

Complete List of Publications

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www.aprilgalarza.com

News & Feature Articles

Demo Magazine

<http://cms.colum.edu/demo/>

2008

Election Night Memories

Gazette (Chicago) Formerly The Near West Gazette

2007

Global Warming: we all can do our part to improve environment (City Beat Feature)

This article won an award in the 20th Annual Apex Awards for Excellence competition

Quarry Park Slated to Open Spring 2008 (Front Page Cover Story)

Ald. Balcer, City look to replace Bridgeport Jewel (Front Page Cover Story)

Jewel Closes its Doors (Front Page Cover Story)

Quarry Park Plans Revealed (page 2 story)

McGuane Park to host Summer Fest

St. Mary of Perpetual Help celebrates 125th anniversary

Chicago Memorial Day Parade a grand solemn tradition

McGuane Park women finally get new lockers

Problems at Bridgeport Village slow development's completion

Balcer, CDC look to redevelop old bank property, brownfield.

Bridgeport Battle sees Segvich taking on Balcer

Halsted Street the gateway to 11th Ward revitalization

2006

Park district won't budge on swim coach

Park District ousts star swim coach

Fireman Joseph Kish proves to be a true Bridgeport hero

Community leader Bland takes on Turner in 9th House District

Day of the Dead Celebrates life and lost love ones (City Beat Feature)

Art Revolution underway throughout Pilsen Area (City Beat Feature)

Roosevelt University cuts Tuition in Some Programs

Spirit: A Magazine Designed for the Diverse Woman

www.spirit-mag.com

2006

Spheres Of Influence; Someone You Should Know, Pat Michalski

2007

In the Spirit of Enlightenment; An Interview with Cindy Kelly

An Anchor of Hope; an Interview with Lisa Aprati

Healthy Conflict: Why you should argue with your Partner!

For Her Information Chicago

<http://www.forherinformation.com>

2007

A New Era For Working Moms

Essortment.com Formerly pagewise.com

<http://www.essortment.com/>

2002

Ten ways to destress before a test

Learn about skiing; techniques, equipment and instruction

Hosting a dress-up birthday party

Short Stories

Story Week Reader

http://www.colum.edu/Academics/Fiction_Writing/Publishing_Lab/SWR/2006SWR.php

2006

The End of Summer

10,000 Tons of Black Ink

<http://aprilgalarza.wordpress.com/2008/01/02/1a-llorona/>

2007

La Llorona



'Day of the Dead' celebrates life and lost loved ones

By April Galarza

We can fear death, change the subject when it is brought up, avoid it completely until we are forced to face it at a funeral—or we can take a hint from Mexico and celebrate it. In Mexico and other parts of the world, people take this time of year to remember those we have lost and reflect on the lives they led. El Dia de los Muertos (The Day of the Dead) is part of this seasonal observance.

These celebrations allow participants to acknowledge death and speak of it not with fear and mourning but with joy and respect. Celebrants believe when you talk about death ultimately you are talking about life, and they enjoy the Day of the Dead's focus on death's humor and humanity.

For example, folk art displayed at this time of year emphasizes playful portrayals of skeletons brightly clad and participating in ordinary human activities. Often they are dancing, laughing, and singing.

Others can be seen playing cards, riding bicycles, or doing anything else they might have enjoyed to face it at a funeral—or we can take a hint from Mexico and celebrate. it. In Mexico and other parts of the world, people take this time of year to remember those we have lost and reflect on the lives they led. El Dia de los Muertos (The Day of the Dead) is part of this seasonal observance. These celebrations allow participants to



Photos by Michael Topka

Ricardo Linares' "Un Sueno" is a Day of the Dead sculpture at the Mexican Fine

acknowledge death and speak of it not with fear and mourning but with joy and respect. Celebrants believe when you talk about death ultimately you are talking about life, and they enjoy the Day of the Dead's focus on death's humor and humanity.

For example, folk art displayed at this time of year emphasizes playful portrayals of skeletons brightly clad and participating in ordinary human activities. Often they are dancing, laughing, and singing.

Others can be seen playing cards, riding bicycles, or doing anything else they might have enjoyed while alive. Mexico's ancient indigenous people believed the spirits of the dead returned to earth one day a year to be among the living so they would never be forgotten. The Spanish conquistadors thought it better to accommodate this belief into Christianity than try to stop it.

The celebration actually lasts several days. October 31 is the Day of the Angelitos, dedicated to the souls of infants and children.

November 1 honors departed adults, and November 2 it is sometimes necessary to don masks and chase the

stubborn souls back to their graves. Although it may appear related to Halloween, the Day of the Dead actually more closely resembles Memorial Day because it celebrates and remembers those who have left us.

Traditionally celebrated in small rural communities in southern and central Mexico, the Day of the Dead is more a spiritual holiday than a religious one. Although parishioners attend church services on All Souls Day (Nov. 2), the real celebration happens outside church when celebrants gather in cemeteries to clean and decorate their loved ones' graves with marigolds and candles. They bring toys for deceased children and alcohol for adults. They spread picnic blankets and feast on their dead relatives' favorite foods. Mariachi bands wander in between graves taking requests for favorite songs of the dearly departed. All night a "death day"



"Arbol de Frida" is made of polychromed ceramic and wire.

celebration goes on while families await the spirits' return.

Chicago traditions

In Chicago, the traditions have changed slightly due to weather, laws regarding cemeteries, and generational differences.

Often it is impossible to visit a relative's gravesite, so people have adopted the custom of building altars (ofrendas) to honor one or more departed loved ones. Ofrendas can be found in businesses, schools, churches, and homes. They often are brightly colored and include papier maché depictions of skeletons at play as well as flowers, candles, incense, statues of saints, photos, and objects dear to the departed in life.

Traditionally, they feature a glass of water to refresh the spirit after a long journey and the departed's favorite dishes so they might smell them and remember their taste. Perhaps the most important tradition is story telling, when the younger generation learns about relatives

they never met or do not remember, thus bridging the gap between generations and ensuring the dead never are forgotten.

"For most United States citizens, we don't have a day to focus on death," said Cesareo Moreno, director of visual arts at the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum at 1852 W. 19th St., who reflects on the need to acknowledge death. Mexicans, he said, "have this day every year to think about death. It is a healthy way to deal with death bit by bit.

This connection to death over one's childhood to adulthood makes it something you can eventually talk about. I think this has a profound effect on one's view of mortality." According to Moreno, the transplanted Mexican holiday has become part of the fabric of the community in Chicago and particularly in Pilsen. For 20 years, the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum has hosted a Day of the Dead exhibit, and curators are marking this milestone by keeping the celebration a little closer to home with a focus on Dia de los Muertos' local influence. While in the past many exhibiting artists came from Mexico and Latino communities in other parts of the United States, this year the museum invited more local artists than ever before to share their talents.

To honor the changing culture and tradition of Chicago's Mexican Americans, the exhibit will focus on paintings, sculpture, and other fine arts demonstrating the influence of both the artists' culture and their experiences living in Chicago. Three main ofrendas will honor local role models such as José Chapa (1920-2006), a pioneer of Spanish language news radio in Chicago.

Visitors also can participate in the museum's traditional Day of the Dead activities such as the sugar skull making demonstration, art classes, and a skeleton marionette presentation. Find out more at www.mfacmchicago.org or call (312) 738-1503.

A pilgrimage

Students at the Talcott Fine Arts & Museum Academy also are participating in the museum's Day of the Dead exhibit. They decided to use this opportunity to honor the many lost in the journey across the border between the United States and Mexico. Many are children of immigrants themselves and seek greater



Photos by Michael Tropea

"Ofrendas" in Pilsen will honor local role models such as José Chapa, a pioneer of Spanish language news radio in Chicago.

understanding of their own roots while honoring their shared culture.

“Throughout history people have made pilgrimages in hope of a better life,” according to Sally Havlis, the art teacher in charge of the students’ project. “Life threatening terrain has not deterred the nomadic people of Africa, the Hebrews leaving Egypt, the Europeans traveling to the Americas, or the Mexicans presently crossing the border.”

The students’ exhibit will include a desert landscape and symbols carefully chosen to reflect the plight of immigrants such as empty water containers and Monarch butterflies who freely migrate through Canada, Mexico, and the United States.



“Danzantes y Calaveras” is part of the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum’s permanent collection.



Eduardo Oropeza’s painting is a colorful celebration of the Day of the Dead.

“We believe that the men and women crossing the desert with water gallons in hand not only die from dehydration of the body but also from dehydration of the spirit,” according to Havlis. “Water’s symbolic meaning of transformation and rebirth refers to the need for a peaceful solution to our border chaos.”

Although the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum is one of the leaders in Chicago-style observances of Dia de los Muertos, commemorations, exhibits, altar demonstrations, and processions will occur throughout Pilsen through early November.

Day of the Dead Altars can be found at the following locations, in addition to many others: St. Paul Parish/Casa Juan Diego Youth Center, 2020 S. Blue Island Ave.; Colibri Studio/Gallery, 2032 W. 18th St.; and St. Roman Church, 2311 S Washtenaw Ave. St. Procopius Church, 1641 S. Allport St., (312) 226-7887, in cooperation with the Resurrection Project, hosts a Day of the Dead procession through Pilsen’s streets; information can be found at www.resurrectionproject.org.

The Pilsen Little Village Information Center posts a Dia de Los Muertos calendar of events annually. To view this calendar and find out more information about the Day of the Dead, visit www.diademuerto.com or call (312) 421-2552.