

Centro News

Volume VIII, Number 1

Newsletter of the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños

Fall 2001

“Testimonios, pioneros, ritmo y política” Fall 2001 Speakers Series

This past fall semester Centro hosted several events with accomplished scholars on topics related to Puerto Rican and Latino issues. The wide range of topics covered, included

Rican political mobilization in New York and the Island and presented the findings from his research on the levels of political participation by return migrants on the western municipalities of Puerto Rico.

In collaboration with the Center for Latin American, Latino & Caribbean Studies of the CUNY Graduate Center, the Centro sponsored a book presentation/discussion on Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People (October 25th) with author Arlene Dávila (NYU), and discussants Clara Rodríguez

Pioneros will be donated to the Centro Library and Archives.

The semester’s closing event (November 8th), featured Centro Researcher Caridad Souza together with authors Daisy Cocco de Filippis (York College), Mirtha Quintanales and Liza Fiol-Matta (Jersey City University) and Iris Lopez (City College) co-authors of Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios. After sharing some autobiographical information regarding the process of designing and publishing the book, a lively exchange between the writers and the audience followed.

Mirtha Quintanales and Caridad Souza

music and national identity, political participation, early Puerto Rican migration to NYC, Latinos and the media, and Latina feminism.

On September 27th the book Nación y Ritmo...descargas desde el Caribe, was presented by Professors Arnaldo Malavé (Fordham) and Juan Flores (Hunter). The author, Professor Juan Otero Garabís, from the University of Puerto Rico, commented on the history of the project.

During the Fall elections period, Centro Researcher Carlos Vargas-Ramos, Ph.D. presented a paper on “Return Migrants and Political Participation in Puerto Rico” (October 11th). Vargas-Ramos discussed the various theories regarding Puerto

(Fordham) and Marta García from the National Hispanic Media Coalition. The presentation also focused on several issues relating to the ways Latinos are portrayed in the media and on advertisement campaigns.

Pioneros: Puerto Rican Migration to New York 1896-1948 was presented to a diverse public audience in an enjoyable evening at the Barnes and Noble Bookstore at Citicorp (October 30th)

Authors Felix Matos Rodríguez (Centro Director), and Pedro Juan Hernández (Centro Archivist), asked the audience to share their “pioneros” experiences during the discussion. All of the proceeds from the sales of

Centro Events Series is organized to engage students, faculty and the general public in discussions about Puerto Rican and Latino issues. Mark the upcoming activities in your calendar and join us. For more information please contact Ivelisse Rosario-Natal at 212-772-5714 or email: centroevents@hunter.cuny.edu.



Pedro Juan Hernández



CUNY Symposium: The State of Organizing in Latino Communities Post September 11th: Challenges and Issues

By Madeline Perez, MSW, Organizer Cypress Hills Local Development Corp.

On January 31st, a symposium “The State of Organizing in Latino Communities Post Sept 11th: Challenges and Issues” will take place at the Hunter College School of Social Work. This event is sponsored by the Latina/o Community Organizing Network/Red de Organizadores Comunitarios, along with the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños.

This event is the second project of the Latina/o Community Organizing Network, whose mission is to serve as a support network and resource exchange for community organizers of Puerto Rican, Caribbean, and Latino descent working in these communities. The Network originated in 1999 as a collaboration between Pedro Pedraza from Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños and Terry Mizrahi, from the Community Organizing Department of the Hunter College School of Social Work. Originally, the group was formed to plan and implement an exchange program between community organizers and students from Hunter and the University of Puerto Rico. The group earned a CUNY Faculty Development grant last winter and facilitated a conference of New York City Organizers working in Latino Communities. The event featured presentations of organizing projects from the El Puente Academy for Peace and Social Justice and the undergraduate program in Community Organizing & Development (C.O.D. program) at Hunter.

While implementing the exchange program is still very much part of the goals of the Network, the need for con-

tinued dialogue between community practitioners was made evident during their first event. The Network plans to continue serving as a forum to bring together organizers who come from both the learning laboratories of local communities and academia to learn from each other successes and challenges- and celebrate their work.

The goals of the January 31st conference are to:

- Introduce participants to the Latina/o Community Organizing Network/Red de Organizadores Comunitarios;
- Provide community practitioners with an opportunity to learn from each other’s work in New York City and;
- Promote networking among organizers, faculty, and students throughout CUNY and other institutions.

The symposium will feature a panel discussing the overall impact the tragedy of September 11th has had on the Latino Community and organizing in New York City. This includes an impact on such issues which include but are not limited to police brutality/racial profiling; new security/the ‘patriot bill’; immigrant rights; organizing for peace, freedom of speech, and challenges in fundraising. There will also be a focus on how the recent tragic events have effected to organizing around the

Vieques issue. The event will take place from 5:30 pm-8:00 pm.

For more information on this event or to RSVP, please contact Hilda Rivera, Acting Chairperson of Community Organizing & Planning at the Hunter College School of Social Work at (212)452-7100 ;

e-mail: hriver@hunter.cuny.edu. ❖

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Félix V. Matos Rodríguez
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*To purchase any of the Centro publications, contact Catrize Ortiz at 212-772-5686
Catrize.Ortiz@hunter.cuny.edu*

Library & Archives: Progress Report, Events and New Collections

Centro Faculty Fellows Academic Year 2002-2003

The processing of the Archives of the Migration Division continues at a steady pace. Out of the original 3,000 cubic feet of records, there are less than 400 remaining to be processed. In addition to the Identification and Documentation records, various other materials are now open for research.

Thanks to the efforts of our work-study students, the Name Index for the Identification Records is complete. A copy is available in the library. Anyone interested in seeing documents from the Archives should contact Pedro Juan Hernández by phone (212) 772-5151 or e-mail him at Pedro.Juan.Hernandez@hunter.cuny.edu.

The New York City Hispanic Labor Documentation Project is in its second phase. A small continuation grant was received in June from the Documentary Heritage Program of the NY State Archives. A new field archivist, Walkiria Dilone, has been conducting surveys as well as processing collections donated in the first phase of the survey. Anyone interested in participating in the survey or donating documents please contact, Walkiria at 772-5693.

We are happy to announce that long-time activist Alice Cardona has donated her papers to the Centro Archives. This incredibly rich collection represents Alice's diverse interests, her commitment to advocacy for bilingual education, women's rights and political representation. She has worked and volunteered for many

organizations such as ASPIRA, the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, the Puerto Rican/Latino Education Roundtable, the Puerto Rican Association for Community Affairs and the National Latinas Caucus. From 1983-1995 as the Assistant Director of the New York State Division for Women she was supportive of numerous initiatives and community-based groups.

It was a joy to spend time with Alice as she gathered her papers and we are deeply grateful to her for entrusting them to us. They are a significant contribution to the history of Puerto Ricans in New York and are especially valuable for women's studies.

Another Cardona, Alice's brother, Luis will also be giving materials to the Centro Archives. He too has had a long involvement in Puerto Rican community affairs and we expect to find valuable documents relating to the various organizations with which he was affiliated. Our thanks to Luis for his important contribution.

Our gratitude also to Antonio Lopez, a former director of ASPIRA, NY for donating materials that will help to document Aspira's history.

Finally, on November 17, the Centro co-sponsored an all day workshop — titled "The Genealogical Origins of Puerto Rican People" — with the Hispanic Genealogical Society of New York and the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Genealogical Society regarding researching family history. For more information, please consult the websites from the two organizations: www.Hispanicgenealogy.com and www.rootsweb.com/prhgs. ❖

The Centro is pleased to announce its Puerto Rican Studies Faculty Fellows Program for the academic year 2002-2003, which is aimed at providing significant release time to facilitate research and curriculum development projects at CUNY. Applicants can request up to three course releases for one semester. Requests can be made to supplement sabbatical release-time. The Centro will allocate adjunct replacement resources to release selected faculty members from teaching duties for all or part of their normal course load so as to work on research, writing, or curricular projects.

All CUNY faculty, regardless of department or type of appointment, are eligible. All applications must include: (1) project description and justification (five-page maximum plus bibliography) explaining the objectives, methods, and significance of the project, and the amount of release time requested; (2) two-page curriculum vita; (3) letter of support from Department Chair or Provost.

Selections will be made on the merits and feasibility of the project, taking into account its potential contribution to the development of Puerto Rican Studies as well as its relative compatibility with Centro research agendas.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS:

March 1st, 2002. Awards will be announced by April 15th, 2002. Please mail your proposals to:

Félix V. Matos Rodríguez; Director; Center for Puerto Rican Studies; Hunter College; 695 Park Avenue #E1409; New York, NY 10021; voice: [212] 772-5715; fax: [212] 650-3673; Felix.Matos@hunter.cuny.edu; www.centropr.org

Centro and “www.prdream.com” Collaboration

Centro and the “www.prdream.com” website are proud to announce their year-long collaboration to disseminate the contents of the Centro’s speakers series on the internet. [CentroTalks](#) is the section in that website featuring Centro’s scholarly talks in excerpted form for the web. The aim is to create a direct link between the community and the scholar, making the scholar more accessible to the community and the community more accessible to the scholar.

[Puerto Rico and the American Dream](#) is a website dedicated to the Puerto Rican people seeking to empower community through technology. This award-winning site on the history, culture and politics of Puerto Rico and the Puerto Rican diaspora was founded four years ago by Judith Escalona and Stephanie Owens in order to create a global forum on Puerto Rican issues by leveraging new media technologies. Today it continues to bring original content online in English and Spanish.

Its original design included four sections that drew immediate public attention, garnering awards and building an online community that is both local and global. *Oral Histories*, where Puerto Ricans and those of Puerto Rican descent share their experiences through picture, sound and text, is the most personal and moving section on the site. *La Patria* provides a context for these personal narratives through its timelines on a range of historical and cultural themes. A subsection of *La Patria* profiles distinguished Puerto Ricans. The *Forum* is the place for discussing and debating a spectrum of topics and issues relevant to the community aquí y allá. Visitors can also suggest topics. *La Galería* offers ongoing, monthly exhibitions of Puerto Rican artists and artists working with Puerto Rican themes. Plans are to commission web specific art projects to be seen exclusively at La Galería.

As [Puerto Rico and the American Dream](#) grew its online community, it added new sections to meet that growth and to broaden its appeal among Puerto Ricans and other Latinos. *Corrientes* is an interactive announcements board where visitors can learn about events and activities taking place in New York, the United States and Puerto Rico. *Nuyorican Cinema* is an online exhibition on narrative films made by Puerto Ricans in the United States. It consists of film excerpts, synopses and an explanatory essay that surveys the works. Originally a film program curated by Escalona and screened at the 1999 New York Latino Film and Video Festival, it is now permanently online and will soon become a subsection of the planned film section called *La Cineteca*. *La Cineteca* is devoted to Puerto Rican and related cinemas and is one of the most ambitious sections of the website. It will be launched in 2002. ❖

CUNY Faculty News: PALENQUE

PALENQUE/John Jay College-Family Life Center (JJC-FLC) is a culturally-based, arts and performance program for youth violence prevention. The program operates during the academic year and in the summer, promoting Latino & Latina cultural identity as a means to reduce violence in the lives of urban youths. The target area for the JJC-FLC is the Washington Heights/Inwood (Community District 12), a high density, urban community located in Manhattan. Focusing on this community is essential – new arrivals from the Dominican Republic comprise the largest, youngest, and most disadvantaged group in New York City. The program’s name, *PALENQUE*, was the name that self-liberated slaves (*Cimarrones*) in the Caribbean used to identify the liberated zones that they created to protect their personal and collective identities.

Through music, drama, dance, and visual arts, youths in this program focus on problems in their communities, educate others on the benefits of crime prevention, and suggest ways in which to prevent crime. By allowing youths to use their creative talents, art and performance help them develop a sense of identity, independence, discipline, and self-worth. A strong underpinning of the program is its use of *cultural orientation*, that is, the use of culture to understand oneself within your own historical and social context. The program is also based on understanding personal violence and its relationship to street and structural violence. More specifically, the program examines how different forms of exploitation and exclusion – locally and globally – affect communities and individuals.

For more information:

PALENQUE John Jay College –
Family Life Center

Puerto Rican/Latin American Studies Department,
445 West 59th Street, Room 1553N, New York,
New York 10019, Phone: (212) 237-8748, Prof.
Luis Barrios, Principal Investigator/Director, Prof.
José Luis Morín, Co-Principal Investigator &
Summer Program Coordinator

Centro Journal Update

The next volume of *Centro: Journal* (Vol. XIII, no. 2) is expected to be available in January. This edition is dedicated to the Puerto Rican community in Chicago. Gina Pérez (Centro) served as guest editor, and the volume has seven academic essays dealing with issues like: history of the community, gentrification, inter-ethnic relations, constructions of identities, women and work, the role of memory in the community. It will also feature a photo essay (with over 38 photographs) by Carlos Flores documenting the history of Puerto Ricans in Chicago.

To honor the work of Edward Rivera (author of *Family Installments*) the Spring 2002 volume of *Centro Journal* (Vol. XIV, no. 1) will dedicate a section to his memory. A series of academic and personal essays by Alfredo Villanueva, Lynn DiIorio Sandín, Gary Keller, Jack Agueros, Ernesto Quiñones, and Abraham Rodríguez are planned.

For the Fall 2002 volume (Vol. XIV, no. 2) we are planning, with José Cruz (SUNY-Albany) as guest editor, an edition focusing on Puerto Rican politics in the U.S. Please refer to the “Call for Papers” notice in this newsletter and the Centro’s website for more information.

The journal now has its own e-mail address. You can reach us at centro-journal@hunter.cuny.edu. Finally, we are pleased to report that *Centro Journal* will now be indexed, or abstracted, in the MLA International Index, the Sociological Abstracts, and the Alternative Press Index, thus making it easier for students and researchers to access *Centro Journal* articles.

Researchers Profile: Carlos Vargas-Ramos

Carlos Vargas-Ramos joined Centro last February as a Researcher in Public Policy, after earning a Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University. Immediately prior to joining Centro, Vargas-Ramos worked as legislative aide to New York City Council member Philip Reed, who represents the historically Latino neighborhoods of East Harlem and Manhattan Valley (Manhattan) and Mott Haven (South Bronx).



While at Centro, Vargas-Ramos has participated professionally at three levels: the academic, the community-based and the policy-oriented. His policy-oriented interventions have involved mostly appearances in the Spanish-speaking media. *Hoy* published his article “Los puertorriqueños a la luz del nuevo censo,” which profiled Latinos in New York City based on the most recent census data. Vargas-Ramos has also been a guest in WNNY’s programs “Más allá de la noticia” and “Al día con la noticia,” which discussed the recent primary and general elections in New York City and the role Latinos played in them. In terms of working with and assisting community-based organization, Vargas-Ramos has given informational presentations on the changes in the federal public housing law that affects current residents and future applicants, sponsored by the Children’s Aid Society, and served as panelist at a forum on asthma held at the New York Academy of Medicine, sponsored by the East Harlem Asthma Working Group.

Vargas-Ramos is the co-author (with David Park) of a chapter entitled “Paradigms of Minority and Immigrant Political Participation in the United States,” to be published by JAI Press, Inc. in its Research in Micropolitics series. He also presented a paper entitled “The Political Participation of Puerto Rican Migrants” at Centro’s “Tertulia” series last Fall. This coming Spring he will present the papers “Los de Afuera, que Regresan: Demographic Characteristics of Puerto Rican Return Migrants” and “The Changing Nature of Race among Puerto Ricans” at the Caribbean Studies Association’s Annual Conference. In addition, the paper “The Political Participation of Women in Puerto Rico” is also forthcoming. ❖

Staff News

GINA PEREZ

Served as Guest Editor on the forthcoming issue of the *Centro Journal* dedicated to Puerto Ricans in Chicago. Her article, "An Upbeat West Side Story: Puerto Rican migrants and postwar racial politics in Chicago" will be published in that issue.

Presented "A tale of two barrios: Puerto Rican youth and the politics of belonging in Chicago and San Sebastian, Puerto Rico," in a panel exploring issues of globalization, race, and identity at the Race and Globalization Conference sponsored by Columbia University's Institute for Research in African-American Studies held this past November.

Using funds from a PSC-CUNY grant, Perez spent a month this summer conducting follow-up research in Chicago. She is currently finishing revisions for her book manuscript under contract with University of California Press.

Was quoted in *Hispanic Links* on the Puerto Rican brain drain problem and on the migration patterns of Puerto Ricans to Chicago.

PEDRO PEDRAZA

Was invited to serve on the Advisory Board of the new doctoral program on Urban Education at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Published the chapter "Culturally Sensitive Teaching within a Vygotskian Perspective" with Mariane Hedegaard, and Seth Chaiklin in *Learning in Classrooms*, edited by Mariane Hedegaard (AARHUS University Press, Langelandsgade, Denmark).

Published "Participatory Action Research in Education: The National

Latino/a Education Research Agenda Project" in the *Journal of Latinos and Education*, Volume 1, #1, 2002.

FÉLIX V. MATOS-RODRÍGUEZ

Published "The Browncoats are Coming! Latino Public History in Boston" in *The Public Historian*, XXIII: 4 (2001).

Presented the paper "Emigración, política pública y gobierno en Puerto Rico." at the Up from the Margins: Diversity as a Challenge to the Democratic Nation Symposium on June 29-30, 2001, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic sponsored by the CUNY Dominican Studies Institute.

Had the book *Women and Urban Life in Nineteenth-Century San Juan, Puerto Rico [1820-62]* issued on a paperback edition by Markus Weiner Publishers.

Was featured by the *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education* on an article on the national importance of Centro's mission and on-going work. He was also quoted in *The Miami Herald* on recent public scandals and corruption by government officials in Puerto Rico.

Was named an Editorial Advisory Board Member of the *New York Archives* magazine published by the Archives Partnership Trust, New York State and also an Advisory Board Member to the Hispanic Civil Rights Series published by Arte Público Press. ❖

Latinos in New York City and the Northeast Census Info Link

As a result of the work of Professor César Ayala (Lehman College) as a Centro Faculty Fellow this year you can easily access Census 2000 information on Latinos in NYC and in the Northeast (CT, MA, NJ, NY, PA, & RI). By linking through the Centro's website to <http://www.centropr.org/publications/census-home-page.html> you will find tables and maps containing Census 2000 information on New York City and in six states of the Northeast. The link leads to two reports. The first, "Latinos in the Northeast" contains maps and tables indicating the number of Latinos in 1990 and 2000, county by county, in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. The second report, "Latinos in New York City", contains maps and tables of the number of Latinos in the 5 boroughs of New York City. The data for New York City give a breakdown of the Latino population by sub-groups identified in the Census data: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, Central Americans, South Americans, and "Other Latinos."

These web pages are part of a larger website on Latino/Puerto Rican issues being developed at the Centro in collaboration with Professor Ayala. We hope you find these reports useful and encourage you to contact the Centro's webmaster, Mayra Torres mtorres@hunter.cuny.edu, with your feedback regarding the presentation and user-friendliness of these pages. ❖

Exchange Programs: Intercambio(CUNY/UPR) & CUNY Caribbean

In order to facilitate the governance of both the CUNY-Caribbean and CUNY-UPR Exchange Programs we have move to unify their faculty advisory boards and staff members (Pedro Pedraza, Rossy Matos, and Marilyn Rivera). Still, each program will continue to have its own separate mission and identity. Three new members joined the advisory board: Orlando Martinez; (Hostos Community College) Xavier Totti; (Lehman College) and Diana Caballero; (City College.) Returning board members include: Sonia Rivera (York College), Ricardo Otheguy (CUNY Graduate Center), Carlos Hortas (Hunter College), Harry Rodriguez (Hunter College), and George Irish (Medgar Evers College).

The CUNY Caribbean program awarded the following grants for FY 2001-02:

Holger Henke, (Medgar Evers College) “The Legitimacy of the Neoliberal Trade Regime: Class and Race Issues in Contemporary Caribbean Development;”

Jacqueline Jimenez Polanco, (John Jay College) “Pajaras y Maricones ‘Llegó la Hora’ : The Emergence of the Dominican Lesbian and Gay Movement”;

Segundo Pantoja, (Manhattan Community College) “Religious Schools in Cuba: Past and Future”;

John A.I. Bewaji, (University of the West Indies) “Leadership – Philosophical Exploration of Perspectives in Caribbean and Diaspora Polity”;

Angela Casana Mata, (Universidad de

la Habana) “Estudio de la Identidad Nacional en Jovenes de Origen Caribeño”;

Derek Chadee, (University of the West Indies) “Fear of Crime”;

Miriam Rodriguez Martinez, (Universidad de la Habana) “Cuba- Cayo Hueso- Tampa-NY: Una Historia Compartida”;

The Intercambio Program awarded the following research grants:

Iris Lopez, (City College) “Sterile Choices: An Ethnography of the Medicalization of Puerto Rican Women’s Reproduction”;

Tanya Pagan Raggio, (CUNY Medical School) “ Why Doesn’t the Latina Paradox Apply to Puerto Rican Women?”

There has not been an undergraduate student component this year due to the renovation of the dorms at Hunter’s Brookdale campus and the renegotiation of the agreement between the UPR and CUNY. We would, however, like to announce an extension of student applications for the first semester of the next academic year at the UPR to February 28th. Also the application deadline for research grants for both exchange programs, now combined, will be May 1st for the next academic year so that grantees will have the entire year to make their travel arrangements.

On a final note, we a proud to announce that the Centro, due to the CUNY Caribbean Academic Exchange program has been offered admission as an associate member of UNICA, the association of Caribbean-based universities and research centers. We hope that this will facilitate and lead to projects important to our Caribbean communities here in NYC. ❖

A special thanks...

Our sincerest thanks to Hunter College President Jennifer J. Raab for providing \$5,000 in financial support to support hiring a college assistant for the processing of the Migration Division Archives.

Centro Grants received Fall 2001 Semester

1. Four Decades of Puerto Rican Poetry in New York City, New York Council for the Humanities, \$1,500, Félix V. Matos Rodríguez

2. Translation of First Feminist Treatise in Puerto Rican History: Luisa Capetillo’s Mi Opinión [1911] Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project, Center for U.S. Hispanic Literature, University of Texas- Houston, \$4,100, Félix V. Matos Rodríguez

Centro Grant proposals submitted Fall 2001

1. Preserving New York’s Latino Heritage: Updating the Library and Archives Facilities at the Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Booth Ferris Foundation, \$52,300, Félix V. Matos Rodríguez and Nélica Pérez

2. National Latino/a Education Research Agenda Project, Carnegie Foundation, \$100,000, Pedro Pedraza

Centro Holiday Celebration!

Picture Perfect

The Centro celebrated the Holidays with a Christmas/*Reyes* gathering on December 18th at the faculty lounge located on the west building at Hunter College. This event was organized by the Holiday committee consisting of staff members Jennica Carmona, Carmen Fontan, Catrize Ortiz and Mayra Torres. At this event, Centro staff had the opportunity to interact with new work study students, guests and other Hunter staff. There was delicious *comida tipica* and a variety of music.

Thank you committee members for a most memorable event. We'll see you next year!



Tony deJesus, Carmen Mercado , Gina and Antonio Perez, and Idilio Gracia-Peña.



Marilyn Rivera, Yamila Sterling, Catrize Ortiz, Eudenis Castillo, and Gamalier Ramos

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- ❖ PURCHASE THE ONE OF ITS KIND CD ROM PUERTO RICANS IN THE USA 1898-1999, NOW SOLD AT A 25% DISCOUNT.
- ❖ BUY THE POPULAR VOLUME PIONEROS: PUERTO RICANS IN NEW YORK CITY 1896-1948, A BILINGUAL EDITION, A PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE MIGRATION OF PUERTO RICAN "pioneros" to NYC.