

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 5th 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 Letters with intent to slander individuals or groups will not be published.

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Cover photos: Graciela Sánchez & Anel Flores.



Free Speech Coalition Wins Injunction Against the City of San Antonio, Trial Scheduled

The middle-aged woman walked brusquely into a recent San Antonio Free Speech Coalition meeting: "Are you the group that is suing over the street march costs? I want to make a contribution!" Pulling out a checkbook, she said "It's our free speech, our right to assemble in our public streets! This is what we all learned in school. It's obvious!"

Yet, Mayor Hardberger, former "Kennedy liberal," supports the Ordinance: "It's your speech, so you pay for it. It's just like renting a house!" City Attorney Michael Bernard, former ACLU leader, falsely defends the Ordinance as being, "as liberal of an ordinance as there exists in this country" (no other major city charges more than a permit fee). City Manager Sheryl Sculley says the Ordinance is necessary to limit the number of street marches and reduce City expenses: "the Council decided from a budgetary standpoint, the number of events was nearly getting out of control... we have dozens and dozens of these."

So what is going on? Why do people have such different reactions to the City charging thousands for a street march? This diversion of views is caused by the extreme individualism that was thrust into popular discussion by the right-wing Reagan Revolution of the 1980s. Reagan's call for "smaller government," "lower taxes," and "peace through strength" heralded the radical shifts in political and economic policy to what is now known as neoliberalism.

This is the ideology of unbridled capitalism: government's limited role is to maintain order through military strength and to enable "free trade," by deregulating large industries, ending welfare and other poverty-relief programs, restricting unions, and transferring public property to private ownership. **This last element is the origin of the Parade Ordinance dispute: for neoliberalism, all property is private property. If a government owns property, then it should manage that property as if it were a private business.** In this view, the idea of "public property" is nonsensical: since ownership is the right to exclude others, how can a public (all the people) exclude anyone? So public ownership of anything, including streets, parks, air, airwaves, or water, is antithetical to the neoliberal worldview, and the tradition of a "public forum" for free expression is, at best, quaint, and at worst dangerous.

"User fees" were embraced by neoliberals as the perfect solution to the problem of government ownership. Like a Rent-All company, they say, the government should charge for use of its property. Zoos, parks, camping grounds should charge for admission. Users of emergency medical services, fire-fighting services, and prison "services" should be charged because they are getting the benefits. Plain, simple, an attractive idea. The government should have a strong police force to maintain order for the free market and should charge people who "use" police services by causing disorder.

...cont'd on p.13



Members of the Free Speech Coalition at a press conference announcing the injunction.

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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.