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Wednesday, December 15, 2004

Features

Poet to speak on holiday customs

Monitor Staff Report

At 5:30 p.m. Thursday at Mesa Public Library in the upstairs rotunda, Nasario Garc'a will give a talk on "Christmas Customs and Traditions in Hispanic Communities of Northern New Mexico," including, he said, "all the trappings typical throughout rural Hispanic hamlets of northern New Mexico."

The presentation is part of the library's Author's Speak Series, funded by the Friends of Mesa Public Library.

Garc'a believes that "nobody, regardless of one's modest or outstanding accomplishments in life, should ever forget, let alone attempt to disguise, his or her humble beginnings. To do so is to prostitute yourself while replacing your cultural heritage with something superficial and alien to your own persona and that of your forefathers and foremothers," he said.

Cultural traditions are among the richest and most powerful contributors to character and the Christmas traditions in northern New Mexico's hamlets are rich indeed.

Garcia honors his own childhood traditions by presenting them in poetic form in his new book "Tiempos Lejanos: Poetic Images from the Past" (University of New Mexico Press, 2004). Please join us for this informal talk followed by refreshments and chat with the author, one of New Mexico's most eminent Hispanic scholars and folklorists. A book signing will follow at Otowi Station Bookstore at 6:30 p.m. According to the author's introduction in the book, "The words and sounds in this m/ange of poems consist of the poetics of my own being lodged in a world in which my parents raised me. Their way of life, coupled with the customs and traditions and the Spanish language (my native tongue) they taught me, mirror what I have tried to express in (these) poems."

Born in Bernalillo, Garcia grew up in the Rio Puerco Valley northwest of Albuquerque in Ojo del Padre, also known as Guadalupe (today a ghost town), before moving to Albuquerque. He was a student at the University of New Mexico where he received his B.A. in Spanish and an M.A. in Portuguese. In 1972 he was awarded his Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh in Nineteenth Century Spanish literature. He was also a graduate student at the University of Granada in Spain for one year where he took doctoral courses (cursos monogr#ficos) in literature and linguistics.

Garc'a has published several works, including 14 books, 5 of which discuss his native Rio Puerco Valley. His latest publication is "Chistes: Hispanic Humor of Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado." During the past 25 years, Garc'a has delivered over 150 lectures at international, national, regional, state and local conferences. In Spain he has lectured at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and the University of Alcal# de Henares on cultural and language topics

linking New Mexico to Spain.

Garc'a served as president of the prestigious American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese and as president of the New Mexico Folklore Society.

For more information, call 662-8240 or visit lac-nm.us then go to the library's events and exhibits section.



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