

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.

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 Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.

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"Barrio Luv" by Mary Agnes Rodríguez

For the love of community, mujeres fight for justice

¡Feliz Año Nuevo! With this first issue of 2008 (February), La Voz de Esperanza approaches its 20th year of publication. The Esperanza Center published the first issue in November of 1988, taking over the Interchange Newsletter. The first full year of La Voz followed with the publication of the January 1999 issue. As the anniversary approaches, we shall continue revisiting our history.

This issue of La Voz is dedicated to the women who have fought for social justice in the past and present, and to the young women who will continue the quest for social justice in our communities long after we are gone. Featured on the front page are: Lydia Mendoza, Emma Tenayuca, women from the International Woman's Day Committee and frontera landowner, Dr. Eloisa García Tamez who has given Homeland Security officials notice that she will not cooperate in the building of a border fence on her land.

Lydia Mendoza, known as the mother of Tejano music, the *Queen of Tejano*, *La Alondra de la Frontera*, and *La Cancionera de los Pobres*, among other titles, died on December 20, 2007 leaving behind a legacy that will inspire women for generations to come. Lydia, *The Border Lark*, was the essence of "transnational" border culture, embodying the Mexican/Chicano migrant experience and ultimately transcending la frontera by uniting Latinos of the Americas and Cuba through her songs. She sang about the condition of women in a man's world and about the poor; bringing hope to both groups as they reveled in her singing. Lupe Saenz, president of the *South Texas Conjunto Association* told the *Times*, "She was a rebel, in that she did what no other woman artist singer had done before her; that is, she sang about the 'machismo' culture in a way that set the course for many women today." Through song, Lydia achieved her fight for justice.

2008 marks the 70th anniversary of the pecan shellers strike. On January 31, 1938 12,000 San Antonio pecan shellers, mostly Mexicanas, walked off their jobs. The strike was led by 21 year old Emma Tenayuca who was eventually run out of town. San Antonio's chapter of the ACLU cut its teeth on the pecan sheller's strike in the same year. A significant public space or via in San Antonio has yet to be named for this historic social justice icon.

The *International Women's Day Committee* which is planning its 18th march in 2008 has joined with the *Free Speech Coalition* in challenging San Antonio's march ordinance in the courts. The new ordinance charges arbitrary and exorbitant fees for the free speech and assembly that the IWD March and other political marches are entitled to under the U.S. Constitution. At stake is whether our rights are now being sold for a price!

As the border wall that is planned along the U.S./Mexico frontera threatens the free flow of gente and culturas in Texas, one woman has refused to cooperate in the surveying of her land for the purpose of building that wall. Dr. Eloisa García Tamez's challenge to homeland security is yet another woman's fight for unity and justicia instead of the divisions and injustice being fostered by U.S. border politics.

Our deepest sympathies to both cantante, Lourdes Pérez who lost her papí and artista, Ester Hernández who lost her mother, both in the same week that Lydia Mendoza left us.

With this welcome to the 2008 La Voz, I urge you to peruse the accompanying articles and join us at upcoming events marking the 70th anniversary of the Pecan Sheller's strike and the 18th International Woman's Day March. We look forward to seeing you at Azul's concert on El Amor and a special reading by Pat Mora this month. Coming in March is an exhibit of Liliana Wilson's exquisite art and more! Get the details on all events in this and future issues of La Voz and write us at: lavoz@esperanzacenter.org -GAR, la editora

ATTENTION VOZ READERS: If you have a correction you want to make on your mailing label please send it in to lavoz@esperanzacenter.org. If you do not wish to continue on the mailing list for whatever reason please notify us as well. La Voz is provided as a courtesy to people on the mailing list of the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. **The subscription rate is now \$30 per year.** The cost of producing and mailing La Voz has substantially increased and we need your help to keep it afloat. To help, send in your subscriptions, sign up as a monthly donor, or send in a donation to the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. Thank you. -GAR

VOZ VISION STATEMENT: La Voz de Esperanza speaks for many individual, progressive voices who are gente-based, multi-visioned and milagro-bound. We are diverse survivors of materialism, racism, misogyny, homophobia, classism, violence, earth-damage, speciesism and cultural and political oppression. We are recapturing the powers of alliance, activism and healthy conflict in order to achieve interdependent economic/spiritual healing and fuerza. La Voz is a resource for peace, justice, and human rights, providing a forum for criticism, information, education, humor and other creative works. La Voz provokes bold actions in response to local and global problems, with the knowledge that the many risks we take for the earth, our body, and the dignity of all people will result in profound change for the seven generations to come.