

La Voz de Esperanza

February 2002 • vol 15 issue 1

Inside:

- PGA Village Update
- New Year specials
- The State of Free Expression
- *Cittali*, Superhero Comic Strip Debut



"TODAY THERE IS NO LONGER A CHOICE
BETWEEN VIOLENCE AND NON-VIOLENCE.
IT IS EITHER NON-VIOLENCE OR
NON-EXISTENCE."

- MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

La VOZ de Esperanza

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Opinions expressed in La Voz are not necessarily those of the Esperanza. We advocate for a variety of social, economic & environmental justice issues.

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We ask that articles be visionary, progressive, instructive, & thoughtful. Submissions must be literate & critical; not sexist, racist, homophobic, violent, or oppressive. Articles may be edited for length. All letters in response to Esperanza activities or articles in La Voz will be considered for publication. Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.

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Guest Editorial

by Barbara Renaud Gonzáles

El *agua* is one of those words that took me a long time to understand. The *pocha* in me fought with the *el* and the *la*, took the water for granted, drinking it, wasting it, ignoring its meaning in my dreams.

Millions of years ago, this land was under water. That prehistoric sea left us with pools and aquifers, a water-bearing stratum of permeable rock or gravel, as Gloria Ramirez described it to me. Today, there are layers and layers of stratum that act as filters for those pools, each layer like our skin, sensitive to the pressure and probing of external forces.

This month in La Voz, we consider the many issues, like the magical swirls made by a pebble we throw in a lake, that shape and connect our lives. Maria Antonietta Berriozábal, our beloved former councilwoman, writes about the historical and current battles surrounding the real estate developments on top of the Edwards Aquifer. The PGA Village is only the latest battle, she writes, in a complex series of decisions that affect us today beyond premium golfing: the creation of the Bexar Hospital District, USAA, and the political crossroads of young Councilman, Julian Castro.

Much is at stake, writes Berriozábal. As I read her essay, I wondered if it was too late, and how many of our jobs are the result – directly or indirectly - of that kind of development. The icecap is melting at the North Pole according to a cover story in a New York Times Magazine article, and our fossil fuel emissions – 40% which comes from our automobiles – means that the earth will get hotter as the ice melts and the sea rises. Ice is water after all. Yet, we dare jeopardize our water sources.

The need for passionate debate and Emma Tenayuca-type courage to challenge political leaders on their short-sighted policies has never been more critical than now. But in a time of war in the name of peace, citizens in their blind loyalty suspend their own civil rights, says Antonia Castañeda and Arturo Madrid in a column on “The State of Free Expression” by Roberto Rodriguez and Patrisia Gonzales. But unlike other essays on this subject, Antonia and Arturo consider how the culture of war subordinates our thinking, period. How we subordinate our “economic well-being” to corporations and investors; how privilege becomes more hierarchical than ever and how the emphasis on terror perpetuates the cycle of terror itself.

They remind me how our recent MLK march, attended by over 50,000 people, was papered with even more radio ads and politicians who have had little involvement with issues of civil rights. When I called Jaime Martinez, the organizer of the upcoming Cesar Chavez March about the inclusion of Mayor Ed Garza to the platform and the outright coopting of civil rights marches by politicians, he became furious.

I told him that the Mayor's murky stand on the Edwards Aquifer was an issue of environmental justice, and that it seemed to me that Cesar Chavez understood that the right to clean water was a civil right. Well, isn't it?

When Antonia and Arturo ask us to defend our rights, why are we blind to the

VOZ VISION STATEMENT: *La Voz de Esperanza* speaks for many individual, progressive voices who are gente-based, multi-visioned and *milagro-bound*. We are diverse survivors of materialism, racism, misogyny, homophobia, classism, violence, earth-damage, specism and cultural and political oppression. We are recapturing the powers of alliance, activism and healthy conflict in order to achieve interdependent economic/spiritual healing and *fuerza*. *La Voz* is a resource for peace, justice, and human rights, providing a forum for criticism, information, education, humor and other creative works. *La Voz* provokes bold actions in response to local and global problems, with the knowledge that the many risks we take for the earth, our body, and the dignity of all people will result in profound change for the seven generations to come.

Exclusive to the La Voz:

Update on PGA Village

By Maria Antonietta Berriozábal



en la orilla de las nueve aguas;
chicunáui=nueve, atl=agua, téndli=orilla o
labio, co=lugar.
(representado por: chicunáui=nueve,
atl=agua, téndli=labio)
Antiguo nombre de la región del municipio,
LA BARCA

The vote on the PGA Village issue is a critical one for our community. As of this writing it still has not been decided. As I related in the La Voz article last month, the Lumberman's project involves the two critical issues - protection of San Antonio's sole water source and our economic and growth destiny. The taxing district that would make the Lumberman's proposal possible creates a sales tax. Sales taxes are regressive taxes affecting working class and poor people most negatively. In addition its 2,855 acres sit on top of the most sensitive recharge areas of our Edwards Aquifer.

Thanks to the quick organizing of a small group of citizens, the brakes were put on the PGA Village vote.

The following is an update and my analysis of what has transpired:

- ❖ On Sunday, January 13, 2002 the Coalition for Smart Growth was formed to work against this issue. This group of citizens is asking City Council to Vote No. If, however, the Council votes for the project, coalition members are preparing to go to the people. Petitions will be signed to put an item in the May 2002 or November 2002 ballot asking that the vote of the Council be rescinded.

- ❖ Council voted to hire an independent consultant to conduct a limited study of the sensitivity of the 2,855 acres being discussed for the PGA Village project. Unfortunately, the consultant reviewed only studies, which had already been commissioned by the developer and examined only a small area of the site personally. The consultant had at most three weeks to conduct his study. His report is very questionable.

- ❖ An effect of conducting a study, however, is that it has given opponents time to meet and plan further steps. Press conferences, meetings and testimony at Council meetings have taken place. Enrique Valdivia of the Esperanza's Environmental Project has voiced opposition at some of these gatherings as have many citizens from diverse groups. Concern has been voiced over the lack of credibility of the sensitive features study.

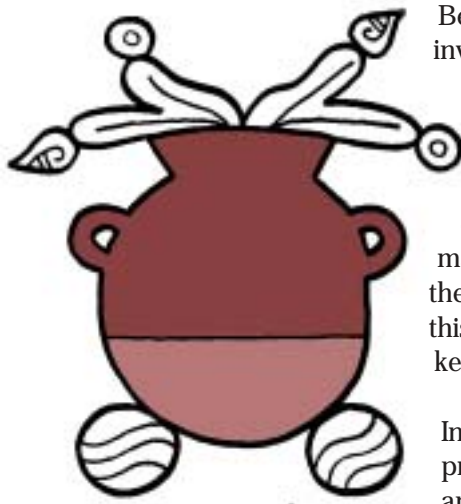


junto al limo del agua;
cocóllin=planta acuática, tlan=entre.
(representado por: cocólin=limo comestible
del lago)
COCULA

- ❖ At a recent council meeting Councilman John Sanders, an opponent of the project, voiced deep concern that council members had not been given information requested prior to the meeting. Mayor Garza joined him in expressing this concern. City staff is in negotiations with Lumberman's.

- ❖ Mayor Garza and three council members favor putting an extension of Proposition 3 in the November 2002 ballot. This would allow for purchase of more land over the recharge zone. A sensitive question is the timing for said election. There is concern this vote for an additional 1/8-cent sales tax would jeopardize the Better Jobs initiative planned for the November 2002 election.

- ❖ In a courageous move, Councilman Julian Castro resigned from his lucrative job at the law firm of Akin & Gump. The Councilman has had to abstain on several major votes because of conflict of interest issues. The PGA Village is one such issue. He felt his constituents needed representation on this and other critical issues. However, at the moment of this writing, he still does not have an opinion from the city attorney on the legality of his voting on this issue.



atotonilco

lugar del agua caliente;
atl=agua, totonilli=calentada, co=lugar.
ATOTONILCO EL ALTO

Because of the involvement of many citizens and the overwhelming public opposition to a major project over the recharge zone, this has become a key vote.

In looking at this project with analytical eyes developed over 30 years of community and political involvement, I

see the PGA Village as the next step in continued development to the north side of San Antonio and over our recharge zone. A pattern has been occurring since the late 60's. A major public action is taken and a growth generator is created. The following are examples of significant decisions, which have directed the growth of San Antonio.

- ❖ The creation of the Bexar County Hospital District in the late 1960's which had the effect of moving the Robert B. Green Hospital from the inner city to the current site of the medical complex.
- ❖ The establishment of the University of Texas at San Antonio on Loop 1604 in early 1970's San Antonio.
- ❖ The huge tax abatement to USAA who was the developer for Fiesta Texas across from Loop 1604 (which now includes the La Cantera development).

Each of these was a powerful development leap to the north. If the PGA Village is developed, land values will escalate and encourage still more development. The site is located east of Loop 1604 and Hwy. 281 in the most sensitive area over our recharge zone. In addition to the danger of pollution of the Aquifer, unsustainable growth produces pollution, traffic problems, over crowded schools, transportation and housing problems for low wage workers, as well as additional strain on already inadequate city services such as police, fire and neighborhood services. History has shown that policies that create suburban sprawl leave behind the older, poor and working class neighborhoods.

In every way that I view this proposal it is a very bad idea. It promotes unsustainable growth. It violates the

environment. It is an abusive way for government to influence growth. It is corporate welfare. It continues an economic development philosophy based on low wages. It is not good for our city. It is not good for our people.

The people of the Esperanza dream of a world where everyone has civil rights and economic justice, where the environment is cared for, where cultures are honored and communities are safe. (From Esperanza's mission statement)

Clearly the PGA Village is not in concurrence with our beliefs as people of Esperanza and those of like mind. I urge you to take a stand. Write, call or e mail your City Council representative and give your opinion. Write letters to the editor. Attend City Council meetings when the issue is up for review. If the Council indeed votes for this to go forward get involved in collecting signatures to put this item on a ballot before the people of San Antonio. Or call Enrique Valdivia and offer your help. Whichever way you decide to act will be your choice. But please let your voice be heard. This is one of those crucial times that citizens must take a stand.



María is a former San Antonio councilwoman and has been a consistent community advocate throughout her life serving on various local boards. In 1995 she attended the Beijing International Conference for Women as an official representative of the Organization of America States (OAS). As an elder statesperson María's insights and analysis of local issues is often sought by community based organizations and progressive media.

Condices antiguos borrowed from *Altepetócaïtl* published by Tlahcuilco in Guadalajara, Mexico.



atitlan

junto al agua;
atl=agua, ti (eufónica), tlan=entre,
(representado por: atl=agua, tlántli=diente,
por el sonido tlan)

San Juanito Atitlan, antiguo nombre de la
cabecera municipal.
ANTONIO ESCOBEDO

THE STATE OF FREE EXPRESSION

by Patrisia Gonzáles and Roberto Rodríguez

from the COLUMN OF THE AMERICAS

To know the state of the nation, we can either check our wallets or listen to the president or the Democratic response. Or we can watch a movie and be bombarded by an unexpected barrage of political messages (prior to the previews) that definitely speak to the times we're living in.

On our end, we asked eminent scholars Dr. Antonia Castañeda (St. Mary's University) and Dr. Arturo Madrid (Trinity University) of San Antonio for their views on the state of the nation. Views such as theirs are either being muted by mainstream media and/or are winding up on blacklists. We respect them not only as two brilliant elders, but also as a couple who share a life commitment to humanity.

Q: What is the state of the nation?

Antonia Castañeda: "Wrapped in the flag of a virulent patriotism that brooks no questioning, the nation is in a state of undeclared war. Declared or not, the nation's military, political, economic, ideological and socio-cultural institutions and apparati are all placed on a war footing for an indefinite period of time.

"The president is given unprecedented war powers. Civil liberties are abrogated. Congress passes the USA Patriot Act that permits secret searches, arrests, incarcerations and immigration proceedings. University presidents castigate faculty who take a critical stance. The borders are closed, then opened under tighter policing. Anti-immigrant sentiment increases proportionately. Unrelated domestic and foreign policy issues are secondary to the politics and policies of the national security state and war preparedness. In the interest of national security and return to normalcy, we are pressed to suspend critical judgment, and go shopping."

Arturo Madrid: "The events of Sept. 11 have had the effect of putting the nation in the mental state of being at war. The consequences and implications of such a mind-set are that social issues and concerns -- including justice, fairness, equal protection under the law -- are dismissed. Political and economic concerns come to the fore. Citizens are expected to suspend their criticisms of the policies of society's institutions and leaders, and accept abridgements of constitutional rights and protections in the name of 'defense.'"

"With respect to the latter, the economic well-being of workers is subordinated to the economic well-being of corporations and investors. With respect to social concerns of the nation, attention, time and monies are diverted away from the well-being of those members of society who are marginalized. This has accelerated the process of what might be deemed a 'meritocratic' society, one in which people who have privilege are able to further capitalize on it. They are able to determine who will improve their situation in the world, whether through education or other types of opportunity."

"The result will be an even more hierarchical society. The 'fortress' mentality that exists in this society is reasserting itself. One of its manifestations is that there are persons who belong and persons who don't belong. Thus, the future of this society as a democratic, pluralistic and just society is in danger."

Q: The absence of terrorism can still leave tyranny and oppression in its place. Can you comment on that?

Antonia Castañeda: "The absence of terrorism, by and large, had not moved national leaders to address domestic or global inequalities, exploitations or oppressions. In fact, global capitalism and neo-liberal economic policies exacerbated those disparities and oppressions at home and abroad. Nor do I expect that record to improve when the current terrorist threat abates."

"Eliminating the terror and violence of poverty, of injustice

in all its forms, of domestic violence, of the global sex trade, environmental devastations and other oppressions were not national priorities before Sept. 11. They will only become so as we organize to address them."

Arturo Madrid: "The mental state of being at war creates an atmosphere in which fundamental rights and protections can be suspended in the name of defense. In addition, the mental state of being at war also provides justification for bigotry and xenophobia. Both conditions are already evident."

"The rights, protections, and attitudes that inform a democratic, pluralistic and just society are not unlike integrity: constantly under assault, and once lost, impossible

or at least very difficult to regain."

The president's views are quite different, as are the views of many in the country who will likely question the right of these two scholars to speak. As the aperture for rigorous public debate continues to narrow, their call for integrity challenges us to remain vigilant in maintaining our rights and freedoms."

Patrisia Gonzáles and Roberto Rodríguez can be reached at PO BOX 100726, San Antonio, TX 78201-8726, or XColumn@aol.com
"Column of the Americas" is posted every Friday and archived under "Opinion" at www.uexpress.com
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Cecilio Garcia Camarillo from Albuquerque, N.M., aka Xilo, ended his journey as a poet warrior on earth. He is remembered in the Column of the Americas as a Toltec: a poet who acts, speaks and communicates in triple meaning. Always a teacher, Cecilio was a former publisher of the '70s-era *El Caracol* and a legendary figure in the world of Xicano Flor y Canto — he continued to write until the end of his journey (*Selected Poems* by Cecilio Camarillo, Arte Publico Press and collaborated in the editing of the forthcoming *Cantos al Sexto Sol: An Anthology of Aztlanahuac Writings*). His writings will continue to inspire and communicate the essence of his spirit.

TÚ eres el futuro. SI tienes una voz.

Explora tu voz/tu comunidad /y tu ser en un programa creado por jóvenes del Centro de Esperanza para la juventud de San Antonio.

ArtEscuela: Un programa que transcurre a través de un año con sesiones semanales que incluyen fotografía, poesía, dibujo, cinematografía, escritura, música, pintura, y más. Para jóvenes de 14 a 22 años.

Creando paz y justicia por medio del arte, diversos medios de comunicación y expresión artística, y diálogo, exploraremos la creatividad, la diversidad,

el orgullo cultural, la comunidad, y el respeto hacia individuos y a uno mismo. El programa es gratuito. Se ofrece comida y transporte.

NO TIENES QUE SER UN ARTISTA; SOLAMENTE DESEAR UN MUNDO MEJOR...

ArtEscuela

Creando paz y justicia con ARTE y CULTURA



EL CENTRO DE ESPERANZA 922 San Pedro (@ Evergreen -- cerca de San Antonio College) para ser parte de este programa llama al 228-0201 El semestre empieza el 26 de ENERO del 2002 cada sábado (incluye comida) 11am - 3pm

ArtEscuela es patrocinado por National Endowment for the Arts, Sordana Foundation y Texas Commission on the Arts

Explore your voice/your community/your self at ArtEscuela-- Esperanza Center's year-round cultural arts/social justice program for youths 14 to 22. The weekly sessions include storytelling, photography, poetry, drawing, cinematography, writing, music, painting, drumming, y mas.

Through art, media and dialogue, we explore creativity, difference and diversity, cultural pride, community, respect for individuals and self.

The program is free and includes lunch. Transportation is available.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO CALL YOURSELF AN ARTIST. YOU JUST HAVE TO CARE.

YOU are the future. You DO have a voice.

La hormiga extraviada

by Marissa Ramírez Farias



Editor's note: The above story is offered to readers for the New Year in Spanish. If you do not read Spanish, its worth your while to read it with a friend who does. This is offered especially to those who have left San Antonio and the Esperanza community. Remember "...siempre llevaba dentro la ilusión del regreso," carry within your heart the thought that you can always return home.

Había una vez una hormiguita pequeñita que vivía con su familia muy grande en un huequito muy pequeño del mundo. Ella era muy feliz dentro de éste huequito que para el mundo, tal vez, pareciera insignificante pero que para ella era su universo. Un día las hormigas mayores se juntaron para pensar en el futuro. Ellos pensaban que el huequito tal vez era demasiado pequeño para la hormiguita y llegaron a la conclusión de llevársela a otro lugar.

Corría el rumor de que al lugar en que la hormiguita se dirigía, bueno, la dirigían, era el centro del mundo. Se decía que ahí se podrían alcanzar todos los sueños. Que ahí se repartían riquezas, se repartían comida, se repartían hogares. Las hormigas mayores pensaron y pensaron y al final el sacrificio y la huida se hicieron realidad. La crisis se estaba poniendo peor y los futuros estaban en peligro. Pero entre tanta preocupación nadie se dio cuenta cómo el dolor de la inevitable separación transformaba a la pequeña hormiguita. Como su dolor se había apegado a ella convirtiéndose en su sombra.

Una mañana, bien temprano, levantaron a la hormiguita de su cama para acostarla en la troca roja. Había llegado el día en que la hormiguita tenía que despedirse de su familia grande. Se habían acabado los días en que su prima llegaba a despertarla para ir a la escolita. Ya no podría sentarse en la cocina de su abue a comer taquitos durante la hora del lonche. Ya no la despertaría la ilusión de convertirse en sirena en el río mientras su tío pescaba. Ya no la despertaría el ruidazo de su abue el soldador. Y ya no sería doña Maria regando las flores la primer imagen que vería del día. Una

mañana la hormiguita despertó para irse a lo que llamaban el centro del mundo y dijo adiós a todo su universo.



Por varios años después la hormiguita se sentía extraviada a causa del continuo movimiento que se producía en el centro del mundo. Por mas que intentaba no sabía ni para donde iba ni de donde venía. La pequeña hormiguita caminaba por la vida

triste y sin rumbo. Hasta que un día, en una de sus tantas visitas, su abue noto su tristeza, la sentó en su regazo y le dijo,

“Mí’ja, el regreso algún día llegará. Tu ombligo está enterrado en este huequito del universo y es por eso que siempre tienes que regresar. Aquí naciste, éste es tu hogar. Te lo digo para que siempre recuerdes de donde viniste, para que nunca se te olvide quien eres.”

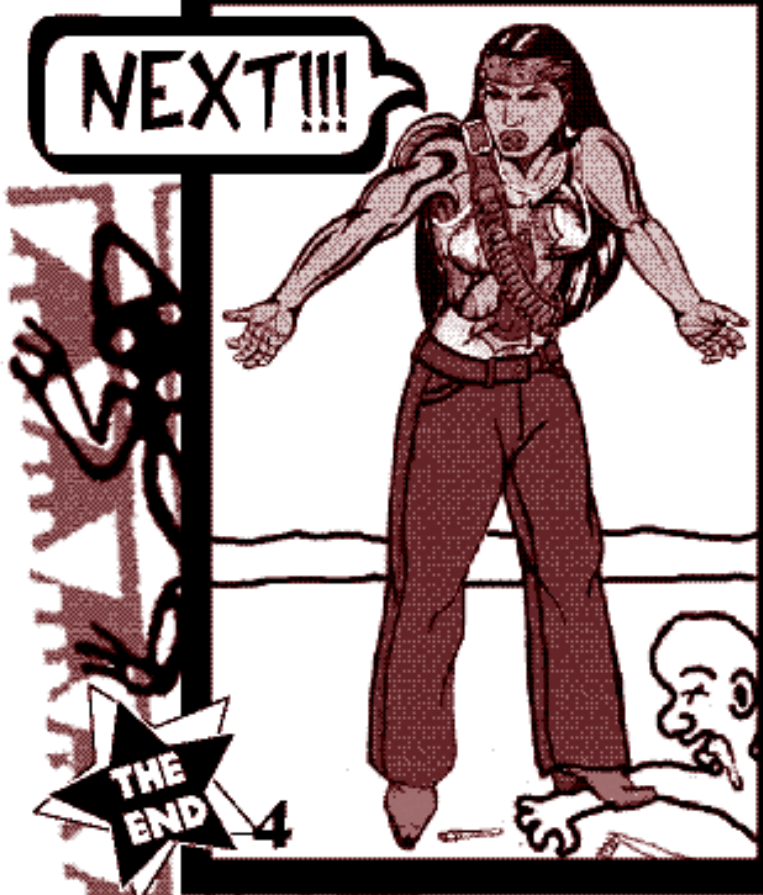
Había cierta seguridad en esas palabras y la hormiguita depositó todas sus esperanzas en ellas. Poco a poco empezó ha aprenderse el camino de regreso a su universo. De cualquier lugar en que estuviera siempre sabía los camiones que tendría que tomar, cuanto dinero tendría que llevar y el horario de las kombis que la llevarían de regreso a su hogar. La hormiguita podría andar extraviada por el mundo entero, caminando sola por lugares desconocidos, pero siempre llevaba dentro la ilusión del regreso y la certeza que solamente da el conocer de memoria aunque sea un camino.

La mudanza ocurrió ya mas de 16 años. La hormiguita ya creció. Los futuros imaginados por las hormigas mayores no han sucedido tal y como planearon. Los rumores de que en el centro del mundo se repartían riquezas y hogares eran solo eso, rumores.

Nadie preparó a la pequeña para la posibilidad de que con sueños ha veces también llegan pesadillas. Nadie le advirtió que el suelo en que estaba parada se movería cada vez que parecía haber alcanzado la paz y la felicidad. Nadie le dijo como borrar de su mente el doloroso momento de la traición. Nadie le enseñó como dejar el pasado en el pasado. Nadie le advirtió que tendría que decir el mismo adiós por el resto de su vida. El perdón aun no ha llegado. La felicidad viene y se va. El dolor es su única eterna compañera, es su sombra. Lo único que resta al final es la ilusión de regresar algún día. Es por eso que aún, después de mas de 16 años, la hormiguita todavía tiene la costumbre de calcular el camino de regreso a su huequito del universo en el momento preciso en que llega a un lugar nuevo.

-23 de noviembre de 2001

Marissa, a former staff member of the Esperanza, is currently finishing her studies at Oberlin College. She will return to her home on the Southside of San Antonio this spring.



Editor's note: The first 2002 issue of La Voz introduces our readers to Citlali, who continues to be present at the Citlali café, a café/arte installation by D... Citlali has returned to San Antonio as an avenger of the gente bronce and...

Hmm, I don't know anything about Chicayno Art. Oh well, I'll just write about these pieces that look like any other art. They say there are only two political works anyway. I wonder which ones they are.

AZTLAN Comics
FEB #1
2002
d. vasquez
lucastapalia
e/c



HEY CABRONES! What do you know about **CHICANO ART** or our **CULTURA**? If you knew anything about Chicano Art you'd know that **CHICANOS** negate the forced aesthetics of Western culture.

WE WILL NOT BE DEFINED BY GRINGOS NOR THEIR VENDIDO CULTURAL BROKERS



ANA SUPER HERO



to a new superheroe, Citlali: Xicana Super Hero. Citlali has taken up residence at the Esperanza and Deborah Vásquez. The exhibit and café will be on view at the Esperanza Center through February. Citlali and readers will be hearing her voz on various issues related to the Chicano community of San Anotnio.

Oración a la Virgen Norteña

by Elvia R. Arriola

Walking through the small Illinois
town of DeKalb one day
Peering through an antique
shop window
I saw your image

an exact replica of
La Virgen that I'd
grown up with at home in California
And I remembered
darkened hallways
maybe a votive candle nearby
the aroma of Mexican rice or
fideo cooking
The sound of Abuelita's feet
shuffling in her chancas back and
forth across
the kitchen floor
and the faint distant noise of a
TV in the background of my mind

La Virgen del Perpetuo Socorro
I said out loud
No one to hear this but myself
Our Lady of Perpetual Help
And I sighed

I stood for a while
With my nose pressed against
The window
And caught sight of the golden rays
Painted in your frame
And remembered how much
Mama Lucy liked to paint
Favorite objects with
The color of gold from a 99¢ spray can
A mist of imaginary halos
Around a beloved Saint Anthony
Or the paper maiché starry night
For a Christmas Baby Jesus
Or just a spray of sprinkled love
And light that could brighten
A retired woman's lonely nights

Soon my nose against that window
Was accompanied by a momentary



Grasping of both hands against the glass
Of the closed shop
A longing for a feeling
A memory of lost mothers and abuelitas
To wrap me in their rebozos of
Love and caress
To bring back that warmth and safety
In the shadow of La Virgen
del Perpetuo Socorro
To whom I write now these words
Help me dear Lady
To recall a sense of faith
Help me remember the treasures of my youth
The values I once held dear that
Got me through lonely lights
Won't you please hear me
And help?

DeKalb, IL 11/26/01



Elvia R. Arriola is a latina feminist critical legal
theorist working in DeKalb, Illinois. She is a
frequent contributor to La Voz and is currently
writing a book on the maquiladoras.

continued from p. 2

civil rights leaders who are not? Even that word – Chicano! – that evokes the struggle of civil rights for so many of us is now a *target* for sale. But, in my interviews required to do an article on this subject, I am finding that many activists and *artistas* concerned about civil rights are hesitant about challenging Cheech Marin, the exhibit's organizers, and the obscenity of its corporate sponsorship.

So how can we have water, then? How is one issue separate from the other?

When I finally listened to my *destino* as a writer, I had a dream. In this sueño, I am driving a car, erratically, circling up a mountain, until the car screeches to a stop right before it falls into the Pacific's crashing waves. Instead, I jump in, and somehow, live to swim to the other side of that mountain. Water, the symbol of the unconscious, comes to me in a dream to tell me that I have confronted my deepest, and most frightening, desire.

How do we begin to understand the water that sustains our soul? Patrisia Gonzales, writer and healer, suggests in her essay *Remedios, Limpias y Escobas* how we can clean our house so that we clean our spirit as well. Frank Valdez writes boldly about this rebirth in "My New Year's Resolutions for 2002" that includes a deeper set of resolutions than losing weight. Change begins with self, he says. And within one's home. He makes me consider what the *colombianas* say about democracy, which to them really is about justice and equal rights because they have nothing to lose.

Democracy at work, democracy at home. And *democracia* in the bed, they say. Water for the thirsty soul. Without it, we are not whole.

Like the wandering ant (*La hormiga extraviada*) in the story by Marissa Ramirez Farias, we are doomed to leave home only to search for it the rest of our lives. Home is our historical memory, our cultural essence, and therefore our fountain of truth. Everything – our mental and physical and ultimately spiritual health – depends on finding home. But we can't find it if we don't leave it to begin with – and like the *hormiguita extraviada*, we are destined to be our ancestors and yet entirely new. What does that mean?

It means to me that justice and water are the same thing. Many say this, but it is a difficult journey to drink from one, and dream the other.

But it is the only way to find home. A home that we want so much we can almost taste it, just beyond our reach. But to get there we have to jump. And that home can't be tribal, or hateful, ordinary or simple. To get there we have to leave the past and even the present as we know it. A New Year's Resolution? Yes. A resolution to drink justice, and a resolution to jump in the water. You can't get one without the other.

To help you, we offer the debut of *Citlali*, la Super Chicana,

who, in this issue, is dedicated to fighting the forces of greed, evil, the San Antonio Express-News, and Chicano! art exhibits. She inspires me, and we hope that you know she will be with us when we most need her.

While Citlali is brave, she is also love. I think she is brave because she loves us so much.

Consider Elvia R. Arriola's prayer in her poem titled "Oración a la Virgen Norteña":

Help me dear Lady/To recall a sense of faith/Help me remember the treasures of youth/The values I once held dear that/Got me through lonely lights/Won't you please hear me/And help?

Water makes up most of our body, remember? As it does the Earth. As we enter this year surrounded by the issues of water and war that we make on each other and ourselves, remember that you are not alone. I believe that it is our *destino* to be here, together in this time and place, and we are here to help each other. In this whirlpool of injustice that is called justice and war that is called peace and Chicano! and Cesar Chavez at the brink of drowning in so many lies, don't be afraid to jump in the water – in the truth that you've been searching for all your life.

El agua. Love. Peace. Water. Drink. Taste. Sip. El agua. Fear. Pray. Jump. Jump. Jump.

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MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR 2002

By Frank Valdez

"To sin by silence when we should protest makes cowards out of men"

Ella Wheeler Wilcox,
popular 19th century poet

When my wife Sheila asked me what my New Year's resolutions were, I responded that I had none. However, upon further pondering and having viewed the movie, Ali, I decided this question would be a good topic to write about.

According to sources on the Internet, New Year's Resolutions go as far back as 153 B.C. in ancient Rome. The mythical god Janus was placed as the first month, hence the month of January. This god with two faces could look back on past events and forward to the future. Janus became the ancient symbol for resolutions and many Romans looked for forgiveness from their enemies and exchanged gifts before the beginning of each year. Today "experts" on the subject of New Year's resolutions say that this practice indicates that we are in control of our lives and NOT reliant on the stars, luck or perhaps even the will of God? These same experts also say that we make New Years Resolutions because we wish to be better people, with more meaningful lives. This philosophy is based on the old European custom of "What one does today, one will do for the rest of the year."

With all this in mind I have chosen the following resolutions for 2002:

- 1) I will strive to be a better man for my spouse, our daughters and our sons. Change begins with self and within one's home.
- 2) I further resolve to continue to be active in the struggle for social justice.

In this time of complacency and going along to get along, those of us in the movement must recommit ourselves and continue the fight. Choosing to be neutral, or silent may be the way of neo liberals, but it does NOT result in JUSTICE! When one sees how Muhammed Ali stood up and refused to fight in Vietnam, one cannot help but respect him. His world championship was taken from him, he almost went broke and he endured an enormous amount of personal hardship. We should be so lucky to have such a high profile person opposing the aggression against Afghanistan today.

- 3) My final resolution is to change careers this year.

Having worked as a social worker for the past 10 years, I have come to the conclusion that pushing papers, following meaningless policies and procedures and working for agencies that put the almighty dollar before the needs and interests of the people is NO longer something I can do. I would love to get a job in the movement or writing

articles, but I'm old and wise enough to accept the realities of life.

These resolutions are all linked one to another. They are linked because of love for my family, self and community. The late Che Guevara once stated, "at the risk of sounding ridiculous the motivation for the revolutionary vanguard had to be love, love for the people." Love, solidarity, militancy and commitment for social change are all values that the oppressors cannot understand because they know NO love other than the love of money. They fail to understand solidarity, because REAL solidarity is based on feeling for people who are in similar economic, political and ideological circumstances.

While the oppressors often show some semblance of solidarity, it quickly ends once their goal is accomplished. (e.g.) the U.S. and Saddam Hussein, the U.S. and Manuel Noriega, etc. These relationships are more often temporary because the imperialist's and their puppet's sole linkage are an insatiable addiction to power and money.

The oppressors understand militancy on a limited basis. However, they have confused true militancy with irresponsible violent behavior. In reality, true militancy has little to do with being violent. (The ruling class almost always initiates violence.) Militancy has everything to do with being committed to a cause. (Even the far right has been known to be militant in their extremist views.) As to commitment to social change, the oppressor's only interest in social change is to have more power, more control and to take away the rights of the people. For this reason I have chosen as one of my resolutions to step up my efforts in the struggle for social justice.

In San Antonio we have our work cut out for us; struggling for livable wages, affordable housing, accessible healthcare, opposing police brutality, fighting against racism and homophobia, fighting for our environment against further military and industrial pollution and the struggle against further deterioration of our civil liberties by the ultra right Bush administration.

In closing I wish all readers of La Voz and supporters of the Esperanza a Happy and prosperous New Year!



Frank Valdez is a veteran labor, peace and civil rights activist who has been a prominent figure at the Esperanza since its inception fifteen years ago and a frequent contributor to La Voz. We wish him and his family well in the coming year.

Remedios, Limpias y Escobas

By Patrisia Gonzáles



I struggle with keeping my house swept, but la comadre tlazohteotl, fuerza regenerativa de la madre tierra, has taught me the spiritual power of the broom. It is one of the most basic limpieas that we do.

I still bring in the New Year with ritual sweeping. In El Paso, I learned to sweep the house minutes before midnight, to sweep out the old year and make way for the new. La escoba and ritual sweeping are recorded in the ancient picture books of Mexico. The daily sweeping so common among our elders and Mexican women is a legacy of the ritual sweeping our ancient abuelas did as part of their sacred responsibilities for healing, purification and ceremonies. Our ancestors knew we must cleanse matter and spirit. Tlazohteotl, which the Spaniards translated as the “goddess” of filth and sex, is instead a feminine healing energy of the Earth associated with regeneration, fertility, the partera and the temazkalli, the sweatlodge tradition of indigenous Mexico. Y la escoba is one of her instruments. Our ancestors were great scientists who did not believe in “gods,” but rather energetic functions, the way we understand gales and other forces of nature.

Cleaning house is not only sanitary but a spiritual act because we clean out emotions and the energy of the days gathered in dust and dirt. My abuelas taught me to clean on Fridays (some say because it was an odd day and therefore potentially unlucky or because it was a powerful day for healing). I then smudge my house with copal or sage, romero or incense. Before there was Pinesol, nuestras abuelas put flowers in the pale and rinsed the house with agua florida – our aromatherapy. I like lavanda, agua florida or agua de limon, especially on the day of a full moon, when things come into

completion. Do limpieas for the new beginnings, such as the new year, the beginning of the month, or weekly. La abuela Celia also advises to smudge ourselves daily and pray to live in a good way.

Our most basic limpia that we do everyday is when we take a shower or bath. Baños espirituales also are powerful ways to cleanse our spiritual, emotional and physical bodies of stress and other elements attached to our energy field. Baños are made like teas and then poured over us as we pray, following our showers or bath, or added to bath water. Herbs or flowers can clean our spirit and body and many herbs drunk for stress or calming can be used as a baño. It is best to use the herbs that grow around us or that we have a relationship with – like ones our abuelas used. A basic herbal bath includes a couple of handfuls of plantas maestras -- romero, albacar, ruda. They should be boiled in a non-metal pot, strained and kept covered to contain vapors until you are ready to pour. After your regular shower or bath, pour the liquid over you and pray que las plantas santas cleanse you deeply, releasing stress and any mitotes you have with others. Helga Garcia- Garza of Calpulli Tlalpalcalli in San Benito, whose encuentro de medicina is this June during summer solstice, suggests this baño fuerte, using the three plantas maestras. Prepare as above, except do not strain. With your legs in a V, take the herbs and rub them from below your stomach up, breathing deeply to release spiritual crud. Do for three consecutive days.

Such is the poder of a bath and a broom, the power el baño y la escoba. Patrisia Gonzáles is a healer and a writer with the Column of the Americas, Universal Press Syndicate.

Notas Y Más

Brief notes to inform Voz readers about events, issues and happenings. If you have an item to announce, send it to La Voz de Esperanza, 922 San Pedro, San Antonio, TX 78212. The deadline is the 12th of each month.

From January 31 to February 4, heads of top transnational corporations and political leaders will meet at the **WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM (WEF)** in New York City. In opposition to the **WEF**, the Second Annual **WORLD SOCIAL FORUM (WSF)** -- www.forumsocialmundial.org.br) will meet from January 31 to February 5, in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Representatives from international human rights, labor and student groups will stand in solidarity against corporate-centered globalization. In New York City, **ANSWER** is one group organizing mass rallies on Feb 1st and 2nd. Check their website at www.internationalanswer.org

On First Friday, February 1st from 6 to 8 pm **Jump-Start's Up-Start Gallery** will host a reception for an exhibition of recent works by African-American artist Claudette Hopkins. On Saturday, February 2nd at 8 pm and Sunday, February 3rd at 3 pm **Jump-Start Performance Co.** will present a staged reading of **CAMEOLAND**, a new play with music, written by Sterling Houston; cost is \$5 & \$7. Call 227-JUMP for reservations.

The Vagina Monologues, the celebrated and provocative play that has become a phenomenon worldwide will play at the Charline McCombs Empire Theatre in San Antonio from Tuesday, February 12 through Sunday, February 24, 2002. Check local papers for times or call the theatre box office.

Westfall Branch Library, 6111 Rosedale Court continues its free bilingual reading and discussion series in 2002. On Tuesday, February 19, at 7 pm. Dr. Norma Cantu will moderate a discussion on the book, **The Agüero Sisters** by Cristina García. Call 344-2373.

Women's Place. Transitional Roles of Women in the 21st Century will take place at Jackson Auditorium on the Texas Lutheran University campus in

Seguin, TX. February 21 and 22, 2002. The conference will feature among others Ema Perez on *Decolonizing Chicano Women's History* and Jean Franco on *Bodies in Distress, Feminism in the Era of Globalization*. Call Aida Cragnolino at 830-372-6086 or e-mail: acragnolino@tlu.edu

Editor seeks erotica for and about African-American Lesbians in the form of poetry, essay, short story, interview, etc. Limit 5000 words. Deadline is Feb. 28, 2002. Send submissions to **Afro-Sappho Press**, Editor Juin Charnell, PO Box 2054, St. Paul, MN 55102-0054.

YouthAction is a national organization based in Albuquerque, NM that provides resources for building a social change movement in which young people play an important role. **YouthAction** will convene a *National Gathering for Youth Organizing* on April 5-7, 2002 in San Antonio. Contact them at 505/873-3245 or email: siri_manne@yahoo.com

As part of the final stages of the new *Tejano Area* at the **Institute of Texan Cultures**, a display has been created to commemorate labor disputes in Texas history. Sharing the space with Emma Tenayuca and the pecan shellers' strike is our own **Fuerza Unida**. The new area is a result of combining the original Spanish Area with the Mexican Area. Visit the Institute on the grounds of the Hemisfair tower in San Antonio.

Calling Filmmakers, Artists, Videographer, & Performers for the **11th Annual Women of Color Film and Video Festival**. **Corpus: Re-membering Re-locating & Re-inscribing (Our)Selves** is the theme for this year's festival which takes place on April 26-28, 2002 at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Guidelines for Video/Film/Multi-Media Pieces/ Artwork and Photography are available from Elisa Huerta at ehuerta@cats.ucsc.edu and

guidelines for Performers/ Musicians/Dancers/Spoken Word Artists can be obtained from Tia-Nicoleat at NuNuChile@aol.com **DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 15, 2002.**



Annual International Women's Day March

"La Dignidad de la Mujer Obrera"

March 9, 2002

call **Fuerza Unida** for information at **927-2294**

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City of San Antonio Local Charitable Campaign

and the

Combined School District Charitable Campaign

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or call us to sign-up with our electronic direct deposit program!

Community Meetings

Society of Friends meets every Sunday at 10 am at Friends Meeting House, 7052 N. Vandiver, SA TX, 78209, call 945-8456.

ELLAS, Latina Lesbian organization. Call for meetings and information, 210-473-0217.

San Antonio Lambda Students (SALSA) meets the last Wednesday of the month at the Central Library, 6th floor, 7 – 8:45 pm. Call 732-4300 & ask for Lambda Students.

San Antonio NOW meets the first Monday of each month at the Resource Ctr, 121 W. Woodlawn. Call Maggie Cronan, 673-8600.

Voice for Animals meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7 pm, Brook Hollow Library, 530 Heimer, call 737-3138.

Parents/Friends of Lesbians/Gays (PFLAG) meets the first Thursday of each month at 7 pm at the Resource Ctr, 121 W. Woodlawn, call 351-0395.

Amnesty International #127 meets the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm at Ashbury United Methodist, call Ernani Falcone at 681-8370.

Habitat for Humanity holds Volunteer Orientation the first Tuesday of each month at 1st Presbyterian Church, 404 N. Alamo, at 6 pm.

Circle of the Re-Formed Congregation of the Goddess meets the third Thursday of each month at 7 pm at the Esperanza, 922 San Pedro, call 822-9105.

A Multicultural Worship Service is held Sundays at 11 am at **Spirit of Life Lutheran Church**, call Rev. Jennifer Kivikko at 826-8771.

DIGNITY S.A. holds mass every Sunday at 5:15 pm at St. Ann's Convent, call 735-7191.

Voice for Animals meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7 pm, Brook Hollow Library, 530 Heimer, call 737-3138.

Xicana Xicano Education Project meets every Wednesday at 6 pm at the Bazan Public Library, 2200 W. Commerce St. Call the voice mail at 348-3872.

The **peaceCENTER** invites community members every Tuesday from 7 – 9 pm to discussion, exploration, and commitment to nonviolent peacemaking, 1443 S. St. Mary. Call 224-HOPE or <http://www.salsa.net/peace>

Proyecto Hospitalidad Liturgy meets Thursdays at 7 pm at 325 Courtland, call 736-3579.

The **Anti-War Coalition** meets the first Monday of the month at 6pm at the Esperanza, 922 San Pedro. Call 228-0201.

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People and the Land

**Saturday,
February 9th**

3 pm Platica

with filmmaker/
activist Riad Bahhur on the
Israel/Palestine Conflict

7 pm Video Screening

followed by Discussion

at the Esperanza

~donations accepted~

People and the Land producers Riad Bahhur and Tom Hayes travel into the universe of occupied Palestine, unreeling images of a new form of apartheid based on ethnicity.

Challenging US foreign policy, this film examines the concrete realities of Israel's conduct in the West Bank and Gaza and the human cost of US aid. A powerful and timely portrayal that highlights the human rights violations against the Palestinian community. (1997, 57 minutes)

Esperanza Peace and Justice Center ♦ 922 San Pedro ♦ 228.0201

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