

La Voz de Esperanza

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*¡Mujeres marchando,
el mundo va cambiando!*



*Twelve years celebrating
International Women's Day*

La VOZ de Esperanza

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Editor

Gloria A. Ramírez

Layout/Design

H. Esperanza Garza

Contributors

Efrain Huerta, Patrisia Gonzáles,
Charlie Jackson,
Yolanda Chávez Leyva, Irma Mayorga,
Frank Valdez, Christina Valero

La Voz Volunteer Collective

Sean Danweber, Mario Gutiérrez,
Becky López, Dee Murff,
Herminia Maldonado, José Rodríguez,
Melissa Rodríguez, Ruby Sánchez,
ArtEscuela Interns, MujerARTES &
Fuerza Unida Mujeres

Esperanza Director

Graciela I. Sánchez

Esperanza Staff

Elizandro Carrington,
Viola Cásarez, Verónica Castillo,
Vicki Grise, Herminia Maldonado,
Petra Mata, Irma Mayorga,
Marisa Ramirez,
Cindy Rodríguez, René Saenz,
María Salazar, Inez Valdéz

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Michael Martínez, Marcos Márquez,
Dolores Zapata Murff, Kamala Platt,
Gloria A. Ramírez & Rudy Rosales

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Inquiries, articles, and letters should be addressed to:

La Voz de Esperanza,
922 San Pedro,
San Antonio, TX 78212
or email
lavoz@esperanzacenter.org

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922 San Pedro, San Antonio, TX 78212
(on the corner of Evergreen Street)
210-228-0201 • fax 210-228-0000
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Hoy He Dado Mi Firma para la Paz

by Efrain Huerta

*A Carlos y Eugenia,
en Nueva York*

*Hoy he dado mi firma para la Paz.
Bajo los altos árboles de la Alameda
y a una joven con ojos de esperanza.*

*Junto a ella otras jóvenes pedían más firmas
y aquella hora fue como una encendida patria
de amor al amor, de gracia por la gracia,
de una luz a otra luz.*

*Hoy he dado mi firma para la Paz.
Y conmigo, en cien países, cien millones de firmas,
cien orquestas del mundo, una sintonía universal,
un solo canto por la Paz del mundo.*

*Hoy no he firmado el poema ni los pequeños artículos,
ni el documento que te esclaviza,
no he firmado la carta que no se siente
ni el mensaje que durará un segundo.*

*Hoy he dado mi firma por la Paz.
Para que el tiempo no se detenga,
para que el sueño no se inmovilice,
para que la sonrisa sea alta y clara,
para que una mujer aprenda a ver crecer a su hijo
y las pupilas del hijo vean cómo su madre es cada día más joven.*

*Hoy he dado una firma, la mía, para la Paz.
Un mar de firmas que ahogan y aturden
al industrial y al político de guerra.*

*Una gigantesca oleada de gigantesas firmas:
la temblorosa del niño que apenas balbucea la palabra.
La que es una rosa de llanto de la madre,
La firma de humildad, la firma del poeta.*

*Hoy he elevado en una el número mundial de firmas por la Paz.
Y estoy contento como un adolescente enamorado,
como un árbol de pie,
como el inagotable manantial
y como el río con su canción de soberbios cristales.*

*Hoy parece que no he hecho nada
y sin embargo, he dado mi firma para la Paz.*

*La joven me sonrió y en sus labios había una paloma viva,
y me dio las gracias con sus ojos de esperanza
y yo seguí mi camino en busca de un libro para mis hijos.*

*Pues ahí estaba mi firma, precisa y diáfana,
al pie del Llamamiento de Berlín.*

*Parece que no he hecho nada
y sin embargo, creo haber multiplicado mi vida
y multiplicado los más sanos deseos.*

Hoy he dado mi firma para la Paz.

Efrain Huerta es poeta mexicano (Silao, Guanajuato, 18 de junio de 1914 - México, D. F. 3 de febrero de 1982). Poeta y periodista, luchador social por excelencia. Representa un símbolo de dignidad.

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, speciesism 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.



My Asian experience is shaped by western culture. As a first generation Asian American, I constantly maintain a balancing act. It is difficult to both honor tradition and live in a more liberated society. My parents immigrated here following "The American Dream", yet tried to maintain their own culture. I'm not sure if they have fully realized how much western culture dominates their lives.

My name originally was going to be Maria Christina. however a nurse told my mother that it would be detrimental for me to have an ethnic sounding name. I cannot speak my native language, as my school advised my parents not to teach it to me because I would have trouble learning in the school system. I see Asians trying to maintain their culture but bleach their hair blonde and get surgery to widen and westernize their almond shaped eyes, which are covered with colored contacts. I saw great irony when my mother scolded me for acting like a rambunctious American kid, yet wanted to get a nose job to change her own small flat nose. My parents did not see the slow erasure of our ethnicity. There is a need to rethink the idea becoming a good American.

The desire to fit in is demonstrated by visiting various Asian homes. The residents take you on a tour emphasizing all the expensive items. Many Asians are notorious for "keeping up with the Joneses." This expresses the material dominance of America. America is great and powerful due to economic advantage. I believe that our capitalist culture shapes everything.

Differences are not tolerated because they may harm or show an alternative to the structure. This need to maintain the highest dollar output stresses uniformity. The person who chooses to live by his own means is ostracized or labeled as a tree hugging peacenik. This ridicule comes from the fear that people would realize another way is possible - a way that obstructs the well oiled machine maintained by capitalism. Peaceful people are threatened, subjected to spy tactics because they stand in the way of these profits. The peace movement is considered a threat. But, the only threat we make is to their hierarchical order, to their power and profits.

We devalue human life for the dollar to preserve a way of life filled w/ SUVs and material items. These are status symbols- a farce to cover what we lack. People are tricked into believing these are necessary for fulfillment. Society robs

Mujeres

Speaking out for peace

by Christina Valero

Editor's note: The following speech (edited version) was delivered at the International Women's Day March and Rally which took place this year on, Saturday, March 8th in the Westside in San Antonio. The March and Rally was dedicated to peace in all parts of life including domestic violence and global warfare. Christina is presently an intern on the staff of Esperanza.

people of their true worth, so they replace it with items. Along with economic power comes the sense of American superiority. Consensus is that America is so advanced that the rest of the world must follow in our footsteps. So, the U.S. has gone out of its way with Neo-liberalist policy to create models of itself around the globe. Countries which cannot be converted, either are overtaken by force or subject to a policy of containment such as we did during the cold war. If we are not careful, this arrogance of superiority, will cause America to fall. America may be the most powerful nation in the world, but all that power could be usurped should the other nation states turn against us. Simple sanctions such as refusal of trade could seriously injure our economy.

Looking at the populace, I feel as if we are experiencing a backslide from the free thought that earlier decades had brought us. It is not only immigrants concerned about being "good Americans" now. Many people are unwilling to express dissenting views because they fear being labeled "unpatriotic." Minorities are especially ostracized. When we express dissenting views, we are told to get back on the boat and return to where we came from. In this climate, many are afraid to speak out.

American culture has been dominating since its early stages from changing immigrant's names to its imperial nature of globalization. The word "American" has been redefined to fit a specific meaning opposite of the original connotation. It is un-American to express dissent. I would like to remind those who label us, that we are Americans, too. America is a broad enough nation to support all of us. The constitution was created to allow for all of our opinions. People rally around the flag for freedom- yet, so few seem to understand its true meaning. They maintain that they uphold it, but at the same time are intolerant of other views. People are fighting and dying for a perverted version of America.

As an Asian woman, I struggle with the same issues as the average American woman, except more so. In my culture, a woman's role is defined as subordinate, delicate, or to use a euphemism, demure. Should a woman extend her strength to assertiveness or being opinionated, she is considered as stepping out of her place. Conventional society places us in this role, and it is tragic that femininity is associated with weaker qualities. The entire gender construct of masculine

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I am a woman of wide skirts -- faldas grandes, enaguas as round as the moon.

The first time I saw myself was in 1979 in Rey Gaytan's Chicano art class at the University of Texas at Austin. I found myself in Frida Kahlo's enaguas, in the tehuanas she made famous.

She reflected my palette of rosa Mexicana and the green of life -- and the sepia pricks of the soul that stained my canvas along the way. For a short time, I lived near Frida's Blue House, and my first and only attempt at a novel begins there.

Pioneer Chicana muralists brought Frida Kahlo to Chicanos and to the United States in the 1970s. Thanks to the muralists and Hayden Herrera's pivotal biography "Frida" (Perennial, \$25), she was later embraced by gay San Francisco, feminists and art collectors, painting the way for the eventual Fridamania and the biopic "Frida."

Frida was the original "bomb" -- Andre Breton called her "a ribbon around a bomb." The movie is more ribbons than bomb, beautifully filmed but, as Guillermo Gomez Pena recently said, "Frida Lite." Frida was handsome -- not a vixen like Oscar-nominee Salma Hayek, who portrays Frida's passion and sexuality more than her art or politics. Frida's face was often taut with pain. She was blackbird beautiful and lived like a peacock.

4 She would likely mock the "gringos" for now making faux

FRIDA'S SKIRTS

This is a first-person column,

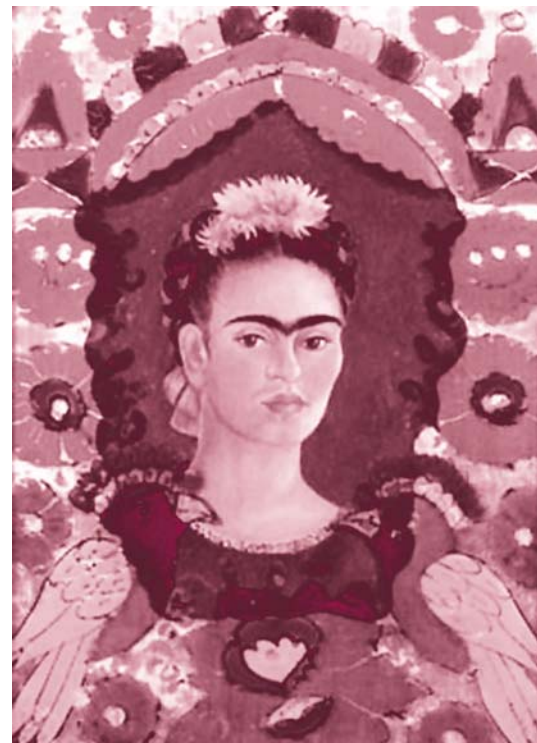
Frida jewelry and charging \$200-a-plate fund-raisers in San Antonio as they prance in huipiles (indigenous blouses), but dare they paint themselves in her famous brow and moustache? In the early '90s, Chicanas protesting a Frida movie that was to star a non-Mexican marched down Hollywood in huipiles, brows and moustaches.

I never wanted to be like Frida la sufrida. But when I found myself on a doctor's table with 27 needles down my spine and then a year of barely being able to walk, I certainly felt like the suffering Frida. She depicted her spinal column broken and held with nails as a result of a trolley car accident and many subsequent operations. That I identified with Frida spoke to how much she has become part of the Chicana psyche. No wonder psychologists employ her images in therapy.

The operation on my back complicated a severe auto immune disorder that I fought for five years. One doctor told me I would never be healthy again. I told him he was wrong. I healed with the medicine of the Earth and the balm of woman courage I learned from indigenous people who faced land invasions, rape, torture and massacres in Mexico.

I befriended one of Frida's contemporaries, Benita Galeana, a freedom fighter who also dressed in huipiles. I've often said she lived the life Frida idealized. Both were women of eyebrows

and moustaches, writes Mexican writer Elena Poniatowska. Benita also used a corset to support her spine from a car accident and the beatings she received as a revolutionary. Frida and Benita helped me understand that to be courageous doesn't mean



OF SUFFERING AND STRENGTH

by Patrisia Gonzales

you don't have fear. You fight and struggle despite it. Benita once said the fearless don't always know the consequences of their actions and that "courage is an illusion."

But to fight our fears makes us courageous. We begin to trust the power of our lives and to live with confidence as women. We suffer when we believe we can't change our destiny.

Frida was courageous because she painted her sufrimiento, choosing to transmute its form rather than to endure its fate. She put it outside of her body, her biochemistry floating all around, painted to the cellular level with microscopic precision. By painting her suffering, she proclaimed her strength. How she responded to suffering changed her destiny. Herrera's biography describes Frida's last painting -- of watermelons. Despite immense pain as she neared death, "(S)he wrote her final salute to life: VIVA LA VIDA." Long live life!

A week after 9/11, I went to a San Antonio post office and asked for a Frida stamp. A worker told me they had agreed among themselves to stop selling Frida's stamp and that he personally refused to.

"She was a communist," he proclaimed. I bet you didn't know that, he prodded, and then looked me up and down. I was wearing a huipil and a wide skirt. Everyone in the crowded room went silent lest they be called unpatriotic.




"Yes, I knew that. She was many things, a great painter, a human being. She stood on the side of the people." Frida would have enjoyed the exchange.



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Chronicles, Testimonios & Remembrances

by Patrisia Gonzales
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Sin Lamento/Without Regret

Memoirs of an Activist By Frank Valdez

"When we are really honest with ourselves we must admit that our lives are all that really belong to us. So, it is how we use our lives that determines what kind of people we are. It is my deepest belief that only by giving our lives do we find life."

—Cesar Estrada Chavez, Labor and civil rights leader

As I approached my 51st birthday and recently a new father again, it was only natural to question myself about my life. Questions such as: "Why couldn't I have been more "normal" and accepting of things?" "What would have happened had I finished high school as scheduled and NOT have become active in the anti-war movement of the 60's?"

When one becomes a parent and is unemployed, without money in the bank, one must question if he/she has done the right thing.



I wish I had been more financially "successful", but I feel that I am a rich man in many other ways. In my 30 plus years in the movement I have experienced things most people only read or fantasize about. Things like participating in civil rights protests, sit down strikes, mass demonstrations, organizing workers, and more importantly seeing positive results such as the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, the victory of the farm worker strike/boycott, the defeat of apartheid in South Africa and other historical events.

For me, it all began on November 22, 1963, the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. To an eleven-year-old boy, the violent murder of our president was shocking and the initial cause of doubt in our system. Even before the release of the Zapruder film, I could not accept the fact that Kennedy was shot by Lee Harvey Oswald with a gun that was both shoddy and obsolete. It never made sense to me how someone shot from behind would have the back of his head blown away. Had Kennedy been shot from behind as some would have us believe, the front of his head would have been blown away.

6 My first movement activity began in the summer of 1965 when

my father and his co-workers walked out of a café/bus depot on Highway 90 in route to Houston in support of an African American worker who was refused service. For a 13-year-old Chicano to have experienced this was the most valuable lesson in political activism one could ever get. The pride and excitement that I felt that day was only exceeded by the feeling I had when I witnessed the recent birth of my son, Francisco.

My second movement activity occurred the summer of 1968 at the San Antonio International Airport while seeing off a friend from Mexico City. Gen. Curtis Lemay, candidate for vice-president under the American Party banner was arriving in San Antonio. (The American Party was the independent attempt by former Alabama Governor George Wallace to run for U.S. president). There was a crowd of about 50 persons protesting

Lemay's visit to San Antonio. I left my parents to join in the chants against this right wing demagogue. (Lemay a retired general espoused the nuclear bombing of Vietnam to achieve "victory" over the North Vietnamese and the liberation forces of South Vietnam). Again, I experienced solidarity with the other protestors and the feeling was one of excitement, empowerment and sheer euphoria.

The following year I met some people from the American Friends Service Committee. I learned about the AFSC from an article in the Sunday newspaper that covered local antiwar activity. I had already become an outspoken opponent of the war in Vietnam in my government and art classes in high school and my friends in the AFSC helped guide my raw, adolescent

opposition to the war into one that had a rational and scientific basis to it.

During the Vietnam War Moratorium in 1969 my picture made the front page of both the San Antonio Light and Express-News. I had a good time explaining to my high school principal and parents what I was doing protesting the war in front of the Induction Center instead of being in class. Through the AFSC I also learned of the farm worker struggle, the struggles in Zimbabwe and South Africa and other local, national and international movements for justice. To this day I owe much to people like John Dauer (now a clinical social worker), Tom Flower and others I can no longer recall.

My first experience in the labor movement was when I went to work for the San Antonio Independent School district in the Building & Grounds Department in the Fall of 1971. I joined Local 84 of the Service Employees Union because I had relatives who had joined unions at Kelly Air Force Base, Randolph Air Force Base and the San Antonio Transit System (now VIA). Even with a union on the property the bosses treated Chicano workers with contempt, assigning us to the lowest paying, most

tedious and grueling jobs. (I started off at \$300 per month and "moved up" to \$320 per month. My take home pay was \$108 every two weeks!)

I soon learned the ropes by attending meetings and actively signing up new members. In the summer of 1972 a group of us refused to continue our work in moving furniture from the old Fox Tech High School when a supervisor who had recently retired from the Army said the wrong thing to the right people and we tired of his badgering and harassment.

In the summer of 1973, I joined the boycott staff of the United Farm Workers in Dallas and in San Antonio. With the UFW I learned the skill of writing and had my first article published in El Sol de Texas, a local Chicano newspaper. I learned the importance of organizing support from all sectors of the community in the struggle for justice. That same year the legally elected government of Salvador Allende was forcibly overthrown by U. S. backed fascists in the military. General Augusto Pinochet took over the reins of the Chilean government and was ultimately responsible for the incarceration, torture and death of at least 50,000 Chilean leftists, students and trade unionists. The coup was an eye opener for me and gave me my first understanding of the evils of imperialism.

In the Spring of 1975, I moved to Houston and obtained employment in a shop that manufactured oil field equipment. The shop was part of the TRW conglomerate and was non-union. (In the late '50s the company broke a strike and the union was decertified.) At this job I actually met white workers who were members of the John Birch Society and members or sympathizers of the Ku Klux Klan. A year after being hired, the bosses fired me when they became aware that I had initiated contact with a union to try and reorganize the factory. Unfortunately, this was the same union that had been ousted some 17 years previously and for many of the workers this was the kiss of death. I believe to this day had another union made the attempt, the workers at TRW Mission Manufacturing would have enjoyed the benefits and protection of being organized.

After losing my job at TRW I went to work at a small plant operated by the GAF Corporation. GAF had business holdings in cameras, photo film, vinyl residential siding and roofing, industrial dyes, ceiling tile and vinyl floor tile. The plant in Houston was a floor tile factory that was organized by the Teamsters Union. After making my 90 day probationary period I joined the union and immediately became active. The biggest issue facing the workers was the exposure to high levels of noise, heat and asbestos dust. After having OSHA cite the company for unsafe handling of asbestos, I was elected as Chief Steward for the local union at this job. On June 22nd 1977, a young African American man went to the supply room to secure a pair of work gloves. As he was leaving the Maintenance room, the superintendent immediately began a barrage of loud questions. Prince attempted to explain why he had gone into the supply room, but the super would not listen and resorted to calling Greg, "Boy." Needless to say Prince responded with a few well



chosen obscenities and was fired on the spot. As the Chief Steward I was immediately paged and presented the situation. My attempt to represent Prince and get him reinstated was met by strong resistance not only from the superintendent but also from the Personnel Manager. Word of the firing spread throughout the plant and workers were angry. We met at a nearby U-Totem. About 25 workers showed up and demanded that something be done to get Prince his job back. My response was: "the union has filed a grievance on behalf of Greg, but management is denying us any justice as they do with most of

our cases. For Greg to get his job back it is vital that each and every one of you do what it takes to force the bosses to give him back his job!" The more sophisticated workers immediately knew what it was that I was suggesting.

The next morning the shift started up as usual at 6:30 am. I had entrusted one worker to spread the word that at the first coffee break, everyone was to sit down in front of the time clock and NOT return to their posts. At 9 am I went up to the restroom to wash off and I noticed that there was an unusually large number of workers in the break room. My name was paged over the plant intercom, with a request to go to the time clock. In front of the time clock was a group of about 25 workers sitting down on the floor. They were joined by a larger group

of about 60 workers from the break room. (At that time there were about 100 workers employed, all but about seven or eight were not union members). In the packing department the floor tile that was supposed to be packed into the cardboard boxes was falling onto the floor from the conveyor belt. None of the workers assigned to this department were anywhere around. Many of those who chose to continue working were older workers who I thought I could count on, but quickly learned that they were more talk than action and were very scared. To my surprise the older Chicano workers joined the work stoppage. As one older Chicano worker said; "when they use racist names against one co-worker, we must all take a stand together. If not, then we will go down together." Wise words for a man with only a sixth grade education. He was one of the most respected workers in the plant and it freaked out the bosses to see him actively participating in the action.

I was obligated as the union steward to "urge" the workers to return to their jobs or face discipline. The workers refused to listen to my urging and instead drew up a list of about 30 demands with Greg Prince's reinstatement with no loss in pay at the top of the list. Company management became incensed that a small group of Chicano and African American workers would dare to defy their authority and demand just treatment for a fellow worker. That day plant manager Don Berg fired the workers no less than three times. I asked him if he was seriously going to fire workers who had put 10 to 30 years of their lives in this factory? Berg became angry and stated that he was firing me as well. Of course, the attempt to intimidate the workers didn't work now that their elected shop steward had openly confronted the boss. When he threatened to have the Houston police department evict us from the property, I asked another steward, Charles Butler to call the news media.

Sin Lamento... continued on page 11

The World Says NO to War!

February 15, 2003 San Antonio, Texas
delivered by Charlie Jackson at the anti-war rally

Today we are gathered to answer the call for reason in a country that seems hell-bent towards war.

America, the richest country on earth and a beacon for freedom and hope has instead become an ugly terror that threatens peace around the world.

But here in the heart of Texas we join with the rest of the world in saying "NO to war!"

We have not forgotten our forefather and foremother's declaration of a world in which *all* people are created equal and endowed with life and liberty. So we come here this day along with millions of people in cities around the globe to say "NO to war!"

On September 11, 2000 terrorists struck America in New York and Washington.

Overnight the names of Osama Bin Laden and al-Queda became familiar to all Americans. They succeeded in stirring fear in the hearts of families and leaders throughout our great nation. But since that time there has emerged another type of terrorist.

I am speaking about the folks within the administration who fear-monger each day so that Americans will fall prey to their stated design to conquer the world. Names like Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz and Carl Rove are less well known but they are every bit as much "terrorists" because of what they do and propose to do. Some want us to have war in the worst way...and they're getting exactly that.

Yesterday UNMOVIC and the IAEA gave their reports to the United Nations and in them said that "Iraq possesses no weapons of Mass Destruction" and "there is no evidence of ongoing efforts to acquire nuclear weapons." Yet, despite this

evidence, some in the administration continue to tell their lies and spread fear.

And today the greatest danger to the world isn't Iraq but the fear that has gripped ordinarily reasonable Americans. The kind of fear that makes us see terror around every corner,

makes us run out and buy gas masks for fear of chemical and biological weapons; blind fear that makes us so afraid that we will kill one another.

I visited Washington, D.C. this week and saw the worst fear in the eyes of almost everyone I met there. They have armed guards on every street, metal detectors at every building, and a run on plastic sheeting and duct tape as Americans were told to expect chemical and biological attacks from unknown sources.

Using advanced propaganda techniques these spin-meisters of

death have jumped through all kinds of hoops trying to make the American public afraid and convince seasoned military leaders that we should take risky actions against threats that aren't even there.

And if you ever doubt their motives look at what kind of people they are. Are they the kind who volunteer in soup kitchens or mentor children? Would they give all that they have to help the poor and the weak? Do they make real attempts to learn about other countries, to travel to places like Iraq and meet the face of the so-called enemy as their religion demands that they do?

Or, are they instead consumed by their own power? Are they so filled with their own education and learning that they think there is nothing left to learn in the world and that they cannot possibly be wrong? Do they support love's gentle call or the

blood of the sword?

Last year our President signed into law (and he is proud of it!) the largest increase in military spending in a generation. In fact the U. S. now spends more on our military than all the rest of the nations of the world combined. We are taking food from the mouths of our children's children and using it to feed the ugly face of war. But history tells us that this horrible beast can never be satisfied and always hungers for more.

War desires not only the innocent, but the lives of those in uniform who go to their death believing that their commander can do no wrong. We are proud at how the United States military carries the might and mission of America to the far reaches of the world.

But with that awesome force comes increased responsibility, something that perhaps the U.S. is not yet mature enough to understand, especially when our President acts like an impatient child and publicly calls names at those who disagree with him, even the presidents of other nations.

Is this the sign of an America that is ready to live up to its responsibilities in the world?

Military force used to always be this nation's last option, but instead now we are confronted with an administration that would make it our first option. Rather than holding the most terrible weapons ever created by humans as a last resort, we now have a policy of "first strike."

Now the administration would turn that might on Iraq as the first in a long series of tests of new weaponry and policy. Millions will probably be killed but when our leaders are confronted with this they remain only silent. Can it be that there are those whose minds and hearts are so twisted that they will kill innocent children in cold blood? So full of anger and frustration that they will wear a bomb in a crowded market, crush homes with people still in them, use nuclear weapons?

Unfortunately, we know all too well that people can be that way. And it's not only in places overseas but at home as well. In America these people speak to us every day on nightly television. They say that the "Decision is for the United

Nations," then they say that they're willing to go-it-alone. They say that they believe in the right to life but then out of the same mouth say that they're "not interested" in casualty figures.

Well I'm interested. I care both about those young men and women soldiers who will be sent of to fight and I care

about those children and families –both in the US and Iraq – that will be killed if war comes.

Two weeks ago, I returned from a one-month visit to Iraq. I went throughout the country seeing first hand what kind of place it was. I found that is was a much more modern, diverse, and liberty-minded place than I expected. Unlike most of the Middle East, in Iraq religious freedom is protected. The one million Christians there – from Presbyterians to Catholics – are well aware of this and treasure it in their country.

I was surprised that I could travel almost anywhere I wanted by myself, and visit with Iraqis in their homes, churches, hospitals and Mosques. I met wonderful families, teachers, doctors, and business people whose only real complaint in the world is the economic destruction that has come to the country after 12 years of sanctions imposed after the Gulf War. They also know the costs of war – having fought two during the last twenty years which killed over 1 million people. And they want to be free of this terror of war. At the same time I was surprised to see how much they want to be like the West.

Iraq used to have the most modern hospitals and schools in the entire Middle East. Most Iraqis know some English and would rather pick up a new DVD at the store or watch TV on

The World Says No continued on page 10



Damascus ~ 200,000 Protesters



San Antonio ~ 1,300 Protesters



Berlin ~ 500,000 Protesters

The World Says No continued from page 9

their satellite cable or play at the PS2 store than fight a war. They would rather see the sanctions lifted and be able to study abroad again and join the nations of the world. They would rather that their children, like my own, grow up happy and safe.

I regularly visited with with Safa and Amal and their three children who have tried to make a living in Baghdad despite losing their jobs due to the economy. I met lovely Seham and her boys Yasser, Sammer and Dhafer. And I can't forget little Anush who at 4 is too young to remember war and can't understand the terror that his parents feel.

I also had the pleasure to be the guest of the Iraqi medical system. I was injured in an automobile accident in Basrah and spent a week in hospitals there and in Baghdad. I received only kindness and the best medical attention that Iraqis could provide.

During the last year we have seen what happens when we don't work together and let fear enter our hearts. We have seen what happens when people put personal greed before the interests of their shareholders. We have seen what happens when we forget to look into the eyes of our brothers and sisters around the world. We can understand now what madness gripped Germany in the modern past and made so many people become their worst selves.

So, I came back home and went to Washington to talk with those whose hearts have become hardened and who propose murder and genocide to have this war. It is something that I didn't wish to do but must because of a pledge that the world made at the end of WWII. At that time the people pledged "Never Again" to allow this sort of madness to happen. So I ask you today to also remember that pledge as you stand here and do not let America go to such an unjustified and immoral war.

The President acts as if he can tell Americans what they should do and believe. It is true that he is commander in chief of the military but you and I are free citizens. The President has been given no authority over us, the free people of the United States. So we are not required to follow him wherever he should go.

If America acts it will be without the support of long-time friends and allies. It will be without the support of the Catholic Church, the Methodists, The Episcopalians and Lutherans...without the entire faith community around the world which know that there is evil – not so much in Baghdad – but in the hearts of those who thrill at the aspect of war.

No one can claim that the path of war will be shorter than continuing the path of disarmament of Iraq. No one can claim

that the costs of war would be less than the costs of a peaceful resolution. No one can claim that killing thousands of people is anything less than evil – whether in New York or Baghdad.

More than two generations after WWII, America still has troops in Germany and missiles aimed at Europe. 40 years after the Korean War we still have thousands of troops stationed in Korea. This is what results from poor international policy and fear.



Madrid ~ 1 Million Protesters

But we will not be afraid, we will be strong in our resolve to make peace, this week – today! We will demand with all of our might, "Say NO to War!"

This is not an easy or risk-free course of action. Some argue that we should wait for the administration to come around – but that's not an option either. In my view it's the riskiest of all because if we don't act, war is certain. So we must act today before it is too late.

Americans are a resolute people who have risen to every test of our time. Adversity has revealed the character of our country, to the world and to ourselves. America is a strong nation and we must use that strength to build up, not tear down, the world.

We must exercise this power to lead as servants not as conquerors. We must be willing to sacrifice, if the need arises, for people that we may never meet – for the liberty of strangers. This is the call that goes out to every righteous nation.

The things that we prize are not so much America's gift to the world but those things that are inalienable and given to us by our Creator. Let us go forth today to answer the call for peace and begin the beginning of the end of war.

Thank you my fellow peacemakers.



Sin Lamento... continued from page 7

I told Berg if the cops were going to throw us out then the entire Houston community was going to know why. GAF products were very susceptible to a consumer boycott. Their national spokesperson, Henry Fonda would probably have NO problem in siding with the workers as he was well known for his progressive stances. After six tense hours the wildcat strike ended. No one was fired or disciplined. Greg Prince was reinstated, with one day lost in pay. We were successful in most of our demands, especially those concerning the grievance procedure and safety issues. For the first time in the nearly 30 year history of the plant, workers who were primarily African American and Chicano had stood their ground in their demand for justice!

To fully appreciate the events of June 23, 1977 one has to know that when the plant opened in 1949, Black workers were not allowed to use the same water fountains or lunchroom as the white workers. They were also paid less as they were always assigned to jobs of lower classification than white workers. These were Jim Crow policies of the original union that was eventually replaced by the Teamsters. I was told that just a couple of years before I hired on, a veteran African American worker fell from his elevated position on the production line. This was a worker that never missed a day of work and always worked overtime as requested. That day his loyalty was rewarded by the company refusing to shut down the line while he lay on the floor dying. The company refused to pay his widow any insurance benefits as they claimed he did NOT die on the job. On June 23rd 1977 the workers struck back not only for Greg Prince

but for the worker who died on the job unappreciated and disrespected even in death.

The GAF plant was shut down permanently in December of 1977, some six months after our strike. GAF bosses claimed that the plant was old and obsolete and that the safety changes mandated by OSHA earlier that year were "too costly." Thus ended the floor tile plant and the memories of many years of workers' dedication, injustice and the events of June 23rd 1977. Today, an office building now stands at the junction of Loop 610 and Interstate 59, across from the now defunct Houston Post.

As a new father who has recently regained employment, I wonder about my life and the accomplishments I have made. Confirming my accomplishments and the causes I have supported are my daughters Natalia and Laura. Both of these young women have already taken positions in their young lives that reflect the ideology of their old man. Last year, an article of mine published in La Voz was used by one of Laura's professors. More recently, Natalia stood up for a co-worker at the pharmacy where she works. Like her dad and her grandfather, she is learning the value of worker unity. (Both of my girls have marched and picketed with me and their mother numerous times). Seeing that my children have grown up with good, solid, progressive values is more than enough reward for me. At my age, one must relish whatever rare, simple yet precious rewards life offers, and that's what makes me not have any regrets about the past 37 years.



Frank Valdez is a veteran activist and frequent writer for La Voz. He is a social worker by profession and is currently assisting mental health consumers organize for quality mental health services in our community.

To la Buena Gente de la Esperanza:

Spring is here!
Its time to continue the process of beautifying our home. We're already adding planters to the front of the building and started landscaping the back patio.

To make our home bien pretty we need your help in the next few weeks.

If you can make a donation or can devote two to three hours on a weekend or a weekday please contact Pat or Marissa at 210-789-3143 or send an e-mail to accountant@esperanzacenter.org

Donations can be mailed to the Esperanza Peace & Justice Center Garden Fund Project 922 San Pedro San Antonio, Tx. 78212

Todos somos esperanza...

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone Number _____

or

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

4 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.

Women & War Conference

The second annual Women and War Conference will be held Thursday, May 1 through Sunday May 4, 2003 in San Marcos, Texas. The Women and War Conference is a national conference hosted by The Women's Nation Collective.

The mission of the Women's Nation Collective is to promote dialogue among truly diverse women activists and scholars regarding warfare, nationalism, and territorialism and the ways in which it impacts our communities while simultaneously challenging ourselves to deconstruct racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia within our own collective.

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!

Women's Nation recognizes war as a much broader phenomenon, and in the case of women one that does not necessarily recognize the territorial boundaries of national or tribal wars. For example, women and children are often already at war within the domestic sphere, and "people of color" or other minoritized communities are often under attack from the same nation/states that claim them as citizens. We recognize economic warfare as a form of aggression as

egregious as any armed attack. And although we promote peace, we recognize that peace is not the absence of violence, but a balance of power. Furthermore, we recognize that disempowered people under siege, who do not have access to state sponsored protection have the right to defend themselves.

The primary function of the Women's Nation Collective is to produce an annual international conference, The Women and War Conference, where women representing various regions, national and ethnic backgrounds, and political interests gather for four days of panels, workshops and dialogues on warfare in the ways in which women are particularly vulnerable, and the ways in which we as women can resist these attacks across what appear to be cultural divides.

Throughout the year Women's Nation will also sponsor local actions, and panel discussions. In addition to the panels, there will be two early morning workshops on environmental racism.

Friday's a.m. workshop will explore the re-occurring phenomena of cancer in the Dineh community in Black Mesa, Arizona, the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico and in the occupied territories of Palestine as a result of depleted uranium and how that will impact us all.

Saturday's a.m. workshop will look at the impact that oil exploration has had on increased US militarism including interventions in Colombia and Venezuela and how that exploration will impact us all.

There will also be daily early morning yoga workshops and afternoon physical fitness workshops lead by The Radical Cheerleaders and musical guests every evening.

The conference will be held at Stonehaven Ranch in San Marcos, Texas, 26 miles south of Austin. Stonehaven is a 171 acre retreat center in the beautiful Texas hill country.



For More Information:
<<http://geocities.com/womensnation/information.html>>
or contact Jayna Turchek womensnation@yahoo.com
phone: 512-370-9553 / Fax: 512-474-6950

EL REY FEO

by Irma Mayorga

Representations — likenesses, images, pictures — sustain power.

Unconvinced?

Consider the conquest of the Américas. Spanish conquistadors arriving on this continent in the early 16th century not only killed or enslaved thousands of indigenous peoples, but they also sought to obliterate the entirety of the indigenous life world. Subjugation depended upon usurping self-made likenesses. Chief on the conquistadors "things to do" list of cultural genocide was to burn the vast Aztec, Mayan, and Incan libraries of hieroglyphic picture-books: the codices, which chronicled native peoples everyday lives, histories, and spirituality.

Five hundred years later, descendants of these conquered peoples, myself included, are still trying to assemble the burnt ashes of our representations. We still engage with power — including the media — and we wrestle anxiously with the Latino representations presented in NBC's new "Hispanic" serial *Kingpin*.

The overall venture dresses itself in good intentions: Increase the visibility of Latino actors (representations) on TV and offer compelling story lines that will "grab" viewers — a shady catchphrase for sponsors' advertising dollars. Such intentions fall into cadence with the not-so-startling revelations of the 2000 U.S. census: Latino numbers are rising and, these numbers inspire new opportunities of conquest.

In effect, *I am NBC's target market.* Or am I?

When I watched *Kingpin's* premiere episodes, I didn't see much that resonated with the trials of my Latino family. Instead, I witnessed a sub-world as unrecognizable to me as Tony Soprano's New Jersey rancho. So, if NBC aims to draw in me and mi gente (and our hard-earned dollars) what, I wonder, is supposed to be the lure? If, I — a Tejana-Chicana — couldn't find familiarity in *Kingpin's* psuedo-mexicana/o and narrowly construed mis-en-scene of drugs, illicit activity, and corrupt moral universe, what were Puertorriqueña/os, Nuyoricans, and Dominicana/os out in the East thinking about this rendering of Latino life? Because we're all the supposed target market, clumsily funneled into one "emerging" brown faced (mostly güera) prime-time moment of Latinidad.

Representation is not reality. Yet in our visually oriented culture that is fixated on TV images, the American media and

Hollywood determine what "humanity" looks and feels like, and help shape the contours and content of the American cultural imaginary. This means you have to consider the work of *Kingpin* in the living rooms of a still majority white America and, therein lies the series' tragic flaw: Its corrosive depictions of Latinos are left to circulate uncontested.

To hear series' creator David Mills — who is not Latino — tell it on NBC's *Today* show, we (Latinos? Or all underrepresented nonwhites?) should just plain forget that the series riffs on Latino lives: "I don't think you should sit down and view these characters as representatives of Mexican culture or Latino culture. I set out to write a story about human beings and big human themes like ambition and greed ... They are our vessels for exploring human nature ..." Mills thesis tilts dangerously towards representation's ugly twin: stereotype.

Any people of color who serve as mere "vessels" for ideas is a dangerous use of *all people of color* in the gambit of representation. Strategies such as this have conjured up a hoard of "exotic" stand-ins that have an all too determined history in this country's racial hierarchy: blackness for spirituality, everything Asian for Eastern transcendentalism, and Latinos for hot-blooded pasión (think J. Lo) and, as *Kingpin* purports, cold-blooded barbarity. All of these constructions circle back onto the central question of vessels for whom? More often than not, dominant culture constructs these shallow "vessels" for the spectatorship of an uninterrogated gaze of whiteness.

Despite Mills' stewardship, neither he nor NBC execs can procure and deliver to a Latino audience. The reason: Latinos want control of their representations. And our self-made likenesses will try to depict the totality of our lives: the hard-won triumphs, the despicable poverty, and, yes, even our slowly rising middle-class. Moreover, it will take a flowering of effort and an army of Latino writers, actors, and producers who will not subscribe to the needs of a dominant cultural imaginary. The effort will divulge a Latino poetics of TV storytelling and, only some of it will begin to recover the lost libraries of cuentos and historias destroyed so long ago.



Irma Mayorga, a native of San Antonio, is an artist/scholar/activista in theater who is currently on the staff of the *Esperanza* Center.

OCTOBER 2ND WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN

BY YOLANDA CHÁVEZ LEYVA

On the night of October 2, 1968 15,000 student protestors marched peacefully through the streets of Mexico City to the Plaza de Tres Culturas at Tlatelolco, calling attention to issues ranging from poverty to the lack of democratic process. Mexico was preparing to host the Olympics, the first time a Latin American nation would host the competition. With the world's eyes on Mexico, students believed the timing was right to air their grievances. By the end of the evening, hundreds of students would be dead, killed by Army and police forces. Many others would be injured or disappeared.

The Tlatelolco Massacre would open a wound in Mexico's national consciousness that still has not healed.

The Tlatelolco Massacre marked the beginning of a "dirty war" intended to rid the nation of subversives. For at least two decades following the Massacre, the Mexican government carried on a campaign of surveillance, persecution, and disappearances. Human rights activists contend that hundreds of Mexican citizens were killed in the 1970s and 1980s. Some, including Amnesty International, argue that these activities continue today.

In recent days, a controversy involving a university professor's new textbook has turned attention into the painful event.

Claudia Sierra Campuzano, a history professor at the National School of Anthropology and History in Cuernavaca, recently wrote a middle school textbook "History of Mexico: an Analytical Approach." On February 3, Secretary of Education Reyes Tamez ordered the textbook, which the Secretariat of Public Education had already adopted, taken off the shelves. Secretary Tamez reversed his decision two days later, saying experts would review and evaluate the book for its objectivity. Sierra called the actions, "a crack in the face of democracy in this country."

Editorials in Mexican newspapers have both praised and condemned the chain of events. Critics of Sierra criticize her book for being "politically correct." She contends that her book merely reports the facts.

At the center of the controversy is Sierra's description of the Tlatelolco Massacre. The New York Times quotes the textbook

as saying, "The army surrounded the square and fired from every angle on thousands of youths." Her description is consistent with witness reports, documents, and photographic evidence. It depicts what most historians have come to believe: military and law enforcement officials surrounded the unarmed students, trapping them, and then shot into the crowd, killing hundreds. In the three decades since the massacre, most history textbooks, which are under government scrutiny, have barely mentioned the massacre. When they have, they have often blamed the students for instigating the violence.

Despite governmental efforts to make the massacre at Tlatelolco invisible, to diminish its significance, to obliterate its memory, the Mexican people have not forgotten. Each year relatives of the dead and disappeared, former university students, and others gather to commemorate Tlatelolco. An estimated 20,000 to 45,000 marchers gathered at last year's commemoration. "October 2 will not be forgotten" has become their cry. As governments around the globe have learned, historical memory is a powerful motivator.

In the past two years, the Mexican government has taken steps to heal the painful wounds of recent decades. The Fox administration released eighty million pages of secret intelligence files covering 1952 through 1985, which according to the most recent Human Rights Watch World Report confirmed the arrests, torture, and murders of at least 275 missing people. Mexico's National Human Rights Commission also identified 74 former government officials responsible for these crimes. Last year the Mexican Supreme Court ordered an investigation of the Tlatelolco massacre and named a special prosecutor.

Despite these moves forward, however, the case of the controversial middle school textbook should remind us: Trying to bury the truth of history comes with a high price. Truth and justice work hand in hand and the healing of a nation cannot begin until the truth of history is brought to light.



This article first appeared in the Progressive Magazine

Community Meetings

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

Parents/Friends of Lesbians/Gays (PFLAG) First Thursday of each month at 7 pm at the Resource Ctr, 121 W. Woodlawn, call 655-2383.

Habitat for Humanity holds Volunteer Orientation on first Tuesdays of each month at 1st Presbyterian Church, 404 N. Alamo, rm 302 at 6 pm.

Amnesty International #127 Fourth Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm at Ashbury United Methodist, call 829-0397.

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.

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

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

A Multicultural Worship Service is held Sundays at 11 am at **Spirit of Life Lutheran Church**, call Rev. Kay Johnson at 691-5937 in sanctuary of Los Angeles Heights Methodist.

Fuerza Unida at 710 New Laredo Hwy., Call for information and meeting times, 927-229.

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.

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



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: lavoze@esperanzacenter.org or by snail mail to: 922 San Pedro, San Antonio, TX 78212. The deadline is the 12th of each month.

Lotería Mexicana, a Fuerza Unida Easter fundraiser, will be held Sunday, April 13 at the Fuerza Unida headquarters, 710 New Laredo Hwy. \$10 will allow you to play three cards, 25 games and have refreshments. Bring 5 persons with you and you play free! Call 927-2294 for info.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: Bilingual Anthology by Latino Gay Men and their Fathers. Submissions can be in English, Spanish, or Spanglish. Editors will consider almost any type of creative written or artistic endeavor speaking to relations between Latino gay men and their fathers. Deadline: May 31, 2003. Contact: LatinoAnthology@hotmail.com or call 562/ 984-3992. Editors include Francisco Alarcón, Horacio N. Roque Ramírez, Santiago Bernal, and Jorge Mario Cabrera.

The Mautner Project is conducting a study of the health behaviors and risk factors of *Black Women who Partner with Women* (WPW) particularly as they relate to breast and other female-related cancers. This is an opportunity to voice opinions and concerns on barriers to accessing healthcare and help aid in the formulation of health care interventions to improve the health of black WPW. If you can help get information out in the

black lesbian community or can provide us with a mailing list call: 1-866-W2W-SPIRIT (929-7747) or contact LaToya Godette at (202) 332-5536 or Lgodette@mautnerproject.org or www.mautnerproject.org

Students and adults in the Bexar County area are invited to enter poems now for the sixth annual San Antonio Poetry Fair. May 31 is the deadline to submit poems. The entry fee of \$1 for students, \$5 for college age and adults, entitles you to enter one original, unpublished poem. Entry forms are available at several Barnes & Noble stores and hometown.aol.com/sapoetryfair. Students are encouraged to ask their English teachers for a form at participating schools. Winning poems, and other poems of merit will be published in the sixth edition of the anthology, *Voices Along the River*. For details contact Don Mathis, 736-1405 or DMathis@trinity.edu.

Latina Letters, an annual conference on Latina Literature and Identity co-presented by the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center and St. Mary's University will be held July 17-19 bringing together notable Latina scholars, writers, performers and artists. The 2003 theme is *Our bodies, Our Roots/Nuestros cuerpos, nuestras*

raíces. Deadline for abstracts of papers, panel proposals, and other suggestions for possible presentations is May 7th. For complete information contact co-directors: Dr. Gwendolyn Díaz: gdiaz@alvin.stmarytx.edu or Bryce Milligan: Milligan@wingspress.com

A National Gathering for Youth Organizing will be held June 6 - 8, 2003 in Chicago, Illinois. The gathering will bring together over 350 youth (ages 13-19) and adult allies from every region of the country who are involved in efforts for social, economic and environmental justice. Participants will be mainly youth of color, low income youth, LGBTQ youth, immigrant youth and other young people facing social or political oppressions. Contact YouthAction in Albuquerque by fax: 505/873-3245 or by email: sireesha@youthaction.net

Join us in the Battle Against Police Brutality! Watchando La Jura. Know your Oppressor. Support the Youth Resistance in Local Barrio Cruising Spots. CRUISING IS NOT A CRIME. For more information: contact The Xicana Xicano Education Project, Voice: 210.437.5196 E-mail: pontetrucha50@yahoo.com



Mujeres... continued from page 3

aggression and female submission is flawed. We need to emphasize a culture without aggression. In opposing the war, people believe we do so because we are soft and can't stand violence. It is expected we would oppose war because our male relatives, friends, and lovers could die out on the field. People don't believe women see the larger issues. We need to demonstrate that we are strong. The only group that remained largely unharmed during Argentina's dirty wars was Las Madres de la Plaza. In asking where their loved ones had disappeared to and standing up to authority, these women took power. We can too. Not only for ourselves, but for those who traditionally lack it. That means speaking out for all who don't have power. For those minorities, impoverished, and contained by global dominance.

Only a few weeks ago, approximately 60% of the population was not in favor of rushing into war with Iraq. After the global march for peace, February 15, the U.S. and G.B. were reworking their resolution. This is a response to the global

opposition to war and to a minority who is in favor of war. If we keep persisting, we can make change. Human hands have created our current scenario. We can also recreate it.

Finally, I would like to mention this quote by Martin Pastor, prisoner of Dachau concentration camp, 1942 for people to keep in mind:

"First they came for the Communists; I did not speak because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews; I did not speak because I was not a Jew. Then they came to fetch the workers, members of trade unions; I did not speak because I was not a trade unionist. Afterwards, they came for the Catholics; I did not say anything because I was a Protestant. Eventually they came for me, and there was no one left to speak..."



La Voz de Esperanza
ESPERANZA peace & justice center
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Día de los niños
Family Day
April 12, 2003
11-4 pm
Esperanza Peace &
Justice Center

Join us at the Esperanza
for a day of children's
activities, including cantos,
cuentos, raspas, piñatas y
un carnaval de juegos.
¡Todo gratis!