

Anaya Bless me

Racine County's Daily Newspaper
The Journal Times

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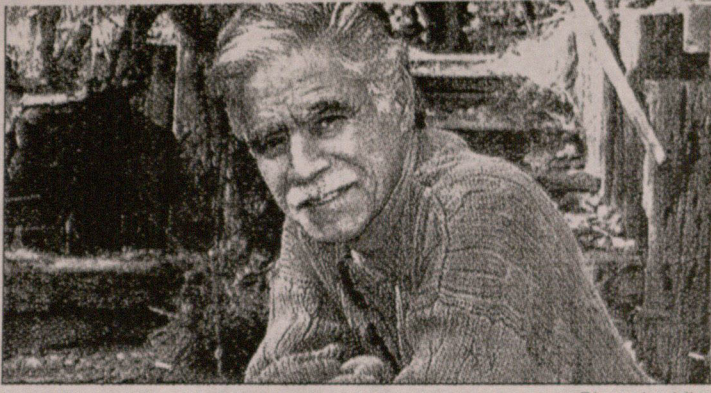


Photo by Mimi

A book by Rudolfo Anaya, "Bless Me Ultima," is being recommended to all Racine County residents by Racine Reads in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.

Racine County, here's your reading assignment

Residents invited to read 'Bless Me, Ultima' by book lovers

BY ROB GOLUB
Journal Times

RACINE COUNTY — The 188,831 people of Racine County are cordially invited to do the exact same thing at the exact same time. We're all invited to read the same book.

Racine Reads, a coalition of local book lovers, is hoping to get absolutely everybody to read "Bless Me, Ultima." The novel, laced with Catholic and traditional Latino overtones, is by Rudolfo Anaya.

The Racine Public Library, the University of Wisconsin-Parkside and local bookstores will sponsor discussion groups and other events focusing on "Bless Me, Ultima." The events are being scheduled during Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs Sept. 15 to Oct. 15.

"Bless Me, Ultima" is a coming-of-age story, intertwined with mystery, religious mysticism, and Hispanic culture.

Racine's Hispanic population has grown 54 percent in just 10 years, according to the 2000 Census. But the Racine Reads coalition isn't only targeting Hispanics; they're asking that everyone in the county read the book.

"It's a way to pull the city together," says Jessica MacPhail, director of the Racine Public Library and a member of the Racine Reads coalition. "Even though we'll all have different experiences reading the book, hopefully when we start talking to each other about it we'll find some commonalities."

Other parts of the country



Hispanic Heritage Month
Mes de Herencia Hispana

have sponsored area-wide book reads. Chicago is reading one of Mayor Richard M. Daley's favorite books, "To Kill a Mockingbird."

"To Kill a Mockingbird" won a Pulitzer Prize, which can't be said for "Bless Me, Ultima." But "Bless Me, Ultima" is generally regarded as a major work of Latino-American fiction.

"It was my first novel, published in 1972. It was at the beginning of what we call the Chicano literature renaissance," Anaya said in a brief telephone interview. "The book represents my hometown, my environment in the 1940s when I was growing up."

"The important thing is that a book lead to discussion. Not everybody will like it. That's OK."

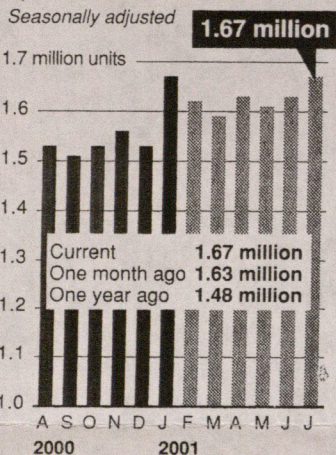
As for Racine County's planned focus on his book, Anaya said: "I didn't know this was happening. This is a great idea."

"Bless Me, Ultima" tells the story of a boy and the curandera who moves into his home. A curandera is a woman who heals with herbs and religious mysticism. For some Catholics of Latino heritage, the magic of a

► More **RACINE READS**, Page 11A

Housing starts

Here is a look at the construction rate of new homes and apartments.



SOURCE: Department of Commerce AP

al Association of
 Low interest rates
 t most Americans
 have kept activity

rt suggested that
 e slowing. New
 te unemployment
 by a seasonally
 380,000 last week.
 e four-week mov-
 claims also fell to
 west since early

is ahead, econo-
 lation will remain
 Soaring energy
 aused consumer
 y 0.6 percent in
 eased. Also, the
 ade it harder for
 'raise prices and
 s are reluctant to
 ases in workers'

plunge in energy
 l for much of the
 ws for July.
 s fell by 11 per-

cent in July. Nationwide average
 prices at the pump have tumbled
 since peaking May 18 at \$1.76 a
 gallon.

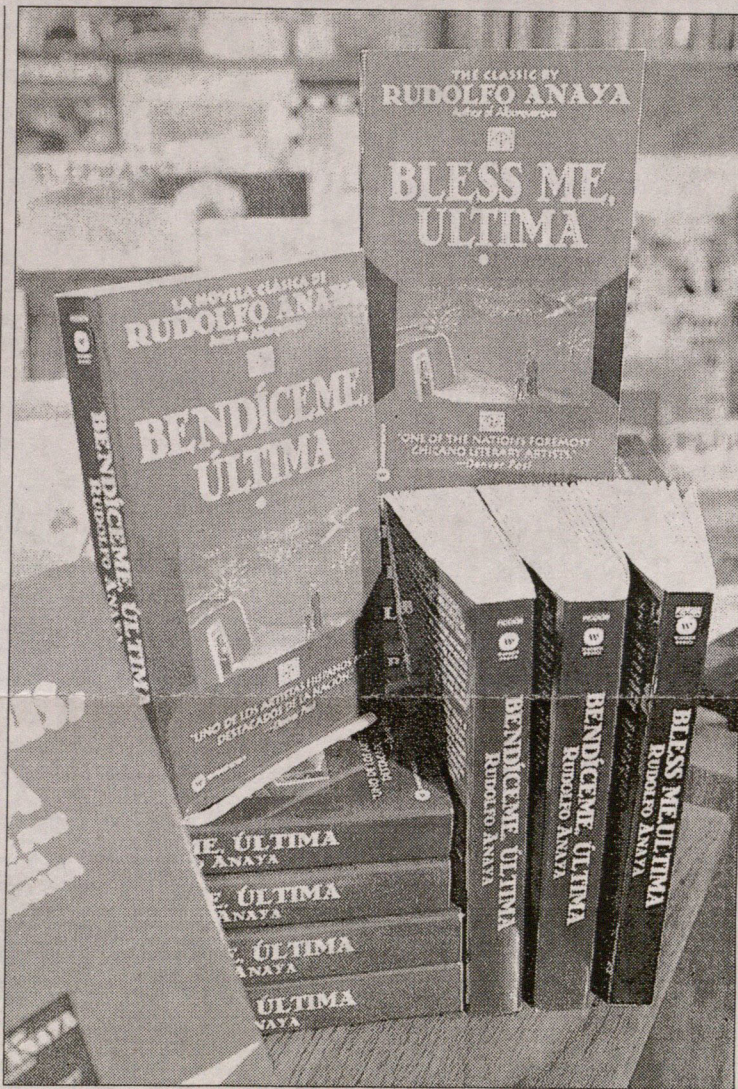
DUCTION

gunpoint.
 Lt. Jim Scherff,
 Hernandez went
 ecurity guards'
 ok one of the
 ial vehicle, a
 ban. The guards
) the back seat of

 m to keep their
 they would kill
 said. "They told
 called the police
 them and kill
 knew who they
 hey lived."
 and Hernandez
 ards all the way
 Once there, they
 a while and then
 rds out of the

 urity guards was

injured. Scherff said the guards
 were probably taken so they
 wouldn't call police when Deleon
 and Hernandez stole a vehicle.
 After they were released in
 Chicago, the three guards notified
 police of what happened.
 Meanwhile, Racine County
 deputies sent a squad car to the
 Auto Auction after receiving a
 report that a stolen car, being
 driven by two suspects in four
 Milwaukee convenience store ro-
 beries Wednesday night, had bro-
 ken down in Franklin. The deputy
 who responded to the Auto Auc-
 tion found the guards' booth
 empty and signs of a struggle
 inside.
 Reports said Chicago police
 were then called to a traffic acci-
 dent and discovered it involved
 the guard's truck taken from the
 auto auction. Deleon and Hernan-
 dez were arrested and are being
 held in the Cook County Jail
 pending extradition to Wisconsin.
 Racine County deputies are
 working with Milwaukee authori-
 ties on possible additional
 charges for crimes committed in
 Milwaukee County.



MARK HERTZBERG *Journal Times*

Rudolfo Anaya's novel "Bless Me, Ultima," in English and Spanish, and a study guide sit on display Thursday at Martha Merrell's Bookstore, 312 6th St.

RACINE READS

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curandera can be part of one's
 faith.
 A curandera's ability to fight ill-
 ness is probably rooted in the
 indigenous traditions of Latin
 America, according to Rosa Salinas-
 Hultman of Racine, who holds a
 master's degree in religious
 studies.
 For some Latinos, ancient tradi-
 tions and Catholicism are merged
 into a single faith, she said.
 Many "Bless Me, Ultima"
 events are still being scheduled. A
 few examples of upcoming events
 are listed below:
 ■ Sept. 17, 5:30 p.m.: Kickoff at
 the Racine Public Library. The
 public is invited to learn more
 about the project and how they
 can be involved. Organizers hope

to have public officials/proclama-
 tions, brief book talk and/or read-
 ing and refreshments.
 Contact MacPhail at 636-9248 or
 Pat Ehlert at 636-9217.
 ■ Oct. 1, noon: Program related
 to curanderas, featuring Wally
 Rendon, at the Racine Public
 Library meeting room.
 Participants are invited to
 bring a bag lunch. A beverage
 will be provided.
 Contact Ehlert at 636-9217.
 ■ October 14, 6:30-8:30 p.m.:
 Discussion of book in Spanish, led
 by Loida Tenuta.
 Open to public.
 At Martha Merrell's Bookstore
 & The Old Book Corner, 312 Sixth
 St., 632-0215.

SAVE 50-75%