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más+menos

english

WORKS

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[ student magazine / fall 2008 ]

TACTICS

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cíee seville study center  
liberal arts program

university of seville  
english department

## contributors

Emily CLARYE / Beloit College

Yesenia FRIAS / University of Seville

María Dolores GARCÍA / University of Seville

Kristen GLAZER / University of Scranton

Ángela GUERRERO / University of Seville

Carmen JIMÉNEZ / University of Seville

Tess KUKOVICH / Elon University

Anne LOHEZIC / Mount Holyoke College

Marissa MASTRANGELI / University of Wisconsin-Madison

Emmalie MOSELEY / Mount Holyoke College

Álvaro PEINADO / University of Seville

Vanessa PINNA / Indiana University

Juan Manuel REGALADO / University of Seville

Cinta RODRÍGUEZ / University of Seville

Olga RUKOVETS / Tufts University

María SUÁREZ / University of Seville

[www.cíee.org/masmenos](http://www.cíee.org/masmenos)



Mariteresa F. FRAIN, Ph.D.: Director of the CíEE Study Center in Seville.

Olga MERINO: Resident Coordinator of the Liberal Arts Program.

José Luis Martínez: Resident Coordinator of the Advanced Liberal Arts Program.

Oscar CEBALLOS: Chief editor and graphic designer.

José Enrique GARCÍA: Coordination of University of Seville students and revision of English-Spanish translations.

Eduardo DEL CAMPO: Text editing, journalistic advice.

Marissa MASTRANGELI: Revision of English texts.

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Printing: ESCANDÓN S.L.  
© cíee study center in seville. 2008  
Depósito Legal: CA-411-2005  
ISSN 1885-5490

cíee  
seville study center

UNIVERSIDAD DE SEVILLA  
Facultad de  
Filología,  
Dpto. de  
Filología Inglesa  
(Lengua Inglesa)



## letter from the editor

As human beings, we define ourselves by our longing for interaction with others. It would not be possible to have an identity that was not pre-determined by a group, just as there could be no group without individuals that define themselves by it. After all, it seems odd to think about a religion meant for only one man or woman, a political ideology defended by only one individual, or –if you can imagine—a soccer team with only one sad fan (although many times, us Betis aficionados feel as if we were that hypothetical pathetic fan).

The growing complexity of social networks is becoming increasingly more evident in a globalized world influenced by an apparent systematic crisis. A world in which some sort of historical revenge, rooted in identity claims, has resurfaced with the objective of excluding others. Fortunately, the evolution of social, economic, and cultural factors in our Western society allows us to live a moment

in our history that respects minorities and in which society actively works so that no one is excluded.

Regardless of the more or less favorable place in the world where we have been born and where we live, our family, friends, work, shared beliefs, political preference, or simply, our passions, are part of a system that provides us with symbolic meaning and that always precedes our own existence. Our capacity to dive into said symbolic space does not end with traditional models. Together with them, the present has brought us to “places” just as symbolic where—like in Facebook—a person can have 1,683 friends without ever having been introduced. Thanks to such new digital communication tools, the signal of our digital self (surrounding us like an aura) doesn’t ever stop blinking. It doesn’t matter that we are sleeping, outside of the office,

or SCUBA diving in deep waters. Finally, we made it... We can be and not be all at once.

Perhaps this sort of duplicated world is one of the great paradoxes of present time: a digital network that demands hours of isolation in front of the computer in order to maintain our active online social networks.

With great rigor, enthusiasm, and irony, the eight writers of this new issue of *más+menos*—the first in which we have published poems, as well as features and fiction—have worked intensely to construct this collective reflection in the form of a magazine. All of them, as always, have collaborated with their counterparts from the University of Seville for the revision and translation of the texts (...and we have also enjoyed one or two tapas together when the situation presented itself). My most sincere thanks to all of them for their valuable contribution.



Social networking sites such as Facebook are no longer being seen as useless traps for procrastination. Today, these virtual meeting points have evolved into an efficient intergenerational tool used to manage businesses, maintain relationships, organize one's social life, and communicate with family and friends both near and far.

# The sharpest tool in the shed.

by Vanessa Pinna

As it nears 11 PM on a crisp Wednesday night in Seville, the sidewalks of Betis Street begin to fill with youngsters sporting side ponytails, neon colored leggings, and acid-washed jeans. Shouts of "Nice legwarmers!" and "Great hair!" can be heard as the crowd begins to congregate outside of Discoteca Boss. With a quick flash of a glossy flyer that reads "80's Party," each Madonna imitator and Michael Jackson look-alike enters free of charge.

Just three years ago, eighties extravaganzas, beach bashes, and stoplight themed socials weren't a staple of the west banks of the Guadalquivir. Three years ago, American and Spanish students in Seville had fewer options for an evening out and even fewer means of discovering new forms of entertainment. The nightlife empire of Cristobal Torres Torres had not begun. [Yes, he has two identical surnames!]

Sitting behind a small desk in the office of Discoteca Boss, Torres, known to friends as Toba, completes important work for the upcoming week. The dynamic 26-year-old is creating a guest list of 500 people, posting publicity on the internet, coordinating drink specials, and informing VIPs of upcoming events. Toba, like many of today's entrepreneurs, is using Facebook, the popular social-

international event promoter. The young businessman works to organize various parties around Seville for both American students studying abroad and local Spanish students as well. Aside from basic planning of the parties, Toba also utilizes Facebook for promotional purposes. "The group and event applications are the most helpful to me. They allow me to invite people to the parties, add photos, and give all the important details," he says.

While currently on Facebook Toba boasts 1,683 friends, 1,703 photos, and an average of four new wall posts a day, there once was a time when the Seville native managed both his business and friendships with pen and paper. "Every time I met a new friend I would write down their name. At one point I had more than 300 names memorized!" Toba recalls. After much encouragement from his American friends, Toba finally decided to create a Facebook account in 2006. "At that time, a person had to

have a university email to join Facebook, but I wasn't in school! A friend of mine had two different university emails, so he made a page for me," laughs Toba. "My friends loved being able to see my face. It was so much more personal than using email."

Today in 2008, Toba continues to connect with friends using Facebook, but largely uses the site to promote his famous parties. "I like going to

Toba's parties because I know all of my friends will be there and we always have a lot of fun," reflects Grace Peterson, a CIEE Liberal Arts student. "I like it when he has themed parties because they remind me of home," Grace adds. Toba's vibrant personality, intelligent use of technology, and ability to know what young people like has become an effective recipe for success. "I'm a businessman," he claims. "It's all about connections."

In addition to connections, a large portion of Facebook's users are interested in reconnections as well. "Facebook has allowed me to find and contact some of my French, American, and Italian friends I may have lost touch with otherwise!" remarks María Montes de Oca, coordinator of student services for the CIEE study center in Seville.

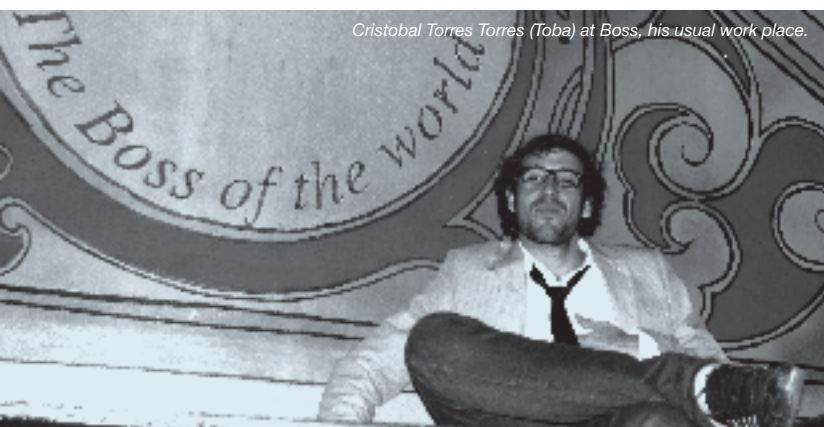
Earlier this year, María was a student services coordinator for another exchange program in Granada. Upon the many requests of her students, María, 28, created a Facebook account and soon became an addict. "My favorite part of Facebook is the photos application. Looking at friends' photos and adding my own is a form of relaxation to me," she explains.

María, like Toba, also uses Facebook for work-related purposes. "Using Facebook events has enabled me to announce the various activities and excursions that CIEE has offered. The staff has seen how much time students spend on the site and realized that it would be a good way to contact them," she adds. According to recent statistics, María and the CIEE staff are wise to utilize Facebook as a means of communication with students.

In a 2008 study entitled "Student Use of Communication Technologies during a Study Abroad Experience," researcher Antonio F. Jiménez found that 100 percent of the students surveyed used Facebook to contact friends back at home, and 88 percent used the site to contact American friends in Spain. Additionally, Jiménez found that 36 percent of students surveyed spent 1-3 hours on Facebook each week and 15.3 percent admitted to spending 7 or more hours on the site each week. With statistics such as these in 2008, one can only imagine how new technology will impact the experiences of future study abroad students.

"In general, I think the amount of time that students spend on Facebook is normal," remarks María. "It has changed the way students study abroad. They are more connected to the world than ever before."

While the 18-24 age group proves to be the largest percentage of loyal Facebook users, María's age group, 26-34, is the second largest and the fastest growing demographic on the site, according



Cristobal Torres Torres (Toba) at Boss, his usual work place.

networking site ranked as the fifth most visited page on the web today. With the ability to create events, join groups, add photos, and connect with new and old pals, Facebook is becoming more than just an addictive social tool; it has revolutionized the way people communicate, do business, and maintain relationships.

"Facebook is the way I do most of my business," explains Toba, who considers himself an



to stats site Comscore.com. “I have many friends on Facebook that are 35 and older,” explains María. “I think little by little it’s becoming more popular with adults.”

María, who has approximately 150 friends on Facebook, feels confident that she has a true relationship with the majority of this number. Gesticulating to emphasise this reality, she insists: “There are very few I don’t actually know!” María spends approximately 45 minutes each day on the site. “I normally check my Facebook twice a day; once in the morning and once at night.”

In contrast to a modest two logins a day, Diana Doman, a CIEE Liberal Arts student, claims to log on to Facebook an average of five times a day. Diana, like many past and present study abroad students, is working to maintain a long-distance relationship while abroad.

While sprawled out on a couch of her favorite “tetería,” (typically a tea and hookah café), Diana sips on a chocolate peanut butter milkshake and reminisces about her past with her longtime boyfriend Kyle, who attends her school, Penn State. “We had been broken-up this summer, but began talking a lot when we realized that I was going to be leaving soon for Spain. When we tried video-chat for the first time before I left, we realized that being together while I was gone was feasible,” she explains.

In conjunction with video-chat, Facebook use has also eased the hardship of being apart for Diana and Kyle, both 20. “Facebook has especially helped Kyle because he can see pictures of the places I’ve visited and put a face to the names of people I tell him about,” reflects Diana. When she returns to Penn State this spring, Diana and Kyle will be on the same campus for the first time. Last year while Diana attended Penn State, Kyle attended Drexel University, a four-hour-drive away. “We’re both at new places and we don’t know each other’s new friends. Being able to see pictures on Facebook has also helped me to see who he talks about. It makes things much more personal,” Diana explains.

The ability to stay connected via Facebook has undoubtedly helped many couples maintain a relationship while apart. However, the opportunity to view photos, monitor wall posts, and look at other posted material can sometimes be a negative ability as well. “It can cause drama when we see pictures of each other seeming flirtatious with other people, especially if we don’t know the people in the pictures,” Diana remarks. “Sometimes the wall posts and picture comments from girls I don’t know get annoying, but as a whole, I think using Facebook has been a positive thing for me and Kyle”.

Diana currently shares an apartment in the Triana district of Seville with Concepción Martínez Acosta, 72. Concepción, also known as Concha,

hosted four other American students before Diana. “Concha’s first American student, Lori, stayed with her in 1992. She had a harder time being abroad because her only way of communicating with family and friends back in Michigan was using Concha’s land line.” “I think it would be so hard not to have cell phones, email, Skype, or Facebook. I talk to Kyle a million times a day; it keeps me from getting homesick,” Diana reflects, checking her cell phone.

Beyond use by Americans living in Spain, Facebook is also popular among Spaniards as well. Unlike Toba and María however, many Spanish people are becoming fonder of Facebook’s local competitor, Tuenti. Created just two years ago in Madrid by 24-year-old Zaryn Dentzel of California, “Tuenti is now the leading site of its kind in the country,” states José Isaac Mercader, a writer for Spanish newspaper *El País*.

At first glance, Tuenti appears quite similar to Facebook. It has a simple design that uses a bi-color scheme of white and sky blue, a homepage separate from each user’s profile page, and notifications when new

comments are received or new friends are added. Both sites contain a public “wall” on profile pages, along with the ability to send private messages, upload photos, and provide personal information such as favorite music, movies, books and TV shows. However, Tuenti is published in 100% Spanish, a key factor for its success in Spain. “Spaniards think it is very important that sites are in their own language,” says Víctor Pimentel, who edits a blog on new technology. “As a user, you don’t just pick a site for yourself, but for all your friends, and the common link tends to be language,” he adds.

As a whole, Tuenti users tend to be much younger than those of Facebook. Nuria Martínez González, 12, Candela Fernández Quiroga, 12, and Marta Garrigós López, 11, claim that they are all “completely hooked” on Tuenti. While Spanish university students were the first to take part in the homegrown phenomenon, the trend quickly spread to the younger crowd. “You have to receive an invitation to join,” explains Candela, “But my older sister invited me and then I invited all of my friends.” While some users are annoyed with Tuenti’s strict privacy policies, others feel that they do their job to protect the site’s thousands of young users. “It is a deft move to ensure that profiles are kept private from the public,” agrees David Corral, writer for *El País*. Regardless of age, the ability to view and upload photos continues to be the favorite application among both the Facebook and Tuenti communities. Like María Montes de Oca, Candela says uploading images and making comments on friends’ photos is by far her favorite thing about Tuenti. “All they ever

say is ‘You look so pretty!’ and ‘Cute photo, girl!’,” exclaims Nani Quiroga, Candela’s mother. “I guess I just don’t get it,” she explains, rolling her eyes.

## “It’s all about connections”

“Facebook has to be the most talked about, most misunderstood website right now,” claims Judi Sohn, writer for networking website *The Web Worker Daily*. Although many people have criticized Facebook and Tuenti, the reality is that these sites provide a digital mirror that reflects the personality of our society. Each time we log in, our news feed informs us of who broke up, who had a great weekend, who has an upcoming test, and who just wishes things were different. We are then left with the option to comfort those in need, laugh with those who rejoice, and ignore those we dislike. Although critics claim these sites are in fact making society more distant, Zaryn Dentzel, creator of Tuenti, argues that these sites “exist to enhance the connections we already have, not to replace them.” These basic connections, our natural relationships, give meaning to the groups we join, the photos we view, the comments we post, and the events we attend. As Toba and many others have said before, “In this life, it’s all about connections.” ■

*[Author’s Note: Shortly after the completion of this article, my mother created a Facebook account. Her name is Nancy Pinna, and she would love to be your friend.]*



Toba's Facebook page, his networking arena.

## 10 things you didn't know about facebook

- The website has won awards such as placement into the "Top 100 Classic Websites" by PC Magazine.
- Facebook is the leading social-networking site based on monthly unique visitors, having overtaken MySpace in April 2008.
- Facebook was opened to everyone with a valid email address on September 26, 2006.
- Facebook membership was initially limited to Harvard students, and was then expanded only to other colleges in the Ivy League.
- The website currently has more than 120 million active users worldwide.
- Facebook's old web address was [www.thefacebook.com](http://www.thefacebook.com).
- In October 2008, Facebook announced that it would be setting-up its international headquarters in Dublin, Ireland.
- Facebook does not allow users under the age of 13 to register.
- Microsoft announced in October 2007 that it purchased a 1.6% share of Facebook for \$246 million.
- Facebook employees can check out anyone's profile. They can also see which profiles a user has viewed.

by Marissa Mastrangeli

# Where a taxi can't take you.

The high school Ramon Carande lies on the border between the marginalized neighborhood of *Las Tres Mil* and the rest of Seville, Spain. For José Luis, it's more than just a physical median. It's his passport to a better life.

You can see him on Saturday nights eating sunflower seeds alongside the Guadalquivir River. Like any other Spanish teen, he's hanging out on Betis street with his buddies. He's dressed in a green and white Betis soccer warm-up, complete with the emblem. He throws his arm around his friend and insists that Betis is the best soccer team in the world. He tells them with excitement as if it wasn't the thousandth time he'd shared his opinion.

Tonight when the bars and clubs close, most people will be taking a taxi home. Unfortunately, José Luis Rivera Romero doesn't have that option. It has nothing to do with money. It's not difficult to find his house. The reason: the taxi drivers refuse to enter his neighborhood. It's dangerous. "I tried once, but the driver refused," says José Luis.

José Luis lives in the *Polígono Sur*, or *Las Tres Mil Viviendas*, of southeast Seville, Spain. It is bordered by the highway SE-30, a railroad, the Guadaira River, and the Hytasa factory. A place where four months ago two German tourists mistakenly wandered into and attempted to take

He lives in *Marrones*, a part of *Las Tres Mil* known especially for flamenco and drugs. Yet, José Luis has his own reasons for its notoriety. "One time I saw a guy firing shots with a pistol. Aside from that, there's always a lot of noise. I can't sleep at night because of the cars and motorcycles. I don't want to stay here."

José Luis's parents have enough money to get by, but moving is out of the question. His mom, Rosalia, works as a housemaid in *Bermejales*, *Su Eminencia*, and other various neighborhoods of Seville. His dad, Francisco, works as a security guard in a small town just outside of Seville. During the summer, José Luis works at his sister Rosa's bar, *Bodega las Cuñas*, four hours a day. But he's only 17 and doesn't make nearly enough to support himself.

In what can seem like a paradigmatic trap, José Luis has discovered hope. When he says, "I don't want to stay here," he means it. And he's doing something about it. Something most kids do because they're forced to. He's doing it because he realizes it's his ticket to a better life. He's going to school.

José Luis attends the high school Ramon Carande, at 4 Alfonso Lasso de la Vega Street. Wide hallways with modest lighting. Orange-colored walls decorated with posters about respect and the value of education. For José Luis, since 7th grade it has been his passage from *Las Tres Mil* to his future of success.

An average day at school. The time is 11:58am, and his recreation period is about to end. A group of girls sits on the stairs playing a game of cards. A group of boys blocks the top of the stairs as they laugh and joke with one another. The bell rings and teachers monitor the chaotic halls as students finish their sandwiches and head to class. A young boy pushes his companion. He shoves him back and they keep walking. A student walks up to the reception desk and asks for the bathroom key (a preventative measure to ensure students don't smoke in the bathroom).

Parents who realize the advantage of an education from Ramon Carande go out of their way to send their students there. Located 300 meters outside of *Las Tres Mil*, it's not the most

convenient. However, most schools directly in the area have more problems with conduct. As a result, more effort is spent on discipline than education. "In my 8 months of being here, I've only seen one fight," smiles Mari Carmen Valverde Chaves, handing the student a bathroom key. Sixty percent of the 632 students at Ramon Carande come from *Las Tres Mil*.

"I live in *La Oliva*," says a boy from a neighboring area of *Las Tres Mil* who wouldn't reveal his



José Luis working on an electrical model.

name. "There's a lot of problems, but my parents can't afford to move." Reasonable. Two logical questions proceeded, "Do you want to go to college? Do you like to study?" The look on his face revealed the absurdity of those ideas.

"Clearly, there are lot of parents and students who *don't* realize the opportunity this school provides," says Zoraida de la Osa Castro, the school's head of studies. "Ten to fifteen years ago, the students who came here wanted to be here. Now it's obligatory."

Ramon Carande has operated under the Spanish Educational System Reform Act (LOGSE) since 1990. Students are required to go to school until they are 16-years-old. If they don't show up to school, they get a phone call. If there are still problems in attendance, social services intervene. According to Encarnación Quiroga, the school's psychologist, it is "a demagogical law that was made without consulting the teaching staff." After graduating from Ramon Carande, only 30% of students will continue their studies in college.

The choice to go to school has transitioned from being internal to external. It affects everyone. "Some students like to study, but some don't. Those who don't, hold back the class. All schools

"A LOT OF PARENTS AND STUDENTS DON'T REALIZE THE OPPORTUNITY THIS SCHOOL PROVIDES..."



José Luis Rivera proudly shows his team's emblem.

a photo of kids playing in the street. Minutes later, relatives of the kids robbed and trampled the tourists, not wanting to be considered some spectacle. Two months later, firearm traffickers were arrested there for possession of 28 pistols, three revolvers, two guns, over 2,000 cartridges, and a two-meter long marijuana plant. "I'm not afraid. I've grown up there," says José Luis.

have this problem. It's just at worse level here," says Encarnación.

"Students don't want to study or go to class anymore. They don't buy the book. What can you do?" Miguel Muñoz Fuentes continues to wipe the counter. After 28 years of owning the school's café, he's seen the school's transitions firsthand. "Society has changed."

Choices at the café range from hot chocolate to sandwiches. About 17 years ago, the menu wasn't so limited. It included tobacco, wine, and beer. Back then, only the professors ordered those items. Needless to say, with that same menu today, Miguel wouldn't be making most of his profit from the professors. He re-wipes the counter in the same spot. "A lot of students come here with family problems.

Some students live with their grandparents. Others have parents that just don't care."

Zoraida analyzes it well. "The students spend 6 hours with us, and 18 at home. The majority of the students' values and formation is going to come from home." The teachers can only do so much.

"We do have a lot of special programs here so that our students can learn in the best way possible," explains Encarnación. Program for Initial

Professional Qualification (PCPI), is an example of a program instituted for students starting at 15-years-old. It allows them to learn at a basic level. Programs like PCPI are

intended for students who have the will to study, yet learn at a slower pace than their peers.

Yet, it's up to the student to take advantage of the programs. For José Luis, going to class isn't a question. He wakes up everyday at 8:00am to be at school from 8:30am – 3:00pm. "I want to finish so I can find a job. I'd like to have a career in computer science or join the army. This is the best high school I can go to in order to do that. We don't have any problems with weapons or drugs here." He rolls his eyes and continues. "But I got written up for eating a sandwich in class. I was hungry!"

It wouldn't be surprising to find out that while José Luis was being punished for eating in class, his neighbor down the street was being punished for robbery. ■

"THIS IS THE  
BEST HIGH  
SCHOOL I CAN  
GO TO..."

## 'A' is for Andalusia.

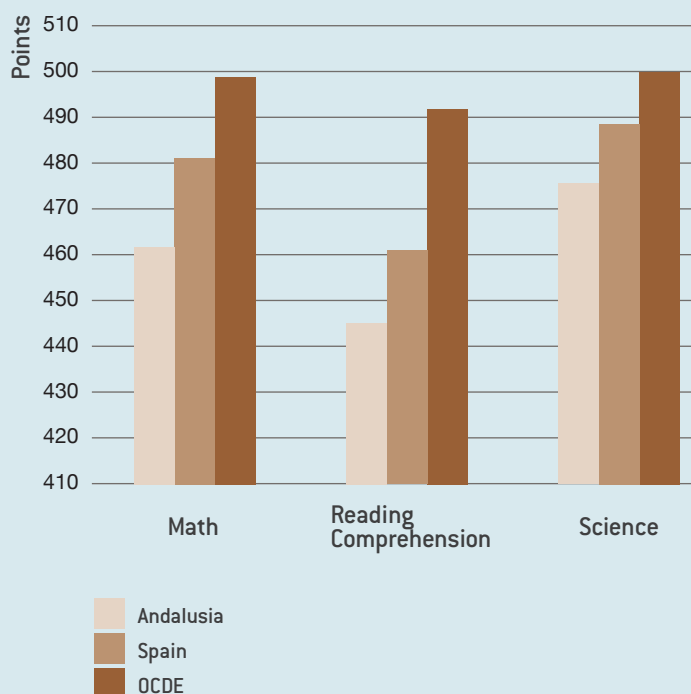
According to PISA (Program for International Students Assessment) the average scores for Spain fall short of those of OCDE (Organization for Cooperation and Economic Development, comprised of 30 countries). In comparison with Spain, Andalusia (region of southern Spain of which Seville is the capital) falls significantly short.

In Andalusia, 4.211 euros are spent annually on each non-university student in a public school. This is the least of all of Spain, who's national average is 5.229 euros per year.

In attempts to reconcile the discrepancy, in 2008 5.761,5 billion euros will be spent on education in Andalusia. This is a 10.68% increase from 2007. The "Law of Education of Andalusia 2007" states that 1.175 millions euros will be added between 2008 and 2012, for a total increase of 36%. They are also contemplating an increase of professors to reduce the student-teacher ratio.

However, the members of ANPE (National Association of Teaching Professionals) believe that the money is being spent on costs that in reality don't affect the schools. "Money is spent in related things, but not in the education itself." ■

Average Scores for 15-Year-Olds (PISA)



Break time at Ramón Carande High School







# What I learned that first day in San Francisco...

by Emmalie Moseley

[fiction]

I had always heard that “It’s not what you know, but who you know,” but I never really believed it. That is, until now.

I had just received my diploma; I was ready to take on the real world. There were endless opportunities, paths I could take. I packed up my things and headed out west, thinking I would start my new life in San Francisco, California. I figured that with my degree in biology and neuroscience from a prestigious liberal arts college in New England, I would be able to find a job in no time. The biotech field was started just south of San Francisco, and I felt that it was where I was meant to be. It was all going to work out; I was sure of it.

I arrived at the airport in San Francisco and met my friends Elise and Rachel, who were to be my new roommates. While Rachel was from California, Elise and I were not from the area. Elise was from Upstate New York, and I had spent the majority of my life in Michigan. The three of us had been friends throughout college, and I was eager to move-in with them as I began my post-college life. Although I was just arriving in mid-August, the two recent graduates had spent the entire summer in the area. Elise and Rachel had found the house that we were to live in together, and they moved-in about a month before my arrival. The house was in the Bayview District, situated in the southeastern corner of the city.

We left the airport in a taxi and headed north to San Francisco. The freeway was much bigger than anything I had ever seen; there were five lanes going in each direction. It was much brighter than the rural area I had grown up in. There were lights everywhere, and the moon reflected on the Bay.

We pulled off the freeway, passing graffiti covered walls lined with trash and a few plants that looked desperate for life.

Two men stood under the streetlight immersed in a conversation or exchange of some sort. As we drove past, they glared into the back seat at us, making me feel a bit uncomfortable. “We arrived at the house around midnight. As the taxi pulled up to the row of houses, I was surprised. I had never seen a neighborhood with that kind of design. Back in Michigan the houses are spread out, with extensive yards on all sides of the houses. Here in

San Francisco everything was cement. The houses were all connected, and I wondered if we even would have a backyard. We got out of the taxi and entered our new home.

I climbed the wooden stairs and arrived in the hallway. My room was the biggest out of the three, with a large window facing the street. Finally, I was home. Exhausted, I threw my suitcase down in my empty bedroom. The thud of my suitcase on the barren floor was echoed by a loud noise.

“WHAT WAS THAT?” I WONDERED ALOUD. A FEW MINUTES LATER I HEARD SIRENS AND SAW THE FLASHING LIGHTS OF A POLICE CAR SPEED PAST MY WINDOW. FROM THE OTHER ROOM I HEARD RACHEL START TO PANIC.

“What was that?” I wondered aloud. A few minutes later I heard sirens and saw the flashing lights of a police car speed past my window. From the other room I heard Rachel start to panic.

“Not again! I can’t live like this! I can’t live here!” she said through her tears. She buried her face in her hands as her brown curls cascaded down over them.

“What do you mean, ‘Not again?’” I asked, still unsure of what had just happened. “Was that,” I hesitated, “a gunshot?” I was beginning to believe I had just answered my own question.

Elise entered the room, “I didn’t want to tell you until the morning, Melanie, but the neighborhood is not as safe as I thought it would be.” She paused, took a deep breath and admitted, “There have been three shootings on our block in the past two weeks.”

“What?” I exclaimed, “You told me this was a relatively safe area...”

We began to discuss the situation of the neighborhood, our landlord, and possible options for what we could do next. It became clear to me that Elise had been warned that it could be a bit dangerous for three white girls to be moving into the Bayview district. She explained that our landlord, Margaret, was Chinese and didn’t speak much English. Apparently the reality of the neighborhood had been lost in translation. Rachel had learned of the neighborhood’s reputation as being quite dangerous. The nearest bus stop happened to be where three gangs often came into contact with one another, and there were often shootings. It seemed that our only real option was to break our lease and find a new place. It was getting late, so

we all climbed into one bed, trying to reassure ourselves with our own presence that things would be alright. As I attempted to fall asleep my mind was racing. I began to wonder how my two roommates had decided that this neighborhood was where we were to live. As I thought more and more, I became upset that I had had no say in our housing decision in the first place. Had I been the one making the decision I would have been sure to research the area first before deciding to rent the house. After thinking for quite a while, my mind succumbed to exhaustion, and I slowly drifted off to sleep.

The next morning my panicking roommate had an announcement: she was leaving.

“You mean, you’re going back home to your family?”

“I’m sorry, Mel, I just can’t live like this. I don’t want to call this home, with all this, this violence. I can’t, I just can’t,” Rachel told me with tears in her eyes. I felt abandoned; I had moved out to California knowing that I would be living with my best friend, and now she was leaving me. Not only was she leaving me, but she was escaping the situation, leaving the two transplants to fend for ourselves. I could hardly believe all that had happened since my arrival. I had arrived thinking that I was moving into a great house in an ideal location with my two friends, and within a day everything I had believed to be true was proven false. Rachel continued, “My mom is coming to pick me up in an hour and we will come back this weekend with the moving truck to get my all my things.”

An hour later she was gone.

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Late that afternoon Elise and I had a meeting with Margaret to discuss breaking our lease. Since she didn’t speak much English, we agreed that she should bring someone to help her translate as to avoid any additional problems. She brought along her boyfriend who was about twenty years younger than her. His height dominated over her small stature, and she seemed intimidated by him. He was pushy with her, and it seemed that he controlled the relationship. He would prove to be a violent person and I felt badly for Margaret. She was a nice person and didn’t deserve to be in such an adverse situation with a man. Elise had prepared the documents we would need to legally move out; gang violence was among the legal reasons to break lease without fines. As soon as our conversation started, Margaret’s boyfriend turned hostile towards us; the situation went from bad to worse. Margaret tried to calm him down, but it was no use. He was fuming; as Elise and I presented our case his face twitched with anger as



he occasionally burst out in harsh remarks. I tried to maintain a strong appearance, but on the inside I was extremely frightened.

"If you move out, we'll sue you! I'll make your life so miserable, just you wait and see! I'll, I'll--" he screamed, pointing at Elise with his index finger inches away from her face. His eyes bulged and his face was red with rage.

"Get out!" she yelled back as she stood up from the table. "Get out now! Leave! This is still my house, and I said get out!"

I had never seen Elise react in this manner; usually she was the one bringing calm and sensibility to a situation. I jumped to my feet as an attempt to help. Realizing the legal and physical harm he could cause, Margaret took our side and helped me to push him towards the door. We were able to get him to go down the stairs to the front door where he continued to yell up to Elise. He was cussing and swearing, but I somehow was able to keep my composure and direct him towards the door. Finally when he was outside I managed to shut and lock the door.

"That's right, you lock that door!" he threatened me. "You better watch your back!"

Margaret left shortly after; Elise and I were petrified. There we were in that horrible situation, with an enraged man waiting nearby, threatening us to not leave our house. We realized that he also had access to the keys to our place, which was a very intimidating thought. I peered through my window and saw that he was sitting in his car in front of the house. The sun glimmered on an item on the dashboard, but before I could really see what it was, he snatched it up, pulling it out of sight. I feared for the worst: was that a gun? In tears, Elise called a friend from school that lived ten minutes away in the neighboring town.

"Andrea," she cried, "can I ask you a huge favor?" Elise explained the situation. While she was on the phone I began to realize that it didn't matter that I had a college degree. Here I was with my knowledge of biology, chemistry, and psychology, and none of that was going to be of any help. The lab reports, twenty page papers, and hours of reading were useless. My education wasn't what

was going to save me from this situation; what was going to save me was having friends.

"I'll be there in ten minutes," Andrea replied.

"Oh my God, thank you so much, Andi."

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Ten minutes. That's all we had to grab everything we needed. We had no idea when we would be returning to our house. There was no way we could know whether or not we

women would need when they were leaving their abusive partners. I had never realized how hard it is to pack your belongings when you're panicked. The time goes by so quickly. Ten minutes. That's all we had to escape our situation. We were lucky enough not to have been in a situation like many of the women that I talked to. Ten minutes. In some situations ten minutes can be the difference between life and death. I shuddered at the thought.

We arrived at Andrea's house, and Elise sighed with relief. At that moment, everything that had just occurred over the past twenty-four hours hit me, and I began to cry. Andrea gave me a box of tissue along with a hug. Elise began to explain in detail the events that had just taken place. Andrea's mom heated up leftover dinner and sat with us. Her motherly presence was comforting, and I began to feel as if the worst part was over. We were safe. ■

photo: Emmalie Moseley



were in immediate

danger. I didn't want to leave anything valuable in the house in case Margaret or her boyfriend decided to return with the keys. Knowing my huge suitcase would be too difficult to handle, I rummaged through my belongings, grabbing things I didn't want to leave behind: my laptop, clothes for a few days, important papers, the guitar my mom had given me before leaving for college... I didn't know what else to bring. I had just moved in with expectations of a secure future, and now I was moving out, scared of what was to come. I had no idea who Andrea was, and yet I was heading to her house as a fugitive.

Just as Andrea said, she arrived at our house ten minutes later with her dad. We threw our things into the car and took off, as I realized all the things I had left behind: contact solution, my toothbrush, pajamas...

My thoughts went to a time during college when I had worked the phones at a women's shelter. My job was to calm the women and instruct them to pack their things and leave. Over and over again I had repeated the list of necessary items the

## San Francisco, CA:

San Francisco is one of California's most popular tourist destinations. Known for its charm and beauty, it sits at the top of a peninsula, with the Pacific Ocean on its left and the San Francisco Bay on its right. In San Francisco, one will encounter a vibrant culture made up of diversity and fun. Some famous destinations include the Golden Gate Bridge, Haight-Ashbury (home of the hippie movement in the 1970's), Alcatraz, and Ghirardelli Square.

Like any city, San Francisco has its not-so-touristy areas. The Tenderloin, Bayview, and Hunter's Point are known as rough neighborhoods. This story takes place in Bayview.

- San Francisco Population: 776,733 (US Census 2000)
- Bay Area Population: about 7.1 million
- Crime Index in 2006: 43,525
- Number of homicides in 2007: 98 (sfgate.com)

Although there are 121 electoral democracies in the world, Spain had to wait until the death of Franco in 1975 to join their ranks. The country continues to work to improve its political system in order to better represent the people, but there are still many who remain skeptical as to whether or not Spain truly is democratic.

# Citizens and politics: how democratic is Spain's democracy?

by Tess Kukovich

Every morning hundreds of people in Seville cross the San Telmo Bridge, by the Torre del Oro, and make their way down Constitución Avenue, passing the huge gothic cathedral. But many do not take notice of the large renaissance-style government building that sits at the end of the long avenue in front of Plaza Nueva. Unless they work there, they have probably never entered it, and have no interest in doing so. But that building holds the elected individuals that have the power to make decisions that affect each and every one of their lives. It's the 'Ayuntamiento', the City Hall.

Seville, one of the 770 municipalities throughout the eight provinces of Andalusia, has its own local government that consists of elected council-

says Luque, who works specifically in the areas of youth, sports, and the environment. A native of Seville, Luque prefers to work in local government so his work is directly helping his fellow neighbors.

As a critic of the current socialist administration, Luque notes, "The government makes promises that it doesn't fulfill. There are many improvement projects in Seville that were supposed to be completed by now and many of them haven't even begun."

He refers, as an example, to the long awaited and many times postponed subway system. The city of Seville reinitiated the incomplete underground metro project from the 1970's in 1999, intending for it to be complete by 2008. It is still under construction, however its first line is sup-

posed to open by the end of this year. The tram on Constitución Avenue, that runs a 0.87-mile course from Plaza Nueva to Prado de San Sebastián, cost 60.5 million euros and was intended to be part of the underground metro. But after four years of construction, the city decided to make it into an above-ground tram instead.

"The tram is absolutely ineffective. It's useful only to tourists and the elderly, but that's a minority of the population. It doesn't serve the commu-

nity," criticizes Julio Ponce Alberca, a professor of Contemporary History at the University of Seville.

As can be seen with this professor or the PP politician, there are many critics within Seville who feel that the government is detached from the people and that their voices aren't being heard. The PSOE has lead Seville's local government since 1979, for a total of 17 years. The current mayor, Alfredo Sánchez Monteseirín, has been in charge for the last nine. "The PSOE has been in control for too long. When you have one party in charge for such a long time, there become problems with corruption and a lack of fresh ideas," says 62-year-old Bella Aurora Carrasco Gómez.

María Dolores Rodríguez, a PSOE councilor of Seville, disagrees, "As part of the city's govern-

ment, we are very aware of the necessity to follow through with the objectives that were established and voted upon by the city's residents. This is our commitment and it is our greatest responsibility."

Jorge Mozo, a 24 year-old affiliate and employee of the new political party Democratic and Progressive Union (UPyD), contradicts her, "There is a complete lack of ideas and progress in the city." He also adds, as a complaint of the hegemony of the two front-running political parties, the PSOE and PP, that "the partisanship that exists doesn't make sense in today's world. There aren't only two political parties,"

"People are born voting for one party and die voting for that same party," says Ponce, who has written several books on government in Spain, including *Municipios y libertad: los Ayuntamientos democráticos sevillanos*. "There is a lack of political culture."

In contrast to Seville's municipal government, there has been persistent rule by the socialists in the Parliament of Andalusia since 1979. As one of the autonomous regions of Spain, Andalusia has its own government, president, parliament, supreme court, and administration. The current president, Manuel Chaves of the PSOE, has been in office for the past 18 years.

Esther Azorit Jiménez, the general director of Occupational Hazard Prevention for the Parliament of Andalusia, believes that there has been much change and an improvement in the quality of life under the current administration. "The people are satisfied. If the government isn't serving the people, then another party will be voted in."

But just how easy is it for a new party to take control under Spain's political system? There is a closed ballot method in place within Seville's municipal government, as well as in the rest of Spain, through which the individual political parties select their candidates for an upcoming election. But the general population doesn't get a vote in this process. As there is no open primary election, only registered members of the parties have the right to vote in the internal primary elections where the leadership of their political organization is selected. "Within the political parties there is little democracy," says Ponce. "The parties have a lot of power, get a lot of financing and they are the ones who are truly in command."

José Miguel Luque meets residents at the Barriada Padre Pio, Seville



ors that direct city services, such as the environment or urban planning. In spite of having lost the last election to the conservative Popular Party (PP), the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) currently has a majority within Seville's government due to its coalition with the United Left (IU).

José Miguel Luque, a PP councilor of Seville, works directly with the constituents of his district, Cerro-Amate, to resolve problems that arise in relation to the city. Residents can contact Luque by way of email, cell phone, and the city's web site, and he often talks to more than twenty residents a day, along with visits to local sites to evaluate complaints.

"I got involved in politics because it is a means through which you can solve many problems,"



The socialist, Rodríguez, disagrees: “I prefer closed ballots because democracy must reflect the credit that any given project, perceived as a whole, receives from society. Democracy shouldn’t promote the type of individualism that has so far encouraged the development of neoliberalism and globalization.”

In the major political parties, such as the PSOE and the PP, leaders within the party choose the representatives selected for the ballots. In the UPyD, this is not the case. “Within our party, the ballots are created in a democratic manner. The candidates selected are voted upon instead of designated,” says Mozo, while adding, “There should be open ballots at all levels of politics. It’s the only way to guarantee that the whole population is represented.”

Under the current electoral system, which follows the D’Hont Law for electoral calculations, representation in Spain is not always representative of what the people want. In a national election, a political party that gets many votes spread out through the 17 different regions will receive less representation than another political party that got fewer votes overall but more concentrated within a few specific provinces. The same concept can be applied to Seville’s municipal elections. Although his political party is currently the opposition, Luque says that the PP receives the greatest number of votes and represents a large majority of Seville’s residents. “The voters aren’t in agreement with the representatives in government,” he says.

A similar disappointment in representation can be seen in Spain’s national government. “We live in a world that has a complete lack of leadership,” says Ponce, “Zapatero is a president, but he has yet to become a leader. He knows how to work the lack of political culture in Spain. He knows how to smile, and the people want politicians with charisma. But that means nothing. It holds no value.”

There are some emerging political leaders in Spain, though, who have been gaining consistent support. One of them is Rosa Díez. After moving around Spain throughout her childhood, Díez began her political career at a young age in the Regional Council of Vizcaya. She then served as a representative of the PSOE in the Basque Parliament and the European Parliament before creating her own political party in 2007, the UPyD. In 2008, she was a presidential candidate in Spain’s general elections, with her party capturing 300,000 votes and gaining a seat in Parliament.

“Díez is a true politician. She realized that the PSOE was straying from its ideology by not defending its ideals or fighting corruption, so she stood her

ground on what she believes and created her own political party,” says Mozo, who expects that the UPyD will continue to gain substantial support by the next election.

Ponce also sees hope in Díez, stating, “She is one of the few true leaders in today’s political arena. There is currently more hope in the future leadership of women than there is of men.”

What is Spain’s political future? Will the PSOE maintain its hold on the government, or will the PP take over again? Maybe the UPyD will even gain control in the long run. According to Ponce, the best thing that Spaniards can do to ensure the future health of their democracy is to be independent, defend freedom of expression, and, of course, “obey less and think more.”



## How it all began – A switch to people’s power

Spain has a long history of war, death, poverty, hope, expansion and wealth. In 1939, following a three-year war that took the lives of 350,000 Spaniards, general Francisco Franco established a dictatorship that lasted nearly 40 years. During that time, there was a complete lack of freedom within the country and many civil liberties, such as freedom of speech, were repressed.

After Franco’s death on November 20, 1975, there was a relatively peaceful transition to a democracy. On November 6, 1978, the current Constitution of Spain was created, establishing a parliamentary democracy within the country. The new Constitution attempted to distribute the power, which had been in the hands of one man for so long, to the different regions of Spain, such as Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia, and Andalusia.

Today, Spain is divided into 17 autonomous regions, composed of 50 provinces, with varying degrees of power. Each region is an electoral constituency, with a number of representatives that depends upon the size of the population. The region of Andalusia is the most populated and holds a total of 61 representatives within the national Parliament (36 PSOE, 25 PP). Seville, the capital of Andalusia, holds 12 of those positions (8 PSOE, 4 PP).

“THERE IS CURRENTLY MORE HOPE IN THE FUTURE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN THAN THERE IS OF MEN.”

Spain’s legislative power consists of the Congress of Deputies and the Senate. The Congress of Deputies, the lower house, has 350 members elected from party lists within the various provinces. The Senate, however, has 259 members – 208 are directly elected (four from each province, and extras from the Balearic and Canary Islands), and 51 are chosen by regional legislatures (one member elected from each of the 17 regions, along

with an additional member for every one million inhabitants). Each representative serves a four-year term in office.

The executive power is in the hands of the prime minister, otherwise known as the president of the government, who is elected by the Congress following the legislative elections, and is generally the leader of the presiding political party. The monarch, Juan Carlos I, must also approve of the selection, which serves as a formality. The current Prime Minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero of the PSOE, was elected for a second term following his victory on March 9, 2008.

Since the establishment of a democracy in Spain, two predominant political parties have fought for control: The Socialist Party (PSOE) and the Popular Party (PP), previously known as *Alianza Popular* (AP). The PSOE is the liberal party of Spain, originally created in 1879 and banned during Franco’s dictatorship. Once legalized in 1977, the party lost its first two major elections, despite capturing nearly 30 percent of the vote.

In 1982, under the leadership of Felipe González, the PSOE became the first individual political party to gain more than a fifty percent majority in the parliament, and continued its rule in Spain’s national government until 1996 when the PP, with its then leader José María Aznar, took over. Eight years later, in 2004, with the leadership of Zapatero, the PSOE was able to regain and maintain its control of the national government. The elections, which took place on March 14, occurred only three days after the massive terrorist attacks in Madrid, and with the Spanish population still in shock, they were the most dramatic in Spain’s recent history.

Other significant political parties within Spain include the United Left (IU), the Catalan Nationalists of Convergence and Union (CiU), Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC), Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), Galician Nationalist Block (BNG) and the Canarian Coalition (CC). ■

## Distribution of power within Spain’s National Congress

Political Party	Number of Votes	Percentage of Votes	Seats in Congress
PSOE	11,064,524	43,64%	169
PP	10,169,973	40,11%	154
CiU	774,317	3,05%	10
EAJ-PNV	303,246	1,20%	6
ERC	296,473	1,17%	3
IU	963,040	3,80%	2
BNG	209,042	0,82%	2
CC-PNC	164,255	0,65%	2
UPyD	303,535	1,20%	1
NA-BAI	62,073	0,24%	1





# IN TOUCH THROUGH THE WAVES.

by Kristen Glazer

From its cosmopolitan station in Triana, Integración Radio unites Latin American immigrants through the art of music.

It's 8 am on a typical Monday morning in the thriving city of Seville, Spain. A local radio station in the Triana neighborhood is playing music, something considered sacred in the Latino community. 88.2 FM Integración Radio starts the day off with Dálmata's song *Pasarela* while its audience listens, Silvia tunes-in at Bar Europa while preparing for the crowd that will be pouring in soon, Eli sings the lyrics to herself while she drives past the Torre del Oro to the apartment where she will spend the day babysitting, and Francisco listens to his portable radio as he walks across San Jacinto Street to catch the C2 bus to visit his mom.

The mind and heart behind 88.2 FM is 38-year-old Walter Vivanco Torres. His tiny station located on Alfarería Street is packed with DJs, bright lights, and loud music. Posters and signs of popular musicians decorate the cramped studio walls.

Walter and his wife, Rosa, arrived from Ecuador in 2000 with hopes of finding a good job: "Everyone talked about Seville; I wanted to come see what it was all about," he remembers. After working with a radio station in Ecuador, he brought a lot of experience to Seville. Six years after his arrival, Walter founded Integración Radio. The purpose was to give immigrants a way to express themselves. Now he owns a flourishing station with over 17,000 listeners and 35,000 online visitors, many of who are Latin Americans for whom music is a huge part of culture and daily life. "Music makes you feel stronger and better. It's a way of communicating; it's our way of life," describes Walter Vivanco, who's also president of the Association of Ecuadorians of Andalusia.

Integración Radio works with dance club Bailódromo Latino to help Latin American immigrants integrate into the Spanish culture. On Friday nights 88.2 FM can be heard blaring from this lively club where the energy is just as strong as the beat of

the music. Bailódromo is located on Castilla Street, also in Triana.

Among the 8 million inhabitants in Andalusia, one million are immigrants, and 145,571 of them came from Latin American countries: Argentina (39,615), Colombia (26,333), Ecuador (22,738) and Bolivia (9,874). Walter's radio has special programs for each of these countries, in addition to Brazil, Chile, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela.

The station owner's favorite style is Ecuadorian folkloric, as well as the Bolivian band Las Jarcas. "I feel nostalgic and I am often reminded of my childhood," he says. But, after living here with Rosa and their three-year-old son, Walter, for eight years, the radio entrepreneur has no plans of returning.

Immigration, however, is not always welcomed. He thinks that some Latin Americans are treated poorly in Seville. "It depends on the person. Usually we are treated well, but each Latin American is different. Some are very reluctant to integrate into the Spanish culture", he explains. In spite of privation, luckily there are people like Walter Vivanco and places like Integración Radio and Bailódromo who serve to help Latin Americans transition smoothly into a new culture.

## Three listeners

Walter Vivanco's life and that of his audience are connected by the love for music and the common experience of immigration. Here are some of the people at the other side of the radio waves.

### SILVIA JEANNETH PARDO PARDO, ECUADOR

Like Walter, Silvia Jeanneth Pardo Pardo, 28, moved to Seville six years ago from Ecuador. Other than her cousin in Barcelona, her entire family is still in her home country. She came searching

"MUSIC MAKES YOU FEEL STRONGER AND BETTER. IT'S A WAY OF COMMUNICATING; IT'S OUR WAY OF LIFE,"

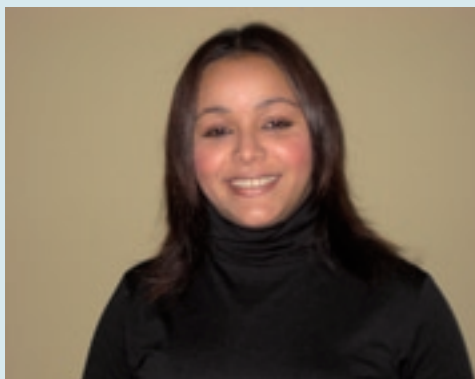
for a better salary and although she has a good job at Bar Europa, she misses her “parents, friends, brothers, the nightlife from Ecuador, the beaches, and the tropical food.”

Silvia said that music brings back memories of her childhood. She is also reminded of all the disappointments she has had regarding love and boyfriends. “My mom is still in Ecuador, so often I think of her. Sometimes all these thoughts make me feel lonely,” she says. Her favorite styles are merengue, salsa and anything with a guitar.

#### ELIVALDA SANTOS DO SACRAMENTO, BRAZIL

**E**livalda Santos Do Sacramento came to Seville looking for a job, too. Eli, 27, departed from Brazil five years ago and left her entire family in her native country. She misses talking to her three brothers and her father because she is rarely able to call them. “Spain is better for money and for getting a good job. The economy is better here and money has more value. Life is just easier here,” she says. Although it is less problematic to live here, Eli still prefers certain things from Brazil: “The climate and festivals are better. I miss all of the traditional holidays and carnivals.”

Eli enjoys dance clubs, especially Triana’s dance clubs Bailódromo and Microlibre. She even met her boyfriend, Francisco, on the dance floor. She listens to music constantly. “Music is essential to live. It makes me feel good. However sometimes it reminds me of my mom who passed away several years ago.” While Eli values Spanish flamenco, she still prefers her country’s music.



#### FRANCISCO ENRIQUE PINILLA CAZALLA, PANAMA

**F**rancisco Enrique Pinilla Cazalla immigrated to Seville two years ago. The 25-year-old Panama native came here in order to live near his mother and to find a better job. His father, originally from Panama, lives here as well. Francisco has one 20-year-old sister, Ana, and a 27-year-old brother, Julio. Ana lives in Seville with their parents. Although they live just a few blocks away from his apartment off of San Jacinto Street, he misses Julio and his grandmother, who still live in Panama. He also misses the landscape and countryside. But he feels welcomed here: “For the most part, people from Seville and Latin America share the same mentality of being open-minded and extroverted. The rest of Spain is different though, only people from Andalusia are that way”.

Francisco loves to listen to salsa, rock, Gloria Estefan, and The Wizard of Oz Band. He especially enjoys listening to music when he has to take the bus because it makes the ride go by faster. “Music is a way of life; it is a way of escaping and forgetting my problems. Latin Americans see music as a religion. I especially like reggae because it reminds me of Panama.” ■



*Clockwise: Eli, Francisco, and Silvia, accompanied by her friend Luis from bar Europa*

## Dance, dance

**S**alsa began in a variety of countries, specifically the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Puerto Rico and Cuba, but it was in New York where the term for this dance was invented. Merengue originated during the late 18th and early 19th centuries in the Dominican Republic, but had some influence from its neighboring country of Haiti. It is a combination of the African and the French ‘minuet’, which black slaves created during their festivities. It flourished during the middle of the XIX century

in the Dominican Republic, the Caribbean, and South America. The Spanish settlers introduced tango to the New World and it became popular within Europe in the XX century. Originally it was danced solo by women, but the Andalusian Tango was later changed to a couples dance. The Samba originated in Brazil and is danced at festivals and celebrations. It was first introduced to the United States in the late 1920s in a Broadway play called ‘Street Carnival’. ■

# PRETTY

by Emily Clary

# TIPYCAL.

Not only is the family size shrinking in Spain, but the more conventional prototype is becoming less widespread. In its place, single-parent, same-sex, and adoptive families are on the rise. An additional trend, the high influx of immigrants, has added to the growing multiplicity of cultures present in the country. We introduce to you seven families who represent a sample of the various types that exist today



# IN THEIR

# OWN WAY.



The **LOJENDIO RECIO's**. A visitor will immediately feel comfortable amid the constant movement and conversation in the warmly decorated Lojendio house. If you stay for a meal you will be advised to "leave your manners at the door" and reach across the table in order to serve yourself. "In a family of 10 people, your principal thought is survival at the dinner table. If you are not fast enough, you don't eat," joked the oldest daughter, Marta. Nonetheless, there was organization among the seeming chaos, and the food, which was set out like Thanksgiving feast, was shared among everyone leaving no one hungry.

Although it was once commonplace to have a family with many children, the standard family size in Spain has been decreasing in the last decades. Modernization has challenged the traditional family values and has put a higher demand on individual development, as well as an increased emphasis on material things, often deterring adults from family building. In the 1980's, the average number of children born to a woman in her lifetime was 2.2. Today, the fertility rate has dropped to 1.3 children per woman in Spain. That's why this house is exceptional.

The Lojendio family lives in a quiet neighborhood next to the Betis soccer stadium in Seville. It is hard to believe that the parents, Salud Recio-Mensaque and Juan Bosco Lojendio Osborne, have learned to maintain order in a family of eight children. As they prepared lunch, their children bustled in and out of the kitchen bombarding their parents with questions. While one child complained about his homework, another was frantically preparing her move to Portugal. Meanwhile as another asked permission to go out with his friends, the youngest tried to take-off her mother's new pair of glasses to examine them. With over a generation between their youngest and oldest, the parents always have to be alert and case sensitive to each child's age and needs.

Salud and Juan Bosco met as teenagers and were both the fifth children of five siblings in their respective families. Salud stays busy as a housewife and Juan paints and sells his artwork, a sample of which is on display next to their dinner table. Their oldest daughter, Marta (23), aspires to be a fashion designer and is about to move to Portugal. Ignacio (20), the oldest son, is studying environmental science at University Pablo Olavide and loves to frequent dance clubs. Juan Bosco Jr. (18) enjoys fixing things with his hands, and plans on studying engineering, although his main focus now is his friends. María (16) is interested in psychology or teaching, and loves to travel. Her paternal twin Álvaro (16) wants to study medicine, and enjoys soccer and biking in his free time. Miguel (14) is the best cook in the family, and wants to be an archeologist in the future. Javier (12) or *SpiderJavi* as he is known by his family, loves to jump and do gymnastics around the house and pretend that he is Spiderman, although he would like to be an actor or painter when he grows up. Loreto (7), the youngest, loves to bike, play hockey, and eat catsup, but she despises dolls.

Although it is sometimes difficult to find peace and quiet or to spend time alone, the kids agree that there are many benefits to living in such a big family since it teaches you how to share, be patient and humble, and not to be an egoist. Also, there is always a friend around or someone to help out with homework. The parents admit that it is a lot of effort and sacrifice to maintain such a big family, but they insist that it is worth it.

The **FERNÁNDEZ BELEÑO's**. On the other side of town, in a modest neighborhood in the outskirts of Seville, the Fernández's eagerly prepare for a new addition to their family. Their sofa is covered with soft yellow blankets and cheerful lullabies chime quietly from the television. They are nothing but smiles as they watch their youngest crawl around and explore everything she stumbles upon.

Antonio Fernández Gallardo and María Dolores (Mariló) Beleño Castilla, childhood neighbors turned high school sweethearts, have been married for 10 years and are proud parents of two children, with a baby daughter on the way. Antonio (30), a comedian by nature, is a martial arts fanatic. He currently has several trades; he works maintenance at CIEE during the week, is a waiter on the weekends, and picks up odd jobs as an electrician when time permits. Mariló (30) is six months pregnant and extremely passionate about cooking. She used to work at a daycare before she became pregnant, and is also a skilled seamstress. Antonio Jr. (9) is considered his father's clone and is very restless like his father. He is slightly bashful around strangers, and has one great love: soccer. When he is older, however, he wants to be a blacksmith like his uncle. His sister Lucía (15 months) has a very calm demeanor and loves to eat, dance, and draw. Although free time is hard to come by in the Fernández family, they love to go to the beach, spend time in the countryside, or relax around the house when they have a moment of peace. Above all, Antonio claims that his greatest interest is to spend time with his kids and wife; everything else comes second.

The **GUTIÉRREZ HACAR's**. When first introduced to the Gutiérrez family you may experience the feeling of *déjà vu*. Both father and son are called *Curro*, and mother and daughter, *Beatriz*. All family members were born and raised in Seville and identify as traditional Sevillans. The parents are both architects, and the children attend bi-weekly tennis and karate lessons. It is hard to not stereotype this family as the cliché of "normal".

Beatriz Hacar Hernández (43) works as an architect for the local government of Seville, and is a self-proclaimed "frustrated artist". She also enjoys

playing tennis with her family. Francisco (Curro) Gutiérrez Olivero (42) has a fixed architecture job as a government employee for the council of Seville. He also enjoys fixing up an old house he has in the country when he is not working or with his family. Beatriz Jr. (10) loves riding her horse, playing the flute, and reading. One day she would like to be a veterinarian. Curro Jr. (7) loves to draw, skate, play videogames, and eat breakfast food. He is a very good student, and, if all goes to plan, will be a mathematician someday.

Every afternoon, young Beatriz and Curro have extracurricular activities, so the best time for the family to meet up is during dinner. Curro Sr. explains that their family has a very structured and organized daily routine. Nonetheless, they love to escape to the rural community where his parents live when they have free time.

The **DEREZHNYA's**. In the village of Mairena del Alcor, in the outer reaches of Seville, the faint murmur of hockey commentators quarreling in Russian serves merely as background noise to a conversation over coffee and sweets in the spotless living room of the Derezhnaya family. The middle-aged immigrants, Vladimir and Olga, met in a small town in Kazakhstan when Olga's grandmother lived on Vladimir's street.

They married, and shortly after the Soviet Union dissolved, moved to Spain with their daughter in order to encounter better work opportunities. They have been working and living in Spain for seven years while simultaneously raising their two daughters.

Vladimir is a painter who is constantly working, but enjoys sports and spending time with his friends when he has free time. Olga is a wonderful seamstress and used to be a clothing designer for a store in Kazakhstan. Currently she cleans houses in the morning and sews in the afternoon when there is work. When time permits, she loves to relax in her house and read. Their oldest daughter, Anastasia (10), loves sports, animals, and playing on the computer. She wants to be a professor or journalist in the future. Their youngest daughter, Cristina (7), was born shortly after they moved to Spain. She has two hamsters, loves to swim and draw, and has hopes of being a dentist someday. Both daughters are active gymnasts.

Although they are living in Spain, they remain involved with their home community and culture. They have access to television programs in Russian, speak Russian in their house, and often meet up with their close friends from Kazakhstan who live in and around Seville. They try to visit Kazakhstan every three years to see their family when the funds are available and when they have a break from work, but have no desire to move back in the future since they have made their home and life in Seville.

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THE PARENTS, SALUD RECIO-MENSAQUE AND JUAN BOSCO LOJENDIO OSBORNE, HAVE LEARNED TO MAINTAIN ORDER IN A FAMILY OF EIGHT CHILDREN.

Spain has the second highest immigration rate, but the highest actual number of immigrants in the European Union. It attracts immigrants for a variety of reasons: its cultural ties with Latin America, its geographical position, and the economy and abundance of jobs that have been available over the years. Approximately 11% of the residents in Spain are foreign born, according to the 2008 Census. The most significant populations of immigrants are Moroccan, Ecuadorian, Romanian and Colombian, although there are a fair amount of Europeans as well.



**T**he **DECO ROLDÁN's**. Last year the Deco-Roldán family adopted a girl from China. The parents, Fátima and Francisco, decided to adopt when they first started planning their family because they wanted to provide a home for a child who was in need. The adoption process lasted three years, so patience was critical. Although the process was filled with uncertainty and doubts, they were finally able to bring home their new baby daughter last January. Spain had the highest adoption rate in the world as of 2006. The majority of the adopted children come from China, followed by Russia, Colombia, and Ethiopia.

The adoptive parents, Fátima Roldán Castro and Francisco Deco (both 40), are university professors who met while studying together in the university. Fátima teaches Arabic and Islamic studies at the University of Seville, as well as a course at the CIEE study center. Francisco teaches philology at the University of Cádiz. Blanca (21 months) loves to listen to music and play, which is consequently her favorite word.

While Fátima and Francisco enjoy music, travel, cinema, art, reading, and spending time with their friends, their priority is their daughter. They eat together, watch cartoons, read stories, and play. Their philosophy is to give as much love, and spend as much time as possible with their daughter so that she feels at home. Luckily, the parents have different work schedules, allowing at least one of them to always be with their daughter.

**C**HRIS and **JOSÉ**. Sipping coffee together at a café in Madrid, Chris Rudis and José Gea related tales about how they met, their coming-out stories, and their future plans together. They met four years ago in Seville through a gay advocacy association and will be married in December of 2008. Their wedding will be celebrated among intimate friends. Even though both sets of parents send their blessing, they will be unable to attend for health reasons and for lack of sufficient notice of the wedding. Although both men knew from the start of their relationship that they would end up together in the future, they made a sudden decision to get married for practical reasons since Chris, a United States citizen, needed Spanish citizenship in order to work in Spain.

In 2005 Spain became the third country in the world to recognize same-sex marriage, and the first to allow same-sex adoption rights for same-sex couples. This law came into effect as a result of a legalization campaign promoted by current socialist president José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero.

Although Chris (28) was born and raised in Chicago, he ended up settling in Spain after he fell in love with José while studying abroad in Seville. He is currently studying political science at the University of Madrid. Chris writes in his spare time,

and loves to cook, which is rather convenient since José hates to cook and only knows how to make food in the microwave. Fortunately, José is a skilled handyman and is able to help around the house in his own way. José (33) was raised by a humble family in Andalusia. He studied architecture in Granada and then moved to Seville to study industrial engineering. He currently works in Madrid as a computer consultant. He loves to read philosophy essays, and to chat with small groups of friends.

José and Chris currently live in Madrid and share an apartment. Although they do not spend much time together during the week because of their busy work and school schedules, their priority is each other during the weekends. Currently they are not thinking of adopting, but they still do not have a very clear idea of what their future holds. They are planning to live together in Europe somewhere, perhaps in France or Belgium.

**T**he **YERGA**. Upon entering the Yerga family residence, you will most likely hear the sewing machine at work, the chatter and laughter of old friends in the living room, or the sound of oil hissing in a pan as a delicious meal is prepared by Antonia, the widowed housewife of published poet Manuel García Fernández. Antonia (74) has three children and three grandchildren. Her oldest son lives in the Canary Islands with his family, her daughter is raising a family in Seville, and her youngest son lives at home with Antonia. It is also common that an exchange student will be occupying one of the bedrooms of the Yerga household since Antonia has been hosting students for over 30 years as a way to supplement her income.

Antonia is an avid seamstress and proud housewife. Her son, Manolo (39), is a reserved man at first glance, although he is a very informed and opinionated conversationalist. He loves playing soccer and hanging out with his friends. Manolo is currently working as a graphic artist, although he is also a skilled decorative painter.

Single parent households like Antonia's are increasingly more common in Spain due to the growing number of women who are becoming single as a result of divorce, the death of a spouse, or by choice.

Regardless of their size, origin, or social class, these human unions have several universal commonalities: they work hard, struggle and fight at times, and identify their family as a fundamental part of who they are and how they spend their time. Whether kicking back and watching movies, escaping to the countryside, the park, or the beach, or just stopping to catch their breath, each family identifies as being pretty typical... in their own way. ■

Top to bottom: The Fernández Beleño's, the Gutiérrez Hacar's, the Derezhnaya's, and Chris and José.

## EXTRANJERO

I lost my poetry in Spain and now I am bereft  
and quivering on street  
corners, asking for euros that won't keep their conversion  
rates and playing CDs on portable stereos  
with an out-of-tune guitar  
in my hands  
that is as splintered as the songs it hums.

I am hassling tourists, handing out leaves  
of grass with the gypsies  
in hopes of small donations,  
saying, regalitos, regalitos,  
for good luck.  
I'm grabbing hands for warmth,  
wallets for sustenance,  
eating words for inspiration and  
spitting out the pits.

I am *botellóning* with the locals,  
pushing troubles like thirst  
down to the hollow of my stomach,  
swaying down streets with the drunks,  
and begging for whisky so I can burn away these  
foreign  
yearnings.

## SAFETY NET

She washed her sister's body  
when she died  
and the smell never  
came off of her fingertips.  
That's why her nails are so  
cracked,  
why her stomach is so weak,  
and she picks at food the way crows  
pick at carcasses.  
She still breathes heavy,  
like the water weighs down on her,  
like the world is water—  
and she can't let us all drown,  
so she sends safety nets and tangles her legs in over-  
compensation.  
She nibbles chicken bones  
and sucks the marrow dry  
and asks me to hand my headaches over,  
saying she can't bare to watch me hurt.  
She calls several times a day  
to make sure everyone is home  
and lingers too long on the other end, not wanting to let  
go—to hang up first,  
lest the current take us away, too.

poems by Olga Rukovets





# A DAY WITHOUT WATER IN SEVILLE

by Nanou Lohezic

The disparities between environmental concern and action in regards to natural resources do affect everyone.

It's 8 am and Alejandro unloads his tools and his 'carretilla' out of the yellow truck from the 'Ayuntamiento de Sevilla'. María Luisa's Park is still quiet and pretty empty, but taking only a few steps into the vegetation, he can already hear one of the many fountains available for everyone to enjoy. Going straight to it, it is with a pessimistic "tsss" that the local worker picks up a soda can and a few plastic wrapping papers. "I don't water everyday but my work always has somewhat to do with water." What he means by this is: rinsing tools, cleaning fountains, washing benches, and watering. "People in Seville don't really respect the parks and the fountains," says Alejandro. The slogan on his truck adds, "We can't be behind everyone."

Carmen, 68, fills up a casserole dish of tap water and slowly pours it over the cooking 'paella'. She is retired and now takes care of American students visiting Seville on exchange programs. 'Paella' is her specialty. "Good. Now, the fish," she says. She turns the kitchen faucet on, fills the casserole dish one more time, and rinses the tiny fishes after having emptied them into it. They will be fried later on. While her sister-in-law sets the table, her brother empties the dishwasher that just finished running. Carmen says that the other day "someone" cut the water because there was a man working downstairs. "I had to do everything with only a bassin of water! We forget how precious water is, but we realize how much we need it the moment we don't have it anymore." "People in Sevilla are careful with water because of the droughts. They don't waste it," she adds. But she doesn't know that the people in the autonomous region of Andalusia, of which Seville is the capital, are the biggest water consumers in Spain, with a daily average of 180-190 litres per person, far away from the 140 recommended as a rational consumption. She then takes the fried fish to the dining room, while drops from the leaking faucet are heard beating the sink rhythmically.

Later that afternoon, Miguel Ángel answers a few questions between two thirsty clients. It's been one year and two months since he started working as a waiter at the Café de Indias coffee shop on Asunción street, and his job not only consists in offering coffee, ice cream and tasty pastries. Miguel Ángel also has to make sure everything fits the hygiene norms: washing his hands regularly, washing the counter, making sure the room and the bathroom are clean, as well as all the equipment used to serve the clients such as glasses, silver-

ware, plates, and coffee and ice-cream machines. He doesn't know how many times a day he uses water in the context of his job, but according to him, "This place would close if it didn't have running water, even for one day."

Water - or its lack - affects all strata of society. From the bathroom sink to the coffee machine and the hose, it is obvious that the lives of Alejandro, Carmen, and Miguel Ángel would be different without the vital element. Despite this, the environment only occupies a secondary position in the mind of Andalusians, according to a 2007 poll, the Ecobarometer. The report states that the population feels more concerned about the noise than the quality of the water they might drink.

But the reality is that 40.9 % of the 75 Andalusian rivers show an important or medium impact, and that only 59.1% suffer from a low impact. These facts show that it is necessary *now* to start doing more than just knowing... if we don't want to have to cook and clean from a single bassin of water

## DO THE GREEN THING

Javier Navarro Luna, who has been teaching Environmental studies at the University of Seville for twenty years, states that "being green" has almost become a trend more than a real concern for people. According to him, they know about global warming, the destruction of the ozone layer, and the problem of deforestation, but the reality is that few citizens actually do something about it. There is a contradiction between the level of awareness and the level of involvement of the population.

However, projects that include the involvement of the population do exist. At the University of Seville for example, the same professor organizes 'aulas de sostenibilidad' which consists in raising awareness and organizing activities to help the environment. The last one to date: a project of reforestation to prevent the erosion of soils. Also, the Andarrios Program, organized by the Environment Department of the regional government (Consejería de Medio Ambiente), the Andalusian Water Agency (Agencia Andaluza del Agua), and the administration of the region's main river (Confederación Hidrográfica del Guadalquivir) looks to involve the society in the conservation of their rivers. One-hundred-eleven associations (with interests ranging from fishing to culture) participated the first year, in 2007. ■