

Rice in the 1920s — one student's experience

NIÑO, from Page 5

Francisco Chairez, they enjoyed events which catered to their cultural tastes. At one of these concerts, Primitivo met his future wife, the pianist Natividad Perez. They were married in 1929.

The Mexican community also served as a support network. This was necessary since chronic poverty was widespread among Mexicans during the late 1920s. Thus Primitivo worked odd-jobs to pay for his living expenses. He also relied upon the kindness of his Mexican neighbors. Every hungry undergrad will appreciate the following story that Thomas Kreneck chronicles in his latest book, *Felix Tijerina*.

Primitivo's typical commute to Rice was a walk down Main Street. One day he entered the "Original Mexican Restaurant" for a quick meal. A young Felix Tijerina served him coffee and a doughnut. During the course of their conversation, Felix discovered that Primitivo had little money and yet was attending Houston's most prestigious college. Felix was impressed with the fellow Mexican's accomplishments, and they quickly became good friends.

In addition, Felix supported Primitivo's education by treating him to lunch on many occasions. Kreneck's *Del Pueblo* reports that Mr. Niño's "education achievements were touted by *el pueblo* as examples for Mexican American youth to emulate."

Let me now address another side of minority life during that age. Who knows if Mr. Niño suffered discrimination at Rice because of his ethnicity? Primitivo's children say their father did not talk much of his college days. We do know that Rice's early years were also characterized by the ethic "work hard, play hard." According to the Rice publication *No Upper Limit*, the Institute banned hazing in 1922 "after many years of sustaining a reputation as the second-worst hazing school in Texas".



Niño's 1928 Rice Campanile photo

Back then freshmen were known as "slimes." The Engineering Society was disbanded in 1941 after its hazing practices got out of control. There was also an unfriendly climate throughout Houston in those days. According to *Del Pueblo*, "Mexican Houstonians were the victims not only of urban dislocation but also of discrimination at the hands of mainstream society and of random violence."

After he graduated, Primitivo worked in an engineering firm but stayed for only a short time because of the hostile environment generated by his co-workers. This is the anecdote that his family retells. One of his first tasks at the company was to operate an engine lathe even though he was inexperienced with it. Regardless, this resourceful man found a faster and better way to run the machine. The other veteran workers be-

came jealous of Primitivo's success especially since a Mexican had bested them. The next day Primitivo was shocked to find that his locker had been vandalized and his clothes cut up. Disappointed with this incident, Primitivo left the company and decided to become his own boss. He found success by establishing a company, Niño's Repair Shop, which created and maintained steam boiler systems in Houston. He was such a unique resource in the city that he worked until his early 80s. He passed away in 1989.

Clearly today's U.S. Hispanics are enjoying a new era where it is cool to be Latino. The environment at Rice is also different. For example the March 2000 issue of *Hispanic* magazine ranked Rice the second best university for Hispanics in the United States. We should be grateful for the hardships endured by our ancestors. Their very existence on campus ensured that their descendants would enjoy an education coveted by so many. To this end, Primitivo's daughter, Cristina ('58), and two grandsons, Donald ('79) and Arthur ('86), are also Rice Owls. Dr. Donald Niño is active in SOLAR where he passes on sage advice to young HACERitos.

What other stories are missing from the written records of an earlier age? More than 85 years have passed since the beginnings of our university. I do not want to dwell on the mistakes that have been made. It is unfair to hold previous generations unequivocally guilty of the high politically correct standards that we aspire to today. But we must never forget. Let us celebrate past accomplishments and educate the opinions that we still reject. I encourage all alumni to teach us, your children and grandchildren, about the past. We want to know: Where did we come from?



El Tecolote

a publication of the Hispanic Association for Cultural Enrichment at Rice

A word from the president

Maricela Alarcón

Welcome to all the incoming and returning Rice Owls. I am excited about this year and all the ideas that we hope to realize for HACER, the Hispanic Association for Cultural Enrichment at Rice.

My name is Maricela Alarcón and I will be your HACER president this coming year. I am a junior from Will Rice College majoring in psychology. I'm originally from San Antonio.

As your president, I will keep busy (just as I am now) making sure that everything is running smoothly. I serve as HACER's representative to the administration and the Rice community. I meet with President Gillis every month to discuss the organization's progress and plan to keep him informed as to what we are doing for Rice as well as the Houston community. I am always open to suggestions and ready to help plan anything you would like to make happen for HACER.

See ALARCÓN, Page 2



RAMAS officers in 1972 (clockwise): Jose Flores, Dr. Richard Tapia, Daniel Garcia, David Ramos, and Adalberto Sierra. See p4 for a history article on Rice Hispanics.

HACER invites all alumni to the Oct 19 meeting!

See Page 8 for details

O-Week and you

Alisa De Luna

¡Bienvenidos! I'm sure I'm not the first one to welcome you to Rice, and I can assure you that I won't be the last. My name is Alisa De Luna, and I'm a senior originally from the Rio Grande Valley.

In February, I was chosen as one of 23 Orientation Week coordinators. At most universities orientations are meant for choosing classes and registering. While we have allotted for about 10 hours of academic advising during the week, O-Week is about so much more.

O-Week is a time for you, the class of 2004, to become acquainted with all that Rice has to offer. You have to admit that Rice has a lot to offer, but it will not duplicate what you have at home, and that can be pretty scary.

If you're anything like me, it will be completely different. I came from a high school that was about 99.9 percent Hispanic in a region of Texas where being Hispanic meant being in the majority, not the minority. I quickly found myself adjusting to different habits, customs and people.

See O-WEEK, Page 5

Calendar of events

- Sat July 15 Houston summer send-off party, Sid Rich BBQ pits, 3 p.m.
- Sat Aug 5 Volunteering for Muscular Dystrophy Association Hispanic subgroup, Main Point Building off-campus, 10:30 a.m.
- Sat Aug 19 Reception for Hispanic freshmen and parents, Sewall Hall Art Gallery Foyer, 6 p.m.
- Sun Aug 27 Introduction to culture and religion at Rice, Grand Hall in Ley Student Center, 5 p.m.
- Sun Aug 27 Hispanic freshman-upperclassmen mixer, RMC, 7 p.m.
- Wed Sep 6 **First HACER meeting, Committee sign-up, Farnsworth Pavilion in the Student Center, 9 p.m.**
- Mon Sep 18 Barrio Student Center tutoring, 3 p.m. Every Monday.
- Wed Sep 20 First college lunch, guest Dr. José Aranda, English Professor and HACER faculty advisor, Will Rice College, noon
- Thu Sep 21 **HACER meeting, Study Abroad programs and minority undergraduate research at Rice, Miner Lounge in the Student Center, 9 p.m.**
- Sat Sep 23 Houston night out, Sempers, 10 p.m.
- Wed Oct 4 College lunch, guest David Medina, Rice Minority Public Affairs Director, Lovett College, noon. Every other Wed.
- Thu Oct 5 **HACER meeting, Perú, Miner Lounge, 9 p.m.**
- Fri Oct 6 Families weekend HACER BBQ, Sid Rich BBQ pits, 5 p.m.
- Sat Oct 7 Santana concert, Woodlands Pavilion (off-campus), 8 p.m.

- Thu Oct 19 **HACER meeting, History of Rice Hispanic students from the 1930's, Keck Hall (Old Chemistry) lecture room, 8 p.m. Reception with alumni, 9 p.m.**
- Sat Oct 21 Fundraiser at Rice vs. Hawaii football game
- Thu Nov 2 Día de los Muertos event, TBA
- Thu Nov 2 **HACER meeting, Hispanics and the presidential election, Student Activities Workspace, 9 p.m.**
- Thu Nov 16 **HACER meeting, Mexico and the Posada tradition, Miner Lounge, 9 p.m.**
- Sat Dec 2 La Posada holiday event, Grand Hall in the RMC, 8 p.m.
- Thu Feb 22 Vision weekend, Minority student recruitment
- Spring Latin World Festival, Grand Hall in RMC

HACER has a lot of plans this coming year, but we could use some help. Your time and effort are the most important resources that you have to offer, but we are also accepting **DONATIONS** of money or equipment. This blanket solicitation only occurs once a year.

Currently on the HACER equipment wish list are: a Macintosh-compatible ethernet-capable 600 dpi laser printer and a small (2 x 4 ft.) printer table.

For contributions to be tax-deductible, checks should be made out to "Rice University". Please write "HACER" in the memo space and mail to Philippa Angelides, Coordinator, Student Activities MS 527, Rice University, 6100 Main St., Houston, TX 77005-1892.

You will receive a receipt stating that you have not received any goods or services in return for your donation. Don't forget to check if your company has a matching gift program. ¡Gracias!

A forgotten gift: Being bicultural in Texas

Marcela Salas

I am a lecturer of Spanish in the Department of Hispanic and Classical Languages. After I finished my undergraduate studies in Argentina, I came to Houston and received my Masters in Spanish from Rice.

I am now working toward my Ph.D. at the University of Houston, where I plan to finish my dissertation by next summer. The major focus of my studies is Hispanic literature in United States. I am also very interested in the differences be-

tween teaching Spanish to students with or without Spanish heritage.

What does it mean to be bicultural? Traditionally, it means to belong to two different cultures, and sometimes it implies that the bicultural person has access to the best of both cultures. Texas is clearly bicultural: The Hispanic world is a part of everyday life for most Texans.

Rice is no exception: There is a huge population of Hispanic students at Rice. It is important to note, however, that not every Hispanic student is bicultural or bilingual to

the same extent.

Many factors influence the degree of biculturalism: the time spent living in each culture, the formal education received in one or the other, the daily contact with one culture, etc. The result is that one of the cultures is professionally and socially favored.

It is obvious that under the current circumstances in Texas, the English language and culture is preferred, especially in formal education. As a result, many Hispanics in Texas and in Rice are well educated

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Meet the officers

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HACER — Front row: Laura Ramirez, Christina Gonzales, Maria Martinez, Maricela Alarcón, Sarai Sanchez, Sandra Alvear. Middle row: Maribel Robledo, Alma Maldonado, Marisa Bono, Lillian Ortiz, Nancy Carrasco, Graciela León, Mayra Perez. Back row: Carlos Gonzalez, Cesar Castelo, Juan Rodriguez, Monica Verduzco, Mike Terrazas, Nella Garcia, José L. Leal, Alisa Tijerina, Leo Barrientes, Jenny Solis, Danielle Gregory.

Faculty Adviser

Dr. José F. Aranda Jr

As I enter my sixth year as faculty advisor, I am grateful once again for all the hard work of last year's officers. They have laid down a legacy that I'm sure the new officers will themselves improve. HACER has always been blessed by its leaders. Next year will be no exception.

Greetings are also in order for all the new students who arrive late August. I am pleased you have chosen to bring your talents and dreams to our campus.

Be assured that by the time you arrive, HACER and its officers will be ready for you, as will I. Between summer jobs, packing, and saying goodbye to family and friends, give yourself some time to think about how your life is about to change.

And if I may offer some advice now, it is never too early to set up initial goals and expectations for yourself this fall. And questions. Be ready and comfortable to ask as many questions as possible. You would not be coming to Rice if you didn't know how to ask intelligent questions. So, I expect to hear a question or two from you when we first meet. Don't let me down!

Otherwise, I want to remind ev-

eryone that this summer all major political parties hold their presidential conventions. Pay attention. It is fun. It is crucial that you be informed of the pertinent issues. Keep in mind, that with the exception of 5th year students, Nov. 7, 2000 is the first time that the vast majority of undergraduates on campus will have an opportunity to cast presidential ballots. It is not only your right to vote, but also a chance to be part of history. It hasn't always been this way.

Finally, this past commencement made a deep impression on me. I can honestly say that I now have dozens of former students who have gone on to become school teachers, medical doctors, engineers, lawyers, social workers, stock brokers, creative writers and artists, college professors, and much more.

I always imagined about how it would be to teach at a university. It never occurred to me that these same students would come back to tell me their "after stories." And how inspiring they are. I am now collecting these "after stories" like a proud parent. And you know what? I want more.

Safe travels this summer.

Dr. José Aranda(aranda@rice.edu) is a professor of Chicano/a and American Literature. <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~english/faculty/aranda/content.htm>

First meeting

Wednesday, Sept. 6 at 9 p.m. in Farnsworth Pavilion in the RMC
We will be collecting \$7 dues over the first few meetings.

El Tecolote

Hispanic Association for Cultural Enrichment at Rice

Dr. Alberto I. Roca
Editor

Jen Frazer
Design

Dr. Alberto I. Roca
Advertising

Rice University — MS 526
P.O. Box 1892
Houston, TX 77251-1892
Phone: (713) 348-3886
Fax: (713) 348-5618
E-mail: hacer@rice.edu
www.ruf.rice.edu/~hacer

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A word from the editor

Dr. Alberto I. Roca

Bienvenidos to all new and returning students. I am a researcher in the Biochemistry Department funded by a NSF Minority Postdoctoral Fellowship. I also advise HACER as a way to connect with my culture. My goal for this newsletter was to produce a professional document that will educate students.

I collected articles from people who will serve as resources during your time at Rice. We have mailed this newsletter to HACER members and incoming freshmen. This year we also decided to contact other Hispanic Rice students as well as our alumni. I would encourage all of you to get involved to make the most of your university experience.

Dr. Alberto Roca may be reached at aroca@rice.edu.

President (cont.)

ALARCÓN, from Page 1

This year HACER meetings will have specific themes and topics chosen by its members. Some meetings will educate about specific Hispanic cultures or their current situations. Other meetings will involve discussing minority issues and how we can take action. Sometimes we'll have guest speakers to inform us about careers, internships or seminars.

We also offer various opportunities to explore what others are doing in the Houston area to enrich us with knowledge about various cultures. HACER strongly encourages its members to get involved and speak out.

I invite you to attend the summer send-off gatherings we are planning this summer. I believe this will be an excellent opportunity to meet and get to know some upperclassmen before the school year begins. They may answer any questions that you may have about college life, Rice itself and HACER.

Maricela Alarcón may be reached at alarcon@rice.edu.

R.I.C.E.-TMS to offer minority scholarships

Andrea Ehlers

For all the incoming freshmen, welcome to Houston and to Rice University! For all the returning students, welcome back for another nine months of hard work and fun!

I'd like to tell you about an aggressive new scholarship effort to benefit incoming minority students of Rice.

I'm sure you are aware that in March 1996, the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in Hopwood v. Texas that the University of Texas law school's use of affirmative action in its admissions policies was illegal.

Subsequently, in February 1997, the Texas State Attorney General ordered public colleges in the state to stop considering race in any institutional policies — including race-based financial aid and admissions. This prohibition has also been interpreted to be binding upon private institutions of higher education in Texas including Rice.

To counter the effects of Hopwood, a group of interested alumni and friends of Rice have created a private, nonprofit Texas Corporation called R.I.C.E.-TMS, which stands for Recruitment into Collegiate Education

Through Minority Scholarships.

The major goal of this foundation, which is entirely separate from the university, is to raise merit scholarship funds for highly motivated minority students with demonstrated leadership potential who will attend Rice University.

We will award the first merit scholarships to minority students admitted to Rice in the fall of 2001. The four-year merit awards will total \$10,000 (at \$2,500 per year) and will be awarded strictly on the basis of merit and leadership potential.

All awards will be supplemental to any other scholarship and financial aid awarded by Rice. The initial goal is to fund a minimum of five fellowships in 2001, ten in 2002, and a minimum of 20 in the third year and thereafter.

However, due to the success of our fundraising efforts to date, we believe we will be able to exceed these initial goals.

Marco Leal, the president of SOLAR, is also the vice chairman of R.I.C.E.-TMS. We are working closely with the Hispanic alumni on this effort. We just recently had a joint SOLAR/ARUBA reception where we announced our year-to-date fund-raising efforts.



Andrea Ehlers (aeblers@aglife.com) is the chairwoman of R.I.C.E.-TMS. She graduated from Rice in 1988. <http://www.riceims.org>

Hispanic culture and language

BILINGUAL, from Page 1
in English but have a much weaker education in Spanish, which creates an imbalance that works against their well-being as individuals and as a community.

We believe that our bilingual students need to find a better balance to succeed professionally in a global world. Not all Hispanics are bilingual, and

there are widely different levels of biculturalism.

We want the Hispanic student to be in touch with both cultures in a more balanced way. To do that, we have been designing a new educational track for bicultural students that will include many different levels and aspects of biculturalism.

We propose to create four

classes to serve the needs of these students. After starting with language, we will then study Hispanic culture in the United States and look for common roots. In this manner we will try to help each student enjoy the best of both worlds.

Marcela Salas (marcelas@rice.edu) is a Department of Hispanic and Classical Studies lecturer. <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~span>

Science and engineering

José L. Leal

The Association of Latin American Engineers and Scientists (ALAES) has a new name, but we don't have a new face.

The name ALAES was adopted in 1999, two years after the merger of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) and the society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists (MAES).

ALAES shares the views of both SHPE and MAES to promote, retain, recruit, and help in the development of Hispanics in engineering, science, and technical professions, as well as encouraging Hispanics to achieve educational excellence, economic opportunity and social equity.

While one of ALAES' goals is to help increase the number of Hispanics in the engineering and science majors on campus, we do not limit ourselves to only these majors. In fact, I am an art and Latin American studies major.

Another goal is to help our community by helping to encourage students to pursue a higher education and professional life. Over the past few years our chapter has demonstrated its capabilities at the national and regional level. This organization has only existed for a few years at Rice, yet we have received some of the highest awards available. We are determined to surpass our previous achievements and bring new light to our efforts.

While many of our founding members have graduated, we have a good foundation to build on and new ideas and projects to develop. The new members are willing and ready to make a difference for years to come and we are personally inviting all of you to join us.

Come to our first meeting and experience what this organization has to offer firsthand.

José L. Leal (jleon@rice.edu) is a member of ALAES. <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~alaes/main.html>

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Marco A. Leal

To Current Students:

I hope that you are enjoying your summer and your break from classes. By now you should know: Make the most of your vacation. "Work hard. Play hard."

I am sure that you worked hard enough this past year and will work harder next year, so enjoy the summer. Have some interesting stories to bring back and share with others, and bring back advice for the new class.

Dear Future Owl:

First and foremost, congratulations on your academic achievements in high school and your acceptance to Rice University. Though I don't know you yet, I feel confident in saying that you have had a successful high school career.

Let me tell you about myself. Even though I was not born here, I consider myself a native Houstonian. During my junior year in high school, something happened that changed my life: I visited Rice for the first time.

Like many of you, I was impressed. The more I read and learned, the more my interest increased. I matriculated in 1992 and after five challenging years, I graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering. If you think that graduating from high school is a great feeling, wait till you graduate from Rice.

Now, as an alumnus, I am part of another organization: SOLAR, the Society of Latino Alumni of Rice. As you might know, Latinos (Hispanics) are willing to help and want to help others. We have formed this organization with the goal of establishing a network in which Latino alumni will be informed and educated of opportunities

and events with emphasis on the Rice community.

We achieve this through mentoring (ourselves and undergraduates), recruiting for Rice, business networking, and providing social and cultural events. We have had a few activities with undergraduates and plan to have more this upcoming year.

We enjoy having the opportunity to have interaction with the undergraduates. I invite you to come out and meet us when we are on campus. Meet alumni who are now engineers, lawyers, doctors, teachers, and business and community leaders, some who have Masters or Ph.D. degrees.

As you can guess, we were in your shoes at one point, and we all went through Rice and graduated. Welcome to Rice. Get ready for an interesting and exciting time.

Marco A. Leal is the president of SOLAR and may be reached at m_leal@wf.net. He graduated from Rice in 1997. http://users.ev1.net/~juan_thurman/SOLAR.html

Mexican and Latin-American Student Association at Rice

Fernando J. Rodríguez-Macías

Hello to all of you. My name is Fernando J. Rodríguez-Macías and I am from Monterrey, Nuevo León, México.

I would like to join the people of HACER in welcoming you to Rice this fall. I am the president of the Mexican and Latin-American Student Association at Rice (MeSAR).

I obtained a bachelor of science degree in chemistry from Monterrey Tech, and I am currently a Ph.D. student in the Chemistry Department at Rice. I really like it here, and I hope your time at Rice is as educational, rewarding and interesting as mine has been. Welcome to the start or the continuation of your college years.

To make the most of this stage of your life I encourage you to get involved in the clubs and student associations that exist at Rice, and participate actively in extracurricular activities, whether they be athletic, cultural, service or (at least) social activities. Also be aware that Houston is a big city with a lot to offer

when you want to go beyond the hedges of the Rice campus.

MeSAR, the Mexican and Latin-American Student Association at Rice, is an association created in 1996 by Mexican graduate students, but we welcome and embrace members of all Hispanic countries and students of all levels. We have members from Colombia, Argentina, El Salvador, and the United States, among others.

We are here to provide support to our members, promote the culture of our countries, and to be a link between students and alumni.

We also collaborate with HACER in events such as the Culture Fair and the annual Posada. If you are interested in more information about us or in being a member, e-mail us at mesar@rice.edu.

Make the most of your time at Rice. I welcome you again, and I wish you the best for this new semester.

Fernando J. Rodríguez-Macías is the president of the Mexican and Latin-American Student Association at Rice and may be reached at mesar@rice.edu. <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~mesar>

Diverse Houston

You will now be one more person in the fourth largest city in the nation. Houston is a metropolis that has just about everything to keep you entertained.

You can explore a wide variety of cultures, for Houston is home to people of many races and ethnicity. A recently released report predicts that within five years Harris County will be a solid minority majority.

There are also plenty of activities and events to choose from. There is an International Festival every year in downtown Houston that celebrates a distinct culture every year. There are Latin Festivals, Asian Festivals, African Festivals and more.

Looking for a place to dine out? How about Indian, Chinese, or maybe even Cuban food? You can find foods from all over the world in some corner in this huge city. Isn't this Houston amazing!

HACER will be here to keep you informed as to everything that is happening and we hope you can let us know about interesting happenings that we don't know of.

Some of you all might have grown up with people like yourselves. Others may have been exposed to diverse backgrounds. Regardless of your past experiences and backgrounds, Houston offers a great chance to learn and experience cultural diversity.



Celebrate Hispanic diversity at our Cultural Fair. There will be a representative from each Hispanic country offering food and answering questions.

Secretary

Nella Garcia

¿Qué tal? I'm Nella Garcia, your HACER secretary. *Bienvenidos* to all the incoming freshman! You have an exciting year of change, growth, and unforgettable memories ahead of you.

As HACER Secretary, my duties include taking minutes and distributing them to the members, making pertinent information known, and committing myself to general organizational duties.

I am a sophomore English and political science double major from Brown College with plans to attend law school. I am from the lower Rio Grande Valley and have been surrounded by His-

Treasurer

Viola Benavidez

I hope everyone is having a great summer.

So far my summer has consisted of everything from being the maid of honor in my best friend's wedding, traveling to San Antonio to see my old high school play baseball for state competition, and helping teach CPR and first aid at the Corpus Christi State School.

I'm a pre-med psychology major and a junior at Sid Richardson College. I'm originally from Corpus Christi, Texas. (I go home pretty often if anyone wants a ride in that direction during the year.)

I'm usually shy and quiet, but that doesn't mean that I'm boring. Most Saturday nights I'm out dancing at Houston's clubs on the Rich-

External Vice President

Alma Maldonado

Welcome freshmen and transfer students!

My name is Alma Maldonado and I'm a senior at Baker College. I'm double-majoring in Latin American Studies and Policy Studies.

I'll be HACER's external vice president this year, which means I'm HACER's liaison to the Greater Houston Hispanic Community as well as to other Hispanic student organizations in other Houston-area universities.

This year I hope to hold monthly community volunteer events, where one Saturday we'll get together for a few hours and volunteer with a nonprofit organization that aids Hispanics.

Some of these events may be done in conjunction with other universities, and this is of course in addition to the weekly tutoring that HACER does with the Barrio Center and the Chicano Family Center.

I also plan to organize monthly social outings as a time for us to get together and unwind away from the stresses of school. I'm always open to suggestions — we usually go to a dance club, but we can try something new! (Houston's dance clubs tend to be 21 and over.)

I really do want to improve our relations with other Hispanic student organizations in Houston and become more involved with them in community events as well as social events.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the first HACER meeting. The new officers are very excited about this year, and we're positive about making HACER bigger and better. But in order to do so, we need your help and support.

Don't get inundated with homework and stress too early into the semester. Just remember that HACER meetings are good study breaks! Have a great summer and enjoy these days when you have "nothing" to do — pretty soon you'll be longing for them ...

panic culture my entire life. This exposure has sparked a passionate interest in my ethnicity and the direct effects it has on my identity. HACER is an organization dedicated to meeting these interests.

We believe in creating an environment that addresses cultural, political and social issues for Hispanic students and those interested in Hispanic culture.

It is our goal to inform, educate and enlighten the Rice community and ourselves about Hispanic culture and its role in our lives.

My HACER experience has been an extremely positive one. It was in this very organization that I made my closest friends. I also found those who shared similar cultural backgrounds and prac-

tices. First-year students make a variety of adjustments and HACER helps ease at least a few of these.

We do not merely concentrate on educational and political aspects of our culture, we also excel at the social element. No matter what the occasion or activity, HACER members always manage to have a great time. Not only that, we create a safety net for anyone who happens to need it. As a close knit group, we support and encourage one another.

The friends you make and the activities in which you participate will impress on your memory times that can never be forgotten.

So, enjoy your summer and get ready for an incredible year. *Hasta luego* ...

Internal Vice President

Ileana Silva

Hello! I hope everyone's summers are going well.

I will be a sophomore at Will Rice College. I am a pre-med majoring in Biology and Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations.

In my free time, you will most likely find me dancing, especially salsa, merengue, and swing. If you do not know how to dance, I would love to teach you!

As your internal vice president, I plan on-campus events

and study breaks where all students, faculty, and staff can learn about the Hispanic culture.

One of my other projects is to arrange college lunches where students can interact with each other and guest speakers in an informal atmosphere. I also organize a program that matches upperclassmen with underclassmen based on college, major, hobbies, and interests.

In general, I am in charge of any event that relates HACER to the greater Rice community.

I cannot wait to meet you all!

<http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~hacer>

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Their experience, our legacy: A brief history of Hispanics at Rice

by Dr. Alberto I. Roca

¿De donde eres?

This deceptively simple question of where you are from can be difficult for a Hispanic person to answer. Where were we born in the United States? Where did our immigrant parents come from?

Maybe our sense of identity is derived from that first time in our lives where we felt independent. For many of us that occurred in college when we left our families and entered a new institution with its own unique relationships. I would like this article to explore the question of where Hispanic support groups at Rice came from.

This is by no means a definitive historical account. But I hope this is the beginning of an ongoing process for others to pursue: recollection, education and, for some, catharsis.

Four years after the Rice Institute was founded in 1912, the first student clubs organized. In the



Primitivo Niño on the steps of the Chemistry Building in the late 1920s.

1926 *Rice Campanile*, it is reported that the Spanish language club, Los Buhos, was formed to allow members to practice their speaking skills. Such Spanish clubs existed in different forms throughout Rice's history such as Sigma Delta Pi ('50s), Club Iberoamericano ('70s), or RuLaLa ('90s).

However, I am more interested in the organizations whose members shared more in common than just Spanish. Instead, Latino friends came together informally and formally because common experiences, family life and values united them. Unfortunately, much of the early record of such groups is difficult to find, but I encourage others to be more persistent. I also ask that Hispanic alumni contact HACER so that we may benefit from your experience.

As far as I can tell, Hispanics on campus did not have any formal clubs before the '70s. Instead, they socialized together as most friends usually do. On the other hand, in the early 1920s, Mexican businessmen in Houston formed a social and cultural organization called Club Mexico Bello. Mexican Rice students would participate in their activities such as picnics and formal dances.

In 1964, Rice changed its name from "Institute" to "University." In addition, the university charter was changed to allow the entry of all students regardless of ethnicity. However, the active recruitment and support of Hispanics students was limited. In 1972, Dr. Richard Tapia, professor of mathematical sciences, formed the Rice Association of Mexican-American Students (RAMAS). The first president was David Ramos ('75) a science and engineering student from San Antonio.

Tapia says he was motivated by his graduate school experience at UCLA. Support groups for Mexican-American students were common in California, so as a young professor he decided to create one at Rice. In 1972, the group consisted of about 25 Mexican-American students, but it also was open to all members of the Rice community.

There were three goals: Educate the campus about Mexican culture through lectures and music and art festivals. Second, recruit Hispanic students at high schools throughout Texas. This was to counter the trend where the talented minority students left the state to attend college. The last goal was to provide a support group on campus. Dr. Donald Niño ('79) notes that the club held a



RAMAS/HACER in the 1984 *Rice Campanile*. standing: Rita Mendez, Leo Lopez, Brian Quintero, Felicia Cavallini, James Morales, Holly Ackley; seated: Lawrence Herrera, James Vera, Suzanne Martinez, Juana Cantu; front: Fernando Serrano, Mario Cavazos.

meeting during orientation week to allow Hispanics to meet one another. This eased the transition to the Rice experience.

Brian Quintero ('84) was the last president of RAMAS. In 1984, the club changed its name to HACER, which originally meant Hispanics Associated with Cultural and Educational Revitalization. Holly Ackley ('84) was the first president. The change reflected the fact that Hispanics at Rice were no longer of just Mexican descent. Activities included bringing Hispanic music, food, and films to campus. The club also participated in the university-wide International Night banquet with more than 200 people from the various cultural groups on campus. Similar HACER and campus-wide events are held today. Browse through this newsletter to see how active the club has become.

But long before any of these groups existed, there were individuals. In the 1920s, Houston had a population of 300,000 with less than 5 percent of Hispanic descent. Most were Mexican and most did not have access to higher education. Let me introduce you to one who did.

Primitivo Niño ('28) was not the first Hispanic to graduate from Rice, but let this story serve as one example of an early individual with *ganas*. Niño was born in San Luis Potosi, Mexico. While in grade school, his family immigrated to Edinburg, Texas. He later became a naturalized citizen.

I came to learn in interviews with his children that Primitivo was a very intelligent, but humble individual. In a very understated manner he would conceive clever solutions to problems and implement them without fanfare. Once, for in-

Interviews: Cristina Cox-Niño ('58), Brian Quintero ('84), Thomas Kreneck, Dr. Dorothy Caram ('55), Dr. Donald Niño ('79), and Dr. Richard Tapia.

References: Many volumes of the *Rice Campanile*; the October '72 issue of Rice's *High Enterprise*; *Del Pueblo: A Pictorial History of Houston's Hispanic Community* by Thomas Kreneck, 1989; *Felix Tijerina: Houston Entrepreneur and 20th Century Mexican-American Leader* by Thomas Kreneck, in press; *President's Report: No Upper Limit—A Historical Look at Rice* by Rice Univ., 1999

stance, he refused to waste his day waiting in line for a driver's license renewal. After assessing the situation, he walked to the beginning of a long row of people and announced "I'm starting a new line." Other people waiting were confused, but then quickly filed in line behind him. What person would not relish such ingenuity?

Primitivo entered the Rice Institute in 1922. From one point of view Mr. Niño led a typical undergraduate Rice experience. He was a mechanical engineering major, a member of the student chapter of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, and on a baseball scholarship. He also took 5 years to graduate, which is what current students affectionately call the "victory lap."

However, another part of Primitivo Niño's life is invisible in his senior yearbook. Whereas the original Rice Institute charter actively discouraged the matriculation of African-American students, Hispanics snuck inside the hedges by blending into the majority population. But at what sacrifice? The desire for an excellent education should only take away hard work, sleep, and money — not our culture.

What may seem trivial to some can speak volumes to others about inclusion. Primitivo Niño's name is missing an "n" under his senior photo of the 1928 *Rice Campanile*. His mother's maiden name is mistakenly listed as his first name. These are obvious identifiers of his Mexican heritage, but there were only a few on campus who could relate.

Primitivo lived off-campus and socialized with the small but close Mexican community in Houston. He was a charter member of Club Mexico Bello. Together with his fellow Rice classmate, **See NIÑO, Page 8**

Multicultural Affairs Office

Catherine Clack

Greetings on behalf of the Office of Multicultural Affairs! For those of you recently admitted to Rice, allow me to be among those to congratulate you on your outstanding accomplishments to date and welcome you to our community. I really want to take just a moment to introduce you new students to the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) and the services it offers, and simply reacquaint those of you who will be returning in the fall.

Most students who get involved with OMA do so through the various multicultural student organizations (and there are several). As such, we are very much involved with cultural programming on the Rice campus, particularly as it relates to allowing these many different student groups to share aspects of their culture and heritage. You will have ample opportunities to learn much about the many cultures present at Rice, if you choose to take part, as there is a wonderful variety of festive and enlightening cultural entertainment and education ahead of you. I heartily encourage you to take advantage of these activities.

OMA also offers a host of more individualized services: individualized counseling, assistance with tutors, a monthly newsletter with career and scholarship information, trouble shooting, etc. If you want to learn more, please check out our webpage.

Have a fabulous summer because we look forward to seeing and working with you in the fall. Please feel free to drop in at your leisure for assistance, or simply to see "what's up." It is our pleasure to help ensure that all Rice students feel welcome, and are happy and comfortable with the campus climate. We hope your years at Rice become some of the most memorable and influential of your life.

Catherine Clack (clack@rice.edu) is the director of Multicultural Affairs. <http://www.rice.edu/oma>

Hear Carlos Santana in concert!

One lucky HACER member will receive two tickets to the Oct. 7 show in Houston. Details at the first HACER meeting.

HACER presents

La Posada

Saturday, Dec. 2, 2000
Grand Hall in the RMC

Join us for HACER's biggest cultural event of the year. This celebration promotes culture to the entire Rice community. La Posada begins with a procession through the eight colleges and carries over to a central place where a Hispanic dinner is served as well as an excellent entertainment lineup that includes Mariachis, a folklorico group, students performances and concludes with a Latin dance party.

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Advisers are here to help you adjust to Rice

O-WEEK, from Page 1

I was fortunate to have had a Hispanic advisor that was absolutely amazing. I was homesick. I missed my family and my friends, *but* I was having fun meeting new people. The best part about everything was that I knew that I didn't have to forget my heritage and my culture to become acclimated into my college.

Angélica (my adviser) was wonderful at showing me how to integrate my culture into the Rice culture. As a group of O-Week coordinators, we have tried to find the Angélicas of Rice University and have them readily available for you during that first crucial week at Rice and at your college. They may be coordinators, advisers, diver-

sity facilitators, or HACER members (you'll learn a lot more about these people in the coming weeks).

If you ever feel lonely, left out, homesick or are craving some good food, don't ever hesitate to go to any of these people, myself included!

I'll leave you with a little piece of advice. It is important for you to be open and to share your own culture with those around you. You have as much to teach as to learn, and people will appreciate your contributions. Most importantly, *be open-minded*. We want to share our culture with others — not force it upon them.

Understanding other perspectives of life can help us understand ourselves, and through self-understanding

we can all become stronger people.

I'll see you in August! *¡Buena suerte!*

Mariela Alarcón's note:

HACER is ready and set for O-Week. We are planning many activities before the fall semester begins. Incoming freshmen should have received a reminder in the mail about the summer send-off parties in or around your city. HACER will host an O-Week reception Saturday, August 19 for all Hispanic freshmen and parents. We will also offer 24/7 phone support during O-Week. Finally, Sunday, August 27, we hope to have a "chill time" before the first day of classes.

There is much going on and we look forward to meeting you all.