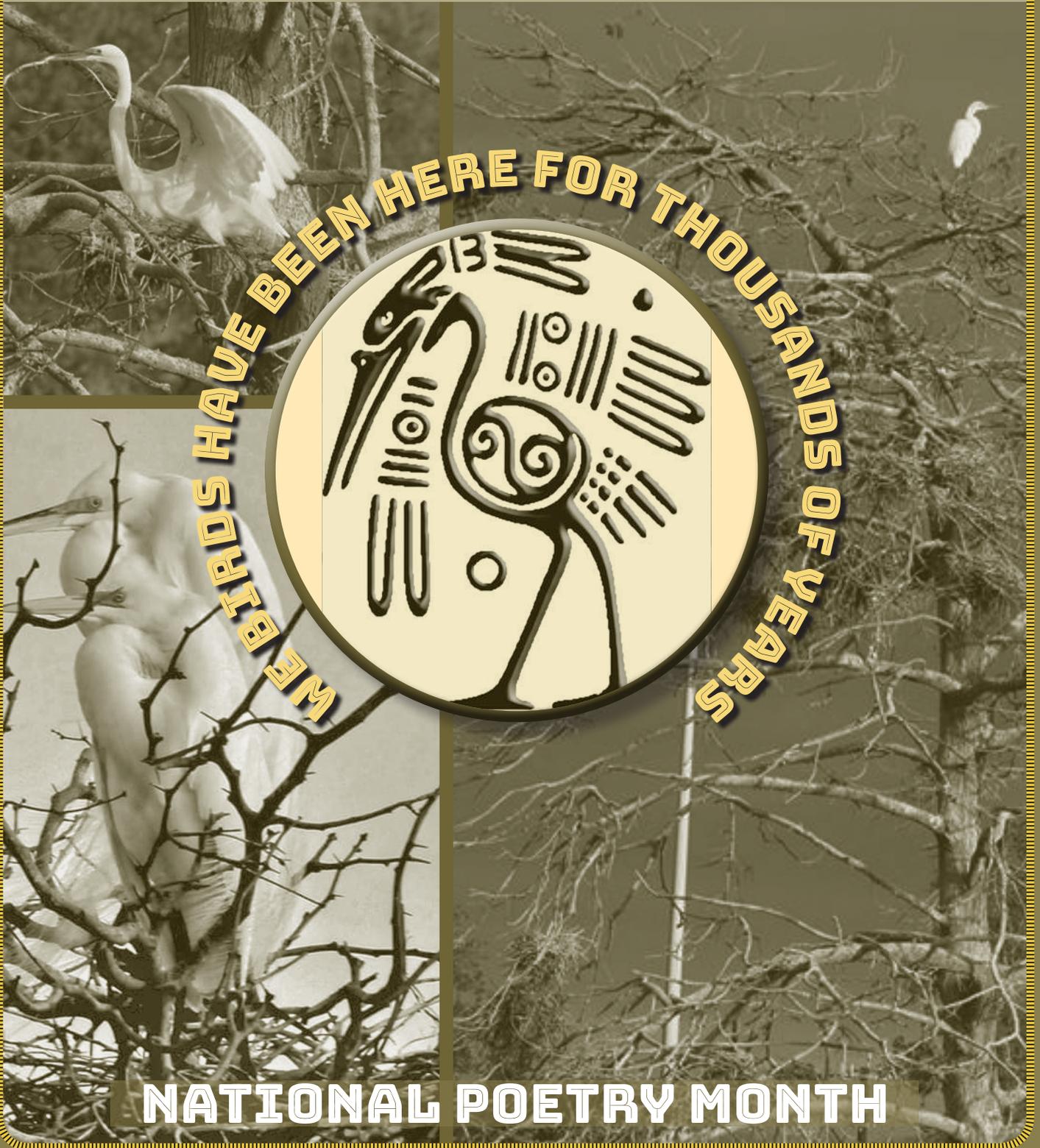


La Voz de Esperanza

APRIL 2019 VOL. 32 ISSUE 2

SAN ANTONIO, TEJAS



NATIONAL POETRY MONTH



La Voz de Esperanza

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Vol. 32 Issue 3

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 Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.



Funny how Voz articles seem to be interconnected. When I saw that the April issue would highlight poetry month, it never occurred to me that it would lead us to the Green New Deal. It turned out that the poem Gianna Rendón sent was on the egrets of Lake Elmendorf. Although I was not involved in efforts to save the birds at the Lake, I knew about it. My plan was to feature the egrets and poems.

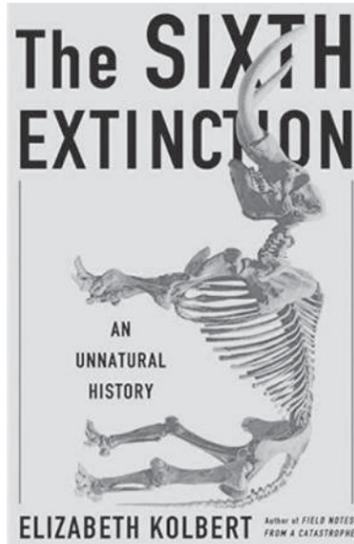
Then, I walked Jere Locke to the Esperanza with whom I had worked with years back on an education group board. He now worked for the Texas Drought Project. Part of his job was working on the Green New Deal. So, I asked him for an article.

Meanwhile, Ed Codina, whom I had known for years since I was a student at UT-Austin in the 70s, died suddenly. At his memorial old friends turned up including Julio Noboa Polanco, another ex board member of the Esperanza who now lives in Costa Rica. He told me he had written about the situation in Venezuela for the Houston Chronicle but they had edited out some language. I asked him for the article. I had hoped to get an article from Antonio Cabral on the topic last month but due to eye surgery, he was not able to write it. That done, I went back to the egrets' poem and planned to dedicate a full two pages to the poem. I asked Kamala Platt to send in photos. Julio, however, contacted me with another article on the anti-hate resolution passed in Congress in response to Rep. Ilhan Omar's comments on the state of Israel that were deemed anti-Semitic by some. The resolution that covered hate based on race and religion did not mention Latinos at all. So, I had to make room for that article.

Gianna's poem and the egrets were reduced to one page. I also had an article by Norma Cantú—an address that she delivered at the NACCS Tejas Foco Conference in Houston in February. The article mentions the first indigenous poet of the New World—no, not Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz—she was the second. Two pages at the end of the issue, a nice ending to poetry month. Read it and find out!

This brings me to the editorial. In reading Jere's article on the Green New Deal and the heartening efforts of young people—children, really—to combat climate change I found out about *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*, a Pulitzer Prize winning book written by Elizabeth Kolbert in 2015 that argues that the Earth is in the middle of a man-made sixth extinction. She gives examples of how humans have been responsible for the extinction of certain species of animals and compares other periods of extinction previously due to natural causes. The current rate of extinction of species is estimated at 100 to 1,000 times higher now than natural background rates. It is due to humans having a direct impact on ecosystems that causes stress that extinguishes species through activities such as transformation of the landscape. She estimates flora and fauna loss by the end of the 21st century to be between 20 to 50 percent of all living species. And here we are trying to rid ourselves of egrets on Elmendorf Lake. ¿Qué cosas? When will we learn to trust Nature and care for our environment and all beings.

—Gloria A. Ramírez, editor



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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.



Finally Hope On Climate: Green New Deal!



By Jere Locke, Texas Drought Project

Last September the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued a report which concluded that we have just 12 years to turn down emissions enough to avoid calamity. However, the IPCC operates by consensus, which means all the scientists and their governments must agree on the findings. The IPCC also doesn't consider the science on tipping points. Both of these factors lead to the IPCC compromising on the best science, so, instead of having 12 years, we have perhaps half that number. Thus if we spend the next 3 years on writing and voting on the Green New Deal (GND) and fail to get it passed, we might not have enough time to offer and then pass another bill which can meet the challenges of climate change.

There are also additional warnings from nature. **Two researchers entering a tropical forest in Puerto Rico where they had done research 35 years before found the bird population greatly reduced.** Their subsequent research found the reason—98% of the ground insects were no longer there, nor were 80% of the insects in the tree canopy. The mostly likely culprit, they reasoned, is climate change. One said *“We are essentially destroying the very life support systems that allow us to sustain our existence on the planet...it is just horrifying to watch us decimate the natural world like this.”* Scientists are seeing this happening in tropical forests and elsewhere in the natural world, evidence of what some believe to be the beginning of the Sixth Extinction.

EL SALVADOR & AFRICA

In the US we've had considerable problems with climate-caused wildfires and hurricanes. Hurricane Maria caused 3,000 deaths in Puerto Rico alone.

Other more vulnerable parts of the world are also being ravaged. Several years ago, the UN, concerned about the noticeable increase in the migrants coming north from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, conducted a study to identify the reason for the increase in migration. They went to the districts in the three countries with the greatest number of migrants and asked why people were leaving. The number one answer was DROUGHT, the severe form of which is caused by climate change. This prolonged drought has greatly worsened food insecurity and impact-

ed jobs, as 2/3 of the latter are agriculture-related.

In October the Texas Drought Project (TDP) hosted a small meeting with Bernardo Bellosso of CRIPDES, a coalition of around 350 communities in El Salvador. When one person talked about the complete disappearance of a spring which had once been a “waterfall” in a community of 2500 people in NW El Salvador, Bernardo said that springs are disappearing all over the country. **Last year the corn and bean crops in El Salvador were 80% below normal levels and have been reduced by a lesser but very significant extent in the previous years.** The UN study indicated that this is happening in all three countries (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras).

In 2017, 3,000 Africans died crossing to Europe from Libya in vulnerable boats, often without life-jackets. In 2018, the number was less, but still an eye-opening 2262. The reason for their flight to Europe isn't completely understood, but they are coming largely from countries with severe drought problems. Several years ago very conservative research indicated that 182 million Africans would die in this century as a result of climate change.

SOME NEEDED GOOD NEWS

The very GOOD NEWS is that the Green New Deal is by far the best national climate effort ever put forward. Although not yet a bill, the GND sets the guidelines for a committee to work for one year writing a bill. There won't be a vote on the GND until 2021 when, hopefully, we'll have a new President and Senate. The GND includes some extremely good guiding principles. It requires that the GND be written to conform to the ideas of our top scientists, and very significantly, it requires that the bill's authors not be recipients of fossil-fuel donations.

Also, the GND has very strong equity provisions. The research of the International Labor Organization predicted the US would lose 6M jobs under the GND, but gain 24M for a net increase of 18M. Equity is addressed through the following provisions:

- (i) provide all members of our society, across all regions and all communities, the opportunity, training and education to be a full and equal participant in the transition, including through a job guarantee program **to assure every person who wants one, a living wage job;**

Continued on Page 6

WANTED: WESTSIDE BIRDS

By Gianna Rendón

Note: In February the city informed the public about plans for the removal of egrets who live in Elmendorf Lake because of claims that they are a threat to military planes on that flight path and that their droppings are also a health hazard—something specialists

You birds.
With your loud noises at all times of the day and night,
and with your poop everywhere,
you had a chance to clean up after yourselves
We sent you warnings,
code compliance notes,
we don't care that you can't read English
only your bird language.
We tolerated you while you were on Bird Island
but then your numbers grew.
You started to spread to other trees
on other parts of Elmendorf Park.

You smelly loud animals,
Don't you know that this park
and this lake and all the islands on it belong to us!
The humans?

.... don't get us wrong,
we love birds.
Just not your kind of bird.
We like small birds,
ones who are quiet and don't fly as high
who don't poop as much or as smelly.

The Birds say, "We Birds have been here for thousands of years.
Our migratory patterns are etched in our DNA.
We are Elmendorf Lake and Elmendorf Lake is us.
We knew the lake before it was renamed,
when you humans merely called it a swamp.
You think you created this lake.

Silly humans.
The fish make the lake,
the opossums,
the turtles,
the trees,
all the insects
the plants and algae,
and yes also you the humans.



disagree with. The discovery of eggs has stopped plans for the removal of the birds at this time. As a lifelong resident of the Elmendorf Lake area, I urge everyone to call City Council and tell them to leave the birds alone! I offer this poem for the egrets.

But us birds too.
We've seen your tourist videos,
the ones where you talk about our lake,
you show us Birds and our songs and our dances,
our feathers flowing in the wind free.
You revamped the lake. Put in 'nicer prettier plants';
to clean up the lake and the algae
and make it more appealing to a new type human
not our friends who come on Sundays after mass or on
birthdays,
but new humans, whiter humans you were trying to lure in here.
The problem is those white humans don't like our songs or our
feathers.
They turn up their noses at us and our natural smell.

You can try to scare us away with your noise and your light
machines.
It might take generations,
maybe not us
maybe not our children
or our children's children,
but we will be back.
The gentle waters of the lake
and the sway of the grasses call to us
and lead us home."

The humans say, "There you birds go again with your threats.
We'll build a fence,
a wall, a sky wall to keep you and your children
and your children's children out.
We'll put barbed wire on the trees if we have to,
poison the water so the insects that you eat will die
so you'll starve.
Make Elmendorf Lake great again."

The Birds, "You will miss our songs and our dances.
You will miss our beauty
and the love we bring to this lake.
You may think you are harming us,
but you are only harming yourself."

The Anti-Hate Resolution Excludes Latinos

By Julio Noboa Polanco

A very fascinating and revealing series of events led to the Anti-Hate resolution and to its eventual wording. It is important to remember that for decades and, until quite recently, members of the GOP as well as the President himself have intentionally made clearly and unmistakably racist remarks against immigrants, Latinos, Blacks, Muslims, Native Americans, etc. and none of this has generated a resolution condemning these statements. Meanwhile Rep. Steve King, who voted "present" on the resolution, who has made repeated racist and White nationalist comments, rightfully condemned by some, but not enough to generate any anti-racist or anti-White Supremacist resolution from the House.



The House of Representatives passed a resolution broadly condemning hate and in-tolerance in the wake of controversy over Democratic freshman Rep. Ilhan Omar's remarks on the State of Israel.

But now enter new congresswoman Rep. Ilhan Omar, an African naturalized citizen who happens to be Muslim, wears a hijab and who has in the past made legitimate critiques of Israel's inhumane treatment of Palestinians. She makes reference to the influence of AIPAC money on US policy towards Israel, it is immediately condemned as being anti-Semitic, regardless of her intent.

If that were not enough to illustrate the powerful influence of AIPAC money and lobbyists, even more so was the fact that the reaction to her words and even to her apology was to demand her removal from the House, or from the Foreign Affairs Committee or to sanction or punish her for speaking truth to power.

That same powerful AIPAC influence also help generate that incredible first draft of a resolution that mentioned and targeted only anti-Semitism. This is a curious and revealing fact considering that many other racial, ethnic and religious groups in our nation have long been targeted for discrimination as well as enslavement, exploitation or genocide, as in the case of Native Americans and African Americans.

Despite the obvious limitations of the first draft, thanks to the alert brilliance of AOC and other progressives the wording of the original was expanded to include a condemnation of Islamophobia and racist discrimination against African Americans, Native Americans, immigrants, and other people of color as well as against members of minority religions.

Despite these changes, I still reserve some serious critiques of the final draft of the resolution. It is interesting though disappointing to note that in the entire draft of this wide-ranging resolution, which details numerous attacks against Jews, Muslims and African Americans, not once does the term Latino, Hispanic, or Mexican American even appear. Some would contend that Latinos are subsumed under the category of "immigrant" and "people

of color" which we indeed are, but that does not consider three very key realities about the Latinx experience here in the United States that are often ignored.

The first is that since the 2000 Census it has been clearly documented that Hispanics are the largest ethnic minority group in the nation, and continue to be so. Their economic activity alone rivals that of entire nations, and in the U.S. they represent a wide diversity of nationalities, social classes and racial blendings.

The second fact is that the term "immigrant," which is appropriately included in this resolution, can apply to any number of racial, ethnic or religious groups, not only Latinos. Moreover, not all Latinos are or were immigrants to the United States. Most notably Mexican

Americans who were here before the European Americans. It was the Anglo settler who was the "immigrant" coming into the West that had already been settled by Mexicans for generations who had established farms, ranches, vineyards, towns, cities, churches, schools, and even courts.

There was an entire Hispanic American civilization that existed in what the Anglos called the "western frontier" and it was the Mexican vaqueros and charros who taught the Great American Cowboy everything he knows about mustangs, corrals, chaps, lassos and rodeos. Ask yourself why is it that all of these terms as well as some of the most characteristic geographical features of the American Southwest, including arroyo, chaparral, mesa and canyon, are all in Spanish. It was the Norteño Mexican ranching lifestyle that was the foundation of what we now refer to as "Western Living" which encompasses not only fundamental features of the cattle industry but also architectural characteristics with patios, verandas, plazas and all kinds of vistas. Thus in conclusion, many Latinos have long been here and are not just immigrants to our nation.

The third fact has to do with the widespread confusion about Latinos and race. Regarding us being "people of color" a label that is problematic at best, it simply ignores the fact that Hispanic, Latinos, Latin Americans are "people of many colors." Not only can we be of any race, as official documents often remind us, but more importantly the vast majority of us are of mixed race. Biracial may be a relatively new concept in contemporary United States, but Latinos have been biracial and multiracial for five centuries!

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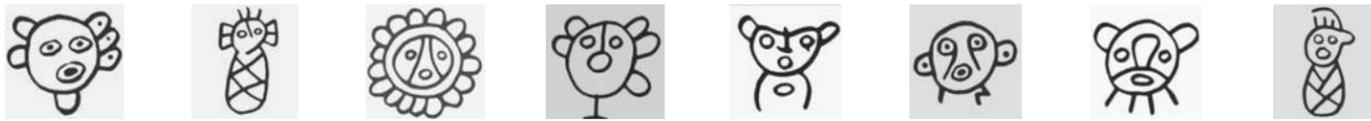
Anti-Hate Resolution

Continued from Previous Page

Puerto Ricans, for example, are a racial blend of indigenous Taíno Indians, various African nations and tribes, and Spanish settlers who also have Celtic, Arab and Jewish roots. Among Boricuas, there are those that look quite European like Carmen Yulín Cruz, Mayor of San Juan, and others that look very African like the late great baseball player and humanitarian, Roberto Clemente. Some of us even display distinct Amerindian features, yet the majority of us reveal a wide variety of aesthetic blending of our many racial roots.

Since neither of these categories of “immigrant” nor “people of color” refers specifically to us, it is quite discouraging and appalling that this resolution should fail to even mention Latinos or Hispanics by name. What this demonstrates again is what many enlightened Latinx thinkers have long recognized: that we are always considered the eternal foreigner, despite having been among the earliest European settlers of this vast land.

Nevertheless, we have contributed with our courage and lives



Green New Deal

Continued from Page 3

(ii) take into account and be responsive to the historical and present-day experiences of low-income communities, communities of color, indigenous communities, rural and urban communities and the front-line communities most affected by climate change, pollution and other environmental harm;

(iii) mitigate deeply entrenched racial, regional and gender-based inequalities in income and wealth (including, without limitation, ensuring that federal and other investment will be equitably distributed to historically impoverished, low income, deindustrialized or other marginalized communities);

(iv) include additional measures such as **basic income programs, universal health care programs and any others as the select committee may deem appropriate to promote economic security**, labor market flexibility and entrepreneurship; and

(v) deeply involve national and local labor unions to take a leadership role in the process of job training and worker deployment.

Then, there is the wonderful “rising up” of youth on climate change. For many months the children of Europe have been leading the way with huge marches of children (one of 35,000 children and others over 10,000) and the **remarkable** leadership of Greta Thunberg – (access her **exceptional UN** speech here: bit.ly/thunberg_un). They have established a rapidly growing movement in Europe. The children take Fridays off from school for climate action. And now, this movement is spreading in the U.S.—on



Greta Thunberg: UN Climate Change Conference

March 15th there were children’s rallies all over the US during school hours.

The Sunrise Movement, founded and directed by young adults in the U.S., is largely responsible for the Green New Deal. They’re now joined by our children demanding that we support them and help protect their futures. We hope that many of you join with them in Houston, Austin, San Antonio and Dallas for upcoming events.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The Texas Drought Project is organizing in nine Texas congressional districts bringing together strong and diverse coalitions to meet with their Congress members in hopes of gaining more Texas Congressional sponsors of the Green New Deal. As of now, the GND has been endorsed by 11 Senators, 6 Presidential candidates and 89 House members as we continue to work with local groups and individuals in four Houston congressional districts, three Metroplex districts and two districts in the Valley. We’ll also work to bring the GND to the attention of all presidential candidates that come to Texas.

Over 650 organizations are organizing to support the GND including 350.org, Earthworks, Food & Water Watch, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Indigenous Environmental Network, National Family Farm Coalition, National Nurses United, Our Revolution, SEIU, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Progressive Democrats of America, Rainforest Action Network, Roots-Action.org, and Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

To learn more about the Green New Deal and how to get involved contact: Jere Locke at jerelocke@yahoo.com or Alyssa Burgin at Alyssa@texasdroughtproject.org.

to every military conflict from the Civil War when we fought on both sides, right up to the most recent imperial forays in the Middle East. We have contributed our language, culture, cuisine, labor and brains to the growth and development of this nation. Yet, we have also suffered and continue to withstand the slings and arrows of racial and ethnic discrimination. Like all the other groups mentioned in the resolution, we also deserve our place in any document that purports to be a statement against the evils of racism and bigotry. As a nation, we should do no less for a people who have given so much and yet been recognized for so little.

Bio: Julio Noboa Polanco is a writer, columnist, and social justice activist who served as Chair of the Esperanza Board in the 90s. He was also a columnist at the *San Antonio Express-News* for nearly a decade.. His writings continue to appear in Texas (*Houston Chronicle*) and in Costa Rica (*Semanario Universidad*) where he and his wife now live. Recently retired as Assistant Professor of Social Studies from UTEP, his focus is on Latino History, Mexican American Studies, critical pedagogy and multicultural education.

POETRY MONTH

LATINA POETS WITH NEW BOOKS

Between Wings

1.
Your arms stretch under the blue garment,
not feathered, not under Guadalupe’s drapery of sky,

nor below the hot blanket of holy breath.
Your stiff garment

forms a pair of wings
from the apex of your neck.

Only your clothing reveals
it is you, thin, a spine,

a column under that dress.
The carver left your eyes open,

floated Earth’s effigy inside your crown
to remind us of this weight on your head.

2.
It was a retired schoolteacher
who flew the body of an airplane

into your shrine that morning.
Announced he wanted to kill

Catholics, Methodists, and Mexicans.
Crashed between the shrine and school,

between children having lunch
and supplicants at prayer.

The exploding fuselage lodged
in the beam, in the silent spine

of your winged building.
Did not kill

a single person on the ground.

* published in *VirginX*,
Finishing Line Press,
2018

* In October 1970, San Juan,
Texas made international
headlines when a retired
schoolteacher smashed a
rented single-engine plane
into a schoolhouse and shrine.
—*The Texas State*
Historical Association

Chincherias For El Chandelier

After Pepón Osorio’s *El Chandelier*

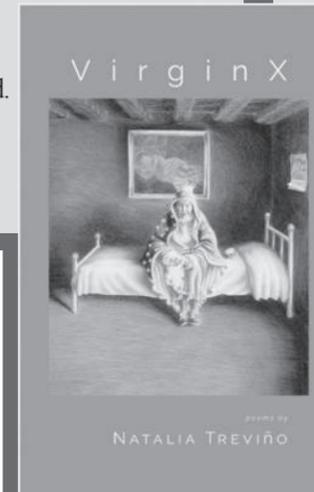
He had left it all behind, la esposa, his daughter, el carro, la chamba, all behind so he could marry this little americana he met on WhatsApp. He thought it would be his last chance after casi toda la vida jalando, unas pocas viejas, and his best friend Benny dead in the last cat fight. When he arrived to her house and saw it was in a nearly soundless barrio, he wanted an object to remember every brave thing he had done. A magnet from la tiendita downtown for the first time they held hands walking under the Tower of Americas. He wondered how far he could see if he had the nerve to go up. New chamba, new chamaca, new casa where he hung his old license plate over his new wife’s bed because they had had sex for four hours straight on more than one occasion, and he wanted to remember it was just like driving his car. He kept all the brochures the hotel clerks and street hawkers gave him from their early days of abrazando en la calle, and he kept all of the colorful junk mail they eventually sent him at her house because it has his name on it; he stuffed pages in his dresser drawer because they held things he had never seen before. Battery powered song birds. Upside down tomato planters. Genius. He filled her house, every corner eventually with his curiosidades because he had to see what he had done since he could not believe it. Until there was nowhere else to hang the plastic babies that were on sale at the Dollar Store in the After-Christmas Bonus Dollar Sale Bin that he had to have because they reminded him of his own new babies, and la new wife, hair up in a donut bun, with a good belly muffin popping out of her jeans now, had already been yelling that there was not one cuadrado, ni un lugarcito of space left in any drawer in this pinche wreck of a house and he better not bring home one more mugre mas te vale cabron— until he saw it at la pulga for twenty five dollars and said, Ah, el chandelier. And he packed it in the



NATALIA TREVIÑO

backseat of his carcacha, hung it immediately from the ceiling when they got home. He wanted to see it dazzle like the Christmas lights by the river. Era un chandelier that held todo—todo lo que le dio la pinche gana. Jugetes, adornos, tiny muñecas wearing blue eyeshadow. Every crystal scallop became a shining echo for every new gem he collected, every strand of crystal beads became a hook for his assortment of plastic palmas and pearl-rimmed bird’s nests. *Recuerditos, hermosa. Mira!* He wondered if his daughter en el otro lado could see this magical upside down Christmas tree, if he climbed the Tower and hung it up from there like an earring, if she could see it shine.

*Previously published in a slightly different version in *Western Humanities Review Volume 70.2 Summer 2016*



LATINA POETS WITH NEW BOOKS

you love a river

for twenty years you love a river and every time you cross it or sit to stare at it you imagine your suddenly immense hands brushing over its calm ripples as if it was fur as if it was skin as if it could touch you back as if it also loved you as if it had waited for you always this peaceful uncontested river always serene so different from that other river the river that has defined your entire life

the river you love is far but not that far from that other river that other river sometimes muddy sometimes dry sometimes green sometimes lovely but you can never think of it without seeing almost two centuries of blood shed over it can never see it without thinking of the lives the pain the hurt the losses crossing that river has cost you have always loved rivers but is it still a river if it has walls



IRE'NE LARA SILVA

ire'ne lara silva



CUICACALLI
HOUSE OF SONG

the earth of us

for Rosemary Catacalos

into the flesh of us
lavender and jasmine
and the stuff of stars

out of our eyes
the spoken the prayed
the love in the hands of us

almas mias
this is the work of our lives
the black earth of us
wet with tears and sweat
and the sex of us
composted with our dreams
and our tragedies

seeds breaking open
in the revolving regenerating
rising intensity of us
and the sought for healing
stronger and stronger
streaming out of our chests
in the expanding suns of us

sunlight and moonlight
limning the bone
marrow blood flesh skin of us
all our words the knives
for peeling away at
the disordered delicate
dangerous disturbed of us
until light falls unfettered

at our end there will be
only one essential story

what we made of the earth of us

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Saddle Road Press

Josephine collects the dishes

Not exquisite china but sturdy ceramic,
dark blue in the face, grainy bitter white
on the broken cusps.

Josephine picks up the largest pieces from
the floor.
She considers options for what can be done
with the pointed edges, the curled lip of bowls.

All that comes to mind are the tender gold corrections
of Japanese pottery.

The art of broken pieces.

Sometimes we are art, sometimes we are pieces,
she says to Michael, who has flown away,

who always flies away after a fight.
But Josephine knows her angel heard.

She leaves the broken stack on the kitchen counter.
Already the cat is rubbing his face on a soft edge.

There is work to do and so all of this
will have to wait.

When she returns, the house is dark and cool,
purple blue and dim chandelier.

The dishes together again soft gold
marks running across each face.



JO REYES-BOITEL

Unending

From Dallas, where two are lost,
to St. Paul, where women cannot throw out
their trash,
and Baton Rouge, where two are killed.

From Medina to Germany to Orlando.
From St. Louis to Mexico City to Oakland.
Paris. Turkey.

Sanford. New York City.
Ferguson. Haiti. West Texas.
Venezuela. Iguala.
Nigeria. Syria.

Puerto Rico.

There is always a fight, each compelled by its own narrative.
This alone should focus St. Michael's attention.

A shield can protect the body.
But who attends to the pierced and unprotected behind it?
That hot coal roosting under the breast.

An angel needs a lover, their softness
cradling the kiln-fired edge of her sword.

Otherwise arteries harden into fissures,
skin a topography of places where
care has no home, where borders firm up
until the land is inhospitable
and generosity is the one thing
we are asked to carry in our arms

to give what can be managed,
a sliver of what has been given
to keep the body warm,
to keep arms open.

Every place carries the truth of its
own birth.

— jo reyes-boitel



The house holds its breath

It has been four days since she left.
The hallway glow with daylight.
The sun insists.

Michael tiptoes a sleepwalk.
She has given up speaking calls go
unanswered.

The loss of her lover a needle
weaving its way
through her lips.

Michael falls into the sofa
her back a curve brittle wings.

She spends hours placing her palms together -
fingers spread out
close again like billowing gills -

then returns to the bedroom once shared.
The hottest room in the house.

how often their fingers hooked into the other's
as they led to comfort.

Winter has come early this year.
Seasons will do what they want.

Michael summons her lover:

a clay vessel veined with heart break
permanent fissures

a labyrinth built within her lover's ribs
desire's stretch
into life

an incomplete fire cool rain
the potential for clouds

a cloak of balm and breath

But she does not return.

POETRY MONTH

LATINA POETS WITH NEW BOOKS

In Lak'ech

Mi'ja, you are more than shared flesh. You are warrior at evening time.

You are powerful voice at morning prayer. You are ancestral lucha burning sage under your bare feet.

Descalza, the earth ignites, you into the day como Águila, eagle spirit. Mi'ja, you are of madre tierra. You are

trenzadas por la madrugada. Holy spirit ribbons through each braid of charcoal. You are curious fingers through carrot

strips. Orange fire in your mouth—a dragon of giggles where I find God on a chipped tooth.



CAROLINA HINOJOSA-CISNEROS

Holy Is a Bird's Cry

Holy Spirit, can you hear?
Ashes of my (be)fore-mothers
vacillate over my limp body.

Temptation coils my throat.
Vexed desert sands, canyonous
t(r)reason is deft possibility.

Mirage of doubt pesters
like a fly buzzing at death.
I hear Mary

call my faith.
Mother, I do not pray anymore.

I feel the Jesus of my mother
cup the crane of my neck,

close his eyes over the kettle,

and blow medicine into the fold.
He brings his mouth to speak

but I have already fluttered away.



Becoming Coztótotl
POEM BY CAROLINA HINOJOSA-CISNEROS

Published by FlowerSong Books. Mil Gracias.

CENOTE

At 13, the lightness of her limbs as she lets herself fall bodiless

onto the trampoline, the counter slap of leap into the air. The open palm of her own strength, the back-handed

swing of a girl against the ball of the closed world.

Her childhood in that effort to perfect the underwater headstand, legs like a V pointing at the sky as her eyes

blink wide open, taking in that hushed and sacred bottom.

Now brown girl at a bus stop, all she owns in a broken-zipper backpack—one t-shirt, a pair of jeans, two socks, a size A bra and a notebook—her question

hitched on one hip. Lamplight dimmed by the spreading oaks'

limbs, as he asks her to go with him. When she says yes

yes, he rests his hand on her small shoulder, his fingers folding over like a cup.

Later, the next man,

and the next, and the next.

Hundreds of men beaten

into one. One by one and her slow smile, one that hoards

its swimming girl

becoming thousands of Maya virgins

being flung into a cenote. Underwater, consorting with the gods

to desecrate their own village
Meanwhile, the nightstand by the mattress,

its discarded picture of a pair of children with dark night in their hair and eyes,

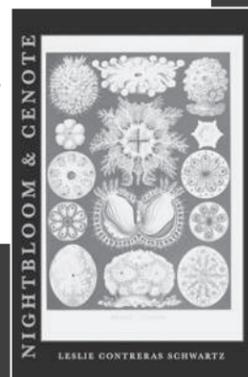
on a mother's lap. Their twinned joy as they stare next to

a pile of condoms, needles, and mace, a man's wallet.

To the bottom she goes, sea in a little jewelry box of hell.



LESLIE CONTRERAS SCHWARTZ



NIGHTBLOOM & CENOTE
LESLIE CONTRERAS SCHWARTZ

TARGETING VENEZUELA FOR THE SINS OF EMPIRE

By Julio Noboa Polanco

The Trump administration would have us believe that the crises in Venezuela is simply one of tyranny versus democracy, but the reality is much more complex than that. Often ignored by the American media is the long history of American relations with Latin America, their traditional “backyard.”

For over a century, the United States has engaged in numerous interventions in Latin America, many of them through outright violence, destroying democratically elected leaders and replacing them with repressive military dictators. Most notable among them were two violently deposed presidents, Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala in 1954 and Salvador Allende of Chile in 1973. Clearly the U.S. intent was not to protect or defend democracy but instead to establish, maintain or increase corporate profit by exploiting the country's land, people and resources.

The American Empire has not only supported repressive regimes in the past, in Brazil, Chile, and Guatemala but also in the present, notably the murderous monarchies of the Middle East, namely Saudi Arabia. The Empire has also engaged in bloodless political coups to remove enlightened and democratically-elected presidents such as Jean-Bertrand Aristide of Haiti in 2004, or more recently José Manuel Zelaya of Honduras in 2009, because its corporate interests were threatened by their social and economic reforms.

Given the capitalist nature of the American Empire, reformist and especially socialist regimes were always targeted for political, economic, and/or military intervention regardless of whether they were established through the ballot or the bullet. These interventions were facilitated by the fact that in every Latin American nation there exists a perennial class struggle tearing at the social fabric of each with the wealthy, powerful elite being the major economic beneficiaries of a regime under the control of or in partnership with the Empire.

It is with the above understanding that the crises in Venezuela can best be understood. I'm no admirer of the late Hugo Chavez, nor of his militarist mentality, nor of his cult of personality. Nevertheless, his Bolivarian Revolution did finally bring a large portion of his nation's enormous petroleum-based wealth to help the poor and destitute of Venezuela with education, housing, health and other benefits long denied them. For centuries this wealth had gone only to the elite, who in Venezuela were roundly defeated in the polls when Chavez won a democratic election. Nevertheless, the Bush administration supported a failed military coup in 2002 that further served to divide the Venezuelan people and harden their resolve.

Under internal and external attacks, media misinformation and harsh economic sanctions and sabotage, the Bolivarian regime has become more paranoid and repressive. Due in part also to their own mismanagement, they confront a host of economic hardships that further exacerbate the crises with severe shortages of food and medicine and plummeting of oil prices.

This is the climate into which Nicolás Maduro took the reins of power. Whether or not you believe he won a completely free and fair election, it is important to note the Trump administration's current support of undemocratic regimes the world over.

More to the point, the Trump administration and its allies have no



Tallahassee SDS protests US intervention in Venezuela. (Fight Back! News)

right to declare who the president of Venezuela is, much less to name their designated choice, National Assembly President Juan Guaidó, who did not even run for president or receive a single vote for that office. The Trump regime is entering into very volatile territory openly supporting a coup in Venezuela which will inevitably lead to more repression, violence and bloodshed.

There are more peaceful means for resolving this crisis as suggested by Uruguay, Mexico and the Vatican. Certainly, this coup attempt by the U.S. will not only make it even more difficult to resolve the crisis through dialogue and negotiation, but it will also divide all of Latin America as well as the world, into two dangerously opposing camps.

Let's not be fooled by Trumpist rhetoric about democracy and liberating the Venezuelan people; the U.S. has its eyes on all those incredible petroleum reserves that are under Venezuelan soil. The Trump regime cares little for the lives of poor and destitute Central Americans seeking asylum, nor the starving Yemenis being bombarded every day, nor the Saudi women leaders being jailed and tortured. Are we to believe they really care about the plight of Venezuelans?

The best way out of this conundrum is through dialogue, yet the Trump administration has refused to enter into negotiations with Maduro despite their repeated invitations to do so. The Trumpists are focused on regime change to achieve their objectives and have no intent on pursuing peaceful solutions. We can only hope that the efforts at dialogue are realized and that another struggling Latin American nation can avoid

the devastation of civil war brought about by the greed of their own elite and of the American Empire.

Bio: Julio Noboa Polanco a writer, columnist, and social justice activist served as Chair of the Esperanza Board in the 90s. He was also an opinion columnist at the *San Antonio Express-News* for near a decade. His writings continue to appear in Texas (*Houston Chronicle*) and Costa Rican (*Semanario Universidad*) newspapers. Recently retired as Assistant Professor of Social Studies from UTEP, Julio now lives in Costa Rica with his wife, Elsa. His focus is on Latino History, Mexican American Studies, critical pedagogy and multicultural education.

Note: A version of this article first appeared in the *Houston Chronicle*.

Sembrando Ideas / Sembrando Acción

By Norma Cantú, Trinity University

Editor's note: *This was the keynote address to the NACCS Tejas Foco Conference held in Houston Texas, February 17, 2019.*

I begin by acknowledging the spirits of this place now called Houston, Texas, honoring the Karankawas and the Akokisas ancestors. I thank The *Tejas Foco Annual Conference* committee for the invitation to speak today. As is my wont my words will meander through poetry and testimonio musing on the theme of this gathering—*Semillas de Poder: Chicana/o/x Movements & Mapping 21st Century Resistance*.

I'd like to begin in **1325** with the founding of Tenochtitlan...folio 2 of the Codex Mendoza shows the establishment of the Aztec empire in what is now Mexico City. The Aztecs had come from Aztlán south honoring their God Huitzilopochtli's urging to establish their kingdom when they found the eagle perched on a nopal with a snake on its beak, thus planting the seeds of our layered mestizaje—for there were other people already there and the Empire built upon it.



Photo: The Codex Mendoza circa 1541

The next key date I underscore is **1492** the year of one of the most violent and intense encounters in history. The codices chronicle the devastation. The seeds of injustice and of colonization planted remain over 500 years later in the remnants of the colonizing enterprise. The Spanish Empire clashed with the Aztec Empire and the seeds of resistance were planted then, too. In *el Lienzo de Tlaxcala* we have a chronicle of the devastation and of the characters in the story—La Malinche, the Aztec kings, Cortes and the warriors and soldiers...the anonymous authors of this crónica documented the violence and the roles of the key players like Malintzin—La Malinche. The next major year I focus on turns to a spiritual encounter: **1531**, the year of the apparitions—yes there were 5 total—of the *Virgen de Guadalupe*. The event that December in the *Valle del Tepeyac* sows the seeds of a folk Catholicism, a religious and spiritual shift that remains until today in, oh, so many forms. The image of our powerful fierce indigenous Christian image was the impetus at the *Grito de Dolores* in **1810**, as Mexico fought for Independence from Spain, and again as an emblem during the Mexican Revolution of **1910** and with Cesar Chavez as the farmworkers marched for justice in the **1960s**. But before we jump ahead, there is another figure who planted seeds that are still bearing fruit.

Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, *La decima musa*, the 2nd femi-

nist poet of the Americas—**The 1st was an indigenous poet, Macuilxochitzin who was writing about women being out on the battle field in the mid 15th century before the Europeans set foot on the Americas, on Abya Yala as the Guna call this continent.**

Her poem concludes with these lines:

Axayácatl exclamó:
 “¡Que venga el otomí y la piel de un venado,
 que me ha herido en la pierna!” con ésto hizo reverencia a Axayácatl.
 El otomí tuvo miedo, dijo: Estaba lleno de miedo el otomí.
 “¡En verdad me matarán!” Pero entonces sus mujeres
 Trajo entonces un grueso madero por él hicieron súplica a Axayácatl

(translation: Miguel León Portilla, 2003)

The last two lines are what makes this a feminist poem, in my view, as it is the first instance where women are mentioned. In fact, I see these women who are present at the battle between Axayacatl and the Otomi are instrumental in the outcome. And, they are the precursors of *Las Adelitas* and the fierce Chicanas working in the *Movimiento* and beyond. *Herederas del legado de nuestras madres y abuelas*. Sor Juana planted seeds for feminism, for the value of the intellectual pursuit, seeds that are still bearing fruit as we engage in the spiritual activism that Anzaldúa so aptly invoked.

The seeds of political change had remained dormant for centuries until Mexico declared its independence from Spain. The *Virgen de Guadalupe* was part of the story as I mentioned earlier.

We already know the next critical date—February 2, **1848**—when the *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo* was signed and made us a doubly colonized people in what is now the U.S. The seeds were planted for our status as part of the U.S. So many stories of heroism and of survival including stories of women at the Alamo.

1910 brought the seeds that swept through the country as the Mexican Revolution expatriates migrated north and infused the Mexican community in the U.S. from California to Chicago and to Kansas City, and of course, the Southwest, all over what Américo Paredes called *Greater Mexico*, with new ideas and new blood. Tejanas like Jovita Idar and Leonor Villegas de Magnón along with others were



Photo: Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz

intimately involved in the Revolution even as they worked for the community in the U.S. The situation in the early 20th century *iva de mal a peor* and so a gathering called; *El Primer Congreso Mexicanista*, met in Laredo from **September 14 to 22, 1911**. The Congreso's motto was “*Por la Raza y Para la Raza.*” Clemente Idar, whose family owned and published *La Crónica de Laredo* had a daughter, Jovita Idar, who was the leader of several initiatives such as the *Liga Femenil*. The 400 delegates planted seeds for the *escuelas*—I attended one of these little schools in Laredo in the early 1950s.

They sowed what would be harvested 50 years later in the Chicano Movement and the fight for civil rights. These seeds and many more planted over the years in our cellular memory flourished in the **1950s & 1960s** as the struggle that had been forged over decades of actions yielded a rich harvest—of sorrow but also of joy. We are the inheritors of the Legal cases like *Del Rio ISD v Salvatierra* (1930), *Mendez v Westminster School Dist.* (1947), *Hernandez et al v Driscoll Consolidated ISD* (1954), the subject of a wonderful film by Enrique Aleman, *Stolen Education*, and *Delgado v Bastrop ISD* (1957). These are only a few...but significant because EDUCATION is the key—the one significant factor that provides a way for La Raza. I was the beneficiary of the decisions in these cases—in fact we all benefited from the struggle and the seeds planted through these legal actions.

In the **1960s** and **1970s**, the Movement took off; I found I was a Chicana in 1976 at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. So many other dates—the Grape Boycott of the **1960s**, The Chicano Moratorium of **1972**—But more recently, **2016** was one more blow, one more storm that the seeds patiently waiting to sprout forth must weather. We must not allow despair to set in, in the face of calumny. We deserve better...those children ripped from their mother's arms deserve better. Those who have died in detention centers deserve better. And while we know the destruction the policies bring, **we must resist**.

How do we resist? With our words, with our work and with our passion. We owe it to all who came before us and to all who come after us. Yesterday's events made me sad...and angry...we must carry on and we must remain ever vigilant. Just like Jovita Idar and Sara Estela Ramírez and like so many other brave ancestors who stood steadfast for what is right, we, too, must carry on and do what Anzaldúa urged us to do—*Work that matters*.

I am here to tell you that your work matters. The struggle to get Mexican American Studies into the Texas public school curriculum matters, the countless hours and days working to register voters—that matters; the insistent and never-ending struggle to protect our communities from gentrification—that is work that matters. When you write a paper and deliver it at a conference such as this one, that is work that matters because you transform yourself and others in doing that work. As I write this, I am telling myself that it matters that I write those letters of recommendation, it matters that I grade that stack of papers, it matters that I write a poem, it matters that I acknowledge who I am with all my faults and limitations, with my broken wrist, with my absent minded professor syndrome that's why I forget to eat sometimes!

Yes, in acknowledging who we are we recognize that we are human and that we have a role, a mission if you will. Ask your-



Photo: Jovita Idar, leader of Liga Femenil

self why are you on this earth? What is the work that you came to do? I try hard not to judge anyone's path. Or choices. We are all doing what we must. And I know I am here to work in academia and to be an activist for social justice. Just like I know I must write and I must teach; It's who I am. I can't tell you how many times I've heard that what we do in academia in higher education is not enough, that we who are scholar activists could do more! In typical Capricorn fashion, I listened and so I did some serious self-reflection and two main lessons came to me: ONE it doesn't matter if you change the world—it matters that you try! And TWO—what you do is beyond what you can comprehend. In other words, it may be that your *granito de arena* is what was needed to make the major shift, that what you thought was not enough or not good enough was EXACTLY what was needed to persuade others or perhaps just one person to do what matters. To live honestly and with kindness towards others.

My grandmother Celia Becerra de Ramón was not famous or of noble birth, her ancestors came to south Texas and northern Mexico. She had several children but only two survived to adulthood—my mother and Tia Eloisa. It was not an easy life in the 1920s and 30s in Texas. But, she managed. She survived. Her life mattered. She taught me to read and taught me to be confident and independent. In their own ways, all our abuelas teach us to be who we are. They planted the seeds that we are. Our abuelas gave us more than their genes, they gave us their love and our parents. And so we will not just survive, but thrive and live lives that make a difference, lives that matter. I leave you with a challenge. Figure out what it means to do work that matters and then **Do It!**

Muchas gracias!

2019 NACCS Tejas Foco Premio Estrella de Aztlán



The **2019 NACCS Tejas Foco Conference** presented Graciela Sánchez with the *Premio Estrella de Aztlán* recognizing her as someone whose work has contributed towards the betterment of Chicanas/os in Tejas through her work at the **Esperanza Peace and Justice Center** in San Antonio, Texas. Pictured are Graciela, at left, and Antonia Castañeda, one of the persons who nominated Sánchez for the award.

Amnesty International #127 Call Arthur @ 210.213.5919 for info.

Bexar Co. Green Party: Call 210.471.1791 | bcgp@bexargreens.org

Celebration Circle meets Sun., 11am @ Say Sí, 1518 S. Alamo. Meditation: Weds @7:30pm, Friends Meeting House, 7052 Vandiver. 210.533.6767.

DIGNITY SA Mass, 5:30pm, Sun. @ St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1018 E. Grayson St. | 210.340.2230

Adult Wellness Support Group of PRIDE Center meets 4th Mon., 7-9pm @ Lions Field, 2809 Broadway. Call 210.213.5919.

Energía Mia: Call 512.838-3351 for information.

Fuerza Unida, 710 New Laredo Hwy. www.lafuerzaunida.org | 210.927.2294

Habitat for Humanity meets 1st Tues. for volunteers, 6pm, HFHSA Office @ 311 Probandt.

LGBTQ LULAC Council #22198 meets 3rd Thursdays @ 6:45pm @ Luby's on Main. E-mail: info@lulac22198.org

NOW SA meets 3rd Wed See FB | satx.now for info | 210.802.9068 | nowsaareachapter@gmail.com

Pax Christi, SA meets monthly on Saturdays. Call 210.460.8448

Proyecto Hospitalidad Liturgy meets Thurs. 7pm, 325 Courtland.

Metropolitan Community Church services & Sunday school 10:30am, 611 East Myrtle. Call 210.472.3597

Overeaters Anonymous meets MWF in Sp & daily in Eng.

www.oasanantonio.org | 210.492.5400.

PFLAG, meets 1st Thurs. @ 7pm, University Presbyterian Church 300 Bushnell Ave. | 210.848.7407.

Parents of Murdered Children, meets 2nd Mondays @ Balcones Heights Com. Ctr, 107 Glenarm | www.pomcsanantonio.org.

Rape Crisis Center, 4606 Centerview Suite 200, Hotline: 210.349.7273 | 210.521.7273 Email:sschwab@rapecrisis.com

The Religious Society of Friends meets Sunday @10am @ The Friends Meeting House, 7052 N. Vandiver. | 210.945.8456.

S.A. Gender Association meets 1st & 3rd Thursday, 6-9pm @ 611 E. Myrtle, Metropolitan Community Church.

SA AIDS Fdn 818 E. Grayson St. offers free Syphilis & HIV testing | 210.225.4715 | www.txsaaf.org.

SA Women Will March: www.sawomenwillmarch.org | (830) 488-7493

SGI-USA LGBT Buddhists meet 2nd Sat. at 10am @ 7142 San Pedro Ave., Ste 117 | 210.653.7755.

Shambhala Buddhist Meditation Tues. 7pm & Sun. 9:30am 257 E. Hildebrand Ave. | 210.222.9303.

S.N.A.P. (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests). Contact Barbara at 210.725.8329.

Voice for Animals: 210.737.3138 or www.voiceforanimals.org

SA's LGBTQA Youth meets Tues., 6:30pm at Univ. Presby. Church, 300 Bushnell Ave. | www.fiesta-youth.org



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Notas Y Más

February 2019

Brief news items on upcoming community events. Send items for Notas y Más to: lavoz@esperanzacenter.org or mail to: 922 San Pedro, San Antonio, TX 78212. The deadline is the 8th of each month.



The 7th annual **San Antonio Book Festival** will take place on **April 6th** at the **Central Library** (600 Soledad) and **Southwest School of Art** from **9am to 5pm**. Visit saplf.org.



The **March for Science-SA** takes place on **April 6th** in support of the City of San Antonio's (COSA's) **Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (CAAP)**. It starts at **9:30am** at **UTSA** downtown and ends with a rally in front of City Chambers at Main Plaza **until 12:30pm**. **Dr. Gunnar Schade**, climate scientist at Texas A&M will speak. www.marchforsciencesa.com/



Join **Esperanza's Buena Gente** on **April 13** for our monthly **2nd Saturday Convivio** from **10am to 12pm** at Esperanza's **Casa de Cuentos** at 816 S. Colorado. Enjoy food, drink and stories of the Westside of San Antonio. Bring photos for scanning or set up an appointment by calling 210.228.0201.

The Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa invites you to submit artwork for the **2019 El Mundo Zurdo Art Exhibition, Interstellar Nepantla: Transcending Dreams, Realities, and Dimensions** curated by Rebel Mariposa, Jess Gonzales and Elisa M. Pérez. Works

submitted must be **New and Never been exhibited. Deadline: May 3**. Submit online: at bit.ly/MundoZurdoCFA2019. The **2019 Conference** will be held at **Trinity University** on October 31 through November 2, 2019.

The Nation. **The Nation**, the most widely read weekly journal of progressive political and cultural news will host **Native American Voices: The Dakotas, Colorado and New Mexico** an indigenous travel experience from **May 12-20** that includes meeting with community people and tribal leaders, story-tellers, artists, and activists. See: thenation.com

Hays Street Bridge Update

On Friday, the Texas Supreme Court **granted** the Hays Street Bridge Restoration Group's Petition for Review, agreeing to review the court of appeals' 2017 decision that **dismissed** the Restoration Group's breach of contract claim **against** the City. The Hays St. Restoration Group expects the eventual return of ownership of the land at 803 N. Cherry to the City to hold in trust for the Hays Street Bridge community and visitor center as originally intended. Read more at: <http://bit.ly/HaysStBridgeTXSupremeCourtPR>



Edward Codina

April 23, 1948 - February 21, 2019

Edward Codina transcended into the cosmos at the age of 70 in San Antonio, Tx. His sudden death stunned his family and friends who gathered to honor him at Hillcrest Chapel on February 28th. Ed was born and raised in McAllen, Tx leaving to pursue his education—obtaining both a master's and a doctorate in education. He retired from the Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas. Preceded in death by his parents, Rodrigo and Mary Ann Codina; and a brother, Omar Codina, he is survived by his wife, Chiu-hui Li and his daughters, Xochitl Parra Codina and Yasmin Parra Codina. He is also survived by 3 brothers and extended family, friends and community. Ed was honored at the memorial with the presence of many lifelong friends who were fellow peace, social justice and environmental justice activists. He was remembered as a man of science and spirituality who believed that everything had a soul, even rocks. He was part of the Esperanza community for many years and participated in the Peace Market selling his nature photography and plants. His daughters with first wife, Laura Parra Codina—Xochitl and Yasmin—remain as a gift to the community of San Antonio activists. Sincere condolences from Esperanza staff, board & buena gente. QEPD, Ed.





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LATINA POETS WITH NEW BOOKS



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Author of
*Cuicacalli/House
of Song*



NATALIA TREVIÑO

Author of
Virginx



JO REYES-BOITEL

Author of
*Michael +
Josephine*



**CAROLINA
HINOJOSA-CISNEROS**

Author of
*Becoming
Coztotoil*



**LESLIE CONTRERAS
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GRIS MUÑOZ

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7pm • April 6, 2019

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