



La Voz de Esperanza

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

La Voz de Esperanza

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Articles due by the 8th of each month

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 Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.

So, what is the theme of this month's Voz?—I often get asked. I reply that we don't have themes. Articles, poems, artwork and announcements are sent to La Voz monthly and they seemingly fit together. I have tried to explain this process but can only credit the universe for bringing together each issue. Take this issue, for example. When I heard about the assassination of Berta Cáceres, I knew that we had to pay tribute to her on our front page. We already had an article, written by Itza Carbajal and her father, Mario, Hondureños, about the Garífuna killings in Honduras (one being a trans person) and the oppressive conditions they endure with corporate land grabbing, violence in their communities and drug cartels. I asked Itza if she would also write about Berta. She immediately said, yes. Beatrice Marin, who assists us by writing texts in Spanish—also agreed to write an article in Spanish on Cáceres.

While reading about Berta I found out that she not only worked with the Lenca indigenous community in Honduras but also with the Garífuna. Oddly enough, the February and March issues of La Voz had had a story about a Garífuna woman, "Maribel", who had fled the violence of Honduras only to be incarcerated in harsh conditions in a detention center in Texas.

In February, we also published articles on Campus Carry and Open Carry laws in Texas that will permit people to carry guns—even on college campuses beginning in August. In this issue, we highlight professors who are openly protesting guns in their classrooms.

In February, Nadine Saliba wrote about "Connecting the landscapes of a refugee crisis" reminding us of the Kurdish Syrian toddler, Alan Kurdi, that was washed ashore trying to cross from Turkey to Greece with his family. In the March Voz Randi Romo followed up with a poem for Alan and all Syrian refugees. In that issue we also had an article about the water crisis of Flint and parallels to San Antonio. In this issue, we began a two-part interview with Gianna Réndon about the water issue in San Antonio.

In this issue of La Voz we began to look at the Supreme Court and the Fisher case (Part I of II) that will decide the fate of affirmative action in U.S. colleges and universities. We also have an article on San Antonio's non-discrimination ordinance that may be affected by Supreme Court rulings in the future. We have come full circle making connections with issues of immigration, gun violence, racism, homophobia, environmental injustice, and so on.

So, if we need to look for a theme in issues of La Voz, we will find it in one word: "intersectionality"—that is, that multiple forms of oppression are related and occur on multiple levels, locally and globally—and that these connections will continue to overlap affecting us directly. As such, when we hear about the killing of Berta Cáceres, we mourn her death, but pay tribute to her life by continuing to work for social justice. ¡Berta Cáceres vive!

—Gloria A. Ramírez, editor



Berta Cáceres 1973 - 2016

El jueves 3 de marzo fue asesinada Berta Cáceres en La Esperanza, al oeste de Honduras. Una vez más vemos con rabia y dolor cómo se apaga una voz, voz de mujer, que decidió hablar por todos, los jamás escuchados, los ignorados, los marginados de Honduras, de Centroamérica, del mundo.

Berta era una líder lenca, la etnia indígena más numerosa de Honduras, y defensora de los derechos humanos en su país. Durante años fue objeto de amenazas contra su vida y la de sus familiares y allegados, incluyendo sus cuatro hijos. Ella sabía, estaba consciente, de que vivía en el país más peligroso del mundo para los activistas ambientales, con una de las poblaciones más desprotegidas y un capital en recursos naturales al que hace tiempo se le fijó un precio y se vende al mejor postor, por supuesto, extranjero, ajeno.

La fuerza y valor los aprendió Berta de su madre, Doña Berta, partera y defensora de los derechos humanos. Tuvo la fortuna de crecer en una familia en donde predominan las mujeres como cabezas de familia; son las que deciden, emprenden, resuelven y celebran; las que protegen y exigen, las que alzan la voz. Generosamente Berta incluyó en su voz a sus vecinos, amigos, compañeros y hermanos de raza y sangre.

Entre las creencias del pueblo lenca, quizá la más significativa, está la de que en los ríos habitan los espíritus femeninos y las mujeres son sus guardianas. Probablemente esta fue la razón por la que Berta se entregara tan amorosa, decidida y feientemente a la lucha ambientalista.

En 1993, Berta fue cofundadora del Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras. "Somos custodios de la naturaleza, de la tierra y sobre todo de los ríos", afirmó en una entrevista de la BBC en 2015, después de haber recibido el Premio Medioambiental Goldman, que es el equivalente al Nobel para los ambientalistas.

En 2006, el gobierno hondureño y grandes consorcios transaccionales iniciaron los trabajos de construcción de la represa de Agua Zarca sobre el río Gualcarque, el pueblo lenca se acercó a Berta para solicitar su ayuda y detener el ecocidio que acabaría con muchos de sus recursos. Se organizaron y tomaron diferentes medidas de acción civil y comunitaria. Finalmente el proyecto fue suspendido.

Con su muerte, Honduras se queda un poco huérfana. La madrugada del jueves 3 de marzo varios hombres entraron de manera violenta a la casa donde vivía Berta y

la asesinaron. El móvil que determinó la autoridad fue el robo.

Seguramente continuará con su lucha, para ella no había otra opción, desde los mismos ríos, con sus compañeras guardianas, protegiendo la vida, arrullando a los bosques, cantando a la noche, animando a los que quedaron, ofreciéndoles esperanza.

—Beatrice Macin, buena gente de Esperanza



Historias/Viajes

New works by Marta Sánchez Dallam and Liliana Wilson

Opening Thursday April 14 @ 7 pm
On display through July 2016

Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection
LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections
The University of Texas at Austin

Dr Norma Cantú will moderate a plática with the artists.



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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.