agreements.

"Fuerza Latina", a conference held at SUNY at Albany to discuss some of the problems facing the latino community today and to help "awake the sleeping giant" was a great success. I myself couldn't attend because I was in the middle of midterms. What I have gathered

from speaking to people who attended was that it very inspirational and it opened many eyes. A message from this conference was that we as educated latinos have a responsibility to go back to our communities and help out our brothers and sisters back in the hood who are trying hard to live a better life but can't, due to certain restraints set against them. I hope more and more latinos get there eyes opened and unite because we are here in this country fighting for the same things freedom, education and a better way of life for ourselves.

I would like to leave by saying "Felicidades a mi gente Dominicana en este otro año de independencia que celebramos el pasado 27 de Febrero." For those who don't speak Spanish "Congratulations to my Dominican people on another year of independence which we celebrated on February 27."

José Martinez
Managing Editor

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that we should always stand firm on what we believe and never let anyone tell you can't accomplish what you want."

So-there you have it! Alexa hasn't lost sight of her roots and she holds true to her philosophy. Her convictions were in her words which doesn't surprise me when I heard her entire album on the way home. Every aspect of Alexa was strong and powerful: her voice, her laughter, her pose, her sincerity and her affability. There's no doubt in my mind she will be the next brilliant star in the music industry and in the world. The staff of En Accion wishes her the best!

Stony Brook en Accion

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The staff of Stony Brook en Accion can be contacted in the Stony Brook Student Union, Polity Suite 258 or at 632-4681

Poemas...

Homeland Yearnings

Hypatia Martinez

Why can't I feel it
even though you run through
my veins
there's a part of me missing
seems to be in the Caribbean

Underneath the soca, the tim-
bales
is where I might find my name
here in the land of America
I can't bury myself in it's terra
cotta

There seems to be a heaven in
the sun
in the sands that my Indians
once roamed
a land they once owned
the music, el son
where was their dawn?

Tongue twisted, wet from birth,
I try
trying to call it to me
I want you
all the mangos left to lick
all the timbales to hit
the sands to kick
the humidity to stick to
I want you.

MULATA

Dorca Almanzar

Piel canela, peil morena,
Miel de abeja, tibia arena,
Sol que arrasa, luna llena,
Risa, playa y berbena.

Para mi eras un sueno
De el cual yo fuera dueno
Y, aunque tal vez muy pequeno
Aceptaba con rencor
El estigma del color.

Flor de labios, flor de campo,
Rostro sabio, triste llanto,
Baile alegre, dulce canto,
Pueblo que yo amo tanto.

Para mi eres herencia
De dolor y de paciencia
Y, aunque perdi my inocencia
Reconozco con orgullo
Que yo tengo algo tuyo.♫

My last cancion de consuelo

Somebody told me que no tenia
una mama
that's awfully depressing
lo siento pero-
Now I know why you hate me
I remind you of all the wasted
time
waiting for that someone to
open the door
y darte un beso.
Sorry I ain't her
sorry I can't love you like that
anymore
no soy ella.
Get a grip, mi hermano
and tell yourself she boar you
and died
then maybe you won't feel aban-
doned
then you won't hate me that
much
when I leave your ass behind.
Con puños y rosas
no me puede mantener aqui
you gotta find a new routine
because I don't have any skin
left to bruise
I'm gonna buy myself a new
face
and I'm gonna buy myself a new
tongue
to stick out at you
so I'll remind you
una vez mas,
how alone you are
and how independent I am.
Adee-os!

The Chicano Invasion

Hypatia Martinez

Everybody has their own favorite book. It's the book that we'll never forget. The novel that we could read over and over. It's the piece of literature we can say made us see life in a different way. Well, my favorite book is Rudolfo Anaya's, "Bless me, Ultima."

Anaya is a Mexican writer who has never, ever taken a writing course. He says, "Writing is never quite learned. My writing is completely self-taught." when I heard this, I was sure that the book was going to be written with many literary holes. Wrong.

Yes, the language is a bit simple for the literary elite, but it leaves you to concentrated on his story lines. The story is about a Mexican boy named Antonio who lives in New Mexico. Antonio is the son of a cowboy father and a farmer mother. These two different lifestyles are the first conflict

Antonio has to face when trying to find his own identity.

Although the entire plot has religious sentiments, what appealed most to me is the emphasis on the native Indians throughout the book. At times, Hispanics tend to forget their Indian roots.

Anaya has said that the novel was part auto-biographical. Knowing that, made the narrative stronger. I took to his fears and aspirations. I felt embarrassment for Antonio on his first day at school during lunch time. "My mother had packed a small jar of hot beans and some good, green chili wrapped in tortillas. When the children saw my lunch they laughed and pointed again ... They showed me their sandwiches which were made of bread. Again I did not feel well."

Aside from the religious overtones, Anaya reflected the

Spanish/Indian mix called *mestizaje* that was sprinkled throughout the book. Mestizaje led to me religious attitude towards the land, perfectly personified by Ultima, the grandmother figure who moved in with Antonio's family due to her old age. His descriptions of the landscape and his home reinforced the relationship between the setting and Ultima's mysterious magical powers leading the neighbors to call her a "curandera".

"Ultima came to stay with us the summer I was almost seven. When she came the beauty of the llano unfolded before my eyes, and the gurgling waters of the river sang to the hum of the turning earth. The magical time of childhood stood still, and the pulse of the living earth pressed it's mystery into my living blood. She took my hand, and the silent, magic powers she possessed made

beauty from the raw, sun-baked llano, the green river valley, and the blue bowl which was the white sun's home. My bare feet felt the throbbing earth and my body trembled with excitement."

The book has many story lines. There's talk of black magic rituals with witches, a murder and a close encounter with death. One aspect that brings me back to this book time and time again is the richness of the Mexican culture and the mysterious aura of Ultima. You feel that Antonio isn't the only one under wing but you are there listening to her every word. Forget the westerns of the whites because this book cherishes the natives that roamed the affable hills that they once owned.

If you like witchcraft, the Chicano culture and a book about undying faith and beauty, this is it!

Cross-Cultural Journeys

Hypatia Martinez

There is something that repels many of my peers from art shows. Many of my friends say that they don't "get" the artistic expressions that appear at art galleries, museums and ballet halls. I'm one to jump at the chance to attend an artistic showing because it's a chance for me to see the expressions of others especially, when they are featuring Hispanic artists.

When the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Department held a reception for the Latin American art exhibition on February 7th, I didn't see many students, Latino students, on hand. The Art exhibition, "Cross-cultural Journeys-North and South" featuring two artists, Juan Alberto Mancilla and Judith Burns McCrea, showcases the beautiful influences of the Hispanic cultures on the art world.

Mancilla, a Mexican artists who's

soft spokenness lends to his docile appearance, was very gracious in his introduction of his pieces. I was instantly captivated by his work. In his artwork which included drawings, paintings and prints I noticed many socio-economic ideas.

One of two portraits that caught my attention was a black and white drawing of a sneaker with a torn sheet of loose-leaf paper. On the loose-leaf paper, was a sketch of the Statue of Liberty. Seeing the black and white sneaker reminded me of all those sneakers left hanging on telephone lines in city streets. The sketch of the Statue of Liberty reinforced the lower-middle class view of the American Dream; For many "minorities", the American Dream is a broken one.

The other portrait was a colorful painting of a penny loafer with the Statue of Liberty painted on a price tag. The colorful painting seems to

represented a more upper-class point of view due to the penny loafers and the price tag. Mancilla seemed to express exquisitely the different views of the American Dream between differing social and economic classes.

When I confronted Mancilla to discuss his art work, he left a different taste in my mouth. He stated that all his pieces of art work were memoirs of his time in New York City.

"You see the painting of the crutches?" he said pointing to the center portrait.

"Yes." (I believed the portrait discussed the homeless way of life in New York City. Little did I know.)

"Well, I broke my leg while I was in New York." This was his explanation for the crutches in the painting.

At that point, I laughed to myself remembering all my friends who didn't go to art exhibitions fearing they would misinterpret the expres-

sion. So I said to him, "Many students don't attend art functions because they feel that they don't understand what the artist is trying to say."

He quickly and earnestly stated, "As long as the viewer gets something from my art pieces, that's all I want."

He spoke about the icons in his pieces identifying New York City and the experiences related to his personal ideas. He also stated that the artist has an interesting challenge expressing himself in an art form that is wordless and susceptible to various misinterpretations.

Needless to say, this art buff mistakenly concluded Mancilla's ideas every time. There are many other Hispanic artists that need to be supported that we cannot fail to show up with open arms.

"Cross-cultural Journeys" will be on display until May 2nd.

BORN TO BE A STAR

Alexa

Hypatia Martinez

Here I was, on the highway with Melinda, our renown editor. (Kiss ass! Kiss ass!) We were on our way to interview (my first interview ever!) Alexa. Who's Alexa, you ask? Well, I didn't know who she was either, at first. I heard her song "Fuera de mi Vida" on the radio once. Her deep-throated voice broke through the radio station and I was elated to finally find a salsa singer who could do more than dance!

Up the elevator and there she was opening the door for us. I admit, I was nervous. Like I previously said, I never interviewed a celebrity before. I was expecting to encounter a drama queen or a spoiled brat but there stood a comely woman with an amicable smile. She was very tall, not lanky, with long curly raven-like hair. Her rich creamy complexion was complimented by her off-white top and black jeans. She quickly introduced herself and led us into her manager's office. Henry, her manager, was also a friendly face. In reality, I felt totally at home at David Maldonado Management so we put down our coats and started the interview.

Let's start at the beginning. How did you get started in the music business?

Alexa: "I always sang, which feels like forever since I started opera at 11. If you can sing Opera, you can sing anything."

Did you always plan to sing Salsa?

Alexa: "No. I studied voice because I wanted to sing. I knew I always wanted to sing but I was born and raised in New York and I never heard Salsa. I started singing Salsa without ever hearing a Salsa song."

What part of New York are you from?

Alexa: "Jackson Heights. I went to Saint Francis Prep. I was a "Prepster." Yes, I did wear loafers!" (laughing)

Okay, so you loved to sing-how did you get to this stage of the business?

Alexa: "I happen to have met a lot of people in the Spanish music industry. I started hanging out in music studios. Everybody I met, I said, 'I sing! I sing!' I knew I was going to sing but I wasn't sure what type of music. A friend was going to a record studio and he said, 'Come on.' I did a demo in Japan and a friend of mine came to my home with the vice-president of WEA Records." *What makes you different from the other Salsa singers?*

Alexa: "I think everybody is different. Its like finger prints-everybody has something different. I don't pretend to be better or worse. I have a trained voice so I think my style is different." *Who are your influences?*

Alexa: "I listen to anything from Opera to Rap. Anything as long as it's well done."

When you're in the studio, do you try to create something of your own or do you think of what others have done?



Melinda DeJesus, Alexa, And Hypatia Martinez

Alexa: "For example, *Fuera de mi Vida* is a cover tune. It was done very well before. I heard it but I don't like to hear it too much because you try not to copy it. You change it around. You do it the way you feel comfortable doing it. I wouldn't be able to copy it even if I tried."

So-how is the music industry to you?

Alexa: "I already have an ulcer! (laughing) It's rough. It's not an easy business. Jesus, if I knew it was this rough..."

What is the difficulties in the Business?

Alexa: "Selling yourself, trying to get your product out there, getting recognition, getting people to believe in you.... I've had quite a few knocks. People think it's glamorous. It's wonderful if you're doing well. There are more hard times than good."

Is there a moment when you're satisfied?

Alexa: "Every time I see people singing my song it feels good. I take the bad things in stride. You learn from it."

Any sacrifices to get here?

Alexa: "I lost 40 pounds. They said,

'Lose 40 pounds or we don't take out the record.' That's some incentive."

Are there any issues, as a Latina, that you feel strongly about?

Alexa: "Being a women makes things much harder. I also think its how you see yourself. If you perceive yourself one way, you project that and everybody will see that. Stand firm on what you believe. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't accomplish something. If I would've done that, I would've

never accomplished anything. Keep your feet firmly on the ground."

Are you going to stick to singing Salsa?

Alexa: "I want to purse acting."

Would you do an Opera record?

Alexa: "I would love to. I started singing Salsa not just because the field was begging for females. It had no females when I started. Basically, it was just me and India. I started recording when she was working on her first record. I love it."

Selena's death attracted attention on the Latin Music scene. Do you feel you're taking advantage of it?

Alexa: "No, I don't think that I'm taking advantage of it. It was hard for me because people tell me I look like Selena and then I came out with *Buenos Amigos* and I did it way, way before she died. Throughout the tragedy, at least something positive has come out of it. We're getting a lot of attention and it's more than we're used to."

Who do you owe your success to?

Alexa: "There's so many people. Everyone is a stepping stone."

What is your ultimate goal?

Alexa: "I don't have just one goal. Make it through the week without any ulcers? (laughing) I guess, to be successful in anything I do and not just monetary success but to be emotionally and spiritually fulfilled. It's harder than making money but I think it's always doing what I believe in."

With all this stress, how do you relax?

Alexa: "I call my manager, Henry, and complain. Henry is sitting there like, 'Does she ever!' These guys are like my family. I love them."

Henry, what attracts you to Alexa? Why do you stand by her?

Henry: "She's very talented. The crowd warms up to her."

Alexa: "And he knows I'll drive him crazy if he doesn't!" (laughing)

One thing I noticed is that Salsa is coming back to New York.

Alexa: "People were telling me to move to Puerto Rico. They said, 'Puerto Rico is the Salsa capital.' Face it, New York is the capital of the world. If you're going to make it, you'll make it big here. Look at Marc Anthony and India. I feel very Puerto Rican but I love New York. I'm proud of being Nuyoricana and bringing the younger generation into Salsa."

Are you fluent in Spanish?

Alexa: "Now I am. I had to learn Spanish. I speak it very well. Now I don't know what to speak: English or Spanish so I speak "spanglish". (laughing again)

One thing about Latin music is that hearing it makes me appreciate my heritage even more. Do you find that to be true too?

Alexa: "Definitely, my brother doesn't speak any Spanish and now he's learning. It's great when you go back to your roots. People call me a major *Cocolá* "(Henry said "cocolá" is a Puerto Rican who loves salsa.)

How far have you gone in your academic pursuits?

Alexa: "I went to Queens College for two years. I'm a college drop-out! (yelling) I left it for singing."

So do you have anything you want to say to the Latinos at Stony brook?

Melinda: "Cuz they sure don't listen to me!" (a roar of laughter in the office.)

Alexa: "I think it's great that so many Latinos are going to college. It's a positive thing to stay in school. I always say

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"GOD DON'T MAKE GARBAGE"

Luna de Mariposas

You know what?, I'm still numb. Don't know if it's the medication, Paxil, I'm taking, believing in religion or just that I'm truly numb. Maybe I'm afraid of something and subconsciously holding it in, nevertheless, I'm not crying anymore.

It's so weird not to cry. I've been doing it for so long. It was almost romantic, dramatic, to live in sorrow. The thing is, that melancholy is precious and melodramatic in fiction or on the shelf at a bookstore but so pitiful, dangerous, and scary in real life.

I wonder what my parents thought when they first knew I was in a hospital? How about when I cut myself and they found me on the floor crying hysterically? Did they feel my pain? It's a different kind of pain but losing control and feeling useless when your child is in need is real. When you're suicidal, you feel that you have absolutely no control of your life and that hurts-like a knife cutting you slowly. Did my parents feel pain like that?

Just like an alcoholic will be an alcoholic for the rest of his life, I will be a suicidal for the rest of my life. I just hope to control my death wish like the alcoholic controls his urges. So I will call myself a "suicidal" and being one I just wanted the pain to stop. I didn't want attention, fame or pity. Subconsciously and psychologically, I can admit it was a cry for help but my

first real feeling was that I could not deal with the pain any longer.

When you lose too much blood, you hemorrhage. It's the same thing with depression but it's all emotional. When Kurt Cobain and River Phoenix died, people made fun of them saying, "If I had money, fame and every girl/guy I could have, I'd be happy." Kurt and River didn't want any of those things. They just wanted to stop hurting.

Did I hit rock bottom because I

*How about when
I cut myself and
they found me on
the floor...*

played nice and didn't say what bothered me throughout the years? How about holding in all my secrets? Guilt can kill you, you know! I busted! I went insane. *I was insane! I am insane!* I had no control of my emotions.

Boy, I thought I had no control before I went into the hospital? The night my parents picked me up from the floor with the swollen knife marks on my wrists, that was insane! When I couldn't control the outpouring of tears that tore up my face, that was

crazy! I felt like a seltzer bottle that was spilling foam after being shaken wantonly.

As I sit here before my computer, I think of all the other Suicidals out there that are hurting. The saddest thing in the world is to feel hopeless. I know now how rich and empty this world can be. We are all miners looking for the bucket of gold at the end of the rainbow. Suicidals don't have a shovel, though. Some of us are missing an arm. Some of us don't have a flashlight. It's dark in the caves-I don't have to remind you how hard life is.

I pledged a sorority while in college and one thing that one of my pledge sisters said was, "Girls, you are pledging us now but you are always pledging life." How true she was because, man, if I can do life-I can do anything!

Sometimes I used to think my ability to write poetry was the reason I was depressed. All great artists were thought to have lived tragic lives. That theory explained why I was tragic but didn't explain why I lacked greatness.

Then I made up another theory that I was born in heaven and I was one of the fairies that the Goddess created. One day I wanted to be more than an angel and be in charge. I was punished for that and sent to earth. That explained why I felt like such an oddball. I felt like I didn't belong and in actuality, I really didn't belong. I was made to be a fairy and instead, my fool-

ishness made me fall into Hell, otherwise known as the Earth.

Taoism, Gnosticism, Christianity, Buddhism and many other schools of thought teach us that we are mini-universes and we are in the image of God. Science says that the universe is expanding. Atoms are supposedly always moving away from you so in a way, you are the center of your own aura. When I finally came to see that I could be magnificent, important, enigmatic and fair, that gave me the key to a new understanding of myself. There are days that I fall out but I just need to open any religious book to see that someone loves me unconditionally, no matter what I do.

I recall one day when I smoked up, I pictured myself as water and it was the first time in my entire life I thought I knew what happiness was. I felt so free, unbounded and unlimited but all the while I felt like I was not a barrel of water. I was an ocean with high tides and low tides, gentle creeks and angry, roaring rapids. I was the source of the world and also the destructor. I was the mini-universe I heard I was supposed to be. That made me cry. You see, I just tasted what I believed to be freedom in a smoke of an artificial high. Knowing I had so much to offer this world was frightening but at the same time, it felt great.

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Depression: the Silent Killer

Candice G Camilo
and Dr. Ivette Sanchez

At least 12 million college students in the United States suffer from depression each year. There is evidence that the incidence of depression is increasing, and that younger generations are at higher risk. The incidence of depression is about twice as high in women as in men, although the reasons for this are not known. Others who are at increased risk are those who have had one or more episodes of depression in the past.

Perhaps because the name of this major illness is also used to describe the normal, temporary feelings of sadness or periods of unhappiness

we all experience, depression is a misunderstood disorder. People who have never experienced clinical depression have trouble understanding why a depressed person can't just snap out of it. Yet, depression is far more debilitating than most people imagine. Recently, researchers evaluated the physical and social impairments caused by depression and a variety of other chronic conditions caused by the illness. They found that with the exception of chronic cardiac disease, depression impaired physical and social functions to a greater extent than any other disease condition studied, including asthma, arthritis, diabetes and high blood pressure.

Depression is believed to have a biological basis, caused by low levels of chemical messages in the brain, especially serotonin and norepinephrine. These natural substances, called neurotransmitters, carry electrical signals from one nerve cell in the brain to another across spaces (called synapses). Although an imbalance in levels of these neurotransmitters may be ultimately responsible for a person's state of depression, life events such as the death of a love one, change in marital status, financial problems, or job loss also can trigger, maintain, or be a consequence of depression.

Transient feelings of unhappiness and brief periods of sadness are common, especially when associated with disturbing life events, such

as financial problems or death of a love one. However, pervasive feelings of sadness that last for weeks, months, or even years is a sign of depression.

Antidepressant medication targets the imbalances in specific neurotransmitters in the brain that are thought to be the biological basis of depression. For example, some of these medications increase the amount of serotonin at the synapse and help restore serotonin functions to normal. Other treatment methods include psychotherapy (sometimes called "talk therapy"), which targets resolution of coexisting life problems, such as job loss or death of a love one.

Many clinically depressed patients experience improved results when

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SOME THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT DEPRESSION

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION INCLUDE:

- persistent sad, anxious or "empty" mood
- feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, pessimism, guilt or worthlessness
- loss of interest in once pleasurable activities, (such as sex, or involvement with children or other love ones)
- changes in sleeping habits (such as trouble getting to sleep, early morning waking, oversleeping)
- change in eating habits (such as lose or gain of appetite or weight)
- decrease in energy, fatigue, feeling "slowed down" or tired all the time
- restlessness, irritability

- difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempts.

Do

- maintain as normal relationships as possible
- point out negative thinking without being critical or disapproving
- let the depressed person know that you understand she/he is in pain and suffering from a treatable illness, not a personal weakness
- encourage honest efforts and pay compliments
- express affection, show you care, respect and value the person
- gently encourage the depressed person to get

- involved in activities she/he once enjoyed
- point out signs of improvement, although the depressed person may not recognize them

Don't

- blame the person with depression for her/his conditions
- lose your patience (a depressed person often brings out anger in others and it is tempting to tell the person to "snap out of it")
- criticize the depressed person, or say or do things that can make already low self-esteem get worse
- be surprised or get impatient if you notice improvement in the depressed person's symptoms before she/he starts to feel better

- ignore the signs that the depressed person is thinking about suicide, a symptom of depressive illness

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I try to find pleasure in things such as poetry, music, snowflakes, street lights, Venus in the winter sky, iced tea, cold milk, a cigarette after a meal and, saying hello to someone I haven't seen in the longest time. I play with my cat, laugh at jokes and write things I want to do the next day. That's hope! That's a tomorrow! I love waking up like a bug snug in my bed knowing God loves me even if I am so bad because "God don't make garbage."

F.Y.I. continued from page 1

did not necessarily present an economic advantage. Still, this junior political science major feels that the self-confidence, direction and stability she has gained from transferring here are well worth the expense.

However, even when the good outweighs the bad, there exists a wrenching dilemma that I along with all the other transfers must face. In light of the fact that our time at Stony Brook will be shorter than average we have to decide if it is worth getting involved on campus. That decision will be influenced by many factors one of which is by our sense of belonging to a community.

I certainly felt welcome by the Latino community—faculty and staff included—at Stony Brook University. I want to acknowledge that this community was instrumental in helping me to adjust. Over the past semester I have

learned about some of the great things it has to offer and about the tremendous potential of its student body.

But I cannot voice the opinions or experiences of all new Latino transfer students on this campus. Just because something worked for me does not mean it will be the same for the rest. Still, I encourage other transfers, Latinos or not, to put my experience to the test with the hope that as their transition into Stony Brook becomes smoother. "La comunidad" will continue to grow in its active members.

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However late everyone stayed up that night, there was still more to come Sunday.

Sunday include a Career/Job fair for everyone. There were over twenty-two companies and



One of the many tables that L.A.S.O. occupied at the banquet

potential employees present to give positive employment.

People from all over the Tri-State united to celebrate some-

thing they have in common: being Latino. For those of you that didn't go this year, there is always next year!

**In Recognition of Women's History Month
The Distinguished Hermanos of
La Unidad Latina,
Lambda Upsilon Lambda
Fraternity Inc.,**

*Would like to publicly acknowledge and honor
the courage, strength, and power of all Latina
Women on this campus, in our communities and
around the world.*

*In the face of what sometimes seems to be
insurmountable obstacles , you remain The Pillars
of our people, progenitors of our race.
and guardians of our culture.*

*We as Men recognize that without the love,
support, and fortitude of Latina Women our identity
as a people would cease to exist. You will always
have our undying admiration and respect.*