Featuring Rudolfo Anaya’s classic novel
“Bless Me, Ultima”
THE BIG READ-A-THON
Part 1: Wed., 3/31, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Part 2: Thu., 4/1, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Hayward City Hall Rotunda

Join Hayward Public Library and friends as we kick off The Big Read, a program of National Endowment for the Arts, by reading Rudolfo Anaya’s classic book, Bless Me, Ultima, out loud from cover to cover. Students, teachers, community leaders, friends and neighbors are all taking a turn on the microphone — and so can you. Bring a friend!

Meet Author Tess Uriza Holthe
Tues., 4/6 at 6:00 p.m., Hayward Main Library

Tess Uriza Holthe grew up in a Filipino-American family in San Francisco. Her critically acclaimed and nationally bestselling novel, When the Elephants Dance, is inspired, in part, by the experiences of her father, who was a young boy in the Philippines during World War II. Her second book, The Five Forty-Five to Cannes, was S.F. Chronicle Notable Book of 2007 and ALA Notable Book of 2007.
Meet Author Rafaela Castro
Sat., 4/17 at 1:00 p.m., Weekes Branch Library (Hayward)

Rafaela Castro was born in Bakersfield, California, but has lived most of her life in the San Francisco Bay Area. She spent two years in Brazil with the Peace Corps before receiving degrees in English Literature, Library Science, and Folklore from U.C. Berkeley.

Meet Author Gary Soto
Sat., 4/10 at 2:00 p.m., Hayward Main Library

Gary Soto grew up in a barrio of Fresno, California, which inspired him to create over twenty books of poetry and prose for adults and over thirty books for younger readers. He focuses on the daily trials and tribulations of Spanish-speaking Americans and connects with readers of all ages and backgrounds. Soto is considered one of the most important contemporary authors in the United States. Event sponsored by Friends of the Hayward Public Library.

Meet Author Art Rodriguez
Sat., 4/17 at 1:00 p.m., Barnes & Noble Dublin

East Side Dreams is the debut memoir of Art Rodriguez, a Latino American who survived growing up on the rough side of life, spending time as an inmate of the California Youth Authority. This book reflects on the happy and the miserable times of his childhood—growing up, maturing, and finally making a comfortable life. Event sponsored by Barnes & Noble Book sellers.

Fernando Hernandez Demonstrates Bronze Casting
Sat., 4/17 at 1:00 p.m., Hayward Main Library

Fernando Hernandez was born in Mexico City, immigrated to California in 1986 and settled in Hayward. An educator and artist, he has exhibited surrealist mixed media sculptures throughout the Western states. The artist will demonstrate bronze casting techniques.

Meet Author Rafaela Castro
Sat., 4/17 at 1:00 p.m., Weekes Branch Library (Hayward)

Rafaela Castro was born in Bakersfield, California, but has lived most of her life in the San Francisco Bay Area. She spent two years in Brazil with the Peace Corps before receiving degrees in English Literature, Library Science, and Folklore from U.C. Berkeley.

Chabot College Theater Arts presents Ultima

An original play inspired by “Bless Me, Ultima”
April 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, and 24 at 8 p.m.
and April 25 at 2 p.m.
Little Theater at Chabot College
(510) 723-6830
Tickets: $5 for Big Read participants
$10 general admission

MORE EVENTS ON PAGE 6
ABOUT THE BOOK

The summer before Antonio Juan Márez y Luna turns seven years old, an old woman comes to live with his family in Guadalupe, New Mexico. This woman-called La Grande or Ultima-is a curandera, a traditional healer feared by many and mysterious to all. With her knowledge of medicinal plants and adoration for the llano (open plains), she uses her magic to aid the community.

Because she served as his midwife, Ultima has a special connection to Antonio. As she teaches him, their bond deepens. Antonio witnesses several tragic events that profoundly shake his understanding of his history and his future. After the murder of Lupito, a soldier recently returned from World War II, Antonio begins to consider sin, death, and the after-life in earnest.

Among the many conflicts Antonio seeks to resolve, the tension between his parents ranks foremost. A devout Catholic, María Luna Márez is the daughter of farmers, and she desperately wants Antonio to become a priest. But his father, Gabriel Márez, is a former vaquero, or cowboy, whose wandering spirit has not settled despite marriage and six children. Gabriel's deepest dream has not come true-to move his family to California's vineyard country.

Antonio's dreams often foreshadow the future and feature his three older brothers, just demobilized from World War II. These surreal dreams also reflect his existential questions: Why is there evil in the world? Why does God sometimes seem to punish the good? Where will I go after death? How can I know the truth? Believing that his first Communion will answer these questions, Antonio studies his catechism and proves an able scholar. Through his dreams and his challenges-including a mob beating from his schoolmates, the death of a close friend, and his brothers' waywardness-Ultima and her owl remain a watchful, benevolent presence.

Bless Me, Ultima is a coming-of-age novel about a young boy's loss of innocence and approach to maturity. But it also deals with tradition and education, faith and doubt, and good and evil. And if Antonio doesn't find an absolute truth in his search, he still comes to believe with his father that "sometimes it takes a lifetime to acquire understanding, because in the end understanding simply means having a sympathy for people."

Don't miss the keynote event, a conversation with author RUDOLFO ANAYA live via videoconference, Tuesday, April 27th, 6:00 p.m. at Cal State East Bay.

For complete event information, visit HaywardBigRead.Wordpress.com

"For Ultima, even the plants had a spirit."

Juniper:
"Place many juniper branches on the platform... Have Antonio cut them, he understands the power of the tree."

Yerba del manso:
"Of all the plants we gathered none was endowed with so much magic as the yerba del manso."
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rudolfo Anaya was born in the small village of Pastura, near Santa Rosa, New Mexico, to a farmgirl mother and a cowboy father. The curandera who presided at his birth set out tools of both family trades near the newborn-only to see him reach for a paper and pencil instead.

To judge from his early years, one might have expected him to crawl toward a sporting-goods store. As a boy Anaya hunted and fished and swam the Pecos River. Later, after the family left the countryside for Albuquerque, he gravitated toward baseball and football. At sixteen, while roughhousing around an irrigation channel with friends, Anaya dove in and hit the bottom. Years of arduous rehabilitation and bedridden reading would pass before he regained a full movement in his neck.

Anaya discovered a different kind of movement during his years at the University of New Mexico. El Movimiento, the Chicano Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, encouraged Anaya's dream of writing books that would explore his cultural heritage.

After graduating with his BA and MA, he taught at middle schools, high schools, and universities while writing at night. In 1966, he married Patricia Lawless, who shared his passion for books and storytelling.

After more than seven years of writing and rewriting his novel, Anaya submitted his first manuscript, Bless Me, Ultima, to the small Berkeley press, Quinto Sol. A $1,000 prize accompanied the novel's printing, and the mainstream New York publisher, Warner Books, later acquired its rights. Since its publication in 1972, the novel has become part of high school English and university Chicano literature classes. Writer Tony Hillerman has praised Anaya as the "godfather and guru of Chicano literature."

"I was happy with Ultima. We walked together in the llano and along the river banks to gather herbs and roots for her medicines.... She taught me to listen to the mystery of the groaning earth and to feel complete in the fulfillment of its time. My soul grew under her careful guidance."
—Antonio in Bless Me, Ultima

"For Ultima, even the plants had a spirit."

Oregano:
"We gathered plenty because this was not only a cure for coughs and fever but a spice my mother used for beans and...

Oshá:
"It is like yerba del manso, a cure for everything."
Teen Poetry Competition

Hayward Main Library—submission deadline Fri. 4/23

Students in grades 7-9 are invited to submit original poetry on the theme of “culture” or inspired by Bless Me, Ultima. All entries must be received at the Hayward Main Library, 835 C Street, Hayward, CA 94541 by 5 p.m. on Friday, April 23. The winners will receive prizes and will perform their poetry at the Big Read Wrap Party on May 5. Visit the website HaywardBigRead.Wordpress.com for more information.

Literary Tour: Joaquin Miller, Poet of the Sierras

Sun., 4/25 at 11:00 a.m.
Joaquin Miller Park, Oakland

Join the California Writer’s Club for a tour of local literary history featuring "Poet of the Sierras, Joaquin Miller." Event sponsored by California Writer's Club.

Shop Barnes & Noble—Support local schools!

Barnes & Noble is a proud sponsor of The Big Read, East Bay! When you shop at participating Barnes & Noble locations, or online at BN.com/bookfairs between March 31 and May 5, a portion of the sale proceeds will be donated to buy Big Read books for kids in local schools. Simply provide this Bookfair ID# at checkout (or bring this brochure with you).

Bookfair ID # 10140143

Participating B&N locations: Fremont, Dublin, Emeryville, Walnut Creek, Eastridge San Jose, and online at BN.com/bookfairs
SEE AUTHOR RUDOLFO ANAYA
Tuesday, April 27 at 6:00 p.m.
Cal State East Bay

Mark your calendar for The Big Read keynote event — a larger-than-life conversation with renowned author Rudolfo Anaya, streaming live from his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Old world storytelling meets new world technology in this cutting-edge event, hosted by Cal State East Bay. Don’t miss this rare opportunity to see, hear, and interact with the inimitable Mr. Anaya. Learn the story behind his novel, Bless Me, Ultima, and the forces which shaped the author and his work. Event sponsored by Friends of the Hayward Public Library.

Meet Author Francisco Jiminez
Thurs., 4/29 at 7:00 p.m., Barnes & Noble Eastridge/San Jose

Francisco Jiminez’s novel Reaching Out, the sequel to Breaking Through, follows the narrator’s journey from high school through college. Leaving his home in Bonetti Ranch, a migrant community of dilapidated army barracks with no indoor plumbing or drinkable water, he sets off for college. He leaves behind a family struggling to pay for food and rent and a desperate broken father. Carrying memories of years of poverty and prejudice with him, he enters a world different from his own. Event sponsored by Barnes & Noble Booksellers.

Meet Author Lucha Corpi
Sat., 5/1 at 2:00 p.m., Barnes & Noble Walnut Creek
Tues, 5/4 at 7:00 p.m., Barnes & Noble Eastridge/San Jose

Poet, novelist, and children’s book writer Lucha Corpi was born in a small town in Mexico and came to Berkeley as a 19 year-old wife and student. She uses her books "to study all forms of racism, from the very blatant -- police harassing someone just because they're Mexican American -- to the more insidious racism inside our own families" Event sponsored by Barnes & Noble.

Big Read Wrap Party
Wed., 5/5 at 6:00 p.m., Hayward City Hall Rotunda

Join us for a wrap-up party of the Big Read 2010’s celebration of Bless Me, Ultima. Students, educators, and community leaders will reflect on the Big Read experience and the impact it has had on our community. Public acknowledgements will be made to people and organizations who made significant contributions to the community Big Read effort. Contributors and participants will be recognized and the winners of the Teen Poetry Slam will read their winning poems. Event sponsored by Hayward Literacy Council.
Chabot College Theater Arts Department Presents

ultima

INSPIRED BY
Bless Me, Ultima
BY RUDOLFO ANAYA

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY Rachel LePell

APRIL 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24 @ 8PM
APRIL 25 @ 2PM