

La Voz de Esperanza



December 20 | 4 • January 2005 • vol 17 issue 10

- **MujerArtes celebrates Día de la Virgen de Guadalupe with an exhibit/art sale on Sunday, December 12, 2004. (p.7/8)**
- **Rita Vidaurri CD Release with concert and dance on December 11, 2004. (p. 6)**
- **Join the MLK March on January 17, 2005. (p.12)**

La Voz de Esperanza

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

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Policy Statements:

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 Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.

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cover art:
Plate by Lucila Vicencio

Looking to the future of Esperanza...

In January of 2005, the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center completes 18 years since its doors at 1305 North Flores opened in 1987. Since then, we have mobilized a solid base of community support in San Antonio and beyond, which has allowed us to buy our own building at 922 San Pedro and successfully challenge the City of San Antonio in court when our arts funding was cut on the basis of our politics and insistence on fully being who we are. We are looking forward to continuing our work in this repressive era and want to celebrate with you our 20th anniversary in 2007.

That we have been able to survive and thrive for so long is nothing short of a miracle. The Esperanza community continues to show strength in the face of mounting reactionary forces who now, more than ever, are appropriating and openly subverting the gains of the civil rights, peace, environmental justice and labor movements. With the re-election of Bush, the path this country is on directly impacts the Esperanza.

The Esperanza board is acutely aware that funding resources are drying up and that foundations that have funded us in the past, will no longer continue to do so. The financial resources we currently have, must last us for more than the coming year. We can no longer operate as we have before and count on future funding. For the Esperanza there may be no future if we don't act now and conserve whatever resources we have.

More than ever we will be looking for support from our community both financially and in people power. We need to maximize our resources and creativity. We must look to other sources for supplies, labor and equipment. We must be prudent in our use of facilities. We must recycle, reuse, and double up. And, we must rely more on buena gente and a smaller staff if we are to survive the current climate of conservatism.

This issue of La Voz, traditionally a double issue with 24 pages, was cut back to the regular size of 16 pages, a small gesture towards beginning to conserve financial resources. Yet, in this single issue we can see the impact of systemic policies in the lives of everyday people. Policies that we continue to fight at Esperanza.

Bárbara Renaud González writes of her father's experience as a World War II veteran whose time spent fighting in the big war led to a loss of his family's land. The sacrifices he made in war have been visited upon his daughters and sons whom he abandoned in an effort to find himself in land he had lost. In his eighties, her father comes to realize that no one wins in any war. The same sentiment is echoed in the poem by Yolanda Chávez Leyva who memorializes the life of her great aunt who lived through revolution, economic crisis, immigration laws and repatriation. These same dynamics affect our daily lives today, only now in the U.S. some of those laws are called Homeland Security measures.

At eighty, Rita Vidaurri's story is one of hardship, also. While as a young woman she enjoyed fame as a recognized international singer, she now works as a nurse's aide in order to pay her mounting water and electricity bills and hold on to the modest home she keeps. In reviving her past as a singer and her struggles as a woman, the Esperanza has made a small mark against cultural erasure of this San Antonio treasure.

In an idyllic setting outside San Antonio, the people of Helotes along the Scenic Loop fight to keep Walmart at bay. A battle Mexicanos lost with a Wal-mart having been recently built within view of the sacred grounds of Tenochtitlán. A battle against commodification, globalization, and profitization which can be found in all parts of the world. A battle which is being waged over the San Antonio aquifer. A battle which is being waged on the U.S./Mexico border with the murders of young women of color. And so on.

And Frank Valdez returns us to the question of profits over people with his article detailing the legislature's plans to cut 5% in mental health services which could mean closures of the state mental hospital and the state school here, in San Antonio. Seems like the land these institutions occupy could be sold for a pretty penny down the road if only these institutions could be gotten rid of. Such disregard for human life!

We no longer believe that the abuse of people by governmental entities is inevitable. We at the Esperanza still dream of a world where everyone has civil rights, where the environment is cared for, where cultures are honored and communities are safe. In these times, the Esperanza's vision of a world safe for all seems more distant than ever before. Yet, it is in these times that our work for social justice, joined with the struggles of people around the world is more urgent than ever.

History teaches that lasting change occurs when a people are moved to action. The atrocities being committed in our name by the US government in Iraq and throughout the world move us to action. The punitive abuse of the elderly, the poor, the mentally and physically challenged, immigrants, and children by city, state and the federal government moves us to action. The devastation of our water and land, cultural heritage, neighborhoods, wages, freedom of expression moves us to action.

We refuse to continue in this cycle of abuse from systemic sources of government at all levels that disregard and disrespect our quality of life and sell out at every turn. We refuse to allow our family and community dynamics to continue to be impacted by profiteering. We refuse and we will act!

The Esperanza board invites you to help us confront the challenges that 2005 will bring. Join us in sharing our vision of hope for a better world for all. Together we can make a difference here in San Antonio and globally. Todos Somos Esperanza.



Agradecimientos por un año exitoso, 2004

Thank you for a successful year in 2004!



The Esperanza Center board and staff gratefully acknowledge the contributions made in 2004 by individuals and organizations which support our continuing work towards peace and justice. In 2005 our work will be even more challenging We encourage everyone to consider joining the ranks of monthly donors to sustain our work. We would like to also thank all of the buena gente who volunteered throughout the year at events, in the office and on the streets promoting peace, justice and an environment that secures our future .

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As 2004 ends, you can still make a tax deductible donation. Simply fill out the form on page 14 and send in your donation. Or become a monthly donor now for 2005. Call the Esperanza at 228-0201 or come by 922 San Pedro anytime. Have a peaceful holiday season and a happy beginning to the new year!

Love and peace to all in the new year. Amor y paz en 2004.

Daddy and the War

By Bárbara Renaud González

Christmas. And Daddy's remembering like the silver tinseling round and round the artificial tree.

Bien proud. Three years in the Phillipines, World War II. His sepia portrait in Army uniform, clean as a whistle in our Pine-Sol-smelly living room, next to the Honorable Discharge papers in their crooked brass frame, first thing you see shining when you walk in. And the deer antlers.

His trophies.

From the dining room, where I'm sitting beside him, they stand at attention. We can't afford turkey, but Mami's roasted chicken with the enchiladas and rice is plenty paradise. I'm the oldest of eight, and already explained to my Mexican mother and my little brothers and sisters about why the turkey and then why the pilgrims, over and over, but Mami says we're more like the Indians who sat down with them.

"And where are they now?" she asks, reminding us that the Indians in Mexico welcomed Cortéz, "Porque somos unos estúpidos!" But nobody pays attention because Daddy's talking. And he's the boss.

Real pumpkin pie. Vietnam comes after, and it's never sweet. Maybe because Ernesto, Chuy, Manny, Beto, Tony, and the others aren't coming back after the high school graduations. Except in flag-covered boxes. I'm innocent enough to ask again - why? Their families swearing *jamás!* No more *mijitos* will go over there, and I'm remembering how Beto first-kissed me because he swore it might be the last time.

Daddy always saying we should bomb the hell out of Vietnam. That it would solve everything. "See what we did to Hiroshima? Nobody invades us and gets away with it!" My father knows about fighting and communism. His thick farmer's hands the biggest and strongest, and he used them for punching, after the Big War, against anyone who looked him even cross-eyed. 'Specially someone who hadn't sacrificed like him.

My father's family comes from the King Ranch, and Daddy was born on our homeland, *la kineña*. His family, way before, owned thousands of acres, and that's why his grandfather was shot in the head, yeah, in cold blood, just like the famous picture of that general killing the Vietcong in the street, and it's the reason Daddy knows about war. The winning and the losing. We lost that one, you see. The U.S-Mexican one.

But, by golly! We were on the winning side this time.

Mami, never impressed. She's *pura mexicana*, and her father's family lost everything because of the Mexican Revolution. One million of her *paisanos* died, ten percent of Mexico's people, she says, in that *pinche guerra*. Cussing under her breath so that only I can hear. "And the rest, starving. It wouldn't have happened if the *españoles* hadn't taken all the

land like the pigs they brought with them! *¡Hijos de María Morales!*" The way she saw it, there was a price to pay sooner or later for stealing land that wasn't yours.

And that's why my family was doomed to poverty.

Someone has to pay for the sins.

No land left. That's what brought my parents together, to their *destino* on the Texas border. Both running from the wars behind them, wars swirling around them, wars, like shadows, following them, catching them.

I have two brothers who served in the Air Force and one in the Army. They didn't want to go. Jorge, at the top of his class, bored with the town's backward public school, dropped out and stole some hubcaps. That was more real than the Hitler-wannabe government teacher making him feel he didn't belong, and that's why my brother put the little snake in his drawer - it didn't rattle or anything. By that time my father and mother had five jobs between them and *peleando* all the time because there was never any money.

Besides, Daddy wanted to go back to the land. "No entiendo estos *huercos malagradecidos*, how can *la escuela* be that bad?" Now war - that was tragedy, and what did we know about it, *sinvergüenzas*. "That's right, *jefe*," my smart-mouthed brother, Jorge, shoots back, "we're not ashamed, *¿y qué?*"

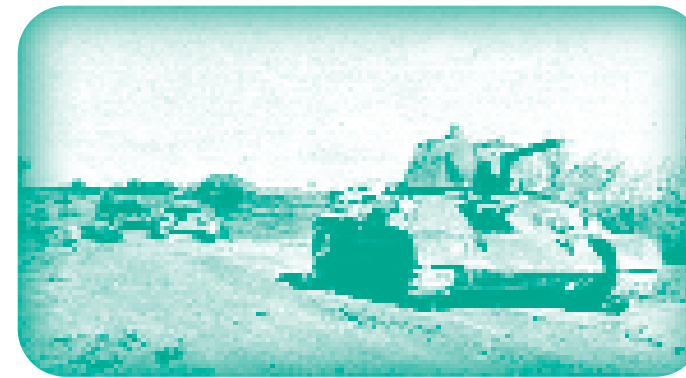
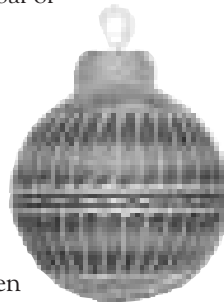
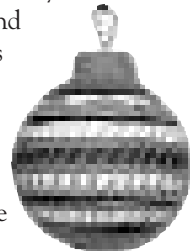
Then Carlos signed up because Daddy wasn't around to stop him. Daddy had left us for the land, calling him like a bad woman, Mami explained. Though there was a lot of crying - they were still boys and Daddy wasn't there to make them stop.

I guess later my brothers wanted to make Daddy proud, though he never returned to see them in their uniforms. But there were new pictures for the living room walls.

Después, I forced my baby brother, Estéban, to join the Air Force. Mami insisted he travel the world and this was the only way. To become a better man than my father, *ahorita*, when there was no war in sight. "Vete, *mijito*."

Besides, she couldn't afford to feed him anymore - "that's the real reason we send them away," she said, laughing, showing me the iron skillet of *carne guisada* he had just emptied. "Let the *gobierno* maintain him!" The truth was she really couldn't afford him anymore. He drank a half-gallon of milk a day and a loaf of bread too. On her minimum wages?

Before my mother died, three brothers in dress greens and blues welcoming people to her living room, prettier to look at than all the dime-store frames holding our college degrees. Just about everyone finished *el colegio* in my family, sitting around the table passing the enchiladas - and then



finally, that damn turkey, we must have looked like some kind of American dream. Only, we were wide awake in this one.

You see, Jorge went to prison after the Army. And Carlos died some years after his discharge. The military didn't help either of them get my father's attention. No. They returned with his war still raging deep inside them. No peace for my brothers.

Now, Daddy says he never wanted to go to war in the first place. He's eighty-five years old and it's high-time to tell the secrets about war, different than what you've read anywhere, he starts saying one Christmas after Mami's gone, and he keeps going.

"Never forget it, no sir." Passing around the store-bought pecan pie, his favorite. We're sitting in his cobwebby living room way out in the country. "President Roosevelt went on the radio after the bombing of Pearl Harbor with all of us young men listening to every word - and then - Roosevelt announced - that the men who were already active, yessiree, men like me.... That we would be serving for the Du-Ration of the War."

He pauses to reach for a cigarette, fingering the packet, then the lighter. Crosses his skinny legs, shakes his head, his voice scratching like that D-Day record he used to make us listen to at night when we were kids.

"We couldn't believe it." Looks at his cigarette again.

"The men just broke down, and some cried for their mothers." Not him, mind you, he was tough! The cigarette becomes a distant star in his hand. War is fear and loneliness, he warns in his crackling thunder voice after the *tormenta*.

Working, always working, sunup to sundown every day of the year. His father fighting to keep him home for the few hundred acres they had left. Daddy wanted something, though he didn't know what it was. Adventure? Daddy, the oldest of ten, said he had a dream, *es todo*. On the day he reported for duty, his father, Pedro, just shook his hand, turned around quick and never looked back.

Adios!

He had work to do.

That was the last time Daddy saw him alive.

"You know what my job was in the war?" Sighting the enemy from his tank, his brown-eagle eyes aimed into the *corazón* of the target. "Isn't that something now? Fire!" And he didn't see that other soldier's face peeling back like one of those scorched tomatoes for *salsa*, the enemy's bones melting into a bloody dough, the crispy-frying of slanted eyes from their sockets, he couldn't see them, don't you know? Didn't kill anyone, he just aimed. He, safe as a baby in the *pansa*, the blacker-than-thou

cannon in front of him, President Roosevelt himself trusting Daddy's merciless 20/20 eyes, but no one told him about the war that comes after the war. How his six sisters, panicking after their father's sudden death and their big brother's absence, finally surrendered the land he was fighting for.

Mami used to argue that it was up to the women to stop the wars of men. That the taking of land between men was something that women knew wasn't worth the life of a son. Or the rape of a daughter. Because *las mujeres* were the ones who had to live with *la memoria* of a butterfly's wings inside her.

"Men were once *mariposas*." I didn't understand her then. There is no way a mother would carry a monster inside her for nine months, she protested.

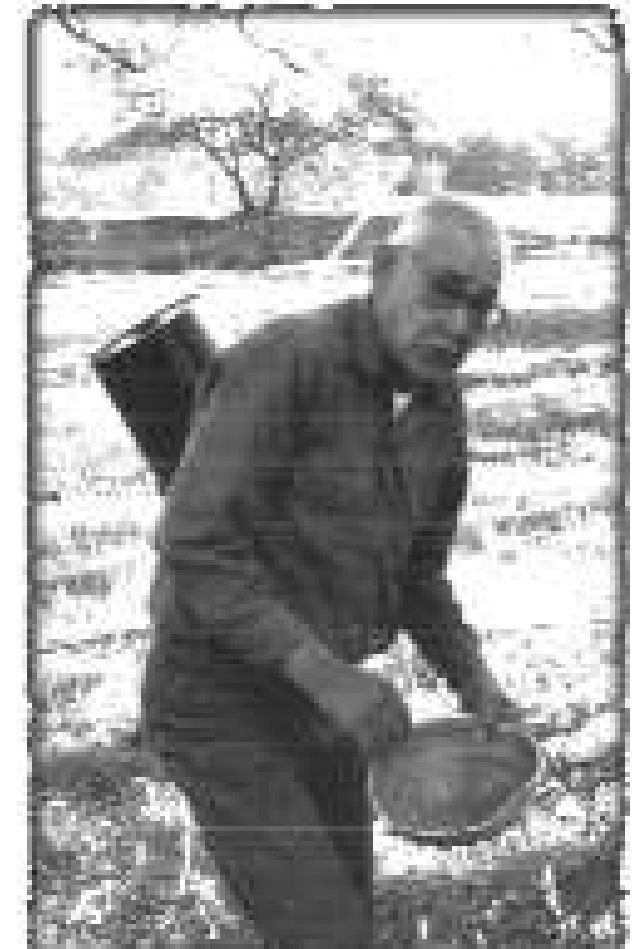
My mother, always worrying about the women on the other side of the war. "Are they eating? What about the babies? *Pobrecitas*, who will take care of them if their husbands die?" This from the kitchen, where she was always making tamales for the holidays. Mami never had a quarrel with the women in Vietnam, Panama, Cuba, Chile, then the Middle East.

The war was between her and Daddy.

"Those women love their *hijitos*, too!"

Now, Daddy says he doesn't believe in war. Watches the news late into the night when he isn't walking around the land he loves, that isn't his. Been writing my brother, Jorge, in prison for over a decade now. Tries to *ayudar* and give *consejos*, especially to Carlos's only son, Joaquín. Think he's trying to make up for not saying goodbye to my brothers, who couldn't forget Daddy had left them.

Daddy & The War continued on Page 12



This is so people will Remember

By Yolanda Chávez Leyva

In memory of my tía abuela María Jesus who died during the repatriations of the Great Depression

(1917-1931)

This is so that people will remember
That you were born in Chihuahua when the nation was at war with itself
That you were the youngest daughter of five
That you were the middle child of ten
That your eyes were green and your hair light brown
That you were the one who smiled
That your sisters told you that they loved you the most

This is so that people will remember
That you spent your short life migrating
From Chihuahua to El Paso to la Ciudad de México
That your young life was shaped by Revolution and economic crisis
And the day to day wonders
Of your mother's tortillas and your baby brother's eyes

This is so that people will remember
That your mother died when you were ten
That when your father left you
He crossed the border to drink himself to death
That your sisters cried each night alone
Missing your mother's touch, her soft gaze

This is so that people will remember
That you were not alone
That a million others joined you
Pushed out of the land of opportunity
by violence and poverty and hope that
Somewhere else would be better
Some imagining a long lost home
Others returning to a land they did not know

This is so that people will remember
That your last thoughts were of sitting at the kitchen table
Listening to your mother hum softly as she cooked
That the pain in your stomach could not drown out the memories
Of walking home from school laughing
That at the end you let go without fear

This is so that people will remember
That somewhere in this massive city lay your bones
Laid to rest so many decades ago
In an unmarked grave in the sacred ground of Tenochtitlán
That for seventy years your sisters cried
To have left you so far from home.

Mexico City,
June 29, 2004



RITA VIDAURRI



The Esperanza Center presents
La Calandria, Rita Vidaurri
in a CD Release Concert/Dance

Saturday, December 11, 2004 from 7-10 pm
at the Esperanza Center. 922 San Pedro. Call 228-0201.
Admission is a \$5-\$10 donation. CDs will sell for \$15

*He viajado por muchos países, pero siempre pensaba en mi gente la que me vió crecer
en mi San Antonio—mi gente de mi barrio, mi familia.” –Rita Vidaurri*

01 Si Me Recuerdas (Salomé Gutiérrez, R.)	04 Cuando Vivas Conmigo (José A. Jimenez)	07 Solamente Una Vez (Augustin Lara)	10 De Qué Manera Te Olvido (Federico Méndez)
02 Amor Eterno (Juan Gabriel)	05 Se Me Olvidó Otra Vez (Juan Gabriel)	08 Remordimiento (Salomé Gutiérrez, R.)	11 Miel Amarga (Cuco Sánchez)
03 Que Culpa Tengo Yo (tradicional)	06 Tonto (Ismael Armenta)	09 Echame A Mí la Culpa (Ferrequilla)	12 Penas Que Matan (Salomé Gutiérrez, R.)

La pasión en la voz de una mujer joven cantando estas canciones naturalmente evoca imagenes de amores incendidos con la locura de amantes descubriendo el ardor y la dulzura, o la traición y amargura que uno riesga en el querer. Cincuenta años despues, a los ochenta años ¿podria esta misma mujer cantar con tanta pasión? En su nuevo CD, *Rita Vidaurri, La Calandria*, Rita canta con una pasión tan profunda que uno reconoce que esta abuela ha vivido una vida llena y ha conocido toda clase de amor, no sólo el amor romántico.

Rita Vidaurri at 80 years of age sings with passion. Not the passion of a young woman who is experiencing the innocence and ardor of first love but the passion of a woman who has experienced the deepest of all loves in living a full and complete life. Her songs are infused with a love that bore her three sons who died before their time, a love for her only living daughter and a love for grandchildren. A love that allows her, at eighty, to continue to work and care for an elderly couple as a home health aide. When one hears Rita sing it is with the knowledge that “amor eterno” is one that transcends the limitations of our earth-bound life.

Actress, musician and businesswoman, Rita Vidaurri was born in 1924 in San Antonio in a neighborhood called El Callejón de Montezuma. Cantinflas, Mario Moreno, discovered her at the Teatro Nacional in San Antonio where she began singing and winning contests at the tender age of 14. She was very popular in the mid '40s to late '50s throughout Mexico as well as in Central and South America. She even toured in Cuba with “La reina, Azucar,” Celia Cruz, and the “queen of boleros,”

Olga Guillot. She performed with the likes of Tin Tán, Pedro Vargas, Trio Tariatari, Lalo González (El Piporro), Cantinflas, y muchos más. Famed Mexican signer, Lorenzo Barcelata gave her his own personal, autographed guitar and baptized her with the name of La Calandria, the songbird. Throughout México, she was also known as “La Ranchera.” In her own hometown, San Antonio, Rita was not as well known even though she was the official Jax Beer Poster girl in 1957!

As part of the Arte es Vida project of Esperanza that revives or reclaims historical and cultural memory, especially in the Westside of San Antonio, Rita Vidaurri, La Calandria, has returned to the recording studios and is releasing her first CD for her own San Antonio comunidad. En sus tiempos pasados, Rita recorded three albums and more than fifty singles. Rita will, no doubt, be remembered as one of our own Tejana queens of song with the addition of this CD to her already illustrious singing career. In fact, Rita was inducted into the National Hispanic Music Hall of Fame on October 29, 2004.

Join us for this momentous holiday performance as the Esperanza's buena gente joyfully celebrate Rita's return y conviven en un espíritu de amor. Another piece of San Antonio's cultural treasures is being restored and that is reason enough for celebration as the year 2004 comes to its end.

“La música es un alimento para nuestras almas, si estás triste o estás feliz. La música alimenta tu ser. Yo he tenido golpes muy fuertes. Como la pérdida de mis tres hijos. Sólo Dios me ha dado el consuelo. Por eso cuando canto, pongo todo mi sentimiento. -Rita

Día de La Virgen de Guadalupe, 12 de Diciembre



Coatloapeuh, She Who Has Dominion Over Serpents

El nueve de diciembre del año 1531 a las cuatro de la madrugada un pobre indio que se llamaba Juan Diego iba cruzando el cerro de Tepeyác cuando oyó un canto de pájaro. Alzó la cabeza vío que la cima del cerro estaba cubierta con una brillante nube blanca. Parada en frente del sol sobre una luna creciente sostenida por un angel estaba una azteca vestida en ropa de india. Nuestra Señora María de Coatloapeuh Se le apareció.



“Juan Dieguito, El-que-habla-como-un águila,” la Virgen le dijo en el lenguaje azteca. “Para hacer mi altar este cerro eligo. Dile a tu gente que yo soy la madre de Dios, a los indios yo les ayudaré.” Esto se lo contó a Juan Zumárraga pero el Obispo no le creyó. Juan Diego volvió, llenó su tilma con rosas de castilla creciendo milagrosamente en la nieve. Se las llevó al Obispo, y cuando abrió su tilma el retrato de la Virgen ahí estaba pintado.



Guadalupe appeared on December 9, 1531, on the spot where the Aztec goddess, *Tonantsi* (“Our Lady Mother”), had been worshipped by the Nahuas and where a temple to her had stood. Speaking Nahuatl, she told Juan Diego, a poor Indian crossing Tepeyac Hill, whose Indian name was *Cuautlaohuac* and who belonged to the mazel class, the humblest within the Chichimeca tribe, that her name was *María Coatloapeuh*. *Coatl* is the Nahuatl word for serpent. *Lopeuh* means “the one who has dominion over serpents.” I interpret this as “the one who is at one with the beasts.” Some spell her name *Coatlaxopeuh* (pronounced “Cuatlaxhupe” in Nahuatl) and say that “*xopeuh*” means “crushed or stepped on with disdain.” Some say it means “she who crushed the serpent,” with the serpent as the symbol of the indigenous religion, meaning that her religion was to take the place of the Aztec religion. Because *Coatlaxopeuh* was homophonous to the Spanish Guadalupe, the Spanish indentified her with the dark Virgin, Guadalupe, patroness of West Central Spain.

From that meeting, Juan Diego walked away with the image of la Virgen painted on his cloak. Soon after, Mexico ceased to belong to Spain, and la Virgen de Guadalupe began to eclipse all the other male and female religious figures in Mexico, Central America and parts of the U.S. southwest. “*Desde entonces para el mexicano ser Guadalupeño es algo esencial*”/Since then for the Mexican, to be a Guadalupeño is something essential.

Mi Virgen Morena	My brown virgin
Mi Virgen Ranchera	my country virgin
Eres nuestra Reina	you are our queen
México es tu tierra	Mexico is your land
Y tú su bandera.	And you its flag.

—“La Virgen Ranchera”

In 1660 the Roman Catholic Church named her Mother of God, considering her synonymous with *la Virgen María*; she became *la Santa Patrona de los mexicanos*. The role of defender (or patron) has traditionally been assigned to male gods. During the Mexican revolution, Emiliano Zapata and Miguel Hidalgo used her image to move el pueblo mexicano toward freedom. During the 1965 grape strike in Delano, California and in subsequent Chicano farmworkers’ marches in Texas and other parts of the Southwest, her image on banners heralded and united the farmworkers. *Pachucos* (zoot suiters) tattoo her

image on their bodies. Today, in Texas and Mexico she is more venerated than Jesus or God the Father. In the Lower Rio Grande valley of south Texas it is *la Virgen de San Juan de los Lagos* (an aspect of Guadalupe) that is worshipped by thousands every day at her shrine in San Juan. In Texas she is considered the patron saint of Chicanos. *Cuando Carito, mi hermanito*, was missing in action and, later, wounded in Viet Nam, mi mamá got on her knees y le prometió a Ella que si su hijito volvía vivo she would crawl on her knees and light novenas in her honor.

Today, La Virgen de Guadalupe is the single most potent religious, political and cultural image of the Chicano/mexicano. She, like my race, is a synthesis of the old world and the new, of the religion and culture of the two races in our psyche, the conquerors and the conquered. She is the symbol of the mestizo true to his or her Indian values. *La cultura chicana* identifies with the mother (Indian) rather than with the father (Spanish). Our faith is rooted in indigenous attributes, images, symbols, magic and myth.

Because Guadalupe took upon herself the psychological and physical devastation of the conquered and oppressed indio, she is our spiritual, political and psychological symbol. As a symbol of hope and faith, she sustains and insures our survival. The Indian, despite extreme despair, suffering and near genocide, has survived. To Mexicans on both sides of the border, Guadalupe is the symbol of our rebellion against the rich, upper and middleclass; against their subjugation of the poor and the indio.

Guadalupe unites people of different races, religions, languages: Chicano protestants, American Indians and whites. “*Nuestra abogada siempre serás*”/Our mediatrix you will always be.” She mediates between the Spanish and the Indian cultures (or three cultures as in the case of mexicanos of African or other ancestry) and between Chicanos and the white world. She mediates between humans and the divine, between this reality and the reality of spirit entities. La Virgen de Guadalupe is the symbol of ethnic identity and of the tolerance for ambiguity that Chicanos-mexicanos, people of mixed race, people who have Indian blood, people who cross cultures, by necessity possess.

-excerpted from *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* by Gloria Anzaldúa first published in 1987 by Aunt Lute Books, pp. 27-31 (1st edition), section entitled, “Coatloapeuh, She Who Has Dominion Over Serpents.”

In Honor of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe

The Esperanza Center invites you to:

La Virgen Morena
Mujerartes
exhibit / art sale
Sunday,
December 12th,
9am - 6pm
1422 El Paso St.



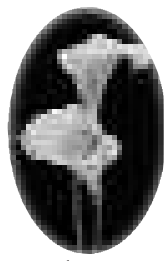
In Memoriam



Recordamos al joven **Mario David Sánchez**, 23 years of age, who died unexpectedly of a brain aneurysm on Saturday, November 27, 2004. Mario, a SAC student in the media arts, had graciously taken part in Esperanza's El Rebozo de Caramelo in March, 2004. He lived his life as a caballero showing respect to his elders and infused with cultura. A dreamer, Mario was searching for a direction in his life and had begun trying out different paths including a stint in the Navy and more recently, filmmaking. Mario grew up in the company of his father, Bill Sánchez and little brother, Alejandro. Our deepest sympathy to his family, most especially to Bill and Alejandro.



The Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice and the Esperanza Center mourns the tragic death of **Fannyann Eddy**, an outspoken lesbian activist brutally murdered by assailants who broke into the office of the Sierra Leone Lesbian & Gay Association in Freetown while she worked alone one evening. Fannyann, 30 years old, leaves a nine-year-old son. Katherine Acey, Astraea's Executive Director, issued the following statement: "A source of light and life for colleagues and activists around the world, Fannyann's conviction and passion for justice will be sorely missed. May her memory be a blessing and a source of strength for those who continue to work for LGBTI justice around the world." Photo courtesy of Lorena Espinoza



ROGER A. FLORES, II, former District I councilperson in San Antonio, died on November 21, 2004. During his tenure, the councilman was considered a friend to the Esperanza, visiting the center and participating in some events. Roger took the Esperanza Center seriously and listened to concerns brought before him. On the streets and at the Little Mitla restaurant, one of his establishments, Roger was always quick to greet and talk to Esperanza community members. A gentleman who did his best to represent community interests, Councilman Flores will be missed. Esperanza extends our deepest sympathy to his beloved wife, Evangelina, his son Roger III, currently on the Council and the rest of his family members.

WAL*MART® A threat to a way of life

By Nicole Lessin

When I moved to Grey Forest, I was immediately charmed by its quirky character - lopsided, houses built on 1920s summer cabins, a spring-fed public swimming hole and abundant Hill Country beauty of live oaks, songbirds and caliche.

The small businesses of the surrounding area add to the environment. Down the road a bit is the designated landmark honky tonk - John T. Floore Country Store - where Willie Nelson got his start. Closer still is the scenic Grey Moss Inn - the oldest continuously running restaurant in Central Texas - where you can still eat the same southern squash casserole that Mary Howell, the original owner, made when she opened the rock-faced inn in 1929.

That inn, along with a dotting of bed and breakfasts, stables and small ranches, is on Scenic Loop Road - a focal point of my community. Originally an American Indian trail, then a stagecoach route from the railroad in Leon Springs to Helotes, this winding, tree-lined gateway to the Hill Country lives up to its name. Each week, hundreds of bicyclists and ecotourists flock to pay homage to the road's natural beauty, made all the more special by its proximity to the city.

That's all about to change if a powerful conglomerate gets its way. An enormous Wal-Mart Supercenter is planned on Bandera Road at the mouth of Scenic Loop. How this behemoth would impact our community is predictable. According to the book "Slam Dunking Wal-Mart" by Tom Coughlin, the effects will be swift and lethal. A majority of our small businesses will be lost. Scenic Loop will be straightened and widened to accommodate a new snarl of traffic. Twenty-four hour lights will illuminate the once dark skies, destroying our ability to see stars. Endangered cave invertebrates will be threatened, and a gas station will sit over our increasingly taxed and fragile aquifer. But most important, we will lose the uniqueness of our community - and once lost, it will be gone forever.

I've heard rumors that Wal-Mart is offering the city of Helotes a new fire truck. That makes me laugh because whatever Wal-Mart may have promised cannot equal what we will sacrifice. A fiesty group of Helotes and Grey Forest residents has banded together recently to fight this threat to our unique community. They have even created a website (www.helotes-heritage.org) detailing all the ways citizens can get involved - from attending a planning meeting to writing a letter to our elected officials. Some in the local media have called ours a David Vs. Goliath battle, and some people write us off. But seeing the way hundreds of people of all ages and backgrounds have quickly come together, fanning out into the streets for petition drives and pooling resources, gives me great hope. We will succeed in preserving our quirky slice of heaven for future generations.

Nicole Lessin, is a resident of Grey Forest. For more info. go to www.helotes-heritage.org

Texas Mental Health Service Facilities in Jeopardy

By Frank Valdez



On October 28th the Texas State Health & Human Services Commission held a public hearing related to a feasibility study on closing state mental health and mental retardation facilities. Approximatley 175-200 consumers, elected officials, mental health professionals and state hospital workers were in attendance. NO ONE spoke in favor of closing either the state school or the state hospital. Senator Leticia Van de Putte lambasted the HHSC commissioners for even considering the notion of closing the state hospital.

This feasibility study was mandated by House Bill 2292, a controversial law passed last year by the state legislature. (In San Antonio, House Bill 2292 could mean both our local state hospital and state school for the mentally ill will be shut down.) 2292 basically reduced the number of individuals eligible for public mental health services by requiring consumers to have diagnoses of either schizophrenia, biplar disorder or major depressive disorder with suicidal ideation. Even with these diagnoses individuals can be denied services if they are deemed to not be seriously ill!

As a result of this absurdity, counties such as Travis, Galveston and Harris are reporting that their county emergency rooms are absorbing those rejected by the state and local mental health authorities. Harris reported an almost double increase in mental health emergency room patients! Stats for Bexar county are "unavailable."

H.B. 2292 also mandates studies to be done by the state regarding privatization of state facilities and/or closures. By closing facilities, the state not only would save money on payroll and services, but could sell the properties, ranging in value from \$17,500 to \$15 million. In addition, contracting services out to private entities could yield profits for big business.

Joe Lovelace, Executive Director of NAMI TX in Austin, seems to think that 2292 is the best thing since sliced bread. The Texas Mental Health Consumers, the Texas Psychiatric Society and the Mental Association in Texas all opposed 2292 along with the Texas State Employees Union. Locally, we are organizing speakers and activists to go to Austin this upcoming legislative session to undo the damage imposed on us by 2292. It is imperative that everyone join us in this fight!

Editor's note: Scheduled hearings on this issue are available from Tom Valentine's office at the Texas Health and Human Service Commission. Public comment about why we must keep the San Antonio State Hospital and San Antonio State School can be documented there. Contact: tom.valentine@hhsc.state.tx.us; [512] 424-6529) to register comments or get information. Valentine reports to the Texas Legislature in December. Texas

ranks near the bottom of the 50 states in mental health spending (47th), so nothing can be gained by these proposed cuts. For more on the "feasibility study" see http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/news/announce/060404_Rider55_HB1.html Call your legislators and make your voice heard!

-Frank Valdez is a current board member of NAMI San Antonio, a founder of the local TMHC chapter and veteran social justice activist for the past 36 years. He can be reached at: mentalhealthjustice@yahoo.com or 732-5181x42.

**MEETING
FOR
MENTAL HEALTH
ADVOCATES
806 S. ZARZAMORA
(CHCS MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC)
SATURDAY,
DECEMBER 11TH
@
10:30 A.M.
GUEST SPEAKER:
MIKE HALLIGAN,
TEXAS MENTAL HEALTH
CONSUMERS
Susan Beattie, 341-4979
Frank Valdez, 785-9994
NAMI San Antonio Board of Directors**



March with
the Esperanza
for
Peace & Justice
January 17,
2005
at the
Martin Luther
King Jr.
March.

March begins at 10 am at the Eastside Boys & Girls Club on Martin Luther King Drive
This year the March ends at Pittman-Sullivan Park on New Braunfels.

Featured speaker: Rev. Joseph Lowery (Southern Christian Leadership Conference)
Featured artists: The Canton Spirituals Gospel Choir

(Call 228-0201 for specific meet-up instructions for our group or to volunteer)

• *Daddy & The War* continued from Page 5 •

Daddy never saying, *te quiero mijito*. ¡Adiós!

And when we're alone late at night and he's had a beer or two, Daddy whispers the *cuentos* of other wars he's heard and seen, the rope coiling around his great-grandfather's neck, like the Indian woman's freshly-cut baby's *ombliigo* dangling on the gringo's sword, the gut-smoke of boots making smiles on his grandfather's back, and his uncles answering with the cocksure grin of a pistol.

A storming of fists on the fathers and then their fists raining down on the sons and their sons and their sons' sons, to the *chicote's* lightning whip on me and my brothers, our family legacy almost destroying us. So that each one of us is like a cracked ornament on a tree strung together *todo rasquache* by someone who doesn't believe in Christmas. ...Until now.

"Don't get medals for surviving, just fighting in it," Daddy says from the vinyl yellow kitchen chair he's moved outdoors to study the December sky.

Another cigarette. Everybody smoked in the Big One.

He tells us he's eighty-five, again. We're all sitting around him, just listening to the crickets and frogs, scratching off the mosquito bites, watching the mangy dogs he's adopted. In this family, we've lost so much I guess that we keep trying to win at love.

Daddy's talking, talking about Bush and Iraq. He watches all the news and the Dallas Cowboys. And he doesn't have to say he's sorry, we know. It's in his rusty shoulders trembling like the abandoned rottweiler that shadows him. Like when we leave him at the end of the day.

"No one wins at war," he reminds us when we leave.

Se acabó.

Estéban, the youngest, visits him all the time. He was six years old when Daddy left us. Mami and me raised him to be different, and when the Air Force tried to make him an officer, he went and got a Ph.D instead.

After the holiday *comida*, Estéban and Daddy always stay outside together. Searching for the winter star shining on the land that isn't ours anymore, but is.

A holy land, like the heart.

Bárbara Renaud Gonzáles is a free lance writer currently working on her first novel. This story was originally written for the Express-News where Bárbara was featured as a contributing columnist until her writings became too controversial after 9-11 at which time she was threatened with censure. After a couple of years, she was invited to write again. She submitted this story which was turned down without explanation.

¡Vale! A Random Critic's Look at the Arts

Ray, A Motion Picture Worth Seeing

By Frank Valdez

"The soul that is within me, no man can degrade."
- Frederick Douglas

On October 29th I took the day off work and spent much needed time alone with my wife Sheila. Since the birth of Francisco, our two-year-old son, we do not get much time alone anymore. After she completed her early voting (we voted for Kerry) we took in a movie at the nearby Bijou on Fredericksburg. Having seen the previews and critiques, we chose to see Ray starring Jamie Fox. Fox a native of Terrell, Texas has come a long way since his role as Homie the Clown.



The story begins with Ray as a young child in Florida during the 1930's. He witnesses the accidental drowning of his little brother, George. This trauma is one that haunts him the rest of his life. Not long after, Ray becomes blind. Much to Ray's good fortune, his mother Aretha Robinson a poor, single mom teaches him to be self-sufficient. While Ms. Robinson lacked formal education she had the insight to see that when one raises a child with special needs, you do not coddle that child and make the child a victim. She taught him that he could learn to survive and succeed, if he so chose.

Ray Charles was a musical genius who met with success because of his God given talent to take any form of music and make it sound good. He made his name in R&B, but easily fit in with Jazz, Blues, Country & Western, even Rock and Roll; and he did things with Gospel that only Ray Charles could do. Ray's music sounds good and like no one else's. Ray Charles not only became wealthy, he became a respected pianist, singer and composer throughout the world. He was truly a musical legend.

The trauma of his brother's death and the unwarranted guilt he experienced had a serious impact on his psyche which led him to a heroin addiction, compulsive sexual flings with numerous women and the consequences of such self destructive behaviors. Ray Charles did not know how to handle his demons and chose to deal with them through dope and sex, not unlike many of us who have also attempted to numb our pain with alcohol, dope, food, gambling, sex, etc.

Only after Ray was threatened with imprisonment for smuggling heroin from Canada into the U.S. did he finally hit rock bottom and come to realize that he, indeed, needed help. Through



detoxification, serious soul searching and therapy Ray Charles was finally able to understand who he really was. He came to understand that he was not responsible for his brother's accidental death and that his mother's teaching him to set high standards for himself and not be dependent on others was done for a reason. His talent blended well with his mother's lessons and he became a true success, only after he addressed the demons that were destroying him.

Another lesson that helped Ray Charles come to understand himself was when he had a change of heart about playing before a segregated audience in Georgia during the 60's. Initially, he was going to ignore the pleas of local civil rights activists, but the racist remarks from the White promoter and the words from his friend and colleague Quincy Jones helped Ray realize that Jim Crow was not his cup of tea and he did not need money under those circumstances. For standing up to Jim Crow, Ray was banned from ever performing again in the state of Georgia. From that point on he refused to perform before segregated audiences in the U.S. (Charles did perform in South Africa in 1981 despite advice to the contrary). The incident in Georgia also led Ray to meet and befriend the late Dr. Martin Luther King and this friendship led to his involvement in the civil rights movement.

Ray educates the audience to the real Ray Charles and what made him tick. Ray Charles, like any one of us, was a person made up of flesh and bones, emotions and needs. Despite his fame and fortune he did not truly become successful until he was finally able to fully understand who he was and what his true mission in life was all about.

In my humble opinion Ray should get at least a nomination for an Academy Award.

I base this opinion on three things: 1) Jamie Fox's portrayal of Ray Charles was superb. As mentioned before, Fox must now be considered a great dramatic actor.

2) The music in this motion picture included many of Ray Charles' greatest hits. Even if you aren't familiar with his music, you will want to dance upon hearing it.

3) The tragedy, the glory and the lessons of life that Ray Charles experienced made even this old, hardened goat get teary eyed. Any motion picture that can make you cry out of joy as well as out of sadness is one that was excellently done! Surely Jamie Fox will get a Golden Globe award and maybe even a Screen Actors Guild Award. That's how good Ray is. If you enjoy movies based on true stories and if you enjoy the music of Brother Ray Charles, then Ray is one movie that you do not want to miss!

-Frank Valdez, a frequent writer for La Voz has been a social justice activist since 1965.

First photo: C.J. Sanders as Young Ray Charles & Robert Wilson as Jack Lauderdale.

Second photo: Jamie Fox as Ray Charles. Photos courtesy of Universal Pictures.

Editor's Note: Anyone can be a random critic - just send in your review of any arts event.

Community Meetings

Amnesty International #127 meets the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm at Ashbury United Methodist. Call 829-0397.

Bexar County Green Party meets first Sundays at 2 pm at Picante Grill, 3810 Broadway.

DIGNITY S.A. holds mass Sundays at 5:15 pm at St. Ann's. Call 735-7191.

Fuerza Unida is located at 710 New Laredo Hwy. Call 927-2297 for information.

Habitat for Humanity holds Volunteer Orientation on first Tuesdays at First Presbyterian Church, 404 N. Alamo, Rm 302 at 6 pm.

Parents/Friends of Lesbians/ Gays (PFLAG) meets the first Thursday of each month at 7pm at the Resource Center, 121 W. Woodlawn. Call 655-2383.

Proyecto Hospitalidad Liturgy meets on Thursdays at 7 pm at 325 Courtland. Call 736-3579.

San Anto MEXA meets on Tuesdays at 6:30 pm at the Esperanza Center. Contact: www.sanantomexa.org or mexa@riseup.net

San Antonio NOW meets the fourth Wednesday of each month at La Madeline on Broadway (across from Central Market) at 6:30pm. Call: 210/673-8600 Mail: Box 34551, 78265-4551

The Shambhala Buddhist Meditation Center offers meditation instruction on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7pm and Sundays at 11:30 am. Practice is on Tuesdays

and Thursdays at 7pm and on Sundays from 9:30 am-12:30 pm at 1114 South St. Mary's. Call 222-9303.

The Society of Friends meets on Sundays at 10 am at The Friends Meeting House, 7052 N. Vandiver. Call 945-8456.

The Society of Latino and Hispanic Writers of San Antonio meets on the 2nd Monday of the month @ 7:00 pm to discuss craft and publishing concerns specific to Latinos at Barnes and Nobles, San Pedro Crossing (across Loop 410 from North Star Mall). Open to the public.

Solidarity: Peer Support for Mental Health Consumers, meets the first and third Saturdays at 10:30 am at the Travis Park United Methodist Church, Rm 210. Call 734-7527.

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

S.N.A.P. (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests) meets the last Wednesday of each month at 7 pm at 1443 S. St. Mary's. Call 725-8329.

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

Voice for Animals meets the last Saturday of each month in the meeting room of Whole Foods Market in the Quarry from 3 - 5 p.m. Call 737-3138 or visit www.voiceforanimals.org

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

Call us at 228.0201 to sign-up with our electronic direct deposit program or to access employment site codes.

Todos somos esperanza...

I would like to donate \$ _____ /month by automatic bank withdrawal. I intend to do so by _____

I would like to send \$ _____ each _____ month _____ quarter _____ twice-monthly _____ through the mail.

- I would like to do a donation of _____
- _____ \$1000
 - _____ \$500
 - _____ \$250
 - _____ \$100
 - _____ \$50
 - _____ \$25
 - _____ \$15 La Voz subscription
 - _____ \$10
 - _____ other \$ _____

I would like to volunteer!

Name _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Phone Number _____

Make checks payable to the Esperanza Peace & Justice Center, 922 San Pedro, Suite 201, San Antonio, TX 78212. Donations are tax deductible.

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.

ATTENTION HOLIDAY SHOPPERS! **The Esperanza Center** at 922 San Pedro still has many gift items for sale including rebozos, artesanía, books, bumper stickers, T-shirts, CDs y más! Come by between 9 am and 6 pm daily to peruse our merchandise and support the Esperanza Center. Call 228-0201 to ask about specific items.

Also, the UFW offers online shoppers a nice selection of items to buy. Visit <http://www.ufwstore.com> to order.

IUE-CWA, Local 780 is sponsoring a **Christmas Scholarship Fundraiser & Dance** with Live Music by The Liberty And DJ at La Villita Assembly Hall on Sunday December 12, 2004. Doors will open at 7 pm. Donations for \$20 are requested. For info call the César E. Chávez Union Hall at 210-226-2301.

The Centro de Español y Lenguas Mayas invites you to study Spanish or Tzotzil in Oventic, located in the highlands of Chiapas, 45 minutes from San Cristobal de las Casas. Oventic is home to one of five Juntas of Good Government, established by Zapatista communities in August 2003 as an expression of autonomy and genuine democracy. Tuition is three days minimum wage in the country of origin (US\$144 per week or US\$192 for Tzotzil) and includes food and lodging. Tuition supports the regional autonomous secondary school in Oventic where indigenous youth prepare as education promoters. Contact the **Mexico Solidarity Network** at 773-583-7728 or msn@mexicosolidarity.org.

Join upcoming delegations to Chiapas to learn about the new Zapatista "Good Government" structure. Earlier this year the International Red Cross pulled out of Chiapas to move operations to Iraq, leaving behind 8,000 internally displaced refugees surrounded by the army and paramilitary forces without access to food and emergency medical care.

Delegations are sponsored by the **Mexico Solidarity Network**. Check our website: <http://www.mexicosolidarity.org/future.html> The New Year's delegation is scheduled December 26-January 2, 2004. Contact 415/621-8100 or check the website at msn@mexicosolidarity.org

ALLGO in Austin presents *Claiming and Honoring Your Spirit* a workshop on expressing spirit through cultural art and self-healing by Rose Twofeathers on January 8, 2005 from 1-3 pm in the ALLGO Community Room, 701 Tillery St. in Austin. Call 512/472-2001.

ALLGO also presents *¡Orale! Fear of a Brown Nation: a manifesto for defending yourself and changing the world* on January 15, 2005 from 1-3 pm in the ALLGO Community Room, 701 Tillery St. in Austin. Bárbara Renaud González and Rich Martínez will be speaking about the book they are currently editing which takes on the allegation put forth by Samuel P. Huntington that Latinos constitute a major potential threat to this country's cultural and political integrity. Call 512/472-2001 for more.

The second annual "activist scholarship" conference, **Abriendo Brecha/Haciendo Camino** will be held at the University of Texas at Austin, on February 24-26, 2005. Registration online is at: <http://www.utexas.edu/depts/cmas/abriendobrecha/register.html> Registration deadline is Thursday, February 10, 2005. Contact: Dolores at doloresg@mail.utexas.edu or call 512/475-6973. Or check: 512/475-6973 or <http://www.utexas.edu/depts/cmas>

Two forthcoming issues of **Ventana Abierta** will be published on (February and August 2005) dedicated to the diverse aspects of today's Latino literature in the U.S. We are asking for collaborations (poems, short stories and essays not longer than 6 pages, double spaced). The deadline to submit manuscripts to be considered are

December 31st and June 30th. We are asking you to, please, renew your subscription or make a new one. Contact Luis Leal or Victor Fuentes at (805) 893-3895 for information.

The **AARP Foundation's SCSEP-Bexar County Program** is finding permanent jobs for seniors age 55 and older faster than they can enroll them. The program helps seniors who qualify under the income guidelines to sharpen their skills, obtain needed job training and find a job. Please contact the SCSEP-Bexar Project Director, Eva Trevino Garcia, at 210.223.7588 for information. The office is located at 1325 N. Flores, Suite 106, in San Antonio across the street from M.K. Davis Restaurant. If you're a non-profit organization or a private business interested in knowing how you might work with the program, please also contact Ruperto Garcia at AARP Foundation SCSEP-Bexar County located at 1325 N. Flores, Suite 108 in San Antonio, TX. Call 210/473-2566.

Puentes de Palabras



...bridging gaps with our words

First Monday Letter Writing
 La Casa de Cuentos,
 816 S. Colorado St. on the Westside

During the last few years, funding for cultural arts centers in our country has declined rapidly. The representation of cultural arts by the media has become distorted and biased in many cases. In response to this crisis, our mission is to support the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center and serve the larger community through meaningful communication by writing letters to raise money for the Esperanza and by responding to media on issues that affect our community.

Give our community hope through your enthusiasm, commitment and dedication.

Call 373-5947 for the New Year's schedule.



Join the Esperanza on Monday, January 17th as we march for Peace and Justice at the 2005 Martin Luther King Jr. March.

The March begins at 10 am at the Eastside Boys & Girls Club on Martin Luther King Drive. This year the March ends at Pittman-Sullivan Park on New Braunfels.

(Call 228-0201 for specific meet-up instructions for our group or to volunteer)

La Voz de Esperanza



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7pm to 10pm

Esperanza Center

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228.0201

Miel Amarga

Se Me Olvidó Otra Vez

Amor Eterno

Si Me Recuerdas

Cuando Vivas Conmigo