

Reveles brings wisdom to GC, with a little side of 'Enchiladas'

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First things first. I will readily admit that I arrived late to hear Daniel Reveles speak. But I soon discovered how unfortunate that was for me, and the others that arrived after I did. The large auditorium-like classroom was packed. I could barely peek through the clusters of people that were huddled by each entrance to ensure myself I was even at the right place. Much to my dismay, I was where I was supposed to be. From what I could gather, Reveles was speaking, but about what I couldn't possibly tell (over the whispers and general noise that is inevitable amongst large groups of people).

My still developing roving reporter instinct told me to find a way around my problem. The side doors (located behind the small stage in the classroom on the other side of the building) were y last hope of hearing anything from Reveles, so I decided, in classic "Mission Impossible" fashion, to give it a go. They were packed, too. Foiled again. Well, at least there I could see him, and he was more audible than from the other side. I settled for the floor—this was about as good as it was going to get; halfway in the door, halfway out.

At first impression, Reveles struck me as a quiet man who just happened to be sitting in front of the room speaking. But upon further presentation, he was a true storyteller. Incredibly at home with his audience, he sat behind a podium as English Instructor Joe Medina looked on. Medina was one of the driving forces behind the effort to bring Reveles to Grossmont. Before the presentation, Medina described the

writer as a true "Renaissance man." But by the time the program was over, Medina, by the look in his eyes seemed to have an even more profound sense of admiration for the man.

The process that brought Reveles' presentation at Grossmont was a culmination of instructor ideas, student participation and The Puente project, an academic program created to enhance education for Latino and inspire them to ascend to the university level. As part of his English 120 class,

Medina assigned his students to select and read the works of an author. Two students, Andres Alvarez and Abraham Ramo, took a special interest in Reveles' work, and decided to inquire further about the author. Medina knew how to contact Reveles, and arranged for Alvarez and Ramos to interview him. The interview inspired an invitation to speak at Grossmont, which Reveles said would be his honor.

Reveles discuss his latest book, "Enchildas, Rice and Beans." He explained that although his stories are fiction, they originally come from real-life. "As a fiction writer, you only have one obligation, to be interesting. Nothing else is important," said Reveles.

The Colombian-born author has been writing most of his life. But it was only through many failures in other areas that he discovered his true talent. Sitting comfortably behind the podium, leg propped on one rung of a stool, Reveles told us about a six-teen-year-old kids who wanted to paint. After taking three weeks to paint his first nude

(because he not only wanted to paint the figure, but the soul as well), and a small piece of advice from his father ("He advised me to think about entering the field of small engine repair"), the young Reveles turned to music, which eventually led to writing. The obstacles that Reveles has had to overcome to see the fruition of his talent were, to say the least, challenging. His second language is Danish; he never finished the ninth grade.

should make all English teachers smile). All dialogue is written in Spanish, then in English, so it doesn't "lose its color." Speaking in front of an audience was apparently a small anxiety that he had to overcome. It was touching to hear that this man of such experience in the world, with writing and living, had to refer to a book about giving speeches to help him out.

Reveles has had experience writing for television, but rarely revealed that he rarely ever watches. Personally, I think that it

His meager beginnings as a writer were mere love letters. "Writers, by the nature of the business, have to live with rejection. You must ignore rejection, don't let it interfere or scare you off."

Writing still isn't the easiest thing for Reveles. He admittedly shared with us that he and his word processor have a "stormy relationship" at best. All of his works are originally written in longhand (following a golden rule that

steals too much time from me. You don't give or get too much with television. Reading is more effort."

The small, frail gentleman seemed to be a little surprised by the rush of students eager to have their copies of "Enchi-

ladas, Rice and Beans" personally signed. The excitement of the audience, their respectful hush that lasted well after the speech, the overall attentiveness was amazing. I'd never seen an audience so interested in what another person had to say. They laughed when the should have laughed, they listened when they should've listened. Reveles couldn't have wished for a better presentation. Along with Reveles, [xxxxx] all but completely disappeared into the swarm of students, fellow teachers, and old acquaintances, obviously reveling in the success of the event.

What will stick in my mind most about Reveles is his willingness to urge future writers to not sit around waiting for the inspiration, or give up searching, like many do. [Sweat] is necessary to be good in the craft. "It's 10 percent inspiration and 90 percent hard work," said Reveles, through a [louder] voiced tone towards the close of his speech. "We all start out even, with 26 letters in the alphabet. What we do with them is what counts."

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