



FALL | WINTER 2026

MANY CULTURES, UNA FIESTA

In the Spotlight | En el Centro de Atención



LET'S MEET RAQUEL V. REYES
LATINA, COMADRE AND
PRESIDENT of SISTERS IN CRIME

by Clara Galvano Rivera

Raquel V. Reyes, author of the **Caribbean Kitchen Mystery** series of cozy mysteries, was elected **President of Sisters in Crime** in October 2025 for the 2025-2026 term. She is the first Latina President in the 40-year history of the organization.

WHAT DID IT MEAN TO YOU WHEN YOU WERE ELECTED PRESIDENT OF SISTERS IN CRIME (SINC), THE FIRST LATINA IN THE ORGANIZATION'S 40-YEAR HISTORY?

RAQUEL: I am honored to give back to Sisters in Crime and the community that helped me grow as a writer. My life's work has been to increase the visibility of Latino/a/e/x in the genre that I read and love. If you look at the 2023 Lee & Low Diversity Survey, you'll see that Hispanics/Latinas represent only 4.6 % of the publishing industry, yet we are 20% of the US population. Through my presidency and beyond, I want Latinas writing in the mystery and crime fiction genre to know that they are not alone and that their voices are needed. I want to inspire Latine writers to boldly use their heritage and culture in their mysteries, suspense, and thrillers. And even though I am the first Latina to be president, I am in good company with other trailblazers who have come before me, such as co-founder and firebrand Sara Paretsky, and the organization's first Black president Frankie Y. Bailey, author and criminal justice professor, among others.

TELL US MORE ABOUT SINC'S ANNUAL GRANTS OF \$2,000 FOR EMERGING MYSTERY WRITERS OF COLOR AND FOR MEMBERS OF THE LGBTQIA MYSTERY WRITERS' COMMUNITY.

RAQUEL: The Eleanor Taylor Bland grant and the Pride grant each have an annual application window. SinC, also, has a \$500 grant for academic research and \$500 grants for libraries and bookstores. Take a look at our [Advocate](#) page for more details. I encourage Latine writers and Latine bookstore owners to apply.

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¡Felicitamos con muchísimo orgullo a nuestra fundadora, Dra. Nora Comstock!

Nora ha sido reconocida con el 2026 HABLA con Orgullo Legada Award, un reconocimiento a su significativo impacto en la comunidad latina de Austin y a una trayectoria que representa legado, liderazgo y latinidad. @everyone

Desde Las Comadres celebramos este merecido reconocimiento a una mujer que ha dedicado tantos años a crear comunidad, abrir espacios, conectar a mujeres latinas y fortalecer nuestra presencia y nuestras voces.

El reconocimiento será entregado durante los 2026 HABLA con Orgullo Awards – "Love Your Cultura":



FALL | WINTER 2026

MANY CULTURES, UNA FIESTA

EDITORIAL

Editors: *Rosa A. Beato & Clara Galvão Rivera*

As we celebrate the **5th Anniversary of the Las Comadres Connect Newsletter**, we reflect with gratitude on the creativity, inspiration, and knowledge that have filled its pages over the years. What began as a way to connect Las Comadres, has grown into a vibrant platform where women share their stories, experiences, achievements, resources, and wisdom. Each edition has strengthened our bonds, highlighted the power of sisterhood, and provided valuable information that empowers us personally and professionally. Through the dedication of contributors, readers, and supporters, the newsletter has become a trusted source of encouragement, learning, and connection.

This milestone is especially meaningful as we embrace our anniversary theme, **"Many Cultures, Una Fiesta."** Our diverse backgrounds, traditions, languages, and perspectives have enriched the Las Comadres community and made our newsletter a true celebration of unity in diversity. Together, we have created a welcoming space where every voice matters and every culture is honored. As we look ahead to the next chapter, we celebrate not only five years of publishing but also the friendships, cultural exchange, and collective strength that continue to bring us together as one vibrant community.



We want to express our sincere gratitude for your invaluable contributions to the FALL/WINTER edition of **Las Comadres Connect** newsletter. We look forward to working together on future endeavors.

- **SHIRLEY YANIS, GEEKETTES CHAT**
- **LILA GUZMAN, PH.D., LORENZO'S SECRET MISSION**
- **NAYELLY REYES, FOUNDER OF PATHIO STUDIO**
- **ELDA ACEVEDO ESTEFANÍA**



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The Secret Flatboat Flotilla | La flotilla secreta de barcas

The History of the Pinata | Drawings | Dibujos

Newsletter Editors | Editoras del Boletín



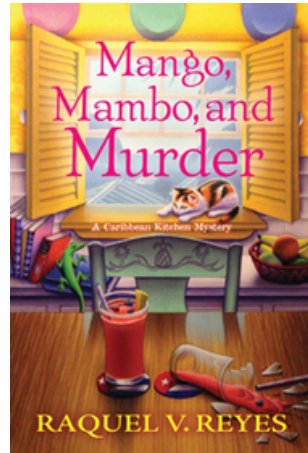


In the Spotlight | En el Centro de Atención --continues

LET'S MEET RAQUEL V. REYES

by Clara Galvano Rivera

YOUR FIRST BOOK, MANGO, MAMBO, AND MURDER, WAS PUBLISHED IN 2022, WERE YOU ALREADY A MEMBER OF SINC AND WRITING MYSTERIES?



RAQUEL: I became a member of SinC in/or about 2005. I joined the national organization so I could be a member of the Guppy (The Great Un-Published) chapter, which was an online group with a message board where you could ask beginner questions and make writer friends. At the time, I was working on a cozy mystery I'd titled The Piche Way. That manuscript got my foot in the door, but it was never published.

HOW AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WRITE MYSTERIES?

RAQUEL: I started reading mysteries as a young person. I went from Agatha Christie to Elizabeth Peters pretty quickly. Then I found cozy mysteries and fell in love with them. But it wasn't until I read my first Lupe Solano mystery in my late 20s – early 30s that I felt represented. Lupe Solano was Cuban-American and lived in Coral Gables (part of Miami). I was Cuban-American and grew up in Miami. It was like I was on the page and in the story. I'd never felt like that. The author of the series, Carolina Garcia-Aguillera, became an inspiration for me. If her Cuban-American detective novel could get published, then maybe I could write a cozy mystery and see it on shelves.

Visit author [Raquel V. Reyes' Latina Sleuths](#) website. Learn more about [Sisters in Crime](#).



IMPORTANT WEBSITES TO KNOW

[Las Comadres Para Las Americas](#)

NEW! Latina, Live...Love...Journal.
[Order your copy](#) today!

[Cooking with Las Comadres cookbook](#)
(recordings)

[Las Comadres Tshirts](#)

[Las Comadres & Friends National Latino Book Club](#)

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MANY CULTURES, UNA FIESTA



San Antonio, TX



Tennessee



Rio Grande Valley, TX

COMADRAZOS



New York City, NY



Fort Worth, TX



NW Cedar Park, TX



San Diego, CA





MANY CULTURES, UNA FIESTA



DC-Maryland-Virginia



COMADRAZO
Manor, Texas 🇺🇸
June 2026



Austin, TX



Harlingen, TX



Inland Empire, CA



COMADRAZOS



LAS COMADRES & FRIENDS BOOK CLUB ANNOUNCES BOOKS OF THE MONTH / *Líbrros del mes*



SEPTEMBER

- *Migrant Heart: Essays About Things I Can't Forget* by Reyna Grande
- *Hear Ye Mortals* by Yamile Saied Mendez

OCTOBER

- *What Will They Say?* by Denise Soler Cox
- *The Malevolent Nephilim* by Lydia Ortiz Avant

NOVEMBER

- *Graceless Heart* by Isabel Ibanez
- *Daughter of Rot* by Rios de la Luz

DECEMBER

- *Bodega Stories* by Amaris Castillo
- *The Sun and All the Other Stars* by Karla Montalvan

JANUARY

- *Last Night in Brooklyn* by Xochitl Gonzalez
- *Something Followed Us Home* by Cynthia Pelayo

Visit the Book Club at LatinoLit.com

Sign up for the monthly [Live Author Chats](#)
(last Monday of the month)

#ReadLatinoLit

LAS COMADRES PRESENTS / EVENTS



OCTOBER EVENTS

4 - MOVIE NIGHT

Dior Cruise 2024 Fashion Show in Mexico, tribute to Frida Kahlo, hostess Lorenza designer Karina Martinez

15 - STAYING SAFE ON THE INTERNET with Judith Solis

22 - MIND, BODY & SPIRIT SERIES: REIKI MENTORSHIP with Carolina Perez

24 - AI PRESENTATION led by Sally Acevedo, Internet Leaders Founder

26 - LIVE AUTHOR CHAT with Denise Soler Cox and Lydia Ortiz Avant

28 - WELLNESS CHECK Dr. Ana Nogales will lead an Open Forum in a safe space for Comadres to discuss openly their concerns and fears.



2026 LATINX FILMS / PELICULAS LATINX

Stars that brighten the movie theaters and home screens

by Shirley Yanis, Geekettes Chat

Our father Roberto loved movies. He grew up in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, watching films starring child actress Shirley Temple, who one of us was named after. He was a kid when he moved to New York with his family in the late 40s. Growing up in NYC, Roberto and his friends lived in the movie theaters. He told me that movie theaters from back then had all day programming; tickets didn't correspond to one single showtime so many kids from the Tri-state area would hangout all day watching newsreels, animated cartoons, short subjects and then finally the main feature film. Parents would show up at the end of day looking for their kids at the movie theater. When he had kids of his own, it was a family tradition for us to go see the summer blockbuster movies at the theater on Saturdays at AMC Village 7 or Kips Bay, which sadly is closing by the end of the month by the time this article is released. It was his love of movies that inspired our passion for films.

For other Latino families going to the movies is a family tradition as well. That is why for many years now you might have seen many countless articles about Latino moviegoers driving domestic box office success. An article from NBC News (Yip, 2024) stated that a research conducted by McKinsey & Company, "non-latino whites Americans see films about 2.3 times a year on average. Latinos audiences have the highest per capita annual film attendance, at 3.3 times a year." They also mention that "Latinos are consistently the group that boosts box office success." Sadly that hasn't transitioned to more BIPOC-led and behind the scene projects getting more greenlighted but the opposite is happening in Hollywood because of our current administration which has dismantled corporate DEI programs and projects.



Hollywood has been rolling back on DEI initiatives and widespread cancellation of industry wide BIPOC-led series, and films. In an article from The Hollywood Reporter (Maglio, 2026), it brings up how in 2025 there were less streaming originals led or created works by BIPOC creators. "After the big numbers we saw for diversity streaming originals just a couple of years ago, we now see the path closing for people of color and women to premiere their film on a major steamer". That is why it's very important whenever I can to seek out and share the latest film or series with BIPOC actors and creators.

For Hispanic Heritage Month, here is my list of films and series that came out this year starring or created by Latinx artists.

- **Julia LIVES (Julia' Vive)** a powerful documentary celebrating the life and the enduring legacy of Puerto Rican poet and activist Juila de Burgos by director Álvaro Calderón. It made us fall in love with Juila de Burgos.
- **DreamZzz** by director Hedi B. Asencio feeling like a psychedelic painting coming to life, the film is about an artist who is reconsidering his life and purpose after the death of his mentor.



2026 LATINX FILMS / PELICULAS LATINX (CONTINUES)

by Shirley Yanis, Geekettes Chat

- **Stream of Memories** by director Carlos Ramon Advincola Jr, an animated short film love letter to old loves behind the greenery backdrop of the Bronx River. A man walks along the Bronx River as memories of his past love come back to him.

If you want to check out Latin American and Caribbean films, Latino Film Market Festival has free screenings all throughout the year in Harlem and Washington Heights.

This year's big screen and streaming adventures were exciting for Latinx stars and creators. Early spring was the release of the book adaptation of *"Project Hail Mary"*, an amazing hopeful space adventure, which is co-directed by Cuban-American director Phil Lord. You will fall in love with the relationship between Rocky (James Ortiz, Puerto Rican-Italian voice actor) and Dr. Grace (Ryan Gosling).

Latinx leads had a wide range of performances in blockbuster films and series. This year we were introduced to a new horror icon Nikki played by Inde Navarrette (Mexican-Australian). She gave a powerful performance in the film *"Obsession"*. A film about the nice guy myth and the loss of autonomy. In July, Christopher Nolan's adaptation of Ancient Greek poet Homer's *"The Odyssey"* came out to really good reviews, one of the highlighted performances was by John Leguizamo (Colombian-American), who played Eumaeus the trusted servant of Odysseus.

Early in the year Netflix released the thriller *"His & Hers"* starring Tessa Thompson (Afro-Panamanian-Mexican-American). A twist and turn series about two estranged spouses, one a detective and the other a news reporter trying to solve a murder from their hometown.

- One film we had outrageously fun with was **"Masters of the Universe"**. A film based on the 80's action-figure toy line created by Mattel, co-starring *Camila Mendes (Brazilian-American)* as iconic warrior Teela.

We had such a wonderful time at festivals, theaters and home screenings. We love championing the variety of films from Latin America, Caribbean and films around the world with Latinx talent in front and behind the camera. This Hispanic Heritage Month, show your support for Latinx films, watch, share and spread the word.





MI FAVORITA LATINO FILMS

JULIA ABRANTES

- Mambo Kings
- Like Water for Chocolate
- Buena Vista Social Club
- Zoot Suit
- Under the Same Moon
- Real Women Have Curves
- Tortilla Soup
- B'less Me Ultima
- Frida

ELDA ACEDVEDO

- Looking for María Sánchez, 2013, starring Lin Manuel Miranda, Jaime Camil, Bruno Iriarrry, Deyanara Torres

RAESHA CARTAGENA

- West Side Story
- Smoke Signals
- Bronxville Bred

MARIA FERRER

- Kiss of the Spider Woman— 1985, with Raul Julia. Set in a Brazilian prison with no way out
- I like it like that —1994, set in Bronx. Introduced singer Jerry Rivera
- Chasing Papi —2003, set in LA with 3-timing boyfriend but the girls get him back
- Desperado—1995, Antonio Banderas with a guitar and a gun. Of course Salma Hayek falls for him. Me too
- Bless Me, Última— 2012, young boy comes of age in New Mexico desert with curandera / medicine woman as guide

CINDY GARCIA

- Stand and Deliver

NINFA GARCIA

- Evita: starring Madonna, Antonio Calderas, Irene Azuela
- Coco, the Disney musical

SANDRA GONZALEZ

- Like Water for Chocolate
- Mi Familia—Gregory Nava
- Selena—Gregory Nava

PHOENIX LARA

- Tortilla Soup, Chef. and Blue Beetle

CYNTHIA MARTINEZ

- Tortilla Soup, 2001, Comedy, Drama

NYDIA MARSELLA

- Coco

KARINNA PEREZ CANTU

- Vecinos: Love Thy Neighbor: 2021, starring Karinna Perez Cantu, JoAnn Reyes and Rupert Reyes

MIRTA RINALDI

- Elsa & Fred: Starting Shirley MacLaine, Christopher Plummer

NELLI WOLVERTON

- Like Water for Chocolate: starring Azul Guaita, Andrés Baida

GRACIAS FOR SUBMITTING YOUR FAVORITE LATINO FILMS!





NEW COMADRES COOKBOOK / Nuevo Libro de Cocina by Cindy Landez



I am pleased to announce that we are currently working on a new cookbook for Las Comadres. We put out a call for new recipes, due on October 16, 2026. Each Comadre can submit up to five (5) recipes. This cookbook will also be filled with delicious recipes for all kinds of entrees, side dishes, beverages, desserts, etc.

In working on the **Cooking with Las Comadres** cookbook, we noticed that we have several great chefs in our organization that focus on healthy options and we think it's great. We would like to include a Vegetarian Entrée Section in Volume 2. So if you have a good vegetarian recipe, please share.

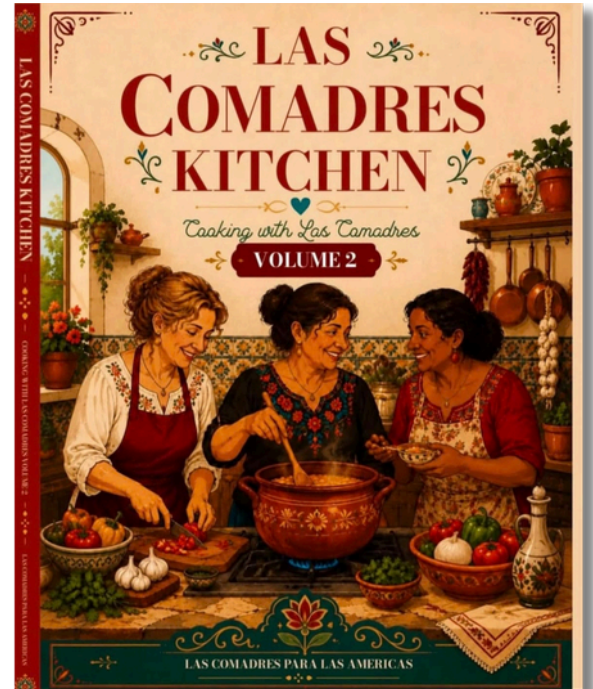
The [Cooking with Las Comadres cookbook \(vol 1\)](#) was a natural extension of the [Las Comadres Kitchen Series/ Cocinando con Las Comadres](#), which can be viewed on the [Las Comadres Para Las Americas YouTube Channel](#).

For [Season 2](#) of the series, I've had the pleasure of interviewing 5 Comadres as they demonstrated and discussed one of their recipes from Cooking with Las Comadres.

You can still obtain your copy of [Cooking with Las Comadres](#), volume 1 on Amazon. It is a community cookbook featuring over 130 family recipes and stories contributed by 60 members of Las Comadres Para Las Americas. Sales from these cookbooks serve as a fundraiser for yearly organizational programs.

We look forward to hearing from more Comadres and receiving your recipes, interviewing you for another season of Kitchen Series with more invitations into Comadres' kitchens, the heart of the Latina family.

!Buen Provecho!



HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR RECIPES

You can submit up to FIVE (5) recipes. (Submit each one separately.) Please send your photograph to Cindy at clandez@sbcglobal.net. Your photo and recipe story will be included in the new cookbook.

WIN GIFT CARD!

As an incentive, the first 25 Comadres to submit a recipe will be entered to win a \$25 gift card. Submit your recipes today.

DEADLINE IS October 16, 2026.

The new **Cooking with Las Comadres** cookbook will be available for the Holidays. It will make a great stocking stuffer. (You'll need a big stocking. LOL)



Many Cultures, Una Fiesta

By Elda Acevedo Estefanía

I have spent most of my life translating myself. My mother was Cuban. My father was Puerto Rican. I was born and raised in Puerto Rico, went to college in Indiana, worked in London, lived in Seattle, married, raised two bilingual children, and built a life in Texas. Along the way, I have worked in tech, nonprofits, and education, each with a culture of its own.

For years, I thought this constant movement between cultures was simply part of my story. I didn't have a name for it. Then I realized that I had been doing something my entire life: InterCulturaling. I made up the word because I needed a verb. We usually talk about culture as a noun. Something we belong to, inherit, celebrate, or preserve. But those of us who regularly move between cultures know that culture is also something we do.

We interpret. We adjust. We explain. We misunderstand. We try again. And sometimes the most interesting cultural differences have nothing to do with nationality. They show up when someone stands closer to us than we expect. When one person considers an hour and a half late perfectly reasonable, and another considers it disrespectful. When speaking up means confidence to one person and disrespect to another. When someone smiles because she is uncomfortable and the person across from her assumes she isn't taking the situation seriously.

The behavior is visible. The meaning we attach to it is not.

That realization eventually became the heart of my book, *InterCulturaling: For Those of Us Who Live Our Lives in Translation and the People Who Live It With Us*.

I wrote it for people who have spent their lives moving between worlds, but also for the people who live, work, teach, love, and communicate with us.

Because all of us do something remarkably human: we interpret other people through what makes sense to us. And then we mistake our interpretation for fact.

InterCulturaling asks us to create just a little space between what we see and what we decide it means.

Not to abandon our standards. Not to excuse every behavior. Not to pretend that every difference is cultural.

Just to pause long enough to wonder: Could there be another explanation?

That is what I hear in the beautiful theme *Many Cultures, Una Fiesta*. Not that our differences disappear when we come together. They don't. We bring them with us. Even when we share a language, we bring different histories, expectations, relationships with time, ideas about respect, ways of showing affection, definitions of family, and thousands of invisible rules we may not even realize we carry.

The goal isn't to become the same. It is to become curious enough about one another that difference doesn't have to become distance.

Maybe that's what una fiesta can really mean. Not one culture. Not one way. One space big enough for all of us. And if we're lucky, a space filled with Comadres.



Honoring Comadres Veterans

Honrando a las comadres veteranas

by Clara Galvano Rivera



Veterans Day is a national U.S. Federal Holiday that honors all American military veterans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces—living and deceased, in peacetime and in war. When Las Comadres put out a request for veterans to come forward and share their stories with us, two courageous members did. Let's meet them!

GLORIA RAIGOZA

a Flight Nurse Captain in the U.S. Air Force serving from 8/1983-4/1991 as a reservist. During this time, she would travel to Seattle for training once a month. In her words, "I wanted my skills to matter in the moments that matter most. Nursing has always been a calling for me. I felt a pull towards something bigger, a commitment to others that went beyond the walls of a hospital. The Air Force offered that flight nurses meet soldiers at their most vulnerable moments and bring them safely home. It takes a special teamwork to stabilize a patient at altitude in the back of an aircraft --that purpose resonated with me." Comadre Raigoza was activated for the Gulf War (1990–1991) but at the last minute, she and the other flight nurses were released.

A single parent with two boys at home, she decided it was time to leave the Air Force. (The ban on women in direct combat roles was officially rescinded in December 2015 by Defense Secretary Ash Carter under the Obama administration.)

With an Honorable Discharge under her belt, she continued helping others in her area, which is when she noticed a lack of good health care in her community. In 1992, she decided to create the Denver Chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) to connect professional nurses and improve the wellness of Latino communities. Her initiative aimed to advocate for culturally competent healthcare and address the specific health needs of Hispanic populations in the area. Recently, the NAHN had their 2026 Annual Conference in Denver and it was a huge success, which made Raigoza, truly happy. The event offered professional networking, updates, and sponsorship opportunities available for Hispanic nurses.

For more info: <https://www.hispanicnurses-denverchapter.org>



Honoring Comadres Veterans - Continues

by Clara Galvano Rivera

ALEIDA GONZALEZ

Another amazing Comadre veteran, Aleida Gonzalez served in Afghanistan (2008-2009) and is currently a member of the Illinois Army National Guard, where she now serves as a Battalion Commander.

Was she afraid when she learned she would be deployed? Nope, she said this was what the training was for, and she wanted to see what it was like. We are so glad she made it back safely!!

She joined the United States Army after college to "be all that she could be". She relates that the hardest part of her training was Officer Candidate School. Because "Back in 2003, it was physically demanding with an average of 4 hours of sleep."

Asked if her Latina Heritage influenced her experience in the military, Gonzalez responded, "I never had any negative experiences being a Latina in a male dominated environment. In fact, I feel it's been the opposite as my culture kept me open to other cultures and allowed me to connect with others. Also, my education and work experience have enhanced my military career. I'm a civilian lawyer and my background has been the cornerstone of my success."

Having a solid education that can serve the military will certainly lead to success. Early on in my career I never met or really saw many Latina/o leaders and now that I am in a leadership role, I hope I can inspire other Latinos in the military."

Aleida Gonzalez has been in the U.S. Army for 28 years and although most of her mentors have been white, one mentor, who is also Mexican American and still mentors her, is now Illinois Army National Guards' first Latino Brigadier General! Gonzalez and he are still in touch and he's trying to set her up to be in line for promotion to a General as well. We hope she gets her due, despite The New York Times reporting on August 6, 2026 that under current leadership the share of women's military promotions have fallen to the "lowest level in over two decades".

Veterans Raigoza and Gonzalez encourage Latinas to join whichever military branch inspires them the most.

**We salute and are proud of you,
Comadre Raigoza and Comadre Gonzalaez!**

This Veteran's Day we honor all Comadres who have served. **Thank You For Your Service.**





THE HOMES WE INHERIT

by Nayelly Reyes, founder of Pathio Studio



When I think about the homes we inherit, I'm not necessarily talking about a house someone leaves us. I'm thinking about the invisible things that move with us from one home to another.

The way my grandma always insisted there should be enough food in the house in case someone stopped by unexpectedly. Waking up on Saturday mornings to the sound of my mom's juicer making fresh orange juice before breakfast. The smell of coffee filling the kitchen. Family photographs covering the walls, making the house feel like a living museum of the people who came before us. Religious figures, fresh flowers, and veladoras that always had their place. The little rituals we never questioned because, to us, they were simply what home looked like.

THE OLDER I GET, THE MORE I REALIZE WE DON'T INHERIT WALLS. WE INHERIT WAYS OF LIVING.

We are, in many ways, a collection of the people who came before us—pieces of our parents, our grandparents, the neighborhoods we grew up in, the cities we left behind, and the traditions we decided to keep. Some of those pieces are obvious. Others quietly appear years later, when we hear ourselves saying something our mother used to say or setting the table exactly the way our grandmother always did.

I've come to believe that a home is really a collection of stories. Those stories simply happen to live inside ordinary things.

As humans, we don't just own objects—we attach meaning to them. Sometimes so much meaning that letting go feels impossible. But I don't think we're attached to the object itself. We're attached to the life that happened around it.

Maybe it's your grandmother's favorite cooking pot, a wooden toy chest filled with childhood treasures, or the smell of tortillas warming on the stove. The object isn't what stays with us.

The feeling does.

Then, as life moves forward, our collection grows.

We travel somewhere and fall in love with a colorful town. We come home carrying a ceramic bowl, a woven basket, or a piece of artwork from a local artisan. To someone else, they're just souvenirs. To us, they're reminders of who we were in that moment.

Our homes slowly become less about decorating and more about documenting our lives. Maybe that's why no two homes ever feel exactly the same, even when they have similar furniture.

Because what we're really seeing isn't someone's design style. We're seeing their story.

PATHIO

Interior Design Studio Austin, Texas + Central Texas



The Homes We Inherit - continues

by Nayelly Reyes, founder of Pathio Studio

As an interior designer, I spend a lot of time thinking about spaces. It's easy to focus on finishes, furniture, lighting, or floor plans. Those things matter, of course. But over time I've realized they aren't what people remember most.

People remember how a place made them feel. They remember feeling welcomed. They remember lingering over one more cup of coffee. They remember laughter around a table. They remember belonging. And I don't think that's true only inside our homes. I think it's true in the places we choose to return to over and over again.

Have you ever walked into a neighborhood coffee shop and immediately relaxed? Or found yourself returning to the same little restaurant because something about it felt familiar?

Our brains are constantly making connections. The stories we've collected throughout our lives become emotional reference points. When a place reflects pieces of those stories—through its textures, colors, scents, sounds, or the way people welcome us—it awakens something familiar inside us.

Without realizing it, we think, I like it here. Sometimes what we're really saying is, this place reminds me of home. I don't think that's an accident.

Good design isn't just about making a place beautiful. It's about creating the conditions for someone to feel like they belong.

Lately, I've been thinking about another kind of inheritance—not the one I received, but the one I'm creating.

memories

As an immigrant, I've had to build "home" more than once. I left Mexico City as a teenager, spent years in Chicago, then San Antonio, and now find myself planting new roots in Central Texas. Each move meant leaving behind familiar streets and people I loved. Yet somehow, home kept finding its way back to me—not because I recreated the same house, but because I carried pieces of it with me.

A recipe. A language. Music playing while I cook. Celebrating birthdays with candles, "*Las Mañanitas*," and the familiar cheers of "*¡Que le sope, que le muerda, y queremos pastel!*" I realized that home was never tied to one address. It was something I had been carrying all along.

Now, as I watch my own children grow, I wonder what they'll remember. I hope they'll remember that our table always had room for one more person. That birthdays were celebrated loudly. That Bad Bunny, Los Tucanes de Tijuana, Daft Punk, Michael Jackson, and Shakira were always playing somewhere in the house. I hope they'll remember creativity as something we practiced together and that our home was always a place where they felt safe to be themselves.

One day they'll build homes of their own, and without even realizing it, they'll take pieces of this one with them. Maybe they'll keep some traditions. Maybe they'll create completely new ones. That's how inheritance works. Each generation receives a collection of stories. And each generation quietly passes them on.

PERHAPS THAT'S WHAT HOME HAS ALWAYS BEEN. NOT A PLACE. BUT A COLLECTION OF MEMORIES, PEOPLE, TRADITIONS, AND LOVE THAT WE CARRY WITH US—AND, WITH A LITTLE INTENTION, LEAVE BEHIND FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO CALL HOME.



The Latino Connection to the American Revolution

by Lila Guzman, Ph.D., *Lorenzo's Secret Mission*



Were your ancestors part of the American Revolution? If so, what were their roles?

As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, it's time to remember the importance of Latinos in establishing this country.

Maybe your ancestors were on the flatboat flotillas that delivered Spanish supplies to George Washington. Spanish muskets, gunpowder, cloth, and medicine left New Orleans on September 22, 1776 and arrived in the spring.

Or were they vaqueros on the cattle drives that herded longhorns from San Antonio to Louisiana to feed Spanish soldiers fighting the British?

Were they at the Battles of Baton Rouge (1779), Mobile (1780), and Pensacola (1781)? Were they part of General Bernardo de Galvez's army? (And if you live in Galveston, Texas, you live in a town named for him.)

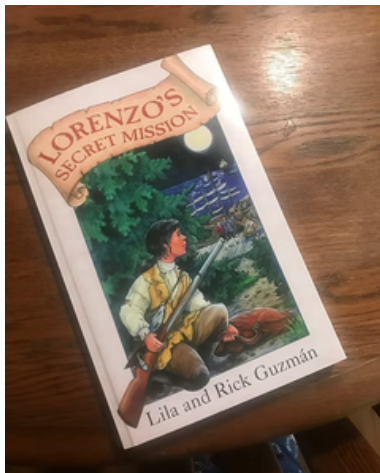
Perhaps your ancestors lived in Cuba. In 1781, General Washington didn't have enough money to pay his troops. When the Ladies of Havana learned this, they donated their gold jewelry, diamonds, and Spanish pillar dollars and sent funds to General Washington when he needed it most.

People often overlook the contributions of Latinos and think of the American Revolution as events that occurred in the *original* 13 British colonies.

But there were more than 13 British colonies. East Florida and West Florida were the 14th and 15th British colonies and did not join the original 13 when they declared their independence.

The Revolutionary War went beyond the thirteen original colonies. The Hispanic contribution to the war was immense and critical to its success.

Spain's role in the American Revolution has generally been overlooked. Let's correct that.



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THE SECRET FLATBOAT FLOTILLA

by Lila Guzman, Ph.D.
Lorenzo's Secret Mission
Arte Público Press

If you were living in **New Orleans in September 1776**, you might have been getting ready to get on flatboats headed up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers to deliver supplies to General Washington.

For the last couple of months, since the end of July, you might have noticed some strangers in town. Men from Pennsylvania were roaming New Orleans--huge, crude men who didn't speak a word of Spanish or French. Their English didn't sound like British English.

What you might not have known is that "Gibson's Lambs," a rowdy group of Pennsylvanians under the command of Captain George Gibson, had arrived in town in July on a secret mission.

Gibson was one of the few men in the British colonies who spoke Spanish and French.

The Continental Congress had asked the King of Spain for aide and he had sent it.

In July 1776, ships loaded with supplies left Bilbao in northern Spain and headed to Spanish-held New Orleans. There, muskets, cloth to make uniforms, gunpowder, and medicine were unloaded and put in a waterfront warehouse.

Then, Bernardo de Galvez had to wait for just the right moment to spring the trap. On September 22, 1776, he put on a show of arresting Captain Gibson.

British spies reported that Gibson's Lambs weren't going anywhere with their commander sitting in jail.

Wrong! Galvez and Gibson had worked out a cover story. That night, the flatboat flotilla left during the dark of night bound for Fort Pitt.

*What happened next? Stay tuned or read "Lorenzo's Secret Mission (Arte Público Press) for the rest of the story.



History of the Piñata

By Esperanza Beltrán



The piñata arrived in Mexico after the Spanish conquest in the 16th century. As early as the 1580s, Augustinian friars in Acolman, a town in what is now the State of Mexico, organized Christmas festivities in which they incorporated the piñata. However, in Mesoamerica there existed practices that involved decorated vessels.

Although a direct connection has not been confirmed, a theory exists that the tradition of breaking a decorated container comes from China. During celebrations associated with the Chinese New Year, figures made from paper and filled with seeds were used in ceremonial activities. Participants struck the figures with sticks until they broke. The remains were then burned, and the ashes were collected as a symbol of good fortune.

A similar practice developed during the 14th century in European communities, where decorated containers were broken during religious or festive occasions. In Spain, a related practice became associated with Lent and the first Sunday of Lent.

The piñata became associated with Christian symbolism. The traditional seven-pointed design represented the seven deadly sins. The blindfold represented faith, and the stick was associated with the struggle against temptation.

Overtime, the practice developed beyond its original religious setting. Piñatas became part of Mexican celebrations such as posadas and birthdays.

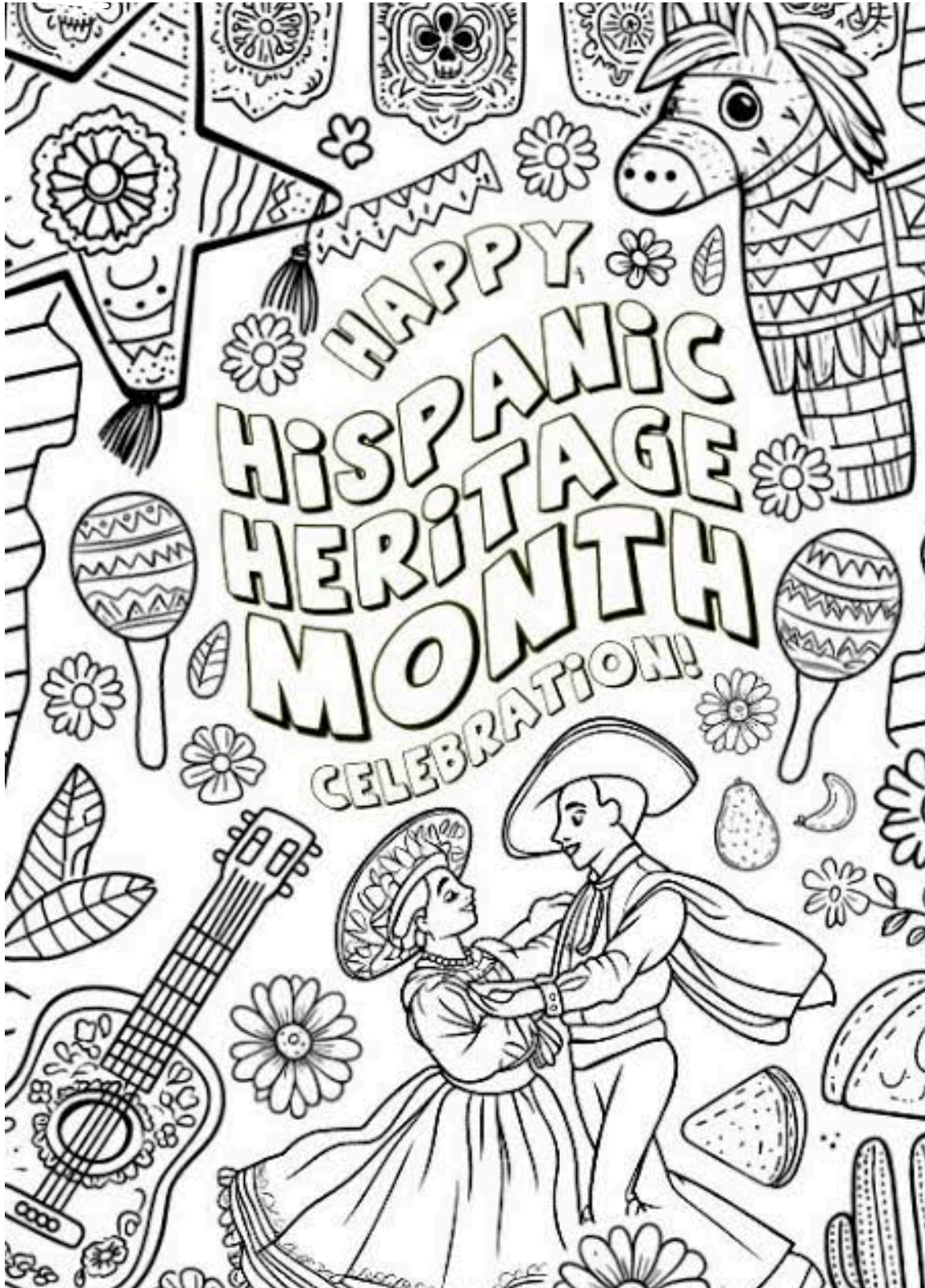
The use of piñatas spread beyond Mexico during the 20th century, particularly through Mexican and Mexican-American communities. Piñatas are now used at celebrations in many countries and are associated with a variety of cultural and secular events.



FIESTA: PIÑATA



FIESTA: HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH





Newsletter Editors | Las Editoras del Boletín



ROSA A. BEATO

A long-time resident of Boston, originally from the Dominican Republic, Rosa is the youngest of 7 siblings and mother of one child (Johnny) and grand-dog (Zorro). For more than 10 years, has been the co-facilitator of the Boston Las Comadres Network along with Debbie Bonilla. Loves to line dance with NE Soul Line Dance Network where dance is part of building and connecting communities and wellness. I love the outdoors, hiking, fitness and LIVE, LOVE to TRAVEL.



ESPERANZA BELTRÁN

An editor for over two years and is currently in search of an agent for her debut novel, *OFELIA: AN ORCHID IN THE SIERRA*, a story based on the life of her grand-mother with whom she had a complicated love-hate relationship. She also has a newsletter of her own, The Unpopular History of Mexico, in which she shares her findings on Mexican history. Esperanza is also the creator of our coloring pages.

New Editor



MEET CLARA GALVANO RIVERA

Born in Manhattan's "El Barrio," then transplanted and raised in Puerto Rico until the age of 7 before returning to NYC, Clara has had a remarkable career. A graduate of Fordham University at Lincoln Center, she was successful in roles with Bristol Myers/Claire, DM News, The Daily News, and at The New York Times — twice! After retiring from Corporate work, she decided to become a freelance writer and work quickly came. Her several years working with LatinTrends Magazine, focused on Latino celebrity interview cover stories (e.g., John Leguizamo, Gilberto Santa Rosa), business, and culture (including a breakthrough article on the history of the Young Lords movement and an article about Las Comadres). Clara has been a Comadre with the NYC Chapter for 20 years (and came up with the idea of the annual NYC Birthday celebration for all Comadres). She has contributed articles for the Newsletter previously and is now honored and excited to join the Editorial Board!



NORA DE HOYOS COMSTOCK, PhD

The National/International Founder of Las Comadres Para Las Americas. She is the mastermind behind all things for Comadres. She has also graciously agreed to proofread the newsletter before it goes out.



MARIA FERRER

She is Executive Director of Las Comadres Para Las Americas and part of the Leadership Team of Las Comadres & Friends National Latino Book Club. In her other life she is a globe-trotting meeting planner who has visited 25+ countries and counting. When not organizing events, Maria is reading, writing and learning to paint watercolors.

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