

SOY DEL PUEBLO, DE PUEBLO SOY, DONDE ME LLEVA EL PUEBLO...VOY

Chicano Press Association



BEGINNINGS

"La Cucaracha" was a proud member of the Chicano Press Association, founded in 1969 by staffs of about 20 newspapers, mostly in California.

In a 10-year period from the mid 60s to the mid 70s, more than 300 Chicano Newspapers were published, mostly in the Southwest. Every organization of any size had a publication, "El Malcriado," the voice of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers and "El Gallo", published by Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales' Crusade for Justice, are examples.

Through this loose-knit network of alternative publications, supporters of the Chicano Movement spread the word about everything from boycotts and demonstrations to politics, the arts and education.

"La Cucaracha" wasn't the first name that came to mind. We considered the symbolism of la cucaracha, the lowly insect that has survived every natural catastrophe. The Chicano, too, has survived. We were in Aztlán first and have survived Anglo society's attempt to exterminate our language, culture and future.



MILESTONES

November 1975 — Newspaper conference at El Centro Quinto Sol. Purpose of the conference was to start a newspaper in Pueblo and to recruit potential staff and supporters.

May 1976 — First edition Type was set with IBM Selectric typewriters borrowed from our employers, Pueblo Manpower, and MASA (Mexican American Service Agency). Headlines were set by a typesetting service before stories were written. Some headlines and ad copy were produced using rub-on transfer lettering.

November 1976 — In an editorial, "La Cucaracha" reported a \$55,000 grant from the Catholic Church's Campaign for Human Development.

Sept. 23, 1977 — the FBI and DOL served a search warrant on Producciones Estrella Roja and "La Cucaracha" offices and confiscated files pertaining to the DOL grant. The allegation was that the federal funds were misspent. In January 1978, Records taken by FBI and DOL were returned with little comment on the part of the investigation. According to DOL, spokesman, their investigation was closed, they were waiting for the FBI to close its investigation. The file cabinets containing the records were dropped off at the curb in front of the PER offices. The Feds admitted there was no wrongdoing by any of the PER staff.



EPILOGUE

By July 1979, "La Cucaracha" had increased frequency from monthly to biweekly. The last La Cucaracha was published in November 1983, seven years and six months after the first edition. Broke and with growing families, the staff moved on. Jose Esteban Ortega became director of the Pueblo Neighborhood Health Centers; Paul Mora was hired at the Denver Post; David Martinez became a lawyer; Juan Espinosa became director of the Pueblo Energy Resource Center and eventually was hired at The Pueblo Chieftain. Deborah Espinosa became director of El Pueblo History Museum, a state museum. Rita Martinez continued as a community activist and recognized leader of Pueblo's Cinco de Mayo Celebration for the next four decades.



La Cucaracha can be read online at
coloradohistoricnews.org.