



La Voz de Esperanza

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La VOZ de Esperanza

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and la buena gente de nuestra comunidad.



Retoños/Renewals*

Antonia Castañeda

Spring, the season of rebirth and renewal, often evokes smiles, a lighter step, and memories of other springs in the seasons of our lives. Spring always reminds me of my Tejana mother, Doña Irene, whose annual welcome to spring was to talk to us about *retoños* as we sat at the kitchen table, cutting tissue paper for confetti and stuffing our brightly colored *cascarones* in the weeks before Easter. Years later I understood how she used both *retoño*, the noun, and *retornar*, the verb, to teach us.

In the season of renewal she proudly reminded us that we were her *retoños*, her shoots, and the *retoños* of numerous family lines, all of whom she would list—that we would remember from whom we came, who we were. She regaled us with stories of all those ancestors whom we were destined never to meet in the flesh, but knew from her stories. She spoke to us about the *retoños* we would in time contribute to the cycle of renewal, and of her own *retorno* to the earth, *la santa madre tierra*, when her time came.

She used her return to the earth to remind us that we must give back to the goodness of life what we have received. We must replenish the resources we have used, whether from the good earth or from the goodwill of others. “Give back, two and three fold, what you have received,” she instructed, “that what you return may be given to others who may have greater need than you.”

As a Tejana farm worker toiling in the fields of the Pacific Northwest, Doña Irene saw need all around her, and saw, too, the *retoños* the fertile earth and her labor yielded each season. From the need she witnessed and lived in fieldwork from Texas to Washington, grew her powerful sense of justice. This too, she told us every spring, you must give and you must receive. And if it is not visible or present, then you must give yourself to make sure that it is, “*hay que asegurar que crezca y retoñe.*” I think of her *consejos* and *historias* all the time, but especially in the spring, this season of *retoños* and renewal.

* *Retoño* (n) sprout or shoot
Retoñar (v) to sprout
Retornar (v) to return



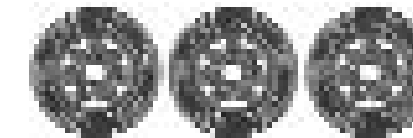
Editor's note: Antonia is a professor of history at St. Mary's University and an ardent supporter of Esperanza in its many forms. Artwork contributed by Michael Marínez.

Front cover photo by José Luís Contreras from series Mundo sin Tiempo, Imágenes de Chiapas, México published by Ediciones Escaramujo.

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, specicism 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.



Editorial



Anoche, as I walked alone on the streets of downtown San Antonio past the Alameda Theatre I had to reflect on the recent criticism that has been heaped on La Voz, specifically for our publication of the most recent Citlali superhero comic strip and, in general, about our unpatriotic critique of the U.S. War on Terror. I hurried along towards the Mercado in anticipation of hearing Los Blazers from East L.A. at Fiesta.

Fiesta? You ask, how can that be? Weren't you the one who published in La Voz last month, “Let's Chingar La Raza Week” with Citlali seemingly insulting and offending gente?

At the risk of seeming defensive, I want to revisit in this editorial the April Citlali comic strip and address some concerns brought out by friends of the Esperanza and La Voz. More importantly, I want to disculparme where and if need be.

First, let me tackle the perceived insults. I was informed that this cartoon resorts to name-calling and calls our gente of San Antonio, babosos and pendejos for participating in Fiesta without acknowledging what lies at the root of Fiesta, the defeat of the Mexicans at San Jacinto.

Friday, April 19th, the Express-News ran an article, which broached the subject, what is fiesta? Responses to the question were varied with few people knowing the historical roots. On Sunday, April 21st, coverage on fiesta continued with claims that the battle of San Jacinto is being revisited with a more inclusive interpretation of what really happened there. Oh, really? Ya veremos.

Citlali, the Xicana Superhero, said, “It's that time again! A time when the parades of blue-eyed queens and King Antonio leading his army of gringos on horses openly remind raza of our placement in San Anto. An event in which we celebrate cuando nos chingaron los gringos but most of us don't care as long as we can get babosos and pretend we have some part of fiesta. So, mi gente, don't give all your feria to celebrate our repression.”

Yes, Citlali did use the “g” word. Let's not pretend it doesn't exist and that it isn't used by raza. As I understand it, the “g” word is perfectly acceptable depending on who uses it. A dark skinned woman with indigenous features is more apt to be criticized for using it, than say a “Hispanic” with borrado eyes who uses it to rib his golfing buddies on the green. In a nutshell, “gringo” simply means, “white people.” Its origins are still in question. That gringos fucked over Mexicanos is historical fact. No matter how you interpret the Battle of San Jacinto.

As I approached the main stage at the Mercado I heard the familiar strains of accordion music mixed with electric guitar. The song playing was part of the repertoire of Los Blazers. I sped up but couldn't move forward fast enough. Too many babosos swaying as they wandered through the Mercado shoulder to shoulder impeding my progress. Yep, everybody was getting babosos, gringos tambien. I witnessed it, first hand, just as Citlali predicted it.

Baboso isn't such a bad word, really. My college friends from the borderlands and barrios used it all the time, still do. Una babosa is a slug, which leaves a trail of slime as it moves along a path. Babas means drool. Guess what? Friday night I saw babosos, (drunks), drooling and leaving behind a trail of slime.

The most painful criticism of the Citlali cartoon was definitely justified and not a matter of opinion. In the rush to publish I neglected to get permission from the author of a quote used in the cartoon: “Remember this. On March 6, 2036, I will blow up the ALAMO. By that time I will be 82 and the ALAMO, as we know it, will be 200 years old. Unless. There is peace instead of war. The ALAMO is a monument to WAR.”

This quote is important because it alludes to possible violence to a sacred relic of Texas history, in essence, a crime against the state in these days of rabid patriotism. Even though the cartoon says, “Unless. There is peace instead of war,” we could be accused of terrorist intentions, but authorities would have to be operating on the assumption that in 2036 we shall still be in a state of war. The quote was used in the cartoon at the last minute without proper acknowledgement of the source and without talking to the author which I assured the artist I would do. If any of us get carted away for printing this quote, it should be me. But why would anyone (author, editor or artist) be plucked and put in the can without explanation. Because things have changed and our rights are not as secure as they used to be.

The website for the Center for Constitutional Rights begins with, “Just six weeks after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, a jittery Congress-exiled from its anthrax-contaminated offices and confronted with warnings that more terrorist assaults were soon to come-capitulated to the Bush Administration's demands for a new arsenal of anti-terrorism weapons. Over vigorous objections from civil liberties organizations on both ends of the political spectrum, Congress overwhelmingly approved the ‘Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act,’ “better known by its acronym, the USA PATRIOT Act.2.”

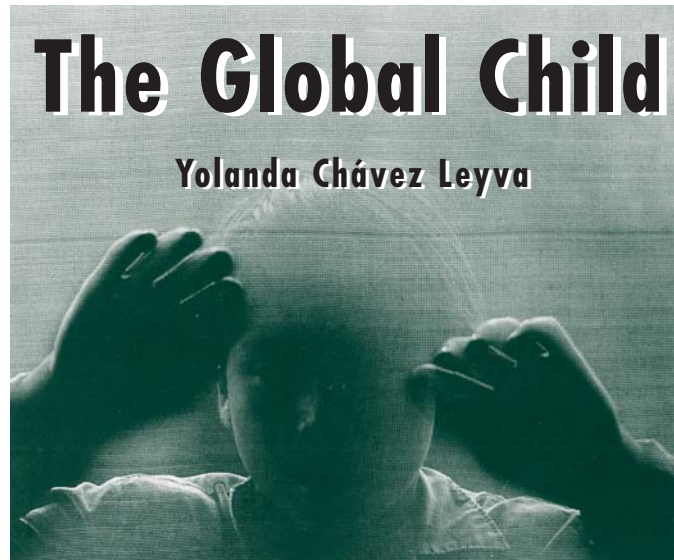
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The Global Child

Yolanda Chávez Leyva

"We were all children once. And we all share the desire for the well-being of our children, which has always been and will continue to be the most universally cherished aspiration of humankind."

From "Introduction" to We the Children: End Decade Review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children



She was standing on a street corner in downtown Ciudad Juárez, near the Santa Fe Bridge, when I saw her last winter. She was tiny, perhaps 4 years old, and wearing a thin flowered dress on a chilly day. As she looked up at me, her hand stretched out asking for change, I noticed that her left eye was swollen shut and so infected that pus ran out of one corner. I handed her some quarters as I've done countless times in the past with so many other children. Despite the ordinariness of this interaction, its memory stayed with me. Perhaps it was because she kept looking at me even after I'd handed her the coins. Maybe it was because, unlike other children begging on the streets, she seemed so alone. No older siblings or mother nearby. No one seemed to be watching out for her.

It is a truism and a cliché that "Children are our future" and I thought of this as I walked across the bridge on my way home to El Paso. Children are our future, yet throughout the world, millions of children die of preventable diseases and malnutrition. Thousands of children serve in national armies or die from landmines. Millions of children are forced to work in sweatshops, farms, and as domestics. All over the world, including in this country, children go to bed hungry.

This month, April, children are at the center of an historic gathering in New York City. In a follow-up to the 1990 World Summit for Children, the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children (May 8-10) brings together over 70 world leaders as well as delegations from over 170 nations. Over 3,000 NGOs have been accredited to attend the session. Conference attendees are discussing children's healthcare, education, and protection from exploitation as essential to world peace and stability.

In May 2001, in anticipation of the gathering originally scheduled for September of last year, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan released We the Children. The report is a comprehensive look at the progress, as well as the lack of

progress, made towards improving the lives of millions of children across the globe. While the report documents great progress in some areas, particularly health, it also points to the continuing harm done to children as a result of social and economic factors.

We the Children points to chronic poverty as the "single

biggest obstacle to meeting the needs and fulfilling the rights of children." According to the report, the economic disparity between industrialized and developing nations has more than tripled since 1960. UN statistics show that twenty-five percent of the world's children live in families with incomes lower than \$1 a day. The number is higher in developing nations where 1 in 3 children live in this dismal poverty.

It is not just in the developing nations of the world that children suffer from the consequences of an economic system that distributes wealth inequitably. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, 11 million American children live in poverty, and 27 million live in low-income homes. Five million children in the United States live in extreme poverty (defined in 2000 as a total yearly income of \$6,930 for a family of three).

Many border children, like other children across the globe, live in devastating poverty. Mexican and Chicano children are extremely vulnerable. In 1999, the U.S. Census reported that 35% of Mexican descent children in the United States live in poverty. In Mexico, half of the population lives in poverty and the situation is worsening as a result of NAFTA, which has created greater landlessness and poverty among rural Mexicanos. More and more campesinos are coming to the border out of desperation, in search of jobs.

The consequences of Mexico's poverty are devastating for children. A 1996 report by Victor Suarez C. in La Jornada del Campo reports that the diets of half of all Mexicanos fall below minimum nutritional standards, resulting in the deaths of 433 Mexican children from malnutrition each day. Poverty also pushes Mexican children into the work force at young ages. Estimates of the total number of Mexican children in the workforce range from 4 million to 5 million. El Programa Nacional con Jornaleros Agrícolas reports that over a million Mexican children work in the fields. Many of these children do not have clean drinking water or toilets;

many are exposed to dangerous pesticides.

UNICEF's 1997 State of the World's Children emphasizes that children are also pushed into the workforce in the industrialized world as well. In the United States, children of immigrants or people of color are more likely to do hazardous work. Mexican and Chicano children work in the fields across the U.S., facing the same dangerous living and working conditions as children on the Mexican side of the border.

The little girl on the sidewalk in Ciudad Juárez, the children working in agricultural fields across the United States, and the children suffering from malnutrition in Mexico share something with other children in many different nations. They are the global children of the new millennium.

The UN provides the following about the disturbing snapshot of children born in 2000. If nothing changes, **out of each 100 children globally:**

30 will suffer from malnutrition before they reach the age of five.

19 will have no access to clean drinking water.

40 will live without adequate sanitation.

17 of the children will never go to school. The majority of those will be girls.

The statistics paint a grim picture of the life of the global child. Yet, events over the last decade point to a hopeful trend. The international community is focusing on children more than ever before. Just weeks before the 1990 World Summit for Children, the Convention on the Rights of the Child went into effect. The Convention outlines the basic human rights of every child and has been ratified by every nation in the world except the United States and Somalia.

Although the U.S. has indicated its intention to ratify the treaty, the United States often takes years, or even decades, to ratify human rights treaties. For example, it took over 30 years to ratify the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The American government is currently evaluating the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which it signed 17 years ago.

BUT, there are things that we can do now to improve the

lives of children. The United Nations recommends the following:

BE AWARE: Every child has rights and your national and local community will not thrive unless children, who hold the very key to the future, are empowered.

LEARN MORE: Find out how children in your corner of the world are affected by poverty, discrimination, ignorance, labor and exploitation, life-threatening diseases, the environment and other factors affecting their development. Share your outrage and hope with others.

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY: Realize that the well-being of children is everyone's responsibility.

BE HEARD: Voice your concerns about children's rights in your community to your local, regional and national government leaders.

TAKE ACTION: Support projects by groups and individuals who are part of the Global Movement for Children.

VOLUNTEER: Sign up with a local or international children's rights advocacy group or spend time improving the situation of children and families in your neighborhood.

REACH OUT: Hold your national and local leaders accountable for the state of children's lives in your country. Extend the same mantle of responsibility to the media, non-governmental groups and religious organizations.

KEEP CHILDREN IN MIND: Examine the impact your business decisions might have on children around the world. Protect the children of your employees and co-workers.

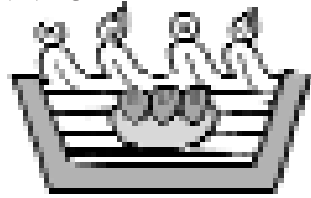
In addition, UNICEF provides the following suggestions to help create support in the United States for ratification of the Convention for the Rights of the Child:

Contact your local constituencies and help mobilize them to support the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Organize informational meetings and/or distribution materials about the Convention.



El Pueblo en San Antonio Continúa Resistiendo



Por Antonio C. Cabral

La sociedad civil en San Antonio, Texas, está rebelándose contra gobernantes locales que continúan con su servilismo a corporaciones millonarias. Al igual que los pueblos en México y Latino América, los san antonianos están enfadados de políticos que traicionan los intereses de la gente común para proteger sus carreras políticas.

Varias organizaciones de la ciudad se han unido para obtener 68,030 firmas en 40 días exigiendo un referéndum público que podría cancelar la decisión que tomó el cabildo o gobierno de la ciudad a favor de una de las corporaciones más ricas de EE.UU. Esa decisión otorga millones de dólares de fondos públicos para "ayudar" a la corporación a construir un proyecto que, además, pone en peligro la única fuente de agua potable para millones de personas.

El pasado 5 de abril, a la 1:30 a.m., nueve de los once políticos que forman el gobierno de la ciudad, incluyendo el alcalde Ed Garza, votaron aprobar la construcción de una "PGA Village" por la corporación Lumbermen's Investment Corporation, una de las subsidiarias del conglomerado Temple-Inland Corporation la cual está incluida en la lista de las billonarias corporaciones de Fortune 500.

"PGA Village" es el nombre oficial del proyecto para construir un campo de golf profesional que servirá a la National Professional Golfers Association (PGA) (Asociación Nacional de Jugadores Profesionales de Golf). Aparte del campo de golf, Lumbermen's planea construir dos hoteles lujosos en sociedad con la cadena igualmente billonaria Marriott Hotels, además varios edificios de departamentos y casas de lujo.

Lumbermen's y la PGA, basada en Florida, le exigió al gobierno de la ciudad que les donara \$81 millones de dólares de impuestos públicos para ayudar a los inversionistas recaudar su inversión y "ganancias justas."

Aparte de esta asistencia con fondos públicos, existe otro problema más crítico: El proyecto PGA Village va a ser construido en más de mil hectáreas situadas directamente sobre el Acuífero Edwards que es la única fuente de agua surtiendo a todo el condado Bexar que incluye la ciudad San Antonio.

Después de varias semanas de protestas, foros públicos y peticiones con miles de firmas pidiéndole al cabildo que no aprobará el proyecto, el alcalde Ed Garza anunció sarcásticamente que "después de fuertes negociaciones con Lumbermen's, he logrado que acepten únicamente

\$57 en lugar de \$81 millones de dólares de fondos públicos y también me garantizan que tendrán precaución con los pesticidas y herbicidas que usaran para el mantenimiento del campo de golf, y también cuidaran que los drenajes en los hoteles, departamentos y casas, no contaminen nuestra agua potable."

Ese día 4 de abril tuvo lugar una sesión del cabildo que inició a las 5:00 p.m. Muchas personas se presentaron a protestar afuera del edificio mientras que adentro otras muchas más hablaron en contra del proyecto. La sesión terminó a la 1:30 a.m. del siguiente día cuando Garza pidió un voto y nueve de los once miembros votaron a favor.

Únicamente dos regidores o consejeros del gobierno de la ciudad, el Chicano Julián Castro y el afro-americano John Sanders votaron en contra después de desenmascarar públicamente varias mentiras que Lumbermen's incluyó en el contrato final que fue aprobado por los "Arrogantes 9" cómo ahora se les llama.

Los nueve mantuvieron una actitud arrogante durante varias semanas y durante la sesión del día 4. Uno de los más déspotas, es el regidor David A. García quien irónicamente representa el Distrito 5, una de las áreas más pobres de la ciudad. García descaradamente desconectó el micrófono cuando el sacerdote Walter D'heedene trató de hablar contra el proyecto. Bobby Pérez, representante del Distrito 1 que incluye el centro de San Antonio y dentro del cual más de 97,200 habitantes viven en extrema pobreza según estadísticas federales, tuvo el descaro de regañar a los representantes de las organizaciones opositoras.

Según los reglamentos municipales, la comunidad tiene 40 días desde el día 5 de abril para obtener 68,030 firmas de personas registradas cómo votantes y residentes de la ciudad para forzar que se cancele la decisión del 5 de abril y que el alcalde Garza convoque un referéndum público para que todos los votantes decidan aprobar o desaprobar el proyecto.

Lo más preocupante de todo este trance a la sociedad civil de San Antonio es que indica el nivel de control sofocante que tienen las corporaciones millonarias sobre los gobiernos en todos niveles en EE.UU. Desde la ciudad, condado, estado y federal, los gobernantes se han convertido en administradores de esos intereses.

Estos son los mismo políticos y oficiales de gobierno que arrogantemente visitan México y >>>

Latinoamérica para "enseñarle al pueblo y políticos" como debe funcionar un gobierno democrático y como deben "respetar la democracia."

El año pasado, la Corte Federal del Distrito Oeste declaró culpable al hoy alcalde Ed Garza y varios miembros del gobierno de la ciudad de violar la constitución de EE.UU. y leyes estatales. El juez federal Orlando L. García dictó que el comportamiento arrogante contra el Centro Paz y Justicia Esperanza (Esperanza Peace and Justice Center) los llevó a cometer serias violaciones de la primer y catorce enmiendas de la Constitución Federal y la ley estatal titulada Texas Open Meeting Act (Ley de Texas sobre reuniones gubernamentales públicas).

Hoy, el Centro de Esperanza, Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS), Smart Growth Coalition, y varias otras tienen centenares de voluntarios recaudando las 68,030 firmas necesarias para forzar al gobierno de la ciudad, una vez más, que recuerde que fueron elegidos para gobernar la ciudad y no para servir a los intereses de las corporaciones.

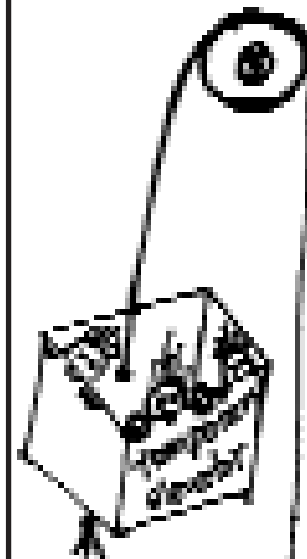
Esta resistencia del pueblo trabajador en S.A. refleja la lucha de los pueblos en México y toda Latinoamérica contra el plan económico/político neoliberal que entrega a las corporaciones el poder de gobierno. El modelo neoliberal le niega a la gente su derecho de decidir que programas y proyectos sociales y económicos aprueba para su ciudad, estado y país. Las corporaciones son las que deciden todo chantajeando a los pueblos con su poder financiero, controlando a los políticos y, en casos extremos como en México y Latino América, por medio de la fuerza policíaca y coup d'état militares como lo intentaron recientemente en Venezuela contra el Presidente Hugo Chávez.

La lucha del pueblo en S.A. contra el descaro de los "Arrogantes 9" es parte de la lucha global contra ese modelo inhumano y anti-democrático.

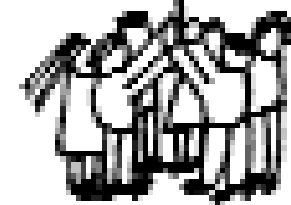


Antonio C. Cabral es escritor Chicano de San Antonio. Sus ensayos se publican en inglés y español en EE.UU. y México.

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Global Child continued from page 5

Organize letter-writing campaigns in your area in support of the Convention.

Contact your local newspapers with letters to the editor and opinion articles in support of the Convention.

Mention the Convention on the Rights of the Child in your newsletters.

Work with your local churches, schools and community groups to create grass-roots support.

A few days ago I returned to Juárez to buy some manzanilla and on my way home I saw her again. Two blocks from the bridge, near where I had seen her before. She ran past me, entered the Domino's Pizza, and quickly ran out again. Walking in front of me, she again stretched out her hand, a beautiful smile on her face. Her eyes looked bright and her little body radiated energy. Nearby I saw her mother, a young woman wrapped in a rebozo with a baby in her lap. I put some quarters in her hand and asked her name. We spoke for a few seconds before she went running back to her mother. I marveled at the resilience of children and thought about the future.

Her name was Rosanna.

For more information on the rights of children, see the following sites:

UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child
<http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm>

We the Children
<http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/docum/entation/documents/a-s-27-3e.doc>

United Nations Special Session on Children
<http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/>

National Center for Children in Poverty
<http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nccp/>



Dr. Chávez Leyva is a professor of Mexican and Borderlands History at the University of Texas El Paso and a long-time Esperanza supporter.

Mexicanos/as and Appalachians: Solidarity Ever?

by Rachel Jennings

While shopping at the Seventh Street H.E.B. in the heart of *mexicano* East Austin recently, I saw plastic “Hillbilly Teeth” being sold in vending machines for children. The teeth were decayed and crooked. The picture on the machine portrayed a gap-toothed, bug-eyed, sallow-skinned hillbilly. “Look, mami, look! It’s a hillbilly!” a small boy cried out.

Even when overheard references to *la güera* or *la gringa* reminded me of my white privilege, I had always felt psychically safe in working-class East Austin. But now I felt hurt and rattled, although I had seen the same plastic teeth in my hometown. In some odd attempt at political sensitivity, they were called “Horror Teeth” in Tennessee, and the display picture showed a Gothic castle.

At that moment, I was reminded that I am a migrant in Texas. To many, my ways and appearance are foreign. To many, my personal and political struggles mean nothing. Then I thought of the poorer, browner, Spanish-speaking, and thus far less empowered migrants who have traveled to Tennessee from Mexico. Except for Mexican food aisles in supermarkets, their presence is rarely acknowledged. I longed to express my solidarity.

Of course, not all *mexicano* migrants to Appalachia have been as disempowered as the recent influx of poorly paid workers in agriculture, construction, and manufacturing. In 1962, Américo Paredes, who would later be known as the dean of Chicano/a studies, was still a quite junior professor at UT-Austin. Writing to a friend at West Virginia University about his upcoming trip to Morgantown to teach courses at the Summer Language Institute, Paredes had received word about an apartment that would cost \$110.00/month.

The price, he wrote, “seemed fantastic,” and he hoped to “hear of some place that is much cheaper, a boarding house for unemployed miners perhaps.” With typically sardonic wit, Paredes expressed solidarity with the Appalachian working class. Having experienced domination as a Mexican American from South Texas, Paredes instinctively understood “which side” he would be on.

As a folklorist, of course, Paredes was familiar with the rich body of Appalachian folklore, which at that time was the central quarry of American folklore studies. In *With His Pistol in His Hand* (1958), which helped inspire the 1960s Chicano Movement, Paredes distinguishes the “stirring” Mexican American corrido from the Appalachian ballad, which he describes as a “British ballad” in “preserved form.”

Unlike Appalachian ballads, he argues, border region corridos reflected the living, virile struggle of *mexicanos* against Texas Rangers and corporate agribusiness. Whereas Appalachian ballads historically have been studied as relics of “pure” tradition, Mexican American *corridos*, which did not even exist until the late nineteenth century, had a clear political function. As a subtle jab, he suggests that early Appalachians had not struggled heroically against domination as Texas Mexicans had after the U.S.-Mexican War.

This rhetorical jab, however, is clearly not directed toward contemporary Appalachians, who indeed have experienced (and resisted) severe exploitation. Rather, Paredes briefly invokes Appalachian identity as a reminder that nineteenth-century Appalachian migrants to Texas displaced Tejano/as from their land and stripped them of their civil liberties.

Professor Paredes’ view of Appalachian ballads inspires reflection on the long relationship between Appalachians and *mexicanos*. In the cultural memory of Texas Mexicans, Appalachians are not a quaint people attached forever to the mountains, as the common stereotype would have us believe. Rather, as exemplified by Davy Crockett and Samuel Houston, they are an aggressive people anxious to colonize the hot plains of Texas.

Unfortunately, conditioned by camouflaged stereotypes of the “greaser” and the coonskin-capped “hillbilly,” the distorted cultural memories of both Appalachians and *mexicanos* inhibits solidarity at this crucial current moment when many impoverished *mexicanos* are settling in Appalachia.

Many Appalachians conveniently ignore the past contributions of *mexicano* workers and complain bitterly about the increasing numbers of Latinos/as in the region. And unlike Dr. Paredes, who briefly refers to Appalachian ballads to make a point about the *corrido*, some Chicanos/as look to the past as an excuse to denigrate Appalachians in the present.

The founder of the Raza Unida party, José Angel Gutiérrez, for example, has expressed bitterness that “white poverty in Appalachia” in the 1960s was “dramatized and memorialized in film and with print photos . . . while our poverty in the Southwest was ignored.” While correct in his assessment that white poverty received disproportionate attention during Johnson’s War on Poverty, Gutiérrez fails to mention how distorted, culturally prejudiced, and psychically damaging were the media portrayals of Appalachians in the 1960s. Conversely, the late Chicano *pinto* poet, Ricardo Sánchez, argues that white scholars and artists could best serve the public by studying “the infested sores and hunger of Appalachia” rather than objectifying and stereotyping Chicanos/as. Sánchez’s comment, of course, reflects his own exposure to popular stereotyping of Appalachians. Like Gutiérrez, Sánchez forgets that folklorists, anthropologists, and photographers have combed the hills of Appalachia with the same reckless abandon that they have adopted South Texas as a field site *par excellence*.

Appalachians, of course, possess many prejudices of their own. When a farmer in Bybee, Tennessee, offered his land for the construction of a Head Start facility for the children of Latino/a migrant workers in 1999, someone burned his barn down and displayed a mutilated effigy of a Mexican worker. Even before this hate crime, white residents of Bybee had tended to treat the migrant workers with hostility. In turn, suggesting the potential for de facto segregation, migrant workers fearfully expressed reluctance to interact with townspeople.

Rather than treating the Bybee case as a reason to demonize white Appalachians, one must ask what caused their animosity. Some Bybee residents expressed envy that their own children were not afforded the opportunity to attend Head Start or to receive two meals a day. Others believed that the migrants would not pay taxes. In addition to such economic fears and resentments, though, were more viscerally racist responses. As one white resident said, “We don’t want a bunch of Mexicans roaming around this town.” Given the virtual nonexistence of Latinos/as in most parts of Appalachia until the 1990s (coal mines and large farms being important earlier exceptions), one wonders what this white man meant by the term *Mexican*.

In many parts of the Southwest, of course, the term *Mexican* has been used with such seething hatred in the past as to make it virtually unusable by well-meaning whites. Recounting a third-grade field trip to the Alamo, for

example, Richard Flores recalls how a racist Anglo classmate blamed him “and the other ‘mes’kins” for the deaths of the Alamo defenders.

In Appalachia, however, this history of conquest and conflict does not exist. Or does it? As Flores points out, the majority of the “150 men in the Alamo” were “from outside Texas.” While the fighters came from many countries and states, popular legend has focused on “David Crockett and his dozen or so volunteers from Tennessee.” Thus, the backwoodsman, later reborn as the inbred hillbilly, was ingrained in the national imagination.



Since Anglo “Texians” were not the primary defenders of the Alamo, one can assume that others besides Texans have benefited from the racial privileges accorded by the Great Alamo Myth. White Appalachians, in fact, now enjoy a unique blend of racial privilege, cultural stigma, and economic disempowerment. Unfortunately, many scholars have remained oblivious to how the “cookskin-cap” image of Davy Crockett has contributed to such denigrating portrayals as Li’l Abner and Pappy Smith.

In the imaginations of many Anglo-Texans, Davy Crockett lives on. But in my view, Davy must die. If you’ll throw me that Bowie knife, I’ll do the honors.

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Rachel Jennings is a 2001-2002 James A. Michener Publishing Fellow at the University of Texas Press. The photos in this article come from collaborations of Appalshop, a community group from Whitesburg, Kentucky, on their anniversary tour of the US in the spring of 2001. The picture on the far left is from their bridging culturas visit in San Antonio at Esperanza featuring Los Diferentes.

Who to Love and Who to Hate

COLUMN OF THE AMERICAS

by *Patrisia Gonzales and Roberto Rodríguez*

Like the "Mystery Science Theater 3000" crew, a group of "Indian" critics sit on a couch, talking back to old Westerns. When John Wayne kicks up dust as the great white father of the West, comic Drew Lacapa remarks: "George W. Bush!"

In "The Talking Couch," featuring Lacapa, filmmaker Chris Eyre and Gary Farmer, the native commentators lobbed Indian humor at 100 years of Hollywood movies as part of the Taos Talking Picture festival. The movies show native braves taunting white women ("Let me take you back to my pad") and romanticized Indian country in more recent movies such as "Pocahontas" and "Dances With Wolves."

"Any white actor who plays an Indian I think is funny," said Eyre.

In other clips, as Buster Keaton is burned at the stake, the comics quip "that's like eating a New Mexico chile." White men also play red face and go "ugh" and dance to the tomahawk chop ... pom pom pom pom. As Peter Pan is given an Indian name and native caricatures sing, "What makes the red man red," the comics retort: "I hope no one grew up watching this."

Often the clips are not much to laugh about and are painful in how they teach even native youth to want to be cowboys so they don't wind up dead. The portrayal of indigenous peoples as savages and terrorists is not something of the past. After 9/11, several columnists across the country spoke of Geronimo and Pancho Villa as terrorists.

This distortion of history reflects a society that began by dehumanizing indigenous and African peoples. In contemporary context, these attitudes are reinforced on TV and the big screen. As a result, we love our heroes light and our villains dark. We lionize men and silence women. We love us, we hate them. We belong, they don't. We are of God, they are of the devil. We are civilized, fair and just, and they are savages.

Hollywood is responsible for what we love and what we hate, says Jack Sheehan, author of "Reel Bad Arabs."

What is glorified, we learn to love. And what we demonize and dehumanize, we learn to hate. Once dehumanized, it's easy to dishonor, disparage and kill. Thus, a dozen people killed is a tragedy, an outrage. One hundred hated or dehumanized people killed equals justice.

Therein lies the relationship between image and reality.

White: good, pure, innocent. Dark: bad, suspect, guilty. The truth is, this dichotomy was not created by Hollywood, but it is sustained and replicated by it and the mass media.

This past week (in April), the Taos festival was host not simply to some cutting-edge independent films, but it also sponsored media forums that examined the industry's historic treatment of marginalized peoples, including the timely discussion of anti-Arab bias and its repercussions on people's attitudes toward the Middle East conflict.

Only recently have filmmakers of color begun to gain creative control of their images.

Certainly all groups who are not white Anglo-Saxon and Protestant have been historically subjected to derogatory treatment on the screen. As a result of these practices, the people and groups affected have always complained. Yet Hollywood continues to demonize and dehumanize.

Hollywood does not change because, as one participant said, "Killing people of color sells." Yet, Sheehan responded: "Humanization also sells."

Humanization can sell, but Hollywood doesn't get it. The apparent solution is for the dehumanized groups to create their own films. For example, "Smoke Signals" (1998) recently broke ground for Native Americans. This year, indigenous film cooperatives from Bolivia won an award for their work in using video for cultural preservation. Eyre's "Skins" and Sherman Alexie's "The Business of Fancydancing" were featured native films at the festival.

Yet that is but one hurdle. There's also distribution. Recently, we saw "Sin Dejar Huella (Without a Trace)" by Maria Novaro, a Mexican film that puts "Thelma and Louise" to shame. Yet because of international industry guidelines that expect it to generate instant profits (pitted against Hollywood competition), it will never air in Mexico, nor Hollywood.

There is good news in this realm. "The Bronze Screen," co-produced by Nancy de los Santos, Susan Racho, and Alberto Dominguez, airs this fall on HBO/Cinemax. The film documents "the evolution of Latino images in Hollywood from the 1920s 'greaser' movies to contemporary films of the 1990s." Unlike some writing about censorship that never sees the light of day, perhaps the industry is about to get the picture.



We are proud to announce that our collaborative "Going Back to Where We Came From" documentary -- by THE AZTLANAHUAC PROJECT-- premiered at the Taos Talking Picture Festival. We would like to thank everyone who participated & collaborated in its making, particularly director George Ozuna. If you want more info or if you want it shown in your community, visit us at <http://hometown.aol.com/aztlanahuac/myhomepage/index.html> or contact us at 210-734-3050 or aztlanahuac@aol.com

Corazón Zapatista

by H. Esperanza Garza



In the Summer of 2000, I spent almost two months traveling throughout México asking fellow travelers about alternative strategies of aprendizaje, the struggles around institutional education and community autonomy. The viaje culminated with two weeks in Oventic, Chiapas. I look forward to sharing more about this trip with you through writing and video in the near future.

In August 2000, I was in Oventic, Chiapas, Aguascalientes II, liberated Zapatista territory. One cool evening, feeling a little restless, I decided to go to the collective store. The international observers' camp was positioned on the north side of the highway, on higher ground so that we could look out and protect the community. The road was built in 1995, during the Mexican military incursions into indigenous territory. Forty-five minutes from San Cristobal, the road passed Chamula, San Andrés and onto Oventic, identifiable only by a sign and the collective store open for business. Although the road continued, this is where it was meant to lead, just in case armed trucks need to get in or out quickly.

I scrambled across the road, looking for a little conversation and a coke. There were no glass windows in the store. The shutters and the door were open. There were about a dozen people in the room, Zapatistas and one international observer. A new television, a gift from a solidarity group in California, was turned on in the corner.

That night, Tele Azteca was broadcasting a Spanish dubbed version of Steven Spielberg's ET. I strolled in when ET was dressed up as a ghost for Halloween. By the time I finished buying my one liter bottled Mexican coke and sat down at a picnic table with Che Guevara's face painted on it, ET was already sick. The broadcast had commercials and during the breaks in the movie, Jesús, the Zapatista who was in charge of electrical work in the Aguascaliente, channel surfed to a 1960's Mexican comedy, Siempre Domingo and back.

Later in the film when ET died, my friend Elisa, the responsible of the collective store gasped, "¿Está muerto?" Her sing song Spanish accented by Mayan Tzotzil almost broke my heart and I meant to speak up. Words were caught in my throat at the strangeness of it all and Jesus bellowed, "¡No, no está muerto, es una película de Hollywood!"

We watched together quietly.

I think that even though Jesús said that ET wouldn't die, and I knew he wouldn't die, we were all a little tense. The vision of a governmental force taking over someone's home and property and treating another living being like an object was disturbing to watch. I almost decided to leave and go back to play cards or talk with the other internationals. And then we saw the flicker of ET's heart, as Henry Thomas cried on his chest. The flower was alive again, and ET had to be rescued.

The Zapatistas really enjoyed this plot twist. In the next scene, one of ET's friends pulled down a ski mask, a

pasamontaña. "Mira, como nosotros, se parece a nosotros," they murmured with excitement and wonder. As the boys in the movie biked through a suburban set, riding away from government agents with guns pointed at them, Elisa turned to me asking, "Es como tu tierra?" And when the music soared, we sighed.

I sat there looking around the room, at people who grew up thousands of miles away from me, who have only seen the United States through a few movies, and wondered what all this might mean. As my eyes settled on the screen, I saw ET's heart glowing red. With all the childhood memories, stuffed animals, Neil Diamond and Michael Jackson, I really saw ET for one second. In a flash, I remembered a welcome that a Zapatista had given me in another village a few days before.

A young man had told me that I was always welcome in his town, because they could see clearly that I had a corazón zapatista. I imagined ET as a zapatista, calling the children of suburbia, me and you, to make a democratic space for civil society to dialogue and meet. Our goal was to keep our friends safe and autonomous, but we were also transformed in the process. We could not stay the same.

As ET and Henry Thomas said goodbye, questions of culture and meaning were forever changed for me. Steven Spielberg did not intend to offer us a revolutionary alternative to capitalist commodity culture. When I saw ET as a child, it was a packaged experience that was not complete without a limited edition collector's cup from Mickey D's. In the context of Chiapas and the Zapatista culture of resistance, watching ET transformed me.

As you may know, ET was re-released this past Spring. When I heard about it, I thought I would go see it again, not so I could remember my childhood stuffed animals, but to honor my friends in Oventic.

In the pre-release hype for the film, an astute observer leaked that among the "digital enhancements" was the removal of guns from the government agents' hands and the word "terrorist" from the film. I realized then, I had already learned everything I would from ET.

The corazón zapatista I carry with me will be enough.



H. Esperanza Garza is a community activist deeply inspired by the Zapatista movement. She is currently working with Fuerza Unida and Centro Esperanza.

Editorial continued from page 3

It goes on to report that the Act which does away with our rights if one is simply suspected of any terrorist act was passed with virtually no public hearing or debate, and it was accompanied by neither a conference nor a committee report. On October 26, President Bush signed the Act into law. This particular law strips individuals of rights and liberties formerly guaranteed in the U.S. constitution. The mere suspicion of terrorism could put any one of us away without any regard for our rights.

We should all be worried about what we write and do these days. But, this is La Voz and we have a reputation for giving artists, writers and gente the opportunity to express themselves without fear of reprisals, particularly people of color, women and queers. As editor, I encourage gente to express themselves as they wish with a modicum of editing because it is important for people to choose for themselves how they will develop and subsequently change as a result of feedback, or not. While mainstream publications buckle under the pressure to silence us, La Voz remains firme in its commitment to reflect authentic writing and art that reflects a real concern for our future en ésta tierra.

We must be aware that at any turn we could be accused of terrorism against the state. I was lucky not to have been arrested at La Gloria along with Araceli Espin when we made a last ditch effort to deliver a check to the hands of Mr. Limon who ordered the destruction of our historical memory as personified by La Gloria. As we resist

government processes which bit by bit are wasting away our lands, our cultures, our resources and our history we could be tagged as "enemies of the state" for simply protesting the move towards globalization. Our complacency is contributing to the state of the world and the future demise of our communities.

Dancing furiously to one last killer polka, I finished listening to Los Blazers on Friday night and made my way back through the crowds at El Mercado. It bothered me that parents were wheeling strollers with new babies through drunken crowds. At the same time I admired that our gente had great visibility and were all over downtown. This afforded us the opportunity to really look at each other and feel validation in who we are. Young women in spaghetti strapped tops passed by me cheerfully laughing and having fun. As they walked past, I noticed one of the tops said, "Puro, pinche raza." Pura verdad.

Remember this. Citlali is a Xicana superhero. She is a comic strip, but the issues that have been brought up by her are important to think about. The anger personified by Citlali is real. We need to sit up and take notice of what is happening to raza in San Antonio.

Fiesta makes money for governmental institutions who do not defend our culture when need be. The razing of La Gloria did happen. Even though the Conservation Society admits discrimination does exist in site selections regarding conservation, it was not able to prevent La Gloria's demolition. Moneymaking is the goal of Fiesta.

The word Fiesta has been copyrighted by the City >>>

of San Antonio as a trademark. Our cascarones have been packaged by grocery stores and are sold by organizations rather than familias on street corners. Indigenous dress, proper attire for Fiesta, is considered "campesino chic" for white people and middle class Hispanics.

And we do celebrate our own defeat, gente.

Ademas, messing up our water with the PGA golf course can and most probably will happen. Look at what's happening with homes surrounding the Brackenride golf course. The signatures collected at Fiesta and in the next few weeks may not be enough, even though we may get the numbers, legally. Government tricks will make sure money is made off this deal for those chosen by them. Ultimately, the water our children drink may be tainted and we will die of diseases at a higher rate than those who can afford bottled water. There are too poor people and people of color for government to care about us.

Fiesta, the PGA, La Gloria. It's all the same, it's about appropriation and making money and it's not for the good of our gente. And that is a cause for anger, our anger, Citlali's anger. Anger can be a good thing. It caused me to write this editorial. It caused me to think and brought forth to me wisdom and knowledge. Citlali, our super hero, points a weapon as a result of her anger.

As thinking individuals we have choices. We can choose the weapons with which to counter the violence heaped on us. Violence that has resulted in lynchings, rape of lands, women and children are all a part of our history as

Mexicanos in this part of the world.

We can choose the weapons of artistic expression, verbal exchange and the written word to express righteous anger. We can choose to organize, activate, perform, write, speak out and cause change to happen. We are all citizens of a dying planet that is for sale. We all bear responsibility.

In this issue of La Voz Yolanda Chávez Leyva's words grace our pages with an article on the state of our children in the world, today. Read it carefully and visit the websites she offers to find out more. Antonio Cabral writes in Spanish about the PGA issue for those who have not read coverage in Spanish explaining the real issues behind the PGA. Our layout editor, H. Esperanza Garza, writes about cultural transformation around the movie E.T. as she traveled in Chiapas to visit the Zapatistas. Roberto Rodríguez and Patrisia Gonzáles of Column of the Américas having recently returned from the Taos film festival examine movie images of Indians and Cowboys. Finally, Rachel Jennings puts herself on the list of suspects for terrorism with her concluding remarks on Mexicanos/as and Appalachians.

Why, you ask, would Rachel Jennings be on the list of suspects for terrorism? The Patriot Act, I answer. Look it up at the Center for Constitutional Rights' website at http://www.ccr-ny.org/whatsnew/usa_patriot_act.asp or simply key in Patriot Act in your favorite search engine and read all about it. Your life could depend on it.



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**CITLALI
LA XICANA SUPERHERO**

**AZTLAN
Comics**
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kuetzpalin
c/s

**- Returning
This Summer 2002 -**

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.

Get Up, Stand Up! Organizing Against Police Abuse, a statewide conference, will be held Saturday, May 4th at the **Claude Black Center**, 2805 E. Commerce St. in San Antonio. Participating organizations include **ACLU**, **MALDEF**, and **NAACP** among others. Registration is only \$15. Visit the website at www.ProTex.org/criminaljustice or call 512/441-8123 or contact Dan Ramos at San Antonio ACLU at 210/226-8707.

The **peaceCENTER** happily announces that Arun and Sunanda Gandhi (Mohandas Gandhi's grandson and his wife) will visit San Antonio on May 10th and 11th, 2002. Join us in a discussion which includes moral responses to 9-11, as well as talk around the philosophy and practice of peace and justice. On May 10th: **Open House: Tea with the Gandhis** from 1 pm to 5 pm (free) and on May 11th: **Heartbeats Coffeehouse Fundraiser** from 7pm to 9 pm which will include a cultural program with stories and dances (\$15 advance /\$20 door cover charge). All events will take place at the **peaceCENTER**, 1443 S. St. Mary's at Carolina St. in the Mennonite Church. Contact 210/ 224-HOPE or www.salsa.net/peace

The world premiere stage adaptation of Naomi Shihab Nye's acclaimed novel, **Habibi** will be presented at **Jump-Start Performance Co.** on weekends from May 17-26, Fridays & Saturdays at 8 pm and Sundays at 3 pm. The stage adaptation was written by Paul Bonin-Rodriguez and Zet Baer and explores the internal/ international tensions of young love and Israeli/Palestinian politics. Admission is \$10/\$8. A gala preview with a reading by the author, music, food and drink will be held on Wednesday, May 15th. Special events cost is \$25 regular admission and \$50 for sponsors who will receive a signed copy of **Habibi**. Call 227-JUMP for reservations.

Latina Letters, an annual conference

on Latina Literature and Identity, co-presented by the **Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center** and **St. Mary's University** is scheduled for Thursday, July 11 through Saturday, July 13. The theme for 2002 is **Latina Literature at the Crossroads: Defining Our Terms**. Papers and presentations for the conference are being accepted for possible presentations until May 3rd. Send abstracts of papers, panel proposals and other to: Artistic Director Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, 1300 Guadalupe St. San Antonio, TX 78207 or call (210) 271-3151, x. 22 (voice)/(210) 271-3480 (facsimile)

NAIAC, The National Association of Latino Arts and Culture will hold its second annual Leadership Institute on May 14-23 at **Trinity University** in San Antonio, Texas. The Institute will provide essential training and workshops for leaders and/or potential leaders of community-based Latino arts and cultural organizations. Call 432-3982.

The San Antonio Chapter of ACLU will hold a spring fundraiser, **Celebration of FREEDOM** on Tuesday, May 21 from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm at the Magnolia Gardens at Main and Ashby streets. Funds raised from this event will be used to develop the recently opened downtown office here in San Antonio allowing for an increased presence in South Texas. The event will feature speakers, music and a light buffet. Ticket donations are \$25. Call 210/732-8551 or 226-6121 for tickets.

Lowrider Magazine's 2002 Writing Contest is seeking entries. Prizes are \$500 for First Place; \$300 for Second Place and \$100 for Third Place. Entries may be Fiction or Non-fiction not to exceed 500 words. Contact **Lowrider Magazine** Writing Contest 2100 E. Howell Ave. #209 Anaheim, CA 92806 Deadline: August 31,

Indian Writers' Conference is looking for indigenous women writers or writers

who write about indigenous women's issues to contribute to a conference session on **Indigenous Lesbian Writers and Community Issues** the evening of September 26, 2002, at **St Mary's Learning and Leadership Development Center**. Contact Christine Canning at 256-8115 or christine.canning@uni.edu

An effort is underway to salvage vintage streetcars that carried passengers across the San Antonio landscape a century ago (1878-1933). Jay C. Moore, a public transportation aficionado is spear heading the effort. He also envisions a **living memory project**, where those who have memories of riding the streetcars or have related stories would provide vignettes to accompany a future exhibit of fully restored trolleys. For information or contributions to this project call 210/824-6242.

South End Press announces the publication of **Water Wars Privatization, Pollution and Profit** by Vandana Shiva. Bookstores can call 1-800/283-3572 and individuals can call 1-800/533-8478 for copies. Now available at independent bookstores for \$14. For more information contact: southend@southendpress.org or check www.wouthendpress.org

MUJERFEST 2002 will be held at the Wild Horses Facility in McAllen, Texas on June 21st and June 22nd. **MUJERFEST 2002** will serve as a chance for mujeres to form alliances and provide a forum for women to perform. It is a conscious attempt to build links between mujeres not only in south Texas but throughout and build links between women in different circles. Mujeres interested in attending or presenting any type of workshop, performance, visual presentation, exhibition or in leading discussions should contact mujerfest@hotmail.com or visit www.chicanastuff.com/mujerfest



Do you work for a public school, the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, the State of Texas, or the Federal Government?

The *Esperanza* is part of **Another Way Texas Shares.** Sign-up to donate monthly to the *Esperanza* directly from your paycheck at work through the

State Employee Charitable Campaign

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City of San Antonio Local Charitable Campaign

and the

Combined School District Charitable Campaign

Esperanza Peace & Justice Center Code #8035

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

Community Meetings

Society of Friends Sundays at 10 am at Friends Meeting House, 7052 N. Vandiver, call 945-8456.

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

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

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 Emani Falcone at 681-8370.

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

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** holds open meetings every Tuesday from 7 - 9 pm for discussion & exploration of 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.

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

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

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

Fuerza Unida holds community meetings every the third Tuesday of the month at 710 New Laredo Hwy., 7 pm. Call 927-2294.

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