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MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán)

Madison, Wisconsin: MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán), May 6, 2003

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LA ONDA

MEChA

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Volume 15, Issue 1

May 6, 2003

MEChA Nationals Held at UC-Berkeley

By: Tané Perrigoue

On March 27th through the 30th, the 10th Annual MEChA National Conference was held in Berkeley, California. I along with nine other mechistas went to Berkeley and had a great time. Being my first year in MEChA, I was really excited to see what the whole conference was about.

The first full day, Friday, went well. Every-



Mechistas enjoying the nice San Francisco weather.

one who went on the trip presented a workshop and Friday was the scheduled day for Aurelio and I to present our workshop on growing up Chicano. I think we did a great job. It was well received by all who came

came and saw it and we got great feedback.

Since I had already presented my workshop, I spent the rest of the conference attending caucuses and viewing workshops. During the caucuses we sat in groups and discussed different issues that are important to MEChA. I found both the caucuses and workshops to be really eye opening. Being the minority at the conference, it was really interesting to hear how my ideas and feelings on and about certain topics were similar and different to those of other mechistas. When we discussed topics, I found that despite people's background, many had similar conflicts and opinions on the topics we discussed.

There was a topic brought up in many workshops about labels. I feel this was one of the most interesting things of the conference. I attended a workshop about labels and identities and through this and other presentations I learned more about the-

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Frida's Skirts of Suffering and Strength

This is a first-person column by Patricia Gonzales.

I am a woman of wide skirts -- faldas grandes, enaguas as round as the moon.

The first time I saw myself was in 1979 in Rey Gaytan's Chicano art class at the University of Texas at Austin. I found myself in Frida Kahlo's enaguas, in the tehuanas she made famous.

She reflected my palette of rosa Mexicana and the green of life -- and the sepia pricks of the soul that stained my canvas along the way. For a short time, I lived near Frida's Blue House, and my first and only attempt at a novel begins there.

Pioneer Chicana muralists brought Frida Kahlo to Chicanas and to the United States in the 1970s. Thanks to the muralists and Hayden Herrera's pivotal biography "Frida" (Perennial, \$25), she was later embraced by gay San Francisco, feminists and art collectors, painting the way for the eventual Fridamania and the biopic "Frida."

Frida was the original "bomb" -- Andre Breton called her "a ribbon around a bomb." The movie is more ribbons than-

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got spanglish?

Note from the Editor:

Bueno, se acabo el año. It's been a rough one but we made it once again, tuvimos que pelear but we proved once again, que si se puede! I want to congratulate all the graduating Mechistas for showing the world who we are y lo what we can do. Mantengan su cultura viva because it is one of the most valuable things you have in life. Remember that the new Mechistas are here to continue con la lucha. I want to take this opportunity to thank mi familia here at MEChA. Sin ustedes I would probably be back home right now. Gracias por todo su apoyo.

Aurelio Salazar

The Dream Act and the Student Adjustment Act

By: Gerardo "Lalo" Mancilla

Currently if an undocumented student is in the United States and wants to attend a college or university, then he/she has to pay out-of-state tuition. Most undocumented students don't have any money for tuition because they come from low-income families. Yet, some drop out of school because they see no clear future without documentation. For example if they aren't going to be able to attend a college or university, then what's the point of completing high school?

Originally introduced by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT). The Dream Act would repeal the current situation of undocumented students paying out-of-state tuition and would allow them to pay in-state tuition instead. The bill is titled the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (Dream Act). The current bill for this act would also allow undocumented students who graduate from a U.S. high schools and have good moral character to be eligible for permanent residency.

The Student Adjustment Act was originally introduced by Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), Howard Berman (D-CA), and Chris Cannon (R-UT). This bill is similar to the Dream Act but this one is with the House of Representatives. Both bills are facing opposition using the argument that "the bill would give more incentives to immigrants to come to the United States illegally and that it would reward "lawbreakers" who have entered this country without papers." - Jon Kyl (R-AZ)



Gladys Reyes

and Jim Sessions (R-AL)

According to LULAC, passing the bill would:

- Improve educational opportunities for Hispanic Americans by enabling students to achieve their "dream" of pursuing a higher education.
- (It would also) lower dropout rates. According to the Interim Report of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, only 40 percent of foreign born, non-US citizen children finish school. Many do not finish because they have no hope of ever moving ahead.
- Raising the educational achievement of Hispanic students is critical to the U.S. economy. Income is directly proportional to educational attainment. By passing this law these exemplary students would help to double the rate of Hispanic college graduates by the year 2010, which would produce additional tax revenue of \$13 billion.
- Extend dignity and justice to children who are committed to making a difference in their lives and the well-being of their families.

It is very important for us to keep on pressuring both the Senate and the House. This is affecting our community and the education of our future.

"By passing this law these exemplary students would help to double the rate of Hispanic college graduates by the year 2010..."



Esta es la chingadera que se necesita para convertirse en un "legal alien."

My Five

By: Gladys Reyes

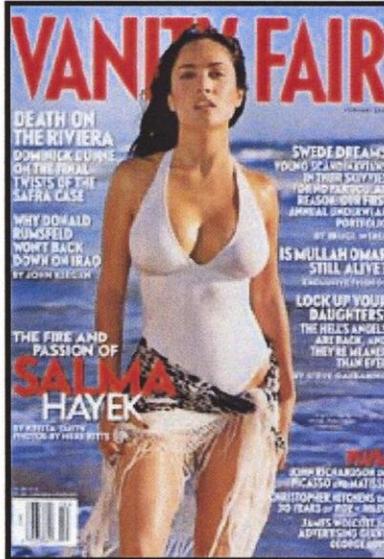
Looking back on the five years that I have studied here at the UW I can honestly say that I have learned a great deal, not so much in the classes that I took, but about who I am as a person. When I first arrived here at Madison, I had no idea what waited me, all I knew is that I had to leave home, everything I loved, my family, my few friends and the warm cooked meals that kept me healthy. This was the opportunity of a life time for a daughter of a Mexican immigrant, single mother, hard-working housekeeper. I was the first in family to graduate from high school, and I was determined to be the first to graduate from college. I knew that in order to help my family this was the way, I had to pick myself up and migrate to a place where there were better possibilities to succeed, an all too familiar -

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Vanity Fair, an Anti-Latino Publication

By: A.S.



February's Vanity Fair Issue

Vanity Fair, February 2003, Excerpt:
[page. 116, Ask Dame Edna]

Dear Dame Edna:

I would very much like to learn a foreign language, preferably French or Italian, but every time I mention this, people tell me to learn Spanish instead. They say, "Everyone is going to be speaking Spanish in 10 years. George W. Bush speaks Spanish "Could this be true? Are we all going to have to speak Spanish?"
[Torn Romantic, Palm Beach]

Dear Torn:

Forget Spanish. There's nothing in that language worth reading except Don Quixote, and a quick listen to the CD of Man of La Mancha will take care of that. There was a poet named Garcia Lorca, but I'd leave him on the intellectual back burner if I were you. As for everyone's speaking it, what twaddle! Who speaks it that you are really desperate to talk to? The help? Your leaf blower? Study French or German, where there are at least a few books worth reading, or, if you're American, try English.
[Dame Edna, Vanity Fair magazine]

This Vanity Fair article appeared in the magazine's February issue.

It was rather ironic that a magazine dedicating its cover to Mexican Salma Hayek would also include this tasteless article by Dame Edna, who is the alter ego of comedian Barry Humphries. Within hours of its release an e-mail was circulating which demanded an apology from the magazine for the Latino population. After receiving hundreds of e-mails and letters the magazine had no other option but to issue an apology. In the letter the magazine states that their "intent, in short, was to mock the very ethnic stereotypes that some have accused us of

reinforcing." These stereotypes though were never and will never be taken lightly by the Latino community.

In its April issue the magazine reprinted its apology along with a number of letters, including one by Salma Hayek herself. In her letter Salma expresses her anger and disgust with Dame Edna's article.

If you would like to read the full apology or Salma Hayek's letter I suggest you go online, because I for sure would not give the people of Vanity Fair any of my money after reading Dame Edna's column.

Ozomatli in the House

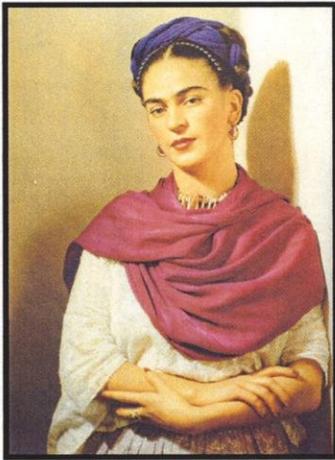
By: Gladys Reyes

On November 6, 2002, Ozomatli, a native band of Los Angeles, CA, rocked Luther's Blues the only way they know how to, long and hard. They had the whole audience on their feet dancing and singing along to cumbia, salsa, hip-hop and flamenco style music. It was wild; I've never seen so many white people with so much rhythm.

The environment was real chill, everyone there was having such a good time and Ozomatli sure does know how to put on a show. From beginning to end the drums, trumpets, and guitars did not cease to play. I especially enjoyed the closing of the show, the entire band jumped off the stage and started to play their instruments within the audience, all the while we were chanting "Ole Ole Ole Ola" the soccer chant. If you watch soccer you're familiar with this and know how much fun it is when a lot of people are doing it at the same time. Next they led a mambo line to where they would exit that had to be the longest mambo line I've ever seen.



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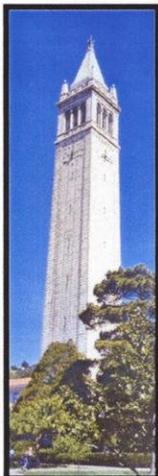


The late Frida Kahlo, picture taken in 1938/39.

“Frida was courageous because she painted her sufrimiento, choosing to transmute its form rather than to endure its fate.”

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The Campanile one of the many UC-Berkeley landmarks.

Frida’s Skirts of Suffering and Strength
Continued from page 1.

bomb, beautifully filmed but, as Guillermo Gomez Peña recently said, "Frida Lite." Frida was handsome -- not a vixen like Oscar-nominee Salma Hayek, who portrays Frida's passion and sexuality more than her art or politics. Frida's face was often taut with pain. She was blackbird beautiful and lived like a peacock.

She would likely mock the "gringos" for now making faux Frida jewelry and charging \$200-a-plate fund-raisers in San Antonio as they prance in huipiles (indigenous blouses), but dare they paint themselves in her famous brow and moustache? In the early '90s, Chicanas protesting a Frida movie that was to star a non-Mexican marched down Hollywood in huipiles, brows and moustaches.

I never wanted to be like Frida la sufrida. But when I found myself on a doctor's table with 27 needles down my spine and then a year of barely being able to walk, I certainly felt like the suffering Frida. She depicted her spinal column broken and held with nails as a result of a trolley car accident and many subsequent operations. That I identified with Frida spoke to how much she has become part of the Chicana psyche. No wonder psychologists employ her images in therapy.

The operation on my back complicated a severe auto immune disorder that I fought for five years. One doctor told me I would never be healthy again. I told him he was wrong. I healed with the medicine of the

MEChA Nationals
Continued from page 1.

varieties of definitions of the word Chicano. A common characteristic I heard through all the definitions is that it doesn't matter what your background is or the color of your skin, Chicano doesn't come with a color. I heard this many times, but I wish that that would have been put more into practice in the conference. Many times I heard degrading comments towards many different ethnic groups and think that that takes away from the pur-

Earth and the balm of woman courage I learned from indigenous people who faced land invasions, rape, torture and massacres in Mexico.

I befriended one of Frida's contemporaries, Benita Galeana, a freedom fighter who also dressed in huipiles. I've often said she lived the life Frida idealized. Both were women of eyebrows and moustaches, writes Mexican writer Elena Poniatowska. Benita also used a corset to support her spine from a car accident and the beatings she received as a revolutionary. Frida and Benita helped me understand that to be courageous doesn't mean you don't have fear. You fight and struggle despite it. Benita once said the fearless don't always know the consequences of their actions and that "courage is an illusion."

But to fight our fears makes us courageous. We begin to trust the power of our lives and to live with confidence as women. We suffer when we believe we can't change our destiny.

Frida was courageous because she painted her sufrimiento, choosing to transmute its form rather than to endure its fate. She put it outside of her body, her biochemistry floating all around, painted to the cellular level with microscopic precision. By painting her suffering, she proclaimed her strength. How she responded to suffering changed her destiny. Herrera's biography describes Frida's last painting -- of watermelons. Despite immense pain as she neared death, "(S)he wrote her final salute to life: VIVA LA VIDA." Long live life!

pose of being at a national conference, which is to share our feelings and ideas to become a more united MEChA.

That was however my only complaint about the trip. The campus was gorgeous, I met some really great people, and it opened up my eyes further to what MEChA is and how much a group can accomplish when they all work together. It was a great conference and I wish that everyone could have had an opportunity to go.



My Five

Continued from page 2.

story for most of our Mexican families. I left, but my roots were firmly planted, and the experiences that I had my first year and until now have only made them stronger. In a sense it is ironic, how being here in Wisconsin, of all places, where the majority culture is white, where everywhere I looked I was the minority, as opposed to the 99.9% Mexicans and Tejanos I was used to, my cultural pride has never been as passionate as it is now. I strongly feel that this why I was able to make it, in the back of mind I knew that I had to surpass the status quo and negative stereotypes that were so liberally given to me and anyone who looked like me. I had to prove everyone wrong, and unlike the majority of the students here, I had something to prove and was not going to back down from the challenge.

I was lucky, for some of us we just can not make it, for whatever reasons. (That's a whole other article, but if you are a student of color, who identifies as such, then there is no need to explain, for the rest of you, do your homework). I had the support from people that were also from San Antonio, and who had similar, if not the same background as me. Some of us became very close friends, so much so that I still remember that one crazy night when we were just FED up with this campus and the bullshit that accompanied it, the weather, some shitty people, you name it we were done. We stayed up half the night researching other universities in the Southwest, where it was warm, where there were more people like us, *where it was warm*. Looking back we just laugh, we knew we were just venting, we had a lot of those nights. My circle of close friends, Dez, Darrell, Naomi, Mario, Deborah, Ofelia, Juanita, and Robbie for the first couple of years these people were my safety net, honestly if it was not for them I would have packed my bags and would not have missed Wisconsin at all. All of us were a part of MEChA, some more involved than others, but nonetheless MEChistas, camaradas y hermanas/os. MEChA as been my family away from home and the mission and goal of MEChA has helped to keep me focused, and not lose sight of why I am here and how it was that I had the chance to even sit in one the many class rooms and roam freely through the libraries that were not constructed for my knowledge.

Ozomatli in the House

Continued from page 3.

It was very inspiring to know that the lead vocals of the band were Chicanos and that this band is very active in their community. They've helped raise funds for the Taco Bell Truth Tour in L.A. and used their musical talents to better their communities. Their music carries a very strong and positive political message and not only do they mix it up by having some really good dancing music, they also touch so many people no matter their ethnicity their music is universal. I had heard so many good things about them and how much fun their shows were, I was not let down, it was well worth the money I paid and the late studying I had to do that night. I would highly recommend that if you have an interest in learning more about Chicano and Latino music this band should definitely be on your pick list.

For more information and to hear their music go to: www.ozomatli.com

Overall, my five years here have been filled with ups, downs and in between, but with each day that has gone by since August 1998; there is not a day that does not go by that I don't give thanks to the higher being for having been given the blessing to live out this crazy chance. If there is anything that someone can learn from my neatly compressed experience, it would be that at times you take the most precious aspects of your life for granted and don't know how important they are to you until they are gone.



Gladys (center) with fellow Mechistas enjoying the opening dinner for El Mes Xicano.

For my Mechistas, if there is any guidance that I could give to you, it would be to make MEChA yours, because it indeed belongs to you all. Educate yourselves; take classes that are for and about you, "hint, hint". Our antepasados fought hard and long for our history, cultures, and struggles to be included, take advantage. And although many of you will be involved in many other activities besides MEChA, never lose focus of why you are here. Hit the books and make the grades, keep in mind the more of us that have that piece of paper and experiences that go along with it, the better it will be for the advancement of our communities. I know that I can expect great things from you; you all have the fire of MEChA in your corazones.

C/S

Revelation By: Vanessa Ferniza

With all great Changes comes even Greater Sacrifice...

I step into a place...

A place unlike no other, where the minds trickle with ideas, notions and emotions
deep enough to fill my heart as well as tear it apart.

A home away from home though at times I feel alone

I step into a place...

Where precious minds are shut down by logistics that are useful for only making biscuits
Where the youth is power and can only flower

I step into a place...

Though it may be far from home, I remember my mother's tone:

Los valores que te he enseñado se van contigo, pero te digo, ahora tu
nos contarás de verdad quien seras.

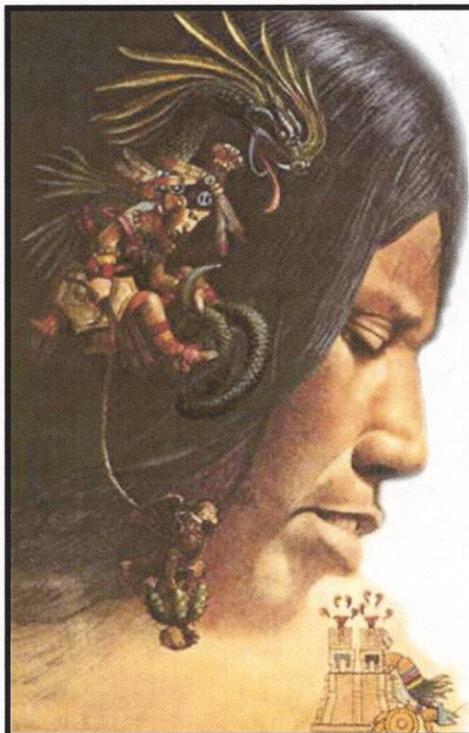
With those words as powerful as any fist, I stand amongst the great abyss fully equipped ...

No matter where adversity may hit, you always should remember this.. Those values which
have brought you here, hold them dear, hold them dear.. So don't you fear, its not unclear
you have them here so very near.

I step into a place I'll make my own.

Though it may be far from home, I find myself not alone, but in a new home, with problems and troubles
and struggles... we aren't alone, we can make this home and change the tone

We aren't alone!



En los caminos ya hacen dardos rotos,
los cabellos están esparcidos.
Destechadas están las casas,
enrojecidos tienen sus muros.

Gusanos pululan por calles y plazas,
y en las paredes están salpicados los sesos.
Rojas están las aguas, están como teñidas,
y cuando las bebimos,
es como si bebiéramos agua de salitre.

Golpeábamos, en tanto, los muros de adobe,
y era nuestra herencia una red de agujeros.
Con los escudos fue su resguardo, pero
ni con escudos puede ser sostenida su soledad.

Icnocuitatl

Excerpt from a poem talking about
the destruction of Tenochtitlan.

Broken spears lie in the roads;
we have torn our hair in grief.
The houses are roofless now,
and their walls are red with blood.

Worms are swarming in the streets and plazas,
and the walls are splattered with gore.
The water has turned red, as if it were dyed,
and when we drink it,
it has the taste of brine.

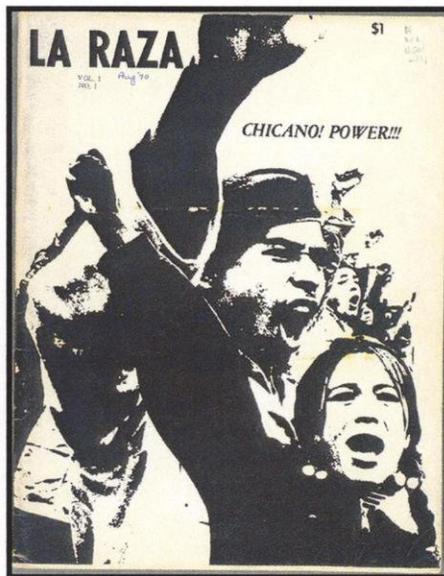
We have pounded our hands in despair
against the adobe walls,
for our inheritance, our city, is lost and dead.
The shields of our warriors were its defense,
but they could not save it.



Untitled

By: Eric Mata

Culture
 Rooted deep
 In the giver of life
 Transferred through mother's milk
 Grasping firmly
 Telling stories
 Teaching history of
 Sun gods
 Feathered serpents
 Aztlán homeland
 Myths
 Legends
 Pale-skin god
 Rape murder theft
 In cycles
 Tyrannical oppression
 Mixed blood
 Mestizo
 Transposed
 Losing life
 Roots grasp pride
 Brown Latino Chicano
 Uplifting.
 Bootstraps tight
 Guerilla trained
 In verbal warfare
 A lyrical assassin
 Bicultural schizophrenic
 Brown in white society
 By necessity
 Chicano by choice
 Revolutionary by birth.
 Educated
 Bronze-skinned
 Brown-eyed man
 Redefining macho
 Through poetic verses
 Using double-edged tongue
 To bring new meaning to life as I've lived
 Sharing the struggles of my people
 Making them known to others
 Yet to understand
 What I mean
 When I say
 I am Chicano



Expresiones

Eagle (Aguila)

By: Natanael Martínez



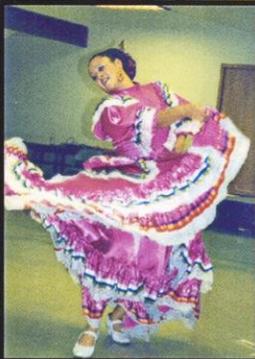
Fly bold eagle,
 Brave the heights of the sky,
 Endure the cold atmosphere,
 Manipulate the harsh winds,
 do not let them push you around.

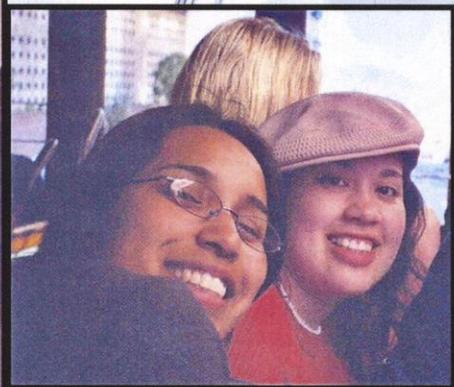
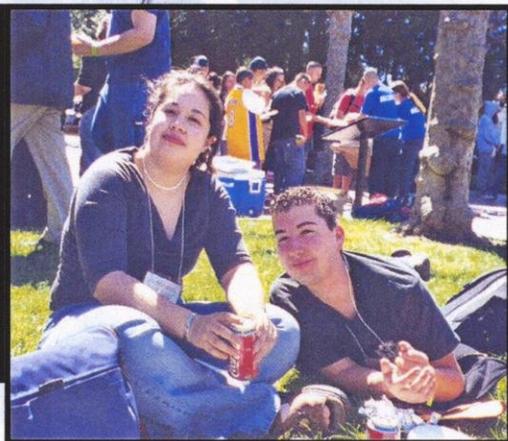
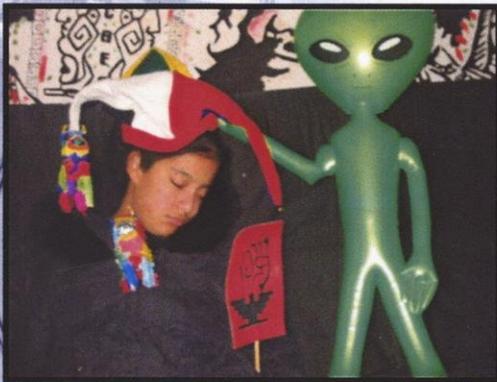
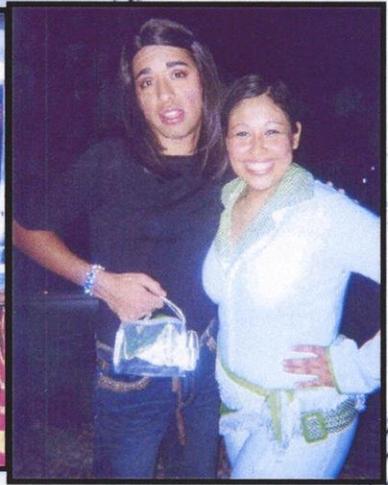
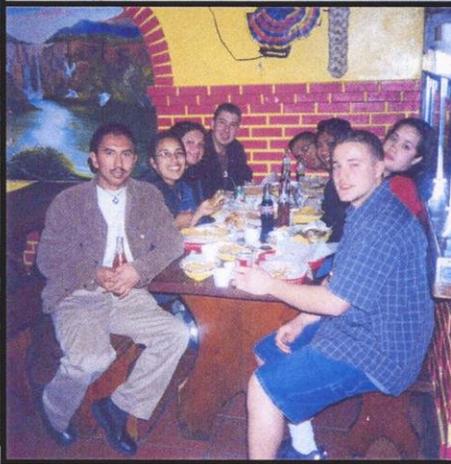
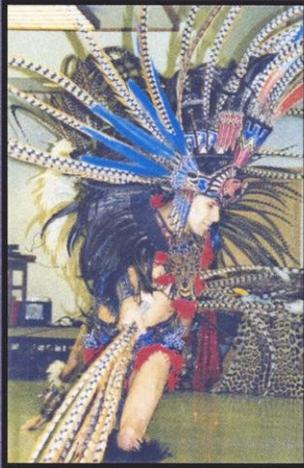
Vuela águila brava,
 Desafía los altos del cielo,
 Aguanta el frío del ozono,
 Manipula los vientos bruscos,
 no dejes que te empujen.

A Piece of My Mind

By: Remi Aregbesola

People ask me why I don't rap, cause there's no need.
 I'm not the underdog but the most likely to succeed.
 Any road I choose, any job I will achieve.
 My flow is like an Amtrak, I can go for hours.
 Call me Black Panther, cause my words bring Black Power.
 That means all obstacles in my way I will devour.
 I say, Lord, I'm not afraid of your love, so give me a shower.
 They show us the road, and teach us the glory we can have.
 But how could you teach us this if you haven't walked that path.
 Some people think glory is the green thing called cash.
 How can it protect our economy when it burns so fast.
 I remember last year on King's Birthday they tried to take my shine.
 Pointed straight to me and my guy's head with a big chrome nine.
 So if you think I'm talking about jewelry yo, get your life straight.
 I don't hate my brother for what he tried to do, shit, I can relate.
 We're taught to make something out of nothing and that ain't straight.
 How could you eat if there's not food on your plate.
 And I sit back and think with a sad tone.
 Why was I born to catch two in my dome.
 Why wasn't I born to sit up on my throne.
 Then I look back and reflect on the 9-11 tragedy.
 One side I see crying, on the other I see laughter.
 But, to kill our own people, is the world's greatest disaster.







As we all know MEChA is a national organization which is divided into several regions. Our region the Midwest has two chapters, UW-Madison and St. Cloud State University. We have also recently welcomed the University of Michigan into our region. For the past several years the Midwest has been looking for a more significant name that would represent us all as a whole. In our last regional meeting at St. Cloud, MEChA de UW-Madison proposed to change the name to Midatl. After further deliberation it was agreed to change the name to Tierra Midatl. Since we came to the agreement very late in the year it has not officially been changed and we are hoping that next year the official change will take place.

Here is part of the written proposal to change the name explaining the meaning and significance of it:



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Newsletter Editor: Aurelio Salazar
asalazar@wisc.edu

Tierra Midatl

By: A.S.

The decision for changing the Regional name from Midwest to Tierra Midatl, came about after extensive contemplation on what it means to be Chicanos from the Midwest. The migration pattern, which has led our ancestors to this location, has produced a profound impact on the history and culture of the Midwest. Adding to both the diversity and population which now resides in this area. Tierra symbolizes the earth and the cultivation and tribulations, which accompanied the laborer, which continues to be a struggle today. An important characteristic of the Midwest is its vast rolling plains; as well as its corn, oats and wheat fields, giving it the well-known name of the "bread basket". Mid, represents the Midwest, the geographical location of where we dwell. Atl, comes from the Nahuatl language which signifies water. The Great Lakes and rivers are the pulse of this region. It is what has facilitated transportation and it feeds into the land. The idea is that Tierra Midatl wraps up all of these views where as the Midwest leaves us wanting more. A regional name shouldn't just be a single idea and perspective of a region. It should be comprised of fundamental ideas, which have emerged from the people and history of the location.