

Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos

# unidad

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1989



Photo by Laura Aguilar

**GLLU's Eighth President :**  
**LYDIA OTERO**  
an interview

# LYDIA OTERO: GLLU's EIGHTH YEAR BEGINS

an interview by Louis Jacinto

In 1982, at one of the last Lesbians of Color (LOC) retreats, Lydia Otero met several Latina lesbians who were active members of Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos (GLLU). Lydia wished to continue working towards the betterment of people of color, but realized that LOC was coming to an end as an organization. Yet she was unsure about GLLU, as her first concern were issues pertaining to Latina lesbians. The women she met from GLLU assured her that the organization provided that space through its Lesbiana Unidas (LU) committee. Thus she was able to continue to work for and with Latina lesbians without the need to deal with the sexism always present with gay men.

In early 1983, Lydia attended GLLU's first Latino/Latina retreat. There she met several Latinos from GLLU, and realized that these men had come to deal with sexism on their own. From that point, Lydia's

involvement expanded, realizing, as others involved with GLLU, that we are Latinos and Latinas first, gays and lesbians second.

While others have always been ready to label her, Lydia is quick to point out that she has never considered herself a separatist or any other label which is so readily slapped on people. She is even cautious about applying the label of leader on herself.

"I think you have to be careful feeling that you're a leader of people," she warns, "Because it can be misdirecting people or misdirecting yourself."

Lydia points out that leadership in GLLU is to follow the thinking of a collective group and trying to represent that group at all times.

"There are times," she says, "when I can't say what I exactly feel because I don't think that reflects what the majority feel in the organization. So leadership means

to be there when the issues need to be brought up."

For Lydia, GLLU offered her the space to grow and branch out. She realized the organization was also capable of growth. The ability of GLLU to allow Latina lesbians who are separatists to participate without the men feeling intimidated is a shining example.

When asked about what goals she has set for herself as GLLU president, Lydia stated that goals are something one sets with a time limit of several years. Twelve months is not enough time to accomplish too many things.

"I want to expand the AIDS committee, producing something that will stay around a long time."

With this goal in mind, Lydia hopes that the AIDS committee will be able to write a collection of stories of how the AIDS crisis has affected Latinos and Latinas. She also hopes to continue making GLLU a stronger organization.

When asked about running for a second term, Lydia stated no, but would remain actively involved.

"No other organization represents me as GLLU does. I'm a construction worker and being president of GLLU is not going to help my career goals. I'm president and a member of GLLU because I care about the organization and when I'm not president, I'll still have that commitment."

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## Latino/Latina Photography Exhibit

Eight contemporary Latino and Latina photojournalists whose work focuses on People of Color will be featured at the Los Angeles Photo Center, 412 So. Park View in L.A.. The exhibit starts on February 14th and will run through March 25th.

Laura Aguilar who has a series of photographs of Latina Lesbians is one of the artists that will be featured. In fact, the photograph of Lydia Otero on the cover of this UNIDAD is from her series. This is a project Laura has been working on for about three years. Last year GLLU's People of Color Committee gave Laura a small grant to help her continue her work. Her series was also featured last year in a very popular exhibit in Mexico City.

The opening is scheduled for Saturday, March 11th from 12-5 p.m., with music by Bobby Matos and the Heritage Ensemble and ALIENZ. This is being sponsored by the L.A. Cultural Affairs Department and is free. Call (213) 384-7206 for more information.

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# La Noche Alegre:

## *A Night of Entertainment with VIVA!*

### Featuring/Presentando

- \*scheduled to appear: CARMEN ZAPATA from the Bilingual Foundation for the Arts.
- \*Performance/Actuación by/por Teatro VIVA!
- \*Singing/Canciones by/por Robert Cyclona Legorreta
- \*Poetry/Poesía by Betty Flores
- \*Food/Antojitos

WHEN/CUANDO: Thursday/Jueves, Febrero 16th, a las 7:00 P.M.

PLACE/LUGAR: Barragan's Restaurant  
1530 Sunset Blvd.  
(Echo Park Ave./Sunset Blvd.)

Donation/Donación: \$8.00 advance/avanzado  
\$10.00 at the door/puerta

Make checks payable to VIVA! and send to VIVA! 813 No. Virgil Ave., #444, Los Angeles, CA 90029 or call VIVA!'s 24 hour Bilingual Hotline (213) 232-8482.

## BEING ALIVE - PEOPLE WITH AIDS ACTION COALITION

Nearly 14% of current PWA's are Latino, nationwide. We are clearly over-represented, as the current U.S. population is only 8% Latino. There exists an information shortage as well as a gap in support services in the Latino community. Being Alive is trying to do something about this terrible situation. Being Alive was one of the first groups in Los Angeles to start a support group for Latino PWA's and PWARC's. It has since opened this group up to HIV Positives. The group meets Tuesdays from 5 - 6:30 p.m. at the Silver Lake office, 4222 Santa Monica Bl., at Hoover. They are building a SIDA information center, where, like the library, one can come and learn about the latest AIDS treatment strategies. It will be a general source of information about AIDS.

## BOOK REVIEW:

# A Burst of Light

*"To that piece in each of us that  
refuses to be silent"*

Audre Lorde

Audre Lorde has done it again! Vocalizo mis pensamientos que no encontraban escape por falta de palabras utiles. In a "Burst of Light", Audre has collected a series of essays and journal excerpts that address lesbians of color by verbalizing our thoughts and emotions, finding answers that evade us and in doing so, has presented another ten challenges for every question she answered.

In "I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities" she speaks to other Black women: "It is not easy for me to speak here with you as a Black Lesbian feminist recognizing that some of the ways in which I identify myself make it difficult for you to hear me. But meeting across differences always requires mutual stretching, and until you can hear me as a Black Lesbian feminist, our strengths will not truly be available to each other as Black Women." How many times have we, as active lesbianas latinas searched for and not found these very words.

Audre continues by pointing out that it has been said that Black Lesbians are not part of the

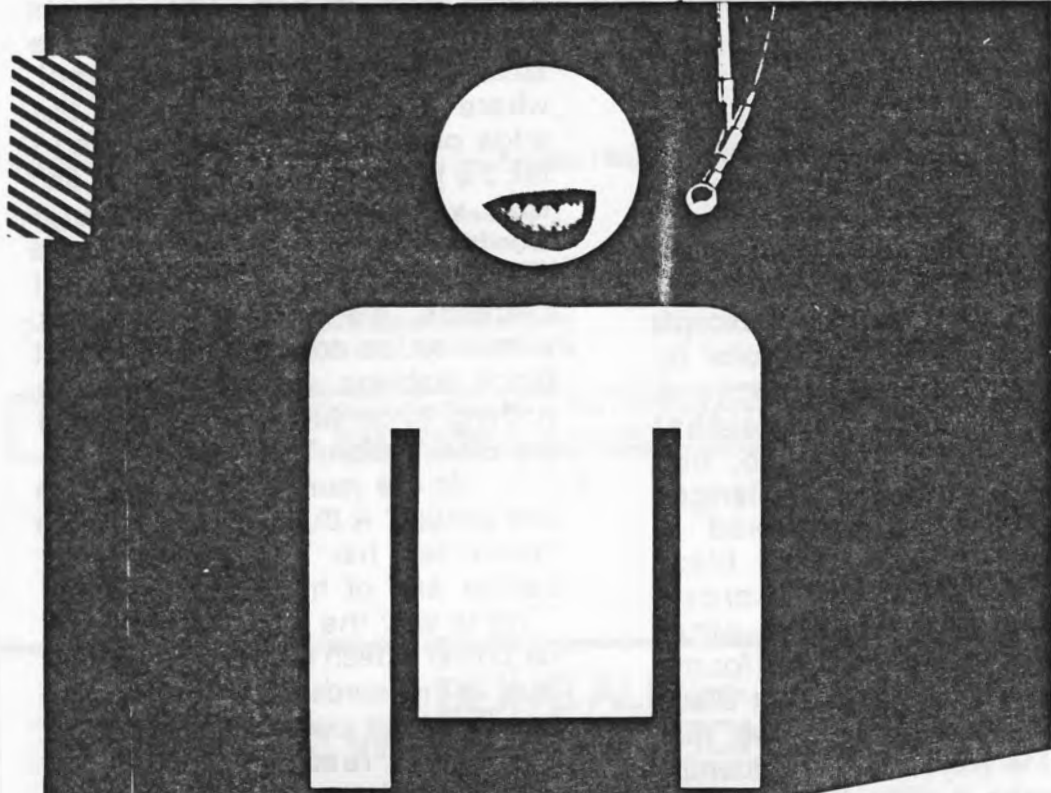
struggles of Black people. She quickly asserts: "But when I taught Black and Puerto Rican students writing at City College...in the 60's, I was a Black Lesbian. When I taught a poetry workshop at Tougaloo, a small Black college in Mississippi, where white rowdies shot up the edge of campus every night, and I felt the joy of seeing Black poets find their voices and power through words in our mutual growth, I was a Black lesbian. But did not know it because we did not identify ourselves, so now you can say that Black lesbians and gay men have nothing to do with the struggles of the Black nation."

In the journal excerpts which she entitles "A Burst of Light", Audre chronicles her battle with liver cancer and of her writing states: "This is why the work is important. Its power doesn't lie in the me that lives in the words as much as in the heart's blood pumping behind the eye that is reading, the muscle behind the desire that is sparked by the word--hope as a living state propels us, open-eyed and fearful, into all the battles we do not win. But some of them we do." Y yo ya no les digo mas, no hay mas que decir. Lean el libro. M. Limon from the Austin Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization (ALLGO).

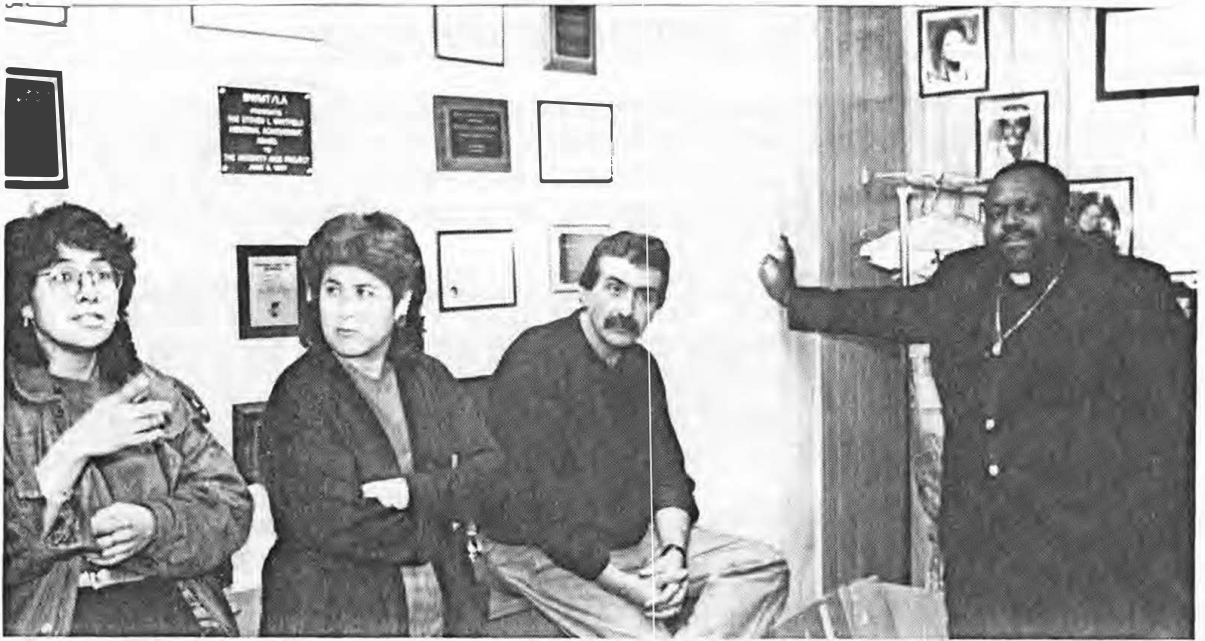
*Audre Lorde will be in Los Angeles on March 16th at UCLA, 7:30, Haines Hall #39. For questions and directions call (213) 206-8101.*



# RADIO GLLU



**IMRU 90.7 FM**  
**4th Sunday**  
**10 PM**



GLLU members and Reverend Bean at Minority Aids Project.

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## MINORITY AIDS PROJECT OPEN HOUSE

On January 24 we were given a great opportunity to visit the Minority AIDS Project's new offices and talk with Rev. Carl Bean about the services provided by the organization.

MAP is a "direct service" provider. What this means is that they deal with individuals and their specific needs. The services range from a food pantry, clothing closet, support groups of PWA's (which include a growing number of Latinos) to direct financial assistance and Dignity Hospice - a 6 bed home for homeless PWA's.

Rev. Bean emphasized the importance of meeting the individual's specific needs and how these needs are very different in the minority communities. He stressed the need for our communities to unite and work together in order to accomplish this. Of great concern is the poverty that engulfs the minority communities and the serious issues that this adds to people living with AIDS.

If you are interested in lending a helping hand, there are a number of ways to get involved: Buddies are desperately needed (bilingual), food and clothing to keep the pantry and closet open, just to name a few. If you want to sign-up or want more information please call (213) 936-4949 right away!

## *Una Tardeada de Amor*

Valentines is a time for showing love and expressing that you care for an individual. We at Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos (GLLU) are using this opportunity to share this special occasion with People Living with AIDS. Dr. Paul Rothman, a noted AIDS physician, is graciously opening his home to GLLU for this afternoon (2-6 P.M.) event.

On Sunday afternoon, February 12, GLLU will be hosting *"Una Tardeada de Amor para Personas que Viven con el SIDA"*, *"A Loving Afternoon for People Living with AIDS"*. We are going to focus our efforts on those who are isolated, due to language and/or cultural barriers and thus may not be connected to AIDS service agencies or support systems. We plan to have plenty of food, live entertainment, music and a loving environment.

El Centro del Pueblo and Central City Action Committee have donated the use of their vans and are providing the drivers. Guests will be picked up at Cara a Cara/ Hollywood Sunset Clinic, the Minority AIDS Project, Milagros/El Cento Mental Health and other stops.

For further information call Valentino (213)465-0459 or Jose(213)469-1568.

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## THIRD WOMAN TO FEATURE CHICANA LESBIANS

Third Woman Press is calling for submissions by Chicana lesbians to be included in the next issue of THIRD WOMAN.

While a recent anthology of Latina lesbians, "Companeras" has been well received, it did not fully deal with Chicana lesbians and the issues which confront them. The next issue of THIRD WOMAN will try to capture what it means to be both a Chicana and a lesbian. Specifically, this issue will focus on the experience of the lesbiana identity as it is incorporated into the Chicano community, the lesbian and academic communities, families, and other pertinent areas. The hope is to create a voice among Chicana lesbians and to foster dialogue with non-lesbian Chicanas.

Third World Press is asking for the submission of articles, critical reviews, essays, short stories, poetry, book reviews, plays (excerpts), and art which concern the Chicana lesbian and the conflicts, issues, and concerns we need to be aware of.

Direct all inquiries to Carla Trujillo, Third Woman Press, 3404 Dwinelle Hall, U.C. Berkeley, Berkeley, CA., 94720. Deadline, June 1, 1989.





# LESBIANAS UNIDAS

G.L.L.U

GAY AND LESBIAN LATINOS UNIDOS

P.O. Box 85459 Los Angeles, CA 90072

Lesbianas Unidas is a social, educational, cultural and political committee of Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos (GLLU), that has been in existence for five years. In the past we have offered a variety of activities such as Latina Lesbian retreats, workshops, parties and other social/cultural events. This year we eagerly plan to increase our outreach efforts and we invite you to participate in the following scheduled events.

## Early March

3/11 - Celebrate Dia Internacional De La Mujer. 741 Atlantic Bl., E.L.A.

## Late April

Cultural trip to San Diego

## Early June

Tardiada

## Mid-September

Independencia De Las Americas party (reception honoring Cheri Moraga, Latina Lesbian Author).  
Writers awards presentation.

## Mid-October

Latina Lesbian Retreat

## Early November

Acknowledging Dia De Los Muertos Party

We welcome your input and support at our monthly meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 10th at 6:30 pm. Call for location and directions.

## Announcements

On Sunday, March 25th at 10:00 pm, KPFK 90.7 Radio GLLU will feature four Latina lesbian teachers who will discuss their involvement with the Gay & Lesbian Teachers sub-committee of UTLA

## Needed

We are looking for video tapes of talk shows that present Gay & Lesbian interviews. These tapes will be used as part of a "Media Training" workshop to help develop a speakers bureau. Call Aida at the information number listed below.

So "arriba con nuestro entusiasmo". Let's together build and expand our sharing, our energy, and our evergrowing Latina Lesbian Spirit. For more information call Susana at (213) 665-3798 and/or Aida at (818) 890-0215.

## Steering Committee

Susana Brito  
Laura Duran  
Irene Martinez  
Ileen Padilla  
Aida Pineda

*GLLU sent the following letter to the Hilton to protest their contribution to "Yes on 96." We hope all of our friends and supporters will also write them and express their concern.*

Chief Executive Officer  
Hilton International Corporation  
9336 Civic Center Drive  
Beverly Hills, California 90209

Dear Sir or Madame,

Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos, a non-profit organization dedicated to meeting the social, cultural, and educational needs of the Latino community is outraged by Hilton Corporation's recent contribution of \$2500, in September 1988, to the campaign for passage of Proposition 96 in California. Moreover the organization finds it abhorrent that the Hilton Corporation would support legislation so detrimental to public consciousness. In the midst of this health crisis, it is counter-productive for Hilton Corporation to have supported legislation opposed by so many groups, including two respected state wide organizations of health professionals: the California Medical Association and the California Nurses Association.

Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos had the privilege of hosting its Seventh Anniversary and Awards Ceremony at the Los Angeles Mid-Town Hilton on November 18, 1988. Had Hilton's action come to our attention sooner, we would not have committed the organization to a legally binding agreement; we would have taken our business to more politically correct environs. As an organization we can no longer in good conscience do business with Hilton Corporation and its subsidiaries; nor will we support or endorse events hosted at Hilton facilities in the future. Furthermore, Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos will actively seek economic sanctions against the Hilton Corporation by other organizations serving the Latino and/or Gay and Lesbian community.

We strongly urge the policy makers of the Hilton Corporation to review, assess, and change their current stance on mandatory HIV testing. Lastly, we encourage the Hilton Corporation to join the war against AIDS by fighting fear with facts. Until then, Hilton Corporation has earned failing marks in social consciousness.

If and when Hilton Corporation wishes to right the great wrong done by supporting Proposition 96, Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos would view a matching dollar contribution to an appropriate AIDS organization as a conciliatory gesture thereby freeing us and our supporters to patronize Hilton establishments.

Respectfully,  
Lydia Otero  
President, Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos

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## UNIDAD

Louis Jacinto  
Lydia Otero  
Valentino Sandoval  
Laura Duran  
Jose Hernandez

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Unidad is the official newsletter of Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos (GLLU). Articles in Unidad do not necessarily reflect the views of GLLU or Unidad staff.

Subscribe to UNIDAD for \$6.00 a year. Unidad is published bimonthly. Letters to the editor, articles, photographs, etc., may be submitted to Unidad, GLLU, P.O. Box 85459, L.A., CA 90072. Unidad reserves the right to edit.

Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos is a social, cultural, educational, and consciousness-raising group in the Los Angeles area. Call (213)665-2196 for any GLLU information.

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## L.A. Marathon

El Centro del Pueblo in Echo Park has a water station for the L.A. Marathon on March 5th at the corner of Sunset and Echo Park Boulevards. Again this year it will be a block party with live music. Sandra Figueroa, Executive Director of El Centro has asked GLLU to be part of festivities and to help hand out water to the runners. If last year is any indication this will be lots of fun. It begins at 8:00 A.M. Call Lydia for more information (213)665-2196.

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## PEDRO ALMODOVAR

by C.L.A.

Es quizás el nuevo pop director gay de España, cierta mezcla de Luis Buñuel, John Waters y David Hockney se encuentra en sus películas.

Su nueva película, "Mujeres Al Bordo De Un Ataque De Nervios", ha dejado al público en general satisfecho, ya que se encuentra en ella en cierta forma surrealista, la batalla de los sexos, así como también el mensaje contra el sida aunque en forma cómica y corta creo que es más que suficiente.

Hasta el momento solo he visto dos de sus películas, "Mujeres. . .", y "La Ley Del Deseo", la cual narra la historia de amor entre gays. Para mí tal vez podría ser la atracción fatal gay y en español, mientras que "Mujeres. . ." es más limpia y cómica que las otras, dirigida y escrita con cierto ingenio hace de esta película placentera y divertida desde el principio hasta el final.

Esperemos que este director gay rico en imaginación nos siga trallendo su arte en cine y que los temas gay no terminen en "Mujeres Al Bordo De Un Ataque De Nervios."

# unidad

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