

Dice
PIZZA PATRON:
"Aceptamos Pesos"

Is it Time to Get
Rid of the TAKS
Test in Texas?

An Open Letter
from Johnston
High School



"Si Se Puede"

The Best Source of News and Views on *La Raza* in *Tejas*

La Politiquera

\$2.25

Vol # 18 Num. 1

El Periódico Que No Se Queda Callado

January, 2007



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 1929 - 1968

People in the News



Dead Candidate Wins Re-Election

State Representative Glenda Dawson was re-elected on November 7th, 2006 as the State Representative from District 29 just outside of Houston. She defeated Democrat **Anthony A. Dinovo** by a vote of 21,284 to 13,984. Not bad for a dead candidate.

Dawson who died in September, 2006 at the age of 65, campaigned as though she was very much alive and well. She even appeared in campaign literature with **Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison** and reminded voters of her many accomplishments in the areas of education and employment.

According to **State Representative Dennis Bonnen** (District 25) who was overseeing her campaign, there was no need to mention that she had passed away because everyone already knew it.



Judge Rose Vela's Gamble Pays Off

Rose Vela shocked South Texas voters by pulling off an upset victory over incumbent **Fred Hinojosa** on election day.

When **District Judge Rose Vela** decided to run for the **13th Court of Appeals** as Republican, few people thought she would have a chance against **Federico "Fred" Hinojosa**, whose has held the position for the past 15 years.

With the vote in from all 669 precincts in the 20 counties that comprise the 13th Court of Appeals, **Vela** snatched the position 53.49% to 46.51%. (128,959 to 112,121). **Hinojosa**, who was appointed to the bench by **Ann Richards** in 1991, had run unopposed in 2000 and pulled in 251,015 votes.

Both candidates had high name recognition and spent large sums of money fighting for the post. The job pays \$105,000 a year.



Voters Oust Hinojosa as County Judge

The voters in **Cameron County** (Brownsville) delivered a stunning defeat to incumbent **County Judge Gilberto Hinojosa**. Instead of returning the Democrat to office, they went with with former county commissioner **Carlos Cascos**, a Republican, by a vote of

22,181 to 18,221. **Cascos**, who had served as a **Cameron County Commissioner** for several terms reminded voters of a scandal involving the sheriff of **Cameron County** which resulted in a 24 year prison term. **Cascos** also reminded voters of the close association of **Hinojosa** with the sheriff.

This was not the first time the voters of **Cameron County** have elected a Republican to the County's top job. In 1988, they elected **Tony Garza, Jr.** **Garza** later went on to become **Secretary of State** and now serves as the ambassador to **Mexico**.



Luis Orozco Wins 2006 Pat Dobbs Leadership Award

(Austin) **Lanier High School** student **Luis Orozco** was honored at a dinner and reception at the **Hilton Hotel** in **Austin, Texas** as the winner of the **2006 Pat Dobbs Student Leadership Award**. Together with a certificate he was given a scholarship check for \$1,000.00 dollars.

Orozco, who is originally from **Michoacan, Mexico**, was one of the student leaders who organized the walkout at his high school in March of this year to protest the pending legislation in Congress that he believed would adversely affect his family and others. He continues to remain active and is currently participating in the **Social Justice Saturday School** at the **University of Texas at Austin**.



Salinas Working to Educate People on Environmental Racism

Iris Salinas, an undergraduate at **The University of Texas at Austin** is mother, works two jobs and still makes time to be involved in the community. Her speciality is education and environmental racism. **Salinas** believes it is no coincidence that the health problems of some groups of people are tied to the economic decisions of business who choose to look the other way when it comes to industrial production.

She is passionate about the need to educate people about the growing number of cancer related cases that are showing up around the state of Texas. **Salinas** recently spoke at the **Social Justice Saturday School** in **Austin** about her work and invited students to think seriously about the health of their own families.

In the next issue of **La Politiquera** we will publish our 2007 list of the **25 Most Influential Latinos in Texas** and the **25 Most Powerful Latinos in Texas**. We taking nominations until **January 31st**.

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Publisher's Statement

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Pensamientos Para Año Nuevo

Qué tal amigos! La Politiquera has returned! We have been absent for a good two or three months and I know some of you have asked, what's going on?

La mera verdad is that I just didn't have anything new to say or contribute. Other publications and blogs have been doing a good job of spreading the news y avisando a la gente about things that are going on so I just decided to shut up for a while.(An especially good blog site is Stace Medellín's Dos Centavos. www.dos-centavos.blogspot.com)

Pero aquí estamos de vuelta, y ahora, si tenemos algo que decir! Primeramente, queremos decir que La Politiquera va seguir con su tradición de picar aquí y allá cuando ve que algo anda afuera de onda. Al mismo tiempo, vamos a seguir dirigiendo y enfocando la luz a esos individuos y organizaciones que se estan aventando.

Cambiando de Tema

Ya que la legislatura de Texas esta en session, vamos estar viendo con mucho interes todo lo que pasar en la area de educación. You can expect to see many articles on the issue of education and what can be done to address the continuing dropout problem in the state.

You will also see a number of articles in La Politiquera that will highlight the achievements of community activists from around the state. There are many individuals who work hard in their respective communities and get very little respect or recognitions from others.

Tambien en 2007 vamos a tratar de incluir más información sobre lo que esta pasando en la comunidad Africo Americano. Es tiempo que nos juntamos más porque tenemos más en comun que queremos admitir. Como siempre le extendemos una invitación a todos que manden sus noticias cuando tienen algo que compartir.

Editorial



Alfredo R. Santos c/s Editor and Publisher

Cambiando de Tema

For those of you who might be interested, in addition to La Politiquera, we have been publishing, through an affiliated organization called the Mexican American Center for Community and Economic Development, a series of community based newspapers called La Voz.

These publications contain a more localized approach to information and news and sometimes shares articles with La Politiquera. We are interested in expanding La Voz and look forward to visiting with individuals and organizations. La Voz can also be found on the internet at www.lavoznewspapers.com

25 MOST INFLUENCIALS LATINOS IN TEXAS

In the February, 2007 issue of La Politiquera we will deliver our list of the 25 most influential Latinos in Texas. We are still accepting nominations and suggestions. In the March, 2007 issue of La Politiquera we will publish a list of the 25 most powerful Latinos in Texas.

To be sure the definition of what constitutes influence or

power is both ambiguous and the subject of much debate. For the most part the criteria we are using for influential revolves around, people who are moved, touched or motivated to action.

With respect to "powerful" we are looking primarily at individuals who make decisions involving money or policy which in impact the lives of people.

Is it possible for someone to

be influential but not powerful? Of course it is. How about powerful but not influential? Otra vez, of course it is. How about both? Tambien, there are people who could be both.

Send in your nominations (and if you want rationales) and we will certainly consider them.

d.santos@sbcglobal.net

Advertisement for La Politiquera featuring a magazine cover with headlines like 'Police Shoot Austin Teenager in the Back' and 'One Wins and One Loses Que Pasó?'. It also includes a 'Nuestro PRESE' logo at the bottom.

By the Numbers

- 463,130** Number of Hispanics who graduated from high school in Texas between 2000 - 2005
- 287,333** Number of Hispanic high school graduates who did not enroll in higher education after graduation during this same time period
- 106,039** Number of Hispanics who went on to a public 2 year community college during this time period
- 62,734** Number of Hispanics who went on to a public 4 year public college or university during this time period
- 31,091** Number of Hispanics who earned college degrees in 2005
- 12,409** Number of Hispanics who entered a Texas prison in 2005
- 12,212** Number of Hispanics who earned a bachelors degree in 2003 from public institutions
- 6,970** Number of Hispanics who went on to an independent college or university (2001-2005)
- 6,783** Number of Hispanics who were released from a Texas prison in 2005
- 2,482** Number of Hispanics who earned a masters degree from a public institution in Texas in 2003
- 160** Number of Hispanics who received a doctoral degree from a public health related institution in 2003
- 114** Number of Hispanics who earned a doctoral degree from a public institution in Texas in 2003
- 0** Number of Hispanics who have been to the planet Mars

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Improving the Quality of a High School Education Using End-of-Course Exams to Measure Student Performance

by Brooke Dollens Terry

For too many **Texas** students, a high school diploma signifies little more than a certificate of attendance. While today's high-tech, global economy demands students to have a rigorous education and a high level of skills to succeed, too many students are graduating without the basic skills needed in the "real world." Part of the problem is a poor assessment for measuring subject-area mastery and student progress in high school. With billions of dollars spent each year on Texas schools, students and taxpayers deserve better.



End-of-course exams can move us in the right direction.

Inflated grades, inflated course titles, and lack of rigor in the high school curriculum fail to prepare Texas students for success in college or a career. Regrettably, students in disadvantaged and low socio-economic areas tend to suffer the most. An analysis by the **U.S. Department of Education** found that students in poor schools typically receive A's for work that would earn a C- in wealthy schools. Imagine the surprise and frustration when these "honor" students get to college and are placed in remedial reading and math classes!

Some teachers admit they are pressured to inflate grades. According to an **American Federation of Teachers'** survey, 30 percent of American teachers admitted to feeling pressure to give higher grades than deserved and to decrease the difficulty and amount of work assigned. Grade inflation does not benefit the student; instead, it gives students an inaccurate representation of their skills and abilities and sets them up for future frustration.

As schools enroll more students in advanced courses, course inflation is also becoming a problem. According to the **National Center for Educational Accountability**, "high percentages of students receiving credit for advanced courses are not learning the content implied by their course titles." Their research found a startling 60 percent of low-income **Texas** students who received course credit for Geometry and Algebra II failed the **Texas** exit exam covering Algebra I and Geometry.

Texas must ensure that students are given an accurate assessment of their comprehension and skill levels in each subject area as they progress through school to immediately identify where and when improvement is needed. The current testing system, which assesses students in the spring of 11th grade with a multi-subject cumulative test, does not provide parents and students with timely information to identify and remediate problems.

Texas should replace the **TAKS** test with a series of end-of-course exams in math, science, social studies and language arts in each grade of high school. End-of-course exams are statewide finals given at the end of each course to provide an in-depth measure of comprehension and skill attainment. As a result, educators can evaluate subject mastery, determine if the student is ready for the next level of the course, and more accurately measure student progress. Most importantly, end-of-course exams can diagnose weaknesses in academic curriculum and teaching before it is too late.

Research shows that end-of-course exams increase academic standards and student achievement. Researcher John Bishop found that students in both New York and North Carolina, states with end-of-course exams, are about half of a grade level ahead in math and science and almost two-thirds of a grade level ahead in reading among comparable students without such exams. **New York's examinations are so well regarded for their rigor that the City University of New York** uses their English end-of-course exam in place of their own placement test. Moving to end-of-course exams would put **Texas** in good company. There are as many as 15 states across the country and several countries in Europe and East Asia using end-of-course exams to evaluate student learning.

Ultimately, the rigor of **Texas'** academic curriculum is only as tough as the tests used to measure performance. If Texas lawmakers want to improve the quality of a high school education and ensure that all Texas students are taught a rigorous curriculum and have an incentive to learn, **Texas** should adopt end-of-course exams to better assess student learning and achievement.

Brooke Dollens Terry is an education policy analyst at the Texas Public Policy Foundation, a non-profit research institute based in Austin. She can be contacted at bterry@texaspolicy.com.

Pizza Patron Accepts Pesos: “Americanos” Go Nuts!



By now you have heard the news, **Pizza Patron** is accepting pesos! It seemed like a good marketing move and the Dallas based company thought there might be an opportunity to pick a few pesos here and there. But they got more than they bargained for when the word got out.

Thousands of emails poured into the company headquarters from all over the United States and they weren't all positive. "What you are doing is unpatriotic. This is America not Mexico." "Get the hell out of this country" wrote in another angry individual.

All together **Pizza Patron** has 59 stores in the United States including 3 in **San Antonio**, 4 in **Austin**, 5 in **Houston** and 9 in **Dallas**. Company officials said they never expected the kind of reaction this marketing move has caused. They say that most of the emails sent in are anonymous and have been coming from places such as

North Dakota, Connecticut and Indiana.

Pizza Patron has been doing business in **Dallas**, where it was founded for the past 20 years. According to **Andy Gamm**, **Pizza Patron** spokes person, over the years many customers have come into a store and joked whether they could pay for the pizza in pesos. One day company officials decided to test the joke and put up signs say they accepted pesos. The rest is history.

David Ramon, the **Pizza Patron** store manager at the **Springdale Shopping Center** location in **Austin**, said, that he has had no bad reactions at his location. He added that as far as he was concerned there was no such thing as bad publicity.

The reaction from this marketing move by **Pizza Patron** represents another example of how agitated and disturbed some people are getting as they perceived the continued "Browning of America."

Pizza Patrón Locations in Austin, Texas



Town Lake Plaza
Shopping Center
1922 E. Riverside Drive
Austin, TX 78741
512-447-0021

Store Manager
David Mendez

Springdale Shopping
Center 7112 Ed Bluestein
Blvd, Suite #175
Austin, TX 78723
512-928-9700

Store Manager
David Ramon

Oltorf Shopping Center
533 W Oltorf
Austin, TX 78723
512-916-1569

Store Manager
Raul Palomino

Confetti Shopping Center
730 W. Stassney Lane
Austin, TX 78745
512-443-0014

Store Manager
Jason Gilmore

Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr., was born on January 15, 1929, in **Atlanta, Georgia**. He attended the **Atlanta** public schools. Following graduation from **Morehouse College** in 1948, **King** entered **Crozer Theological Seminary**, having been ordained the previous year into the ministry of the **National Baptist Church**. He graduated from **Crozer** in 1951 and received his doctorate in theology from **Boston University** in 1955.

In **Boston**, **King** met **Coretta Scott**, whom he married on June 18, 1953. Four children were born to them. **King** became minister of **Dexter Avenue Baptist Church** in **Montgomery, Ala.**, in 1954. He became active with the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** and the **Alabama Council on Human Relations**.

Nonviolence: The Bus Boycott

In December 1955, when **Rosa Parks**, a black woman, was arrested for violating a segregated seating ordinance on a public bus in **Montgomery**, black citizens were outraged. **King**, fellow minister **Ralph Abernathy**, and **Alabama's** state chairman of the **NAACP** called a public meeting. African Americans were urged to boycott the segregated city buses, and the **Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA)** was formed. The boycott lasted over a year, until the bus company capitulated. Segregated seating was discontinued, and some African Americans were employed as bus drivers. When the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed that the bus segregation laws of **Montgomery** were unconstitutional, the boycott ended in triumph for black dignity.

Overnight, **Martin Luther King** had become a national hero and an acknowledged leader in the civil rights struggle. The victory had not been easy. Elected

president of the **MIA**, **King's** life was in constant danger. His home was bombed, and he and other **MIA** leaders were threatened, harassed, arrested, and jailed.

Southern Christian Leadership Conference

In January 1957 approximately 60 black ministers assembled in **Atlanta** to form the **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** to continue the civil rights fight. **King** was elected president. A few months later he met **Vice President Richard Nixon** at the celebration of **Ghanaian independence** in **Accra**.

A year later **King** and three other black civil rights leaders were received by **President Dwight Eisenhower**. However, neither meeting resulted in any concrete relief for African Americans who, meanwhile, were growing increasingly restive under continued racial discrimination.

In February 1958 the **SCLC** sponsored 21 mass meetings in key southern cities as part of a "Crusade for Citizenship." The goal was to double the number of black voters in the South. **King** was traveling constantly now, speaking for "justice" throughout the country. A year later **Dr.** and **Mrs. King** visited **India** at the invitation of **Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru**. **King** had long been interested in **Mahatma Gandhi's** practice of nonviolence. Yet when they returned to the United States, the civil rights struggle had greatly intensified, and violent resistance by whites to the nonviolent efforts of black demonstrators filled the newspapers with accounts of bloody confrontations.

Increasing demands were being made upon **King** as an advocate of nonviolent change. He moved his family to **Atlanta** in 1960 and became associate pastor with his father at the **Ebenezer Baptist Church**. **Ralph Abernathy** soon followed, and the two men worked

in tandem for the remainder of **King's** career.

Sit-In Movement

In February 1960 the "sit-in" movement was begun in **Greensboro, North Carolina**, by African American students protesting segregation at lunch counters in city stores. The movement quickly spread throughout **North Carolina** to **South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia**. The black students were frequently joined by white students and other sympathizers.

On April 15 the **SCLC** called a conference of sit-in leaders to coordinate the movement. **King** urged the young people to continue using nonviolent means. Out of this meeting the **Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** emerged. For a time the **SNCC** worked closely with the **SCLC**, though ultimately the two groups went their separate ways.

By August a report issued by the **Southern Regional Council** in **Atlanta** stated that the sit-ins had succeeded in ending segregation at lunch counters in 27 southern cities. In October delegates at the **SCLC** meeting resolved to focus nonviolent campaigns against all segregated public transportation, waiting rooms, and schools. They would increase emphasis on voter registration and would use economic boycotts to gain fair employment and other benefits for African Americans. An important department store in **Atlanta**, a widely known symbol of segregation, was the first objective. When **King** and 75 students entered the store and requested lunch-counter service, he and 36 others were arrested.

Atlanta's mayor negotiated a truce, however, and charges were dropped, but **King** was imprisoned for violating his probation on a traffic offense conviction. **John F. Kennedy**, currently campaigning for the presidency, made a dramatic telephone call to **Mrs. King**. Political wheels were set in motion, and **King** was released.

Freedom Riders

In a subsequent move, the **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**, **SCLC**, and **SNCC** joined in a coalition. A **Freedom Ride Coordinating Committee** was formed with **King** as chairman. The

idea was to "put the sit-ins on the road" by having pairs of black and white volunteers board interstate buses traveling through the South to test compliance with a new Federal law forbidding segregated accommodations in bus stations.

A great deal of violence resulted, as resisting whites overturned and burned buses, assaulted the Freedom Riders, and attacked newsmen. Many of the arrested riders went to prison rather than pay fines. However, public furor moved the **Interstate Commerce Commission** to enforce non-segregation laws in buses engaged in interstate transportation and in their servicing terminals.

In December 1961 **King** and the **SCLC** were invited by black leaders in **Albany, Ga.**, to lead their civil rights struggle. After 2,000 frustrated African Americans clashed with police, **King** called for a "day of penitence." **King** himself was jailed, tried, and given a suspended sentence. In an ambitious voter education program in **Albany** and the surrounding area, **SNCC** and **SCLC** members were harassed by

The city of San Antonio, Texas became the first major southern city to integrate its lunch counters due to the sit-in demonstrations on March 16, 1960.

Recordando a Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

whites. Churches were bombed, and local black citizens were threatened and sometimes attacked. **King's** nonviolent crusade responded with prayer vigils. It was not until the **1964 Federal Civil Rights Act** was passed that public facilities in **Albany** were desegregated.

In May 1962 **King** was asked to assist in the civil rights struggle in **Birmingham, Alabama**, and the **SCLC** made plans to hold its annual convention there. The **Birmingham** campaign began with a series of workshops on nonviolence. In early 1963 **King** made a speaking tour, recruiting volunteers and obtaining money for bail bonds for those arrested in the struggle.

On April 3 a manifesto was issued by the black community, and the campaign began in earnest with picketings and sit-ins. On the Friday before Easter, **Dr. King** was jailed; on Easter Sunday, African Americans appeared at white churches asking to join their fellow Christians in worship. When **Dr. King's** brother was arrested on his way to the **Birmingham** jail to pray for **King**, a near riot resulted.

On May 2 some 6,000 school children marched to demonstrate against school segregation; 959 children were arrested. The next day, as volunteers gathered in a church, police barred the exits, and fire hoses and police dogs were turned on the teen-age demonstrators.

The **SCLC's** campaign continually met harassment from the **Birmingham** police. Finally, a period of truce was established, and negotiations began with the city power structure. Though an agreement was reached, the **Ku Klux Klan** bombed the home of **King's** brother and the motel where **SCLC** members were headquartered. Enraged black citizens rioted; **Alabama** state troopers moved in and set up undeclared martial law. **King** and **SCLC** personnel continued to

urge nonviolence, and tensions seemed to ease for a time. But more violence erupted when white racists refused to comply with Federal school integration laws. The worst came when a bomb thrown into a black church killed four little girls.

Civil Rights Rally in Washington

The year 1963 was eventful in the struggle for civil rights. In June, **King** and 125,000 persons marched in a "Freedom Walk" in **Detroit**. On August 27, over 250,000 black and white citizens assembled in **Washington, D.C.**, for a mass civil rights rally, where **King** delivered his famous "Let Freedom Ring" address. That same year he was featured as *Time* magazine's "Man of the Year."

The next year **King** and his followers moved into **St. Augustine, Florida**, one of America's most thoroughly segregated cities. After weeks of nonviolent demonstrations and violent counterattacks by whites, a biracial committee was set up to move **St. Augustine** toward desegregation. A few weeks later the **1964 Civil Rights Bill** was signed by **President Lyndon Johnson**.

In September 1964 **King** and **Abernathy** went to West Berlin at **Mayor Willy Brandt's** invitation, where **King** received an honorary doctorate from the **Evangelical Theological College**. The two civil rights leaders then went to **Rome** for an audience with **Pope Paul VI**. Back in the **United States**, **King** endorsed **Lyndon Johnson's** presidential candidacy. That December, **King** received the **Nobel Peace Prize**.

In 1965 the **SCLC** concentrated its efforts in **Alabama**. The prime target was **Selma**, where only a handful of black citizens had been permitted to vote. **King** urged **President Johnson** to expedite the **Voting Rights Bill**, and he announced a march from **Selma** to **Montgomery** to demonstrate the black people's determination to vote.

But **Governor George Wallace** refused to permit the march, and the 500 persons who gathered to march were beaten by state troopers and "possemen." The march continued anyway, and **Selma's** black citizens were joined by hundreds of blacks and whites from other states, including many notable churchmen. On March 21 over 10,000 persons followed **King** from **Selma** toward **Montgomery**. Only 300 were allowed to make the 4-day march, but they were joined by another 25,000 in **Montgomery** for the march to the capital to present a petition to **Governor Wallace**.

New Issues: Viet Nam War

In 1965 **King** made a "people-to-people" tour of northern cities. But the growing militancy of black people in **Watts** and **Harlem**, and even in **Mississippi** and **Alabama**, caused **Dr. King** to reassess the nonviolent civil rights movement, which he had fathered. Although he reaffirmed his commitment to nonviolence, he understood the intense frustration experienced by blacks when their own nonviolent tactics left them open to dangerous violence from the opposition. He was troubled, too, about the American involvement in the war in **Vietnam**

and found himself increasingly pushed toward leadership in antiwar groups.

In 1967 **King** began speaking directly against the **Vietnam War**, although many civil rights advocates criticized this. While serving a 4-day sentence in **Birmingham** stemming from the 1963 demonstrations, **King** and his brother, **Abernathy**, and **Wyatt Tee Walker** began planning a "Poor People's March" to bring together the interests of the poor of all races.

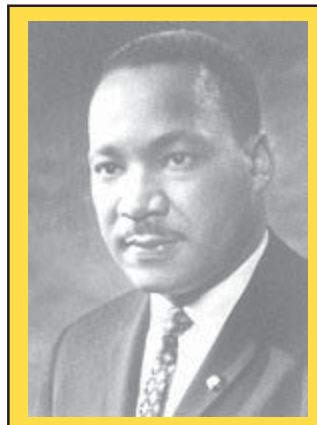
The Assassination

In January 1968 **Dr. King** and other antiwar leaders called for a **Washington** rally on February 5/6. He also announced that the Poor People's March would converge in **Washington** on April 22. Following the February rally, **King** toured key cities to see firsthand the plight of the poor. Meanwhile, in **Memphis, Tenn.**, black sanitation workers were striking to protest unequal pay and poor working conditions.

The protest soon became citywide, with grievances ranging from police brutality to intolerable school conditions. In March, **King** went to lead the **Memphis** demonstrations. The march ended in a riot when some frustrated young blacks began breaking windows, looting, and burning stores. Police retaliation was swift and bloody. In **Memphis** on April 3, **King** addressed a rally; speaking of threats on his life, he urged followers to continue the nonviolent struggle no matter what happened to him.

The next evening, as **King** stood on an outside balcony at the **Lorraine Hotel**, he was struck by a rifle bullet. He was pronounced dead at 7:00 P.M. in a **Memphis** hospital.

In December 1999, a four-acre site near the **Lincoln Memorial** in **Washington, D.C.** was approved as the location for a monument to **King**.



HELPING MYRA HERNANDEZ REALIZE HER DREAM

by Alfredo Santos c/s

I thought I would share this story with you while it is still fresh in my mind. I just came back from dinner with **Luis Orozco**, the **Sifuentes Brothers** and a new student at the **Social Justice Saturday School** named **Myra**. **Myra** is an undergraduate student in the **School of Social Work at The University of Texas at Austin**. She had brought a friend with her and we all met at the Vietnamese Restaurant on **Guadalupe** called **PHOs**. (Across from Dobie Hall)

I was surprised to learn that **Myra** and her friend had never been in there to eat before. (The others had already told me they had no idea what Vietnamese food was.) We did introductions, ordered appetizers and food and **Luis** led the political discussion that soon followed. When the main courses did arrive the conversations ceased as they explored the food before them.

The stated purpose of getting together for dinner was to follow up on something that we learned about **Myra** during the first session of the **Social Justice Saturday School**. **Myra** had shared with the group how she had struggled to get into college despite coming from a difficult family situation in **San Antonio, Texas** where she had been told that a university education was beyond her reach.

As she began to tell us on that first Saturday how bad she wanted an education and how bad she wanted to prove everyone wrong about the low expectations they held out for her, she also revealed another secret.

She said, (between tears) that she wanted to participate in May semester (6 week program) in **England** in 2007. She shared with the group what this would mean to her.

Long story short, we were all very moved. So moved in fact that we said that we would help her realize her dream. Tonight's



ABOVE: **Myra Hernandez** on the left, with other friends from her mariachi group in San Antonio, Texas

dinner was the follow up. After we finished the main courses we got down to business. She needed to raise \$3,500 for this program. We decided that what she really needed was \$5,000 (You can't go to Europe with no money in your pocket.)

So we did the standard fundraising plan: Can we find two "one thousand dollar" people? Can we find 4 "\$500 hundred dollar" contributors? Can we find 20 \$50.00 contributors?

Myra had shared with us that her efforts up to this point were disappointing they were. We asked her if she was telling people her story? At first she didn't understand. "What do you mean?" she asked. We told, well if you want people to help you, they have to know something about

you. We have agreed to help you because you told us your story two Saturdays ago.

She said she really wasn't very good at telling her story. Long story short, I said, my wife will contribute \$250.00. Then **Myra's** friend turned to her and said she and her husband would give \$50 Then to my utter surprise, **Luis Orozco**, said in his heavy Spanish accent that he would give \$50. Then the real show stopper came when the **Sifuentes** brothers stammered in their broken English, that they would each give \$25.00.

For **Myra**, who was taking notes, it proved to be too much that two high school students who were probably poorer than she is would be willing to give her money to for a trip to **England**. As she went to tears the **Sifuentes** brothers did

not realize the irony of their humble offering. After **Myra** regained her composure she thanked everyone for their commitments. We said, OK, add it up **Myra**. Just at this table she had \$400.00 already pledged (8% of \$5,000).

We discussed other prospects that might be willing to give to her cause and agreed that she would need to put on paper a short version of "her story." As we continued talking lo and behold, we made another discovery. It turns out that **Myra** is a violinist! (Since the 6th grade) And not only does she play the violin, she has been playing the violin in mariachi groups and singing all over **San Antonio** for years.

When she decided to come to **The University of Texas** she cut back on her music. (Story getting shorter.) So we bid good bye and **Luis** and friends walked to my car so I could give them a ride home. As we are driving down **Guadalupe Street**, **Luis** and the **Sifuentes** brothers expressed amazement that they would even think in terms of giving money and help to people to whom we are not related.

German Sifuentes stated in Spanish, that never in his wildest dreams do people do things like this for others in **Mexico**. All of them went on to talk about how this was indeed a strange experience for them but that they liked the idea of being able to help someone. They also commented that if were to organize a fundraiser and have music, that they would be willing to sing with **Myra!** To be continued

If you would like to help **Myra** realize her dream of studying for a semester in England please contact **Luis Orozco** at **Austin Voices for Educaiton and Youth** at 450-1880. **Luis** works there 10 hours a week as a youth mobilizer.

Johnston High School in Austin, Texas Under Fire

The following is open letter from the Austin Independent School District dated December 22, 2006 at 2:00pm

Dear Friend of Austin ISD:

As you are undoubtedly aware, Superintendent Forgione and other key District administrators were recently required to attend a meeting with State Education Commissioner Shirley Neeley, and members of her staff, to discuss the comprehensive efforts that are in place to improve academic achievement at Johnston High School. Because Johnston has failed to achieve state academic standards for three consecutive years, and as provided for in state law, Commissioner Neeley could step-in and require major changes at the school, including "reconstitution" of the campus. An announcement from Commissioner Neeley is anticipated sometime in February. Superintendent Forgione has also met with the Johnston faculty, members of the Johnston Campus Advisory Council, and others in the Johnston community. As he did with Commissioner Neeley, Dr. Forgione has outlined the many initiatives that the campus leadership team and Central Administration have launched to improve student achievement at the school. I am forwarding to you an outline that Superintendent Forgione recently prepared for the Board of Trustees, outlining the support structure that is currently in place at Johnston to improve student performance. Should you like additional details on any of these actions and interventions, I would be pleased to help identify for you the best source for the information.

Best Regards,
Janis Guerrero, Ph.D.
Executive Director for
Planning and Community
Relations
Austin Independent School
District Phone:414-9776

Career Profile

Dr. Luis Urrieta, Jr. Assistant Professor The University of Texas at Austin School of Education

Luis Urrieta, Jr. is one of the newest additions to the faculty at **The University of Texas at Austin**. As an assistant professor of education in the area of social studies/multicultural education and anthropology and education, **Dr. Urrieta's** general research interests center on issues of identity and agency, activism, altruism, new social movements, and social practice theory.

He is specifically interested in Chicana/o and *Indigena* identity, and in activism as a social practice in educational spaces both in the US and internationally. Methodologically, his work is grounded in anthropology and qualitative research methods. **Dr. Urrieta's** work specifically makes claims for native anthropology and native educational research as a political practice and method.

Dr. Urrieta is a member of numerous professional organizations in education, anthropology, and Chicana/o studies, including the American Anthropological Association, the Council of Anthropology and Education, the American Educational Research Association, the American Educational Studies Association, and the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies. He currently serves as the Faculty Representative for the Hispanic Caucus of the American Association for Higher Education. As a former middle school bilingual (Spanish/English) Language Arts/Social Studies teacher, Dr. Urrieta was active in the **California**



2003 - PhD Culture, Curriculum, and Change, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

1999- MA Educational Foundations, California State University, Los Angeles

1995 - BA History/Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles

Association for Bilingual Education as well as the Association for Mexican American Educators. Some of his articles have been published in *Educational Studies*, *Educational Foundations*, *The High School Journal*, *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *The Urban Review*, and *Theory and Research in Social Education*.

La Politiquera joins with the rest of the community in welcoming **Dr. Urrieta** to Austin, Texas.





Summer 2007 Legal Internship Opportunities

The **ACLU** of is one of the nation's foremost defenders of civil liberties and civil rights. We are a nonpartisan organization dedicated to defending the Bill of Rights through litigation, legislation, and public education. The **Texas** affiliate of the **ACLU** was founded in 1938 and is headquartered in Austin, with a regional office in Houston, and ten chapters with over 19,000 members statewide.

The **American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Texas** is accepting applications for summer 2007 law internships. We are seeking highly motivated students with a demonstrated commitment to civil rights and civil liberties and the initiative and energy to see projects to completion. Internships are available in our Legal Program and with two specific ACLU projects: Immigration, Border and National Security Policy Project and the Prison and Jail Accountability Project.

Law students will be supervised by the ACLU Foundation of Texas' Legal Director and/or Staff Attorney. Most interns will work in our **Austin** office, which is the state headquarter; as many as two interns may office at the ACLU's Houston Regional office. **The Summer Internship Program** lasts from June 1 – August 10.

Unfortunately, the **ACLU Foundation of Texas** is unable to fund summer internships; however, we will assist students in obtaining their own funding in any way we can. Splitting the the summer is discouraged, but may be considered in extenuating circumstances. We have had significant success working with students on obtaining grants and fellowship funding. We will also assist students who wish to obtain clinical or academic credit for their internship.

Summer law students' assignments will include, but not be limited to, completing fact research and legal analysis and draft memoranda in preparation for litigation of civil rights cases. Other duties may be assigned as necessary. Work hours are flexible but students will be expected to timely complete assigned projects.

Application:

If you are interested, please send a cover letter, including a statement identifying which project you are interested in (project descriptions are listed below); a resume; a brief (no more than 5 pages) writing sample; and a copy of your transcript, if available, no later than **Friday, February 16, 2007**. Documents should be sent in PDF or MS Word format to: Email: kskotak@aclutx.org



Central and South American Journalists Encourage to Apply for Prestigious Tina Hills Fellowship

Application Deadline: February 18, 2007

The **Missouri School of Journalism** announces a call for applications for the **Tina Hills Fellowship** for Latin American journalists interested in earning a master's or doctoral degree at the world's first journalism school.

The fellowship is part of a long-term program to expand relations between the School and the news business in Latin America. The winner will begin a graduate degree program at the **Missouri School of Journalism** in the fall of 2007 and will work as the Spanish-language managing editor of **Adelante**, an award-winning bilingual monthly newsmagazine published at the School for the growing Spanish-speaking population of central Missouri.

The Tina Hills Fellowship will provide tuition and a stipend of \$5,000 a year to the successful applicant. The ideal candidate for this fellowship will be a Latin American working journalist with professional experience. He/she must have good English and Spanish-language skills and a desire to pursue a master's or doctoral degree in the United States.

The fellowship is named for Tina Hills, former publisher of the Puerto Rican newspaper *El Mundo* and president of its parent company. **Mrs. Hills** is the widow of **Lee Hills**, the first chairman and chief executive officer of Knight-Ridder newspapers. Both were presidents of the Inter American Press Association. **Lee Hills Hall**, dedicated in 1995, is home to the Columbia Missourian.

Application requirements for the master's and doctoral program are available at the **Missouri Journalism Graduate Program** home page. Applicants who have questions about applying for the master's program should contact **Martha Pickens**; those interested in the doctoral program should contact **Amy Lenk**. The application deadline is Feb. 18, 2007.

McDonald's Scholarships

The Austin chapter of Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) announced the opening of the 2006-2007 National Scholarship competition for Austin-area students. In partnership with the Austin Co-op of McDonald's owner/operators, RMHC will grant 25, \$1,000 scholarships to local and high school seniors.

These scholarships represent McDonald's long-standing commitment to education, said German Ustariz, president of the Austin Co-op of McDonald's owner/operators. We're proud to support the college dreams of so many deserving Austin students this year. The scholarships are available to all students regardless of ethnicity.

Applications for all four scholarships are available at <http://www.rmhc.org>. The deadline for application submissions is February 15, 2007 and winners will be recognized during a special awards ceremony in May.



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Calendar of Events

January, 2007

January 17, 2007 - The Cost of Poverty to Business and Education This public education event will begin at: 8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Location: United Way Capital Area Address: 2000 East MLK City, State: Austin, TX Senior Policy Analyst Don Baylor will discuss the impact of poverty on the workforce.

January 18, 2007 - Book Signing for Dan Arellano, author of Tejano Roots - A Family Legend at Jovita's Restaurant on South First Street in Austin, Texas 6 to 8pm For more information contact the author at (512) 826-7569

January 20, 2007 - MLK Keynote Address by Christopher Garden (In Pursuit of Happiness) at Riverbend Center 4214 North Capitol of Texas Highway in Austin, Texas For more information call (512) 323-6901

January 23, 2007 - Texas Dropout Conference in Austin, Texas Location: Texas Capitol Extension Room E2.026 from 8:30am to 10:30am. Frances Deviney, Senior Research Associate, will present data from the CPPP and IDRA on the economic consequences to individuals and the state when students drop out before completing high school.

January 24, 2007 - Juvenile Justice Reform in Texas: Thinking Outside the Cell co-sponsored by the Texas Public Policy Foundation and the Texas Coalition Advocating Justice for Juveniles. This public education event will take place at 900 Congress Suite 400 in Austin, Texas. Contact: Isela Gutierrez (512) 462-2181

January 27, 2007 - Community Conference in Dove Springs. Community Activists and other will get together at 10:00 at the Dove Springs Recreation Center to coordinate activities in the 78744 zip code in Austin, Texas. For more information contact Alfredo Santos c/s at 944-4123

January 27, 2007 - Austin Citizenship Drive at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs from 8:00am to 3:00pm (2315 Red River Street) Call (512) 441-8123 for more information

January 23, 2007 - LULAC Meeting at the University Outreach Center 7th Street Austin, Texas

January 30, 2007 - Hispanic Scholarship Fund Reception at 419 Congress in Austin, Texas from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. For more information please call: 615-2294

January 31, 2007 - Poverty Roundtable at George Washington Carver Museum and Cultural Center 1165 Angelina Street in Austin, Texas from 9:00am to 12:00pm CPPP Senior Research Associate Frances Deviney, Ph.D., will present data on poverty in Texas and the U.S.

February, 2007

February 9, 2007 - Greater Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Austin will hold its annual dinner/banquet at Marriot Hotel 701 East 11th Street in Austin, Texas. For more information call: 476-7502

February 10, 2007 - Candidate/Leadership Symposium sponsored by the Republican National Hispanic Assembly. Compass Bank Building at 10711 Burnet Road in Austin, Texas from 8:00am to 5:30pm. Contact Frank Alvarez for more information at (512) 468-4412

February 22-24, 2007 - Abriendo Brechas Conference at The University of Texas at Austin. Theme: Public Education - Marginalized Publics and the Politics of Insurgency. Please call 471-4557 for more information.

Amid the tragedy of the assassination of **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King**, April 4, 1968, an extraordinary moment in U.S. political history occurred as **Robert F. Kennedy**, younger brother of slain **President John F. Kennedy**, broke the news of **King's** death to a large gathering of African Americans in **Indianapolis, Indiana**. The gathering was actually a planned campaign rally for **Robert Kennedy** in his bid to get the 1968 Democratic nomination for President. Just after he arrived by plane at Indianapolis, **Kennedy** was told of **King's** death. He was advised by police against making the campaign stop which was in a part of the city considered to be a dangerous ghetto. But **Kennedy** insisted on going. He arrived to find the people in an upbeat mood, anticipating the excitement of a **Kennedy** appearance. He climbed onto the platform, and realizing they did not know, broke the news



Ladies and Gentlemen - I'm only going to talk to you just for a minute or so this evening. Because... I have some very sad news for all of you, and I think sad news for all of our fellow citizens, and people who love peace all over the world, and that is that Martin Luther King was shot and was killed tonight in Memphis, Tennessee.

Martin Luther King dedicated his life to love and to justice between fellow human beings. He died in the cause of that effort. In this difficult day, in this difficult time for the United States, it's perhaps well to ask what kind of a nation we are and what direction we want to move in.

For those of you who are black - considering the evidence evidently is that there were white people who were responsible - you can be filled with bitterness, and with hatred, and a desire for revenge. We can move in that direction as a country, in greater polarization - black people amongst blacks, and white amongst whites, filled with hatred toward one another. Or we can make an effort, as Martin Luther King did, to understand and to comprehend, and replace that violence, that stain of bloodshed that has spread across our land, with an effort to understand, compassion and love.

For those of you who are black and are tempted to be filled with hatred and mistrust of the injustice of such an act, against all white people, I would only say that I can also feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling. I had a member of my family killed, but he was killed by a white man. But we have to make an effort in the United States, we have to make an effort to understand, to get beyond these rather difficult times.

My favorite poet was Aeschylus. He once wrote: "Even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart, until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God. What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence and lawlessness, but is love and wisdom, and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or whether they be black.

(Interrupted by applause)

So I ask you tonight to return home, to say a prayer for the family of Martin Luther King, yeah that's true, but more importantly to say a prayer for our own country, which all of us love - a prayer for understanding and that compassion of which I spoke. We can do well in this country. We will have difficult times. We've had difficult times in the past. And we will have difficult times in the future. It is not the end of violence; it is not the end of lawlessness; and it's not the end of disorder.

But the vast majority of white people and the vast majority of black people in this country want to live together, want to improve the quality of our life, and want justice for all human beings that abide in our land. Let us dedicate ourselves to what the Greeks wrote so many years ago: to tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world. Let us dedicate ourselves to that, and say a prayer for our country and for our people. Thank you very much. (Applause)

Robert F. Kennedy - April 4, 1968

Cisneros Announces for San Antonio City Council

Mary Alice Cisneros has announced her candidacy for the **San Antonio City Council District # 1**. She has previously served on the school board of the **San Antonio School District** and has served on numerous boards, commissions and tasks forces. Below is a short biographical sketch.

Mary Alice Cisneros is founder and board member of **American Sunrise**. American Sunrise is a community development housing organization whose mission is to act as a catalyst in the revitalization of neighborhoods by providing economic and educational opportunities that improve the lives of working families.

She served as the official "First Lady of San Antonio" when her husband **Henry** was its mayor in the late 1980s and early 1990s. **Mary Alice** has served on the **San Antonio Independent School Board**; and has worked at **Frost National Bank**; **Riggs National Bank**; **MIT**; **Our Lady of the Lake University**; and **Fox-Stanley Photo**.

In addition, she served as chairman of Communities in Schools; chair of the **Southland College Scholarship Program**; the **San Antonio Youth Literacy Board**; **Mayor's Commission for Children and Families**; chair of the **J.C. Penney Golden Rule Awards**; chair and founder of the **Women's Employment Network Odyssey Awards**; and finance coordinator of the **Jimenez Senior Citizen Thanksgiving Dinner**.

She has been honored as the 1985 Outstanding Democratic Woman of the Year; was nominated for the San Antonio Hall of Fame; and was appointed a delegate to the Democratic National Committee in 1988.

She attended **San Antonio College** and **Our Lady of the Lake University**. She has three children: Teresa Angelica, 36; Mercedes Christina, 31; and John Paul Anthony, 19; and three grandchildren: Russell; Grace; and Natalia



Mary Alice Cisneros

For more information about the Cisneros for City Council campaign please call: (210) 224-7222

Mary Alice

CISNEROS

for **City Council District 1**

www.maryalicecisneros.com