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Latinos Inscriptos, Listos Para Significar Una Diferencia

Por Antonio Gilb

Con las fechas límites para la inscripción de electores pasadas en los 50 estados la semana última, las gestiones de los latinos se encaminan ahora a llevar a la comunidad a las casillas electorales.

Entre 7,500,000 y 8,000,000 de latinos se han inscrito para las elecciones del 7 de noviembre, según estima Antonio González, presidente del Instituto William C. Velásquez. El anticipa que habrá una concurrencia del 75 por ciento de los latinos. El Instituto es una entidad no lucrativa de investigación documental y cursos de acción, radicado en Los Angeles y San Antonio.

Eso haría aumentar desde 6,800,000 a los que estuvieron inscritos para votar en las elecciones presidenciales de 1996, en que hubo 18,400,000 latinos en edad electoral. La concurrencia de electores inscritos en aquel año fué del 75 por ciento.

El mes próximo, los latinos podrían desempeñar un papel



decisivo para determinar quién tomará el poder político, desde la Casa Blanca hasta abajo.

En escala nacional, los latinos favorecen al Vice-Presidente Al Gore sobre el Gobernador de Texas, George W. Bush, por 59 por ciento contra 28 por ciento, según una encuesta de hispanictrends.com.

Se espera que las elecciones presidenciales del año 2000 sean las más apretadas desde 1960, cuando John F. Kennedy derrotó a Richard Nixon. Los latinos pueden significar una diferencia aún en los estados en disputa, donde su cantidad es comparativamente pequeña, porque las victorias pueden descansar sobre

unos pocos puntos de porcentaje.

Illinois, uno de esos estados, tiene 22 votos electorales; el 25.6 por ciento de sus 597,000 latinos fueron inscritos en las elecciones de 1996. La Florida, con 25 votos electorales, informó que el 36.7 por ciento de su población latina se había inscrito en aquel año.

Según una encuesta del Instituto Velásquez, Gore va delante en la votación latina de Illinois, 59 por ciento contra 19 por ciento. En Noviembre de 1999, Bush aventajaba a Gore por 38 por ciento contra 35 por ciento.

El Instituto Hispano de Dirección de los Estados Unidos, radicado en Chicago, se ha enfocado sobre inscribir a los latinos en varios estados del Medio Oeste. Su presidente, Juan Andrade, estima que entre 2,500,000 y 3,000,000 de latinos viven en el Medio Oeste.

"No tengo duda de que, especialmente en estos estados en discusión, cualquier bloque importante de electores puede

cambiar el resultado electoral de un modo u otro," dice él. "Hemos tenido elecciones estatales en

Illinois en las que la diferencia fué de 5,000 votos."



"El Respeto al Derecho Ajeno es La Paz."
"Respect for the Rights of Others Is Peace"
Lic. Benito Juarez

EL EDITOR

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Latinos Registered to Vote, Ready To Make A Difference

By Antonio Gilb

With voter registration deadlines in the 50 states wrapped up this month, Latino efforts are now geared to bringing the community to the polls. Between 7.5 million and 8 million Latinos are registered for Nov. 7, Antonio González, president of the William C. Velásquez Institute, estimates. He anticipates a 75 percent Latino turnout. The institute is a nonprofit research and policy group based in Los Angeles and San Antonio.

That would increase from 6.8 million those who were registered to vote in the presidential election of 1996, when there were 18.4 million Latinos of voting age. Turnout of registered voters that year was 75 percent. Latinos could play a decisive

role in determining who will take political power, from the White House on down.

Nationally, Latinos favor Vice President Al Gore over Texas Gov. George W. Bush by better than 2-to-1 -- 59 percent to 28 percent -- according to the latest Hispanictrends.com poll.

The 2000 presidential election is expected to be the closest since 1960, when John Kennedy edged Richard Nixon. Latinos

may make a difference even in toss-up states, where their numbers are comparatively small, because victories may hinge on a few percentage points.

Illinois, a battleground state, has 22 electoral votes; 25.6 percent of its 597,000 Latinos were registered in the 1996 election; Florida, with 25 electoral votes, reported 36.7 percent of its 1.8 million Latino population registered that year.

According to a Velásquez Institute poll, Gore leads among Illinois Hispanics, 59 percent to 19 percent. In November 1999, Bush led 38 percent to 35 percent.

The Chicago-based U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute has focused on registering Latinos throughout several Midwestern states. Its president, Juan Andrade, says between 2.5 million

Could Blacks, Instead of Hispanic, Hold Decisive Vote?

By Jim Lobe

Of the major racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States, African Americans, who have voted overwhelmingly for Democrats in recent years, may determine the outcome of this year's presidential elections in November.

While early media attention this year focused on the strategic importance of the Hispanic vote, and both Republican Gov. George Bush and Democrat Vice President Al Gore have spotlighted their Spanish-speaking abilities at various campaign appearances, black voters are concentrated in key "swing states," those states which remain very much up for grabs three weeks before voters go to the polls.

The most important such "battleground" states, which could go to either Gore or Bush, according to the latest state polls, are Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Delaware, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Georgia, and North Carolina - all states where African Americans make up between 12 and 30 percent of the population.

Moreover, African-American groups like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) are preparing a multi-million-dollar effort to get out the vote on election day, Nov. 7. In contrast to the last two presidential elections, the organization's treasury is well-stocked this year; indeed one single contributor gave it 9 million dollars to get African-Americans to the polls.

"A lot is going to be decided this year by the mechanics of getting people out to vote," according to David Bostis, a political analyst at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, who tracks black voting patterns. "Could black votes be decisive? Yes, there is definitely that potential."

Their potential for influencing the vote goes beyond the presidential election which most analysts believe is a toss-up at the moment. The make-up of the next Congress will also be determined Nov. 7. Democrats are given a strong chance of retaking control of the House of Representatives, which they lost in 1994, and could possibly gain a majority in the 100-seat Senate, where they have 46 seats now.

African Americans make up about 12 percent of the total US population and about 10 percent of the electorate. Hispanic Americans also make up about 12 percent of the total US population, but the rate at which they vote, while rising sharply in recent years, came to only five percent of the electorate in the last Congressional elections in 1998.

In addition to their low turnout rate, Hispanic Americans are concentrated in just a handful of states, compared to African Americans. Some 75 percent of the total Hispanic population live in just two states: Texas, which is certain to go for Bush, and California, which most political analysts believe is solidly in the Gore camp.

Presidents in the United States are not elected by the popular vote, but rather by an "electoral college" of the states. Depending on its total population, each state is accorded a certain number of electoral votes, all of which are cast on behalf of the presidential candidate who receives the most votes in that state.

In other words, if Gore receives the most votes in California, he will gain all of that state's 54 electoral votes no matter how many voters voted for Bush or third-party candidates. It takes 270 electoral votes to win the election.

With the electoral votes of Texas, with 32 electoral votes, and California all but decided, the remaining 25 percent of the Hispanic vote will be spread over a number of states, including three key swing states in which the Hispanic vote could be significant: Florida, Colorado, and New Mexico.

Of these, Florida, with 25 electoral votes, is by far the most important; indeed, many analysts say Bush, whose brother is the state's governor, cannot win the election without Florida. But there the Hispanic vote is split between Cuban-Americans, who vote mainly Republican, and non-Cuban Hispanics, who, like non-Cuban Hispanic Americans elsewhere in the United States, especially Puerto Ricans, Central Americans, and Mexicans, have voted by strong majorities of up to 80 percent for Democrats in recent elections.

If Hispanics are split over party loyalties in Florida and, to a lesser extent, elsewhere, however, African-Americans are overwhelmingly Democratic.

In the most recent elections, almost nine in 10 blacks voted for Democrats, and despite the many black entertainers and speakers featured at the Republican National Convention last summer, as well as a special advertising campaign directed by Republicans at African American voters, Bostis believes that Gore will win 90 percent of the black vote.

"African Americans don't trust the Republican Party," according to Bostis, who adds that the flap over Bush's and other Republicans' refusal to support the removal of South Carolina's old Confederate flag from its state Capitol reminded blacks of how much the party has changed from the 1950s and 1960s when it was led by Northeastern and Midwestern "moderate" Republicans who were more sympathetic to the civil-rights struggle.

"African Americans are not going to trust a party that is dominated by white southerners who opposed the civil-rights movement," says Bostis, who is regarded by Democrats and Republicans alike as the nation's top expert on the African American vote. Republicans, he says, have increasingly become a "white party".

In 1996, for example, Republican presidential candidate Robert Dole received 40 percent of the total vote of which white voters accounted for well over 90 percent. And, while blacks make up 22 percent of the Democratic National Committee, there is only one black member out of a total of 153 members of the Republican National Committee.

At the same time, President Bill Clinton and Gore appear genuinely popular with the African-American community where black unemployment rates are at record lows and income levels are at record highs; and crime and teenage pregnancy have fallen steadily over the life of the administration. In contrast, "the more Bush has become known, his popularity among African Americans has declined".

Unlike Hispanic voters outside of California and Texas, African American voters are certain to play major roles in key swing states just as they have in recent senate and gubernatorial races, particularly in the South where about 60 percent of the country's black population lives.

In Florida, for example, blacks outnumber Hispanics; in Georgia and Louisiana, they make up well over 25 percent of the electorate.

Proud of Indigenous Past, Living a Racist Present

By Diego Cevallos

Mexicans are proud of the nation's indigenous ancestors but discriminate against and marginalize their descendants. For most of the native peoples here, the 508 years since the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas, commemorated Thursday, is just one more date to suffer.

"Columbus, October 12, America, I don't know anything about it," said María Ojeda, an indigenous woman who moved to the capital five years ago from the southern state of Chiapas, in response to questions about the significance of the date.

Like any other day, Ojeda, carrying her small baby on her back, was standing under a traffic signal asking for money from the drivers of the cars passing by, and withstanding their insults shouted through car windows.

A short distance away, fewer than 500 people from indigenous organizations staged a march to commemorate the date, which they said does not merit joyous celebrations.

In other cities around the country, similar demonstrations took place, though also suffering from low turnout, they managed to make some noise and draw police attention.

Ojeda, 42, is one of approximately 10 million indigenous people in Mexico. Of this group, 53 percent of the women and 33 percent of the men are illiterate.

Among the 803 municipalities with majority native populations, 83 percent are categorized as suffering "high" or "very high" marginalization, according to government studies.

Among the country's native groups, more than 80 languages are spoken, as well as numerous dialects. The governmental Indigenous Institute reports that there are 62 different ethnicities, each one representing a culture thousands of years old.

In local schools, indigenous children are taught to be proud of their past, of the original peoples who built large cities and developed extensive knowledge. But in present-day Mexico, being Indian implies low wages and rejection from society.

A study by the National Institute of Statistics indicates that 48.5 percent of the nation's indigenous population did not earn an income for the work they do. The rest, who do earn wages, usually receive a pittance.

Research also shows that only small percentages of the native population are involved in political or social organizations.

With the exception of groups centered in the Mexican south, such as the rebel Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), indigenous peoples are generally not organized in groups that have national political relevance.

A survey published Thursday by 'El Universal' newspaper shows that 56.6 percent of the respondents believe there is racism in Mexico, and 61.1 percent say there is discrimination based on the color of one's skin.

The indigenous peoples are in a clear situation of discrimination and disadvantage, something no one can deny, affirmed Oscar González, president of the Mexican Academy of Human Rights.

In Mexico, as in other countries of Latin America, one of the most offensive insults is to call someone "indio."

Though the indigenous issue periodically makes its way onto the political agenda, especially on dates like Oct 12, native representation in Congress and the government is practically zero.

A far cry from the commemorative events in 1992 for the 500th anniversary of the Spanish arrival in the Americas, native Mexicans now let the day pass by without much ado.

There were no specific proposals from anyone on Oct 12 to improve the fate of this group, beyond some declarations made in Congress, where representatives asked president-elect Vicente Fox, who takes office Dec 1, to remember Mexico's indigenous citizens.

Given the situation of hunger, misery and extreme violence in which indigenous peoples live, Mexico has a "de facto apartheid" against natives, maintained the National Plural Indigenous Assembly for Autonomy.

The roots of racism existing in Mexico, hidden or explicit, originate in the fifteenth century, when the Catholic Church debated whether or not natives had souls, point out historians.

"This day is just like yesterday. I continue without work and here in the street," said Ojeda.

Comentarios de Vidal

by Vidal Agüero

We received several from Friends and other saying that it seems that we are committed to Frank Gutierrez in the Commissioner's race.



Although I had planned to do all my endorsement next week, it would probably come to no one's surprise that I will endorse Frank Gutierrez for the position. My reason will be further explained in next week's edition.

Several calls were also received about the demonstration held last week. Many said that they thoroughly agreed with the event and had attended if they had known. The news release that announced the demonstration was distributed to all newspapers, TV's and Radio stations since Monday before the Wednesday demonstration. Why other media ignored it is not known, but perhaps one of the reasons is that no type of news program is aired through the electronic media. Even Chicano radio station opt to play what is called "continuos music" and choose to ignore news.

Many persons are asking about letters to the editor in our newspaper. All are welcome and will be published as space allows. I prefer them to be e-mailed to editor@llano.net but you can also fax to 741-1110 or mailed to 1502 Ave. M. Be sure and sign. We will not publish unsigned letters.

El Editor Newspapers

My Imaginary Presidential Debate

by JAMES GARCIA
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Vice President Al Gore and Texas Gov. George W. Bush met Tuesday night for the third and final presidential debate. Jim Lehrer was the moderator. I couldn't help imagining how the evening might have gone if a Latino, such as myself, had been the one dissecting the questions and challenging their answers.

This is my imaginary debate.
On health care, you, Mr. Gore, said you wanted to pass a meaningful patients bill of rights. While, you, Mr. Bush, support a scaled down version backed by the Republican-controlled Congress and favored by the insurance industry.

To be honest with you, I'd like to have a patient's bill of rights. But I'm more worried about the 10 million or so Latinos in this country who don't have any health insurance at all. That's about 25 percent of everyone in the United States without health insurance, even though our community is only 11 percent of the population. And our children make up an even larger share of the uninsured when compared to non-Hispanics. Who's going to help them?

Mr. Gore, you said you want to provide affordable health care coverage to every child in America within four years. That's a start. But my first impulse tells me that unless the Democrats win not only the presidency but both the House and the Senate, that Republicans won't let it happen. Still, it's a good idea. And I give you credit for trying. Don't you agree that it is inhumane to allow any child to go without health insurance, particularly in an era of record budget surpluses?

Mr. Bush, you say that there shouldn't be a federally-run health care program for every American in the nation. But don't you think that there should be a federal health care program for every American in the country who cannot afford to pay for health care?

Like millions of other Latinos in this country, I know what it is like to do without health insurance. If you are healthy, you live in fear of getting sick. If you're sick, you find

yourself depending on either health care clinics that are usually under-funded and provide minimal services, or you end up using the emergency room. Most poor people don't know or care that emergency room medical treatment is the most expensive health care in our system. But we know that. And the two of you know that. So allowing this system to continue is not only a waste of money, but it puts vast numbers of Americans in real danger, since they're forced to do without preventive health care in their lives. And a vastly disproportionate percentage of those Americans are Latinos.

As for senior citizens and prescription drugs, a member of my own family is now having to go from living below the poverty line to utter destitution. My stepmother has cancer. She is able to undergo chemotherapy because she has Medicare. But she cannot afford to buy the drugs she needs to alleviate the pain caused by that treatment because Medicare doesn't include a prescription drug benefit.

Mr. Bush, you want to subsidize private insurance companies and encourage them to provide prescription drug benefits. Even if she could afford to purchase medical insurance, why should she trust the same insurance companies who run the same HMOs that so many Americans have grown to distrust to provide the drugs my stepmother needs?

Mr. Bush, you say seniors should have the same choices members of Congress have. They can pick and choose from several health care plans. Members of Congress, Mr. Bush, earn more than \$100,000 each. Lobbyists buy their lunch and cover their travel expenses. How many seniors are in a position to afford to pick and choose their health care plans? And what about the Latino elderly, especially low-income Latinos, like my stepmother, who must choose between paying the electric bill or paying for a prescription that cost upwards of \$100 for only 20 pills?

Mr. Gore, you say you want to expand an existing government health care plan to help people like my stepmother, as opposed to Mr. Bush, who says he wants to encourage private insurance companies to take on that responsibility. In the end, I don't think the insurance lobby will let it happen or be inspired by such encouragement, Mr. Bush. And if Mr. Gore is

to succeed, I think he'll have to exhibit far greater leadership skills than Mr. Clinton has in the last eight years, especially if the Republicans keep control of Congress.

On education, a woman in the audience asked about holding parents accountable for their children's performance in school. Both of you have said you support mandatory testing of public school students to determine whether they're learning what they need to know to succeed. I think you both mean well, but I think the evidence shows that both of you are wrong on this count. Yes, test my child in history, science, reading, writing and math. But shouldn't you allow that testing to be part of an academic program that is shaped and developed by educators, not bureaucrats?

In Texas and elsewhere, state education agencies are creating one-size-fits-all tests for students without regard for the individuality of those students, particular schools or even communities. Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore, you say you believe in local control when it comes to education. State mandated standardized tests are the single worst example of non-local control. You should train teachers, pay them well, then let them do their job. Don't try to do their jobs for them.

It is a fact that some of the best teachers in the industry are leaving the profession because they are not being allowed to do what they were trained to do. That's happening in Texas. Instead of treating children as individuals, they are now required by school administrators and the state to treat children as statistics. If standardized tests scores aren't up, they're out of a job.

Mr. Gore, you say you want the federal government to help pay for hiring 100,000 new teachers nationwide. And you want to provide school districts with money to pay for new buildings. Providing tax credits for middle-class families to help send their kids to college is a good start, as well. But there are many in America, and Latino families are a large part of that group, who do not earn enough to take advantage of those tax credits. They're too busy putting food on the table. It is harder

today to get Pell Grants and low-cost student loans. The cost of a college education is skyrocketing.

Whoever is elected needs to convince Congress to set aside more funding for that kind of assistance if we expect to educate the young Latinos and Latinas who'll one day be an increasingly substantial segment of our nation's work force. Shouldn't public universities like public schools be free? In many school systems across the country, Latino children are now the majority in the student population. Yet 40 percent or more of our children never graduate from high school. This trend should be reversed.

Again and again throughout your campaign, Mr. Bush, you have said you want to end the "bigotry of low expectations." It's a colorful phrase, and I think that you believe it when you say it. But one of the ways you want to do it is by penalizing poor performing schools — which are often schools with large minority populations — by cutting off one of their only sources of federal education funding. That money, you say, would be offered to parents who want to send their children to another school, such as a private school. In most cases, the vouchers given to parents would be about \$1,500. First, how would these children be chosen? And if they are the children from the poorest families, how far will \$1,500 go toward financing a quality private school education?

And why not just call it a voucher, Mr. Bush? That is what it is.

If private contributors want to give money to the poor to have their children attend private schools, that's fine. And I would never blame the families of those children for taking the money. But what using federal revenue to finance private schools seems wrong. Why? Because private schools can exclude anyone they want. They do not have to provide facilities for the handicapped, for instance. And if a private school administrator does not want his school to have too many Latino children, there's almost nothing the government can do about it. There is a reason why the best private schools in America are not located in minority neighborhoods.

On foreign policy matters, Latinos care about the Middle East and should. But also we care very much about our nation's foreign

policy toward Latin America. Nearly 40 percent of Latinos living in the United States are foreign born. For those born here, most of us have family ties abroad. Most of the new immigrants to America are coming from Mexico and Central and South America.

Economic and social stability are fragile commodities in Latin America. Most Latin American nations are new to the idea of democratic and representative government. It wasn't so long ago that almost every nation in Central America was engulfed in civil war. Colombia is in crisis. Just this year Mexico held what many regard as its first free and fair election in history. At the same time, the region's economies have not grown as fast as their populations.

The single most pressing economic issue of our time will involve the management and utilization of the hemisphere's exploding labor force. Simply put, Mexico and the rest of Latin America have too many workers. We don't have enough. The trouble is our need for highly-skilled labor is growing, while Latin America's ability to train its workers for high-tech jobs has stagnated.

The trade agreement with Mexico and Canada, known as NAFTA, did not address the labor question. Our immigration policy does not adequately address the labor question. As Mexico's President-elect Vicente Fox has pointed out, however, it is an issue we must address if we ever expect to equalize the hemisphere's economic striking disparities. What will you do to address these concerns?

Finally, if there was a defining moment in this final debate that told me who Americans should vote for, it was in your response to a question asked about your stance on affirmative action, Mr. Bush.

You oppose affirmative action, but you have never been willing to say so. Your pat response has been "I don't like quotas. Quotas tend to pit one group of people against another." In your view, affirmative action as it is implemented today is the equivalent of a quota program. And for the record, you say you support diversity, but 80 percent of your appointees since taking office have been white.

Mr. Gore is right. For you, Mr. Bush, to suggest that affirmative action is no different than a quota is wrong. The Supreme Court has ruled that quotas are illegal.

Mr. Bush, you would have us believe that discrimination is no longer a problem. For nearly 200 years of our nation's history, it was legal to discriminate against women and people of color. Barely a decade ago we made it illegal to discriminate against the handicapped. It is still legal to discriminate against gays and lesbians. And despite the existence of civil rights legislation, people are still victims of racial profiling, redlining and hate crimes.

If you, Mr. Bush, say you are colorblind, then we can only take you at your word and give you the benefit of the doubt. But you know that the world is not colorblind. And you must know that discrimination still is with us.

When you compare affirmative action to quota-inspired programs the implication is clear: You believe that affirmative action is discriminatory because it provides what you regard as preferential treatment for women and minorities.

If this is what you believe, then I think the Latino community deserves to know that. There are Latinos who agree with you, and they should vote for you. But Latinos who understand and appreciate the value of a legally implemented affirmative action policy, whether it applies to hiring or university admissions, deserve a straight answer from you on the matter. You have refused to answer the question.

Mr. Gore, you gave us a straight answer. You said, "Affirmative action means that you take extra steps to acknowledge the history of discrimination and injustice and prejudice, and bring all people into the American dream because it helps everybody, not just those who are directly benefited."

Your comments on this show you have the depth and vision to lead America.

The debates, according to you, Mr. Bush, have been an opportunity for Americans to take a "measure of the man." You are right. In the end, Mr. Bush, you simply don't measure up.

**Lo Mejor En Informacion
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United States, however, the children were forced to work as domestics.

Moreover, trafficking is growing both in the United States and worldwide, according to the report, which singled out Thailand, Vietnam, China, Mexico, Russia, and the Czech Republic as the major sources for traffickers who deliver to the United States.

The study found that the US justice and immigration systems were ill-equipped to deal with the challenges presented by trafficking in part because of confusion over jurisdiction, the difficult in investigating and prosecuting cases, and the light penalties - until now maximum prison sentences were 10 years - handed out to traffickers or employers when they are discovered.

"Traffickers are rarely punished," according to Democratic Sen. Paul Wellstone, another co-sponsor. "The penalties are light and do not reflect the human rights abuses perpetrated against the victims."

Worse, the victims, particularly those compelled to work in the sex industry - are most often immediately deported to their home countries where the underlying economic conditions which propelled them into the

Latino vs. Hispanic: A Chicago Campus Comes to Terms

By ADOLFO MENDEZ
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When Northwestern Illinois University student Sabrina Lebron attended an on-campus discussion on the Latino vs. Hispanic label, she didn't end up picking one over the other. "as long as we can find a word that unites all Latinos... The government gave me the name Hispanic, I give myself the name Latino."

--Saul Tafolla-Martinez, student "I say both, actually," said Lebron, an education major. "I'm Puerto Rican. Or is that, Puerto Rican-American? I say, 'I'm a Latina.' Or, 'Look at that Latin guy.' It doesn't matter what you call yourself."

Lebron and other students as well as university faculty and staff were treated to a one-hour discussion on the history of Hispanic and Latino at a conference sponsored by the university's Hispanic Heritage Committee.

About 100 people attended the event, including panelist and student Jeanette Hernandez. "When they asked me to participate, I said, 'Oh no, they're going to have me deal with those words. Not those words,'" she said. "I am the type of person where one word means something and another word means something else."

Hispanic is an adjective; Latino could be a noun or an adjective," Hernandez explained. "Latino could also be used to describe gender. One of things that really bugs me is the term 'Latino women.' That's a contradiction."

There were plenty of strong opinions on the subject of labels, as well as a number of questions from the audience.

"I don't know if Hispanic includes people living in Latin America. I could be wrong, but I don't think it does," Hernandez said. She also cited some personal preferences. "Hispanic grocery store seems to fly better than Latino grocery store."

On a lighter note, Hernandez added that the word Hispanic could be separated into "His" and "panic" and joked: "I don't want to be called anyone's panic -- not his or hers."

Saul Tafolla-Martinez, a senior studying criminal justice, said whatever one decides to be labeled, the goal should be toward a united community. "My position is as long as we can find a word that unites all Latinos, instead of fighting out it, then we'll be okay," he said. "The government gave me the name Hispanic, I give myself the name Latino. The majority of students here call themselves Latino."

The audience was given a lengthy history lesson on the subject by Dr. Jose Lopez, a political activist who heads the Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Chicago.

"It's an ongoing discussion," said Lopez, a professor in the university's Mexican/Caribbean Studies program. "Issues of identity are very complex. In our theories and our myths, we see our world in a particular way."

Some prefer Latino because it's viewed as a self-identifying word, unlike Hispanic, which is the preferred term used by the U.S. government for census and other purposes. But Lopez, who holds a Ph.D., warned "there are some serious challenges with whatever identity we choose."

On the term "Hispanic": "This is a racist concept of the 19th Century. The Mexicans taken over in 1848 said, 'We're not Mexican, we're Hispano. The idea of being a Hispano was, 'I'm not Mexican. I don't look like them, my ancestors are from Spain.' And many of them are wealthy." Some wanted to tie themselves to light-skinned Spaniards and away from dark-skinned Mexicans, he said.

"In professional circles you find this idea of Hispanic, and that has some class issues tied to it. We're professionals, we're Hispanic."

"Latino, for some reason, makes more sense," Lopez said. "Perhaps the most politically appropriate word would be Latino."

Lopez said the word Latino has come to be used as a concept where it [refers to] political identity rather than cultural identity. People concerned with social activism are concerned with "Latino."

But Michael Rodriguez, a junior studying political science, suggested the discussion was misplaced. "There are more important issues we could be talking about, like schools, our community," said Rodriguez, whose remark sparked spontaneous applause from the audience. "These are more important than 'Latino' or 'Hispanic.' Other issues outside of identity are more important and we should be dealing with that."

Angelena Pedrosa, an associate professor of foreign languages and literature, defended the discussion. "Any issue that we touch on historically is important," she said. "I'm a very political person and I'm afraid that this will be another issue that divides us. Don't allow that to divide us."

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hands of traffickers in the first place are unlikely to have changed. Their deportation also makes it impossible for them to testify against the traffickers here.

The new law is an attempt to deal with a number of these problems. Under it, maximum criminal sentences for trafficking or forced labor will be doubled to 20 years, with the possibility of life imprisonment in cases where the offense results in death or involves kidnapping, aggravated sexual abuse, or an attempt to kill.

To deal with the deportation problem, the bill creates a new "T" visa for trafficking victims - even if they entered the United States illegally - that would permit them to stay in the United States at least through the prosecution of their captors and permanently if they suffered serious abuses. They would also be eligible to receive federal assistance during the period of their stay.

The bill also creates an inter-agency office in the State Department to direct and co-ordinate all federal efforts to promote the various facets of the bill and require the State Department to report each year on the efforts of other nations to stop trafficking. It also authorizes

withholding aid to countries that are found not to be making reasonable efforts to combat trafficking.

Some 94.5 million dollars are earmarked for working with other countries on anti-trafficking efforts, including programs to increase public awareness of the dangers of trafficking in communities where the practice is widespread. The bill also directs the US Agency for International Development to give special consideration to the same communities for funding projects that could boost local economies and thus deter trafficking.

"This legislation establishes an entirely different approach by punishing the perpetrators, not the victims," said Brownback. "It also facilitates important advocacy efforts to raise public awareness about sexual trafficking throughout the world."

Added to the final bill was a 3.4 billion dollar authorization for the Violence Against Women Act. The money is to be used over the next five years to fund programs in the United States to combat violence against women, including support for battered women's shelters and services, prevention efforts, public information, and training for judges.

Congress Passes Sweeping Labor Anti-Trafficking Law

By Jim Lobe

A new law that will toughen penalties against international trafficking of women and children for sex or other forms of forced labor swept through both houses of Congress here this week.

The law, the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, will also make it possible for victims of such activity in the United States to gain permanent residency here in exchange for their co-operation in prosecuting traffickers accused of the most serious abuses.

In addition, the bill earmarks almost 100 million dollars to fund overseas efforts to fight human trafficking over the next two years.

"This is the most significant human rights legislation of this Congress," claimed Republican Sen. Sam Brownback, an original sponsor of the bill, which passed the Senate in a rare unanimous vote. "This bill challenges the largest manifestation of modern-day slavery worldwide."

Indeed, the scope of the hu-

man trafficking problem has become very great in recent years and continues to grow, according to a recent study by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

As many as 2 million people, primarily women and children, are smuggled across national borders each year in search of what they believe is legitimate work, but which turns out to be a form of virtual slavery or indentured servitude to employers who use them as prostitutes or in hard labor.

Of that total, some 50,000 are brought to the United States each year, mostly from Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, Mexico, and Asia, according to the CIA, which concluded that human trafficking has become the fastest-growing source of profits for organized criminal enterprises around the world. Globally, human trafficking is estimated to have become a 7 billion dollar-a-year business.

The CIA study cited, among other examples, cases of Latvian women brought to Chicago where they were forced to dance

naked in private clubs; and Mexican women, including girls as young as 14, brought here on the promise of house-keeping or child-care jobs but sold directly to brothels.

If they resist, they are often threatened with bodily harm, even death, or they are told that their families back home will be harmed. If they still do not co-operate, they are beaten and often raped, according to experts and victims who testified before Congress earlier this year.

Still others are brought here as indentured servants in sweatshops or in households. The public was shocked in 1995 when 72 Thai workers were discovered in a town near Los Angeles where they were forced to work assembling and stitching garments 20 hours a day for 69 cents per hour in a compound ringed by razor wire fencing to prevent their escape.

In another case cited in the CIA study, a Nigerian smuggling ring charged parents as much as 12,000 dollars to bring their children to New York to gain a better education. Once in the

"The Yankees won Today"

By Miguel Pérez

It has been my favorite U.S. baseball team for as long as I can remember. Long before I knew the names of most of the other teams, or the cities they represented, I was a New York Yankees fan -- back in my native Cuba.

As a young boy, I can remember owning but not being able to wear my own Yankees cap.

In the early 1960s, wearing a cap that symbolized "Yanqui imperialism" was seen as an act of defiance against the Communist regime. My parents wouldn't let me wear it.

"It's only a baseball team," I would cry. I was too young to understand that I lived under a

regime that had politicized even baseball. My parents were not about to allow me to jeopardize the family's chances of leaving Cuba over a baseball cap.

"I'll buy you a better one when we get to Miami," my father told me. "And there you can wear it all the time."

He did. And I still do -- a bigger size. It's a symbol of my family's struggle for freedom.

Before my father died in Miami in 1987, whenever he wanted to cheer me up about the prospects for a free Cuba, he would tell me, "The Yankees won today." It was our private joke.

On the night in the summer of 1977 when I moved from Florida to New York, I returned a U-

Haul that I'd towed from Miami and then drove directly to Yankee Stadium. I bought a ticket and a new baseball cap, and paid my respects.

But for many years, I've been whining about not having enough Latinos on the team. Frankly, my allegiance was often torn when the Yankees played a team with lots more Latinos on the roster. And that's playing American League teams. In the National League, teams like the Dodgers and the Pirates had many more Latinos.

The Yankees always had one or two Latino starters. But in a stadium surrounded by a predominantly Latino neighborhood, it seemed incomprehen-

ble that an effort was not being made to recruit more Latino players. Yankee owner George Steinbrenner has never liked his Bronx neighbors, so he was in no hurry to please them.

I don't think it was affirmative action that made the Yankees who they are today. It was the overwhelming amount of Latino talent now in professional baseball.

We've come a long way. Now the Yankees are one of the most Latino teams in baseball. Now the Yankee dugout is bilingual. Now I love my team for many different reasons: Tino Martínez on first; Luis Sojo on second; Bernie Williams in center field; Jorge Posada behind home plate; Orlando "El Duque" Hernández on the mound; with Mariano Rivera ready to relieve and José Canseco as a designated hitter,

although he has been left off the roster for the league championship series.

With talent from several countries, the Latino Yankees represent the diversity of their community. They are a source of pride to many Latinos, the kind of nationalist pride that is common in all sports and nationalities.

When El Duque is pitching, the Yankees can have as many as six Latino players (seven with Canseco) in the top 11 positions, including the designated hitter and the closing reliever. To find a New York baseball roster with as many Latinos, you'd probably have to go back to the days of the Negro leagues.

Times have really changed. U.S. baseball is much closer to the way it was when I was a boy in Havana. Now they play salsa and merengue in Yankee Stadium when Latino players go up to bat. That's what I heard at Havana's El Cerro Stadium during the last time I was there. Pero me sentí feliz de ver que Lasorda y su equipo lo convirtieron en una victoria para la libertad.

Ustedes podrían decirme: "Es sólo un equipo de béisbol." Y yo podría decirles algo sobre la gorra de béisbol que yo no podía usar.

(Miguel Pérez es columnista de The Record en Bergen, Nueva Jersey.

ing my youth.

Back then, the teams play winter league ball in Cuba included several non-Latino players. One of the *Americanos* on a Cuban team went on to manage in the World Series and, a few weeks ago, the Olympic Games in Australia. When Tommy Lasorda led the U.S. team to victory over the Cuban national team at the Olympics, and dedicated the victory to Cuban exiles, the spirit of my Yankee cap was revived again. I could hear my father saying, "The Yankees won today."

Lasorda has been criticized by non-Cubans and praised by grateful Cuban Americans. The naive critics said he should not have politicized the game. But Lasorda knows who politicized it first. He knows how Castro has made sports an instrument for promoting his dictatorship. Had the Cuban team won, Castro would have treated it as a victory over Yankee imperialism.

When the U.S. squad beat the Cubans in the Olympics, I felt sorry for my fellow Cubans, some of whom may have been trying to defect. But I was happy to see Lasorda and his team make it a victory for freedom.

"It's only a baseball team," you might tell me.

And I might tell you a little something about the baseball cap I couldn't wear.

"Los Yankees Ganaron Hoy"

Por Miguel Pérez

Ellos han sido mi equipo favorito de béisbol durante tanto tiempo como puedo recordar. Mucho antes de que yo conociera los nombres de la mayor parte de los demás equipos, o de las ciudades que ellos representaban, ya era un fanático de los Yankees de Nueva York -- allá en mi Cuba natal.

Cuando era niño, puedo recordar el haber tenido, pero sin poder ponérmela, mi propia gorra de los Yankees.

A principios del decenio de 1960, el llevar una gorra que simbolizara al "imperialismo yanqui" se veía como un acto de desafío contra el régimen comunista. Mis padres no me dejaban usarla.

Yo protestaba: "Es sólo un equipo de béisbol." Pero yo era demasiado joven para comprender que vivía bajo un régimen que había entronizado a la política hasta en el béisbol. Mis padres no querían permitirme que pusiera en peligro las oportunidades de la familia para salir de Cuba, por cuenta de una gorra de béisbol.

"Te compraré una gorra mejor cuando lleguemos a Miami," me decía mi padre. "Y allá puedes usarla todo el tiempo."

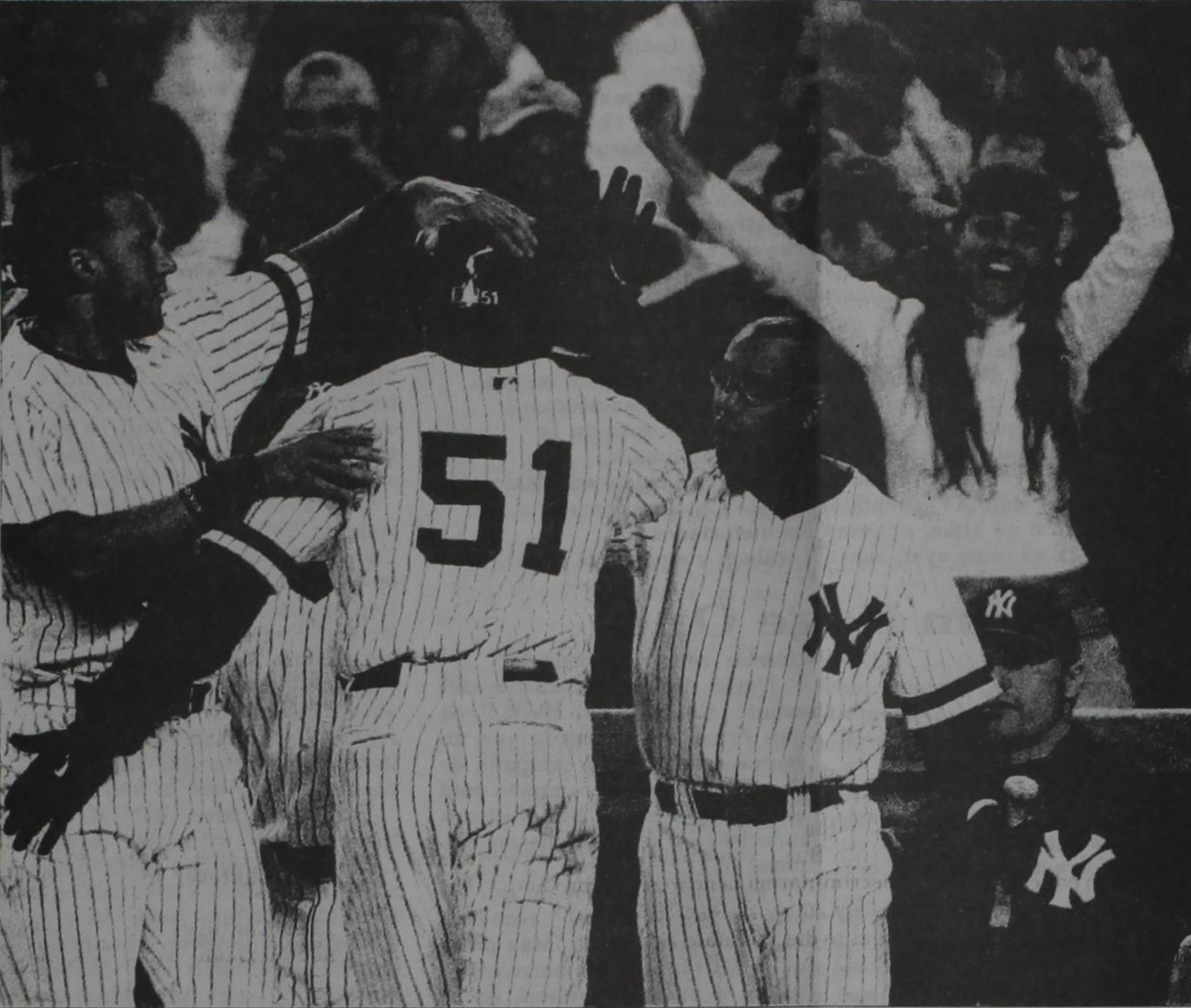
El lo hizo. Y yo la llevo todavía -- una de mayor tamaño. Es un símbolo de la lucha de mi familia por la libertad.

Antes de que mi padre muriera en Miami en 1987, siempre que él quería alegrarme sobre las perspectivas para una Cuba libre, él me decía: "Los Yankees ganaron hoy." Era nuestra broma particular.

En la noche de verano de 1977 en que me mudé de la Florida para Nueva York, devolví un remolque U-Haul que había llevado desde Miami y conduje directamente al Yankee Stadium. Compré un boleto y una nueva gorra de béisbol, y presenté mis respetos.

Pero durante muchos años, he estado quejándome de no tener a suficientes latinos en el equipo. Francamente, mi fidelidad fué rasgada a menudo cuando los Yankees jugaban contra otro equipo que tuviera muchos más latinos en su lista de jugadores. Y eso ocurre en los equipos de la Liga Americana (American League). En la Liga Nacional, los equipos tales como los Dodgers y los Piratas han tenido muchos latinos más.

Los Yankees siempre tuvieron uno o dos lanzadores "de comienzo" latinos. Pero en un estadio rodeado por una vecindad predominantemente latina, parecía incomprensible que no estuviera haciéndose una gestión para reclutar a más jugadores latinos.



Al propietario de los Yankees, George Steinbrenner, nunca le han gustado sus vecinos del Bronx, de modo que él no tenía prisa por complacerlos.

No creo que fuera la acción afirmativa lo que hizo de los Yankees lo que son hoy. Fué la cantidad abrumadora de talento latino que hay ahora en el béisbol profesional.

Hemos recorrido un gran trecho. Ahora los Yankees son uno de los equipos más latinos del béisbol. Ahora el cobertizo de espera de los Yankees es bilingüe. Ahora quiero a mi equipo por muchas razones diferentes: Tino Martínez en la primera base; Luis Sojo en la segunda base; Bernie Williams en el jardín central; Jorge Posada detrás del "home plate"; Orlando "El Duque" Hernández en el montículo de los lanzadores; con Mariano Rivera listo para relevar y José Canseco de "batedor designado," aunque él ha quedado fuera de la lista para la serie de campeonato de la liga.

Con talento procedente de varios países, los Yankees latinos representan a la diversidad de su comunidad. Ellos son una fuente de orgullo para muchos latinos, la clase de orgullo nacionalista que es común a todos los deportes y a todas las nacionalidades.

Cuando "El Duque" está lan-

zando, los Yankees pueden tener tantos como seis jugadores latinos (siete con Canseco) en las 11 posiciones principales, incluyendo al "batedor designado" y al "relevo de cierre." Para encontrar una lista de beisboleros en Nueva York con tantos latinos, habría que ir probablemente de regreso a los días de las ligas de negros.

Los tiempos han cambiado en realidad. El béisbol estadounidense está mucho más cerca de lo que era cuando yo era niño en La Habana. Ahora tocan salsa y merengue en el Estadio de los Yankees cuando los jugadores latinos van al bate. Eso es lo que yo escuchaba en el Estadio del Cerro, en La Habana, durante mi juventud.

Entonces, los equipos que jugaban en la liga de invierno de béisbol en Cuba incluían a varios jugadores que no eran latinos. Uno de los "americanos" de un equipo cubano llegó a ser el administrador de la Serie Mundial y, hace pocos años, de los Juegos Olímpicos de Australia.


Cuando Tommy Lasorda llevó al equipo de los Estados Unidos a la victoria contra el equipo nacional de Cuba en las olimpiadas y dedicó la victoria a los exiliados cubanos, el espíritu de mi gorra de los Yankees revivió otra vez. Yo podía oír a mi padre diciendo: "Los Yankees ganaron hoy."

En el circuito de charlas por radio en español, LaSorda ha sido criticado por los no cubanos y elogiado por los cubano-estadounidenses agradecidos. Los críticos ingenuos dijeron que él no debería haber inmiscuído a la política en el juego.

Pero Lasorda sabe quién hizo eso primero. El sabe que Fidel Castro ha hecho del deporte un instrumento para promover a su dictadura. Si el equipo cubano hubiera ganado, Castro lo hubiera presentado como una victoria sobre "el imperialismo yanqui."

Cuando el equipo de los Estados Unidos derrotó a los cubanos en las Olimpiadas, me sentí triste por mis paisanos, algunos

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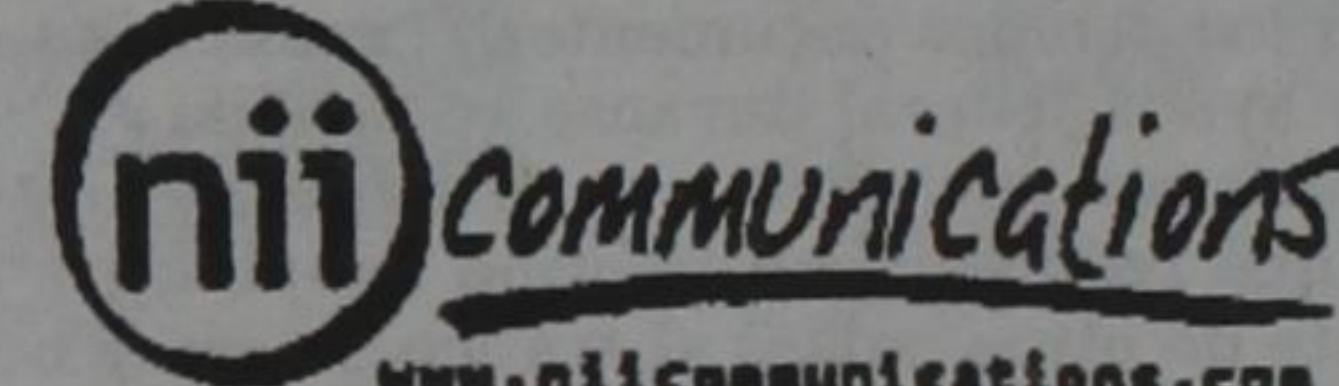
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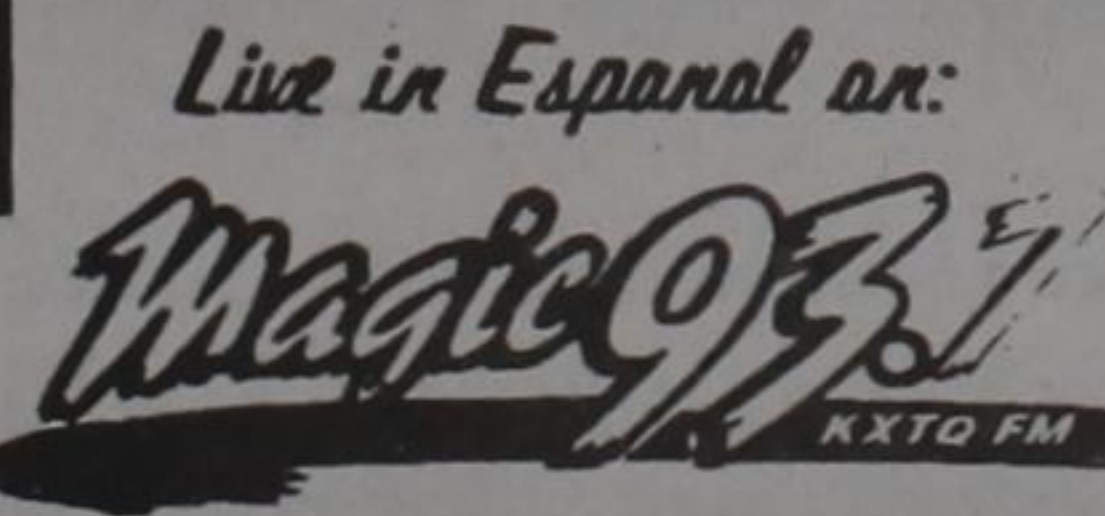
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Noticias Breves

EEUU: LEY CONTRA TRÁFICO DE SERES HUMANOS

por Jim Lobe

Washington, -- El Congreso de Estados Unidos aprobó una ley que refuerza las penas contra el tráfico internacional de mujeres y niños con fines de prostitución y otros tipos de trabajo esclavo. La ley permitirá que las víctimas de estos delitos obtengan la residencia permanente en este país, a cambio de que cooperen con las autoridades para capturar a los traficantes.

La ley también destina casi 100 millones de dólares para combatir el tráfico internacional de seres humanos en los próximos dos años. "Esta es la legislación más significativa en materia de derechos humanos de este Congreso. El proyecto desafía a la mayor manifestación de esclavitud moderna en el mundo", aseguró el senador republicano Sam Brownback.

El tráfico de seres humanos sigue aumentando, según la Agencia Central de Inteligencia (CIA).

Hasta dos millones de personas, principalmente mujeres y niños, cruzan ilegalmente las fronteras nacionales cada año en busca de lo que creen será trabajo legítimo, pero luego sus empleadores los obligan a trabajar en la prostitución u otro tipo de trabajo forzado.

De esa cantidad, unos 50.000 llegan a Estados Unidos cada año, en su mayoría de Europa oriental, la ex Unión Soviética, México y Asia, según la CIA, que concluyó que el tráfico de seres humanos es la fuente de ganancias de mayor crecimiento para el crimen organizado en el mundo.

Se calcula que la práctica ilegal genera 7.000 millones de dólares por año.

El estudio de la CIA mencionó casos de mujeres letonas llevadas a Chicago donde fueron obligadas a bailar desnudas en clubes privados, y de mujeres mexicanas, algunas de ellas niñas de 14 años, traídas con la promesa de emplearlas como domésticas pero vendidas directamente a prostíbulos.

Si se resisten, corren peligro de sufrir lesiones o incluso la muerte, o se les dice que sus familias sufrirán represalias. Si aún no cooperan, son golpeadas y con frecuencia violadas, según expertos y víctimas que atestiguan ante el Congreso este año.

Otras llegan virtualmente como esclavas de fábricas o casas que las explotan. En 1995, 72 trabajadores tailandeses fueron descubiertos en un pueblo cercano a Los Angeles donde trabajaban en una textil durante 20 horas diarias por 69 centavos la hora, en un complejo cercado por alambres de púa para evitar su fuga.

En otro caso mencionado por la CIA, una organización nigeriana cobraba a parejas de padres hasta 12.000 dólares para llevar a sus hijos a estudiar a Nueva York. Pero una vez en Estados Unidos, los niños eran obligados a trabajar como empleados domésticos.

El tráfico de seres humanos aumenta en este país y en el resto del mundo, según el informe que precisó que Tailandia, Vietnam, China, México, Rusia y República Checa son las principales fuentes de traficantes que traen personas para trabajar contra su voluntad en Estados Unidos.

La CIA halló que los sistemas de justicia y de inmigración de este país no están preparados para combatir el tráfico debido a la confusión sobre la jurisdicción, la dificultad de investigar y procesar los casos, y la poca severidad de las penas.

Hasta el momento, las penas máximas eran 10 años de prisión para los traficantes o empleadores descubiertos.

"Es muy raro que los traficantes sean castigados. Las penas son ligeras y no reflejan la violación de los derechos humanos perpetrada contra las víctimas", según el senador demócrata Paul Wellstone.

Las víctimas, sobre todo aquellas obligadas a trabajar en la prostitución, son deportadas de inmediato a sus países donde es poco probable que haya cambiado la situación económica que las llevó a caer en manos de los traficantes en primer lugar.

La deportación también impide que atestigüen contra los traficantes en Estados Unidos.

La nueva ley intenta resolver estos problemas. La pena máxima para los traficantes o el trabajo esclavo se duplica a 20 años, con la posibilidad de prisión perpetua en los casos de muerte, secuestro, violación sexual o intento de homicidio.

El proyecto crea la visa "T" para las víctimas de los traficantes que les permitiría quedarse en Estados Unidos aunque hayan ingresado al país sin los debidos documentos. También estarían habilitadas a recibir ayuda federal durante su estadía.

El proyecto también crea una oficina en el Departamento de Estado (cancillería) que redactará un informe anual sobre la evolución del combate de otros países al tráfico de seres humanos. También autoriza a negarle ayuda a aquellos gobiernos que no cooperen en este ámbito.

Se destinarán 94,5 millones de dólares para cooperar con otros países en la lucha contra este tipo de tráfico.

"Esta legislación establece un enfoque totalmente diferente al castigar a los perpetradores, no a las víctimas. También facilita la concientización sobre el tráfico de tipo sexual en todo el mundo", dijo Brownback.

La Cámara de Representantes aprobó el proyecto con un solo voto en contra esta semana. Junto al proyecto se aprobaron 3.400 millones de dólares para la Ley contra la Violencia contra la Mujer.

El dinero se utilizará en los próximos cinco años para financiar la lucha contra este tipo de violencia en Estados Unidos, incluso el apoyo a refugios y servicios para mujeres golpeadas, información pública y la capacitación de jueces.

ORGULLO POR INDÍGENAS DEL PASADO Y RACISMO HOY

por Diego Cevallos

México, 13 oct (IPS) Los mexicanos están orgullosos de sus antepasados indígenas, pero marginan a los actuales. Los 508 años de la llegada de Cristóbal Colón a América, cumplidos hoy, fueron una ocasión más de sufrimiento para la mayoría de los nativos.

"Colón, 12 de octubre, América, yo no sé nada de eso", fue la respuesta de María Ojeda, una indígena que emigró hace cinco años a la capital desde el estado sureño de Chiapas, consultada sobre el significado de la fecha.

Como todos los días, la nativa, que carga un pequeño bebé en su espalda, estuvo parada junto a un semáforo pidiendo dinero a los automovilistas y soportando insultos.

A poca distancia de allí, menos de 500 integrantes de organizaciones indígenas realizaron una marcha callejera para recordar la fecha, que, según dijeron, no merece ningún festejo.

En otras ciudades del país se registraron manifestaciones similares, pero con baja participación, mucho ruido y vigilancia policial.

Ojeda, de 42 años, es una de los 10 millones de indígenas que viven en México. En ese grupo, 53 por ciento de las mujeres y 33 por ciento de los hombres son analfabetos.

Ochenta y tres por ciento de los 803 municipios con población mayoritariamente indígena sufren "alta" o "muy alta marginación", según expertos.

La población mexicana nativa habla más de 80 lenguas y dialectos, y el estatal Instituto Indigenista la divide en 62 etnias. Cada una de ellas representa una cultura milenaria.

En las escuelas se inculca a los niños el orgullo por ese origen, por aquellos pueblos que construyeron grandes ciudades y que desarrollaron avanzados conocimientos. Pero en el presente, ser indígena implica menores ingresos y rechazo social.

El Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas informó que 48,5 por ciento de los indígenas no recibe ingresos por el trabajo que desempeña. El resto, que sí los obtiene, recibe cifras ínfimas.

Las investigaciones indican, además, que sólo pequeños porcentajes de los nativos integran organizaciones políticas o sociales y que, si lo hacen, no conocen bien su significado.

Con excepción de grupos del sur del país, como el rebelde Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, en general los indígenas no participan en organizaciones de relevancia política nacional.

Una encuesta difundida por el diario El Universal indicó este jueves que 56,6 por ciento de la población considera que en México hay racismo. Además, 61,1 por ciento cree que existe discriminación por el color de la piel.

Los indígenas están en una clara situación de discriminación y desventaja y pocos lo pueden negar, dijo Oscar González, presidente de la Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos.

En México, como en otros países de América Latina, uno de los insultos considerados más ofensivo es "indio".

Aunque la cuestión indígena está presente en forma cíclica entre los políticos, especialmente en fechas como el 12 de octubre, en el Congreso legislativo y en el gobierno la representación de la población nativa es ínfima.

Lejos de la fiebre de las celebraciones de los 500 años de la llegada de los españoles a América, registradas en 1992, ahora los nativos mexicanos vieron pasar la fecha sin mayores ofertas.

No hubo promesas específicas de nadie, y sí algunos pronunciamientos en el Congreso, donde diputados pidieron al presidente electo Vicente Fox, quien asume el 1 de diciembre, no olvidar a los indígenas.

Por la situación de hambre, miseria y violencia extrema en que se encuentran los indígenas, se puede afirmar que en México existe un "apartheid de facto" contra los nativos, sostuvo la Asamblea Nacional Indígena Plural por la Autonomía.

Las raíces del racismo, velado o evidente, que existe en México vienen desde el siglo XV, cuando la Iglesia Católica discutía si los nativos tenían o no alma, apuntan los historiadores.

"Este día 12 es como ayer, sigo sin trabajo y aquí en la calle", dijo la indígena Ojeda.

From Page One

Los estados en disputa de Pennsylvania y Michigan tienen poblaciones en edad electoral cada vez mayores. En 1996, tenían 171,000 y 165,000 respectivamente. Sólo algo más de la mitad de los latinos que viven en cada uno de estos estados se han inscripto.

En Nueva York, los latinos de edad electoral ascienden a 1,800,000, y el 38 por ciento de ellos están inscriptos. Ellos pueden ser la diferencia en si Hillary Clinton llega a ser la Senadora novicia de Nueva York, dice González, del instituto.

"Ellos son suficientes como para significar una diferencia en una contienda apretada," dice él.

Junto con cientos de gestiones locales y regionales, el proyecto Voto Latino 2000 de Inscripción y Enseñanza del Suroeste (SVREP en inglés) se concentrará ahora en llevar a los latinos a las urnas electorales el 7 de noviembre. Ellos usarán guías para electores, envíos por correo, recordatorios telefónicos y anuncios de servicio público.

Un análisis terminado en este verano por el Instituto de Políticas Tomás Rivera, radicado en California, sobre las gestiones para movilizar a los electores latinos en 1996, destacó la eficacia de la comunicación personal, pero halló que, debido a que la misma lleva tiempo y es costosa, sólo uno de cada cinco latinos fué alcanzado por las organizaciones de California y la Florida. En Texas, la cifra fué uno de cada cuatro.

Las encuestas indican que Gore o Bush tienen ventajas sólidas en los tres estados con las mayores poblaciones latinas: Gore en California y Nueva York y Bush en Texas. Por lo tanto, las campañas presidenciales están concentrando una gran parte de sus recursos en el Medio Oeste y otros estados en discusión, que tienen poblaciones latinas más pequeñas.

"En esos estados donde no la había hace cinco años," dice Angela Acosta, directora de relaciones comunitarias de SVREP. "Debido a que esta contienda es tan apretada, los candidatos no pueden dar al voto hispano por sentado."

Para los organizadores como Napoleón Pisano, el final del proyecto de inscripción significó que él y de 25 a 30 otros voluntarios de Mesa, Arizona, ya no tenían que capear el calor del desierto, de 100 grados Fahrenheit, para inscribir electores. Ellos anduvieron también de puerta en puerta en las vecindades predominantemente latinas, inscribiendo a los electores frente a las tiendas e iglesias, así como en los festivales al aire libre.

"Ha sido una gestión de mucho tiempo," dice Pisano, coordinador de proyectos de SVREP en el Valle del Este.

Los latinos forman 711,000 de la población de Arizona, pero sólo el 32.4 por ciento de ellos estuvieron inscriptos en las últimas elecciones presidenciales, según el Censo de los Estados Unidos. De los inscriptos, el 71 por ciento votó.

From Page One

and 3 million Latinos live in the Midwest.

"There's no doubt in my mind, especially in these battleground states, any significant voting bloc can shift the election one way or the other," he notes. "We've had statewide elections in Illinois where the difference was 5,000 votes."

Battleground states of Pennsylvania and Michigan have growing Latino voting-age populations. In 1996, they stood at 171,000 and 165,000, respectively. Just over half of the Latinos living in each of these states are registered.

In New York, voting-age Latinos number 1.8 million, with 37.8 percent of them registered. They may be the difference whether Hillary Clinton becomes New York's junior senator, says the institute's González. "They're enough to make a difference in a close race," Andrade says.

Along with hundreds of local and regional efforts, the national Southwest Voter Registration Education Project's "Latino Vote 2000" will now concentrate on getting Latinos to the polls on Nov. 7. They will use voter guides, mailings, telephone reminders and public service announcements.

While SVREP is nonpartisan, Melissa Romero, its communications director, points out that other Latino groups will be participating in hundreds of partisan get-out-the-vote campaigns.

An analysis completed this summer by the California-based Tomás Rivera Policy Institute on 1996 Latino voter mobilization efforts highlighted the effectiveness of personal contact, but found that because it is time-consuming and costly, only about one in five Latinos was reached by organizations in California and Florida. In Texas, the figure was one in four.

Polls indicate that of the three states with the largest Latino populations, Gore holds a sizable lead in California and New York, while Bush does so in Texas. Therefore, the presidential campaigns are concentrating a large proportion of their resources on Midwestern and other toss-up states with smaller Latino populations.

"In those battleground states, you have Latinos where you didn't have them even five years ago," says SVREP community relations director Angela Acosta. "Because this race is so close, candidates cannot take



the Latino vote for granted."

For organizers such as Napoleón Pisano, the end of the registration project this month meant that he and about 25 to 30 other volunteers in Mesa, Ariz., no longer had to brave the 100-degree desert heat to register voters. They walked door to door in predominantly Latino neighborhoods, signing up voters outside stores and churches, and at outdoor festivals.

"It's been a time-consuming effort," says Pisano, the project coordinator of the East Valley SVREP. Latinos constitute 711,000 of Arizona's population, but only 32.4 percent of voting-age Latinos were registered in the last presidential election, according to the U.S. Census. Of those registered, 71 percent voted.



Increasing the number of Latino voters will give them a stronger voice, he says. "Political parties have to notice that Latinos care. To say 'We have to include them' only makes sense."

David Aldape, chairman of the SVREP steering committee in San Francisco, recalls a representative from the Gore camp telling him that the campaign is targeting the undecided voters in toss-up states.

"We're tired of being taken for granted," he responded. "Sooner or later, people are going to get rubbed the wrong way -- what they're doing, it's a gamble."

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La Paternidad y El Matrimonio De la Bruja

Por Victor Landa

Algunas veces se trata de llegar a la casa desde el trabajo, agotado, y hallar la fuerza para estar presente en su desbarajuste maravilloso. Algunas veces se trata de sentarse al borde de sus camas por la noche, sólo mirándoles.

En mayor medida, es una montaña rusa de gozo y angustia.

El otro día, eso tomó la forma del matrimonio de una bruja, o tan próximo a uno como puedo recordar. Cuando yo era niño se decía, "Cuando llueve con sol, se casa una bruja." Lo celebrábamos descalzos, haciendo salpicar los riachuelos cálidos que se formaban en las cunetas de las calles. Jugábamos hasta que la lluvia se cansaba de caer y el sol predominaba, haciendo fantasmas de vapor que se levantaban desde el asfalto.

En aquel día, debe haber sido la reina de las brujas la que por fin atrapó a su rey. Bajo el más brillante de los soles del sur de Texas, las nubes oscuras se abrieron, asentaron el polvo y detuvieron al viento. Se acostumbraba decir que el ruido de la lluvia golpeando al piso en un día como ése sonaba como "los aplausos del diablo." De ser así, el diablo parecía estar muy complacido en aquel día. Mi hijo estaba conmigo cuando eso ocurrió, y me miraba buscando seguridad.

De modo que me metí en la lluvia, levanté los brazos, incliné la cabeza hacia atrás y saboreé la celebración.

"¿Papá?" La lluvia estaba empezando a correr por los costados de sus mejillas.

"Ve a buscar tu pelota de balmopí, mijo. Vamos a mojarlos."

No creo haber visto nunca al niño correr tan rápidamente. El lanzaba tiros largos, se preparaba para agarrar la pelota y rodaba sobre la hierba húmeda para agregar dramatismo, y sonreía, una sonrisa enorme mayor que su cara, más cálida que la lluvia.

Entonces él hizo algo típico de un niño. Se detuvo mirándome, ridículo en la lluvia como yo estaba, con la camisa empapada, el cabello chorreando agua. Caminé hacia mí sin decir una palabra. Puso sus brazos alrededor de mí durante pocos segundos y después retrocedió y lanzó una espiral perfecta.

Ahí está en una cáscara de nuez, pensé yo.

Me pregunto, ¿por qué tantos hombres de mi generación se hallan tan temerosos de tales

momentos? Parecemos haber olvidado que la paternidad es un privilegio, un don que no ha de tomarse a la ligera y que debería, como su momento más gozoso, ser tan sencillo como jugar bajo la lluvia.

Los hechos escuetos no mienten. Casi todos los hombres que se hallan encerrados en las cárceles de nuestro país son hombres que no tuvieron un padre presente en sus vidas cuando más lo necesitaban. En gran medida, el problema más apremiante a que se enfrenta nuestra sociedad es el número cada vez mayor de familias sin padres, de niños abandonados por hombres.

Hay algo, un conocimiento, una aceptación, una visión, que sólo los hombres pueden dar a los niños. Bien puede ser algo puramente tribal, gutural, cargado de testosterona, y de ser así, que sea. No tiene nada que ver con la versión chapucera del padre encarnada por "Dagwood Bumstead" (el personaje de las tiras cómicas llamado "Lorenzo" en español). Tiene que ver con el anclaje, la orientación, el ejemplo que debe ser un hombre. Tiene que ver con hallar el espacio para aullar a las estrellas y saber cómo estar callado sin tener que llenar el silencio.

Tiene que ver con reconstruir el respeto a la paternidad, con recordar (re-memorar) lo que ha estado desvinculado durante demasiado tiempo.

La premisa es cautivadoramente sencilla. Un niño que no está dotado adecuadamente de un padre no sabrá cómo estar de pie por sí mismo, cómo ser su propio guía.

Es un desperdicio, un recurso empleado insuficientemente. Cientos de miles de hombres que sólo estuvieron presentes en la concepción de sus hijos, desaparecieron después. El vacío que han dejado es devastador.

La cara de la paternidad ha tenido que cambiar. La cara de un padre ahora es la de una madre soltera, las caras de tíos, vecinos, padrinos, maestros, preceptores o hermanos. Nuestros hijos nos necesitan, para mirarnos a la cara y hallar presencia, para conocer los límites, la moderación, la fuerza y el afecto.

Nos necesitan para orientarlos hacia la lluvia cálida del verano, cuando se asienta el polvo y el viento se detiene, para extender nuestros brazos, mirar al cielo y bailar en el matrimonio de la bruja.

Fatherhood and the Witch's Wedding

By Victor Landa

Sometimes it's coming home from work, drained, and finding the strength to be present in their wonderful mayhem. Sometimes it's sitting on the edge of their bed at night, just looking at them.

Mostly it's a roller coaster of joy and anguish.

The other day it took the form of a witch's marriage, or as close to one as I remember. *Quando llueve con sol, they'd say when I was a boy, se casa una bruja.* When it rains and the sun is out, a witch is getting married.

We'd celebrate in bare feet, splashing in the warm rivulets that ran along the sides of the street. We'd play until the rain tired and the sun prevailed, making vapor ghosts that lifted from the asphalt.

On that day, it must have been the queen of witches who finally trapped her king. Under the brightest of South Texas suns the dark clouds opened up, settled the dust and stilled the wind.

They used to say that the sound of the rain hitting the ground on such a day was *los aplausos del diablo*, the devil clapping his approval. If so, he seemed very pleased that day. My son was with me when it happened, and he looked up at me for reassurance.

So I stepped out into the rain, threw my arms out, tilted my head back and tasted the celebration.

"Dad?" The rain was starting to run down the sides of his cheeks.

"Go get your football, mijo, we're gonna get wet."

I don't think I've ever seen the boy run so fast. He threw long bombs, he dove for catches and rolled in the wet grass for added drama, and he smiled, a huge smile bigger than his face, warmer than the rain.

Then he did a typical boy thing. He stood there, looking at me, as ridiculous in the rain as I was, his shirt drenched, hair dripping. He walked toward me, didn't say a word. He put his arms around me for a few seconds, then walked back and lobbed a perfect spiral.

There it is in a nutshell, I thought.

I wonder why so many men of my generation are so afraid of such moments? We seem to have forgotten that fatherhood is a

privilege, a gift that's not to be taken lightly and that should, at its most joyous moment, be as lighthearted as playing in the rain.

The hard facts tell no lie. Almost all of the men who are locked up in our nation's jails are men who did not have a father present in their lives when they needed one the most. By far, the most pressing problem facing our society is the growing number of fatherless families, of boys abandoned by men.

There is something, a knowledge, an acceptance, a vision that only men can give to boys. It may very well be a purely tribal, guttural, testosterone-laden thing, and if it is, so be it. It has nothing to do with the bumbling "Dagwood Bumstead" version of Dad. It has to do with grounding, with guidance, with modeling what a man should be. It has to do with finding the space to howl at the stars and knowing how to be still without having to fill the silence.

It has to do with rebuilding respect for fatherhood, with remembering (re-memoring) what has been disjointed for far too

long. The premise is disarmingly simple. A boy who isn't properly fathered will not know how to stand alone, to be his own guide.

It is a waste, an underutilized resource. Hundreds upon thousands of men who were present only at the conception of their children, then disappeared. The void left is devastating.

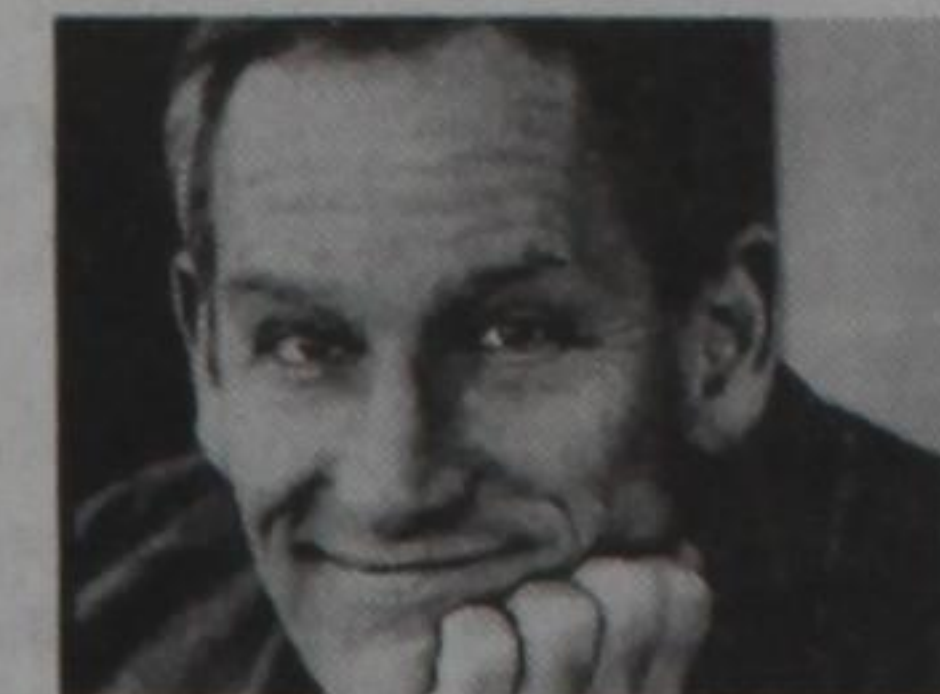
The face of fatherhood has had to change. The face of a father now is that of a single mother, of uncles, neighbors, padrinos, teachers, mentors or brothers. Our boys need us, to look us in the eye and find presence, to know limits, temperance, strength and affection.

They need us to guide them out into the warm summer rain, when the dust is settled and the wind is still, to stretch our arms, look up at the sky, and dance at the *bruja's* wedding.

(Victor Landa is news director of Telemundo affiliate KVDA-60 in San Antonio, Texas.)

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Letters to the Editor About Voting

Tonight as the "good Ole" white folks peppered our "hood" with political signs, a flash back of the pool tax days crossed my mind.

Our "patron" always paid my grandparents pool tax and on election day they could vote for whoever the patron wanted to win.

My grandparents couldn't read or write so he gave them the names, written on a small piece of paper, to compare with those names on the ballot.

I pray that we today study the issues and outcome of all the political debates and seek what is in our best interest. Not only for one person but for our families and people as a whole.

We must realize that we need better paying jobs not welfare reforms. We need better law enforcement not killer cops and we need to have a better relationship with our law enforcement so our people see them as protectors not our enemy.

Just today I read of cops in Clovis using shotguns that shot bean bags instead of real bullets. I really think that this should be brought into Lubbock in order to avoid deadly force.

Our children are the future. Lets give them a chance in Life.

Don't vote for the Party's sake. Vote for what is good to us - the people. Make up your own mind. God bless you.

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¿Que Pasa?

Large Item Buy Back To Begin

City of Lubbock Solid Waste Department and the County of Lubbock Large Item Buy Back will begin Monday, Oct. 30 and run through Saturday, Nov. 4, 2000.

The Buy Back is a successful program that helps prevent illegal dumping of mattresses, large furniture items and appliances that often are dumped in the alleyways, vacant lots and county roads around the city.

Items eligible for buy back include mattresses, box springs, couches, chairs, appliances and other household items that are too large to place into the dumpsters. This program is not for businesses, and items from commercial establishments are not eligible. City and county residents will be paid \$2.00 for each large item that they bring to the landfill for proper disposal.

Drop-off hours at the landfill, 8245 North Avenue P, are 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday, and 8 am to noon on Saturday. For more information call 775-2482.

Lubbock Arts Seeks Community Participation

The Lubbock Arts Alliance is inviting the community to participate in a exhibition for the *Dia de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) celebration on Nov. 2. During the event, the Alliance Gallery, at 2109 Broadway, will be the site of a community *ofrenda* or offering table constructed to honor the loved ones.

Dia de los Muertos is a time to remember our loved ones and the joy they brought to our lives.

Ofrendas for Dia de los Muertos are a traditionally a display of photographs, mementos, flowers, and special foods commemorating those who have died.

The deadline for bringing items to share by the Lubbock Arts Alliance office is Fri., Oct. 27. For more information contact the Lubbock ARTs Alliance at 744-2787.

A Kite for the Day of the Dead

The Buddy Holly Center will host a *Kite for the Day of the Dead* on Sat., Oct. 28 from 10 am to 12 noon. The kite workshop will allow ages 8 and up to explore handmade kites used in Day of the Dead celebrations. There is a \$10.00 fee. For more information call 767-2686.

Availability of Emergency Funds

Guadalupe Economic Services Corporation (GESC) has received emergency funds to assist low-income clients cope with the significant increases in home energy costs, a result of significant increase in propane fuel.

The primary intent of the emergency funds is to assist qualified low-income households with the purchase of propane fuel.

Priority will be given to those households who heat with propane as well as households containing one or more persons age 60 or above, persons with a disabilities, or small children under six years of age.

For information contact 744-4416 and ask Henry Tarango.

Trejo Supercenter to Host Halloween Carnival

The Maggie Trejo Supercenter, 3200 Amherst, will host a Halloween Carnival on Saturday, Oct. 28, from 2 to 4:30 p.m. The event will consist of activities include games and prizes, a costume contest and lots of food.

The event is geared toward elementary school age children and the cost of the Carnival is the donation of one can of food (or \$1). The canned goods will go the South Plains Food Bank.

Turkeys donated by United Supermarkets will be given as door prizes.

LHCC Election 2000 Candidates Forum Canceled

The Lubbock Hispanic Chamber of Commerce regrets to inform you of the cancellation of the Candidate Forum, which was scheduled for Oct. 25. If you need more information, please call the office at 762-5059.

LHCC Membership Drive 2000

Lubbock Hispanic Chamber of Commerce will host its Annual Membership Drive will be Oct. 25 through Oct. 31. Phone Bank Day will be held on Mon., Oct. 30 from 10 am to 4 pm. LHCC asks for volunteers for this event.

There will be a contest with prizes going to the top two winners bringing in the highest revenue in collected membership dues. The deadline is Oct. 31 at 5 pm all members must be paid by the deadline. New members and renewals that pay on or before Nov. 1, will be eligible to vote in the upcoming LHCC Board Election on Dec. 8.

A membership reception in honor of our new members will be held Fri., Nov. 3 from 5:30-7:00 pm at La Fiesta Restaurant on the corner of 34th & Ave P. Event sponsored by Edison Security.

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