

# La Voz de Esperanza

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## *Fuerza Unida* 15 Años

November 19th, 2005, Fuerza Unida will celebrate its  
Quinceañera from 7:00 pm – 12 midnight  
at Santa Fe Episcopal Church, 1108 Brunswick.  
210 . 927 . 2294

# La Voz de Esperanza

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 Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.

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In this October 2005 issue of La Voz de Esperanza we wish to honor and congratulate the women of Fuerza Unida who have been en la lucha por justicia for fifteen years. They are celebrating their quinceañera. There have been many lives touched by their work and many people involved in keeping Fuerza alive, but the two women who have been at the forefront since the beginning are Viola Cásares and Petra Mata. I urge everyone to take part in their quince or at least to send in a contribution to keep their work going, for it is needed now, more than ever. (See next page.) Also, in this issue we have several eyewitness accounts including one from Crawford, Texas, covering Cindy Sheehan's courageous stand against the Iraq War and one of the Diez y Seis Marcha in Austin which connected issues of immigration and racism. Antonio Cabral who was in Houston as the first evacuees from Katrina arrived was able to interview evacuees there and give us an account of that, also.

As we watch the dwindling force of Hurricane Rita overshadowing the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, for the moment, we must not be led astray and begin to think that, yes, we do have a caring and responsive government, after all. We do not. In fact there has been an increasing estrangement between the U.S. government and ordinary citizens. This has become more evident in recent weeks.

As I watched news reports of Katrina I realized that the people that were being interviewed at first were middle class white folks and that the majority people of color in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama were being malignly neglected. One of the first couples interviewed on TV were lamenting the loss of their home in Biloxi, Mississippi, and expressing gratitude that they still had each other. The reporter asked, "What will you do now?" They replied, "I guess we'll have to stay at our summer cottage, for now." The reporter gushed over how the couple could express gratitude to still have each other in the wake of such devastation. This type of interviewing was not uncommon on the first days following Katrina's destruction.

People of color, on the other hand, seemed to be goaded by reporters and blamed for not evacuating when told to do so. Time and again, I observed families of color interviewed and asked, "Why did you not evacuate when you were told to?" The question was often asked with an undertone of blame. One woman responded apologetically, "My mother has been seriously ill and we didn't think she could withstand the trip to get out." Ultimately, it seemed to me that the reporters just didn't get that people could be so poor as to not have the means to evacuate.

Now, with Hurricane Rita, we see that mass evacuation is not so easy even when buses are provided, resulting in at least one tragic consequence. What Katrina revealed to us is that people of color and anglos who are poor remain invisible in this country. Invisible as the hotel/motel workers, restaurant workers, the homeless, the unemployed and the underemployed. It's outrageous that the standard for the U.S. is monied familias with second homes and "nest eggs" for retirement, but the reality is that those families are few and far between. We are being duped at all levels of government into believing that the interests of businesses and corporations are what is best for this country and for us.

Watch and listen carefully for even though media and government try to hide their bias against people of color and the poor, one can pick out this bias easily. When Bush arrived in New Orleans for the first time he said something like, "This is a terrible tragedy for people in 'this part of the world.'" He actually distanced himself by using the phrase "this part of the world." The gulf coast suddenly was not even part of the U.S. Reporters and media distanced themselves constantly using the phrase, "these people," never once saying "our people" or even "the people." Barbara Bush showed her true colors, also, declaring that some of "those people" are better off because of Katrina. It is no wonder her son is as inept as he is. Beware, gente, y despierten. It is time for us to wake up and rise to action.

Como siempre, mil gracias to the writers and buena gente that keep La Voz going each month. You make a difference when your voice is heard.

-la editora, Gloria A. Ramírez, [lavoz@esperanzacenter.org](mailto:lavoz@esperanzacenter.org)

**ATTENTION VOZ READERS:** If you have a correction you want to make on your mailing label please send it in to [lavoz@esperanzacenter.org](mailto: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.



Viola Cásares and Petra Mata

# FUERZA UNIDA Quince Años

-a force to be reckoned with for 15 years

By Lacey Dalby

*"When they dropped the bomb, they thought each of us would go home alone. But we've sure turned that one around!"*<sup>1</sup>

Fifteen years ago, a labor organization was born that would change the face of the struggle for workers' rights in San Antonio forever. On January 15, 1990, Levi's closed the larger of their two factories in San Antonio, laying off over 1150 workers with less than a day's notice. However, if Levi's thought these women would be satisfied with their meager severance package and go home quietly, they were wrong. As Fuerza Unida's Quinceañera approaches, it's a good time to look at all the organization has accomplished as well as the struggles yet to come.

Fuerza Unida was founded in February 1990 when twenty-three of these laid off women workers gathered and developed the "Women Garment Workers Justice Campaign." While the first meetings started small, the organization grew to over 700 members in its first year and developed a strong leadership from within. During this first year of struggle, Fuerza Unida organized a national boycott of all Levi's products, a series of hunger strikes and protests, and an \$11.6 billion class action lawsuit. Members even traveled to Levi's corporate offices in San Francisco to bring nationwide attention to the company's lack of corporate responsibility. While the lawsuit was defeated two years later, the protests and boycott worked to tarnish Levi's 'caring corporate citizen' image, causing sales to fall and the process of plant closings to slow down.

Over the next several years, Levi's continued to close plants around the country, using NAFTA to move to countries where workers would make in a day what U.S. workers made in a half hour. However, Fuerza Unida didn't give up. Members went to Levi's factories around the country, including the second San Antonio plant, to educate workers about their rights. They also continued to fight for a better severance package for their members. While Levi's has refused to acknowledge that it treated its San Antonio workers unfairly, it has admitted to learning "from past experience in closing plants and layoffs" and in 1997 offered an improved severance package to workers at other closed plants.

However, Fuerza Unida's efforts have not been restricted to Levi's. Members have become more familiar with the plight of other workers within the community, and have joined their struggles as well. Viola Casares notes, "In the beginning, we started this organization out of anger and revenge for Levi's, but now our vision has been expanded. It is no longer our fight with Levi's... but other injustices that are occurring such as the destruction of the environment, human rights issues, immigrants' rights, etc. It's a much broader vision."

This broader vision has led the organization to build alliances with other groups of women and workers, and to travel to Costa Rica and Honduras to observe the even poorer working conditions at Levi's relocated factories. Fuerza Unida

played a crucial role in the successful effort to force U.S. Congressman Charlie Gonzalez to vote *No* on CAFTA (the Central American Free Trade Agreement), and is building momentum to oppose the FTAA, the Free Trade Area of the Americas. They continue to speak before legislative bodies, community groups, and media outlets telling their personal stories of the effects of Free Trade, particularly the effects on women garment workers. This includes a recent visit to the U.S. Capitol during the CAFTA vote, as well as numerous local, national, and international community speaking engagements. In addition, they advance community organizing efforts on the racist Minutemen Project and provide support for events such as the International Women's Day March and the Cesar Chavez March.

One of the most notable accomplishments of Fuerza Unida is its longevity. Fuerza Unida is a self-sustaining organization, with support coming from the establishment of a sewing cooperative, El Hilo de la Justicia, which is a model for economic justice, developing living wage products that value worker rights, economic justice, and human dignity. With donated materials, the sewing cooperative produces high-quality bedding and pillows. In addition, as part of their upcoming reunion, Fuerza Unida will feature a new clothing line made by El Hilo de la Justicia. The organization also provides support to its members with a food bank, and gains income from a catering service that was established to provide community members with little financial resources the opportunity to afford catering services at a lower cost. Presently the catering program is small scale yet has proved to be successful since they are recommended on a daily basis for their delicious comida.

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2005, Fuerza Unida will celebrate its Quinceañera and a Reunion for Ex-Levi's workers and supporters with a gathering to honor their experiences since the plant closed 15 years ago. It will be a time to build stronger ties among workers in the community, and a way to acknowledge those persons that have helped in the struggle. The Quinceañera will be from 7:00 pm – 12 midnight at **Santa Fe Episcopal Church, 1108 Brunswick.**

Fuerza Unida is looking forward to the next stage of their organizational life and they need the community's support. Now is the perfect time to support Fuerza Unida's efforts by becoming a member and donating at a level that you can afford. To participate en la lucha for the rights of workers and families, or for more information on the Quinceañera, please call **Fuerza Unida** at 210-927-2294.

<sup>1</sup> "Mujer a Mujer: Firsthand Account of Levi's: Collective interview with Berta Suárez, Virginia López, Margarita Castro, Lupe Galvan, Viola Cásares, Rita Alvarez, Petra Mata, Marta Martínez, and Francis Estrella of Fuerza Unida." [www.hartfordwp.com/archives/26/147.html](http://www.hartfordwp.com/archives/26/147.html)

Bio: Lacey Dalby is currently a buena gente volunteer at the Esperanza Center having graduated from UTSA with a BA in English and a M.A. in Women's Studies from Ohio State.

# KATRINA: Sorrow and the End of Illusions

By Antonio C. Cabral

Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath are a never-ending nightmare. Its devastation of the southeastern U.S. brought us unbearable sorrow as we saw scenes of extreme human suffering that are usually present in impoverished countries ruled by dictatorial regimes. The devastation of New Orleans also ended the illusion, for those who still harbored it, that the U.S. has a responsive government ready and willing to help its citizens in their time of need. Hopefully, this apocalyptic tragedy will finally motivate the U.S. civil society into actively taking back their country from politicians at all levels who serve only the invisible government: greedy U.S. corporations.

Everyone knows by now the human and material destruction Katrina left behind and about the callous failure by the Bush Administration to react quickly and decisively. I interviewed some of the displaced families from New Orleans' Superdome and heard horror stories. One African-American couple told me that inside the Superdome was a nightmarish hell. "But even before we got to that horrible place, we couldn't get any water or food. We were wading the streets in water full of sewer, corpses, gasoline and other junk." The husband cried, "A cop told us that aid could not get in, but reporters were all over the place filming and taking our picture. How come reporters could reach us but not the government to help us?"

Their eyes told their story of fear and sadness; the same painful feeling of despair found in the eyes of refugees in centers for battered women and in starving children in the mountains of Mexico. Eyes that scream of pain, not from their physical injuries but from their overwhelming needs, their disappointment in those they trusted and their feeling of abandonment. Many refugees were embarrassed to talk about how 'their' government had abandoned them only because they are poor or African Americans or both. The New Orleans victims were, in fact, the very poor; the forgotten ones who, like their counterparts in other U.S. cities, are visible to the rest of society only when they show up to work at under-paid jobs.

Bush and his apologists shamelessly claim that what happened in New Orleans was an "unavoidable natural disaster" caused by Katrina. Fact is, the flooding and subsequent destruction were caused by the regime's cuts to funding needed to strengthen the dams and levees protecting the city. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had been warning about those funding cuts for years.

John Woodley, the Army's Assistant Secretary for Civil Works, admitted on February 5, 2004, that the funding cuts "...reflect the frugal funding when the nation is at war." In other words, Bush and Congress chose to spend more than \$300 billion destroying Iraq in a senseless war rather than protect New Orleans. It was more important to give Israel \$2 billion to pay for the recent relocation of Jewish settlers from the occupied Gaza added to the \$90 billion Israel already receives annually from our treasury.

New Orleans' destruction illustrates how politicians respond only to the economic interests of corporations; that the President, the Congress and state and most municipal governments have become mere public administrators on behalf of that invisible corporate government that imposes policies harmful to the majority of working-class Americans. For example, despite the opposition by the majority of U.S. workers, the Bush regime is proposing an increase in Mexican and other Latino guest workers to be imported and eventually to give work permits to the millions of the undocumented already here. Both of these actions will accelerate the deterioration of the standard of living for U.S. working families while increasing the profits of greedy companies.

They will also continue saving Mexico's brutal governments from collapsing from their own corruption and from the courageous struggle of many Mexican organizations. It is no accident that U.S. Chambers of Commerce and almost every Mexican politician support these two Bush proposals.

There are many examples of the federal government acting against the interests of the majority of U.S. working families. This loss of representative government can be traced back decades, but it accelerated during the Reagan Administration and has increased with each passing administration, including those controlled by Democrats. For example, during the Clinton era, Vice President Gore led the effort to reduce the federal government and empower local religious groups to create a so-called safety net for the poor. It was Clinton/Gore that instituted the harmful "Reinventing Government" strategies. The central goal of these was to dilute the authority and funding of federal agencies, give total control to corporations and transfer responsibility of the public good to nonprofit and religious organizations. The Katrina aftermath has exposed the fallacy and dangers of those policies.

Regardless of how the Bush Administration spins the truth, the world now knows that poor people in the U.S. can expect the same disdain and arrogance that the Bushies have demonstrated towards the rest of the world. That's the fundamental reality that the New Orleans destruction has brought out into the open. Republicans, Democrats and the news media pretend to be surprised that poverty and racism still exists. Those three pillars of support of the invisible government are using their usual pitch that 'we are in this together as Americans' and, therefore, we should not be "playing the blame game." They are hoping that people will forget what happened and continue to be apathetic about the government's actions. They have used that strategy with the Iraq occupation and they will use it with this disaster also.

Faced with these realities, working people in the U.S. have two options. One option is to wait until the next election and, once again, vote for the lesser of two evils handpicked and marketed behind the scenes by corporate strategists. This option guarantees the continuation of the dangerous status quo including the reinforcement of the undemocratic rule by corporations through servile politicians. The second option is to follow the example of their counterparts in other countries and implement grassroots strategies that will give people control of their destiny. People throughout the world have removed from power despot presidents and charged them with crimes against humanity in international tribunals for, directly or indirectly, causing the death of their own people. Those civil societies took control of their own country and are trying to end harmful domestic and international policies like the ones currently suffocating the U.S.

Katrina and its aftermath have brought us much sorrow but also exposed the delusion that we are no longer divided by race and class. Now, U.S. workers, of all races and ages, must decide how they and their future generations will live and the type of government they have. A good starting point can be joining and supporting the effort to impeach Bush ([www.impeachbush.org](http://www.impeachbush.org)). You can also take time to learn about national groups that are struggling to change the dangerous course of our country such as the national Operation Democracy movement ([www.moveon.org](http://www.moveon.org)) and other grass roots efforts aimed at bringing democracy to the U.S. ([www.democracyinaction.org](http://www.democracyinaction.org)). It's up to you. Don't wait for someone else to give you back your country.

Bio: Antonio C. Cabral is a San Antonio freelance writer. His essays are published in the U.S. and Mexico.

# A COUPLE OF DAYS IN CRAWFORD, TEXAS

An eyewitness report by Loretta Van Coppenolle

As I write, a bus is preparing to wend its way from San Antonio to Crawford, Texas, packed with people who believe in truth and peace. I have been to Crawford – twice in the last two weeks. The first time was spur of the moment. A friend and I were attending a rally in Austin and we said, "Hey – we're halfway there – Why not?"

Arriving in Crawford in support of Cindy Sheehan and the Iraq-war protest she began, you stop first at the Peace House, begun a few years ago by John Wolf. It must be a thorn in the side

of this pro-Bush, pro-war bastion of 705 citizens. A little frame house with a lovely rock-lined garden, the House welcomes those who come in peace. Anyone can wander in to take a shower, pick up literature and leave donations. Outside are tables and coolers filled with drinks. Shuttles leave for the camp sites where many await George Bush's decision on whether or not he will see Cindy.

On our first trip, there were a couple of dozen people milling quietly at the Peace House. We stayed awhile, then hitched a ride to Camp Casey with a woman who'd just arrived from Chicago and whose son had come home after a year in Iraq. She was adamantly opposed to the war. Camp Casey was a ramshackle line of tents, tables, and chairs along a gravel road off of Prairie Chapel. There were 40 or 50 people camping. Striking were the many little crosses in the ground bearing names of U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq. Across the road, 5 or 6 pro-war people stood watching under their tent, with a big sign proclaiming their allegiance to Bush.

I introduced myself to Cindy and offered condolences on the loss of her son Casey, for whom the camp was named. He had been in Iraq one week when he became another casualty of Bush's war. Cindy Sheehan is a tall, composed, articulate woman of medium build who remains steadfast despite the viciousness of verbal attacks and other personal upsets: having recently had to contend with her husband's suing for divorce and her mother's suffering a stroke.

Our second time in Crawford was more deliberate and lengthier. There were four of us and this time I took notes. Our first trip had been on a Sunday; the second on a weekday. We'd been warned it might be less interesting but the opposite was true. The Peace House was more crowded and now there were two Camp Caseys. A rancher (a courageous soul!) had offered property to the peace vigilantes which became Camp Casey II under a tent nearly the size of a football field and several smaller tents. There were up to 200 people at the three peace sites on my second trip. Joan Baez had been there and performed for the peace folk. We missed seeing her.

There were crosses at Camp Casey II, also and many photos of fallen soldiers, mostly young and cut down too soon. There were signs all over with slogans like "War leaves all children behind" and "How many deaths will it take 'til he knows that too many people have died?" paraphrasing Bob Dylan's immortal words of a generation ago. One sign read: "You can blow out a candle/But you can't blow out a fire/Once the flame begins to catch/The wind will blow it higher." Banners proclaiming this was not just a movement by traditional pacifists were put up by the Iraq Veterans against the War, Veterans for Peace, and Gold Star Families for Peace.

I started conversations with strangers to get a sense of just who who had come to be with Cindy. I was told that 20 states were represented that day. I noted license plates from Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Louisiana, and New Mexico. Others had flown in from Georgia, New York, and Oregon. Texas was well represented.



I also met two doctors sent by Physicians for Social Responsibility who were there to lend medical assistance (to elders and those not used to the Texas heat) but also to deliver a letter of support from their group. Jeff Ritterman and Vivien Feyer had been on the Iraqi border last winter with some Gold Medal mothers– ones who do not buy the Bush war propaganda and you don't hear about.

I conversed with an older man who looked like a corporate head who'd had a change of heart.

Neil Kirk, a carpenter/ contractor from northern

California, was in Crawford with his granddaughter and another doctor to protest the war and show support for Cindy. He spent his days there networking, exchanging e-mails, and reading books like George Lakoff's *Moral Politics*. My most poignant conversation was with a woman from Ohio, Theresa. She sat at one of the tables reserved for military families and seemed hardly old enough to have a 20 year old son in Iraq. She had opposed the war from the start, having realized early on that Bush was not being square about it. Her son had joined the reserves planning to make a career of it following the footsteps of a long line of family members in the military. She said her son couldn't refuse to go to Iraq and felt a personal obligation to be with his buddies. She was emphatic in saying that maybe 80% of military people know the war is invalid but are not in a position to say so.

From Camp II we took a short cut through a dirt road, Quiet Valley, to get to Camp I. At one juncture there were police cars, a larger vehicle, and several uniformed men standing guard in front of another road. "Aha!" I thought, "This must be the way to Bush's ranch." Quiet Valley, a lovely name for a road leading to the abode of such a destructive individual. Back at first Camp, I noticed that as the pro-peace faction had grown, so had the pro-war group across the road. After some hesitation, I went to the other side with my peace buttons on my dress, to talk to some of them. One of my interlocutors was a baby-faced young man named Jason from a town nearby. He said he'd fought in both Afghanistan and Iraq. He wanted me to know, "The path to peace is not peace – You have to win peace by fighting for it." I asked if I could quote him and after he said yes he became nervous about who I was and who I was writing for. I put my hand on his shoulder and said I wouldn't hurt him. His last name and town of residence are here omitted for that reason. Jason is not the enemy. I said that I wished both sides would cross the road and begin talking to each other. Maybe if some dialogue ensued there'd be some chance at growth and understanding. Jason said that the peace people wouldn't let his side cross the road. I replied that it was because they were afraid of his side.

The bus leaving for Crawford today is probably by now on its way, packed with well wishers for a peace movement nobody could have predicted a month ago. That bus is one of many that will converge today on Crawford, as people heed the call of MoveOn.org to be present with Cindy just before she leaves for Washington, still in hopes of meeting with a president who shuns public dissent.

These impressions were written down so that those who read these words will have a better sense of what happened in Crawford in August, 2005, rather than rely on the usual sources which have begrudgingly covered the peace movement at Crawford. The details of this movement will go down in history by those that write it.

Bio: Loretta Coppenolle is a San Antonio citizen activist.

# WHY BUSH MUST BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE

"The

imothy 5:24

By Frank (Pancho) Valdez

Never in the history of the U. S. have we been subjected to as much corruption as we have experienced under George W. Bush. While this second rate businessman, son of a wealthy and powerful oilman does, indeed, wield great power, he has absolutely no heart, no soul, and little if any brain. George W. Bush will go down in the annals of U.S. history as one of the worst, if not THE worst president ever to rule in the White House.

Under Bush we have seen the following:

1) Tax relief for the wealthy which has destroyed the economic stability left by President Clinton.

2) An attack of U.S. civilians by alleged Islamic terrorists led by the son of a very close business friend of the Bush family. Four years after the criminal attacks of September 11, 2001, Osama Bin Laden remains a free man.

3) Despite the fact that there is no connection between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda, the events of 9-11 led to the unjustified invasion of Iraq resulting in unknown thousands of dead and maimed Iraqis, almost 1,900 U.S. soldiers dead and thousands more with physical and mental injuries. It has cost the economy about \$8 billion, much of it going to the coffers of Haliburton and other defense contractors. Under Bush, prisoners of war continue to be abused and killed with the official blessing of the U.S. Attorney General, Alberto Gonzales.

4) While Bush wages war against the Iraqis, he has also targeted environmental regulations allowing the multi-national corporations to further pollute our atmosphere, soil and water.

5) He has also targeted labor laws denying workers overtime pay after 40 hours, making it more difficult for workers to organize unions and is taking the side of employers in strikes by longshoremen, rail workers and airline workers.

6) Under Bush, religious fanatics have been allowed to determine official U.S. policy in wholesale attacks against immigrants, women's reproductive rights and gay people. While they claim to be *Christian*, their hatred and violence suggest that they know nothing of the true teachings of Jesus Christ.

7) Bush and his cronies have strongly supported "No Child Left Behind" which does anything but help children in the public schools of the nation, especially inner city children of color. Bush has encountered much opposition to this lame program even from within the Republican Party.

8) Bush continues to attack our civil liberties with the Patriot Act which has eroded our Constitutional rights and virtually makes the U.S. a police state.

9) Since Bush literally took office, the rate of poverty has risen putting children and elderly in jeopardy of malnutrition, unsafe housing, lack of healthcare, etc. His cuts of VA services are a slap in the face to those who served in Afghanistan and Iraq. Now the number of Americans without healthcare has

risen to over 48 million!

10) The icing on the Bush cake is his incompetent, racist and insensitive handling of the Hurricane Katrina disaster in New Orleans and other gulf coast communities. The federal government has known for years that the city of New Orleans was at high risk for serious flooding due to the condition of the levees and the city's being below sea level. Rather than fund the repair of the levees and other preventative measures, Bush gives tax breaks to the rich and squanders billions on an unjustified war in Iraq. This latest escapade by the *Mad Cowboy* has raised concern even amongst Republicans!

Recently, Bush's ratings fell to an all time low of 38%! Gordon Adams a former senior White House budget official for national security under President Clinton called for Bush's resignation in a scathing Op Ed article in the Baltimore Sun. Chastising Bush for the grossly incompetent handling of the disaster relief in New Orleans, Adams demanded that Bush resign his position as president! Another organization called Not In Our Name is currently raising money to bring criminal charges against Bush. NION charges Bush with war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The nation's tolerance of Bush lessens by the day. He can no longer convince most people to support his imperialistic war, and he certainly has proven that he is NOT a leader when the nation needs him the most. More and more people are calling for Bush's removal from the position of the presidency. I strongly concur and would add that Bush should be indicted and tried for lying to the Congress, for treason as he violates the basic principles of the U.S. Constitution and for crimes against humanity in his war with the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, the Democratic Party lacks the backbone to bring this criminal to justice. They are too busy being "careful" as to not appear radical or partisan. What they don't understand is that the people want strong leadership to address Bush's gross inadequacies and fill the vacuum of his inability to lead. Being careful to not offend will NOT inspire people to take action. What is truly offensive are Bush's crimes and that too many politicians lack the cajones and principles to stand up to him.

We as social justice activists must put the pressure on the politicians to remove Bush. It can be done, but it will NOT happen by itself. History shows us that the most powerful despots fell due to their own arrogance and corruption. We the people can make it happen with Bush. He must go! We deserve better than this fascist thug. Si Se Puede!

Bio: Frank Valdez is a 36 year veteran of the social justice movement and currently serves on the board of the National Alliance For The Mentally Ill

# TEXAS MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

## -AN ASSAULT ON FAMILIA

AN ASSAULT ON FAMILIES THAT DON'T FIT THE "OZZIE AND HARRIET" MOLD

By Daniel Graney

On November 8th, 2005 we will be asked to vote on an amendment to the Texas Constitution that will define marriage in a way that will deny rights and protections to thousands of families across this state. Listed as Proposition No. 2 on the ballot, the language of this amendment reads as follows: *The constitutional amendment providing that marriage in this state consists only of the union of one man and one woman and prohibiting this state or any political subdivision of this state from creating or recognizing any legal status identical or similar to marriage.*

Proposition No. 2 is one of nine constitutional amendments on the ballot. There is nothing else on the ballot except the ACCD Bond. There are no candidates running for public office on November 8th. Generally, voter turnout for constitutional amendment elections

the most powerful Right Wing leader in this country:

*The son of a Nazarene evangelist (the Nazarenes are a Holiness sect who believe that they are incapable of sin), Dobson is a child psychologist who, after earning a Ph.D. in psychology, taught pediatrics for many years at the University of Southern California School of Medicine and served on the attending staff at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles. In 1976, appalled by the "radical feminist agenda" of an international conference on women and families, he founded Focus on the Family. He has written that the organization's goal is "to help preserve the family and to spread the good news about Jesus Christ throughout the world. That's why we are here....More than 1,300 dedicated staff members are working every day to defend the cause of righteousness and assist your family in surviving the pressures of the '90s."*

*In fact Dobson's real mission, and that of his huge staff, is to roll back the clock. In the letters he contributes to Focus on the Family's monthly newsletter,*



**- This amendment is really about defining familia in such a narrow way so as to deny legitimacy, rights and protections to the vast majority of families in this state. -**

is low – between 5 and 10 per cent. However, because of a well-funded and orchestrated effort by Governor Rick Perry, the Texas Republican Party and fundamentalist right-wing churches, groups and individuals, the turnout for this election could be higher.

One thing is unmistakably clear. Marriage is really only a very small part of the Right Wing's agenda in promoting Proposition 2. This amendment is really about defining familia in such a narrow way so as to deny legitimacy, rights and protections to the vast majority of families in this state.

One of the right-wing organizations that is leading the effort on behalf of Proposition 2 is the oddly-named Free Market Foundation (FMF), based in Plano, Texas ([www.freemarket.org](http://www.freemarket.org)). Its website says that FMF was founded in 1972 and is a 501(c)(3) organization "dedicated to protecting freedoms and strengthening families in Texas". The website further states that FMF is a "statewide public policy council associated with Dr. James Dobson's Focus On The Family". See also the Right Wing websites promoting passage of Proposition 2 at ([www.txmarriage.com](http://www.txmarriage.com)) and ([www.texansformarriage.org](http://www.texansformarriage.org)). For the statewide coalition working to defeat Proposition 2, go to ([www.nononsenseinNovember.com](http://www.nononsenseinNovember.com)).

Bruce Bawer, author of *Stealing Jesus: How Fundamentalism Betrays Christianity*, provides this glimpse into the background and thinking of James Dobson who is, perhaps,

*he offers up a 1950s-style vision of family life that makes "Father Knows Best" look like "Mommie Dearest". Dobson's letters teem with sentimental anecdotes about happy weddings, about the joys of motherhood, and about high-school sweethearts marrying and living happily ever after.... Dobson constantly harkens back to the 1950s and to his own youth during that decade.... Back in the 1950s, he remembers fondly, "Grandfatherly Dwight Eisenhower was president of the United States...and most of our congressmen, even those who professed no particular faith, understood and defended the Judeo-Christian system of values".*

*The emphasis here on image – "Grandfatherly" Ike, atheistic congressmen who made Christian noises – is typical of Dobson, whose anecdotes consistently conjure up a picture of the 1950s in which everyone is white and middle-class and without serious problems. He doesn't acknowledge the poverty and racial prejudice that existed then, and ridicules the "liberal historians" who paint a more nuanced picture of 1950s life than he does.*

-Bawer, *Stealing Jesus*, pp. 248-249

Dobson's fixation on "Ozzie and Harriet" as the family icon – one man and one woman, both white, married with children – is a central component of the Right Wing's efforts to turn our government into a theocratic autocracy. As Suzanne Pharr so poignantly observes, "[t]he narrow definition of family affects not only LGBT people but also everyone whose family does not fit the definition of one man and one woman married with children". (*La Voz de Esperanza*, September, 2005, p. 4) This narrow definition of family excludes common law couples (with or without children), single people (with or without



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***This narrow definition of family excludes common law couples (with or without children), single people (with or without children), grandparenting families, blended families, adoptive families, foster families, extended families, interracial couples (with or without children), families of color, queer families (with or without children).***

children), grandparenting families, blended families, adoptive families, foster families, extended families, interracial couples (with or without children), families of color, queer families (with or without children). Indeed, the vast majority of families in Texas and in this country do not fit the “Ozzie and Harriet” mold of one man and one woman (both white) with children! Yet, according to Pharr, these families do not rate as “acceptable” or “legitimate” in the eyes of the Right Wing.

A case in point is the Texans For Marriage website at ([www.texansformarriage.org](http://www.texansformarriage.org)). This website, which does not acknowledge its ownership or have a “contact us” link, lists as one of its “Common Questions” the following: “Okay, so what if kids need both mother-love and father-love? Are you suggesting that single moms, widows and fatherless children are somehow inferior?” The answer provided says “of course not”. Yet, it goes on to say “many single parents are single through no fault of their own... These are far from ideal situations, and single parenthood is an unfortunate reality – not a celebrated ideal – for them.” In other words, single parent families are not as capable, acceptable or as legitimate as “Ozzie and Harriet” families and their children are at a “distinct disadvantage despite their parent’s best efforts”.

As the child of a single-parent divorced mother, I beg to differ. Yes, there were struggles my mother had to face raising four children on her own, but we all turned out to be unique, hard-working, loving and sensitive adults! We did watch “Ozzie and Harriet” as children on black-and-white TV, but it had absolutely no role to play in how we matured as adults! We matured into responsible adults because of the love we experienced from our mother and our extended family, especially our grandparents. Nothing more, nothing less.

Here in Texas, Governor Rick Perry is meeting with fundamentalist Christian ministers in first-class hotels touting the Texas Marriage Amendment as the next best thing to sliced bread. Perry and his right-wing buddies in the Texas Legislature did not take care of “bidness” such as public school finance and children’s health insurance, so now the focus is on Proposition 2. This is all they got! Unlike the 11 states that had constitutional marriage amendments on the ballot last November, Texas is the only state with such an amendment this November. Make no mistake, the Radical Right is pouring millions of dollars into Texas to ensure that Proposition 2 passes and Texas does not become the first state in the nation to vote down a constitutional marriage amendment.

Every registered voter in this state should vote against Proposition 2, here are four reasons why:

**(1) THE LANGUAGE OF THE AMENDMENT IS VAGUE AND OVERLY BROAD AND HURTS TEXAS FAMILIES:** The amendment defines marriage as the union of one man and one woman. What does “union” mean? That word is not defined in the amendment. According to most

dictionaries, “union” is defined as “the act of uniting or joining”. Thus, “union” implies some act, ritual or ceremony; i.e., civil or religious marriage ceremony or act of consummation (i.e. sexual intercourse). Judges and ministers who are authorized to perform marriage ceremonies in this state are required to sign a marriage license. So, if a “union” of one man and one woman implies a civil or religious ceremony supported by a marriage license, what about the thousands of common-law married couples in this state who have not met these requirements?

Moreover, the second part of the amendment bars recognition of “any legal status identical or similar to marriage”. Common law, or informal, marriage is recognized by statute as a legal form of marriage in Texas. See Texas Family Code, Section 2.401. The Family Code provides that a woman and man living together are married if they either (1) obtain a piece of paper from the courthouse called a “Declaration of Informal Marriage” or (2) “agree to be married and after the agreement they have lived together in this state as husband and wife and represented to others that they were married.” However, “common law marriage” may not fit the definition of marriage as the “union of one man and one woman” in the proposed constitutional amendment, so since common-law marriage is “identical” to marriage, Section 2.401 of the Family Code may become null and void if Proposition 2 passes, and “common law marriages” may no longer be valid in Texas. These couples would lose all sorts of rights, including social security survivor benefits, immigration rights, parental rights, joint income tax filing rights, and the over 1,000 other rights that are guaranteed by federal and state law to married couples.

There are other “legal statuses...similar to marriage” that will also be affected. These apply to relationships, whether they are heterosexual or homosexual. Here are a couple examples:

Joint Tenancies With Right of Survivorship (JTWROS) – This is a “legal status” that provides joint ownership of real property and bank accounts in this state. If two people own their home as JTWROS and one of the persons dies, the other inherits full ownership of the entire property without having to go through probate court. The same applies with a joint checking or savings account in a banking institution. JTWROS status is frequently used by lesbian or gay couples to protect their inheritance rights. However, this status is also used in mother-daughter, father-son, father-daughter, grandparent-grandchild or a myriad of other family relationships to protect property and inheritance rights. Can you imagine how an aging parent or grandparent will feel if after November 8, she wakes up and realizes that her joint banking account with her daughter or grandson is no longer protected?

Joint Managing Conservators (JMC) - This is a “legal status” that provides joint custody rights with children of a divorced couple. When a married couple with children divorces, the court generally makes a ruling on child custody.

JMC is the preferred child custody status because it grants the most equal access of both parents to the child or children of the relationship. This could be jeopardized if Prop. 2 passes, whether it involves an LGBT or heterosexual parent.

The list of “legal statuses similar to marriage” encompasses a network of relationships that affect property and inheritance rights, parental rights, the right to make medical decisions for a loved one, domestic violence orders and the list goes on. Indeed, a judge in Ohio, which passed a similar constitutional marriage amendment last November, nullified a domestic violence order because the couple had no marriage license!

**(2) CIVIL MARRIAGE FOR SAME-GENDER COUPLES IS ALREADY PROHIBITED BY LAW IN TEXAS:** Civil marriages between same-gender couples are already prohibited by statute in Texas. See Texas Family Code, Section 2.001. Moreover, under the Defense of Marriage Act that was adopted by the Texas Legislature in 2003, civil marriages and civil unions from other states and countries are not recognized in Texas. So, writing the prohibition of same-gender marriages, civil unions or domestic partnerships into the Texas Constitution is redundant and represents nothing more than a homophobic “piling on” against same-gender couples by denying rights to a whole demographic in this state.

**(3) THIS AMENDMENT DOES NOT BELONG IN THE TEXAS BILL OF RIGHTS:** Article I of the Texas Constitution is entitled “The Bill Of Rights”. This is the

section of the state constitution that enumerates all the rights granted to people in this state: the right to free speech, the right to a jury trial, the right to bear arms, the right to equality under the law and the list goes on. If it passes, Proposition 2 would be added as Section 32 to the Bill of Rights and, as such, would deny rights to many Texas families. It makes no sense to put this amendment into the Bill of Rights. It would violate the entire scheme of the Bill of Rights and contradict the Equal Rights clause in Section 3 of Article I of the state constitution.

**(4) THIS AMENDMENT IS A DISTRACTION FROM THE REAL PROBLEMS FACING THIS STATE:** The Texas Legislature failed the people of this state in the last several legislative sessions and did not solve real problems, such as public school finance, property tax reform and health insurance for all Texas children. Instead, they focused on Religious Right “morality” issues like “bump-and-grind” cheerleading, lesbian and gay foster parents and this amendment that is discriminatory, hateful and divisive. We need to send a message to the Texas Legislature that they need to focus on issues that really matter to Texas families and vote AGAINST writing hate into the Texas Constitution!

*Bio: Daniel Graney is a retired former Lutheran minister and attorney and is a community activist living in San Antonio with his partner of 31 years, Roberto Flores. Dan is presently volunteering his efforts with the San Antonio Alliance for Social Justice, a coalition of organizations and individuals that is working to defeat Proposition 2 on November 8.*

**VOTE AGAINST PROPOSITION 2 –  
THE ANTI-FAMILY CONSTITUTIONAL  
MARRIAGE AMENDMENT –  
ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2005!  
(Early Voting begins Monday, October 24th until  
Friday, November 4, 2005.)**

**VOTE EN CONTRA DE LA PROPOSICIÓN NO. 2 –  
LA ENMIENDA CONSTITUCIONAL DEL MATRIMONIO  
QUE ES ANTI-FAMILIA!  
el MARTES, 8 DE NOVIEMBRE. 2005!  
(Votación temprana empieza lunes, 24 de octubre hasta  
el viernes, 4 de noviembre. 2005.)**



**Join a coordinated statewide campaign to defeat this amendment.  
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for local organizing information and state-wide actions:  
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*¡Felicidades! Herminia y Carlos*

*The Esperanza staff, board and community congratulate Herminia Maldonado and Carlos Ayala who took a leap of faith and love and were married in August, 2005 at the Bexar County Courthouse after a courtship of two years. Herminia is a former staff member of the Esperanza and Carlos has been active as one of Esperanza’s many Buena Gente volunteering time and energy. We wish them well on their new journey.*

*¡Buena suerte y fuertes abrazos!*

# Marching for Justice in Austin: The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Mexican Independence Parade

By Roberto R. Calderón

It was a beautiful, hot sunny day for a marcha and rally and we all sweated generously. The temperature was close to 100°F. We marched directly north toward the Capitol in Austin on Congress Avenue, and the event went off as scheduled. For weeks prior to Saturday, September 17, 2005, organizers worked hard to make the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Austin Diez y Seis de Septiembre Parade an event that went beyond celebrating Mexico's declaration of independence from Spain in 1810 to one that sought to connect with current issues directly affecting the Chicano/Latino community. The *marcha's* call was against racism, against the Minutemen and, most importantly, in favor of having Congress pass the DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act allowing immigrant youth in the U.S. opportunities in institutions of higher education.

Austin-based groups and Texas affiliates of national organizations took the lead in organizing and included the Texas United Latino Artists (TULA); the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC); the United Farm Workers Union, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU); the UT-Austin Longhorn Council of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC); the UT-Austin Jóvenes Inmigrantes por un Futuro Mejor (JIFM); Texas LULAC; and Coalición Internacional de Mexicanos en el Exterior (CIME) of Houston and Dallas. A number of student and youth groups throughout the state of Texas as well as employee unions, business, professional, grassroots and social justice groups like MALDEF, Coalición Indígena de Texas and the César Chávez March for Justice Organizing Committee of San Antonio among others joined the march, also.

## Marching for Justice: A Report from the Street

The handful of brief accounts of the Marcha published in Mexico's and Texas's print media were hardly adequate. For starters, the *Austin American-Statesman's* article had the numbers wrong on how many participated in the *marcha* and how many right-wing protesters met us at the gates to the Capitol. The reporter spoke of 100 anti-immigrant protesters and 400 *marcha* participants. Notimex's article was off the mark noting there were 100 anti-immigrant hecklers and only 200 participants. The *Al Día* story got it better by simply noting that there had been "hundreds" participating in the march. The latest to weigh-in on this point was the *Diario La Estrella* who reported that estimates of *marcha* participants ranged from 350 to 500 and 1,000 to 2,000.

I documented the Marcha by taking close to 250 photographs. Several of us present at the March discussed the numbers in attendance. We came to the conclusion that there were at least 1,000 participants, perhaps more. This figure concurs with the opinion of event organizer and CIME member

Manuel Rodela of Dallas as reported by the *Diario La Estrella*. The key organizer in this event was the young Rice University alumnus Ana Yáñez-Correa, and she estimated as many as 2,000 participants which maybe overly generous. Those with whom I discussed the numbers tended toward the figure of about 1,000, which would make the event a success, as confirmed at the rally by the immigrant rights organizer from Arizona who noted that a march/rally of this size would be considered successful by the progressive forces there fighting for the public's hearts and minds. Peak attendance occurred in the hour immediately following the arrival of the column to the Capitol grounds and the start of the rally at the steps to the Southside entrance.



The *marcha* stretched along Congress for maybe a quarter of a mile at its greatest extension, with room between contingents. The floats, cars, and other vehicles had gone ahead of the main column of marching contingents. The atmosphere among those who participated was definitely upbeat, celebratory, and full of energy. There were families with children and many university and college students mostly Chicanos/Latinas experiencing a *marcha* and rally for the first time.

## 'Goons at the Gates'

At the entrance to the Capitol grounds there were some thirty or more mostly Anglo males—supporters of the Minutemen, anti-immigrant activists. This Anglo contingent of right-wing protesters tended to be middle-aged in contrast to the age overall of those who marched. Standing between the marchers and the reactionaries as the *marcha* passed through this intersection was a phalanx of about ten Austin policemen and Texas state troopers. They directed the *marcha* toward the Capitol grounds with no physical altercations.

The 'goons at the gates' had been called to the scene someone said, by a local right-wing talk radio show host in Austin. The contras took the sidewalks leading to the Capitol grounds. There they held at least three prominent signs, two of them hand-lettered which read: "Mexico Out of USA" and "Illegal Immigration Is Bad." The other sign printed in the nifty colors of Spain, golden yellow and royal red stated a statistic: "106.6 Illegals per Hour/The Invasion." These Anglo men yelled words out like: "Keep on marching all the way south," and "Go Back to Mexico!" UT Austin Prof. Angela Valenzuela, with her two daughters made the following observation:

*My children, ages 9 and 12, were shocked by the violent, abusive language spewed out by the Minutemen in attendance. We had to remind them again that they are 14th generation descendants who were here on this land before there was a Texas. As Mexican American parents, we also underscored our shared destiny with Mexican immigrants and most immediately, our need to help them*

*pass federal legislation (like the Dream Act or Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee's Immigration Fair Act) that will allow them to secure gainful employment and contribute as they can and should, to the well being of this country. Regarding the Minutemen, in particular, we told our children that they have a right to disagree and to counter-protest. We denounced, however, their violent, sexist and racist speech that was clearly intended to provoke. Fortunately, the joy of the marcha and rally and seeing so many good friends from across the state helped to offset the toxicity of the discredited foul-mouthed Minutemen.*

Needless to say paranoia runs deep among this crowd, and media gave them as much attention as the next person.

As irony would have it, on the sidewalk were many non-protesters, mostly Latino and African Americans waiting to catch a city bus on their way elsewhere.

Above the din made by the bullhorn-amplified sloganeering of the counter-demonstrators, and much to their chagrin, could be heard the clapping and cheers that arose from some of the Latinos and African Americans waiting for the bus. Some marchers invited them to join us as part of the marching column.

Added to the large group of bystanders and bus riders were throngs of reporters, photographers, and videographers who were conducting an impromptu press conference with presumed leader(s) of the anti-immigrant bunch on the sidewalk at the entrance to the Capitol grounds. The group of pro-Minutemen was by no means anywhere near to numbering 100. At best it may have been a third of this figure. Clearly, each observer or reporter has his or her own truth of the matter.

## Rallying for Civil & Human Rights

Raza and others in the *marcha-rally* used standard civil and human rights calls including "¡Sí Se Puede!" "¡La Raza Unida, Jamás Será Vencida!" "Hey, Hey, Ho, Ho, the Minutemen Have Got to Go!" "What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!" "¡Afuera con los Minutemen!" "¡Raza Sí, Migra No!" "Racists Go Home!" A young Chicana university student held a hand-lettered poster that read: "Who Would Jesus Deport?" Other students carried signs that said: "¡Di No Al Racismo!" "Educate Don't Discriminate," "Minutemen = Terrorists," "La Lucha Sigue," "Minutemen are KKK," "Education Not Deportation," and "UT Students for the Dream Act." And, of course, born in the struggles of the California immigrant rights movement in the 70s, the slogan, "No Human Being Is Illegal/Ningún Ser Humano Es Ilegal." The student group from the University of North Texas, MUEVE, with a U.S. flag on the left and a Nazi German flag on the right stated in its *mantra*: "We're on that path: We will not remember the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends. DO SOMETHING."

Leaders and politicians at the rally included Congressman Lloyd Dogget (D-Austin) who spoke first and was followed by a host of other excellent speakers including one from Arizona. She delivered a moving statement of solidarity noting that those who



objected to immigrant rights were people afraid of the political, cultural, and economic changes that the demographic changes will exact. State Rep. Roberto R. Alonzo (D-Dallas) spoke as well to his credit having an exemplary record in the Legislature for advocacy and support of the immigrant community's rights.

The only current Mexican American/Latino on the Austin City Council, Raúl Alvarez, spoke in both Spanish and English. Representatives of LULAC participated including national president, Héctor Flores, who has long resided in Dallas but is originally from South Texas.

Ana Yáñez-Correa, one of the young organizers spoke with much clarity and passion. She is currently involved in efforts to reform the Texas criminal justice system as the executive director of the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC). She is the immediate past education

director for LULAC's statewide office in Austin. There was also Julieta Garibay, a student leader at UT Austin and leader in the Jóvenes Inmigrantes por un Futuro (JIFM). She is fighting to have the Dream Act pass so that she can exercise her profession as a registered nurse and continue her studies to obtain a master's and work in the U.S. She spoke in both English and Spanish with much emotion and compassion delivering a moving and powerful statement. Presentations continued with live and recorded music provided before and after the speeches were heard.

## The Struggle Continues

Civil and human rights struggles are part of the political life and fabric of human existence. If there is a yearning for greater social justice in this world, there you will find that the struggle continues. The *marcha* and rally in Austin provided an occasion for a newer generation of young people to experience their first such event, it also afforded a place and space for veterans of many such struggles in Texas and across the country to come together and continue their alliance. It is heartening to see that a new generation of social justice organizers is alive and well and coming into their own for they will inherit the future.

There was lots of creativity, networking, and lots of plans for continuing the struggle for civil

rights, which is one and the same as immigrant rights. One of the leading messages was Justice, means all of us, not Just-Us. There was talk of there being another *marcha* planned in the state sometime in 2007 or 2008 and one in Washington, D.C. It was all in a day's work down in Austin this past weekend. ¡Sí Se Puede!

Bio: Dr. Roberto R. Calderón is Associate Professor of History at the University of North Texas.



# Diario of a Pocho Word:

By Nino A. Acuña

*Etymon*: A word in a foreign language that is the source of a particular loan word (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary).

*Nepantla*: An Aztec word meaning torn between ways (Gloria Anzaldua: Borderlands/la frontera).

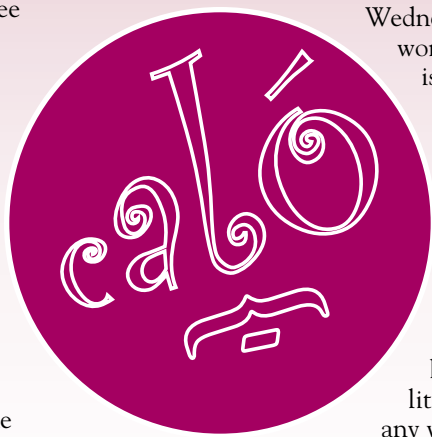
Once upon a time, in a distant land called Etymon, there was a spirited young little word that was lost. The word had journeyed far away from its homeland of Nepantla, where it had left behind two loving parents. Its mother was a beautiful Mestiza word whose family tree included Spanish, Arabic, and Nahuatl words, and its father, who although claimed a pure English vocabulary for lineage, was known to have words from all over the world for ancestry.

Their youngest offspring, the adolescent word protagonist of our story, left home intending to find adventure, fortune, and maybe even a little romance in the form of a passionate verb, possibly a dazzling noun, or perhaps even a colorful adjective—it did not matter from what language since the little word was not the least discriminatory when it came to love. Unfortunately, things had not gone as planned: it found no adventure, it was as penniless and broke as a split infinitive, and the only fling it had encountered was with a bawdy and profane four-letter word (*parenthetical: in order for this story to maintain its PG rating the lewd four-letter word will go unnamed and its liaison with the little word of our story will remain untold due to the vulgar language and crude sexual humor that would be necessary in the telling of this most sordid of episodes*).

After a year of hardship the little word found itself alone in Etymon, a place that was cold and not very welcoming. Everyone the word met in Etymon was either xenophobic, closed-minded, or just plain racist. "Every time I open my mouth I get suspicious looks," thought the little word. "I had better be careful of anything I say in this intolerant place."

The word felt like it was without a friend in the world and was very frightened. It did not have its language family nearby and sorely missed its five brothers and sisters, who, from oldest to youngest were named, Caló, TexMex, Spanglish, Casteyanqui, and Inglespañol. The little word also missed its neighborhood friends from Nepantla such as Creole, Pidgin, Ebonics, Patois, Cajun, Blinglish, and Frangleis; it even missed the class computer geek whose name was Cyberspanglish.

These feelings of agonizing nostalgia sprang from the reality that life for the little word was positively inhospitable in Etymon. This week, in particular, was positively terrible. Positively.



On Monday, when the word tried to register for classes at Etymon high school, it was labeled "slow or limited in intellectual development" by the school administration. "But I'm not retarded!" cried the little word. It was true; in the school in Nepantla, the little word had been an honor roll student. Tuesday was no better. On that day, the little word was turned away from the Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, safe haven for destitute words, even though it was cold outside and it had nowhere else to go. On Wednesday, the language police found the little word sleeping outside the dictionary shelter and issued a citation for loitering and being an "inarticulate vernacular word."

"We don't like your type around these here parts," growled the red-faced officer.

On Thursday the little word sought refuge in the shelter of a thesaurus because it heard they were more accepting of wayward words. But sadly, not even the thesaurus would accept the poor little vocable. Finally, on Friday, when the little word thought it could not possibly get any worse—it did. The humiliated, rejected, maltreated, mispronounced, and dejected word was physically abused, attacked in a park by a gang of neo-Nazis while it rested peacefully under a tree.

"For the defense of the father tongue!" shouted one of the Nazis. "If the government won't give our language protection and official status, then we will stomp out all of these undesirable mongrel words that do nothing but corrupt our superior civilization!" This is what the defenseless and young, ex-idealistic word heard while being pummeled by steel-toed boots.

The little word was badly bruised and bloodied. It struggled to its feet and was able to make it over to a crowd of people. Before passing out it managed to say, "I am badly injured, I have just been beat up by language Nazis . . . please call help." But instead of waking up in an emergency room with doctors and nurses, not to mention pain medication, the little word woke up in the office of a speech language pathologist! "I don't need help with my accent and pronunciation!" yelled the battered little word, "I need medical attention!"

After a week like that, most words, no matter if they were English, Spanish, Mandarin, or whatever language, would be ready to give up and call it quits, but not the little word. It actually wanted to get back to the Etymon school and prove that it did not belong in special education classes. The little word looked around. The school valued other naturalized words and phrases. "Why not me?" it wondered. In the playground it noticed that the Latin phrase Ad Nauseam was repeating the same old story about the time it won the city spelling bee to the utterly bored Yiddish

word Chutzpa who would have surely preferred to be doing something bold or daring somewhere else. Over by the swings it saw the French word Déjà vu tongue kissing its girlfriend Je ne sais quoi. Even the Italian word Prima Donna had been accepted, although all of the other words considered it to be a very temperamental word.

The friendless, unattached little word felt utterly downhearted on the playground. It sat at one end of the seesaw, but that's no fun when there is no one on the other end to go up and down with. It asked the other words to play hide-and-go-seek but when it would go off and hide, no one would bother to try and find it. The little word even tried to play checkers, but have you ever tried to play checkers by yourself? It is not very engaging to say the least. The little word just wanted to cry. No one would talk to it; everyone put it down, kicked it around, and called it names.

"Pocho, Pocho, habla como mocho," taunted all of the Spanish words.

The English words jeered, "What does that dumb word think it is, doesn't it know that English is the official language here in Etymon? Besides, who can understand that gobbledygook language it speaks anyway?"

They said all of this and more while pointing their fingers and sticking out their tongues at the disheartened young word from Nepantla; pubescent words can be quite cruel to those who are different.

The little word felt so ashamed that it felt like taking a vow of silence and never speaking to anyone ever again. "What's the good of talking when no one wants to listen to a single thing you say?" thought the little word. Even the teachers admonished it about speaking what they contemptuously called "That second-rate tongue of criminals and peasants." The little word's Spanish teacher constantly tried to shame it into speaking what she called "proper Castilian" and "the elegant language of Cervantes." The snobbish teacher condescendingly said, "Te debe dar vergüenza hablar así, que no sabes que la diferencia entre la comunicación civilizada y la bárbara radica en que la primera utiliza sistemas más complejos, construidos conscientemente, mientras que la comunicación bárbara, como la tuya, esta ligada a los instintos. El diccionario de la Real Academia Española tiene el propósito de fijar las voces y vocablos de la lengua castellana en su mayor propiedad, elegancia y pureza y tu no tienes ni elegancia ni pureza."

The little word felt so humiliated, but it kept quiet and remembered what its mother had said when it was learning to speak the blended dialect of its loving parents.

"Remember my beautiful baby palabrita. There are many different forms of communication such as painting, music, dance, even smoke signals, but you are special because you are part of a new language, a beautifully bold, innovative language that will not only illustrate your linguistic inheritance but will signal the birth of a new multicultural world. A world of endless possibilities, don't forget that this awaits you my child, the world is yours." The memory of its mother's loving guidance is the only thing that kept the little word from believing the hurtful rhetoric of the Spanish teacher.

The little word's English teacher was no better.

"You have to speak correctly you awful little word, don't you realize how ignorant you sound speaking like a dirty mongrel. Instead of Oxford English you sound more like Oxnard English."

The little word wondered how a teacher could be so cruel and insensitive. Again, the little word had to recall its mother's loving affirmations to keep itself from wallowing in self-pity.

Instead of surrendering and giving his arrogant teachers, his taunting classmates, the dictionary shelter that had slammed the door in his face, the fascist language police, the sadistic neo-Nazis, and everyone else in Etymon the satisfaction of seeing it conform to their language rules, the little word held its head up high and decided once and for all that it was going to rise above the narrow-mindedness of everyone in Etymon. After all, they had almost made the impressionable little word internalize their attacks on its culture and assimilate to their way of thinking, acting, and speaking. The word was determined not to let them soil the beautiful linguistic heritage of Nepantla. The little word would honor its parents and grandparents by being the best word it could be.

Every morning for self-affirmation, the little word stood in front of the mirror and said, "You are good enough, you are smart enough, you are a first-class word, and one day you will have a language family to call your own." The little word knew that it would not be a lonely outcast forever. Instead of remaining silent in the classroom it began to speak up and defend its proud heritage. Instead of letting itself be made fun of and bullied by the other words in school, the little word came up with clever syncretistic terminology and ingenious phrasing that would leave everyone feeling bewildered and taken aback by the sheer creativity of the its expressive capabilities.

Years passed and in time the little word proved how brainy and brilliant it was by learning many languages including standard English and Spanish, but also Nahuatl, French, Turkish, Greek, Arabic, Latin, Swahili, and Mandarin. The little word became a world-renowned linguist and winner of a Nobel Prize for literature, the Águila Azteca, and countless other literary honors for the groundbreaking novel eloquently written in the language of Nepantla titled: *Diario of a Pocho Word*.

The little word was never sad or lonely again, although it still occasionally had to try and educate bigots and chauvinists who were slowly becoming anachronistic in the enlightened world that the little word had helped to create. In time, the little word, who by now was not so little, married an avant-garde synthetic tongue named Esperanto. The two had four children, two prefixes and two suffixes. And they all lived happily ever after... The End.

Bio: Nino Acuña a graduate of UT-Austin (BA in Latin American Studies) and UTSA (MA Bicultural/Bilingual Studies) is living in New Orleans recently leading the life of a wandering nomad. He has been notified that his home sustained minimal damage. Nino considers himself a borderlander having grown up in Brownsville, Texas. Contact him at [ninoalejandro@yahoo.com](mailto:ninoalejandro@yahoo.com)

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**\*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 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.

**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 on fourth Wednesdays at La Madeline on Broadway 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 Thurs

days 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 2nd Mondays @ 7:00 pm at Barnes and Noble, San Pedro Crossing (north of Loop 410). 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

**Texas Media Empowerment Project** meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday @ the Esperanza Center @ 6:30 pm. Contact: Deanne Cuellar deanne@tokyo.com phone: 210.320.7561

Submissions, deletions or changes to community meetings may be made by contacting [lavoz@esperanzacenter.org](mailto: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.

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

**The Last Reading of Charlotte Cushman** by Carolyn Gage portrayed by **Martha Prentiss** will be at **Jump-Start Performance Co.** on Friday, September 30<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Cushman, a large butch woman, was very "out" about her lesbianism, cross-dressing to play men's roles and referring to her partner as "my wife" in the 19th century. Friday and Saturday, at 8 pm and Sunday at 2 pm. Admission is \$12/ \$9 discount. Call 210/227-JUMP for reservations.

A great, free show is being offered on Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> at the **Collins Garden Public Branch Library**, 200 N. Park Blvd. **Tortilla Heaven**, a bilingual comedy, is about three generations of Hispanics try to relate to one another. Jade Esteban Estrada performs this play by Celeste Angela Estrada, winner of the 2004 Gertrude Stein Literary Award. At 7 p.m. Call 210/225-0331 or go to: [www.getjaded.com/TortillaHeaven.htm](http://www.getjaded.com/TortillaHeaven.htm).

Low-cost **mammograms** will be offered on October 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> from 8 am to 4 pm by **ALLGO** at 701 Tillery Street in Austin. Appointments are required. Call 210.472.2001 x 108 or [www.allgo.org](http://www.allgo.org)

**Gemini Ink** presents award-winning novelist **Mary Gordon** who will give a free reading followed by an audience Q&A at 7 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 6 at the **San Pedro Playhouse**, 800 W. Ashby at San Pedro. Contact 210.734.WORD or 210.877.734. WORD or [www.geminiink.org](http://www.geminiink.org). Free.

In response to racist attacks on our communities by criminal vigilantes comes the **5th Annual Border Wide Mobilizations** with four simultaneous actions along the U.S./Mexico border on October 8th, 2005 at 12 pm. It is organized by the Southwest Network for

**Environmental and Economic Justice (SNEEJ)** and grassroots affiliates in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, California, Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas. In Texas, the actions will take place in El Paso/ Cd. Juarez and Eagle Pass/ Piedras Negras. Check [www.sneej.org](http://www.sneej.org).

San Antonio's 3rd Annual **South African Festival, "SA to SA,"** on Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup> will take place from noon to 7 pm featuring South African music, food, dance, crafts and drum making. A film festival follows from 7-9 pm. Sponsored by **Prima Donna Productions** it will be held at the Continental Café, 6390 Fairdale (near Rittiman Rd. and I-35). COST: Adults \$5, Children, 12 & under, \$2. Call 210-822-3552 or visit [www.primadonnaproductions.com](http://www.primadonnaproductions.com)

The Mind Science Foundation presents **Thinking in Pictures** with **Temple Grandin, PhD** from Colorado State University on Monday October 10<sup>th</sup> from 6-8 pm at the Scottish Rite Auditorium at 308 Avenue E speaking on the realities inside the mind of a child or adult with autism. And, on Monday, October 24<sup>th</sup> a free lecture sponsored by **Trinity University** at 7:30 pm in Laurie Auditorium will be offered featuring renowned neuroscientist **Michael S. Gazzaniga, Ph.D.** of the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience - Dartmouth College. Contact: [info@mindsience.org](mailto:info@mindsience.org).

On Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm **LORNA DEE CERVANTES** will read from her new book, **Drive, The First Quartet** at the **Trinity University Chapman Graduate Center Auditorium**. Contact: [milligan@wingspress.com](mailto:milligan@wingspress.com)

Mexico Solidarity Network presents:

**International Campaign for Justice in Juárez and Chihuahua** from October 20-30th. And from November 6-19th the **Women Confronting Globalization: Cultural Resistance, Fair Trade and Human Rights Tour** will take place. To schedule speakers contact [msn@mexicosolidarity.org](mailto:msn@mexicosolidarity.org) or call 773/583-7729 or 202/544-9355.

The Texas Book Festival celebrates its 10th anniversary at the State Capitol in Austin from October 28<sup>th</sup> through 30<sup>th</sup> with all-star authors including **Sandra Cisneros, Carmen Lomas Garza, Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Benjamin Alire Saenz, Liliana Valenzuela** and others. Most presentations are free, but some require wrist bands available from Barnes and Noble. Check: [www.texasbookfestival.org](http://www.texasbookfestival.org)

TEXAS CULTURE: CALL FOR PAPERS: **The Southwest/Texas Popular & American Culture Associations Annual Conference** will be held February 8-11, 2006 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Submissions for presentations are now being accepted. Contact: [www.h-net.org/~swpca](http://www.h-net.org/~swpca) or 505.842.1234.

The producers for the **411 Show**, (airs on Tuesdays, 6:30pm), are looking for youth, ages 9 to 19 years old, to appear as talk show guests and performers during filming. No experience is necessary. All talents will be considered. This is a non-paid position and gives youth the opportunity to develop experience in the media arts. Call **Patsy Robles, 411 Productions**, at 789-3143 or e-mail to [411show@sbcglobal.net](mailto:411show@sbcglobal.net)

DRIVE OUT THE BUSH REGIME MEETINGS EVERY WED. AT 7:30 PM AT SAN PEDRO PARK IN THE GAZEBO Contact [artputa@yahoo.com](mailto:artputa@yahoo.com)

**Congratulations, Tami and Kelly**  
Tami Gold and Kelly Anderson co-directors of the documentary **EVERY MOTHER'S SON** were nominated for an Emmy Award for "Outstanding Achievement in a Craft: Directing." Iris Baez, Kadiatou Diallo and Doris Busch Boskey, the mothers in the film who remained steadfast in their pursuit of police reform and accountability, are also to be congratulated. The film was brought to the Esperanza in partnership with POV with Iris Baez and Tami Gold present for the screening and panel presentation.

**Congratulations to Isabel Sánchez**  
for a lifetime achievement award presented to her by the Avenida Guadalupe Association for her work in the Westside Community and especially in garnering funds for the Lanier PTA and the Fuentes-Sanchez Scholarship Fund. A donation of \$10,000 was made to the scholarship fund as a tribute to the those honored by Avenida.

## 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.

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



*Arboles de MujerArtes*  
are on exhibit until  
November 11th, 2005  
at the Esperanza Center.

Dan  
Guerrero as

*¡Gaytino!*

at the Esperanza Center 922 San Pedro  
Sat. Nov. 5th @ 8 pm, Sun. Nov. 6th @ 3pm

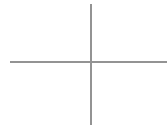


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*Watercolor Women Opaque Men*  
**and Psst...I Have Something**  
*to Tell You, Mi Amor*

Sunday @ 3 PM  
October 2, 2005  
ESPERANZA Center  
922 San Pedro  
210 . 228 . 0201



**ANA CASTILLO**