We birds have been here for thousands of years.
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 into the Green New Deal. It turns out that the Guadalupe Guerrero Rendón sent was on the egrets of Lake Elsmendorf. 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 poetry.

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 so 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 not read 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.

Giama’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 last year where she mentioned the incidence 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 Elsmendorf Lake. ¡Qué cosas! When will we learn to trust Nature and care for our environment and all beings.

—Glória A. Ramírez, editor

THE SIXTH EXTINCTION

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 time. 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 re-searchers 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 undermine 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 rav-aged. 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 pro-duced drought has greatly worsened food insecurity and impact-ed jobs, as 1/3 of the latter are agriculture-related.

In October the Texas Drought Project (TDP) hosted a small meeting with Bernardo Belloso 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 2,500 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 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 num-ber 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 re-quires that the GND be written to conform to the ideas of our top scientists, and very significantly, it requires that the bill’s authors and the GND provisions:

1. net increase of 18M. Equity is addressed through the following
2. US would lose 6M jobs under the GND, but gain 24M for a lesser but very significant extent in the previous years.
3. reduction of the International Labor Organization predicted the research of the International Labor Organization predicted the
4. increase of 26M jobs under the GND, but lose 2M for a lesser but very significant extent in the previous years.
5. reduction of the International Labor Organization predicted the research of the International Labor Organization predicted the
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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 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 sways 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.”

By Julio Nóbua 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. (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 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.

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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

The House of Representatives passed a resolution broadly condemning hate and intolerance in the wake of controversy over Democratic freshman Rep. Ilhan Omar’s remarks on the State of Israel. The resolution, who has in the past made legitimate critiques of Israel’s inhuman 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 other 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 rodesos. 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! Continued on Next Page
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, gender, housing, land, education, health care, and access to the environment;

(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 leading the way with huge marches of children (one of 35,000)

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 future. 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 supporting the Green New Deal including 350.org, Earthworks, Food & Water Watch, Friends of the Earth/Greenpeace, Indigenous Environmental Network, National Farm Coalition, National Nurses United, Our Revolution, SEIU, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Progressives 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 jere@texasdroughtproject.org.

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, then, 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. Crushed 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

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

the earth of us
for Rosemary Catacalos

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

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

sunlight and moonlight
limning the bone
narrow 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

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

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

at our end there will be
only one essential story
what we made of the earth of us

* Reprinted with permission from
Saddle Road Press

the house holds its breath
It has been four days since she left.
The hallway glows 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
a scarf of balm and breath

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

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Every place carries the truth of its
own birth.
— jo reyes-boitel

Josephine collects
the dishes
Not exquisite china but sturdy ceramic,
dark blue in the face, grainy bitter white
on the broken cups.

Josephine picks up the largest pieces from.
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,
the dishes together again
soft gold marks running across each face.

The dishes

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 roasting 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
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Irene Lara Silva

Unending
Poetry Month
Latina Poets With New Books

In Lak’ech
Mi’ja, you are more than
sharred flesh. You are
an ember at evening time.
You are powerful voice
at morning prayer. You are
ancestral lachu burning
sage under your bare feet.
Descalza, the earth ignites,
you into the day como Aguila, engle spirit. Mi’ja, you are
of mustard seed. You are
trenzas por la madrugada.
Holy Spirit ribbons through each
brand of charcoal. You are
curious fingers through carrot
strips. Orange fire in your mouth-
where I find God
a dragon of giggles
its smile, one that hoards
in that to perfect the underwater headstand,
legs like a V pointing at the sky as her eyes
blank wide open, taking in that husked 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
oak’s
lungs, 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, courting with the gods
to desecrate their own village
Meanwhile, the nightlife
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.

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 to perfect the underwater headstand,
legs like a V pointing at the sky as she says
blank wide open, taking in that husked and sacred
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man’s wallet.
To the bottom, she goes, sea in a little jewelry
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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.
As the wind roars over my
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
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box of hell.

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 in 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 numerous 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 Jose Manuel Zelaya of Honduras in 2009, because its corporate interests were threatened by their social and economic reforms.

Given the capitalistic 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 social 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 call of personalismo. 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 routinely 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 hara-kiri 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 around the world.

More to the point, the Trump administration and its allies have no 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 crises 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 bombed willy-nilly, nor the Sudanese 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 Trumps 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 is a writer, columnist, and social justice activist. He served as Chair of the Esperanza Board in the 90s. He was also an opinion columnist at the San Antonio Express-News for nearly a decade. His writings continue to appear in Texas (Houston Chronicle) and Costa Rican (Semanario Universal) 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 Latin History, Mexican American Studies, critical pedagogy and multicultural education.

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

Published by FlowerSong Books. MI Acron.
By Norma Cantú, Trinity University

Editor’s note: This was the keynote address to the NACCs Tejas Foco Annual 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 Tejas Foco Annual Conference committee for the invitation to speak today. As is my wont my words will meander through poetry and testimonio musings on the theme of this gathering—


I’d like to begin in 5255 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 Aztlan south honoring their god Huitzilopochtli’s urging to what is now Mexico City. The empire built upon it. The next key date I underscore is 1492, with new ideas and new blood. Tejanas like Jo Sánchez, whose family owned and published the Congreso’s motto was Abya Yala. 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, I’d like to begin in 1589 with the year of the apparition of La Virgen de Guadalupe—of sorrow but also of joy. 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 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.

I am here to tell you that your work matters. The struggle to defend our community in the U.S. is what was is what we do in academia in higher education—of sorrow but also of joy. 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. 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 they knew. And so a gathering called; La decima musa, the year of the apparition of La Virgen de Guadalupe was the impetus at the time as I mentioned earlier. I was here to tell you that your work matters.
Amnesty International #127 Call Arthur @ 210.213.5919 for info.
Bexar Co. Green Party: Call 210.471.1791 | bgc@bexargreens.org
Celebration Circle meets Sun., 11am | Say Sl, 1518 S. Alamo. Meditation: Weds @7:30pm, Friends Meeting House, 7052 Vandiver. 210.333.6767.
DIMITY SA Mass, 5-5:30pm, 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 | Lorna Field, 2809 Broadway.
Call 210.213.5919.
Energia Mia: Call 512.838-3351 for information.
Fuerza Unida, 710 New Laredo Hwy. www.lafuerzounida.org | 210.927.2294
Habitat for Humanity meets 1st Tues. for volunteers, 6pm, HFHUSA Office.
LGBTQ LULAC Council #22198 meets 3rd Thursdays at 6:45pm | Lubly’s on 31st Prbanizd.
NOW SA meets 3rd Wed See FB | satin.now for info | 210.802.9068 | nowsaexecutive@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 210.484.7797
Overeaters Anonymous meets MWF 7p & daily in Eng.

www.ousanantonio.org | 210.492.5400
PFLAG, meets 1st Thurs. @ 7pm, University Presbyterian Church 300 Bushnell Ave. | 210.848.7407
Rape Crisis Center, 4606 Centerview Suite 200, Hotline: 210.349.7723 | 210.521.7273 Email:scwhab@rapecrisis.com
The Religious Society of Friends meets Sunday @11am | 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 Fda @818 E. Grayson St, offers free Syphilis & HIV testing | 210.225.4715 | www.saxaf.org
SA Women Will March: www.sawomenwillmarch.org | (880) 484-7493
SGI-USA LGBT Buddhists meet 2nd Sat. at 10am @ 7442 San Pedro Ave., Ste 117 | 210.653.7755.
Shambhala Buddhism 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. 6-8pm at Unio, Presby, Church, 300 Bushnell Ave. | www.fiesta-youth.org

Send to 922 San Pedro, SA TX 78212. Donations to the Esperanza are tax deductible.

SABF: Esperanza Peace and Justice Center 922 San Pedro Avenue San Antonio, TX 78212
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 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, storytellers, artists, and activists. See: thatnation.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 Yasmín 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.
Sanchez/Fuentes Lanier Scholarship Fund Baile
Saturday, April 13, 2019
8pm–12am
Esperanza Peace & Justice Center
922 San Pedro Ave
Call 210-228-0201 for more info

Save the Date • Paseo por El Westside • May 4th 2019

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M-F 10-7 pm thru May 10
HUIPILS STILL AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE
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Noche Azul de Esperanza
April 20
@8pm

Tickets
$7
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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-BORTEL
Author of Michael + Josephine

CAROLINA HINOJOSA- CISNEROS
Author of Becoming Coztotl

LESLEY CONTRERAS SCHWARTZ
Author of Nighthbloom & Cenote

GRIS MUÑOZ
Author of Coatlicue Girl

Reading and book-signing • Plus! Music by Jen Mendoza
7pm • April 6, 2019
Esperanza Peace & Justice Center • 922 San Pedro Ave, San Antonio, TX