



# La Voz de Esperanza

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## La Voz Mail Collective

The Collective is sheltering at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic but will be returning when their health and safety can be assured. Extra funds are being raised to pay for folding La Voz each month during this time.

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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 is a publication of

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 Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.

*Montopolis*, a part of Austin, Texas always had a special place in my heart. As a child, I always looked forward to going to Montopolis and crossing that wonderful bridge. It was as though we were going to another town. I did not know it was a part of Austin. In fact, it was established in 1830, incorporated nine years before Austin. It was the “city on the hill” that historically served as a refuge for indigenous people, black people and Mexicans, some being immigrants from Mexico.

We would drive to Montopolis on some Sundays to visit my mother’s brother, Tío Pete and his wife, Tía María. My Dad had siblings there, too—his sisters, Marcela and Nacha and their husbands, Tío Pete (yes, I had at least 3 Tío Petes) and Tío Felix. Tío Pete and Tía María’s family were active with Dolores Catholic Church and we would often attend functions there. They lived on Porter St. My other aunts and uncles lived in some tiny houses (shotgun houses) on the outskirts of the city that had orange asphalt siding with a brick design. This cluster of small houses was always fun to pass by because we could point them out and say that’s where Tía Margie lives, or Tía Nancy.

Montopolis and the Dolores Parish had a profound impact on my Uncle Pete’s family. They were very involved with the parish priest, Father Underwood, a social justice advocate who made Austin step up and provide for this community of color. My aunt darned his holy socks and pressed his clothes. The impact he had on my Uncle Pete’s family was so profound that one of my cousins wound up becoming a nun, a Sister of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in San Antonio, where she is now a retired Catholic school administrator.

I also remember the Fiesta Drive-In that was there and run by our relatives. We could go to the movies, a carload at a time, with our family of seven getting in for a couple of dollars. We enjoyed the movies in Spanish and the food and drinks in trays anchored to our car doors. It was almost a monthly ritual.

Montopolis was not annexed until the 1950s by the City of Austin which was very slow in providing city services or bus transportation. Father Underwood worked for many years to bring services to Montopolis and to finally build a community center there that recently has been renewed. The mural on the new Montopolis Community Center by Peter F. Ortiz, a resident of Montopolis, is featured on this month’s cover of La Voz.

Montopolis is now the darling of neighborhoods in Austin and threatened by gentrification with tiny houses going for more than \$350,000. The Montopolis Bridge has been transformed into a hike and bike trail (of course!) and I now get lost going to Montopolis amid the mish mash of circling highways. Still, I have fond memories of Montopolis.

As part of the celebration of LGBTQ pride in June, this issue of La Voz features two LGBTQ artists, Peter F. Ortiz, Jr. of Montopolis and internationally renown photographer, Laura Aguilar (deceased), a friend of the Esperanza’s. Look for Juneteenth celebrations in your community this month and learn more about our true American history. And, don’t forget to **Vote!**

—Gloria A. Ramirez, *editor of La Voz de Esperanza*



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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.