

# La Voz de Esperanza

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**Esperanza Celebrates  
her Quinceañera**

*desde que nací,  
han pasado  
15 años*



*¡Ven a festejar el 26 de Octubre!*

# La VOZ de Esperanza

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Cover photo provided by Rachel Delgado

## Desde que nació, han pasado 15 años

Before I was born I lived in the memories of my mothers. Mis primeras madres fueron mujeres. One, a San Anto Westsider, was a dreamer, una soñadora soñando siempre en un mundo de paz y justicia. She was also, and still is, a warrior woman que le habla la verdad a cualquiera. Another of my first mothers, with children of her own, se fue a vivir en un país de gente blanca. She lived far away in Norway and remained true to her roots learning to tell her story to the world, for she believes we are all Chicanas.

At my birth, many madrinas were present filling me with eloquent ideas and hope for the future. One of my madrinas would eventually find herself in Beijing championing justice and peace. The others spread throughout the world with news of my birth.

In time, I came to have many more mothers, many more madrinas...

At the age of five one of them came to the U.S. on a ship from Holland. She threw all of her toys overboard into the sea when her papa discovered their belongings were over the weight limit. That left her with a great well of sadness that has quelled somewhat since returning to her native land. She was the legal warrior fighting for fuerza unida and for me. Since, I have had other madrinas wielding legal swords and winning battles of hope.

Some of my madrinas were men in physical form with hearts which contained a share of motherness. One suffered in Vietnam but devoted his life to peace, thereafter. He was always a presence in my life. El catrín, un artista, siempre se vestía muy de aquellas and occasionally sported a hooped skirt or priestly garb. El mechudo, an artist also, meneaba sus greñas de un lado al otro. As he swayed his head from side to side he would ask, "Aren't I pretty?" They were/still are, my protectors.

Some of my mothers came with the wisdom of working in the fields, trabajando la papa, picking cotton, beets, spinach, strawberries, carrots, los cherries, zanahoria, y todo lo demás. They taught me strength and humility and told many stories; stories of great courage, horrible abuse, endurance, and of hope, always.

Two of my madrinas became fathers to twin girls. El Boricua became a controversial columnist with searing words of wisdom cutting into reactionary walls of prejudice. The long-haired hippie in a VW van who travelled by rail all over Mexico stayed home when his blond beauties were born and his wife began her medical practice helping to heal those around me. Doctors, nurses, midwives, acupuncturists, curanderas,

**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.

shamans, all took care of me through the years. Cleansing my soul and tending to my spirit and sometimes the physical manifestations of my cansancio and traumas.

The teachers were always present guiding me in the direction I wanted to grow. Early childhood teachers, elementary, middle, high school and university level teachers have brought gifts to me throughout my quince años. Gifts that challenged my thinking and sharpened my mind. The writers, my other teachers, were from all walks of life, from all parts of the world. Chucas del Westside and cholas from East L.A. Hombres bigotudos, con pelo, o sin pelo, pero siempre con palabras de poder. Pintores de arte y de carros. Amas de casa y conserjes. Firme black writers with words of fury and might. Divas y dancers who swirled round and round to the accordion sound wrote for me, taught me, nurtured me. Powerful words written in song accompanied me since infancy teaching me about the world, pushing me towards courage. De pueblecitos chicos a ciudades grandes por todo el mundo mis maestras vinieron.

And, always present, were the elders. My gentle grandmother who always advised me to treat my enemies with honey. My grandmother from Michigan who gently and quietly poured over those piles and piles of files in my memory banks. My grandmother who eloquently waxed poetic on stage with a grand

presence, her white hair gleaming. Y mi abuela, curandera y indigena, whose spirituality infused my soul with vida. And of course, the elderly gentleman, a madrina, too, whose love of music, words, poetry and food have been a constant inspiration in my life.

My mothers came from everyplace and went out everyplace carrying me in their hearts and minds. The circles of influence they have created throughout the world wrap around me in my fifteenth year of existence and fill me with strength. My only wish as I reach my fifteenth birthday is to see as many of you here with me to celebrate the great job you've done in raising me.

Now, more than ever, as people begin to attack me once again, I need my madrinas, both male and female, to surround me for my quinceañera compartiendo comida, baile, ritos, alegría, y esperanza. Perhaps, then, I will feel safe and can continue to live a long life.



Editor's note: On September 20<sup>th</sup>, a Friday night, I happened upon a city council hearing on the proposed budget for the upcoming year and found that Esperanza, once again, was being attacked. Along with Esperanza, Jump-Start Performance Co. and the Alamo City Men's Choral were also attacked with pleas to cut off any city funding for their "amoral agenda."

As we celebrate our fifteenth year, we must remember that we will continue to be targets as xenophobia increases with the advent of war. Celebrate we must, while we can.

**Whomever you are, wherever you are,  
you have been part of Esperanza for all or part of our 15 years.  
Esperanza will celebrate her quince años on  
October 26, 2002 beginning at 6 p.m.**

- Volunteer for the Quinceañera
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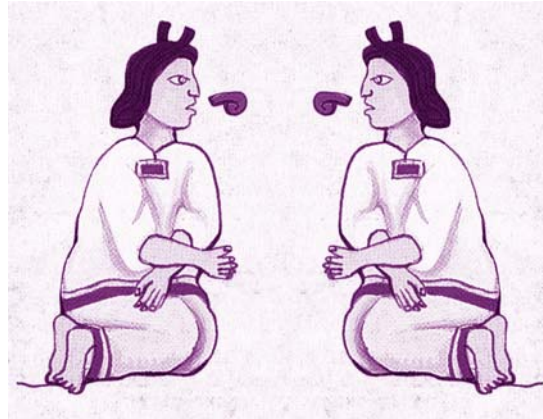
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# The revisioning of history es una gran limpieza: Teaching and Historical Trauma in Chicana/o History, part ii

by Yolanda Chávez Leyva, Ph.D.



Editor's Note: This is a continuation of Dr. Leyva's work from September 2002, *La Voz*, exploring community, memory, intergenerational trauma, healing, and pedagogy. Please email Dr. Leyva with comments, stories or responses at yleyva@utep.edu or write to her at The Department of History, University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, TX 79968.

### History and the Chicano Movement

History was a foundation stone in the emerging Chicano movement and its demands for Chicano studies in the 1960s. In 1969, the Chicano Coordinating Council on Higher Education brought together university students and faculty to elaborate a plan to improve Chicano students' access to higher education. The result of the three-day conference was El Plan de Santa Barbara, which called for the creation of Chicano studies programs on college campuses as well as the production of knowledge that would benefit the barrio and the Chicano community. The manifesto began with the assertion that "For all peoples, as with individuals, the time comes when they must reckon with their history."<sup>i</sup> The statement was militant in the context of a long history of educational segregation, neglect, and exclusion. With this opening sentence, El Plan called on us to consider our history, not only as the past, but also as part of the present, and even the future. Within the framework of the Chicano movement, history was highly politicized and tied to our empowerment and that of our communities.

From its inception, the field of Chicana/o Studies confronted issues of power, albeit initially limited to race and class, and Chicana/o scholars and activists recognized that history was key to understanding the contemporary circumstances of Mexican communities in the United States. Chicano scholars undertook the radical task of writing histories that challenged older racist portrayals of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. In the succeeding three decades, Chicana/o historians have broadened that vision to contest not only the racism and classism that was rampant in earlier representations of our communities, but also the sexism, and more recently, the heterosexism of those previous studies, as well as earlier works in Chicano studies.<sup>ii</sup>

Chicana and Chicano scholars have employed new methodologies and frameworks to re-vision the history of people of color in the United States. It has not been simply a revision of history, a modification of the existing narrative, but

a revisioning, a different way to look for and at the histories of marginalized peoples.<sup>iii</sup>

When I entered the university in the mid-1970s, Chicana/o studies was less than a decade old and classroom resources were few, yet what we learned from Chicana and Chicano professors excited us, awed us, and sometimes alarmed us. Family stories told by parents and grandparents around the dinner table became part of a larger history that crossed borders and transcended nation states. Chicana/o studies allowed us to see ourselves in the broader context of historical processes: colonization and conquest, the migration of peoples, and movements for social change. Moreover, it departed radically from the distanced and disengaged milieu of the university in significant ways. Like other radical histories of the time, African American/ Native American/ women's histories, Chicano history talked explicitly about the connections between the community and academia. It was overtly political and spoke to social change. It reached out to us and made us know that we were part of making the history we were studying. Chicana/o faculty teaching Chicana/o studies validated our experiences and those of our parents and grandparents.

Learning this once silenced history brought forth a range of emotions among Chicana/o students. We responded, in the classroom and outside of it, with growing pride, a new understanding of our individual and community histories, and a sometimes-overwhelming anger. We asked our professors and each other why we had never heard these stories before. We understood, to varying degrees, that the suppression of our history had not been accidental or a mere oversight. Learning our history became the impetus for organizing on campuses and in our communities. Without romanticizing those early days of Chicano studies, for they were also a painful struggle for those of us who fought for the creation of a more comprehensive Chicano studies, one that included women and queers, I can say that studying Chicano history changed my life.

### The remembrance of Chicana/o History

When I began teaching in the conservative 1990s, my students were predominantly Chicana/o, first generation in college, and from working class or lower middle class backgrounds. They were far less politicized than my contemporaries were fifteen years earlier. Some questioned the value of history, which they perceived as dwelling on a "depressing" past that could only lead to more conflict and social division, as if the remembrance of the past, rather than past historical events and processes, had led to our current social problems.<sup>iv</sup> Despite these differences in political outlook, I observed many of the same dynamics occur in my classroom as I had experienced during my days as a student.

I saw students respond to learning Chicana/o history in ways that were highly personal and painful. I witnessed students engage our often-painful histories intellectually, emotionally, and physically. For example, my first semester teaching Chicano history at the University of Texas at El Paso, a young man dropped out of my course telling me that it was too painful and confusing for him to stay. This happened a few days after I had talked about Anglo American men marrying Mexican women in New Mexico and Texas in the early nineteenth century. I explained to students that the military conquest of northern Mexico in the mid-1840s was preceded by an economic conquest in the 1820s. Part of this take-over involved Anglo American men intermarrying into wealthy and influential Mexican families in order to access business and political contacts. The student, the son of an Anglo father and a Chicana mother, found himself literally getting sick while I spoke to the class. My lecture that day had awakened deeply personal issues for him, involving power relations, gender, and race.

The same semester, a group of young Chicana students came to visit me following my lectures on the Texas Rebellion of the mid-1830s and the U.S.-Mexican War of 1846. They commented that the stories they learned in my class differed vastly, in focus and content, from what they had learned in seventh-grade Texas history. Soon, they were describing the shame they felt about being Mexicans in Texas. They recalled wanting to be invisible in the classroom after the teacher described the battle of the Alamo with its predictable cast of heroic white "Texans" and villainous Mexicans. Although they grew up in the Texas-Mexico border town of El Paso, 600 miles from San Antonio, the shadow of the Alamo had fallen on them as darkly as if they had stood outside the colonial mission on a sunny day.

When I taught in San Antonio, this trauma was even more pronounced since schools often sent students to visit the Alamo for field trips. Although some of the exhibits at the Alamo now explain the larger story of the site, including its older history as a mission (another traumatic history in itself), the focus continues to be on the white "Texans'" fight against a despotic Mexican government. I often spoke to San Antonio-born Chicanas/os who told me about the anger, shame, confusion, and apprehension they had experienced as children because of these field trips.

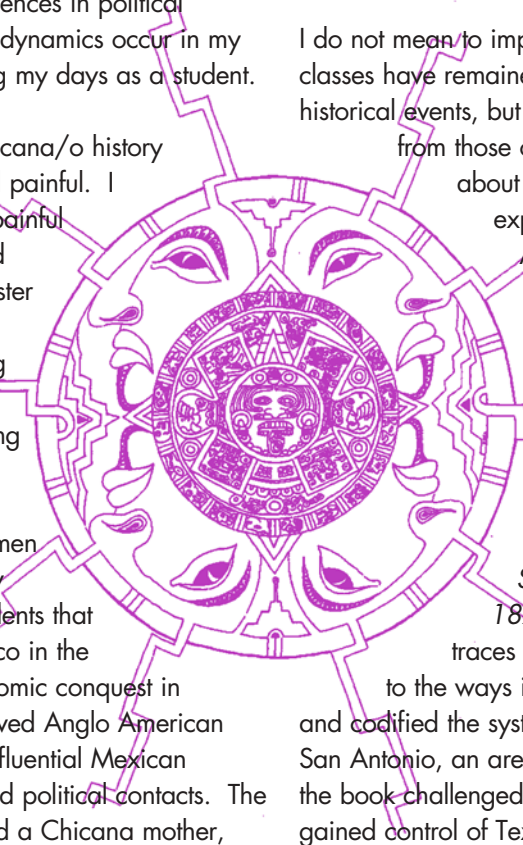
I do not mean to imply that Euro-American students in my classes have remained unaffected by the teaching of traumatic historical events, but their responses have been quite different from those of the Chicana/o students. When I talk about the traumatic past, centering on the experiences of people of color, some Euro-American students respond defiantly, others with guilt, some with a desire to know more and others with a plea *not* to know.

For example, one semester while teaching Texas history, I asked my students to read a book on slavery in Texas. The monograph, *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821-1865* by Randolph B. Campbell, traces the evolution of slavery in Texas, pointing to the ways in which Texas independence entrenched and codified the system of slavery.<sup>v</sup> Since I was teaching in San Antonio, an area where Texas nationalism is epidemic, the book challenged images of freedom-loving "Texans" who gained control of Texas after wrenching it militarily from Mexico. After reading the book, one young Euro-American woman came to my office in emotional and even some physical distress, teary-eyed and breathing heavily. She told me, "I didn't want to know this." These classroom experiences represent what Duran, Duran, and Brave Heart name "the trauma of colonialism."<sup>vi</sup>

### The Trauma of Colonialism in the Classroom

The trauma of colonialism lives on in our classrooms. We can see it as a deep pain that manifests itself as anxieties, uncertainties, and unrest and other times in more subtle expressions. Chicana/o students, whose roots go back in this continent thousands of years, talk about themselves as "newcomers," while Euro-American students boast of having ancestors who came over on the Mayflower.

Although academic debate has continued since the 1960s over the validity of conceptualizing Chicana/os as a



colonized people, events in Chicana/o history correspond closely with the colonial experiences of other indigenous peoples in the Americas.<sup>vii</sup> Land loss, economic and social subordination, the denial or eradication of our culture and language are all experiences that Chicana/os share with other colonized peoples. Our experiences as colonized peoples have molded our experiences in the classroom. Colonization has shaped our relationship with history in two ways. History has been used against us, to disempower us and disconnect us from our past, and our history has been hidden, trivialized, or made invisible. In the classroom, we have experienced the trauma of colonialism both in the ways that our history has been taught and in the ways that it has not been taught.

Conclusions

In her essay "The Historian as Curandera," Aurora Levins Morales describes herself as "one of the traumatized seeking to recover herself."<sup>viii</sup> Trauma is something that we historians do not usually talk about, especially when speaking about ourselves. Yet, historical trauma is our constant companion in the classroom. U.S. history, whether we speak of colonization, national expansion, or economic growth (all occurred by displacing/oppressing people of color), is filled with incidents of traumatic history. When we teach the histories of marginalized groups, when we teach history to people from marginalized groups, or when we ourselves are from those groups, we find ourselves in the midst of historical trauma. It is incumbent upon us, then, to explore the links among historical trauma, healing, and the teaching.

In *Medicine Stories*, Levins Morales writes movingly about these issues.<sup>ix</sup> Her essay describes the "role of a socially committed historian" as moving beyond documenting the past "to [restoring] to the dehistoricized a sense of identity and possibility." Medicinal histories "re-establish the connections between peoples and their histories, to reveal the mechanisms of power, the steps by which their current condition of oppression was achieved through a series of decisions made by real people to dispossess them; but also to reveal the multiplicity, creativity and persistence of resistance among the oppressed."<sup>x</sup> Clearly, Chicana/o historians have taken the first crucial steps of uncovering, recovering, and documenting our histories. Those histories have provided the basis for

political organizing, cultural revitalization, and community building. It is time for Chicana/o scholars to go beyond writing and teaching Chicana/o history. It is time for us to confront the profound consequences of that history in the lives of our students and our communities and to find ways to heal that pain.

Footnotes

<sup>i</sup> Carlos Muñoz, Jr. *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement* (London: Verso, 1989), 191. Feminist scholars such as Cynthia Orozco and Mary Pardo have criticized El Plan de Santa Barbara for lacking any reference to women's issues, sexism, or research on Chicanas. See Cynthia Orozco, "Sexism in Chicano studies and the Community," in *Chicana Voices: Intersections of Class, Race, and Gender* (National Association for Chicano Studies, 1990), 11-18. Versions of El Plan currently posted on the World Wide Web have inserted women into the manifesto with the inclusion of "his/her" and "he/she" throughout. See [www.panam.edu/orgs/mecha/st\\_barbara.html](http://www.panam.edu/orgs/mecha/st_barbara.html) for example.

<sup>ii</sup> Historians such as Vicki Ruiz, Antonia Castañeda, Emma Pérez, Deena González, Raquel Rubio Goldsmith, Elizabeth Salas, Cynthia Orozco, and the late Irene Ledesma have published groundbreaking histories that center the experiences of Chicanas.

<sup>iii</sup> See Emma Perez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999) for an example.

<sup>iv</sup> In his introduction to *Between Hope and Despair*, Roger Simon writes about the "curious practice" of remembering traumatic history. According to Simon, such remembrances are met with reactions ranging from skepticism, suspicion, doubt, and apprehension. These reactions are largely based on questions regarding the motivation behind such remembrances. See Roger I. Simon, ed., *Between Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 1-3.

<sup>v</sup> Randolph B. Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821-1865* (Louisiana State University Press, 1991).

<sup>vi</sup> Duran, Duran, and Brave Heart, 62.

<sup>vii</sup> There is also considerable debate over the identity of Chicana/os as indigenous people. See Antonio Ríos-Bustamante, "A General Survey of Chicano (a) Historiography," Occasional Paper no. 25 (June 1997) Julian Samora Research Institute for more information on both debates. I employ the definition of indigenous developed by the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations. According to the UN group, "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions, and legal systems."

<sup>viii</sup> Aurora Levins Morales, "The Historian as Curandera," *Medicine Stories: History, Culture and the Politics of Integrity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1998), 25.

<sup>ix</sup> Aurora Levins Morales, "The Historian as Curandera," *Medicine Stories: History, Culture and the Politics of Integrity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press, 1998), 23-38.

<sup>x</sup> "The Historian as Curandera," 24.



# QUESTION AUTHORITY

by Ginny Timmons

So it read on Graciela's t-shirt. It was around 1980 and she had just graduated from Yale. Then, with her beloved family, a surprise visit to my New Hampshire home took place.

We go back many years— the Sanchezes, other special San Antonio friends and this doting gringa here. Allow me to share. It was 1968 and I'd returned from Vietnam with a new slant on life. Freedom, peace, family, friends and church took on more relevance. Time was no longer a commodity to waste.

The assignment as an Army nurse at the military hospital in San Antonio-with its 40-hour work week just didn't cut it for really filling my time. Through a number of calls I reached fathers Matula and Ruiz and learned that there was another nurse, Leta, at another hospital who wanted also to immerse herself in the Catholic and local community. Thus began one of the most meaningful years of my life. I know Leta, godmother to one of my children, feels the same way!



We single, young (20ish) white females living alone on Vera Cruz St. were an oddity, indeed. Our hearts were in the right place- we loved both church and our Mexican-American neighbors. Our bilingual abilities were non-existent but the wonderful Benny and Evangelina Zarazua and Isabel and Henry Sanchez families came into our lives.

For days and months we shared laughing, talking, praying and working together in trying to encourage a caring Catholic community. We participated in masses in families' yards; parties at Inner City; visits to better acquaint ourselves with who we were and why the neighborhood residents were important. We simply, tried to "be there" for them.

I'll never forget the darling young children who came often to visit our home; the thoughtfulness of community members surprising the priests painting their home while they were away; the love and warmth amidst economic poverty; the Mexican way of sharing happy times; the heartrending wails at funerals of those loved and lost (the open display of emotion we could all learn from); and the compassion and exuberance that I attribute to Mexican persons; and the trust of neighbors of us to them and vice-versa.

I grew up on the affluent North Shore of Chicago as one of 12 children in an Irish (English, Welch) Catholic two parent household. How sweet to come to appreciate one of the biggest gifts the community could have given me; respect for the great love and caring in single parent households. It was the beginning of a struggle to deprogram a judgmental and rigid

part of my background. I received far more than was given!

There were many meaningful occasions in that year. I went from working in the Army hospital to the Robert B. Green emergency room. I saw what waiting in the ER really entailed and how demeaning it could be. And I delighted in the occasions when "my clout" allowed my neighbors to be seen sooner by the doctors.

I will never forget Evangelina's gentle and loving ways; Benny's laughter, love for everyone (and yes, his BBQ chicken); Isabel's astute and kind awareness of EVERYTHING; of Henry's supportive and hard-working mentality; and both priests' desire to do the best for their community.

As each of us grows, and does what we feel is needed I continue to marvel at those friends. Through their example, I see a Graciela Sanchez, once simply a cute little daughter of two friends, now living proof of acting out what I saw in 1980...questioning authority...and effecting change! I am PROUD to call her, Graciela's family and the former community members my friends.

I have since married and given birth to nine very loved children. I pray, as they embark on their independent lives, that they, too, will never lose their sense of outrage at the inequities of life; that they will continue to support and affirm one another and those around them; and like the precious friends in San Antonio's West side, leave a lasting, meaningful and inspirational impression on those whose lives they have touched.



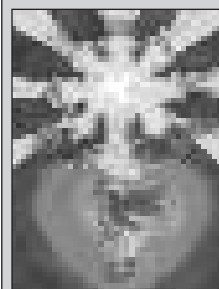
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## Borracheras

an excerpt from *Las Hijas de Juan*  
by Josie Méndez-Negrete

The ripped toenail, the refrigerator, those instances were nothing compared to that time I challenged him to drink. Drunk, his brutality had no bounds. I was fed up with him. Someone had to stand up to him. And, that someone had to be me. I dared him to a drinking *mano-a-mano*. Wanted to prove to my father that his drinking was not the reason for his hating us so much.

In my own way I was trying to find out if he had a heart. Wanted to know if he had a conscience. Did he realize that he was hurting us? Did he care?

Friday night is here again. He's home again drunk to the gills, making a racket and throwing his weight.

"It's only an excuse that you don't remember," I say to him with the desperation of a young girl who has grown a turtle hide for protection.

"You pretend you don't remember. You hide behind your drinking. You do what you want when you want. Let's see how much of a man you really are. *¿No, qué es muy macho?*"

Pulling out a fifth of vodka from the cabinet where he kept his liquor, I tell him, "I'll show you. I'll remember everything. *¡Andele! A ver.* Let's see who wins."

My mother attempts to stop it. She takes the bottle away from my hand.

He backhands her. Knocks her on the floor. Tells her to sit. Stay out of it.

"*¿Qué te importa?*"

Told her it was none of her business. Accused her of jealousy.

"*¡Cochina! Celosa ¿de tu propia hija?* You're just jealous because your own daughter wants to drink with me," he gloats as he takes on the challenge.

Good thing we finished eating before it all began. I hated the smell and taste of alcohol. Had to force myself to gulp the stuff. I hated alcohol maybe as much as I hated him. It reminded me of the whippings he gave us when he was plastered. Despised the pickled vinegary smell that seeped from his pores and made him smell like rancid cabbage. Sometimes he smelled of vomit.

We began the challenge.

Followed the swig with everything that was going on around us. Numbered every drink we took, taking the first three in stride.

"*Esta es la cuarta copa y allí va su hijo corriendo de miedo.* Your boys are so afraid of you that they run when they look at you. *Quinta.* My mother's tears are running down her face. She's too afraid to tell you how horrible you really are. *Sexta.* Mague peeked in to see if I'm okay. *Séptima.* Mother is looking at me as if she wants me to stop drinking. I ignore her, and I don't let her get to me. *Octava.* You're nodding out. Your face is falling on the kitchen table. You see, I know what's going on around me. I'm not fading out. *Novena.* You passed out," I say to no one in particular as I pour the tenth one.

Mother takes it from my mouth. "He's out."

He's out. We're free of the monster for the night.

That's the night I gave up drinking for life.

When they saw he was passed out, Mother and Mague took the bottle.

"*Ya párale, Josefina. Está dormido.*"

"Look, Sister. I know everything that's taking place."

"You and my mother are taking me to the shower. You want, you don't, you want me sober, not drunk. I swear I'll never forget what happened tonight. He has no excuses. Poor excuse for a father. He's no fucking man. He's a fucking coward."

Mom says, "*Los niños y los borrachos dicen la verdad.*" I began to cry as the child who is drunken with truth. Couldn't hold it anymore. Anger was oozing from the bottom of my soles to the tip of my hair. Mague calmed me.

"Shhhh! You'll wake him. Shhhhhhhhh! He'll take it out on you. Shhhhhhhhhhh! He won't be happy to find out you proved him wrong. Shhhh! Be quiet or we'll pay for it." Mague whispered, putting her hand over my mouth to muffle my voice. She was afraid I'd wake him.

After our main bout he continued to do what he wanted when he wanted because he felt like it anyway. He felt it was his right. And kept on as if that day had never happened.

My drinking contest was for nothing. Only thing I learned was that drinking or not, he was the way he was.



# 2 Creando Familias Seguras 2

## Creating Safe Families

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In San Antonio, the P.E.A.C.E. Initiative, Putting an End to Abuse through Community Efforts, coordinates a calendar of diverse events occurring throughout the month of October.

Below are some highlights for 2002 which include a reading of *Las Hijas de Juan, Daughters Betrayed*, by Josie Mendez Negrete at the Esperanza (see next page for excerpt and information). Call 735-4988 or visit <http://www.salsa.net/peace/calendar.html> for more information.

### “Path to Protecting Children”

#### Awareness Event

Milam Park  
Saturday, October 5, 11am to 1 pm

The opening for National Domestic Violence Awareness Month will focus on protecting our children. Non-violent child-centered activities will be provided with Cat Paws, fingerprinting by SAPD, the Rape Crisis Center’s Yellow Dino, face painting, etc. Contact: Patricia Castillo at 735-4988.

### Domestic Violence Call-In Hotline KSAT 12

Sunday, October 7, 12 pm to 7 pm

The hotline will have legal advocates available for those with questions related to domestic violence. Watch KSAT 12 for the number to call. All calls are confidential. Contact: Cyndi Jahn at 335-2865.

### Domestic Violence Awareness Fair

Palo Alto College  
Wednesday, October 9, 9am to 1 pm

The third annual Domestic Violence Awareness Fair will be held in the Student Center (Cafeteria) with a variety of resources and information. Contact: Eloisa Cordova at 921-5382.

### Texas Council on Family Violence 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference

Renaissance Austin Hotel in Austin, Texas  
Sunday - Wednesday, October 13-16, 9am to 4 pm

TCFV’s annual conference will provide a multitude of workshops and speakers regarding the latest information on domestic violence. This event is a great opportunity to network with others around the state working on ending violence. Contact: TCFV at (800) 525-1978.

### “The Healing Begins” 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Run to benefit Alamo Children’s Advocacy Center

Saturday, October 19, 2002

6:30 am (pre-register), 8 am (adult run)

This run/walk will benefit the Alamo Children’s Advocacy Center, serving sexually abused children. There will be a 10k run, a 5k walk/run, and a children’s fun run. Awards will be given to best overall, and top 3 male/females. Contact: Karen Ybáñez at 675-9000.

### “Embracing Your Power”

San Antonio College, Rm 144 Moody Learning Center  
Thursday, October 24 at 9:30 am

A legal presentation by Crista Marichalar, Attorney at Law, about restraining orders, protective orders, child support and safety planning. Contact: Debbie Middleton at 785-6408.

### The Phoenix Awards

San Antonio Federal Credit Union  
Tuesday, October 29, 5:30 pm to 7 pm

The P.E.A.C.E. Initiative recognizes people from the community who work to end violence in families by presenting its 4<sup>th</sup> annual Phoenix Awards. The Phoenix, a mythical bird, when it feels its life is at an end, builds a nest, sets it on fire and is consumed by flames. From the ashes, a new Phoenix springs forth to live again. Join us as we recognize those within our community who have endeavored to change the consuming effects of domestic violence. Contact: Jane Shafer at 207-2136.

### PeaceDay

at Incarnate Word University  
Wednesday, October 30, 9 am to 5 pm

Enjoy Peace Day at UIW with speakers, exhibits, prayer and actions to encourage more just and peaceful societies. Resource tables will be available at this event. Contact: Marina Alvarado at 829-3128.

### “Peace and Remembrance” Mural

at San Patricio & Trinity Streets on the Westside  
Friday, November 1, 2002 at 6 pm

The P.E.A.C.E. Initiative in conjunction with San Anto Cultural Arts, Guadalupe Cultural Arts, and Inner City Development will host a celebration for Día de los Muertos. The celebration includes a procession, street theater, live music and a community altar to be built on Guadalupe Street. We will memorialize those who have died due to domestic and street violence.

# Control, Complacency y La Causa

By Frank Valdez

*When I give food to the poor they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a Communist.*

— Dom Helder Camara



In this crazy, complex world, those of us who are involved in the struggle for justice face many attitudes and reactions from people that we interact with. Many times we see, hear, and feel the pain that our people endure on a daily basis. You can see their anger, their sorrow, the despair in their eyes and in their facial gestures. For them, the promise of the American Dream is a cruel farce. They have seen their neighborhoods neglected as absentee landlords reap the profits, renting substandard houses and apartments. Day after day people observe drug dealing and gang activity as the police do nothing, other than harass or abuse people in the neighborhood. They witness the effects of corrupt school officials mishandling school funds as their children receive an inferior education. They also see the ineffectiveness of our electoral system as político after político sells out the interests of the people (e.g. The PGA Village). The fact that 30% or less of the eligible electorate even bother to vote is an indictment of the voting process in this country.

As we talk to the people and listen to their concerns and their complaints, we experience racing thoughts in our minds that tell us, “surely these many concerns and problems can be solved.” But, for the disenfranchised, the exploited, the incarcerated, the oppressed, there are NO simple solutions. They have heard it all before from the church, the police chief, the social service workers, etc., etc. Why should they believe anything will ever change now? While we fully understand their anger, and their distrust, we quickly realize that these positions while very real are also very, very discouraging and help promote apathy. Thus, the system is not only unjust, it also has its own built-in means of keeping people under control. And this, dear reader, is what we in the movement must contend with in new and not so new ways.

Whether we are organizing workers on job sites, tenants in public housing or other low-income projects, mothers on welfare, undocumented immigrants, or other populations familiar with the injustices of our system, we MUST OFFER HOPE! We must remain steadfast in our belief that by organizing and struggling as a collective, positive change can be won. Our biggest obstacle to victory is the oh so prevalent mindset that there is NO hope of making change or that all struggle is futile. Plantation owners and their overseers to dispel the notion of freedom in the minds of the slaves consistently used this type of discouragement often accompanied with violence and the threat of death. Many times those who claim to be our allies are the very ones that espouse these self-defeating ideas. This holds especially true with politicians, lawyers and our esteemed clergy. (Of course this does not apply to all). These Judas Escariots, swindlers and con artists will fill the people with notions that THEY, not the people, should take care of the problems. They will quickly stifle any attempts by the people to organize and stand up for themselves. They are equally

quick to downplay the importance of collective action, branding such activity as “pathologic, too controversial or provoking unneeded conflict.” Of course they do not label poverty, the lack of quality healthcare or housing as “pathologic.” As to controversy and “unneeded conflict?” Hell, being denied your basic rights is already controversial (at least it should be) and it’s a clear example of the conflict that was started by the powers that be, NOT by the people!

Marxists and others who learned it in political science refer to this as “class conflict.” Those who choose to shun such “radical ideology,” tend to prefer the term social injustice. *The bottom line is that social change must be initiated by those victimized by social injustice if it is to be genuine social change.* Allowing politicians, lawyers, clergy, or “professionals” to do it for us is not empowering, nor in our best interests. Struggling for justice is something one must learn by doing, by watching those experienced at it and by taking it step by step, participating.

Class conflict, social injustice, whatever. Being screwed out of what is ours is all the same thing. Rather than waste time on frivolous semantics, we must learn to stay focused on what the real problem is. That, being the fact that those of us who are the majority, those of us who create the wealth, those of us who are not in the position of socio-economic exploitation, are NOT getting what is truly ours. While the likes of Bush and his ilk whine about family values, millions of our elderly live in adjunct poverty. Millions of our fellow Americans are without adequate healthcare.

All this talk of so-called family values is both hypocritical and BULLSHIT! The bottom line is if we are truly concerned about our environment, our lack of affordable housing and healthcare, poverty wages, and the scores of other social injustices, WE MUST first believe in ourselves and in the struggle for social justice. We must assure the people that by doing nothing, NOTHING CHANGES! We must maintain that in organized struggle and in complete unity, WE CAN OVERCOME! ¡Sí se puede!

 Frank Valdez is a frequent contributor to La Voz. At present he is actively organizing mental health consumers to fight for quality mental health services.

**Fuerza Unida**  
invites you to participate in  
**a Bi-National Action**  
for Border Justice  
**October 12, Día de la Raza**  
**Brownsville & Matamoros**  
Call 927.2294 for rides & logistics

**IN THE END  
( AL FIN )  
WE ARE ALL CHICANAS  
( SOMOS TODOS CHICANAS )  
pivotal positions for change**  
A textual collage of cross-cultural exile stories by Susan M. Guerra

“Who am I, a poor Chicanita from the sticks, to think I could write?” ( Gloria Anzaldúa, “Speaking In Tongues: A Letter to 3rd World Women Writers” p.166 in This Bridge Called My Back)

to think I could travel?  
to think I could understand?  
to think I could see?  
to think I could speak?  
to think I could think?  
to think I could .....?

1. Marginality as a place of power

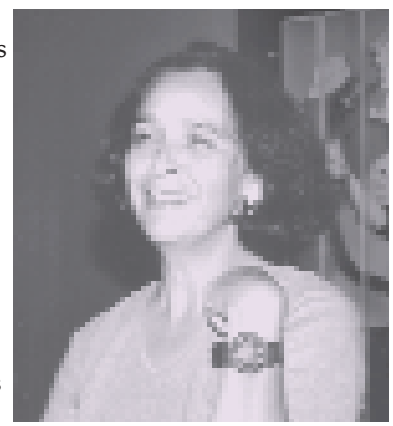
backyard games  
a universe locked inside  
chainlinked  
backyard fence  
lined with double-dare you drought daisies  
brown-tipped and strawberry cream pinked  
stalking ears of corn mock the alamo tree  
playing snow with its drop of cottonseed in the spring  
and cracked cement porch  
trips bicycle tires and rollerskate wheels  
round and round  
and nobody goes  
the torn wires  
worn  
chickens coop  
behind a sappy plum trunk  
rusted nails, that ol'sour  
mop or two  
inviting as barbed wire  
exhausted, as we, thrown against the  
house paint-chipped wall  
our lean paradise, our phantom scream  
our nightmarish  
kinder palace, daddy left.....  
and we, no lap to sit on, no stories good bedtime  
to hear, in there

the three p.m. sun, waves of dripping air  
pitchfork hot, caught, a rotten peach hangs  
too hot for us to know,  
no breath left for a skip through the ages,  
jump the rope, nor other cool and savvy  
survival games  
just the hide, the seek  
tag, you are it.

Out of four sisters, I am the only Chicana. Hey! But one of my sisters speaks better Spanish than I do. Anyday! Grammar, pronunciation. Very suave. Studied in Peru, muy académica y real down to earth. We always wanted to send her to Jeopardy, she's-so-smart-can-learn-anything-sister. But Chicana? I don't know. She talks more about the Dalai Lama than La Virgen. Do you think she would mind? La Virgen, I mean. Or what about the Dalai Lama? What he doesn't know is that my sister paints him gathering roses and his robes bear sequence on satin of red, white and green, con gold sandals on his feet. Is this impure, or what? She's got some sin vergüenza theory about it. She's too busy to write it though; always off to India, Tibet, and back to los Andes. Fortunately she loves tamales, and often heads home to South Texas at Christmas.

Then, there is the city planner who plans bike trails in urban American cities. She doesn't even know how to ride a bike! Como Alanis Morissette canta, “Isn't it ironic.” Left for the northeast con un Ivy League boyfriend (rubio) and , well....sometimes makes comments as if she disdains “Chicana”/ “woman of color”/ “Latina” talk. Said something once about “send those .....back where they....”. The telephone lines between us on fire, and both of us, so far away from Texas. I think sometimes our brains get as bent as a mother's back. Bent with the histories of poverty and more poverty; of how wars change a life. Of houses of broken glass, neighborhoods of kids taking a piss on sidewalks and how this makes some mothers keep their children chain linked in the back, stay behind a bush, makes a daddy disappear; teenage guys leave their hearts and throw knives. A drive-by on Calle Chihuahua, or was it Morelia Street? That's when dad said “Basta!” In NYC, the city planner tries not to look, because like it or not, it still hurts. A drive-by memory shoots the gut (or is it the heart?). Memories of what is real yet unaccounted for. Including the days of alegría, with lavender/yellow pansies on Easter dresses, hand sewn with chiffon ruffles, laced trimmed socks

popping up in somersaults dangerously near the cactus and rock garden, the kitchen full of steam from the pot of mole simmering on Thanksgiving day; invisible stories of our history. Today, both the city planner and I can almost afford DKNY sleek to mask the stories of broken pieces of glass in a mosaic beneath our breasts and across our backs. The heart and body are poor editors with these stories we'd like to leave behind, or better yet, wouldn't we like to send them all back?



The third sister, the oldest one, the beauty, Helena, hermosa, (she doesn't even know I see her in this way) hmmm; I don't know what happened to her. La movie star, once a wildcat doing Tommy and Hair musicals. The spikes and red streaks of punk, blueblack nail polish, or glitter green lips, in a white mustang '83 Zoommmmm. Lesbiana y lista. That September at the Santa Rosa hospital waiting room after my mother lost a leg because of the gangrene,

(she hated los doctores); Helena, hermosa, left us and entered a psychological space behind armored doors all her own, swallowed the iron key and to this day sifts through biographies of St. Maria Goretti and Helen Keller. Amen.

Exiles. Forced to leave the dear and the wicked. Forced to re-arrange the blueprints of experience. As I take on the position of slayer of contorted histories, I discover myself in the position of the slayed. To re-shape my heart, I must change the subject, while collecting myself as the object. I am the pivot for transformation, the axis of what I choose as the end and what I choose as the beginning. But help me, sisters. Al fin, somos todos Chicanas.

Body. Memory. Scent. Dreams. Voices louder than books, speeches. Theory, practice. L'espíritu. These are my raw materials. I twirl in the echo of the words spoken during the introduction of a Latina issues discussion at the Esperanza Center in San Antonio, Texas. Fall 1997....” I am large, I contain multitudes.....,” a quote from Walt Whitman's “Song of Myself”; I contain multitudes.... that Walt Whitman, a white man and a poet. Y tambien Chicana?



Susan Guerra, a founder of the Esperanza Center, returns to San Antonio to read from her contribution to This Bridge We Call Home, Radical Visions for Transformation. Look for the continuation of her article in next month's Voz.

**On October 12, Dia de la Raza, in observance of the survival and resistance of indigenous Mexico, a Purepecha Fiesta will be held in the Plaza of Ajijc, Jalisco, a small town on the shore of Lake Chapala just south of Guadalajara.**

**A rug of flowers will adorn the street from the Ajijc San Andres Church as folk art masters will hold a feria from October 12-20.**

**\$20 US dollars\* will give you the honor of supporting this fiesta. For more information contact [FiestaPurepecha120ct@hotmail.com](mailto:FiestaPurepecha120ct@hotmail.com) or call Xill Fessenden at 01 376 7661676 Ajijc Jalisco**

**\*All profits will support indigenous communities preserving their traditions/cultures as multinational corporations like Walmart threaten to move to Ajijc**

**More than twenty years after the ground-breaking anthology This Bridge Called My Back . . .**

**Gloria Anzaldúa and co-editor Analouise Keating**

**will be at the Esperanza, November 13<sup>th</sup>**

**reading from their new edited volume of over eighty original writings**

**Susan Guerra will read her featured work**

**This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation**

**this bridge we call home will challenge readers to rethink existing categories and invent new individual and collective identities offering a bold new vision of women-of-color consciousness for the twenty-first century**

# Notas Y Más

Brief notes to inform *La Voz* readers about events, issues and happenings in the community. Send announcements for *Notas y Más* to: [lavor@esperanzacenter.org](mailto:lavor@esperanzacenter.org) or by snail mail to: 922 San Pedro, San Antonio, TX 78212. The deadline is the 12th of each month.

**Centro Cultural Aztlán** sponsors the **Low & Slow Classic Car Show**, Sunday, October 6 from 10 am to 10 pm at Mateo Camargo Park on Hwy 90 and Callaghan Rd. Entry fee is \$10. Call 432-2896 for info.

**WomanSpace**, in its fourteenth year of publication, is seeking entries from local women for its **Tenth Annual Poetry and Short Story Contest**. Each category will have a \$50 first prize, \$25 second prize and a \$15 third prize. Winners must agree to read at the First Wednesday Gathering on November 6th and be published in *WomanSpace*. Deadline is October 9th. Entrants must be 18 years or older. Mail to: **WomanSpace**, P. O. Box 12327, San Antonio, TX 78212 with name, address, phone and email address. Call the **LISA** line at 828-LISA (5472) for a sample copy or email [womanspace@igc.org](mailto:womanspace@igc.org)

**The 4th Annual Xicana Xicano Youth Conference** in San Antonio will take place Saturday and Sunday, October 19th and 20th. The theme is *510 Years of Resistance, Nuestra Lucha Sigue Floreciendo*. Contact: [xicana\\_xicanoeducationproject@yahoo.com](mailto:xicana_xicanoeducationproject@yahoo.com)

The 5th Annual **San Anto Cultural Arts Huevos Rancheros Gala** and Art Auction will be held Saturday morning, October 12, at 9 am at Plaza Avenida Guadalupe.

**Gertrude Stein & A Companion** sponsored by **Jump-Start Performance Co.** and **Wild French Productions** returns for an encore with Martha Prentiss and Robin White in the lead roles. Performances are Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays, October 11th through October 27th. General admission is \$12. Call 227-JUMP to reserve.

**Horizons/Frameline Film & Video Completion Fund 2002** is accepting applications from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender film and videomakers to apply for grants from \$2000 to \$3000 available for projects in final stages of production. Deadline for applications is October 14. Call 415/703-8650 or [www.frameline.org/fund/](http://www.frameline.org/fund/)

**SONG, Southerners on New Ground**, holds their third retreat for Lesbian/Bisexual/Trans/Queer Women in the South from October 25-27 in Biloxi, Mississippi. The theme is *Creating a Women-centered Vision for Peace*. Registration is \$100. Submit applications by September 20th to: Charone Pagett at P.O. Box 554, Atlanta, Georgia 30301 or [charone@mindspring.com](mailto:charone@mindspring.com). Call Charone at 404/223-0154 or SONG at 919/667-1362.

The 17th annual **Fall Ball**, a project of **Dignity/SA**, is scheduled for Saturday, November 9th at the

Embassy Suites Hotel. For details call 522-1238.

**Race and Resistance: African-Americans in the 21st Century** brings together an outstanding group of essayists including Amiri Baraka, Angela Davis, bell hooks, and others writing on topics such as hiphop and activism, Blacks in the labor movement, the emergence of the Black Radical Congress, Black feminism, and more. Edited by Herb Boyd, the anthology is available at <http://www.southendpress.org/books/raceresistance.shtml>

**Feminist Visions and Diverse Voices** is the Presidential Initiative of Jean Lau Chin to dialogue about issues of feminist leadership. This E-dialogue is open to all Division 35 members and feminist women. Sign onto a forum: [www.feministleadership.com/discuss/](http://www.feministleadership.com/discuss/)

**REEL SISTERS OF THE DIASPORA FILM FESTIVAL & LECTURE SERIES 2003**, sponsored by **AFRICAN VOICES** magazine and Long Island University, MediaArtsDept., Brooklyn, is seeking films directed or produced by women of color. It will be held March 14-16. Entries must be postmarked by November 18. Call 718-488-1052 or visit <http://www.reelsisters.org>

**¡Quince Años!** 



**We need to protect the aquifer. Vote for George Rice,**  
a member of AGUA, the Mayor's Water Quality Task Force, and Save Our Aquifer  
for EEA District 3, on **November 5th**

**RICE** for **Aquifer** Authority Edwards  
**Protect it!** District 3

For more information visit [www.RiceForAquifer.com](http://www.RiceForAquifer.com), call 737-6780, or email [jorje44@yahoo.com](mailto:jorje44@yahoo.com)  
Paid for by Rice for Aquifer, Christel Villarreal, Treasurer 414 East French Place, SA TX

**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**

**Bexar County Government Local  
Charitable Campaign**

**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)** Last Wednesday of each month, 7 pm at the Main Library, 6th floor. Call 732-4300.

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

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

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

**Amnesty International** #127 Fourth Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm at Ashbury United Methodist, call 681-8370.

The **peaceCENTER** Tuesdays from 7 - 9 pm for discussion & exploration of nonviolent peacemaking, 1443 S. St. Mary. Call 224-HOPE or <http://www.salsa.net/peace>

**Xicana Xicano Education Project** Tuesdays at 6 pm at the Bazan Public Library, 2200 W. Commerce St. Call 437-5196.

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

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

**Habitat for Humanity** holds Volunteer Orientation on first Tuesdays 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** Third Thursday of each month, 7 pm at the Esperanza, 922 San Pedro. Call 822-9105.

**Fuerza Unida** Third Tuesday of the month at 710 New Laredo Hwy., 7 pm. Call 927-229.

**Bexar County Green Party** First Sunday of each month at 2 pm at the VIA Transit Center, 1021 San Pedro, across from Esperanza Center.

## Todos somos esperanza...

I would like to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_/month by automatic bank withdrawal. Contact me to sign up.

I pledge to send \$ \_\_\_\_\_ each  
\_\_\_\_\_ month  
\_\_\_\_\_ quarter  
\_\_\_\_\_ six-months  
through the mail.

Enclosed is a donation of  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$1000  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$500  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$250  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$100  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$50  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$25  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$15 La Voz subscription  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$10  
\_\_\_\_\_ other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer!

Make checks payable to the Esperanza Peace & Justice Center. Send to 922 San Pedro, SA TX 78212. Donations to the Esperanza are tax deductible.

# Esperanza's Quinceañera

On OCTOBER 26th, 2002  
the Esperanza celebrates  
her 15th birthday.



Join us on this special occasion . . .

6 pm Potluck Cena, Ritual & Recuerdos  
9 pm Baile con Eva Ybarra  
y Su Conjunto  
with special guest Juan Tejeda

And don't forget, WE NEED YOUR HELP!

- + Volunteer for decorating
- + Bring platos for our dinner
- + Buy an advertisement in our commemorative program

Call us today at 228.0201 to RSVP and  
let us know what you are bringing to our pachanga.

**Arte es Vida**  
is community  
coming together  
to share our history  
through stories.  
Arte es Vida Meetings  
are at 816 S. Colorado  
off Guadalupe Street,  
Every First Saturday  
of the Month:  
October 5, November 2,  
December 1.



. . . y no se olviden  
ecos desde un  
viente de barro  
will be at the  
Esperanza until  
October 18.  
Don't miss it!

Join us at the  
**MujerArtes Cafecito**  
for café, pan dulce y arte.  
MujerArtes work will be  
available for purchase  
**Monthly Every First  
Sunday at  
1412 El Paso,  
8am- Noon  
October 6, November 3,  
December 2.**

La Voz de Esperanza  
ESPERANZA peace & justice center  
922 San Pedro  
San Antonio TX 78212

210-228-0201 • fax: 210-228-0000  
www.esperanzacenter.org

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