

LA VOZ DE BRAZORIA COUNTY

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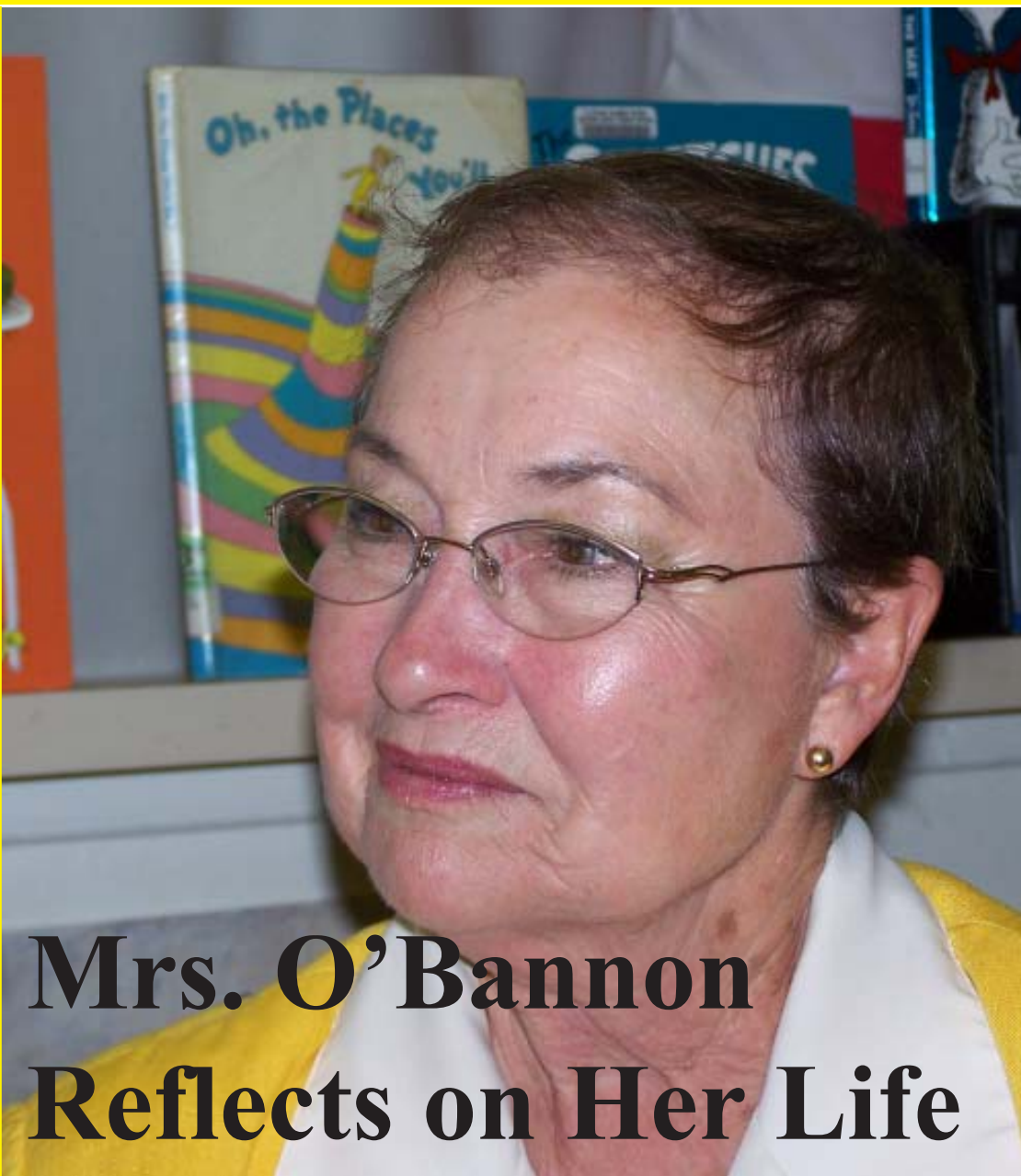
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People in the News

27th ANNUAL TEJANO CONJUNTO FESTIVAL MAY 6-10, 2008



Balli Accepts Position at UT in Anthropology

Cecilia Balli has accepted an appointment in the **Department of Anthropology at The University of Texas at Austin** for the fall of 2008. She will also be affiliated with the **Center for Mexican American Studies** as a CMAS faculty associate. Ms. Balli is currently a doctoral student at **Rice University** in cultural anthropology and has been a contributing writer for **Texas Monthly**. A native of **Brownsville, Texas**, she has written many stories about the U.S.-Mexico border. Her personal essays have appeared in various anthologies, including *Puro Border* (Cinco Puntos Press), *Colonize This!* (Seal Press), *Border-line Personalities* (Rayo/Harcourt), and *Rio Grande* (UT Press). Balli earned her undergraduate degree from **Stanford University** in 1998 and has written for the *Brownsville Herald* and *San Antonio Express News*.



Olga Rivera Lasher Publishes Book: *La Historieta*

Community activist **Olga Rivera Lasher** has just released her new book, *La Historieta: A Children's Story About Texas*. For generations, Tejano families have passed down stories from Abuelita to mama (grandmother to mother). The families would gather to hear stories of humor or about familia (family) from a local storyteller, known to the children as *La Historieta*. In this story, *La Historieta*, narrates her story as she takes you on a journey from the very beginning of **Texas** to the present, focusing on the valuable contributions made by a very special group of people, known as **Tejanos**.

Olga was born and raised in the **Rio Grande Valley** and works in the field of nursing. Her book is available at all major bookstores. For more information or to contact the author, visit www.outskirtspress.com/lahistorieta.



ABOVE: Juan Tejeda from Conjunto Aztlan gets down on the accordion. Not only a musician, he is also the founder and organizer of the **The Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center's 27th Annual Tejano Conjunto Festival** in San Antonio, 2008 which will take place from May 6-10 at the **Guadalupe Theater** and **Rosedale Park**. The festival begins on Tuesday, May 6 with a free **Senior Citizens Conjunto Dance** at the **Guadalupe Theater** from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. **Conjunto Music Hall of Famer, Bene Medina** and **el Conjunto Águila** will be performing at this dance which has become the traditional kick-off event for the **Conjunto Festival**. While the event is free for seniors, a ticket will be required and can be obtained by calling the **Guadalupe** at 210/271-3151.





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Remembering Cesar Chavez and his legacy

by Carlos Muñoz, Jr.

March 31 was **Cesar Chavez's** birthday, and we should commemorate it by renewing our commitment to the workers who continue to labor in the "factories of the fields." **Chavez**, who became one of the world's best-known labor organizers and spokesman for the poor, came from humble beginnings.

He was born **Cesar Estrada Chavez** in 1927 in an adobe house in **Arizona** to poor Mexican American parents. At age 10, **Chavez** and his family moved to **California** to look for migrant work after the family lost the farm. By the 8th grade, **Chavez** had to stop his schooling to work in the fields full time.

Prior to the emergence of **Chavez** and the farmworkers union in the 1960s, not a single Mexican American leader had achieved national recognition. In fact, Mexicans and other Latinos seemed not to exist in the nation's mind. We were the "invisible minority."

I remember feeling proud when his portrait appeared on the front page of **Time** magazine's



1969 Fourth of July issue. The caption read "The Grapes of Wrath, 1969 — Mexican Americans on the march." Our struggles for social justice and civil rights were finally being discovered by the nation — and, remarkably, on the Fourth of July.

Now, decades later, **Cesar Chavez Holiday** is celebrated in **California**. (It is an optional holiday in **Texas** and a day of recognition in **Arizona**.) My first contact with **Cesar** occurred when I was president of the **United Mexican American Students** at **California State University in Los Angeles** in 1968. We had organized a nonviolent protest against segregation and racism

in the barrio high schools of **East Los Angeles**.

Cesar was busy dealing with his union's historic **Delano Grape Strike**, but he took time out to publicly defend us and send us a telegram expressing solidarity for our cause. **Chavez**, like the **Rev. Martin Luther King**, was a deeply religious man who also advocated nonviolence. He incorporated the tactics and strategies of the civil rights movement led by **King**.

Chavez once said that the "truest act of courage is to sacrifice ourselves for others in a totally nonviolent struggle for justice."

The work for farmworkers' rights continues today. The health, safety and well-being of many farmworkers and immigrant workers are once again under attack by the corporate interests that **Chavez** fought during his lifetime.

While many of the workers may have won the same rights other American workers were granted by the **National Labor Relations Act** of 1935 — such as the freedom to form a union and the power of collective

Guest Editorial



bargaining — many continue to be exposed to pesticides and other unhealthy working conditions as they toil to bring food to our table.

It is important for us to reflect and remember what **Cesar Chavez** stood for as he himself stated it. "We do not belittle or underestimate our adversaries, for they are the rich and powerful and possess the land. We know that our cause is just, that history is a story of social revolution and that the poor shall inherit the land." **Chavez** was a labor leader who shunned the spotlight and remained dedicated to the rank and file of his union until his death in 1993. He continues to be a hero to all Americans.

Dr. Carlos Muñoz, Jr. is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California Berkeley. He is one of the pioneers and leaders of the Chicano Movement.

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La Primavera

Springtime is a special time of year for me. It is a season to share God's beauty with everyone. It is a season when life reaffirms itself with a burst of multi-colored flowers all over gardens in every home, in the fields, and in meadows. It is a season when the animals awake after a long winter and the rivers begin to run swiftly once again. It is a time when children become restless in school because they would rather be outside playing than inside the classroom.

Wouldn't it be wonderful and beautiful if all of us would share nature's beauty that God has created; Waking up each morning with the chirping of the birds greeting us with another day? Stepping out into the yard, and looking up towards the sky to see the first rays of sunshine peeking through the clouds announcing a new day?

Let us begin our new day by thanking our Lord God for the beauty of He has created for us to share with everyone during the springtime season.

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Should Texas Bureaucrats Police Roses and Tacos?

By Marc A. Levin, Esq.

Thorny Texas regulations apply to everyday items like roses and tacos that most Texans would think are the province of the private sector. Moreover, these regulations include criminal penalties, as with 1,700 other state laws and countless city ordinances.



Thankfully, a few such state rules may be on the verge of being pruned. Earlier this month, the Sunset Advisory Commission, which regularly reviews Texas state agencies to identify ways in which they have outlived their usefulness, unearthed numerous excessive regulations with criminal penalties imposed by the Texas Department of Agriculture.

The Commission recommended that rose graders no longer be required to obtain a government-issued certificate. Unfortunately, the Commission stopped short of recommending that the underlying law mandating the grading of roses be plucked from the books. No other plant is subject to such bureaucratic burdens. The Commission also took aim at a sweeping Department of Agriculture requirement that “a person, packer, handler, dealer, processor or warehouseman may not receive or handle Texas grown fruits or vegetables without a license.” The Commission suggests that this licensing scheme, which is enforceable with criminal penalties, be eliminated insofar as it applies to cash dealers who sell produce at flea markets and roadsides.

However, the Commission only nibbled at the cornucopia of excessive agriculture regulations. It is a Class A misdemeanor (up to a year in jail) to “use, handle, store, or dispose of a pesticide in a manner that injures vegetation, crops, wildlife, or pollinating insects.” Violating grain warehouse rules can be a second-degree felony; the offender could be warehoused in state prison for up to 20 years.

When the food finally makes its way to the plate, the tentacles of government are still stirring the pot. Dozens of taco truck owners are preparing another lawsuit against the City of Houston over the new mobile food vendor ordinance the City approved late last year. Among the new requirements, mobile food vendors must provide a restroom within 500 feet, presumably by reaching an agreement with a nearby business. Rather than changing their water through a private service, they must now do so at the city-run commissary every 24 hours. Taco truck owners say this costs them three hours out of every day. The City will use radio frequency tags to enforce the requirement – the tags haven’t been issued but vendors are already paying for them.

Mobile food vendors that operate on private property like a construction site must display notarized permission from the property owner and register the site with Houston bureaucrats every time they relocate. Finally, vendors must file a detailed description of their menu with the City that lists every ingredient in every item. Other major cities also have excruciatingly detailed regulations governing food service. For example, in San Antonio, it’s a misdemeanor if ice is not the proper shape – it must be in “chipped, crushed or cubed form.”

This smorgasbord of rules requires entrepreneurs to take time and money away from serving customers. How many peaches and tacos must be sold to pay a lawyer to fill out paperwork or the cost of a citation? Last year, Jefferson Parish in Louisiana banned taco trucks altogether in most areas after they had sprung up to serve Hispanic construction workers helping rebuild after Hurricane Katrina. Former Houston City Council Member Carol Alvarado worried that Houston’s ordinance “is going after Latino-owned mobile food vendors.” Indeed, minorities and those without economic and political power are the most vulnerable when regulators target certain businesses.

Ultimately, Texas farmers and food vendors don’t profit from making their customers sick. In such very rare instances, they can face incredibly costly lawsuits. Instead of producing another crop of rules that stifle entrepreneurship and criminalize ordinary business activities, government should leave the field and let the market for food and flowers bloom.

Marc A. Levin, Esq., is Director of the Center for Effective Justice at the Texas Public Policy Foundation, a non-profit, free-market research institute based in Austin.



Tennessee Hispanics demand school improvement, more options

New survey provides insight into how citizens view the state's public schools

WASHINGTON, DC -A new survey finds Tennessee Hispanics are dissatisfied with many aspects of the state's public schools and would favor the availability of more educational options for low-income families and those with special needs. The statewide survey was released by the **Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options** and seven other organizations in an effort to gauge voter's attitudes about the state's K-12 education system.

"It's clear the state's Hispanic voters want more than just the status quo in education," said Maite Arce, vice president of Hispanic CREO. "When it comes to education, there is a growing desire for parents to have more freedom - the ability to select a school that is suited to their individual child's needs. This is evident when only 20 percent of Hispanics polled would keep their child in public school."

Key findings in Tennessee, which has the fourth highest growth rate for Hispanics in the nation, include:

55 percent of the Hispanic voters polled rated the Tennessee public school as "poor" or "fair."

Hispanic voters felt that overcrowding of classrooms and schools (45 percent), as well as lack of parental involvement (18 percent), are the biggest challenges facing public schools.

Only 20 percent would send their child to a public school, if they had an opportunity to choose any type of school. 62 percent would choose to send their child to either a private school or charter school.

65 percent of the Hispanic voters polled believe school vouchers should be made available to low-income families, to families with special education children, or to families with children in failing public schools.

Los hispanos de Tennessee quieren mejores opciones educativas

Una nueva encuesta muestra el punto de vista de los residentes de este estado con respecto a las escuelas públicas

WASHINGTON, DC - Una nueva encuesta revela que los hispanos de Tennessee están descontentos con las escuelas públicas del estado y desean tener más opciones educativas para familias de bajos ingresos y estudiantes con discapacidades. El **Concilio Hispano para la Reforma y las Opciones Educativas** (Hispanic CREO), en asociación con otras siete organizaciones, publicó los resultados de la encuesta que evalúa las opiniones de los votantes de Tennessee con respecto al sistema educativo de este estado.

"Existe una clara evidencia de que los votantes hispanos de Tennessee desean que haya un cambio en el status quo del sistema público educativo," dijo Maite Arce, vicepresidente de Hispanic CREO. "Cuando hablamos de educación, los padres quieren tener el poder de elegir la escuela de sus niños, una escuela que sirva sus necesidades. Esto es evidente cuando solamente el 20 por ciento de los padres hispanos dijeron que preferían mandar sus hijos a una escuela pública - y no a otro tipo de escuela."

ABOUT

In 2001, the Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options (CREO) was founded to address the crisis in Latino education by empowering Latino families with parental choice in education. By creating coalitions with parents, schools, faith-based organizations, advocates and like-minded groups, Hispanic CREO has been able to educate, inform and mobilize Latino parents on the issues surrounding school choice.

Election Results in Brazoria County in Selected Races

President/Vice-President

NAME	EARLY VOTES	PERCENT	TOTAL VOTES	PERCENT
Joe Biden	23	0.15%	49	0.16%
Hillary Clinton	6,845	45.55%	14,632	50.15%
Christopher J. Dodd	9	0.05%	16	0.05%
John Edwards	103	0.68%	219	0.75%
Barack Obama	8,013	53.32%	14,192	48.65%
Bill Richardson	340	.22%	63	0.21%
<hr/>				
Total Votes Cast	15,027		29,171	
Precincts Reported	72 of 72 Precincts		100.00%	
County Turnout	18.07%		161,376 Registered Voters	

U. S. Senator

NAME	EARLY VOTES	PERCENT	TOTAL VOTES	PERCENT
Gene Kelly	4,966	41.31%	9,563	41.26%
Ray McMurrey	1,294	10.76%	2,631	11.35%
Richard J. (Rick) Noriega	4,549	37.84%	8,506	36.70%
Rhett R. Smith	1,210	10.06%	2,473	10.67%
<hr/>				
Total Votes Cast	12,019		23,173	
Precincts Reported	72 of		72 Precincts	
100.00%				
County Turnout	14.35%		161,376 Registered Voters	



Emma Lou O'Bannon:

A True Example of an Individual Who Cares About the Community

In many communities across the United States, there are individuals who work quietly among us. Many of us have seen them but we do not know their names. We don't give them a second thought and would not miss them if we were to never see them again. Yet these individuals are among us and are making a major impact on the well being of the community and the people with whom they have contact. One such person here in **Brazoria County** is **Emma O'Bannon**. Some of you may know her as **Miss. Emmy**.

Emma Lou O'Bannon is the children's specialist for the **Angleton Library**. In carrying out her job, she plans each story well in advance of its delivery and makes sure she has everything she needs to communicate the story well. Because non-verbal communication is such an important part of total communication, **Miss. Emmy** understands the importance of props and other visual aides.

Each year her reading program is filled with professional entertainers, craft programs, storytimes, musical activities, movies, and a **READING** program that rewards readers. Each child who participates is required to read a minimum of 10 books in order to receive a rewards package. Children are encouraged to read books on their reading level or above, not only to challenge their skills, but also their minds.

Preschool children are encouraged to participate in the **Read-To-Me** program and are required to have 10 books read to them. School-age children who read to their younger siblings can have the books count for both children. The purpose of the



O'Bannon as the pink hair lady

program is to keep children interested in reading and help them retain the skills they have learned in school. This develops an "I-Can-Do" attitude and elevates their self esteem to help prepare them for the next school term.

O'Bannon has spent her entire life in **Angleton**. She was active in school, a cheerleader, and ranked in the top of her class academically, was nominated for most popular in 1948 and football sweetheart. She graduated from **Angleton High School** and studied at **St. Joseph's School of Nursing** for a pediatric nursing degree. She studied for her liberal arts degree at **Brazosport College**.

She married her high school sweetheart **Robert (Bobby) O'Bannon**. He was a football player and she was a cheerleader — a typical American love story. The **O'Bannon** family was in the grocery business beginning in 1949. **Emma Lou** and **Bobby** have two children. A son **Patrick McDuffy O'Bannon** and a daughter, **Molly Ann O'Bannon Carpenter**.

Emma Lou O'Bannon's extensive volunteer projects have not gone unnoticed. She was awarded a proclamation by the **City of Angleton** for sponsoring, hosting and continually encouraging children's interest in reading. She has also been a **Junior Achievement** volunteer to second graders for six years, teaching different working skills within the community.

Emma Lou was honored by the **Alpha Delta Kappa Sorority** for Women Educators as being the person in this area who has done a great deal for the education program. **O'Bannon** is very involved in broadcasting her storytelling on Channel 4, four times a week and influencing many children through her storytelling for more than 30 years. "She gets children on the Road to Success."

One of the most valuable components of storytime sessions is children learning to listen. Regardless of what is being taught, be it the alphabet, math, fairy tales or morals, a little person cannot learn if he/she is unwilling to listen. The 30 minute sessions require the students to sit and listen to the story. It normally takes three-four weeks for a child to learn "sit and listen". If a child doesn't know how to listen, you are just talking in the wind. Parents are the core influence. Using manipulative games, music and illustrated voices helps to keep the child's interest and is vital.



O'Bannon wears many hats, but her favorite part of the job is capturing the children on the brink of learning to read. "We laugh and have fun with books, play music, analyze the story and even do science experiments," she says. "I love the excitement on their tiny faces, and they absorb stories like little sponges. By guiding and assisting in this process we provide them with an appetite for reading. It is very important to reach children at an early age to create an interest in reading."

This year, 2008 is the **Texas Summer Reading Jubilee**. "TEXAS CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF SUMMER READING," with art work by **Janet Stevens**. The **Texas State Library** provides beautiful art work, bookmarks, reading logs and a manual of ideas for each grade level. Locally, we are sponsored by the **ANGLETON FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY**, **DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY** and the **BRAZORIA COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD**. This provides funds for professional programs, crafts, movie licensing, popcorn drinks and reading rewards. **The Angleton** staff are ready for Summer Reading 2008.



O'Bannon dressed as a pirate

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