



El Corazón de Tejas Central Texas Chapter of REFORMA

Meeting Notes

February 5, 2011
Carver Branch Library
Austin, Texas

Present: Bob Cárdenas, Melinda Curry, Paola Ferate-Soto, Oralia Garza de Cortés, Margo Gutiérrez, Loriene Roy, Gustavo Soto, and guest Amy Thompson

Introduction

Chapter Vice-President Bob Cárdenas held this meeting to be sure that the good work of the Corazón de Tejas REFORMA chapter continues and to follow up on a suggestion by Paola to invite Amy Thompson to share information Paola had heard at a previous ISNA (Immigration Services Network of Austin) meeting.

Presentation

Amy gave us an overview of the Texas Legislature website (www.capitol.state.tx.us) which is, surprisingly, very transparent and comprehensive. She pointed out various features, including how to learn more about individual legislators and their backgrounds, committees, and bills. She demonstrated how to search for bills on specific topics and be able to follow them through the legislative process. "Bill Stages" is one of her favorite tabs. To receive alerts via email (or other avenues) about bills of interest, one has to sign up on the My TLO tab. She showed us that previous session information is also online at the site, listed by session number and R, for regular session, or a number, for an extension of the session. The current session is 82(R) - 2011.

Amy told us that there are about 60 anti-immigration bills every session and that Representatives Leo Berman and Debbie Riddle are often the authors of these bills. The legislature tends to "listen to" and take more seriously discussion from professionals and members of faith than the general public. It is important to find people with connections to representatives involved in bills of interest; therefore, the website Biography information about legislators can be useful.

We discussed several immigration issues such as education, proof of citizenship, and "sanctuary cities." A sample of bills treating these topics are: HB 22 ("Relating to information regarding the citizenship and immigration status of public school students"), HB 21 ("Relating to reporting by state agencies on the financial effect of providing services to illegal immigrants"), and HB 183 ("Relating to the duty of a law enforcement agency to verify the immigration status of an arrested person.").

Amy told the group that an “emergency item” may sail through the legislative process outside of the usual progress. An “unfunded mandate” is a powerful phrase that relates to a state requirement but where no funds are available. Amy’s presentation was very informative!

Discussion

We lamented the reduction of state funding which may result in cuts to all library services, including the valuable TexShare funding and public school librarians.

Membership

Bob told us that National REFORMA is getting closer to having its online membership renewal system up and running. An individual’s yearly membership will then run for one year from the date paid until 12 months later, not the current arrangement from January through December.

Bob is also thinking about updating chapter information packets in order to recruit new members.

Chapter Website & Listserv

Gustavo will update the Corazón website as to new chapter officers. Everyone assured Margo that her listserv postings concerning activities of interest at the University of Texas were appreciated.

Announcements

Members present announced the following upcoming events:

- Noche de Cuentos at Blazier Elementary School – Friday, February 11
 - ¡A Viva Voz! Filmmaker Elizabeth Avellán will speak at the Benson – Thursday, April 7, 7-9 pm
- Texas Library Association annual conference – April 12-15 in Austin
- The Spanish-speaking Round Table will celebrate the 15th year of Día de los Niños/ Día de los Libros with a quinceañera at the TLA Convention.
- Día de la Familia at Austin Community College – Saturday, April 16
- Día de los Niños/Día de los Libros – Saturday, April 30
- FORO (Transborder Library Forum) – July 21-23 in Austin
- Reforma National Conference IV – September 15-18 in Denver

Loriene announced that we were welcome to visit her Public Libraries class. It meets in the UTA Building at 1616 Guadalupe from 6-9 pm on Monday evenings.

Future Chapter Meetings- – Bob suggested a weekday meeting to be held at the Benson.