

La VOZ de Esperanza

San Antonio, Texas • April 2005 • vol. 18 issue 3 •



The Killing Fields of Texas



“Weapons of Mass Destructions” in the Bodegas of Mission, TX.

La Voz de Esperanza

© 2005 Esperanza Peace & Justice Center.
All Rights Reserved.

Editor

Gloria A. Ramírez

Layout • Design

Estevan H. Arredondo

Contributors

Amy Kastely, Alejandro Pérez, Iris Salinas

La Voz Collective

Sebastian Ramírez, Inez Valdez,
Imelda Maldonado, Buena Gente
y MujerARTES

Esperanza Director

Graciela I. Sánchez

Esperanza Staff

Elizandro Carrington,
Jessica Fuentes,

Cindy Rodríguez, René Saenz

Esperanza Board

David Zamora Casas,

Anel Flores, Amy Kastely,

Michael Marínez, Marcos Márquez,

Kamala Platt, Gloria A. Ramírez

& Rudy Rosales

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

Inquiries/articles can be sent to:

lavoz@esperanzacenter.org

or mail to:

La Voz de Esperanza,

is a publication of

The Esperanza

Peace & Justice Center

922 San Pedro, San Antonio, TX 78212

(on the corner of Evergreen Street)

210.228.0201 • fax 210.228.0000

www.esperanzacenter.org

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 Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.

Esperanza is funded in part by the Americans for the Arts Foundation/Animating Democracy, Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation, Funding Exchange, National Endowment for the Arts, Open Society Foundation's Southern Initiative, Public Welfare Foundation, Alice Kleberg R. M. Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Southern Funding Collaborative, Texas Commission on the Arts, and la buena gente de nuestra comunidad.

cover art: Photo of Bodega in Mission, TX.

The San Antonio Mayor's Race -An Illusion of Democracy

editorial by Amy Kastely

On the surface, the race for Mayor looks historic. We have three leading candidates. Each appears to represent a distinct point in the political spectrum. Schubert identifies as a Conservative Republican. He is middle-aged and white, was raised on a cotton and grain farm; teaches Sunday School at Alamo Heights United Methodist Church, and likes to hunt. He attended Texas A & M. and UT-Austin, served in the army, worked as a prosecutor, and worked for Valero Energy Corp. He represents district 9 on City Council.

Hardberger is a white liberal Democrat who, in the early 1960s, helped to develop the Peace Corps and the War on Poverty. His career has included work in Mexico, working as a personal injury lawyer, and service as Chief Justice on the Court of Appeals. He likes to fly airplanes, climb mountains, and captain his 42 foot sailboat.

Castro is a young Latino raised in San Antonio by his mother Rosie Castro, a well-known Chicana community activist. He was also educated in the public schools of San Antonio. He and his twin brother went to Stanford and Harvard Law School returning home to work in private law firms and run for elected city and state offices. Both are gaining national attention as rising stars in the Democratic Party. Castro represents District 7 on the City Council.

With this lineup, you would expect lively debate on public policy. Instead, the candidates promote almost identical positions on every topic they discuss: all support the Southside Initiative, PGA Village, a Tax freeze for all elderly (primarily benefitting wealthy homeowners), and the ACCD plan to build a nursing/health campus in the Northside. All say a Public Rail System would be good but isn't possible now. All agree that the city should not challenge: developers, claims to Vested Rights exemptions from Aquifer and Tree protection laws. All celebrate Toyota and Economic Development with Good Jobs and avoid talking about Universal Living Wages. On Government Reform, all call for greater integrity, efficiency and cooperation with the county. All say that Culture /Art /Parks are important; Hardberger emphasizes park maintenance.

Why does this happen? Why do three people with such different political backgrounds end up promoting almost identical platforms? The standard explanation by political commentators is that politicians must "pander to popular opinion," shaping their positions to the views of a majority of voters. While this explanation is mildly critical, hinting that "popular opinion" is uniform, it tends to portray elected officials in a very positive light, as responsive and accountable to the people.

But is this true? Do the candidates reflect the views of most people in

ATTENTION VOZ READERS: If you have a correction you want to make on your mailing label please send it in to lavoz@esperanzacenter.org If you do not wish to continue on the mailing list for whatever reason please notify us as well. La Voz is provided as a courtesy to people on the mailing list of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. **The subscription rate is now \$30 per year.** The cost of producing and mailing La Voz has substantially increased and we need your help to keep it afloat. To help, send in your subscriptions, sign up as a monthly donor, or send in a donation to the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. Thank you. -GAR

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.

Mayoral candidates for San Antonio - 2005



Hardberger



Castro



Schubert

San Antonio? National surveys report an interesting fact: when the surveys focus on actual government policies, they find that most elected politicians promote policies supported by business leaders rather than those favored by the majority of voters in their constituencies. Universal health care, for example, is favored by an overwhelming majority of U.S. voters. Yet, very few elected officials promote universal health care, because it is strongly opposed by the insurance industry and dismissed as “socialist” by most business leaders. The same is true for public transportation, inner city revitalization, education, and environmental protection policies. **Over and over, we see elected officials promoting the views of business leaders rather than those of the voters.**

Ok, for readers of La Voz, this is not surprising. Politicians need money for campaigns and the support of powerful people, especially if they have ambitions for higher office. Moreover, the close-knit business, financial, and media community in San Antonio have shown that they can undermine politicians who threaten their interests not only by withholding support but also by soiling their reputations and undermining their effectiveness.

This is where the process gets complicated and is less widely recognized. The news media treats politics as a drama of personalities, focusing on the “horse-race” of election campaigns. Candidates can uniformly advocate policies supported by the business community because the media won’t focus on those issues anyway. With such limited information, voters have to elect the candidate whose public image is most attractive to them. And here’s the kicker: following the election, the media and political leaders interpret the election results to be an endorsement of the positions advocated by the winner! Political commentators explain that the successful candidate has correctly read the will of the people and, like it or not, democracy has prevailed.

This interpretation is so pervasive and self-fulfilling that an individual politician may not even see any difference between the views advocated by the business community and those favored by a majority of voters - past elections show that there is no difference! From this view, politicians would then see activists who criticize and protest city policies as isolated or disgruntled

extremists.

Like institutionalized racism, sexism, and homophobia, this process is insidious and self-sustaining. Most voters conclude that the voting process is corrupt and not worth even the effort of voting- in 2001 only 15 % of eligible voters voted in the hotly contested mayoral race, in 2003 voter turnout was 5.5%. When actual policies are on the ballot, voters do express their views, but the results are often discounted or discredited by business and political leaders (plenty of examples of that in S.A.!), as when Mayor Garza pronounced that the vote rejecting his Charter Amendment proposals was flawed because the voters got “confused” by having more than one proposal on the ballot.

The outcome for San Antonio is bleak, yet sadly predictable. The downtown will continue to sink into a kind of back alley to the Riverwalk’s profitable yet superficial tourist trade. Aquifer water will be polluted and the people of San Antonio will pay increasingly high prices for processed and imported water. Some employers will stay in San Antonio as long as the relatively low wage scale is maintained, while those needing a more skilled labor force will avoid the city because of its poor educational system and limited cultural offerings.

Another future is possible. The city could use Federal Empowerment Zone money and city development funds to revitalize the downtown and surrounding communities with small businesses, active community spaces, and genuine employment opportunities. We could nurture the rich cultural arts and “ambientes” of San Antonio’s diverse communities. We could use the city’s existing powers to limit suburban sprawl and retain a fair allocation of tax obligations. We could ensure a living wage for all workers. We could have a clean and efficient public transportation system. We could preserve the Edwards Aquifer, one of the world’s largest and most productive sources of fresh water. We could make San Antonio into a city that enhances community life and thus enriches the life of each resident.

All of this can happen, but only if we find and support politicians with insight and courage.

Bio: Amy Kastely is a boardmember of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center.

Letter to the Editor:

Your publication truly offers hope and a forum from which one can express often suppressed views on politics and social issues. I would like to thank you for publishing my poem, *Babylonia*, in the September issue and hope that you might consider another poem, *Shalom*, for publication. In this poem I have attempted to express my views on the current administration's foreign policies, in this instance, in the Middle East. I have lived and worked for a number of years in the region and firmly believe that our foreign policy decisions should be based on humanitarian concerns and social justice, not on short-term economic gains. Most long-term changes, whether political or cultural, come from the people and evolve over time. We are all partners in today's global society and as such should participate in global dialogue, not make unilateral decisions for other nations.

- Janet Lassiter

Shalom

By Janet Lassiter

Checks and balances
in a world-wide game of chess
give way to checklists:
Dichotomies of resistance.

West Bank settlements
Jerusalem
El Quads
Enclosed ghettos
Fenceless crossings

Societies governed by cultural norms
from within.

Flown in democracies
ignite,
not unite.

In Memoriam 'Lalo' Guerrero,

known as the father of Chicano music died on March 17, 2005 in Palm Springs, California at the age of 88. He was conferred the Medal of Arts by



President Clinton (1997) and received numerous honors throughout his life. From children's songs, to Pachuco boogie, to corridos, to rancheras and romantic boleros - Lalo's music was recognized throughout Latin America, Europe and the Caribbean. He is credited with the creation of more than 700 songs. He wrote "corridos" honoring the likes of Robert Kennedy and César Chávez and he created the singing cartoon characters, Las Ardillitas. Mexico's unofficial national anthem, "Canción Mexicana" was written by Guerrero and his Pachuco boogie inspired the film musical, *Zoot Suit*. He also acted in movies with stars like Gene Autry and Jane Russell. His social conscience was reflected in his music and songs like *Wake Up Chicanos* and *No Chicanos on TV*. Lalo performed up until his mid-80s oftentimes benefiting a cause, group or individual. Gracias, Don Lalo por una vida ejemplar.



Toll free: 1-8770-END-AIDS

Join the co-chair of the:

March and Campaign to End AIDS

**Charles King
Housing Works, NYC**

**Friday, April 8, 2005
Time TBA**

Esperanza Peace and Justice Center

922 San Pedro

228.0201

**Jointly sponsored by
San Antonio AIDS Foundation
And Esperanza**

The campaign aims to galvanize the US AIDS movement and other progressive activists who feel beaten down by Bush's re-election, by budget cuts, and conservative attacks on our community.

The Killing Fields of Texas

By: Iris Salinas

"We look to the skies with tears in our eyes and pray for miracles."

Bush points the media and the public to look overseas for weapons of mass destruction. We know where they are. They are here, buried here in the dirt, in his own home state.

...and he personally knew about it when he was just the governor of Texas.

Over six years ago, Maria Ester Salinas stumbled upon a major discovery that would dramatically change not only her life, but also the lives of thousands of people in the deep South Texas town of Mission. She uncovered a massive plot by the federal, state, and local agencies of government, who were working in conjunction with each other, to hide the largest human and environmental disaster in North America.

In the 40's, bodegas (warehouses) were built in the middle of the Mexican-American side of town. Railroads were built through the neighborhoods to ship and deliver to and from these bodegas. These plants housed and mixed the most potent of chemicals, in their purest form, then shipped them out to be used for war as well as for pesticides, but the community was not made aware of this. Initially, residents naturally supported the idea of a factory being built in the community since it meant an opportunity for a stable job just down the street. Little did the community know what implications such an establishment would have on their lives and the lives of their children and descendants to come.

Since 1980, EPA has known about these sites and has scientifically proved their toxicity. One of the sites made the federal registry as a Superfund site and the other made the state Superfund registry as being the #1 most contaminated site in the entire state of Texas. A superfund site is a chemically contaminated area hazardous to humanity that is supposed to have a special allocation of funds available for cleanup and community assistance or intervention. No funds have been spoken of or received for this community of modest means. The Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) now TCEQ (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality) has known about the sites for years as well.

Thousands were and have been born mutated, disabled, sick, chemically burned, that is if they survived birth at all. According to statistics in 1999 alone, **66.28%** of all deaths in the county were caused by ailments listed on medical research studies as being effects of chemical/volatile contamination and exposure. This is in a county where **88.35%** are Mexican and Mexican-American. Hearing stories of cirrhosis of the liver, high rates of spinabifida, multiple and raging cancers,

hermaphrodites, lumps, tumors, physical deformities, mental problems, early unexplainable deaths, sterility, babies being born chemically burned, and other more severe health issues is considered normal for this area. Grass does not grow; the trees

and vegetation are mutated and deformed as well, if living at all. No one knew why but the answers are being made public, thanks to the efforts of individuals like Ester Salinas.

These ecological (environmental and human) catastrophes coincidentally occur in areas that are predominantly Mexican-American and/or along the southern border regions of the U.S., all of which have been ordained by the federal and respective state governments. This case in particular has international implications, however.

Twelve of the 54 chemical contaminants that are present in this small Texas town were banned by the United Nations in May 2001, being referred to as "the most hazardous contaminants known to man."

Ester Salinas has since evolved into a community activist and her fight is reaching a nationwide audience, which now includes two Congressmen who have personally met with her and visited the sites as well as the homes of the residents. Congressman Ciro Rodríguez visited late last year and Congressman Lloyd Doggett made an appearance this past January. George W. Bush was made aware of the situation when he was governor, and sent TCEQ to "investigate" in the late 90's. Local city officials have ignored and publicly fought against the residents, since the local economy is based on tourism. Ester Salinas and the affected communities have since formed alliances with each other as well as with La Raza Unida, United Farm Workers, and the National Council of La Raza.

The disaster in Mission has led to the claim of **genocide** by the outraged community, due to the severe dangers and effects on human health caused by exposure. **This claim can be justified, being that the affected population:**

1. Was and is purposely targeted for exposure:

- By having such a chemical factory as the ones in Mission be placed within an *already existing* Mexican-American community
- By having no assistance from federal or state authorities for the individuals that comprise communities in the present day in regards to their health nor the contamination of their properties, although scientific tests and reports have been conducted and produced by those authorities which confirm the severity of the situation



2. Was and is intentionally exposed in various manners:

- Workers of the bodegas were not made aware of any dangers to human health, which harmed them individually and endangered every member and future member of their families
- Smoke stacks of the bodega building were only two stories high, with an oscillating fan at its end, where it curved and laterally blew and emitted potent and hazardous substances directly into the air, land, and population of the barrios (instead of a typical smoke stack that releases directly upward)

3. Is comprised of “contaminated” individuals who transmit the chemicals and their effects via sexual contact and conception, since the chemicals are in the bloodstream (which leads to abnormal populations of biological descendants as generations continue, if exposure has not already lead to sterility)

****The African-American/Black community that once existed there has since become extinct, having suffered from sterility caused by the contaminants)*

4. Suffer abnormal rates of rare diseases, cancers, early deaths, all of which are suffered by all ages and confirmed in vital statistic reports of the city and county

The environment and population in Mission was initially poisoned in the 40’s and continues to be, as the chemicals spread via air, water, erosion, and time. The chemicals move laterally as well as seep downward through the ground. According to reports by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), a “greyish-green sludge” was detected 28 feet from the surface. The city, county, state, and federal levels of government are well aware of the situation, yet they refuse to help or even advise the locals and visitors of the dangers.

Millions of taxpayer dollars have been wasted on illogical and meaningless “remediation projects” on some contaminated areas, over ten million dollars to be exact. “We are over that estimate right now. I currently have invoices that we were reviewing and paying,” said Kelley Cook, the project manager for TCEQ in a radio/video interview past October.

In these “remediation” soil samples are taken in residential lots, measuring from the surface and down six inches into the soil. The lots were tested in two parts, with the individual lot having been divided into two parts, front and back. These small lots (currently) are valued around \$17,000 and TCEQ claims that it cost \$30,000 to test the front yard and another \$30,000 to test the back yard, with a total of \$60,000

charged to Texas taxpayers for a lot only large enough to hold a small one or two bedroom shack or small house.

Furthermore, TCEQ acknowledged that not all lots and properties surrounding the bodegas were tested or remediated. If contaminants were present, the soil was removed and tested until no chemicals were detected. This, however, leads to the following questions and answers:

Where was the contaminated soil placed, and were the surrounding communities of that location made aware?

- Secretively taken photographs of the trucks removing and transporting the dirt reveal that the contaminated soil was moved to a small Texas town, Robstown. They also portray and reveal the fact that the soil was not properly covered or contained, which meant that as the trucks drove from Mission to Robstown, roads and areas in between became contaminated.

What about the health dangers imposed upon the residents and neighbors of the particles that became airborne as and once the soil was moved?

- They were not advised nor told to leave temporarily as the “cleanup” occurred. Many became ill during that time, or soon thereafter.

What about the implications such contamination would have on human health?

- No mention was made.

How was the community made aware of the overall situation and its related matters?

- They were not. Selected lots, addresses, and individuals were sent letters of notice. This was confirmed by Kelley Cook.

In addition, the ten million dollar *plus* recommendation TCEQ made to the community, or rather, certain individuals of the community, as a result of the confirmation of hazardous ecological poisoning, was the following:

1. Do not track dirt from the outside in
2. Wash your hands thoroughly
3. Water your lot continuously
4. Do not eat any vegetation from your yard

Do these multi-million dollar recommendations seem appropriate for residents (remember, some, not all) of an area contaminated by chemicals specifically outlawed by the United



Nations?

Are you a taxpayer? Is this proof of your hard-earned tax dollars at work?

As far as EPA, it defines itself as such and states the mission as follows: "EPA's mission is to protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment – air, water, and land – upon which life depends. For 30 years, EPA has been working for a cleaner, healthier environment for the American people." It continues with, "What We Do: EPA leads the nation's environmental science, research, education, and assessment efforts."

Just recently, EPA released a statement to the local newspaper stating that the **remediated** site is "several times higher than what is considered safe for human exposure." They also made mention of two options to deal with the situation, to cap the area with blacktop and to recap the areas formerly blacktopped during the last remediation. This statement was published in an English-only paper in an area where **75.9%** of residents speak English less than very well (which makes the percentage of people comprehending and reading in English very low.)

Questions:

- If it is unsafe for human exposure, why do the options being proposed not have any relation to the humans that HAVE BEEN exposed and ARE BEING exposed?
- If the issue is human exposure, what is being done for the HUMAN BEINGS that reside in those areas?
- How is EPA handling the environmental education of this public, since it is a Spanish-speaking one? Is it?

Ester Salinas had the following remarks: "Justice to the people, where is it? There has been none, in no manner, shape, or form. There has been absolutely no community involvement. As for options, I have more than two options:

1. How about health exams for the community?
2. Biomarkers (*blood tests to determine contaminants in the bloodstream*)
3. Intervention for the residents of the areas where the trains that brought in the chemicals derailed
4. Medical vouchers
5. Establish clinics
6. Counseling for those who have suffered mental anguish from being part of a contaminated population
7. Education on the overall situation and its repercussions for the community and public
8. Compensation for the lowered property value
9. Compensation for the mental and physical anguish that this contamination and its remediation has caused
10. Finally, meeting human needs

The buildings still stand. The state and the EPA threw and throw out millions of dollars with their remediation. Who is over-seeing how this taxpayer money has been and is being spent? They are a bunch of *crooks*."

"Why is there discrimination against the people in the Superfund areas? We demand to know why they have betrayed



the people and failed to take care of the citizens and their property, knowing the severity of the situation. TCEQ and EPA continue to be negligent."

"EPA claims to be the 'guardian protector.' Of what? Their staff and personal paychecks? We need documentation and results of the testing done on these sites since the investigation began in the 80's. If EPA is comprised of community educators, scientists, and doctors, where are they? Are we being treated this way because we are of Mexican descent? We continue to be discriminated and to suffer and die by their continuous lies."

"They profit from personal financial gain at the expense of the health, sanity, lands, and lives of our people."

The community continues to fight and gain more and more public attention. An exclusive documentary is currently being filmed about the tragedy in Mission. Although a lawsuit has been filed with over a thousand plaintiffs against 34 companies, it has been six years since it began. Since the plaintiffs are primarily comprised of low-income individuals, fighting billion dollar companies like Union Pacific and others has been an uphill battle with the companies as much as with the attorneys of both sides. The group has made contact with the United Nations and a petition has been started that will be sent to the UN listing the crimes against humanity caused by this genocide that bore and bears the approval the United States government.

For further information, please refer to the following:

www.larazaunida.com/lrugreen

This site has reference to:

- list of chemicals involved and their effects on human beings
- list of defendants in the lawsuit
- vital statistics
- transcript of the interview with TCEQ (which is also available on video)
- press releases, articles, and some news coverage on the topic
- pictures

For video requests of the TCEQ interview or the documentary, or for any further pictures, questions, or comments, please email adelita@mission-texas.com.

This article is one in a series of articles written and published for La Nueva Raza Newspaper and available online at WWW.MISSION-TEXAS.COM

Copyright 2004 Iris Salinas

Walking Through Hell For A Heavenly Cause

By: Iris Salinas

The Killing Fields of Texas, continued

It is early Sunday morning and the odor of chemicals greets the daylight in a hazy-green morning dew. The grass does not grow here and the trees bleed black-brown substance as they reach for the sky in agony. I cautiously walk up to an arsenic house to meet up with Ester, my tour guide into hell. We get on the road and she begins to tell me the stories of this contaminated town as I roll the camera. We stop at a small, dilapidated casita and are greeted with hopeful eyes. We have come to speak to some of the victims in this cruel and epic tale of greed, corruption, contamination, and murder. This town and life in this town has become a living hell for many who are confined by economics and circumstance to "live" here.

Here are their stories.

OSCAR



stand in a darkened room and listen to a very sick man laying helpless and hopeless in his bed. He is an older man whose life has been tragically stolen from him. In the room is the musty smell of poison, which is emitting from a huge wound on his leg. Over the years, he has suffered an incredible deal. His skin has been literally falling off of his body for some time now, he has huge and massive cysts in his stomach that protrude several inches, and now his leg is bursting open. The meat from the inside of his leg is about two feet from me. I see his bone and what is left of his ankle and I can smell the same poison, that same musty scent that I smelled when I went to one of the bodegas. He cannot walk and is imprisoned to his small bed. He, like so many others, is a walking time bomb, a chemical disaster in a human body decomposing slowly as he attempts to live. Several doctors have been unable to diagnose him, and have only said that he had some sort of chemical in his system. My camera is rolling, recording this and I am listening to him tell his story.

He starts to talk about how a few days earlier, he had gone to a doctor to get help for his swollen and bursting leg and ended up being butchered. He had sat down and told the doctor about his wound when suddenly the doctor took a scalpel and just cut out a piece of Oscar's leg with no warning. Although Oscar screamed and blood spewed around, the doctor offered no anesthetic and no pain medication whatsoever. He told Oscar and his wife to clean out the wound with dishwashing soap, because "that should work." He gave them no prescription for pain medication, so Oscar hardly moves as he reveals his injury for the camera. He is economically disadvantaged and because of this, cannot afford appropriate healthcare. He fought for years to get Medicaid, but it only offers limited and restricted medical care.

And as I stand in amazement of what I have just heard and witnessed, a letter from his attorneys is read aloud, saying that



he is being thrown out of the lawsuit because he does not have enough evidence to prove he was contaminated.

ROLANDO

Rolando always wanted to be a dance instructor. He was a flamboyant dancer and had a future of promise ahead of him. Or was it all a lie? He lives behind one of the contaminated bodegas in Mission. Dreams of dancing became just that, dreams. At 18 he had to begin receiving dialysis. On his arms are strange bumps, half-dollar sized, that have appeared over the years. At his young age of 30, he has already received two kidney transplants which have failed, and is due for a third in a few weeks. Just after the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality and EPA remediated¹ the dirt at his home and at the bodegas, he was diagnosed with brain cancer. He has since had that tumor removed. He stood before me for the camera, with eyes glazed and hopeless, as he spoke about how his life

was robbed from him. He spoke about how he didn't know how much longer he had, and how depressed he was that his life had amounted to this. We stand facing the bodega that is just beside his house and a gentle breeze of poison comes between us. It sweeps a tear down his cheek and even I start to feel faint. Rolando has not known life or happiness, only pain and suffering. He, like so many others, is economically disadvantaged and cannot leave his poisoned home. He waits



living yet dying for the lawsuit to come to a close. He too has been thrown out for supposed lack of proof of contamination. He reaches for the pendant of a saint on his necklace and holds it, as he thanks us for coming to see him. For an instant, I see hope glimmer in his eyes, just before he turns to slowly make his way back inside.

LA CAUSA

These are just two stories of thousands who have lost their livelihoods, lives, friends, and family members to strange and inexplicable illnesses brought on by the contamination. It is not only the workers who handled these chemicals that have been affected. The neighborhoods became contaminated when the trains derailed, sending toxic chemicals in 100% form into the comunidad. There was never an appropriate cleanup effort. The people became contaminated when the smokestacks shot the pure chemical out into the barrio, supposedly in an effort to air out the inside of the chemical production factories. The people become contaminated still because of the warehouses that continue to stand open and unfenced, with no signs of warning or danger. The soil is pure poison in this town. No one is told and yet everyone is affected – visitor and resident. It breaks my heart to see a young child walking barefoot in their front yard because the poison is creeping in like an invisible demon, waiting one day to consume and possess their body. Even worse yet is that once contaminated, a person can spread the chemical to another person. This has become an epidemic of massive proportions. The city, county, state, and federal officials are well aware of this place and its hazards. Yet they have failed our people. Is it because we are of brown skin? Would one find this type of dire situation in an Anglo community?

“Where is the chance for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?

What about the right to a speedy trial? They are American citizens,” says Ester Salinas, as we tour the barrio to conduct interviews and film. She has become the leader of the sick and the hope of the poor. She discovered the contamination in 1998 and has since become a leader of the people and simultaneously the enemy of the local government officials and state and federal entities. She began a class action lawsuit against some of the most powerful corporations in the world.



She and the plaintiffs have encountered numerous attempts at the obstruction of justice and major delay of the game from the players on both sides of the case.² She takes no rest, constantly working and in her off time tending to the thousands that come to her for knowledge and help. She and her family have also suffered greatly. “I had to bury my father at a young age, friends my age dying, my family is sick, I am sick, and everyone around me is dying,” she tells the camera. “But I will not stop fighting for justice.”

It has taken a few years, but we have been able to raise so much awareness to this case that it has now turned into a movimiento. Thanks to platforms such as La Raza Unida, United Farm Workers, BeSafe.net, and others, we have been able to inform, educate, and mobilize the gente. Even the sickest of the sick have given us their time, words, and allowed us to record them to let people worlds over know of this injustice. We also have a website (www.larazaunida.com/lruginet.htm) and will soon be aired on television (on *Nota Roja*, Telemundo) throughout the state of Texas and in 75 cities across Mexico. *La Nueva Raza* newspaper has also allowed us to reach people all across the United States. Senator Chuy Hinojosa, Congressman Ciro Rodríguez, and Congressman Lloyd Doggett have come to Mission and have even pledged their assistance with passing a bill to protect the people of the Superfund Sites. (The Superfund policies currently outline the care of the water, land, and air only.) This movimiento is in motion, it is moving, and the dream of a united people is becoming a reality.

The story of this town is bigger than Mission. This is just one battle within a war of many fronts against our people. Our goal is to not only obtain justice for the people of Mission, but to raise an awareness and sense of community for the Raza in and out of the United States. Through understanding comes unity and what a powerful nation, a powerful people we would be if

we were to let go of fear and embrace each other. But it starts at home, in your barrio, in your community, and in your town. In our eyes and in the end, the movimiento of Mission will only strengthen the movimiento of La Raza.

We will continue to fight for the people of Mission. We ask for your allegiance and help with bringing attention to this issue. Too many people are dying early, wrongful deaths, too many people are suffering, and there is too much corruption. We cannot sit by idly and let ourselves and our comunidades be abused. The people of Mission need your help. Contact us at voiceoflaverdad@yahoo.com if you can assist this movimiento.

This story will be heard and recanted for generations to come and it is our goal to ensure that it has a happy ending. Until then, we will continue to walk through hell for a heavenly cause.


To add insult to injury:

- In 1996, the United Nations listed 12 chemicals and declared them "the most hazardous contaminants known to man." Those chemicals were mixed and produced in Mission, Texas.
- In 1986, 20/20 conducted an interview with the "most contaminated man on the planet." That man was Mr. Murillo, who worked at the chemical plant in Mission, Texas.

¹Remediation is a process of removing contaminated soil and replacing it with fresh soil. The problem with this situation in particular is that 3 to 6 inches of dirt were remediated by TCEQ and EPA when their own reports state that the ground is contaminated 32 feet below the surface. The problem with this is that when the dirt is moved, the contaminants are re-released. They did not take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of the comunidad during this process, nor did they do the work their reports claim they did. Taxpayers were charged millions of dollars for this particular cleanup.

²The lead plaintiff attorney in this case is Ramon Garcia, who also currently serves as the Hidalgo County Judge. This poses a MAJOR conflict of interest. The case has been in litigation for almost 7 years now and so many people have died since it began, are dying, or have been carelessly tossed from the case. Where is the right to a speedy trial? Where is the right to fair representation? For more information on the case, please see our website.

For more information on the television show, please send an email to notarojaty@hotmail.com First published for La Nueva Raza Newspaper. Available online at WWW.MISSION-TEXAS.COM



Festival of Human Dignity

Travis Park, San Antonio, Texas
Saturday, April 9, 2005 from 8-11 pm

On February 3rd the San Antonio City Council passed four ordinances that: ban camping in public areas without permission, urinating and defecating in public, sitting on public rights of way and aggressive panhandling. Each is a Class C misdemeanor, punishable by a maximum fine of \$500.

Join us at the Festival of Human Dignity to learn more about the plight of our homeless brothers and sisters and demonstrate to the City Council that the caring citizens of San Antonio do not want the ordinances enforced until:

1. The city provides enough safe and clean public toilets open 24 hours a day in the downtown area
2. The city establishes and recognizes "safe zones" where homeless people can sleep outdoors without fear of arrest.

8-9 pm: Free food & information
9-10 pm: Music & speeches
10-11 pm: Worship service & drumming circle

To learn more visit <http://sa-homeless.blogspot.com> or call the peaceCENTER at 210.224.HOPE or Travis Park Methodist Church at 210.226.8341

INVITE A FRIEND - BRING THE FAMILY

César Chávez Avenue in San Antonio

It's been twelve years since his death and still the eighth largest city in the country has yet to name a school, park, library or street honoring César Chávez. Join a coalition of local groups and citizens in urging City Council to take action and honor the life and legacy of one of our true national heroes by changing Commerce St. to César Chávez Ave. Renaming a street that passes by the historic Mercado would pay tribute to not only Chávez but also the farmworkers who picked the fruits and vegetables and have brought them there to sell since its origins. Contact your City Council representative and ask them to get behind the effort to rename Commerce St. and join the effort to gather thousands of signatures to petition the city to change Commerce St. to Cesar Chavez Avenue.

Mayor and City Council contacts can be found at the following website: www.sanantonio.gov/council

Letters to the editor to the San Antonio Express News can be sent to: letters@express-news.net or to: P.O. Box 2171 in San Antonio, TX 78297-2171 or Fax: 210 250 3465

- To volunteer with the Coalition contact at jueorg@aol.com or call 210.842.9339.
- To help with the petition drive contact Antonio Mandujano at mandujano26@yahoo.com.



TOXIC SAN ANTONIO

a continuation of *The Killing Fields of Texas*

By: Iris Salinas

As *The Killing Fields of Texas* continues, a major twist in the story is uncovered that links the contamination from Mission, Texas to one of the largest cities in the country, San Antonio.

Word has it that Mission, Texas contracted with railroad companies like Union Pacific and the U. S. military to create and distribute weapons of mass destruction – deadly chemicals and toxins for decades. As you may remember, Mission is the birthplace of toxins like Agent Orange, Arsenic, DDT, Dioxin, and many others. Dioxin, which recently gained worldwide attention in the suspected poisoning and disfiguring of Ukraine's newly elected president, Viktor Yushchenko, is a bi-product of Agent Orange, which gained worldwide attention during and long after its use in the war in Vietnam. For years, Agent Orange and several other toxins were reportedly shipped from Mission throughout Texas and other parts of the world with the help of railroad corporations like Union Pacific, the U. S. military, the Texas state prison system, other corporations and government entities. Former workers of the *bodegas* (chemical factories) in Mission have mentioned the transport of toxic chemicals to and through cities like Austin, College Station, and San Antonio, leaving them also contaminated.

It just so happens that in San Antonio the issue of Agent Orange contamination has been one of great concern for this city of over 1.5 million. Kelly Air Force Base, a closed and now privatized military base, used to be the headquarters for *Operation Ranchhand* and reportedly received and transported tons of the toxin, which is said to have contaminated anything and everything within a 20 mile radius. The regional water source for the South Central Texas region, the Edwards Aquifer, lies within these boundaries and parts of it are said to be contaminated, although no public statements have yet been made on the subject.

Operation Ranchhand was a military operation that allowed for surplus Agent Orange to be sold to the public. It began in 1973 and lasted a few short years. Any additional surplus that was not sold was then buried in and around parts of Kelly Air Force Base as well as other military bases in San Antonio. Contamination continues to be a major concern for the city, since former base properties eventually became residential and commercial areas. A little league park was built over one known burial site on the Southwest side of San Antonio.

Community members and organizations like the Southwest Workers Union have protested and voiced their concerns to the EPA, the state, the Air Force, and the city of San Antonio for

some time in an effort to gain attention and action on the issue. However, thorough and appropriate community awareness and involvement projects are yet to take place. Apparently,

the entities involved want to keep the story under wraps. To date, EPA has refused to label the contaminated areas as Superfund sites, although they are well aware of how contaminated the areas are. Perhaps these entities fear that a major lawsuit and mass hysteria will ensue once all the communities involved discover how dire the situation really is and how much of San Antonio is contaminated with Agent Orange.

According to the Texas Department of Health, major health problems and unusually high occurrences

of cancers are common in the areas and neighborhoods surrounding the base. Many zip codes have already been listed as having "Cancer Clusters" yet officials continue to fail to address and warn the community of the situation.

Robert Silvas, a community activist and former employee of the base, agrees that the community has not been properly informed of the dangers of this situation. He is a member of the Kelly RAB Committee, a group composed of the affected community as well as of responsible parties like the Air Force and Union Pacific. It meets monthly to discuss and supposedly address the contamination issues. To date, valid community concerns regarding community involvement, notification, and health have fallen upon deaf ears and lame hands.

The issue of contamination is a very sensitive one, particularly for Union Pacific. At the November meeting, the Union Pacific Manager for Environmental Field Operations, Paul Person, publicly yelled and verbally attacked community members and activists during a community open mike period (where individual concerns of the community are supposed to be allowed.) It appears the public revelation of San Antonio's contamination is a big thorn in Union Pacific's side, since this year alone it had five train derailments there within weeks of each other, resulting in deadly and dangerous chemical spills. It is also one of the Defendants named in the landmark contamination case in Mission, Texas (Hidalgo County, C-4885-99) which has recently gained the attention of the U.N., the U.S. government, and several countries around the world.

Glen Wilkenson, another former worker turned activist, witnessed and testified to several large barrels of surplus Agent Orange being buried at Kelly Air Force base in 1979, before it became privatized and open to the public. He testified before a grand jury and reported what he witnessed to several federal and state entities. No appropriate or investigative measures were



taken and he was soon thereafter threatened with death if he continued to share his testimony.

Although at face value the formation of the RAB committee appears to have the interests of the community in mind, many claim it is merely a front. Its existence may appease the few individuals of the community that are aware of the contamination, but the others that attend these sessions are not comforted. Robert Silvas, Glen Wilkenson, the Southwest Worker's Union, and a small number of concerned community residents regularly attend the RAB sessions and repeatedly voice their concerns. "We are not the only ones affected," says a resident. "Our families, friends, neighbors, and even travelers who come to or through San Antonio run the risk of Agent Orange exposure. Would you wish for your out-of-town relatives to get cancer when they come to visit?"

For more information on the contamination in San Antonio, please visit: www.mission-texas.com/SA or www.swunion.org or look up the key words "Operation Ranchhand." Ironically, *The San Antonio Express-News* ran a story on March 22, 2005 on the elevated cancer rates in the Kelly neighborhood indicating a need for "another study."

This article is one in a series of articles written and published for La Nueva Raza Newspaper and available online at WWW.MISSION-TEXAS.COM

Bio: Iris Salinas (also known as Adelita) is a San Antonio native and Xicana activist who battles issues of racial discrimination, environmental racism, political corruption, and sexism. She is the Congresswoman for La Raza Unida Environmental and one of the leading activists for Mission-Texas. She is also a writer for La Nueva Raza newspaper, a Houston-based publication and extension of La Raza Unida. Her works have been published in various magazines and journals throughout the U.S. and Mexico and a script for a film about the Mission case is currently being written based on her character.

For more information, visit: www.mission-texas.com and www.lanuevaraza.com

La Nueva Raza is an Xicano periodical published quarterly and distributed internationally.

cuentanos un cuento

Desayuno desde Veracruz

By Monica M. Garcia

Isabel Sánchez from Veracruz St. waved me over to peek into the pan filled with chopped onions, tomatoes and peppers. Her worn hands reminded me of my own grandmother's as she swished the sizzling pan around the stove. The smell of the salsa cooking captivated me as I pictured my panza enjoying the meal to come. I was excited since I discovered huevos rancheros but barely nine years ago, a tradition I had always thought of as "adult food." At eighteen, I was discovering the importance of food in a culture I had been surrounded by my whole life. The thought of tortillas, beans and eggs loaded with manteca used to give me onset heartburn without it ever even touching my lips; now my veins craved it. My cholesterol levels jumped as the bacon crackled in the refried beans and I studied Mrs. Sánchez pat and roll the testales of masa before watching them rise on the comal. Mrs. Sánchez explained that she learned to make tortillas late in life because her mother, who lived next door, made them everyday for both households. That would explain "my Texas shaped tortillas," she grinned.

Now it was time for the eggs. Huevos. Mmmmm. It wasn't about scrambled eggs anymore as it had been for so many years, "Dale a la nina revueltos," my grandmother would say. This meal was about the over-easy, sunny-side-up and over-hard style. Drizzle the rancho sauce and let it run over. The busted yolk is supposed to catch the soupy, spicy ingredients, running together, then running from your tortilla as you scoop and pinch to get that perfect bite. Enrique Sánchez, de Veracruz, Mx., smiled as he explained how each of their children liked their eggs prepared. "It's a matter of taste," Mrs. Sánchez reiterated.

I supposed that's how we expand our traditions as we expand our families and teach the new generations. Some of us have the privilege to continue cooking with the same cazuela, rolling pin or molcajete that our parents and grandparents used. Te das cuenta, of the hundreds of sabores those utensils yielded. The smells and sounds of the food had me dancing between memories of my grandmother's kitchen and my experience at the moment in the Casa de Cuentos. The stories Mr. Sánchez continued to tell fascinated me. I caught tunes from the other room as Lydia Mendoza sang from the boom box that played throughout that morning in la cocina. "That's when I fell in love with her voice...there was always music playing as we cooked and prepared meals, even as we ate," Mr. Sánchez mentioned.

And there it was. All five of my senses were exposed to a little Veracruz. The smells from the stove, the sound of la musica, the feel of the warm tortillas, the sight of the comida...and the taste of tradition...in our Westside of San Antonio.

We'll meet again to rediscover more of our cultura at the Casa de Cuentos.

Call us at 210-228-0201 and check the back page of this issue of La Voz for more info on the Arte es Vida Project.



* CONSTANTINE *

By Alejandro Pérez



Constantine, the new supernatural thriller starring Keanu Reeves, starts off in Mexico with two men picking through the scraps of a deserted, desert wasteland. While searching, one of the men - an otherwise unnamed "Scavenger" according to the credits, played by Jesse Ramirez, stumbles onto what viewers later find out is the much-coveted "Spear of Destiny." Holding it in his hand, the Scavenger gains seemingly indestructible strength and a callous disregard for human life. And, as he heads north towards Los Angeles we view the path of destruction he leaves behind.

While this character plays only a minor, almost nonexistent role for the remainder of the film, his prominence in the opening scene and his importance in propelling the narrative forward suggest a greater significance connected not to this cinematic world of magic and mysticism, but to contemporary and concrete attitudes or anxieties about immigration. Art mirrors life as in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* which expressed 17th century attitudes about the mysterious continent and its Caliban-like inhabitants. With his tattered clothes and rough, unkempt appearance vaguely reminiscent of Rafael Resendez-Ramírez, the serial killer who transversed the southwest along rail lines until his capture five years back - the Scavenger embodies the worst of anglo-america's stereotypes as he transforms into an unstoppable über-immigrante capable of crossing borders and creating a literal hell on earth. (According to legend, the Spear serves as a conduit allowing all sorts of creepy things from beyond to enter our world.) We have been demonized before, scapegoated for failing economies, overcrowded schools, and crime sprees; in *Constantine*, we are the demons, an unwelcome legion chipping away at the margins of society.

In fact, the film's logic reflects that of Right-wing nativist organizations like the Federation for American Immigration Reform, the Voices of Citizens Together and American Patrol, what with their perennial calls to close off the border, as well as the more mainstream - though no less pernicious - policies set

by the Bush administration when they relocated the INS under the Department of Homeland Security (a move that essentially equates immigration with terrorism), and the neo-conservatives and well-heeled liberals whose economic prosperity and way of life depends on low-wage immigrant labor to pick their crops, prepare their meals, care for their children. On screen or off, metaphorical or real, the foreign, alien, non-white, or undocumented "other" - society's most defenseless members - pose a threat to this nation's illusionary belief in cultural plurality and benevolent intervention because of who we are and what we represent: a multiethnic, multiracial, multilingual América. The shape of things to come? Throughout areas like Southern Texas or urban California we already are the majority; meanwhile, nationwide we have become the "majority minority," numerically surpassing Blacks. However, behind the demographic fanfare and marketing blitz our access to and representation in places of policy and power, whether political or economic, continues to lag far, far behind anglo america, with little indication that this will significantly change in the next few decades. Despite the rhetoric about liberty and equality for all, for this nation's Brown and Black members' citizenship, by birth or naturalization, does not insure the full rights and privileges of belonging.

Simply put, an ever-decreasing number of white elites will continue to wield greater control over the institutions and ideologies that impact our lives. Look at the Senate: until the last election there had not been a Black or Hispanic representative in decades. Now we have three - Obama Barack, Ken Salazar and Mel Martinez - which may seem to suggest tremendous progress, until we put things in perspective and question why the government, in this example, has been so resistant to change.

In *Constantine's* climax, Reeves' character confronts a motley crew of demons assembled about him. "You are in violation of the balance," he shouts. "Leave immediately or I will deport you!" He then proceeds to kick demon butt and send the delinquents back to their fiery, final resting place. This is, after all, a movie. Back in the real world, however, solutions are never so simple. The problems are always more complex. What are the implications of deporting every undocumented person? What of the conditions that drive them north? Who prospers? Who benefits? Who else is targeted? Do we have any other options, when the demons are deported and even the most kindly of extra terrestrials ends up returning home before the credits roll? We need a new paradigm, a new way of imagining alternatives, to the way things have been and are. We've learned to live with white america; now, white america must learn to live with us.

Bio: Alejandro is a writer, educator and cultural activist in San Antonio.

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.

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 Thursdays at 7 pm 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.

The Rape Crisis Center is located at 7500 US Hwy 90 West, Building 2 in San Antonio. The 24 hour hotline number is 210/349-7273. Call 210/521-7273 or email Drominishi@rapecrisis.com

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 at 6:30pm. Call: 210/673-8600 Mail: Box 34551, 78265-4551

The Shambhala Buddhist Meditation Center offers meditation in-

struction 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 SA meets on the 2nd Monday @ 7:00 pm to discuss craft and publishing 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 3 - 5 p.m. Call 737-3138 or visit www.voiceforanimals.org

Submissions, deletions or changes to community meetings may be made by contacting lavoz@esperanzacenter.org or mail in to La Voz, 922 San Pedro, San Antonio, TX 78212

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. Contact me to sign up.

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

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

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

I would like to volunteer!

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

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

They're slick, they're bouncin' and they're back on Sunday, April 3rd, 2005 for the **23rd Annual Lowrider Festival** at **Mateo Camargo Park** on Hwy 90W (Callaghan Rd. exit) benefitting **Centro Cultural Aztlán**. Enjoy the mobile works of art that rule the road plus good food and rock-n-roll oldies by *The MuddCatts* in a tribute to the Beatles & Elvis, featuring Johnny "E" Mandell the hottest act in Central Texas. Also featuring hometown boys, *Joe Jama & The Proof*, *Ernie Garibay & Cats Don't Sleep* and *DaHeBeGeBees*. The fun begins at 10 am and lasts until 10 pm General admission is \$10. Children under 12 get in free. For info call 210-432-1896.

A historical march in Three Rivers, Texas honoring the memory of **Pvt. Felix Z. Longoria** and his surviving family will take place at 10 am on Saturday, April 16, 2005 (Pvt. Longoria's Birthday). The march begins at the Three Rivers city limit marker located on highway 281 at the north end and concludes at city hall (less than 2 miles). At the conclusion of this march speakers will request that lawmakers address concerns about the public recognition of Pvt. Felix Longoria which is long overdue. Contact Santiago Hernández at 361-851-0958 for info.

ALLGO presents ***Of Chicks, Dicks, and Chinks*** written and performed by K. Terumi Shorb and directed by Madge Darlington on April 17, 2005. Installation viewing begins at 6 pm and the performance at 8 pm. Also **ALLGO Tillery Street Theatre** in conjunction with *The Center for African and African American Studies* at UT-

Austin presents ***The Book of Daniel***, written and performed by Daniel Alexander Jones and featuring Kitundu on April 24th-27th at 8 pm. Pay what you can at both events. Contact sharon for info at 512.472-2001 ext. 106 or sharon@sharonbridgforth.com or visit <http://www.allgo.org> **ALLGO's Tillery Street Theatre** is located at 701 Tillery St. in Austin.

The **Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center** announces the first annual **TeatroFEST** slated for June 24 - 25, 2005. This new festival celebrates the Latino voice in American theater. In its first year it will focus on Latino/a solo performance artists and theater companies from Texas. Opportunities for performance are available in two venues: the **Guadalupe Theater** and the new intimate 40 seat **Teatro Space**. To apply contact the Teatro office at 210-271-3151 extension 26. Applications must be postmarked by Friday, April 22 or hand-delivered to the Guadalupe by Monday, April 25 at 5pm. All applicants will be notified by mail on Monday, May 9, 2005 of their participation.

A new **City of San Antonio Animal Care Services** facility will be built at the intersection of Hwy 90 and Hwy 151 in southwest San Antonio. Its design will play a vital role in helping staff achieve objectives of increasing animal adoptions, stimulating interest in responsible pet ownership, and educating the public about pet overpopulation. One artist will be awarded \$82,000 (inclusive of artwork design, fabrication and installation) for a public art commission complementing

the above-mentioned design goals. Deadline April 11, 2005. For a copy of the **Call For Artists** visit www.sanantonio.gov/publicworks/pubart/opportunities.htm or call 210/207-5951.

The Martinez Street Women's Center is looking to organize a lesbian cancer support group open to lesbian, bisexual and transgendered women with cancer. If you would be interested in a future group please call the Center at 534-6638.

The Chiapas Media Project/ Promedios, an award winning, bi-national partnership that provides video equipment, computers and training enabling marginalized indigenous and campesino communities in Southern Mexico to create their own media sponsors to host screenings on the Spring Tour 2005. The tour features new videos produced by indigenous video makers from the states of Chiapas and Guerrero, Mexico. Presentations can be done in either Spanish or English. Contact: www.chiapasmediaproject.org for or call Alex or Aasia at 773-583-7728 or e-mail at cmp@chiapasmediaproject.org for details.

The **Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center** announces an open call for handcrafted arte by Latina/o artists. We are interested in original art works of all types to be featured and sold in our bookstore and gift shop. Work is accepted on a consignment basis. We are especially interested in pieces that have a Latina/o/Chicana/o, South Texas, and San Antonio themed focus. Contact Irma Mayorga at 382-9865 or historia34@yahoo.com for information.



Congratulations to Elda Silva and her husband, Gilbert who have been on another planet since being blessed with a baby girl. Olivia was born on December 20, 2004 weighing in at 7 lbs. and 15 oz. Described by mom as a sweet, happy baby look for her to be out and about soon saying hello to an adoring public who awaits her debut!



February 12 - May 31, 2005

Tlasohtla: El Amor Tiene Muchas Caras

a solo exhibition of new chicana artwork by

deborah kuetzpalin vasquez

Esperanza Peace & Justice Center • 210 . 228 . 0201

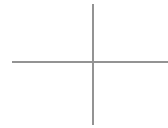


La Voz de Esperanza

922 San Pedro San Antonio TX 78212
210 . 228 . 0201 • fax: 210 . 228 . 0000
www.esperanzacenter.org

address SERVICE requested

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
San Antonio, TX
Permit #332



The Esperanza believes that our elders, nuestras sabias/os have stories to tell, and that within their hearts lie a vast amount of knowlege to be shared and gained by all. The Esperanza's Arte es Vida Project is part of an effort to save our historia, cuentos, y cultura. Join us as we canvass the Westside, interview nuestros abuelos and recreate the stories that must be honored, shared and preserved for the generations to come.



¡Andale!

¡Dale Shine al Westside!

Join the Arte Es Vida Project

un proyecto del

Centro Esperanza de Paz y Justicia

Call 228-0201

to tell us your stories or to help collect stories.

