

# *La mujer es la patria*

*In honor of Puerto Rican & Latina Women*



**Que Ondee Sola**

March 2009 Vol. 37 No. 2

# Nosotras

*Las mujeres boricuas y latinas son tan bellas. Mi orgullo de ser una mujer boricua viene de la patria y la madre.* My mother is my Puerto Rico. She helped me through everything and told me to go over the *muertos* on the road, say a prayer and keep going. She moved here from Puerto Rico when she was 19-years-old not knowing any English and determined to get a degree to become a secretary. Its hard enough to come back from a vacation in Puerto Rico, imagine how would it feel to leave home forever. She had no family and no help until Rev. José "El Viejo" Torres came along and got her on her feet. Her struggle brought me here today. Studying at a university and giving back to the community that once helped her reach her dream. *La mujer latina* is full of love, dedication,

perseverance and vigor. Being Latina does not mean we're only good for cooking, cleaning, and having babies. Kill the stereotypes! We are here to show we cannot only succeed in a patriarchal world but also in a white dominated nation. Having a day dedicated to women is essential. We have been pushed around and walked on for far too long. Because anything men can do so can we. The idealistic views of men and woman, masculine and feminine are socially constructed. Who said that we have to be inside washing clothes while men throw out trash? Think about it. We have yet to be equal to a man's dollar, but we continue to strive and sweat it double. Our double shifts get harder, our relationships become brutal, but we are here EN LA LUCHA.

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## Que Ondee Sola

is published at Northeastern Illinois University. The opinions expressed in Que Ondee Sola do not necessarily reflect those of the Administration. Responsibility for its contents lies solely with the staff.

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## Misión

Que Ondee Sola was established in 1972 and remains the oldest Puerto Rican & Latina/o university student publication in the U.S. Our mission is to provide the NEIU community with a relevant and engaging publication that deals with student issues with a focus on Puerto Ricans and Latinas/os, our communities, and our patrias.

Que Ondee Sola continues to affirm the right of Puerto Rican self-determination, freedom for all Puerto Rican political prisoners, and support for a truly participatory democracy.

# Patricia Pérez

## Artistic Heir to Frida Khalo

### When did you begin to paint?

Five years old! I remember taking a pencil and all I did was spirals and loops, it entertained me for hours. I would pick up a piece of paper and just do it. It was my way of passing the time. I would match up the crayons. Even before I knew of primary colors, I knew without even taking classes. I never really thought about it until you asked.

### Why did you choose to do the cover of this edition of *Que Ondee Sola*?

For me it means I'm getting more involved in the Puerto Rican community, Northeastern and Humboldt Park. Also it's finding a part of me that goes back to the island. My father is Puerto Rican and mother is Guatemalan. I had to do my own research on Puerto Rican culture. My father never made it a priority. So I had no clue what Puerto Rican culture meant until I was 25. No idea what Bomba was or Plena, the only thing I knew was salsa and that's not even from the island. That's why I support Puerto Ricans so much, I encourage people to seek their roots. Through art I promote Puerto Rico. I want to catch people's eyes and make them question. I want to draw them in, draw them into history. I wish I had been exposed to it sooner.

### What inspired you to do art on a culture you only knew little about?

Honestly, CuCa. The first time I was drawn in was in Cucas Gallery. I surfed the web for Latino artists and it gave me her old address. When I walked in I didn't know Cuca. But for the first time in my life (I was 25) I felt the warmth of the island and it was through her work. I have never been to PR at the time. I knew nothing of Puerto

Rico, [but] there was one of her paintings, *La Mapola*. I stood in front of it and *La Bombera*. And I looked at the dancer and I started to cry. Cuca walked to me and asked what was wrong, I told her "I'm supposed to be here." You've captivated everything I have been looking for. At the age 27 I visited the island. It was meant to be! CUCA was the beginning. She encouraged me to get my art work out. She is the reason why I am doing what I am doing.

### Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Wrigleyville. So I felt like an outsider looking into Humboldt park. But I have always referred to it as "my community." Even though I live in Wrigleyville it was the place I started, all my work is done there.

### I hear you teach?

I teach art for the city. Simons Park 1640 N. Drake. My second week teaching was complicated. I felt out of place. A student of mine told me, "you're the whitest Puerto Rican I've ever met in my life." My response was, "I know what you mean but I want you to explain that to me, because if I am going to teach you I am going to learn from you." That was when I gained respect. I can provide an artistic outlet, but I didn't feel like it was enough. Some of the students wake up to a rough household. Don't you need a break from that insane life style? And from there came the mentorship for young girls: *Las Caras Lindas* along with Monkia Blas and Geanime ward, Carmon Florance Rance and Rosita Porrata. We came together and developed this mentorship program. I don't have a psychology nor a sociology degree, [but] we all had different stories [and] the same

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# Women of Resistance:

## Puerto Rican Women Political Prisoners



### Haydee Beltrán

Haydee Beltrán was born in Arecibo, Puerto Rico on June 27, 1955. She lived in the countryside of Quebradillas, Puerto Rico with maternal grandparents until the age of six, when her family moved to Chicago for a period of two years, later returning to Puerto Rico. Her family moved back to Chicago when she was twelve years old and resided in the Humboldt Park community. It was there that she received her education and developed her political consciousness. She attended Tuley High School and was active in student struggles against racism and in support of quality education. After graduating from Tuley, she attended the University of Illinois at Chicago. She was an active member of the Union for Puerto Rican Students and participated in the development and implementation of the L.A.R.E.S. program, a recruitment project aimed at increasing the enrollment of Latino students on campus. However, her political participation was not limited to the university, Haydee also

organized actively for the independence and socialism of her homeland, Puerto Rico. She was an active participant in such issues as the struggle for quality housing and health care, against police brutality and in support of bilingual education and the rights of workers. Haydee continued this work until 1976 when she, along with her husband, Puerto Rican political prisoner, Carlos Alberto Torres and others, was forced into clandestinity. She was four months pregnant at the time and gave birth to her child under the most difficult conditions. Accused of being a member of the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional, F.A.L.N., an armed clandestine organization that advocates for the independence and socialism of Puerto Rico, Haydee was captured by the municipal police in Evanston, Illinois on April 4, 1980. Found guilty of seditious conspiracy, Haydee Beltrán was sentenced to life imprisonment.



### Dylcia Pagán

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Dylcia Pagan was born and raised in El Barrio, one of the historic centers of the Puerto Rican community in New York City. She graduated from Cathedral High School and became involved in community struggles confronting the Puerto Rican population. She organized tenants rights groups, and was an active participant in the struggle for decent housing and rent control. She was also a television actress. Dylcia was a Puerto Rican political prisoner for nearly twenty years and was released, after a long international campaign for her freedom and that of other Puerto Rican political prisoners, by a Presidential clemency in 1999.



## Alicia Rodríguez

Alicia Rodríguez was born in Chicago, Illinois on October 21, 1954. Alicia attended St. Vincent de Paul grammar school; she transferred to St. Michaels, where she would remain throughout her high school years. Alicia became politically active while a student at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She became active in the Chicano-Boricua Student Union. She later transferred to Northeastern Illinois University, where she received her Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry. Alicia was captured along with

her sister and other compañeros/os on April 4, 1980 in Evanston, Illinois. As was the case with the other political prisoners, Alicia valiantly assumed a prisoner of war position and did not accept the authority of U.S. courts. She was found guilty of seditious conspiracy and sentenced to 85 years in prison. She was released, after a long international campaign for her freedom and that of other Puerto Rican political prisoners, by a Presidential clemency in 1999



## Carmen Valentín

Carmen Valentín was born in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, on March 2, 1946. She was nine-years-old when her family moved to the United States in search of a better life for Carmen and her four sisters. They settled on the West Side of Chicago, where Carmen attended parochial schools. She was a good student who took her studies seriously. She graduated with honors from Providence High School in 1964. She then attended Northeastern Illinois University, receiving her Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish and Secondary Education. Carmen was active in the struggle to free Puerto Rico from U.S. domination. She was an active member of the National Committee to Free the Five Puerto Rican Nationalists, and advocated for the independence and socialism of Puerto Rico. She was a Puerto Rican political prisoner for nearly twenty years and was released,

after a long international campaign for her freedom and that of other Puerto Rican political prisoners, by a Presidential clemency in 1999.



## Ida Luz Rodríguez

Ida Luz Rodríguez was born in 1950 in Las Marías, Puerto Rico. Her family moved to Chicago when she was two-years-old. They settled in the West Town community. She graduated from St. Michael's High School. Lucy became politically active during her college years. She attended the University of Illinois at Chicago and majored in political science. She was a leading member of the Union for Puerto Rican Students and participated in the struggles against racism and in support of relevant educational programs that would address the needs of the Puerto Rican student population. Alongside with Haydee Beltrán, Ida Luz was instrumental in the development of the L.A.R.E.S. program. One of the major confrontations surrounding this issue was a massive student strike. The students took over the administrative building, staging a sit-in in the university president's office and demanded that the university fulfill its urban mission. The police were called in to smash the students' resistance and Lucy was one of several student leaders arrested. Later transferring to Northeastern Illinois University, Lucy received her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1974. A fierce advocate of Puerto Rican independence, she

was actively involved in the National Committee to Free the Five Puerto Rican Nationalist Prisoners and organized demonstrations and activities advancing this cause. Lucy was also active in community issues ranging from the struggle for decent housing, to the campaigns carried out against police repression. In 1976, because of her continued advocacy for the independence and socialism of Puerto Rico, Lucy was forced into clandestinity. On April, 4 1980, she along with other compañeros/os was captured by municipal police in Evanston, Illinois. Accused of being members of the FALN, she was later tried and found guilty of seditious conspiracy. She was released, after a long international campaign for her freedom and that of other Puerto Rican political prisoners, by a Presidential clemency in 1999.



## Consuelo Lee Corretjer

She born in Santurce, Puerto Rico on March 29, 1904. Her father Alberto Lee Bastanta, born in Ponce, was the son of an Englishmen and a Puerto Rican women. Her mother, Catalina Tapia Díaz, was the daughter of Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, recognized as the father of Puerto Rican letters and of Spaniard Rosario Díaz Despiiau. She is

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the seventh of twelve children. At the age of 4 she began her studies attending several schools and graduated from a Puerto Rican high school for girls. The First World War prevented her from continuing her education in Europe. However, her education advanced with private instruction in art, music, writing, and painting. Shortly after turning 15 she traveled to the United States with her parents and entered Dwight College, where she studied for the next four years. In 1936 two major historic events took place, which revealed to her critical situations facing the peoples of the world, and which changed her life - the Spanish Civil War and the imprisonment of the Puerto Rican Nationalists. Since 1936 she had worked for independence and socialism for Puerto Rico. In 1937 she joined the Communist Party. One year later she worked for a party in Orlando, Florida. She supported herself as a photographer, with studios in New York and Baltimore. In 1943 the news magazine *Pueblos Hispanos* was founded and directed by Juan Antonio Corretjer, her future husband. Consuelo ran the magazine during its two years of publication. She also contributed articles, stories, and poems. From October 1945 to June 1946 she lived in Cuba with her husband and compañero, Corretjer. In Puerto Rico she was a part of communist organizations and marxist educational effort in the town of Jayuya and other parts of Puerto Rico. In 1948 she lived in Guaynabo. When the *Liga Socialista Puertorriqueña* (Puerto Rican Socialist League) was founded in January, 1963. She became a member of the central committee. For 25 years she taught piano, giving private classes both in her home and her students' homes. In 1969 she was arrested, along with her husband and other leaders of the Puerto Rican Socialist League, for allegedly carrying arms, and was charged with seditious conspiracy. She worked tirelessly for the freedom of many Puerto Rican political prisoners, heading her party's central committee to free the prisoners. She died in 1989.

# A Child

Consuelo Lee Corretjer

A child is a future,  
 Inexorable,  
 Synthesis of creation,  
 Owner of everything he sees,  
 That he touches,  
 That he hears,  
 That he feels  
 Inhales  
 Tastes.  
 But overall he is a vehicle  
 Of immortality;  
 Without a past in appearance  
 But a steel container  
 Of all the past and all that lived,  
 Free, without straps  
 Nor fears  
 Restless fighter  
 Seeking his kind  
 As the plants seek the sun.  
 Ignoring prejudices,  
 And other negativesness;  
 Wearing hopws for the first time  
 Sharing originalities  
 Within all that is the same  
 In eternal repetition  
 Eternally new  
 And as old as the earth itself  
 A child, do not be deceived my friend,  
 In his soft wrap (which is his strength)  
 Pink, black, red,  
 Or whatever other human hue  
 In which he arrives in wrapped  
 Hid fragile hardness,  
 Is always a future  
 Inexorable,  
 Whose meaning is to change all.



# Lynette R. Santiago

Co-Pastor of Rebaño Church on Paseo Boricua

Xavier Ríos



## **Who are you, what is your executive position?**

Lynette R. Santiago, Executive Director of Fellowship Connection and Co-Pastor of Iglesia Rebaño

## **What work do you do?**

I lead community programs in the West Town/Humboldt Park Communities, as well as co-pastor an influential latino church in the Paseo Boricua strip.

## **What guided you to do this work?**

Rebaño has always been my church. My father founded it in the late 1970s, and I was raised with an awareness that God had placed a calling upon my life to serve others. I wasn't sure how, when, or where, but the book of Psalms 37:23 says, "The steps of a [good] man are directed

and established by the Lord when He delights in his way [and He busies Himself with his every step]." I believe that every stage of my life was leading me to do what I now do.

## **History of career?**

Upon graduating from college I begin to work in Human Resources for a Fortune 500 company, I excelled rapidly within the company, and was able to see many different facets of how Corporate America is effective. From Corporate Strategy, to Corporate Development, to Human Resources there was a strong connection. I worked for savvy people who graduated from ivy league schools, and I took it upon myself to learn from them and delve into whatever opportunities came my way. When I came back to my community years later, I was able to implement the expertise and knowledge I acquired into the church that I love, and help further develop an organization with passion for its community with corporate skills, but a passionate heart.

**Where were you born?** Chicago

**Where did you grow up?** Chicago

**Nationality?** Puerto Rican

## **History of school?**

Grammar school – Kosciuszko Elementary School; High School – Waubonsie Valley High School; Undergrad – Liberty University; Grad School – North Park University.

## **What is your passion or motivation?**

One of my favorite quotes is, "You can't lead the people, if you don't love the people. You can't

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save the people, if you don't serve the people" (Cornel West, Princeton University Professor) I believe that what Cornel West said is a testament to what Jesus did, and Jesus is my motivation for all I do. I believe that if I serve my generation according to God's purpose, my life mission will be accomplished.

**Where or how do you see the fruits of your labor?**

I see the fruits of my labor every day. In passing talking to people and hearing their stories. Talking to the children of our after-school program and seeing their smiles, receiving their hugs. I know that in whatever capacity I serve, whether directly or indirectly, lives are being touched.

**Why are you a part of your church?**

Because I believe in what we do. We do not exist for ourselves, but for the people who have yet to arrive to our church. Our mission is to together build lives in Christ, multiplying them to transform the world. Every single time you have the opportunity to make a deposit in someone's life, you have the chance to influence, and therewith make a difference. Iglesia Rebaño does this, and I strongly believe that it is a church that makes a difference.

**How is the church integrated with the community?**

We serve our community. We believe that as a church our job is not only to take care of equipping people's spirits, but we take care of reaching out to their souls and providing for their bodies. We have programs for all people, regardless of the stage of life you are in. We strive to meet people at their point of need. We have partnerships with our community leaders, elected officials, and community organizations. We have agreed to agree on the issues that unite us, and strive to make a difference.

**What do you think students should know about diversity?**

I believe that diversity goes deeper than color. It is something that has existed since the beginning of time. One of my favorite Bible families is Jacob's, he had twelve sons, and if you want to see diversity, study that family. I think diversity brings beauty to its surroundings.

**What should young adults know about the struggles in life, school?**

Resilience is key. One thing I've taught my young children is that life is tough, and we cannot allow obstacles to detain us. John Maxwell is one of my favorite authors, and his book, "Failing Forward" is probably one of my favorites, because it teaches that true failure is when you give up. In life, everyone is tempted to give up at one point or another; in school frustration can set in, but the important thing is to fail forward, press toward the goal that God sets before us.

**What is the mission of the church?**

*Together build lives in Christ, multiplying them to transform the world.*

**Why are you involved with young adults?**

I am involved with young adults because I believe that they are in a transitional point in their lives with many questions. To me young adulthood was the best time of my life, but also the worst because there wasn't a lot clarity as to what my future held. I would hope that throughout this journey with FORWARD (young adults ministry) I would be able to gain from the insight and energy that this team holds, and at the same time be able to provide some type of guidance.

**What do you want them to know?**

I want them to know that God has a plan for their lives and that they have the potential to live

happy, complete and fulfilled lives.

**What is your objective with that?**

My objective is to be able to mentor/disciple this powerful generation.

**Do you have Children?**

Yes, Hannah (7), Matthew (5), Izabella (2)

**Are you married?**

Yes - to Freddy Santiago

**How do you juggle between family and community work?**

My family is very engaged into what I do. My husband and I are a team, and my children love what we do. Even in our efforts of immigration reform, my 7 year old daughter has participated giving speeches in local Catholic Churches giving her response as a citizen to the situation.

**What has been your experience in life as a Latina in the community?**

I love my culture, I love my people, and I feel that I am an asset to wherever I step foot. You could say that I possess confidence. I refuse to allow stereotypes to define me, because I am defined first by what God's Word says about me, secondly, by what my family values are, and thirdly by the Latina blood that runs through my veins.

**How has your experience changed in time?**

Time is in constant change, and experiences can be the stepping stones for success. Today is the gift God has given me, and how I live it will impact tomorrow, therefore I live it without regrets.

# Singer/Songwriter Lyrical Mami

Jackie Nowotnik



**Why the name Lyrical Mami?**

Around the age of eleven or so, I started writing little songs. As I got a little older, like thirteen, my writing started expanding into poetry. So at the time I was just calling myself Lyrical Mami because t all I did was write lyrics. The name just stuck with me ever since. It's actually a good attention grabber for people who come across my name or Myspace because they are like "Lyrical...she must rap or do somethin'. Let me find out!"

**What do you consider yourself to be in the music industry?**

I consider myself to be a versatile singer and songwriter. I can sing in many styles, sing in a couple of different languages and write what ever comes to mind. I consider that to be something pretty rare because most people just stick to one thing.

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**When did you start doing what you're doing?**

I started writing when I was eleven and I've been singing since I was eight. It wasn't until my freshmen year in high school did I start professionally training, so like five years ago.

**What influenced you to do what you're doing?**

Hahaha, this is a funny one. I was in second grade when it happened. I was on the school bus going home just singing some song off the radio. This seventh grader turned around, told me to shut up because I was giving him a headache. So ever since then it's been a wrap. Singing wise, I'm influenced by everything, but I like to credit Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra, Nina Sky and Alicia Keys for my jazzy, soulful voice.

**What is your take on being a female entertainer in a male dominant industry?**

Hmm, I like it. Being a female in a male dominant industry is good, there's always a need for a female singer or rapper. Sometimes, people think because I'm a young woman that I'm not capable of coming with that fire, but when they hear me sing or my lyrics, they are just in awe.

**Do you think there is a good amount of female entertainers in the Chicago underground music scene? Why or Why not?**

There could be...I know as many as I can count on my hand. So that's like ten. I only know the women that are on the North side of the city. There could be more, but that's all I know.

**It's said that women in the Chicago underground music scene are grinding real hard, if not even harder than the men. Do agree with this statement? Why or why not?**

Oh most definitely! Not to knock off the guys in the biz, but I know some girls that stay grinding. We grind because we love it, it's what we do, you know?

**Being Latina holds a sense of pride, is that something you take with you onto the stage?**

Definitely! I feel that as a Latina, we have a certain charisma about us that just makes us hot. Maybe it's the swag, singing in Spanish or the dancing. There is just somethin' hot about it that you take with you not only on the stage but everywhere else you go.

**What is your most memorable performance?**

My most memorable performance would have to be at the Puerto Rican Youth Parade a few years back. Even though I was sharing the stage with my Aspira club from high school, I still felt the lime light. I remember getting up on the stage at the boat house in Humboldt Park. I was standing on the right hand side of the stage facing the crowd. I remember feeling my heart beating extra fast, the butterflies in my stomach, and my hand shake as I held the mic to my mouth. The warm summer breeze was making my plena skirt move and everything was quiet within the park. That's when I heard the instrumental start and I began to sing, "En Mi Viejo San Juan." After a couple of lyrics I felt at ease and felt my connection with the crowd. I could feel that in their hearts that I was singing their song, giving voice to their pride and souls. I could feel the emotions swell as I sang the chorus of "En Mi Viejo San Juan." The song ended with a smile and a beautiful harmonization between myself and the other singer...that's when the waves of applause hit me. Man, I still get the goosebumps I felt while singing the song.

Doña Felisa Rincón de Gautier was born on January 9, 1897 in Ceiba, Puerto Rico. Her parents were Enrique Rincón, a lawyer and Rita Marrero, a teacher. When Felisa was 11-years-old her mother died in childbirth. Felisa was the oldest and therefore had to take care of her eight brothers and sisters. Despite this hardship, she studied in different public schools around Puerto Rico, graduating high school



Party of Puerto Rico (PPD). In 1940, she married the Secretary General of the PPD and Assistant Attorney General of Puerto Rico, the lawyer Genaro A. Gautier. Four years later, she was offered to run for mayor of San Juan, the Capital of Puerto Rico, but her husband refused and so another member of the party, Roberto Sánchez Vilella, ran and was elected. Two years after that, in 1946, Sanchez Vilella

Miosotis Cotto Santos

## The Long Reign of **Felisa Rincón de Gautier,** Mayor of San Juan

in the city of Santurce and then went to college and became a practicing pharmacist. She was also very interested in high fashion and was concerned with the high rate of unemployment in the country. So, she traveled to New York to learn about the art of high fashion and how to run a clothing factory. When she returned to Puerto Rico she opened a florist shop and a clothing store called "Felisa's Style Shop".

On April 18, 1929, after years of struggle, the Puerto Rican government passed Law 74, which allowed, for the first time, women the right to vote, with a stipulation that they had to be literate and 21 years or older. Felisa was the fifth woman to register to vote on the island. In 1932, the President of the Liberal Party, Antonio R. Barceló, appointed her as a representative and later she was appointed member of the Executive Committee. Unfortunately, in the elections of 1936 the Liberal Party was defeated and in 1938, Felisa decided to help Luis Muñoz Marín organize a new party, the Popular Democratic

resigned to occupy another position, so Felisa was approached with the same offer again and accepted. She ran and was elected mayor of San Juan that same year. Doña Fela became the first Puerto Rican woman to occupy a high political post, the first woman to be mayor of San Juan, and the first woman elected to be a mayor of a capital city in the Western Hemisphere.

Doña Fela served as the mayor of San Juan for 22 years. While she was in office, San Juan became one of the greatest urban centers of the Caribbean. Its population grew significantly, from 180,000 to 450,000 inhabitants. Her main concern was the welfare of the people of San Juan. She opened the first pre-school center, which later became the model of the Head Start programs in the United States. She helped facilitate the creation of the School of Medicine in 1950 as well as the regeneration of the whole public health system of the capital city. During her time as mayor, she would open the doors of the City Hall to the public every

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Wednesday so they could come in and talk to her about their needs and problems. Felisa worked together with the "Father of Modern Puerto Rican Archaeology," Dr. Ricardo Alegría, to fix and maintain the historical structures of Old San Juan. Because of her efforts to help the people, the capital city was awarded the All American City Award in 1959. Doña Fela also began a tradition on the *Día de los Reyes* (Three Kings Day) that is still celebrated by the mayors and governors of Puerto Rico. On January 6, she would give away gifts and food to the children in need. Since she never had any children, Felisa dedicated her time making happy the poor kids of San Juan. One Christmas, she had delivered to San Juan a plane full of snow, so the children could see and play with it.

Felisa Rincón de Gautier was asked by four U.S presidents to serve as the American Good Will Ambassador in Latin America, Asia, and Europe. Puerto Rico and New York City has honored Dona Fela by naming avenues and public structures in her honor. In San Juan, you can find the Felisa Rincón de Gautier Museum, which is a historic house. In the Bronx, N.Y, you can find the Felisa Rincón de Gautier Institute for Law and Public Policy and in Brooklyn, N.Y, there is a school named after her. Felisa

received many awards and condecorations, and some of them were: the Medal of Joan of Arc from France, the Golden Medal of Honor from Ecuador, the Don Quixote Medal and the Order of Queen Isabel the Catholic from Spain, the Order of Simón Bolívar from Venezuela, the Order of Merit from Israel, the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem by Francis Cardinal Spellman of N.Y, and the John Adams Medal from the Federated Woman's Club of America. In 1954, she was named Woman of the Americas by the Union of American Women of New York. In 1961, she was awarded by Eleanor Roosevelt with the Madeline Borg Award from the Philanthropic Hebrew Federation of N.Y.

Doña Fela passed away on September 16, 1994 in San Juan. She was placed in the chapel of the Ehret Funeral Home for two days, then her body was moved to the San Juan City Hall for one more day. During her time at the San Juan City Hall, the people of San Juan showed their respect and love for her. Former governors of the island acknowledged Doña Fela's accomplishments and life's work to make San Juan one of the most beautiful cities in Puerto Rico. Felisa Rincón de Gautier received the burial honors of a chief of state.

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goal. I sold sum of my art work to raise money to start this program . We raised \$8,000 last year and provided a network for 12-18-year-old young ladies from the Humboldt Park community. With that money we took them to New York City with everything paid for, 3 of them never been on a plane. They got to experience communities outside of their own and explore a taste of what is out there. When they came back

it was a different outlook. They understood the importance of giving back. Because in order to know where you're going you need to know where you're from. Many forget that. Those eight girls are now confidant and are doing well in school, what more can I ask for? That's the role my art has taken. I am in many ways inspired by these girls. It gives me new ideas to paint.



unique my culture is. I remember when it was time for the Puerto Rican Festival and I would just get this sense of pride and excitement, knowing that my culture is celebrated by so many! I also remember that whenever someone would mention something about Puerto Rico I would get a sense of encouragement and an overwhelming sense of pride and a feeling that they were talking about something I could relate to.

In my early years, I learned to dance ballet and modern dance. At the age of eight I was introduced to a different way of dancing - *bomba*. It was not structured, it was free spirited and open to any interpretations. It became something close to my heart. I was able to learn about my roots and respect my ancestors. Learning the historical background

Alicia Marrero

# Majority to Minority

## The Journey of a Boricua College Student

I'm a Puerto Rican young woman with light-skin, brown hair, and hazel eyes born on the Northside of Chicago right around the corner from Humboldt Park. I experienced the most ironic and beautiful cultural aspects of life. In my neighborhood I watched my neighbors walking their dogs while sipping their Starbucks lattes. A few blocks away I smelled the *café con leche* with some *pan con mantequilla*. I grew up learning about my Puerto Rican culture and it became something that was important to me and knowing my background helped me to view life in a different way. Having my *abuelita* cook *arroz con gandules* with *chuletas* was the highlight for me coming from school. Walking up the back steps and smelling that authentic aroma was like walking into a five star restaurant just right upstairs from my house. Being surrounded by all of this made me appreciate how colorful and

of *bomba* and Puerto Rico, in general, made me realize how important it is to establish and maintain a sense of culture in one's life. I still continue to dance *bomba* because it has helped me to establish leadership, encouragement, bravery, and humility. This introduction helped me to accept diversity and develop an open-minded view of the world. After this stage in my life I began the college experience. I moved away from the city life to go away to college in the southwest region of Illinois. At the beginning of the process I thought this was going to be fine, no worries about moving into a dorm hours away from home, but little did I realize the obstacles that came with it.

I remember "freshman moving in day" and meeting my roommate who was white from

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a small rural town and lived on a farm. Accommodating myself to this new way of living was one of the most difficult things I have had to do. I am in a school that is predominantly white. I would go to class and wonder about the conversations that these white kids were having and I would think to myself, who cares? I would go to a party and people would be standing around having a few beers and that was considered a party. When back home putting music on, dancing and laughing was called a party. By the end of the party no one would give hugs or kiss each other on the cheek to say goodbye. I sometimes felt like the environment was a cold one, comparing it to the warm and caring environment with my fellow Latinos back home. I did not know how to act around them- what do I laugh at, and what do I say? How do I make this new experience easier for myself? Is it possible to make it at a predominately white school in the middle of nowhere as a Latina? I came from a community where I was a majority to a town and school where I am the minority.

As a freshman, one of the requirements at my school was to take an Introduction to Liberal Arts course. When I was introduced to my fellow classmates that first day, I thought to myself, wow these white kids have it all. They have money, two parents, just the perfect college life. I was the only Latina in the room and the only urban student too. But little did I know that my fear of them judging me was turned around and I had been judging them. I learned throughout this course that my fellow classmates lived with single parents and did not have much money. They had experiences that changed their way of living. They were farfetched from the perfect world I envisioned them in. Throughout that class I learned a lot about these people, they opened my eyes to what I could not see. All of us had a past that we did not want to remember about. We all laughed, cried and struggled the same ways. We

were no different from one another. The only difference was our races and where we lived.

Even though my eyes were opened to a new way of viewing things, and although I had built that relationship with my fellow classmates, when it came time to leave the class there was still that gap between me and them. I felt sort of alone. I felt like there was nothing further that we could relate to but our class. Perhaps that was just me being naïve and ignorant but that is how I felt. I would sit at my desk in my room and think about how I need to succeed because I am Latina and a female. I need to succeed because I am the first to go to college and continue going. I need to succeed because I have a single mother back in Chicago working overtime just so that she could make some extra money for tuition. I was confused on why I needed to move forward in life. My mind was going eighty miles a minute because I was not sure what I wanted for myself.

I continued through my freshman year wondering if I wanted to transfer and go to school in Chicago, live the city life with people who I could relate to. But then I wondered was that going to help me see things from different perspectives? Was I going to be able to experience the same things in Chicago that I experience being over here? Being here in this small town, with a downtown as big as my neighborhood, perhaps I was going to live life the way I am supposed to. Yes, I may be frustrated because when I talk about *bomba* or when I talk about Puerto Rican food or anything different no one gets excited with me or sit back and sigh because they understand what I mean. I may have a few friends over here that I can relate to but it is hard for them too. They talk to me all the time about how they want to transfer because they have nothing to relate to, but the first thing that runs through my mind is what are they doing to make it easier?



Coming into freshman year I heard about a Latino organization on campus and I was so excited because this was my way of opening up and meeting new people, especially people who like the same things that I do. I began to get involved, and attended events. A short time later, I was nominated to be part of the organization's Executive Board. I was just so thrilled because now I was part of something and I can have a say in what sort of projects or activities we could do for the school. As the year went by I was nominated for one position and moved to the next and the next thing I knew I was asked to be Vice President my freshman year. During the course of the year, events were planned but they were not very successful. Being part of this club was becoming a hassle and not fun anymore. Now into my second year of college I am the President and have no other Latinos in the club but myself. What bothers me the most is that even though the other students may not be Latino they do not have the enthusiasm. To them, the club is something just to be involved in or looks good on paper. It upsets me because it seems like they

do not want to learn or experience something different, and that is why I question myself as to why are they even a part of the club? It is frustrating when the other Latinos on the campus want to have parties thrown by organizations yet they do not want to do anything about it to make it happen. How can they complain when they are not doing anything about it?

Having been raised in a city that is so diversified coming into this environment makes me appreciate my culture for what it truly is. This experience has been a hard one but one that has opened my eyes to see the true sides of people. In college you are always going to come across people from all walks of life and that is what college is all about. I can share my culture and my experiences and take that and turn it into a great future for myself and others. With this experience I have appreciated the essence of who I am more than ever. Though this has been a frustrating and confusing path I am finally able to learn that I can contribute a lot to the college.

# Que Ondee Sola magazine NEEDS YOU!

Want to join the oldest Puerto Rican & Latina/o student publication in the country?  
Interested in issues facing Latina/o students on campus, Latin America, Latina/o communities in Chicago, Puerto Rico and its Diaspora?

We are looking for photographers, writers, artists, proofreaders,  
fresh ideas, and compassionate and dedicated students!  
Stop by our office, E-041 on Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:40-2:40 PM

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# Blanca Canales:

## Leader of Puerto Rico's October Revolution

Doña Blanca Canales chuckled when I approached her with some incredulity to ask if she had really been one of the leaders of the October 30, 1950 Revolution. A grandmotherly, retired social worker, now in her eighties, she hardly seemed the type.

Born in the mountain town of Jayuya, she grew up in a Unionist family. She was drawn, however, to the Nationalist Party, which took a more militant stand on independence. She recalled wistfully the three months Pedro Albizu Campos and his daughter Laura spent in her home.



By 1950, following World War II and the Korean War, the United States was taking on a new role—that of a superpower. As it tightened its hold on Puerto Rico, Puerto Rican patriots were becoming more militant. In turn, they were being subjected to the Smith Act—the “Ley de la Mordaza,” a law to silence anyone advocating the overthrow of the government by force of violence.

Blanca joined the Nationalist Cadets of the Republic. Though trained as nurses, women were taught, also, to march and to shoot. Social worker by day, militant by night, she

played an active role in the preparation of the 1950 uprising. Munitions were stored in her home. By then, having been a Nationalist for twenty years, she was fired with patriotic zeal for liberation from “tyrannical forces.” She realized, however, that up against the most powerful nation in the world, the Cadets could hope for nothing more than a heroic gesture.

The Nationalists had just celebrated the birthday of General Valero de Bernabe, who had fought with Bolívar for South American liberation. Word had come of a plan to assassinate Albizu. Events were

happening too fast to delay plans for the uprising, so the Nationalists proceeded hastily with the revolution on October 30, before outside help had been able to arrive.

Assembled in the yard of her home in Coabey de Jayuya, those prepared to participate in the revolution were administered an oath by Blanca. Surrounding the Puerto Rican flag, they took the Albizu Campos oath to defend their country and flag with their lives if necessary.

As the Jayuya contingent struck out for City Hall, Blanca was the only woman among twenty young men. "I had been reading stories of heroines and imagined myself off to a crusade," she admitted with a smile.

Though proficient in shooting, Blanca was kept out of the fray by being assigned a post at the telephone. City Hall was attacked and fires set to the post office and Selective Service building. Blanca, in turn, climbed to a second floor hotel balcony and shouted, "¡Viva Puerto Rico Libre!" thus proclaiming the Republic.

The rebellion was soon quelled, both in Jayuya and in other communities throughout Puerto Rico. In Ponce, three police had been killed and seven civil workers wounded. In Arecibo, the police department had been fired on.

The town of Jayuya was in the power of the revolutionaries for three days in spite of bombardment by planes and artillery of

the United States National Guard. Finally, on November 1, when the National Guard entered Blanca's barrio, the revolutionaries surrendered to avoid its devastation.

Though Blanca had not fired a shot, witnesses claimed that she had killed a policeman. This drew her a life sentence. For the burning of the post office, a Federal offense, Blanca was given an eleven-year sentence at Alderson Federal Penitentiary. There, she met briefly with Lolita Lebrón, who had been involved in the 1954 shoot-up in the United States Congress. After 5½ years, she was sent to a prison in Puerto Rico for the life sentence. However, this was eventually commuted by Governor Sánchez Vilella.

From the 1950 rebellion a stronger patriotic movement emerged. *independentista* candidates received the highest number of votes ever.

Undaunted by her seventeen years of imprisonment, Blanca held firm to the cause of independence. "We have to keep working even if it takes a hundred years," she vowed, the softness of her voice belying the strength of her convictions. Though living a quiet life in a government housing project, she is still under surveillance, her phone tapped, her every move checked by a woman undercover agent. But strong in her Catholic faith and patriotism, she remains unafraid.

*Taken from "Voices for Independence: In the Spirit of Valor and Sacrifice" Portraits of Notable Individuals in the Struggle for Puerto Rican Independence by Jean Zwickel*

<http://www.peacehost.net/WhiteStar/Voices/eng-canales.html>

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concentrate on ordering because I was so taken with the atmosphere; the lighting, furniture set up, paintings, and music made up a recipe for perfection. Once my head was out of the clouds I began to browse the menu for entrées that I wanted to order. While I was browsing I noticed how fair the prices were and immediately knew I had come to the right spot to get my Puerto Rican food fix. The waitress that waited on us was very polite and although some of the entrées we wanted were not yet ready, she offered other entrées that were just as good. I had *sopa de salchichón*, a *jibarito*, *arroz con*

Jackie Nowotnik

# Saborology:

## Nellie's Puerto Rican Restaurant

"Coqui! Coqui!Coqui! Coqui," that is the sound I hear as the sun starts to set. The warm Caribbean breeze embraces my shoulders as I slowly walk to the house. I can smell fried *plátanos*, garlic, and *arroz* trail from the kitchen window to the front of the house. The sweet and rhythmic sounds of *salsa* music can be heard, as well as the chatter of family inside. I open the door and walk into *la cocina* - mom, abuela and Titi Mari are busy cooking *la comida*. Then I walk into *la sala* and see *abuelo*, Tío Hector, and my cousin Macho playing dominoes on the table as they wait for dinner. I look by the TV and see my younger cousins playing *policía y ladrones*. Reality snaps back in: "*Bienvenidos a Nellie's, ¿están listos?*" Puerto Rico, *la isla del encanto*, is a good while away from Chicago, but with authentic Puerto Rican restaurants like Nellie's, home does not seem so far away.

As *Que Ondee Sola* writer Ruthy and I walked in and were seated, I could not help but feel relaxed and comfortable. For a minute I could not even

*guandules*, and coconut oatmeal or *avena de coco*. I honestly do not know anyone that can compare with my Madrina's cooking; however I think she has met her match with Nellie's.

Nellie's is located on the corner of Campbell and Division on Paseo Boricua, conveniently right off of Division and Western. Overall I give Nellie's four stars out of five. If you are in the mood for authentic and delicious Puerto Rican food within the Humboldt Park community, then I highly recommend going to Nellie's. Whether you are going there for breakfast or dinner, Nellie's is the place to go! However, if you are going there for breakfast, I suggest having the oatmeal; you will not know what hit you. Enjoy!

Nellie's Puerto Rican Restaurant  
2458 W. Division St., Chicago  
(773) 252-5520

Pride is something that every culture has, showing their roots and their traditions. Each country is defined by its symbols and its flag. The Escobar brothers were born in the inner city of New York and are first generation Puerto Ricans, also known as proud "Nuyoricans." The Escobar family descends from Maygüez and Río Grande, Puerto Rico. Their culture and lifestyles still reflect that of rural Puerto Rico. The Escobar brother's vision with their clothing is not only pride in being Boricua

*przfynestinc.com*. The online store is available now to take a sneak peek at what's coming up for this Spring and Summer. You check it out and get a shirt a hoody that shows your county's symbols, which have a significant meaning or hero, which is admired for their effort they made in their prospective countries.

## P.R.'z Fynest: Clothing with Pride

Marcuz Erazo

but also pride in for other nationalities , even though they target the Puerto Rican community, since the company is based in New York.

P.R.z Fynest, Inc. was established in December 2006 and the mission was to educate and promote the "'Orgullo' of Puerto Rican communities worldwide". Those plans have changed somewhat, the company plans to launch brands that will represent the entire Latina/o community starting with the release of P.R.'z Fynest which was released this past summer of 2008, with the name of "FL20" which represents the diversity of twenty most common Latin American countries in the U.S. The line emphasizes the history that gets forgotten or that is not told and shows that we all need to know our roots and hero's. They show pride and tradition by telling a story with every piece of clothing they create and giving empowerment to each heritage.

Designs are found for both genders and can be found in their on line web page [www.prfynestinc.com](http://www.prfynestinc.com).



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Chair, Foreign Languages and Literatures, was chair of the Spanish program at the University of Hawaii-Manoa. He is the author of a book on Cuba's foremost filmmaker, "Thomás Gutiérrez Alea: The Dialectics of a Filmmaker" (Routledge, 2002), and his articles on literature and cinema have appeared (or will shortly appear) in *Latin American Research Review*, *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, *Jump Cut*, *Senses of Cinema*, *Chasqui*, and *Rethinking Marxism*. His research interests include teaching and researching from a perspective that transcends national and linguistics boundaries. His office is CLS 2039, ext. 4279.

than most kids and by age 17 he was already picking and choosing what college to attend. During his high school years he participated in model U.N in and would travel to the University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras campus (UPR) to do research in the school's library. There, he got a feel for university life, but was worried that if he pursued his education there, it would be jeopardized. At UPR there were frequent shut downs due to constant protests and demonstrations during an intense political

## *Bienvenidos*

# **Paul A. Schroeder Rodríguez,**

## **A Boricua Professor at NEIU**

Samuel Vega



Professor Paul A. Schroeder Rodríguez was born and raised up until 16 years old in Puerto Rico's San Juan metropolitan area. Born to a Puerto Rican mother and German father, growing-up Schroeder mastered three languages English, Spanish, and German. He started school earlier

climate on the island. Today he feels that maybe those demonstrations and protests would have been an integral part in his educational process.

In search for independence from his family and a curiosity to experience a world he would only imagine through cable television, which had been introduced to the island when he was in eighth grade, he looked outward to continue his education. The city that drew his attention was Washington D.C., which he had visited while in high school when he participated in a week-long program called "Presidential Classroom." His parents were able to pay his first semester's tuition to Georgetown University and after that he was on his own. Refusing to be discouraged he sought a scholarship through an ROTC program, which paid for all four years of college. He recalls the education at Georgetown to be very conservative and says he got a strong ground on Western education, stating, "before there was an unquestioned norm that education was to be Eurocentric..."

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Upon finishing his four years he also had to fulfill his contract agreement and serve some time in Germany during the first Iraq conflict. After going through the ranks and his time was up he made his way back to the U.S. where he would meet his family in Phoenix, Arizona. A psychology degree wasn't too promising in the job market so back to school he went to further his education. He studied Literature and Philosophy and graduated with his Masters in Literature. After this he moved on to Stanford University where he would write his dissertation on Latin American film director Thomas Gutiérrez Alea's and obtain a PhD in Spanish.

He found jobs all over the country, teaching Spanish and incorporating literature and Latin American film in his teachings. Tired of the Midwest where he taught at Columbia, Missouri he looked toward Hawaii after coming across a job opening at the University of Hawaii. While in the Pacific he developed a variety of courses. For seven years he taught Spanish, cinema, world film criticism, and Latin American poetry. Disconnected from family, homeland, and a sense of community he moved to Chicago after landing a job here at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU).

At NEIU, his position is Professor of Spanish and Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, the highest title a university teacher can achieve. Although his stay at NEIU has been short, he has accomplished and contributed so much, hosting various Latin American film screenings, leading International Days, and being Co-chair of a committee dealing with the proposals for the Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) funding. I asked him where he found his passion for Latin American cinema and why he hosted these events. A pivotal point in his life was teaching in Arizona where, with a group, he traveled to Spain. He attended a film screening in capital, Madrid, of

*Alicia en el Puebol de las Maravillas*, a spoof film that criticized the situation in Cuba during the 1990's. The director, Daniel Díaz Torres, held a question and answer session afterwards and Schroeder witnessed a heated and passionate discussion that this film was able to kindle. Never in his studies in literature did he witness such a discussion take place after a publishing of a book. It was after this moment that a shift in career focus took place. Here at NEIU he has been able to engage students in dialogues pertaining to Latin America through film as a medium of education. As a result of his experiences and studies he has been drawn to stories and productions that question, or challenge the status quo, political, cultural, linguistic...etc.

At the end of the interview I asked what he felt about the struggle at NEIU to have a Latina/o Cultural and Resource center. He left me with this:

"Of course NEIU should have a Latino Cultural and Resource Center. The question is, 'why doesn't it already have one?' Other universities have one with less Latina/o students. Why is that? Is it [the] lack of resources or lack of vision? I think it's a very good time to be at NEIU because I am very optimistic that NEIU will have a center where Latina/o students will feel at home."

Be on the look out for Paul A. Schroeder Rodriguez's expected publications "*Boricua'aina*" An Anthology of Puerto Rican Literature in Hawai'i. This publication will fill a void in the editorial world of Hawaiian, Puerto Rican and US Latina/o literature by grouping, for the first time and in a single volume, a wide range of creative texts produced by Puerto Ricans in Hawaii. The anthology will be organized into three parts: (1) an introduction addressing the history of the Puerto Rican migration to Hawaii and providing a critical analysis of the literature that has emerged from this migration, (2) a selection of primary texts organized by genre (oral histories, narrative fictions, poetry, and non-fictional narratives), and (3) a bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

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"La Goyita" by Rafael Tujño

# International Women's Day

## ¡La mujer no sufre, la mujer lucha!



Hosted by the women of Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School and the Puerto Rican Cultural Center

**Sun., March 8, 2009**  
**Doors open at 10:30 am**  
**Puerto Rican Cultural Center Annex**  
**2700 W. Haddon**

Brunch will be served at 12:30 pm • Childcare will be provided • Men are welcome

Sign-up for 2 of 3 workshops  
**Reproductive Rights**  
**Domestic Violence**  
**Latina Sexuality**

Facilitated by: Verónica Crespo-Rich  
Cynthia Brito, and Janeida Rivera

Invited guests: Amigas Latinas, Mujeres Latinas en Acción, and the Chicago Women's Health Center

