



Members of La Raza de Ahora pose for the Habari Gani.

photo by Tim Strohane

# Latino input prompts unity

by Rod Minott

Showing genuine concern in promoting their culture and heritage, La Raza de Ahora, Ravenswood's Latino Union, is working towards creating a unifying force.

"Our goal is to bring an awareness of our culture and heritage that cannot be left behind or forgotten," explained Francisco Espinoza who heads the organization.

"It's nice," he added, "because we're like a family establishment. We try to help someone out if they're in trouble. One idea that we've had is to adopt a foster child and assist him. There are kids

starving in East Palo Alto that can be helped also."

La Raza is also raising money for school scholarships and for students who can't afford their own college books. "If someone needs bread we can help them," said Espinoza.

"We would like to get Spanish teachers who can help tutor and relate to our problems. They're more aware of our needs and can bring solutions to problems. It's not only a black and white world. There's Mexican history and art. We need someone whom we can go to and express problems in an intelligent, peaceful manner."

"What we're trying to do", continued Espinoza, "is to expose people to our culture and bring awareness first. After that we can make our demands of what we want. You see, if you make demands first that turns people off and scares them. We don't want to do that."

Espinoza then becoming very concerned lamented that, "There's discrimination against our people. Our constitutional rights are being violated because there are a

lot of Latino people who would like to come to this school but aren't allowed to. One of my goals is to get a certain number of Latinos coming to this school."

"We're classified as minorities because we're not financially insured like white families," he claimed. "People think we would be a bad influence here because we're from low-income families. we're classified as being minorities but a lot of Spanish people would rather be accepted as a person".

Espinoza noted that Ravenswood has the best organized Latino club in the district. "All the other schools are very structured and it doesn't give those people enough time to get together."

La Raza engages frequently in putting on festivals and food sales to raise money. Two weeks ago a festival was held which Espinoza termed as a big success. Music, a tostado sale, and pinata smashing highlighted the day. "It brought a lot of people really together. We'd like to get both blacks and whites in the club and not have it only for Latinos."