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U.S. Immigrants, México Blamed for Swine Flu

By Verónica Macías
Hispanic Link News Service
U.S. health and civil rights experts have been quick to counter allegations that undocumented Mexicans are spreading swine flu throughout this country. The virus is identified as the H1N1 (swine flu) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Despite reports from health authorities confirming U.S. swine flu cases have been nearly exclusively from residents who recently traveled to Mexico, right-wing pundits including Glen Beck, Lou Dobbs and Michael Savage continue to play on citizens' nativist fears.

As of May 2, the 226 U.S. cases reported in 30 states ranging from New York to California did not include a single one attributed to an undocumented immigrant.

While anti-immigrant voices have seized the chance to scapegoat Mexican migrants for the potential swine flu pandemic, its noise has come as no surprise to Hispanic leaders here.

Radio host Savage warned, "Make no mistake about it. Illegal aliens are carriers of the new strain of human/swine/avian flu from Mexico."

Another radio host, Neal Boortz, asked

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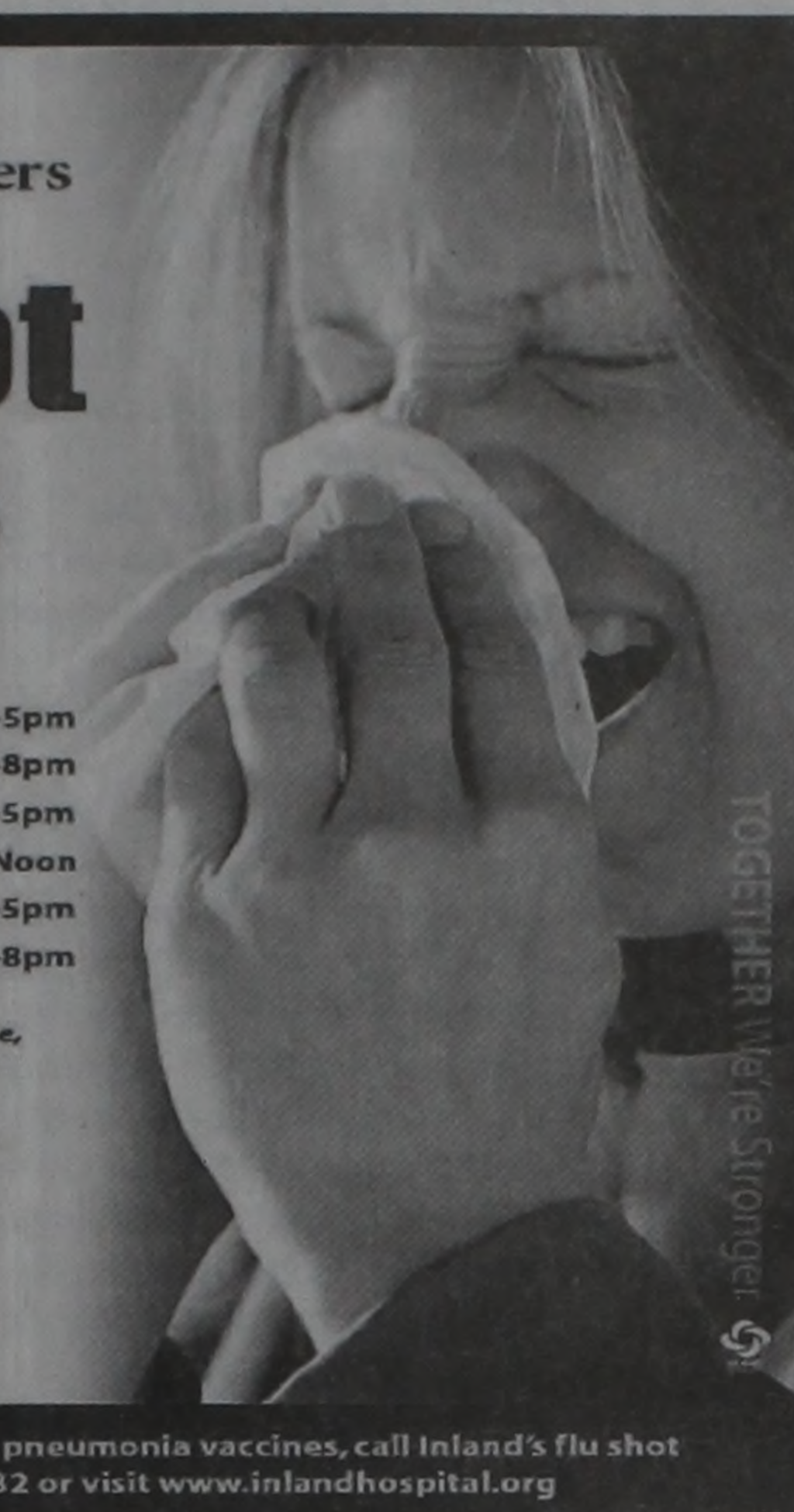
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spread of the infection to immigrants. "They should pay attention to the facts. These were American citizens who had money to travel to Cancún for spring break."

Virginia Gov. Timothy Kaine confirmed that two reported cases in his state were of residents who separately came down with the disease following trips to Mexico.

A U.S. Energy Department security official in Maryland contracted the virus when traveling to Mexico with Secretary Steven Chu last month. He infected his family when he returned.

The Libertarian Party and Americans for Legal Immigration PAC (ALIPAC) have been among groups responded to the growing number of U.S. cases by demanding much more vigilant border enforcement. "We are calling for all non-essential traffic and illegal immigration to stop," ALIPAC president William Gheen emphasized.

Blaming the Congress for not moving more decisively and allowing commerce "to take precedence over public health," he urged that thousands of U.S. National Guard troops be brought in to, in effect, close off the border.

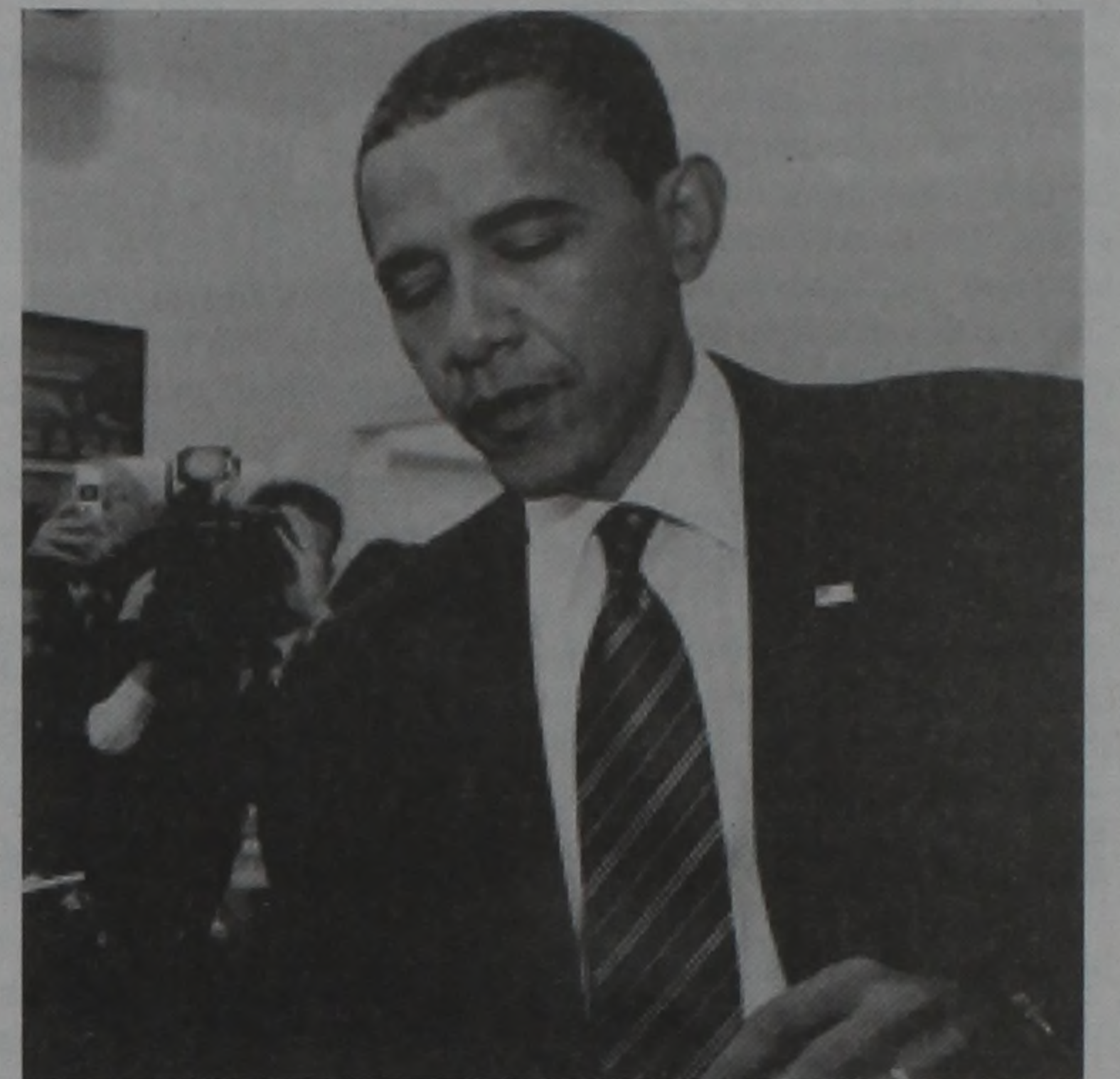
While some media pundits called the virus the "fajita flu," other well known faces like MSNBC host Keith Olbermann called the comments ignorant and racist. Boston radio talk host Jay Severin was taken off the air for characterizing Mexican immigrants as "criminals."

Regardless of the source of the outbreaks, health officials say 35,000 U.S. residents die every year of the seasonal flu and an increase from the H1N1 flu is inevitable.

(Verónica Macías is a reporter with Hispanic Link News Service in Washington D.C. She can be reached at veronica.macias@gmail.com) ©2009

National Latino Leaders Report on Obama Administration's First 100 Days

Every President of the United States since Lyndon B. Johnson has made some effort to include Hispanics in his Administration. Hispanics have held top level positions in the administrations of Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush. Ronald Reagan was the first President to appoint Hispanics to cabinet-level positions. He appointed two and every President since Reagan has had at least one Hispanic serving in a cabinet-level position in their admin-



istration whether they served two, four, or eight years as President. Bill Clinton was the first to have three Hispanics in cabinet-level positions at the same time when he exercised his prerogative and elevated the office of the Administrator of SBA to cabinet level. George W. Bush chose not to continue the designation but still had two Hispanics in his cabinet throughout his two terms

All Presidents want to fill positions in their administration with the best qualified persons, and that is the way it should be. No one should expect to be appointed to any position by the President because of their race, gender or national origin, even though as presidential candidates they promise to do so. More importantly, given massive demographic change that the country is experiencing, it is no longer possible to craft or implement effective policies and programs without the experience and expertise provided by a diverse, truly representative government.

Still, Presidents try to accomplish something in the course of appointing the best qualified persons to their administration. Bill Clinton wanted a government that looked like America and in the process named two Hispanics to head two major departments in his cabinet, elevated a third to cabinet level, brought an unprecedented number of Hispanics into his administration, and signed Executive Order 13171, which called for government-wide strategies to address the persistent under-representation of Latinos within the federal workforce. He was also very much aware of the fact that Hispanics helped him carry 14 of 16 major electoral vote states in which over 90% of the Hispanic vote was concentrated.

George W. Bush brought a natural sensitivity and affinity to his administration, having served as Governor of Texas, a state with the second largest Hispanic population in the nation. He too appointed two Hispanics to his cabinet, chose to extend Executive Order 13171, and, like Clinton, brought a reasonably high number of Hispanics into his administration. Similarly, George Bush was very much aware of the fact that Hispanics helped him carry six major electoral vote states in which 90% of the Hispanic vote was concentrated.

Barack Obama assumed the Presidency promising change, which lends itself more to qualitative measurement than quantitative. Still, during his first 100 days he nominated three Hispanics to major cabinet-level positions. One nominee withdrew and the other two were subsequently confirmed by the Senate. It remains to be seen how many Hispanics are ultimately named to high positions in his administration, and whether he will choose to extend Executive Order 13171. And, like his last two predecessors, he too is very much aware of the fact that Hispanics helped him carry 14 of 16 major electoral vote states in which 90% of the Hispanic vote is concentrated, in addition to North Carolina, Virginia, and Indiana.

On comparing the Clinton, Bush, and Obama Administrations in order to make a fair comparison as to how Hispanics have fared during the first 100 days of the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations, one should first recognize that the Hispanic community has changed considerably since 1992. In 1992 the estimated Hispanic population was 22.4 million, 5.1 million were registered to vote, approximately 4.2 million voted, and 61% voted for Clinton. In 2000 the estimated Hispanic population was 33.3 million, 7.5 million were registered to vote, approximately 5.9 million voted, and 35% voted for Bush. In 2008 the estimated Hispanic population was 44 million, 14 million were registered to vote, approximately 10 million voted, and 67% voted for Obama. So not only has the Hispanic population grown exponentially since 1992, the Hispanic electorate has grown dramatically, and in 2008 helped carry traditional states and more importantly proved decisive in carrying non-traditional states.

So from Clinton to Obama the Hispanic population doubled, voter registration nearly tripled, and voter turnout more than doubled. Obama received more Hispanic votes than the combined total number of votes cast in 1992 and 2000. He received 4.1 million more Hispanic votes than Clinton in 1992 and 4.6 million more Hispanic votes than Bush in 2000. The November 2008 election created a new political reality - a new political reality that has emboldened the Latino community and Latino leaders to demand the change President Obama promised and to expect more than we got from both Clinton and Bush. Clinton and Bush did not give Hispanics something to strive for. They gave us something to surpass. Anything less is not change, but more of the same or worse. President Obama's first 100 days President Obama is to be commended on the appointments of Hispanics he has made to date and for the access to the process that NHLA has had, but NHLA is very disappointed in the overall results. For the record, the Transition Team and NHLA leaders worked very closely from the beginning to find and encourage well qualified Hispanics to apply. Once the President was sworn into office NHLA continued working with the White House Office of Presidential Personnel to ensure that more Hispanics would be nominated and appointed and that more prospective candidates would continue to apply. NHLA commends the President for the access we have had and the transparency with which the process has been conducted, but the results speak for themselves. These efforts fell well short of the target. Latinos remain one of the most under-represented groups in government and the most under-represented at the Senior Executive Service level.

(continued Page 2)

Latino Students Underserved in Current U.S. Education System

Washington, DC—Today, as people around the globe observed Día del Niño, or Children's Day, NCLR (National Council of La Raza), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, marked the day by releasing Missing Out: Latino Students in America's Schools <<http://www.nclr.org/content/publications/detail/57016>>, a statistical brief of Latino students from prekindergarten through postsecondary school. The data presented in this brief suggest that the growing U.S. Latino student population is missing out on many educational opportunities and is not being effectively served by the current American education system.

"Our nation's classrooms must be more attentive to the rapid growth of Latino students and the high value that Hispanic families place on education," said Janet Murguía, NCLR President and CEO. "This brief presents the statistics that are crucial to understanding who these children are, a first step in creating policies and programs that improve their chance at success."

According to the brief, Hispanic children now constitute one-fifth of all school-age children in the U.S., and most are neither immigrants nor undocumented—the vast majority (91%) of Latinos under the age of 18 are U.S. citizens. An overwhelming number (98%) of Hispanics believe that education is "important," and more than half (51%) report that it is an "extremely important" issue. Still, there are significant disparities in educational success between Latino students and their peers.

For example, young Hispanic children, especially those living in poverty, are much less likely (50%) to attend preschool programs than their White (60%) and Black (62%) peers. Moreover, recent figures state that only 58% of Hispanic students (and 55% of Black students) graduate from high school, compared to 78% of White students. Latino and Black students are more likely to attend high-poverty schools and receive fewer resources that would help them succeed in school. The most recent measures indicate that only 11% of college students are Latino, whereas 66% are White.

NCLR supports increased funding for and proper implementation of programs such as Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, and the William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program, all of which would have a tremendous impact on the ability of Latino students to succeed in school. NCLR also advocates for increased funding for programs that would enhance parental involvement at the high school level, improving accountability and assessment systems for English language learners, and the institution of rigorous academic standards to ensure Latino students' success and their preparedness for postsecondary education.

"Young Latino learners are not only changing the face of the American student body, but they will soon change the face of the American workforce," Murguía said. "If we want a well-educated workforce in the future, we need to make investments in Latino students now."

For more information about NCLR, please visit www.nclr.org <<http://www.nclr.org/>>.

Senate Immigration Hearing Shows Momentum for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Washington, DC – Last week's Senate subcommittee hearing on immigration offered highlighted the pressing need for comprehensive immigration reform and the continued momentum behind enacting a sensible policy that works for all Americans.

Under the chairmanship of Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY), the U.S. Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Citizenship heard from expert witnesses who made compelling economic, community safety, and values-based appeals for immigration reform last Thursday, April 30th. Meanwhile, Ranking Member Senator John Cornyn (R-TX)'s choice of witnesses reflected the continued schism in the Republican Party between moderate voices of reason, such as Jeff Moseley, President and CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership, and anti-immigrant extremists, such as Kris Kobach, a Professor at the University of Missouri (Kansas City) School of Law, who compared the undocumented population to thieves during the hearing.

"The Senate hearing kicked off one of this year's highest stakes policy debates and put down a clear marker that immigration reform

is on its way," said Frank Sharry, Executive Director of America's Voice. "It was also notable to contrast the practical and solutions-oriented perspective offered by the pro-reform witnesses and Members with the 'can't do' mentality of the mass-deportation crowd in attendance. The American people want action and solutions on the big issues before us, not excuses for inaction and continued finger-pointing," he continued.

Former Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan stated in his testimony that "there is little doubt that unauthorized, that is, illegal, immigration has made a significant contribution to the growth of our economy," and implored that "our immigration laws must be reformed and brought up to date." Eliseo Medina, International Executive Vice President of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) highlighted the benefits of reform for American workers through the establishment of a fair and level employment market, stating, "we have to finally address our broken immigration system. The status quo is simply unacceptable and works only to the benefit of those who break the rules. That is why the two largest workers organizations in the country – the Change to

Win federation and the AFL-CIO – have come together around a unified proposal for comprehensive immigration reform that consists of five components, each of which depends on the others for success."

Montgomery County, MD Police Chief Thomas Manger, who is also the Chairman of the Major Cities Chiefs Association's Legislative Committee, noted the community safety benefits of the federal government retaking the reins of leadership on immigration policy. Manger stated "Perhaps the most significant reason to enact comprehensive immigration reform is to allow police departments all over this nation to get out from being placed squarely in the middle of a huge problem that with which we have little to no control over the solution."

Pastor Joel Hunter, a prominent evangelical leader, made a compelling moral case for immigration reform, noting that "The hope of any religion is that those who have been on the wrong path can be set upon the right path. The need for Comprehensive Immigration Reform is to create a path that will help people do the right thing. A broken system produces a dysfunctional society, fractured families, and it increases the vulnerability of both legal and illegal residents. It helps criminals

who thrive in the shadows and it harms decent people, consigning them to a life of insecurity, hiding, and minimal contribution to the general welfare. A broken system produces both broken and crooked people. The cost to our nation in terms of productivity, national unity, and national security is depressing. But it does not compare to the damage being done to individuals and families."

Wade Henderson, President and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, also touched on values in his remarks, stating "I hope we can agree on the compelling need to give millions of undocumented immigrants in our country a realistic, humane way to come out of the shadows and legalize their status. As a lifelong civil rights advocate, I recognize the treatment of undocumented immigrants as an economic and legal issue of great importance. But it is also a civil rights issue of profound significance that goes directly to our most fundamental understanding of civil and human rights."

Doris Meissner, former head of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and a Senior Fellow at the Migration Policy Institute, used her testimony Meissner Testimony (Continued on Page 2).



Comentarios - Opinions

HOT WATER OVER A VIRUS CULPAN A INMIGRANTES A EE.UU. POR INFLUENZA PORCINA

By José de la Isla
HOUSTON, Texas — You know the old refrain: When the United States catches a cold Mexico gets pneumonia. Now it seems, with the H1N1 flu outbreak, Mexico has pneumonia and the U.S. (so far) only has a cold.

In my family, the threat of a flu epidemic is alarming news. Prevention measures are observed seriously. You see, my grandfather died during the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic when my mother was one year old. The confluence of a potential flu pandemic and Mother's Day brings my mom, who passed away four years ago, to mind. Throughout her life she had felt incomplete from never having known her father.

I am one of her four sons. As soon as we were old enough to help out around the house, we took turns washing dishes. We were taught nothing less than scalding hot water was the right temperature for the task, requiring us to use rubber gloves. My mom would come up behind us sometimes as the dishes dried on the rack over the sink to pour boiling water over them for good measure. She later retired as a technician from St. Joseph's Hospital. She was temperamentally suited for overseeing the sterilization of surgical instruments.

An avid newspaper reader from childhood, she recounted to me how she waited for the afternoon train

that brought the big-city San Antonio newspaper to Victoria, Texas, so her grandfather could read to her the events of the day taking place around the world.

A glimpse into those times and the pandemic as it occurred in Texas became the movie, 1918. Written by Academy-Award winner Horton Foot, the story unfolds in the nearby town of Wharton.

In today's world news, it seems appropriate that President Barack Obama would lead off his press conference on April 29 with an update on the flu virus. It included his request from Congress for \$1.5 billion in emergency funding and offered steps everyone should take to prevent the illness: wash your hands, cover your mouth when you cough, stay home from work or school if you're sick.

The President was put in that role because Kathleen Sibelius, his Secretary of Health and Human Services nominee, was confirmed only the day before and the country lacks a Surgeon General. These are the individuals who would usually carry the weight of giving practical advice.

For my mother, government was not about ideology. It was about social values — fairness, justice and representation. That's how people help each other in the face of adversity. She cried when Franklin

Delano Roosevelt died. She prayed her rosary fervently in front of the TV set in 1960 when John Kennedy still needed a few votes to carry Texas. I have no doubt it was through her intercession that those votes from Duval County came through for JFK.

One of the earliest memories I have is how she stood up to some men who harassed us at the Pig Stand drive-in, which later became a landmark in one of Larry McMurry's books. She said they were the Koo-Koo Klan.

In her last years she developed a type of Alzheimers. One day she asked me who was president. I told her it was George Bush. "Is he any good to poor people," she wanted to know. Not even Alzheimers can erase legacy knowledge like that.

Her memory is a reminder to me that simple common sense practices like washing dishes with real hot water or coughing into your sleeve — when we all do it together — can tame something as dangerous as a pandemic.

[José de la Isla's latest book, Day Night Life Death Hope, is distributed by The Ford Foundation. He writes a weekly commentary for Hispanic Link News Service and is author of The Rise of Hispanic Political Power (2003). E-mail him at joseisla3@yahoo.com.] © 2009

Verónica Macías
Expertos estadounidenses de temas de salud y de derechos civiles se han apresurado en contradecir acusaciones son los inmigrantes mexicanos indocumentados los que van contagiando la gripe porcina por todo el país. El virus se identifica como H1N1 (influenza porcina) por los Centros del Control y la Prevención de las Enfermedades (CDC por sus siglas en inglés).

A pesar de los informes que emiten las autoridades médicas que confirman que los casos de la gripe porcina en los Estados Unidos han originado casi exclusivamente de residentes quienes recientemente han viajado a México, los eruditos de la derecha, incluyendo a Glen Beck, Lou Dobbs y Michael Savage, continúan jugando con los temores nativistas de los ciudadanos que los escuchan.

A partir del 2 de mayo, los 226 casos estadounidenses que se reportaron en 30 estados, desde Nueva York hasta California, no incluyeron un solo inmigrante indocumentado.

En lo que las voces anti-inmigrantes se han aferrado a la oportunidad de hacer de los migrantes mexicanos chivos expiatorios para la potencial pandémica de influenza porcina, la bulla no les sorprende nada a los dirigentes hispanos aquí.

Advirtió locutor de radio Savage: "No le quepa ninguna duda, los enajenados ilegales son los portadores de una nueva vertiente de

influenza human/porcina/aviara de México".

Otro locutor, Neal Boortz, les preguntó a los radioescuchas: "¿Qué mejor manera de hacer entrar solapadamente un virus a este país que dándole a los mexicanos, verdad?"

Personalidad del canal televisivo Fox News, Michelle Malkin, le dijo a su público: "He bloqueado durante años sobre la difusión de enfermedades contagiosas de todo el mundo en los Estados Unidos como resultado de la migración incontrolada".

Expertos en la salud, como presidenta de la National Hispanic Health Alliance, la doctora Jan Delgado, consideran que los medios conservadores están distorsionando la realidad. "Les están haciendo un mal a sus públicos y al mundo al no presentar la información correcta".

Refiriéndose al brote de la gripe en la escuela preparatoria St. Francis, en Queens, Nueva York, la presidenta de la National Hispanic Medical Association, la doctora Elena Ríos, censuró a los críticos, quienes atribuyen la difusión de la infección a los inmigrantes. "Deberían prestar atención a los hechos. Estas personas (infectadas) eran ciudadanos estadounidenses que contaban con los medios como para viajar a Cancún a pasar spring break".

El gobernador de Virginia, Timothy Kaine, confirmó que dos casos reportados en su estado eran de residentes quienes, cada uno por su parte, se enfermaron de la gripe

después de viajar a México.

En Maryland, un agente de seguridad del Departamento de Energía federal se contagió del virus cuando viajó a México con el secretario Steven Chu el mes pasado. Cuando volvió, infectó a su familia.

El partido Libertario y el comité de acción política (PAC por sus siglas en inglés) Americans for Legal Immigration (ALIPAC), están entre los grupos que respondieron al número creciente de casos en EE.UU. al exigir mucho más vigilancia en la frontera. "Pedimos que todo tráfico no-esencial e inmigración ilegal cese", enfatizó presidente de ALIPAC, William Gheen.

Culpando al Congreso por no moverse más decisivamente y permitir que el comercio "sea prioridad sobre la salud pública", instó que miles de tropas de la Guardia Nacional se empleen para efectivamente cerrar la frontera.

Mientras que algunos peritos mediáticos llamaron al virus "fajita flu", otros locutores de renombre como Keith Olbermann del canal televisivo MSNBC, dijeron que los comentarios son ignorantes y racistas. Al locutor de radio Jay Severin, en Boston, Massachusetts, le quitaron el programa de radio por caracterizar a los inmigrantes mexicanos de "criminaliens".

Sin reparar en el origen de los brotes de la gripe, las autoridades médicas dicen que mueren 35.000 residentes de EE.UU. cada año de la gripe de temporada y que es inevitable que aumenten los casos del

Residents Are Howling After City Council

by Naida DeLeon Gonzalez

District 1 and district two residents are not pleased that their city council representatives DeLeon and Price voted with Councilman Todd Klein to build an animal shelter at the entrance to Mackenzie Park. The puzzling part about this vote is that those same council members led the opposition to an animal shelter in K.N. Clapp Park last July. The rhetoric coming from DeLeon and Price included "I am opposed to the animal shelter being built in the middle of a beautiful park, and in your neighborhood!" Price told the crowd gathered at the garden and arts center at Clapp Park. Price goes on to say in a defiant voice "We've got to find a location to put the animal shelter, but it's not going to be here!" while the sometimes rowdy crowd cheered.

The hypocrisy is insulting! There's been no effort on their part to explain why the dog pound was

not good enough for Clapp Park but it is for Mackenzie Park, a bigger park with much more historical value than any other park in Lubbock.

The fact remains that any time that Price and DeLeon have a chance to say no more dumping in my district, they do the opposite! They go along to get along. And for what reasons no one knows but you can bet that they are doing this for self gain. It seems that city hall is for sale Mr. Price and Ms. DeLeon!! I just wonder if the price is right since it will take a sheer miracle to get yourselves re-elected next time around!

Is this city council so insensitive that in economic hard times, our reps on this council would rather spend the taxpayers' hard earned money on a lavish dog pound where a swimming pool used to be

and that our kids still don't have a community center in district 1 and district 2 is still waiting for much needed economic relief so that our children can start believing that this community cares about providing shelter for the homeless, the disadvantaged, and the disabled in our community!

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El Editor Newspaper Latino Leaders Continued from Front

We are also mindful of the fact that senior White House appointees and the Office of Presidential Personnel have been similarly accessible to other Hispanic groups on matters pertaining to personnel as well as policies, and the President is to be commended for that as well. But regardless of the group with which the Administration has worked, the results have fallen below target and Latinos remain seriously under-represented.

As of April 27, has announced 58 Hispanics who have been nominated or appointed to positions in the Obama administration, including 19 that require Senate confirmation. The Cabinet. NHLA commends the President for nominating two highly qualified Hispanics to major cabinet level positions - Hilda Solis at Labor and Ken Salazar at Interior. Both departments are extremely important, given the nature, scope, and purview of their responsibilities.

And while NHLA also commends the President for nominating a third Hispanic, Governor Bill Richardson, to a major cabinet level position (Commerce), NHLA is extremely disappointed in that another Hispanic was not nominated from the impressive list of well qualified and experienced Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Cubans that NHLA provided when Governor Richardson withdrew, considering that no Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Cubans, or Central and South Americans had been nominated for anything at the time.

The White House. NHLA commends the President for appointing four highly qualified Hispanics to senior staff level positions in the White House - Cecilia Munoz, Louis Caldera, Adolfo Carrion, Jr., and Moises Vela, Jr. But NHLA is extremely disappointed in that only four Hispanics are among the 49 Presidential appointees selected to date to fill senior staff positions in the White House and that no Cubans or Dominicans have been included.

And while NHLA commends the President for appointing five highly qualified Hispanics to the position of Special Assistant to the President including Alejandro Perez at Legislative Affairs, Michael Camunez at Presidential Personnel, and Roberto Rodriguez, Carlos Monje, and Tino Cuellar at the Domestic Policy Council, NHLA is extremely disappointed in that not one Hispanic has been appointed Assistant to the President or senior advisor, the President's inner circle. NHLA is also disappointed in that not one of the five Special Assistants is Puerto Rican, Cuban, or Dominican.

The Sub-Cabinet. NHLA also commends the President for nominating 17 highly qualified Hispanics to Senate-confirmation required sub-cabinet level positions at various departments -

HEALING POWERS OF MEXICAN MASKS

By John Rosales

Mexicans are wearing masks again. Blue ones.

Although these contemporary, surgical masks are meant to guard against the swine flu outbreak, masks have been a part of Mexican culture since 3000 B.C. In pre-Hispanic Mexico, before the Spanish Conquest of 1521, masks were used by priests to channel the power of their pagan gods.

Over the centuries, mask-wearing became ceremonial. Its influence ran from cultural rituals (Day of the Dead, Carnival) and Christian dances (Our Lady of Guadalupe, San Sebastian, Moors and Christians, Pastorela) to historical dances (Battle of Cinco de Mayo, The Conquest) and those that are harvest-related (First Fruits, rain-petitioning).

The ingenuity and beauty of some Mexican masks combine human and animal features. Birds, alligators and various beasts can be identified within a humanized face mask. Snakes and lizards sometimes emerge from a human nose as an abstract expression of the unity between humans and animals. Some masks depict full animal figures, like a tiger, attached to a human face making it impossible to discern the animal from the hu-

man.

Masks of war, such as those of jaguars and tigers, signify courage and bravery. Once positioned over a real face, they imbue the wearer with noble qualities. They also hide and protect the wearer from enemies, such as a nasty pig virus. The almost universal acceptance of cultural themes and beliefs linked to masks reveal much about overall Mexican character.

Enter the sky-blue surgical mask. If television and Internet images are a clue, Mexicans everywhere are wearing this latest face mask, which I think contains old themes like "healing" and "survival."

After all, doctors say the new mask protects people only if someone sneezes right at them. It appears the mask is more psychological than anything, given that the pore sizes of most masks are too large to keep viruses from going through. No matter. Arising from flu tragedy in Mexico might be a new artistic treatment of a modern mask.

In traditional Mexican mask-making, the color blue signifies water and purity. Red stands for bloodshed and evil, while green alludes to crops and black to death. In Mexico today, I've not seen pictured a single red or black surgical mask.

The surgical mask may not protect against death or catching swine flu as much as a vaccine (in development as we go to print), or washing hands, using alcohol-based hand cleaners, or foregoing handshakes and kisses. But it helps.

We know the new swine flu virus can be transmitted between humans, but we don't know how easily. Almost certainly it is transmitted by sneezing and coughing and by skin-to-skin contact (like shaking hands, kissing) with an infected person.

While scientists remain puzzled as to why the infection currently appears to be worse in Mexico than in the United States, the new blue mask seems to lend a mystical if not pragmatic power to the wearer, that of survival.

The masks of Mexico have al-

ways been a record of its people, cultures, and religions. From pre-Conquest and Spanish colonization to Catholicism, wars and modern times, masks have been used to teach history and values.

The calavera (skull) masks used during Day of the Dead ceremonies taught that death is a natural part of the life cycle and should not be feared. Viejos (Old Men) often reflect a humorous rather than depressing view of old age. Duality masks show a single face divided vertically and depicting a side of good (angel) and evil (devil), male and female, life (human) and death (skeleton). Human-animal duality masks reflect on the mystic unity between people and animals.

In the modern world of Mexican sports, lucha libre masks add terror and fearlessness to the arsenal of a Mexican wrestler. It appears that the paper-thin surgical mask does the same for wearers in their battle against airborne swine germs.

As a Mexican American who lived in Mexico for a short period, I find it refreshing in an artificial sense to see that Mexican masks still retain the power to protect against evil, to transform the wearer into something to be reckoned with, and to teach lessons about bravery, survival and, well, hygiene.

The beauty and mystery inherent in Mexican masks of old is unquestionable. Museums, art galleries and collectors crave Mexican masks as folk art collectibles. It remains to be seen the long-term cultural effect of the blue surgical mask in Mexico.

For now, I'm satisfied just to let it keep its wearers from harm's way.

(John Rosales is a journalist who resides in Washington, D.C. E-mail care of charlie@hispaniclink.org) ©2009

El Editor
Informing-Educating
Creating Action.
The Job of a Real
Newspaper of
a REAL Newspaper

Senate Immigration

(From front Page)
to focus on the reasons Congress should enact comprehensive immigration reform this year, the policy it should include, and how it can best be implemented by the Department of Homeland Security. Drawing on her years of management experience at the former INS, Meissner said: "We need a phased legalization program that begins with a simple requirement for a background check so that criminals can be weeded out, and a straightforward registration process that leads to work authorization and a chance to get in the queue for adjustment. Then, over time, applicants can earn their way to permanent residency and ultimately to citizenship for those who so choose."

At the request of Ranking Member, Senator John Cornyn (R-TX), the hearing also included Jeff Moseley, President and CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership and a business voice supporting the need for comprehensive reform, as well as the notoriously anti-immigrant Kris Kobach, a Professor at the University of Missouri (Kansas City) School of Law, who also works with the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). FAIR has been labeled a "hate group" by the Southern Poverty Law Center. While underscoring Greenspan's arguments about the economic benefits of reform, Moseley also called for <http://judiciary.senate.gov/hearings/testimony.cfm?id=3793&wit_id=7854> an immigration debate that featured "less rhetoric and a common sense solution that both parties can support. We all want leaders that are willing to share that truth rather than having the primary source of information be the entertainment

industry that inflames, rather than explains, the reality and complexity of the immigration issue."

Moseley's comments were in stark contrast to the extremist canards put forth by Kobach. After citing research from virulently anti-immigration organizations such as the Center for Immigration Studies, Kobach compared the undocumented population in the U.S. to thieves and then said, "If you give a thief an amnesty . . . you certainly wouldn't say that an amnesty has to include giving the thief the money that he stole. Now, what has an illegal alien taken? Presence in the United States that was not given to him? So therefore . . . in my view — a true amnesty or a good amnesty would not include giving him what he has taken." Kobach also proposed that the American people would "rather have the status quo than an amnesty program."

Despite the claims of Kobach, a series of recent polls show that Americans broadly expect and favor comprehensive reform As Senator Schumer noted in his opening statement, "No one is happy with our current system, whether they are left, right, or center. There is recognition in America that the status quo is not working. Indeed, recent polls show that 57% of Americans believe that immigration reform should be a high priority for this Congress. The politics may be hard, but reality is obvious: it is everyone's best interests to change and fix our current immigration system."

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U.S. Labor Secretary Urges Elimination of Underground Economy

U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis said Thursday that the underground economy in this country needs to be eliminated, a measure that will affect mainly Hispanic workers, as the country begins a debate on immigration reform this summer.

During her visit to the Paramus training center of Local 164 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Solis said that day laborers, the victims of outrages like employers refusing to pay them, are a problem that will not be solved until the country achieves comprehensive immigration reform.

The country's first Hispanic labor secretary noted that many undocumented workers are too scared to file complaints against exploitative employers.

Solis also spoke about the urgency of strengthening the security of workers who are the victims of on-the-job accidents, particularly in the construction sector, an issue that is a priority for her department.

"In terms of Latinos in the work force, we're probably the ones that are faced with the most fatalities and injuries," she said, citing the large presence of Hispanics in the construction industry.

Hispanic workers are at greater risk of suffering fatal work accidents than other groups, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

Between 1996 and 2006, 11,303 Hispanics died in work-related accidents, 13 percent of all workplace deaths during that period.

During her visit to the IBEW

training facility, Solis checked on the advances in training unemployed workers for "green jobs," like installing solar panels.

New Jersey Gov. Jon Corzine, who accompanied the secretary, was congratulated by Solis for his initiative to increase the development of alternative energy sources in his state and training workers to form part of the labor force in jobs that help preserve the environment.

The governor's administration has set a goal of creating 20,000 green jobs in the Garden State by 2020.

"The most important thing we have to do is lift the overall economy because a rising tide lifts all boats," Corzine said.

New Jersey was one of the first states to receive part of the economic stimulus package to help workers who lose their jobs as a result of the recession.

The state's share of the stimulus package includes \$72 million for training workers and \$214 million for paying the unemployment checks of thousands of workers who have been laid off.

According to a recent Pew Hispanic Center survey, in New Jersey live about 500,000 undocumented immigrants representing 4 percent of the population and 5.4 percent of the workforce.

New Jersey is the state with the fifth-largest number of undocumented immigrants.

As a result of the economic situation, the state had to cut its annual budget by \$3 billion.

Unemployment in New Jersey rose to 8.2 percent in March.

What Does Obama Like in a Justice? Pragmatism

Many U.S. presidents have been lawyers, but almost none have come to office with Barack Obama's knowledge of the Supreme Court. Before he was 30, he was editing articles by eminent legal scholars on the court's decisions. Later, as a law professor, he led students through landmark cases. (He sometimes shared his own copies, marked with emphatic underlines and notes in bold, all-caps script.)

Now Mr. Obama is preparing to select his first Supreme Court nominee, to replace Justice David H. Souter, who is retiring. In interviews, former colleagues and students said they had a fairly strong sense of the kind of justice he would favor: not a larger-than-life liberal to counter the conservative pyrotechnics of Justice Antonin Scalia, but a careful pragmatist with a limited view of the role of courts.

"His nominee will not create the proverbial shock and awe," said Charles J. Ogletree, a professor at Harvard University who has known Mr. Obama since his days as a student.

Mr. Obama believes the court must never get too far ahead of or behind public sentiment, the former colleagues say. He may have a mandate for change and Senate confirmation odds in his favor. But though he was the first African-American to become president of The Harvard Law Review and one of the few members of a minority to join the University of Chicago's law faculty, he has almost always disappointed those who expected someone in his position to side consistently with liberals.

Former students and colleagues describe Mr. Obama as skeptical of court-led efforts at social change and interested in how the

law metes out power in society. And more than anything else, he is a pragmatist who has urged those around him to be more keenly attuned to the effects of decisions. Those might be his distinguishing qualities as a legal thinker: an unwillingness to deal in abstraction and a constant desire to know how court decisions affect people's lives.

Though Mr. Obama rarely spoke of his own views, students say they sensed his disdain for the idea that law can be decided independent of the political and social context in which it is applied. To make his point, Mr. Obama, then also a state senator, took his Chicago students with him to Springfield, the capital of Illinois, to watch hearings and see him hash out legislation.

He asked constant questions about consequences of laws: What would happen if a mother's welfare grant did not increase with the birth of additional children? As a legislator, how much could he be influenced by a donor's contribution?

Pragmatism has its detractors, and in a confirmation battle Mr. Obama's nominee could face charges that he or she had not given enough weight to formal law. But although Mr. Obama was oriented to results, he retained an overall skepticism for what courts could accomplish, said David Strauss, a former colleague at the University of Chicago. In Mr. Obama's classes on due process and voting rights, he showed students the broad failures of many efforts to establish equality for blacks in the years just after the Civil War.

Even as law review president, Mr. Obama de-emphasized his own views and instead made himself a channel for those of others.

His decision-making was "about the group sentiment and what the

Mr. Obama's selection of a new justice may challenge him in a



group majority might agree to," said Nancy McCullough, a fellow editor.

In class and in conversation, Mr. Obama talked about judges all the time, but in heterodox terms that gave no clear sense of whose work he most prized.

"I would imagine that if Barack had a free hand to appoint judges without having to worry about confirmations, about politics, that his idea of a great justice would be someone like a Thurgood Marshall," said Geoffrey Stone, a former dean of the University of Chicago Law School. Mr. Marshall argued the case before the Supreme Court that abolished "separate but equal" public education, and he later became the first black to sit on the court.

Mr. Obama often expressed concern that "democracy could be dangerous," Mr. Stone said, that the majority can be "unempathetic - that's a word that Barack has used - about the concerns of outsiders and minorities."

But when a student asked Mr. Obama to name the federal appellate judge he would most like to argue in front of, he named Judge Richard Posner, a conservative. Judge Posner was smart enough to know when you were right, Mr. Obama told the class.

way that running a law review and then teaching law never did. Both of those jobs were about cultivating robust debate, about encouraging multiple viewpoints. Now Mr. Obama must settle on a single legal thinker - at least for now.

Cass R. Sunstein, Elena Kagan and Diane Pamela Wood, three names likely to be on Mr. Obama's list, are all former colleagues at the University of Chicago. Another possible nominee, Pamela S. Karlan, co-wrote an election law textbook that Mr. Obama not only taught from but also contributed comments to when it was in draft form.

In class, Mr. Obama liked to tell students that the Supreme Court was not as far off as it seemed, that it was a dynamic institution that they should not be afraid to challenge and change.

One day in class, a student told Mr. Obama that she was confounded by a decision, a voting rights opinion by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, that she simply could not understand. He quizzed her carefully on the court's logic but finally acknowledged it was hard to grasp.

"When you clerk for Justice O'Connor," Mr. Obama said jokingly, "you'll tell her she got it wrong."

Hispanics Ask Obama for More Key Government Posts

Several Latino leaders sent a petition to President Barack Obama on Wednesday, his 100th day in office, asking him to consider more Hispanic candidates to fill the remaining empty slots in his administration.

The National Hispanic Leadership Agenda, a coalition grouping 29 organizations, presented a report on the process of appointing people to government posts as it has unfolded over the three months since Obama took office.

The NHLA praised some of the policies that have been put in place so far and the efforts of the government to ensure health assistance to children, as well as the intention to bring to fruition comprehensive immigration reform.

Obama has named or proposed 60 Hispanics for top-level posts, including 19 requiring Senate confirmation, a figure that lags behind what other presidents have done to staff the highest levels of their administrations.

The two Hispanics placed highest in the administration are Labor Secretary Hilda Solis and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar.

"There is a list of well-qualified Hispanics who can play an important role in this administration," said NHLA director Gabriela Lemus during a telephone press conference.

Lemus described the rapid growth in the U.S. Hispanic population over the past 17 years.

Currently, there are 44 million Hispanics, and in the election last November 12.1 million of them voted, of whom 9.7 million, or 80 percent, voted for Obama.

From Clinton to Obama, the Hispanic population doubled and so did the number of Latino voters, leading them to feel that their votes should be acknowledged by receiving more top-level posts in the new administration.

The administration "has made notable efforts to advance Latinos," said Lemus, but their presence is necessary in key positions "where they can make political decisions that reflect the needs of the Latino community."

With more than 50 million Latinos living in the United States and Puerto Rico, representing 16 percent of the country's population, the

NHLA feels it's necessary for them to be a part of the decisionmaking process in areas like education, civil rights, immigration, the economy and health care.

The departments of Defense, Health and the Treasury are the ones that have traditionally had the lowest Hispanic representation and to date Obama has made no top-level nominations of Latinos in those departments.

In the rest of the government departments, eight have just one Hispanic in positions of considerable responsibility, one has two and just two departments - Labor and Housing - are meeting the expectations of the organization in terms of Latinos serving in top posts.

The NHLA groups said that they will continue working closely with the Obama administration to ensure the visible presence of Hispanics in the 205 posts that still remain vacant.



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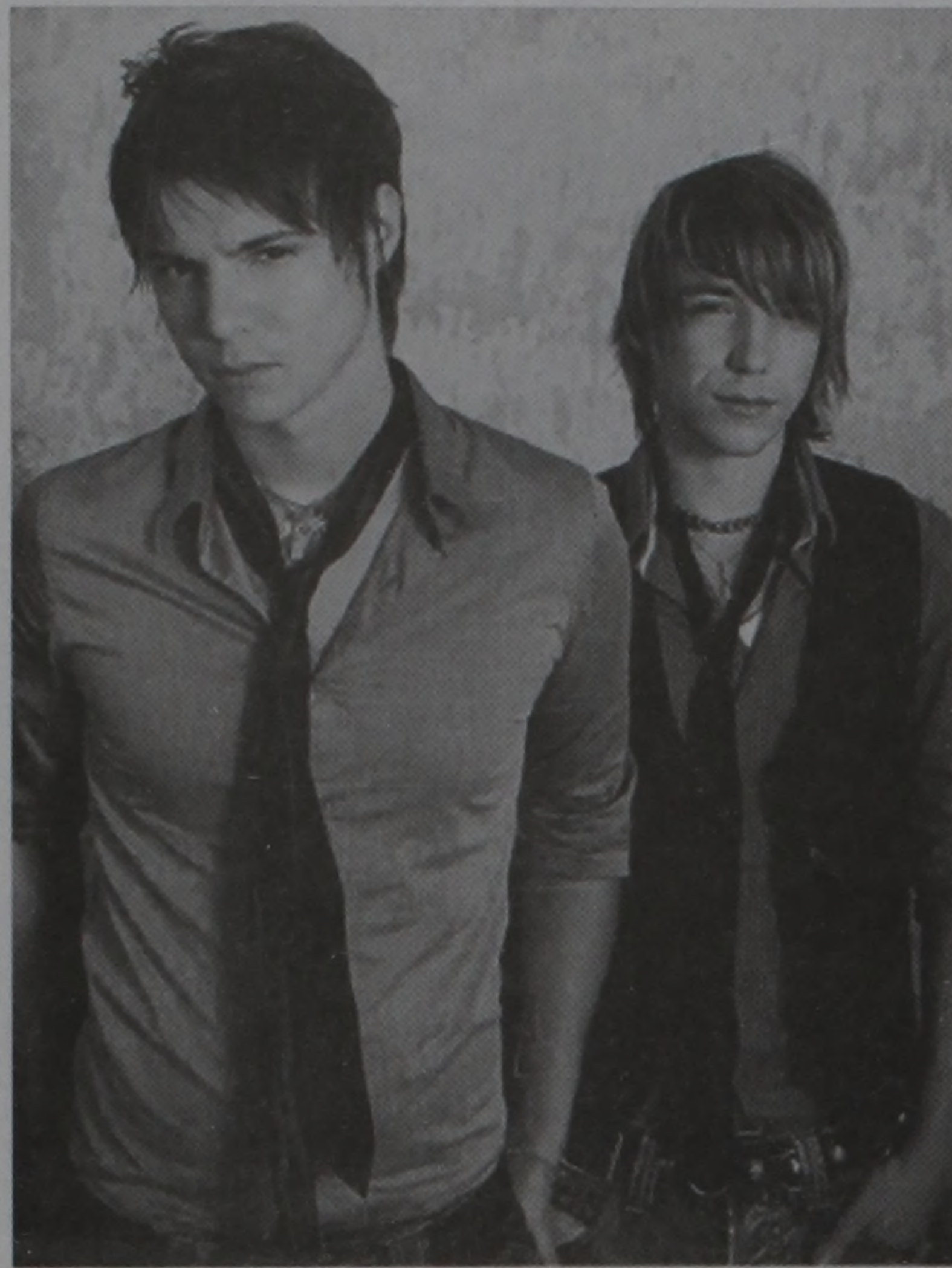
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Sonohra: a la conquista de América



rock romántico en donde las guitarras son el principal instrumento. Grabar el disco fue un reto para los jóvenes, quienes sólo hablan en italiano, por eso "esperamos que aprecien nuestra música", dicen los simpáticos hermanitos.

En su reciente visita a México, Sonohra recibió una gran aceptación del público al ser elegidos para abrir los cuatro conciertos de Enrique Iglesias en el territorio azteca. "Estamos entusiasmados de visitar lugares que nunca imaginamos ir", cuentan sobre la gira promocional que continuarán por Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina y Chile. "Tenemos curiosidad por conocer su cultura y sus tradiciones".

En febrero del 2008, Luca y Diego recogieron los frutos de una década en la música al ser reconocidos como Artista Revelación en el Festival de la Canción de San Remo en Italia. Desde su triunfo, se convirtieron en la nueva sensación pop/rock de la juventud italiana.

No conformes, los chicos se aventuraron a grabar sus canciones en español, un idioma que "admiramos mucho, que pronto aprenderemos", y que seguro les encontrará un lugar en la música latina como lo han hecho sus compatriotas Laura Pausini, Eros Ramazzotti y Andrea Bocelli. "Queremos que nuestra música llegue al corazón de la gente", aseguran con total humildad los hermanos Fainello.

El éxito del dúo italiano Sonohra ha sido tan repentino que sus integrantes, los hermanos, Luca, de 27 años, y Diego Fainello, de 22, todavía no pueden creerlo.

A poco más de un año de darse a conocer en su país, ahora sueñan con conquistar el mercado latinoamericano a través de su primer material discográfico en español, Libres, que ya escala las

listas de popularidad en Estados Unidos.

"Besos fáciles" - la versión de su hit "Love Show" - es el primer sencillo que habla de una demostración de amor y que ya empieza a escalar posiciones en los charts.

Haz clic aquí para escuchar "Besos fáciles"

Libres contiene 11 canciones de su autoría con un estilo de

10th Annual Latin Grammy Awards Will Heat Up Las Vegas On Nov. 5



"The Latin Recording Academy®, Univision Network, Mandalay Bay, and the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority today announced that the 10th Annual Latin GRAMMY® Awards will take center stage at the Mandalay Bay Events Center on Thursday, Nov. 5, 2009. This marks the second time Las Vegas will host the international showcase of Latin music. The Latin GRAMMY Awards previously has been held in Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, and New York. This year's milestone celebration will once again recognize and celebrate musical excellence while featuring performances from the hottest names in Latin music. Nominations for the 10th Annual Latin GRAMMY Awards will be announced Thursday, Sept. 17.

"Celebrating the first decade of the Latin GRAMMY Awards is an extremely exciting moment for The Latin Recording Academy," said Gabriel Abaroa, President of The Latin Recording Academy. "We have spent the last nine years forging partnerships, building a strong membership base and giving music fans truly amazing Latin GRAMMY moments. Following the success we have recently achieved, in this milestone year we are thrilled to bring back the telecast to Las Vegas' thriving music community, as well as work with our friends at Univision on another memorable Latin GRAMMY show."

"We are thrilled to be returning to Las Vegas for this milestone

celebration of Latin music and to be bringing one of Univision's mega-events to one of the most thriving and rapidly growing Hispanic communities in the country," said Alina Falcón, Univision executive vice president and operating manager. "The 10th anniversary show promises to be one of the most memorable nights of Latin music and a wonderful showcase of Las Vegas style entertainment that we are sure our viewers will enjoy."

"Mandalay Bay is excited to host the 10th Annual Latin GRAMMY Awards in November," said Bill Hornbuckle, president and chief operating officer for Mandalay Bay. "We anticipate another successful event and we look forward to continuing our fabulous relationship with both The Latin Recording Academy and the Univision Network. The opportunity to present the Latin GRAMMYs

from Las Vegas allows us to maintain our strong international presence on property as well as showcase Mandalay Bay to our guests and the fans worldwide."

"Las Vegas is a global city and consistently attracts the brightest stars and the biggest names in entertainment," said Cathy Tull, senior vice president of marketing for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. "From concerts to shopping to sporting events, Las Vegas is enjoyed by millions of Hispanic visitors each year. We are doubly honored to host the Latin GRAMMY Awards and welcome music fans from around the world."

The 10th Annual Latin GRAMMY Awards will air live on the Univision Television Network on Nov. 5, at 8 p.m. Eastern/7 p.m. Central. Additionally, the telecast will be seen globally in more than 110 countries.

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Salma Hayek firma para "Noticia de un secuestro"

La actriz actuará al lado de Javier Bardem y Victoria



Abril en la adaptación al cine de la obra de Gabriel García Márquez.

Salma Hayek ya firmó el contrato para ser la protagonista de la película Noticia de un secuestro, basada en la obra del escritor colombiano Gabriel García Márquez, confirma Quien.com.

En el filme, que comenzará a rodarse en octubre en Colombia y México, la actriz de 42 años le dará vida a la periodista colombiana Maruja Pachón de Villamizar, quien fue secuestrada en 1990, y que sirvió de

inspiración para que el Nobel de literatura escribiera la obra.

"La semana pasada, Gabriel recibió el guión completo y ahora estamos a la espera de sus comentarios para terminar de elegir al elenco", declaró Eduardo Constantini, director del proyecto, en el que también están confirmados Javier Bardem, Benicio del Toro, Victoria Abril y Pablo Pedro Ibarra.

El guión de la cinta, producida por Epigmenio Ibarra, Costa Films de Argentina, Argos Cine de México, Cadena Caracol de Colombia y Filmax de España, fue escrito por la guionista Aída Bortnik, quien en 1985 estuvo nominada al Oscar como Mejor Guión Original por su trabajo en la película La historia oficial. Esta será la segunda vez que Hayek actúe en una historia de García Márquez. En 1999, la veracruzana le dio vida a Julia en la película El coronel no tiene quien le escriba, dirigida por el mexicano Arturo Ripstein.

'Rudo y Cursi:' Y tu hermano también

Gael García Bernal and Diego Luna were dying to work together again after the international success of their 2001 film "Y Tu Mamá También," but nothing they were offered seemed to fit.

Then Carlos Cuarón, who wrote "Y Tu Mamá," approached them with a screenplay about two squabbling stepbrothers, hicks from the Mexican sticks who rise to the heights of soccer superstardom, then fall rapidly back to Earth.

"We said 'Amazing, perfect,'" says Luna, referring to "Rudo y Cursi," which opens Friday. "We ... rejected a lot of projects that wanted us to act together. We wanted something that involved the same family we worked together with on 'Y Tu Mamá.'"

"Rudo y Cursi," also directed by Cuarón, is a combination of knockabout comedy and social commentary — strengthened by the smooth and effortless Bernal-Luna teaming.

It begins on a banana plantation in Jalisco, where Cursi (Bernal), a no-talent who wants to be a singer, works hauling large stalks of the fruit, and Rudo (Luna) is the foreman.

When a soccer talent scout arrives in town, Rudo and Cursi are lured to the big city and both becomes stars — although playing on opposite teams.

The movie follows them as they deal with fame, bimbos, gambling, sleazy team managers and drug dealers.

Yet even though both characters make a lot of mistakes along the way, and are not exactly the brightest lights in the

chandelier, they're portrayed sympathetically.

"Carlos had a lot of respect for the characters," says Bernal. "The fable we wanted to tell is that these characters have a mistaken sense of what success means."

Playing these buffoons was not as easy as the actors make it look. Both are big city boys — Luna from Mexico City, Bernal from Guadalajara — and for Luna especially, his role as the belligerent Rudo was very different from his real personality.

"He's a tough guy, and I'm the opposite of that," says Luna. "It was also a lot of work trying to figure out why they wanted to escape their home. To me, they were poor, but surrounded by family and friends in a beautiful place. The first thing was not to judge them."

"We built up the characters in a very free way," adds Bernal. "We didn't want to do reality-based characters; the accent is not an accent that exists, the town doesn't exist. We could invent a whole universe, and stylize that a lot."

What is real is the aura of corruption and violence that hovers over the film, whether it is ava-

icious girlfriends or managers who are paid to put them in the starting lineup.

"I guess it's a statement about the world," Bernal says, "be-

cause this exists on every single level. ... That's what makes it a very universal drama, and it's colored by the context of Mexico."



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But there is more ... a lot more. Leonard Weaver is the first legitimate fullback the Eagles have had in years. Cornelius Ingram could be a fifth-round steal at tight end. Wide receiver Jeremy Maclin was highway robbery at the 19th spot. He is a taller, heavier version of DeSean Jackson

I saw where Mark Sanchez completed 10 of his first 15 passes in minicamp the other day, and my first thought was: You must be kidding. People actually tracked his accuracy in what was essentially a touch-football drill?

Wow. It reminds me of Eli Manning's first appearance with the New York Giants and how critics savaged the star quarterback after an underwhelming minicamp. Let that be a lesson to you, kids. Don't read too much into first impressions.

And we won't. Instead, let's look at the big picture and see who made the biggest jump this offseason. The Eagles are in there. So are the Giants. And so are the Jets and Mark Sanchez. Basically, I want to know what teams got better after Super Bowl XLIII, and how they did it. Here are my top five candidates:

Philadelphia Eagles

What I Like: Virtually everything. The Eagles were vulnerable at tackle last year, with Tra Thomas and Jon Runyan worn down by season's end. Now they add Jason Peters and Stacy Andrews, with Andrews expected back by training camp from a serious knee injury. Perfect. The key here is Peters, whom coach Andy Reid called the best left tackle in the business. Last year he wasn't. But he has a new contract, and guys with new contracts are happy. Having Peters in camp, concentrating on football instead of his next pay day, is huge for Donovan McNabb, who now has someone to hold up against DeMarcus Ware and Osi Umenyiora.

and is the playmaker McNabb had in mind when he went public earlier this year with his shopping list of needs. Rookie running back LeSean McCoy is a Brian Westbrook clone who should take some of the pressure -- as well as the load -- off the shoulders of the club's most indispensable player.

I know, the Eagles lost a lot in Brian Dawkins, but he turns 36 this season, and they acquired safety Sean Jones to cushion the blow. All I know about Jones is that he led the Browns' defensive backs in tackles last season, had four interceptions and is nearly a decade younger than Dawkins. I don't know that he starts, but he will play a prominent role in Jim Johnson's defense. Getting Ellis Hobbs gives them depth at cornerback, where I wouldn't count out Jack Ikegwuonu. He was a first-day draft pick a year ago until tearing up his knee. The Eagles got him in the fourth round, and they may cash in this season.

Bottom Line: On paper, the team to beat in the NFC.

New York Giants

What I Like: First of all, they resolved the Plaxico Burress issue, and hallelujah. Guess that means they're not going to the Run-N-Shoot. Expelling Burress allowed them to move forward and add wide receivers Hakeem Nicks and Ramses Barden in the draft. Nicks is the guy to watch here. He's not as tall as Burress and doesn't have stopwatch speed, but he has great hands and is quick and productive. Barden is 6-feet-6, and, in his own words, "a complete receiver." The

Giants can only hope. They were a different team without Burress, and they had no choice but to plug the holes left behind by Burress and Amani Toomer. They may have succeeded.

Of course, they needed to bolster their offensive tackles, too, and getting William Beatty might help. I say "might" because there is a divergence of opinion on the guy.

Some people think they needed to replace Derrick Ward, too, but I'm not one of them. The Giants have Ahmad Bradshaw as a safety net, and he's a perfect change-of-pace to Brandon Jacobs. Nevertheless, adding Andre Brown in the fourth round makes Big Blue deeper at a critical position.

Losing defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo hurts, but the Giants should be ... no, will be ... better on defense because of the players they added. One is Umenyiora. He's a premier pass rusher who missed all of last season with a knee injury. Another is defensive end Chris Canty, who can hold up against the run and move inside in obvious passing situations. Rocky Bernard gives them depth inside, and Michael Boley fills a huge hole at outside linebacker. The Giants are strong and deep along their front seven, with Mathias Kiwanuka part of a rotation that includes Umenyiora and Justin Tuck. Good luck defending those guys. Getting linebacker Clint Sintim at the 45th spot was a steal. The Giants had considered him a possible late first-rounder.

Bottom Line: They're a half-length behind the Eagles and should battle them for the NFC East title.

New York Jets

What I Like: They identified Sanchez as a quarterback who can make them better; then put together a package to acquire him. Nice. I like clubs that know how to get what they want. The next question, of course, is what they have in Sanchez. One NFC general manager I trust thinks Sanchez's limited arm strength is suited more for an indoor venue than it is the Meadowlands. Maybe. I worry more about his limited experience.

In the end, of course, it comes down to this: He either has the talent or he doesn't. In any case, the Jets did something about improving themselves at their most vulnerable position.

Let's face it, defense wasn't the problem last season; offense was, with the Jets producing 51 point in their last four losses -- or 12.75 per game -- as Brett Favre dissolved. Maybe Sanchez changes that, or maybe Kellen Clemens responds to a wake-up call. Me? I don't see how Sanchez isn't the opening-game starter. The Jets made a bold play to get him, and they didn't do it to have him sit. He will need support, and I'm not talking about the offensive line. That's solid. The running backs may not be, with Shonn Greene a potential answer for veteran Thomas Jones, who turns 31 this summer. I know a handful of scouts who were sour on Greene, but so what? I could line up a dozen who wouldn't vouch for Tom Brady in the 2000 draft, too.

The Jets ranked 16th in defense last year and that improves under Rex Ryan. First, because he has the resume, with his defenses ranked no lower than sixth in his four years as coordinator with the Baltimore Ravens. Second, because he brought over Bart Scott, Marques Douglas and Jim Leonhard from Baltimore. Third, because former Pro Bowler Lito Sheppard checks in at cornerback. Fourth, because he may, just may, get something out of Vernon Gholston. Anyway, the Jets are better on defense, with Scott the big free-agent get.

Bottom line: They're poised to make another run at the top in the AFC East.

New England Patriots

What I Like: They get Tom Brady back, and that alone puts them on this map. There is no quarterback I trust more in big games than Brady, and having him healthy makes the Patriots, not Miami or the Jets, the team to beat in the AFC East. Brady knows how to win, and I don't give a rip that the Patriots gave away Matt Cassel. He wasn't go-

ing to play anyway -- not if Brady is as healthy as the Patriots seem to think. Anyway, there is no way you can overstate the importance of Brady's return. In the seven seasons he's been the starter the Patriots made it to the Super Bowl four times.

Brady's return is one of many changes. The Patriots filled in around their star quarterback, specifically on defense, where their biggest upgrades were at cornerback. They picked up Leigh Bodden and Shawn Springs, with Bodden likely to make an immediate impact, before adding Darius Butler in the draft. Some people thought Butler might have been the second-best cornerback out there. All I know is the Patriots had no business stealing him where they did in the second round. Rookie Patrick Chung is perfect to start working in at safety. Joey Galloway is another option for Brady at wide receiver, where the Patriots can beat you with Randy Moss or Wes Welker. Fred Taylor is perfect for them as a complement at running back ... provided, of course, he stays healthy. I think you get the idea. There are new faces everywhere.

These guys don't regroup as much as they reload each year. I don't care if you like them or not. You can't help but admire the way they do business. They have a core of outstanding talent and fill in with role players who fit their system. The results speak for themselves.

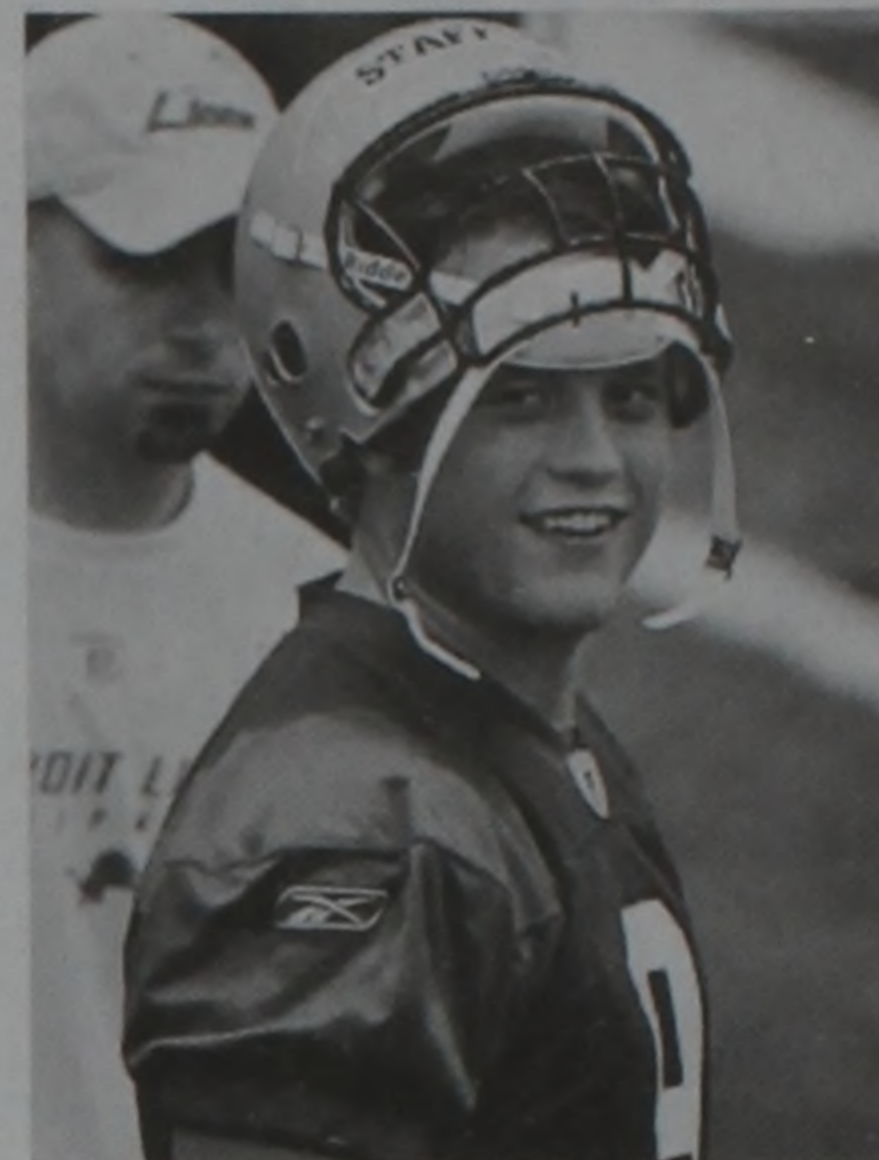
Bottom Line: Get ready, Pittsburgh. The Patriots will challenge for conference supremacy.

Detroit Lions

What I Like: They eviscerated the roster as new coach Jim Schwartz wasted no time trying to shake up the league's sorriest franchise. The biggest move, of course, was drafting Matthew Stafford. Detroit hasn't had a Pro Bowl quarterback since 1972, and maybe that run of futility stops here. Stafford has a chance to become another Matt Ryan, but give him time. Ryan was an overnight

success because he had support in all the right places, starting with Michael Turner. Stafford does not.

There's a reason this team didn't win a game last year -- the same reason it will stay down another season: There just aren't enough good players on the roster. But the outlook is improving, with Stafford, tight end Brandon Pettigrew and defensive back Louis Delmas the most important draft-day acquisitions. Julian Peterson is a strong-side linebacker who can cover or rush the passer effectively. Phillip Buchanon is an upgrade at cornerback. Grady Jackson will plug the middle of the defense. Bryant Johnson can serve as a complement to Calvin Johnson.

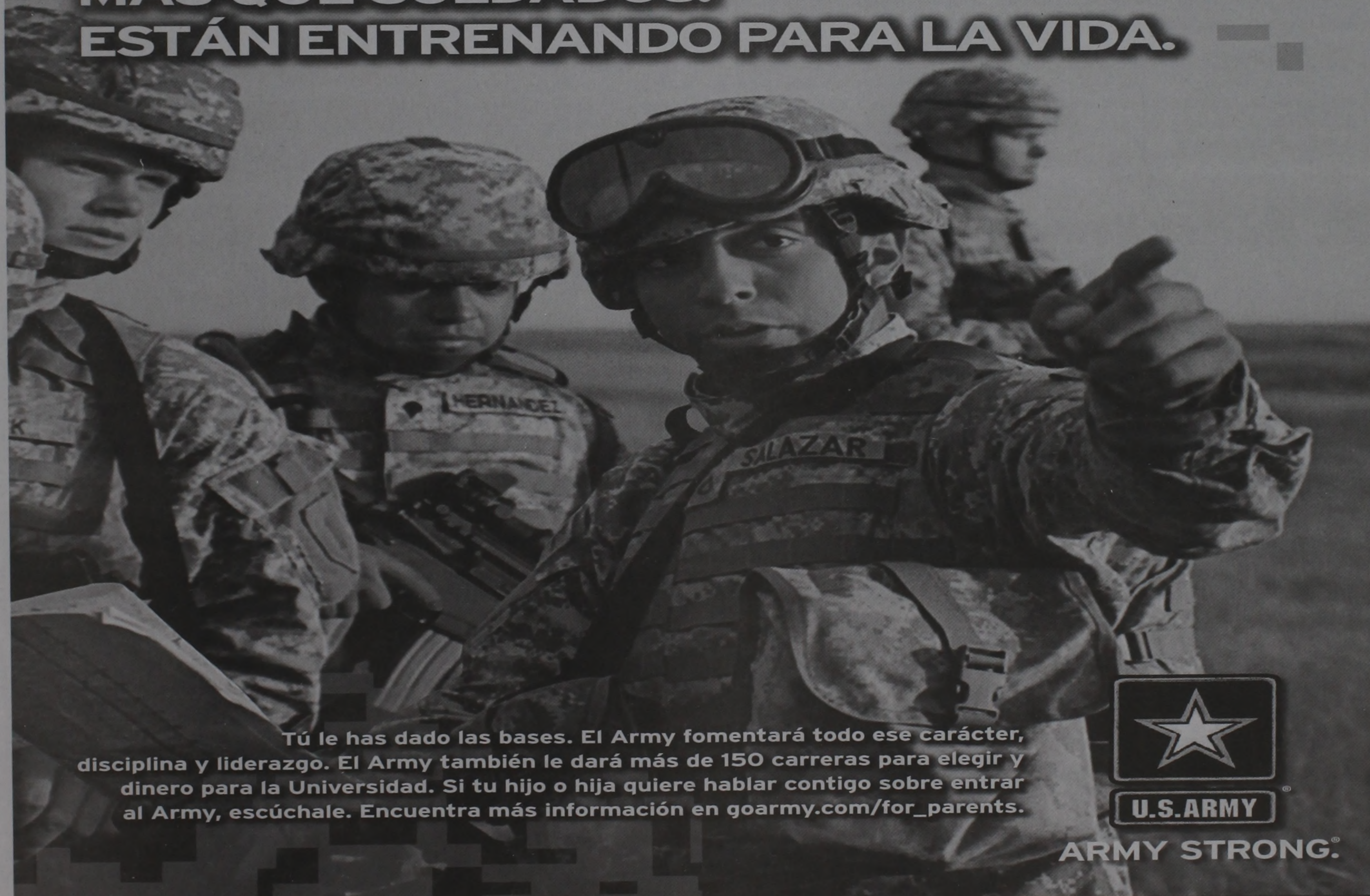


And Maurice Morris is a good partner/relief pitcher for running back Kevin Smith.

Yeah, I know, it's not the '62 Packers, but it's a start. The Lions look a lot better now just because there's a franchise quarterback in place, and it's about time. Maybe Ford does have a better idea.

Bottom Line: The Lions have a long way to go before catching the rest of the division. They will be better, but that's not saying much. They couldn't be worse. Look for these guys to win five or six games, and while that doesn't sound like much, it is here. In the past eight years the Lions never won more than seven games in one season and only twice won more than five.

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El mejor regalo es estar junto a mamá

por Gloria Medina

Este año, los inmigrantes entrevistados por EL DIARIO/LA PRENSA coincidieron en que el mejor regalo para la mamá en éste Día de las Madres sería el estar juntos, ya sea en Nueva York o en sus países natales.

En vez de flores, perfumes o cremas, las madres además piden a sus hijos (as) que regresen junto a ellas o que les ayuden para que puedan viajar y estar en compañía de sus hijos y nietos, a los que no ven en varios años, como es el caso de Ignacio Pérez, un mexicano que no ve a sus padres hace seis años.

"Lo que más quisiera es traerla porque todos sus hijos estamos aquí y ella está allá sola con mi padre", indicó Ignacio, quien ayer estaba cumpliendo 35 años. "Ella no pide dinero ni regalos específicos, sino venir a ver a sus hijos, aunque sea por una visita", agregó el joven que trabaja como cocinero, y quien dice que su mejor recuerdo junto a su madre es el de la última visita que le hizo a Tlaxcala, México hace seis años. El sueño de María De Jesús es irse a vivir nuevamente a su país natal, México pero con todos sus hijos, según Zeferino Leyva, uno de los hijos. "Me gustaría darle ese regalo, pero es difícil por ahora. Aunque si tenemos planes de regresarnos, pero en diferentes fechas porque mis hermanos tienen familias... vamos a ver si se puede", agregó.

Por ahora un regalo más posible que Leyva, de 30 años, le puede dar a su madre es el cambio el horario de trabajo porque sale en la madrugada de su trabajo en un Deli donde prepara comidas.

"Dice que es peligroso, pero es lo que a mi me gusta", asevero. "El recuerdo más bello que tengo de mi madre es cuando me apapacha y me da mis medicinas cuando estoy enfermo. Ella me cuida mucho", confesó sonriente Leyva.

Juana Mejía, de 42 años, cree que el mejor regalo que le pudiera dar a su madre sería una visa para visitar a los

allá con sus flores, animales y nietos. Sinceramente odia este sitio porque la mitad de la familia está aquí y el resto allá. Lo triste es que a veces uno no tiene la posibilidad de viajar", añadió Peña, quien es el menor de nueve hijos.

"Quisiera decirle a mi madre que la quiero mucho y que tal vez este año tenga la oportunidad de verla", fue el mensaje que le mandó Peña a su madre, a quien

madre siempre me decía que estudiara para tener una profesión y ser alguien en la vida. Para que no sufriera como ella", agregó la mexicana, quien es voluntaria en una escuela pública donde asisten sus dos hijas.

Aunque Reyes, de 41 años, no es profesional, tiene la esperanza de terminar algún día sus estudios. "No es tarde y sueño con realizarme alguna vez, y hacerle ese regalo a mi madre. Además, estoy haciendo que mis hijas alcancen una profesión para que mi madre se sienta orgullosa", dijo la mujer, quien agregó que su mamá Adelita Moran Guzmán, quien estuvo mucho tiempo enferma, siempre quiso que su hija fuera doctora.

Sharon Vargas, de 9 años, quien pasaba por una de las calles de El Barrio en Manhattan dijo que el regalo que le iba a hacer a su mamá este año era "portarme bien, porque he sido un poco traviesa".

Vargas, quien es hija de mexicanos y asiste al cuarto grado, añadió que además le va a comprar un CD con la música favorita de su mamá: de Vicente Fernández.

Por su parte, la puertorriqueña Liz De Jesús, dijo que su madre estaba muy orgullosa de ella y contenta con el trabajo que desempeñaba como jefa en una cafetería. "La única cosa que ella quisiera es un ramo de flores. Esta muy contenta con nosotros que estamos junto a ella, quien es ama de casa, cuida a los hijos y al esposo", agregó la joven de 26 años.



Estados Unidos. Mejía, quien es madre de tres adolescentes asegura: "De todas maneras, para las madres el mejor regalo siempre es llenarlas de mucho amor", dijo la dominicana que vive en Nueva York hace más de 20 años.

También Martín Peña, de 32 años, quisiera complacer a su madre Obdulia García, quien vive en la Ciudad de México, y reunirla con sus hijos para el día de las madres.

"Sería lo máximo para ella, el que me fuera para allá", exclamó Peña, quien no ve a su madre hace 8 años. "Ella no quiere venir, prefiere estar

más recuerda cuando ella se tomaba el tiempo para jugar con él después de llegar de trabajar. "No conocí a mi padre y ella fue la que tuvo que trabajar fuerte para mantenernos, pero siempre tuvo tiempo para jugar conmigo", agregó.

Además de estar juntos, algunas madres les han pedido a sus hijas específicamente que estudien para que se hagan profesionales y no sufran como ellas lo hicieron por falta de educación.

"Mis padres trabajaban mucho en el campo sembrando y madrugando para sacar los productos de la tierra y así poder alimentarnos", recuerda Angélica Reyes. "Mi

NCLR Collaborating With Office Of Minority Health To Safeguard Public Health During Swine Flu Crisis

NCLR (National Council of La Raza) and the Office of Minority Health (OMH) today announced a partnership to help educate Latinos and others about precautions they can take to minimize the spread of the H1N1 flu (swine flu).

NCLR will also work with its network of community-based organizations to monitor the situation on the ground, assess communities' needs for information and assistance, and disseminate pertinent information and provide timely updates to Hispanic communities nationwide.

"Public health experts are calling for prudence, not panic, as the best way to ensure the well-being of all Americans. We want to help make sure that the public is aware of developments and the steps they can take to prevent the spread of the virus," said Janet Murguía, NCLR President and CEO.

In light of a number of public gatherings, festivals, sports events, and other activities that are taking place this weekend, NCLR, OMH, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) urge the public to take the following precautions:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when you sneeze or cough. Throw the tissue in the trash after one use.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based sanitizing gels are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. This is the way in which germs are transmitted.
- Avoid close contact with



persons who are sick. If you are sick, it is recommended that you stay home and not go to work, school, or other public events. Avoid proximity with other individuals to protect them from getting sick.

In addition, the CDC is urging that anyone who becomes ill, or experiences the following warning signs and symptoms, seek immediate medical attention:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
 - Sudden dizziness
 - Confusion
 - Sever or persistent vomiting
 - Children:
 - Fast breathing or trouble breathing
 - Bluish skin color
 - Not drinking enough fluids
 - Not waking up or not interacting
 - Being so irritable that child does not want to be held
 - Fever with a rash
 - Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever or worse cough
- "We agree with the public health community that we are all affected by this crisis, and we all need to do our part to prevent the spread of this virus. Ensuring that everyone has access to information and is armed with knowledge will help safeguard the health of all Americans," concluded Murguía. For more information on the H1N1 flu and what can be done to protect against it, visit the CDC website at http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/swineflu_you.htm <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/swineflu_you.htm> or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

Obama Calls For \$63b In Global Health Aid

President Barack Obama on Tuesday unveiled new plans to provide \$63 billion over six years to help the global community fight illnesses and allow for better prenatal and postnatal care.

"We cannot wall ourselves off from the world and hope for the best, nor ignore the public health challenges beyond our borders," Obama said in a statement.

"An outbreak in Indonesia can reach Indiana within days, and public health crises abroad can cause widespread suffering, conflict, and economic contraction.

"That is why I am asking Congress to approve my Fiscal Year 2010 Budget request of 8.6 billion dollars and 63 billion dollars over six years to shape a new, comprehensive global health strategy," said

President Obama.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the new proposal is part of the administration's foreign policy that will improve the US' image at home and abroad. It is a continuation of efforts introduced by the administration of President George W. Bush, called the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief or PEPFAR, as a means of fighting HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

"Our investments in programs to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB and other preventable diseases save millions of lives, reduce maternal and child mortality, and reflect our nation's leadership as a positive force for progress around the world," Clinton said.

Deputy Secretary of State

Jack Lew unveiled the new plans on Wednesday.

"Our announcement today exemplifies a strategy we're bringing to bear across our foreign aid programs, even as we address crises in regions with conflict, we need to make the investments necessary to prevent such crises from occurring in the future," said Lew.

"We are ramping up efforts to fight poverty, food insecurity and disease with solutions that will leave behind the tools to sustain long-term progress."

The Bush administration introduced the program in an effort to help residents of poor nations that could be more susceptible to joining terrorist groups or harboring anti-American sentiment.

Mr. Bush spent nearly \$19 billion

in efforts to fight AIDS in poor countries over the course of two terms.

"When we talk about development and diplomacy, we mean the United States needs to be affirmatively active dealing with some of the root causes of instability in so many poor countries," Lew said. "If people can't provide for the basic needs of their family ... it's a dangerous situation."

Obama is expected to ask for \$63 billion for the 2010 fiscal year, which begins on October 1.

Under the proposal, the PEPFAR program would receive \$51 billion over six years, while the other \$12 billion would be spent among new programs to fight tropical disease and other health issues.

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