

¡EL PUEBLO 50 CLOSING ~ PENNA!

Celebrating the Living Heart of the Southside! Saturday, February 7 2026 4-6pm



Public & Applied Humanities
College of Architecture, Planning
& Landscape Architecture
Arizona Institute for Resilience
Arizona Arts



Program

- 4:15 PM Welcome - Raúl Aguirre (REA Media), Emcee
Opening Remarks - US Representative Adelita Grijalva
Acknowledgements of Partners - Liz Soltero (Sunnyside Foundation)
Music and Conversation - Raúl Aguirre
- Selections from Radio Rebelde: A Retrospective Tribute to KXEW-FM*
Host and co-founder of the Spanish bilingual radio station KXEW-FM Raúl Aguirre samples from, and shares thoughts about, a new tribute show he produced for El Pueblo 50. In this vibrant mix of music, stories, and conversations with special guests, we tune into the intertwined histories of activism and community empowerment in two forces of cultural resistance: Spanish bilingual radio and the El Pueblo Neighborhood Center. Sponsored by REA Media and Bustos Media, the show first aired November 8, 2025 on The Groove 106.3 FM and again November 9 on Urbana 104.3 FM
- 5:00 PM “Los Tres Pueblos/ The Three Peoples” Pop-up Reading - Marc Piñate (Borderlands Theater) with Milta Ortiz, Elizabeth Soltero, Raúl Grijalva-Gomez and Rosanne Couston
- Guest reading by members and guest actors of Borderlands Theater of “Los Tres Pueblos,” a play from the archives of Teatro Libertad, courtesy of archivist and local historian, Bob Diaz. The play calls attention to political turmoil in Central America in the 1970s, and highlights Tucson’s involvement in the Sanctuary movement at the time, and is one of many performances by this iconic Chicano theater company who contributed to the lively peñas that defined El Pueblo’s early years.*
- 5:20 PM Talk Back and Closing Reflections - Cassandra Becerra with actors and special guests, Bob Diaz and Adriana Valenzuela
Closing community discussion with guests and attendees about El Pueblo and the Southside’s role in shaping cultural and community empowerment, then and now.

Event Partners, Guests & Tabling Organizations

REA MEDIA After over 9 years of producing, hosting and anchoring programming for International television giant Univision, **Raul E. Aguirre** decided to undertake his next great venture and founded REA Media Group in the spring of 1990 in Tucson, Arizona. No stranger to groundbreaking endeavors, Mr. Aguirre, bilingual radio pioneer in Arizona, and longtime advocate for the inclusion of Minorities in all areas of business, politics, and education used his expertise in media to create synergies between corporations and community organizations. The result? Over 20 years of building outstanding partnerships!

BORDERLANDS THEATER strives to build equitable, joyful, and meaningful collaborations with the local community through innovative theater and responsive cultural programs ingrained in the heritage, narratives, and lived experiences of peoples rooted across the Sonoran Desert.

About the Cast:

Rosanne Couston (as Narrator) has worked extensively with Borderlands Theater over the years. She appeared in productions of Claudia's Family, Ausente, Nogales: Storytellers in Cartel Country, Barrio Stories, Sazon de Mujer, Electricidad and Barrio Hollywood. She also performed with Winding Road Theater Ensemble, Rogue Theatre, Invisible Theatre, and Live Theatre Workshop. She has also done voiceover work in radio drama, radio commercials and educational tutorials. Rosanne Couston [rosielibrarian]

Jon Sweeny (as Al Haig)

Marc David Pinate (as Ronnie Reagan) has worked with noteworthy theatre companies around the country and holds a MFA from the Theater School at DePaul University. His passion is in the field of civic practice and creating sacred moments of theatrical beauty. Since arriving in Tucson in 2013, he has concentrated on theatricalizing local narratives (Más, Barrio Stories, Sonoran Shadows) in non-traditional settings while collaborating with an array of institutional partners, artists, and community members. He is the Producing Artistic Director of Borderlands Theater

Liz Soltero (as Nicaragua) is Chief Executive Officer for the Sunnyside Foundation, a non-profit organization serving students, educators, and families on Tucson's Southside through education, emergency relief, and community investment initiatives. Soltero is a native tucsonense with decades of experience serving local communities through city governance, academia, and public library administration. Soltero holds a BA in Mexican American Studies and a Master of Library Science from the University of Arizona.

Milta Ortiz (as El Salvador) is a Salvadoran American playwright based in Tucson, originally from the Bay Area by way of El Salvador. She looks forward to the world premiere of Anita in April 2026 at the Leo Rich Theatre, a new musical created with composer Quetzal Guerrero, developed with Borderlands Theater and prior partners including the University of Arizona and Childsplay. Her recent devised work Antigona 3.0 premiered in 2024 and toured last fall. Milta has directed TYA plays at Pima Community College and is a Mellon Fellow alum of ASU's Projecting All Voices. Her plays have premiered nationally, and she serves as Associate Artistic Director at Borderlands Theater.

Raúl Grijalva-Gomez (as Guatemala)

**Que triste, se oye la lluvia
En los techos de cartón
Que triste vive mi gente
En las casas de cartón**

**Viene bajando el obrero
Casi arrastrando sus pasos
Por el peso del sufrir
Mira que es mucho sufrir
Mira que pesa el sufrir**

**Arriba deja la mujer preñada
Abajo esta la ciudad
Y se tiende en su maraña
Hoy es lo mismo que ayer
Es un mundo sin mañana**

**Que triste, se oye la lluvia
En los techos de cartón
Que triste vive mi gente
En las casas de cartón**

**Niños color de mi tierra
Con sus mismas cicatrices
Millonarios de lombrices
Y por eso que triste viven los niños
En las casas de cartón**

TEATRO LIBERTAD was a community-based theater group founded in the mid-70s in Tucson. Membership was fluid over the years. Early members included Barclay Goldsmith, Silviana Wood, Pernela Jones, Scott Egan and Teresa Jones, among others. The group's first full-length play was titled, "Los Peregrinos (1975)". The group also performed a variety of smaller works at various events throughout the community, and in a variety of settings, from neighborhood centers, to local parks, to shopping malls and for the farmworkers in the fields. The group performed at El Pueblo Neighborhood Center early on in the life of the center, later also using the space for its offices, rehearsals and performances. The members of Teatro Libertad sang and acted, with music playing a core part of the group's messaging, performing songs that were a mix of American folk songs and material from the genre known as la nueva canción. Pro-working class, pro-union, pro-immigrant, the group participated in Labor Day marches and were supportive of the workers during the Phelps-Dodge copper strike. For more information, check out the group's papers, which are available for viewing at the U of A Special Collections.

About Los Tres Pueblos:

Teatro Libertad was supportive of the 1979 Nicaraguan revolution and other movements for liberation in Latin America, while the US government was not. Shortly after he was elected, then president Ronald Reagan began to secretly fund a counteroffensive to take power away from the Sandinistas, as they were labeled communist and beholden to the Soviet Union and Cuba for support. Reagan also supported right-wing dictatorships in places like Guatemala and El Salvador. Meanwhile, locally, the Sanctuary movement was starting to bloom and grow. In response to all this, the local arts community also bloomed. Teatro Libertad contributed the skit, Los Tres Pueblos, to the mix. They also performed music from Nicaragua and El Salvador alongside folk groups like Bwiya-Toli who also performed music from Latin America. Traditional and contemporary artists like Martin Moreno also contributed relevant, beautiful works of art. Los Tres Pueblos was the first skit in which Bob Diaz, now U of A Special Collections curator, ever "acted". He was terrified, he shares, but continued to practice with the group, and he got better and felt more confident as time went by. Diaz was a member for two years, from the beginning of 1983 to the end of 1984. **Bob Diaz** was born and raised in Tucson. He attended the University of Arizona and received a BA in Psychology in 1982, and a Masters of Library Science Degree in 1986. He was a member of Teatro Libertad from 1983 to 1985. He was also one of KXCI Radio's very first group of programmers, where he volunteered from 1983-1986, (and again from 2004-2020). His weekly program, "The Chicano Connection" featured a wide range of music from throughout Latin America and the US. Bob has worked at the University of Arizona Library in various capacities since 1992. He is currently the curator for the performing arts and architectural holdings in Special Collections and is the department's reference coordinator. Bob manages a website titled "Bob's World". It can be viewed at bobdiaz.net. Bob can be reached via email at jrdiaz@arizona.edu

SILVIANA WOOD LITERARY COLLECTION LLC

A lifelong resident of Arizona. Silviana was particularly proud to have grown up in Tucson's historic Barrio Anita. With an MFA in Creative Writing, she masterfully wove folklore, history, and "Spanglish" into her stories to give a rich, authentic voice to the Chicano/Latino culture of the Southwest. Barrio Dreams/Selected Plays by Silviana Wood was published by the University of Arizona Press in 2016. La Quinta Soledad, her first and only novel, was published by Aztlan Libre Press in 2022. **Adriana Valenzuela**, Wood's daughter, is managing director of the Silviana Wood Literary Collection, LLC.

You know, we are not a transient neighborhood. We are here. - Beki Quintero

PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY - NUESTRAS RAÍCES

Nuestras Raíces is a team of librarians at Pima County Public Library that celebrates and honors the culture, voice, and linguistic heritage of our Latinx and Spanish-speaking communities in Pima County.

OFFICE OF LANE SANTA CRUZ, CITY OF TUCSON WARD 1 - BUDGET DE LA GENTE

Budget de la Gente is Ward 1's participatory budget program where individuals in the Ward 1 community can submit their ideas for projects for a chance to get a \$10,000 grant. You can see more information on their website here: <https://www.tucward1.com/participatorybudgeting>

U OF A + SUNNYSIDE FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIP

Beginning in 2023, [Sunnyside Foundation \(SF\)](#), whose mission centers on service to Tucson's Southside, began directing reinvestment energies toward reactivating [El Pueblo Neighborhood Center](#), a Southside hub for public services, neighborly exchange and community place-keeping in the area and beyond. Together with stakeholders, the collaboration resulted in an ongoing portfolio of exchanges, including site-specific courses, community storytelling, arts-research projects, exhibitions and more, working to bring the Southside's cultural, historical and speculative imaginaries into the public eye. Drawing from a blended "urban humanities" research toolkit from urban planning, design and the humanities, these projects build on: case studies, visual literacy, archival research, mapping/site plans, site visits, community storytelling, spatial ethnography, pin-ups, community photo-shoots, image co-creation, co-curation, modeling, to name a few methods. A digital hub documenting this work can be found at ss22.st

About El Pueblo 50: Celebrating the Living Heart of the Southside

Ongoing through May 2026. On view Monday-Friday 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, Saturday 8:30 am - 1pm. El Pueblo Neighborhood Center Patio @ El Pueblo Neighborhood Center, 101 W Irvington Rd, Building 1, Tucson, AZ 85714

Home to some of Tucson's oldest neighborhoods, the Southside is a place of safekeeping—of culture, of the environment, and of the collective power to shape intergenerational destinies. Established in 1975, the center is wrapped in murals and memory and home over the years to multiple agencies, offices, services and institutions. Daily traversed by families and civil servants, educators and librarians, recreation and health workers, El Pueblo is also the hub of reinvestment by multiple stakeholders committed to its revitalization. Drawing from multiple archives and community stories, the exhibition presents thematic panels narrating the center's vibrant actions for community and environmental care, while envisioning El Pueblo's role in shaping a more resilient Southside future. The exhibition also features accompanying displays in the Multipurpose Room (MPR) that will be on view via special viewings and open houses till Saturday, February 7, 2026. These include *The Drawings and Doodles of ¡GRIJALVA!* (Curated by Shannon Smith), with over 175 doodles immortalizing the creativity of this beloved US Congressman and activist Raúl Grijalva, and the *¡Viva El Pueblo! Project (2023)* (Jessica Wolff), a nine image series developed from oral and written histories of El Pueblo combined with visual inspiration from the artworks and murals of David Tineo. For more information please email info@sunnysidefoundation.org or visit www.sunnysidefoundation.org/elpueblo50

**If anybody wanted to
know what El Pueblo
was, I said it was an
artery, a beating heart
of activism.
-Raúl E. Aguirre**

¡VIVA EL PUEBLO!
EL PUEBLO NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

