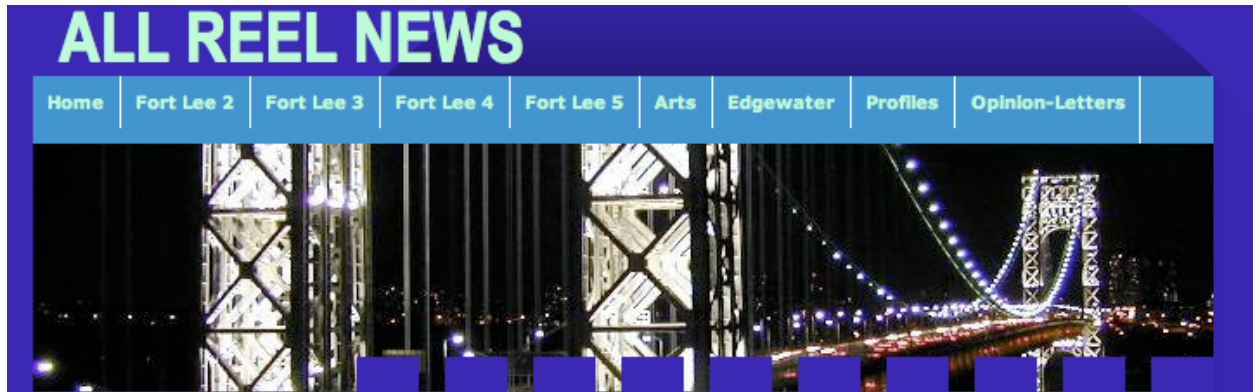


Saturday Nov. 10, 2007



## **Dominican Women Share Unique Immigrant Experiences**

Dominican women shared excerpts of their histories in Spanish at a reading on Saturday Nov. 10 at Borders Book Store Cafe in Fort Lee. The readings were from VOCES de la inmigracion (VOICES of Immigration) compiled by Mary Ely Pena-Gratereaux and published by Cayena Publications.

The handful of writers came from New Jersey, New York and Connecticut.

The largely Latino audience revelled in the reminiscences, which apparently struck many familiar chords. Writers and audience members alike agreed that support of family, education and strong relationships to church and community are key factors in overcoming obstacles and building a successful life in the United States.

After the readings, an audience member inquired why no stories of the lives of Dominican men had been featured in the anthology. One of the writers explained that until 1980, most Dominican immigrants were women. A collection of men's stories and another of stories of adolescent immigrants are in the works, said Pena-Gratereaux.

The women's stories are all unique. Rosalba Polanco, for example, talks about her experience as a working woman enduring low-pay jobs. Ana Isabel Saillant-Valerio writes about her experience communicating without words and finding common ground with a Jewish woman many years older than herself. Rosita Romero, an activist who moved to the United States in 1979, describes her experience as both as a passport to survival and a means to create a better life.

VOCES is being translated into English and will be available in bookstores by March 2008. The Spanish version is available at Borders Book Store Cafe.

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