

el Editor

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Lubbock, TX USA

Agency Restructuring Cause Loss of Jobs and Services

by Bidal Agüero

It was introduced as a bill that would merge 12 Texas state agencies in order to save money. Money that during the last legislative session was in short supply after the State Comptroller announced a 10 billion dollar deficit.

HB2292, as it was named by the 78th Legislature, will merge agencies serving the elderly, disabled, poor, children, mentally ill and mentally retarded is expected to begin in January and be completed by next summer.

Legislators expect to save the most money by eliminating 10,000 state jobs of the 50,000 that the agencies currently employ. The plan also will change how services are delivered, how eligibility is determined and includes private companies running call centers.

In Lubbock the plan is expected to affect 209 workers who will lose their jobs from the Department of Human Services. The loss of jobs will drop \$14.1 million dollars from the Lubbock economy and

will result in three DHS centers being closed. The plan was presented to Lubbock on Sept. 17th. The public hearing to discuss the plan was announced on Sept. 16th in the Lubbock AJ.

Many prisons throughout the State have said that not enough time has been given to discuss the complicated plan and its effects on the County. Several who testified asked why the plan dwells so much on the language of business and little on health and human services. They also said the plan leaves gaping holes in addressing serious concerns.

Some of those serious concerns are the fact that there will be reductions in services due to eligibility policy changes. Foremost of those include a total client caseload reduction of 1,158 by 2005. This includes monthly reduction of 137 pregnant women, 168 medically needy and a CHIP enrollment reduction of 1,653 by 2005.

"Accountability is one of my major concerns with this whole reorganization," said Charles Shedd, an employee of the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, an agency that will be split apart. He said private companies, which recently passed legislation suggests could eventually run a state school for the mentally retarded or a state mental hospital, often claim their records are exempt from the government open records laws.

"How will we know how our tax dollars are being spent?" Shedd asked, saying the drafted plan doesn't answer that question. "There is a real concern a lot of citizens of Texas have when you talk about giving public dollars to private companies."

If the Lubbock State School is closed, 830 workers could lose their jobs and the estimated loss of dollars to Lubbock County would be \$14.1 million.

Joe Alexandre, the mayor of

Raymondville in South Texas, said he's worried about more than the closing of the local Department of Human Services, with the advent of a privately run call center deciding who's eligible for services.

"What kind of band-aid will this be for us?" he asked. "How can you justify to the poor and elderly of the cut in services you will be making with such a decision?"

Although HB-2292 is already a law, implementation of this law is going to be a lengthy and complicated process that will take anywhere from one to five years.

The Texas State Employees Union has been leading the fight to have the Legislature reconsider the plan. Members of the group are currently meeting with Lubbock and area County Commissioners to make

them realize the local economic impact, the number of jobs that each community stands to lose and the fact that new taxes will have to be imposed on each county to offset the discontinued state funding.

According to the group's representatives, some Lubbock Commissioners expressed that they have already been having problems with some mentally ill prisoners who had been denied medications because they were no longer qualified for services from MHMR. They also commented that they had already had to raise taxes because of the effects of the bill.

Initiatives in Travis, Bexar and other counties have worked to pass resolutions to encourage the state leadership to at least detain implementation of this bill until

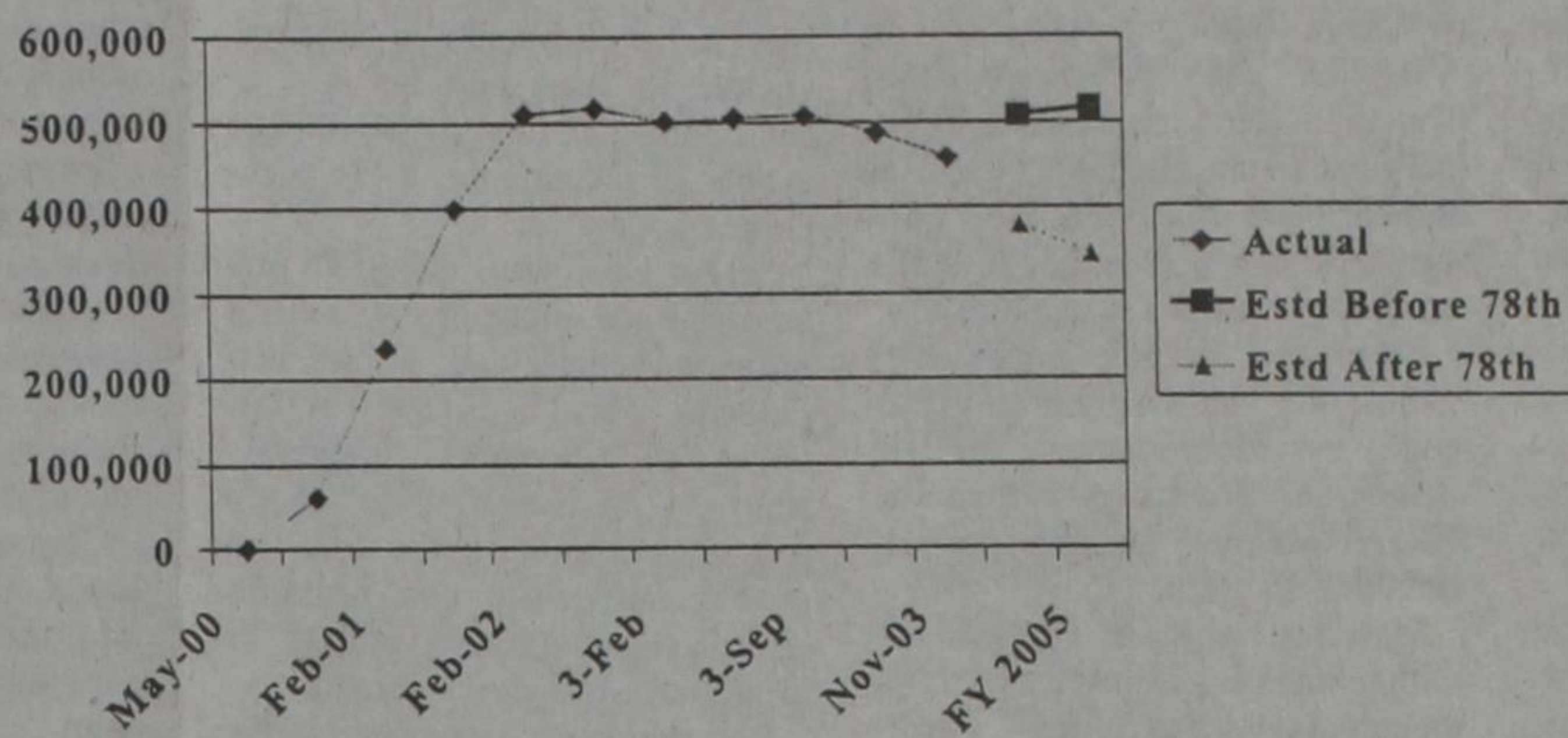
such time that more in depth studies could be conducted on the full impact that this bill will have on counties, cities, and all the people of the state of Texas.

Workers for the TSEU have worked to pass a similar resolution in Lubbock and to start making people grasp the effects.

"When you look at this thing it is massive. Twelve state organizations downsized into four, thousands of people in need of state health and human services being taken off the roles, thousands of state employees losing their jobs, and then all the costs that are going to be passed on to us, the tax payers. If people understand this, perhaps there will be a big enough outcry from the public to at least restrain the realization of this bill."

Texas CHIP Enrollment

May 2000 to November 2002

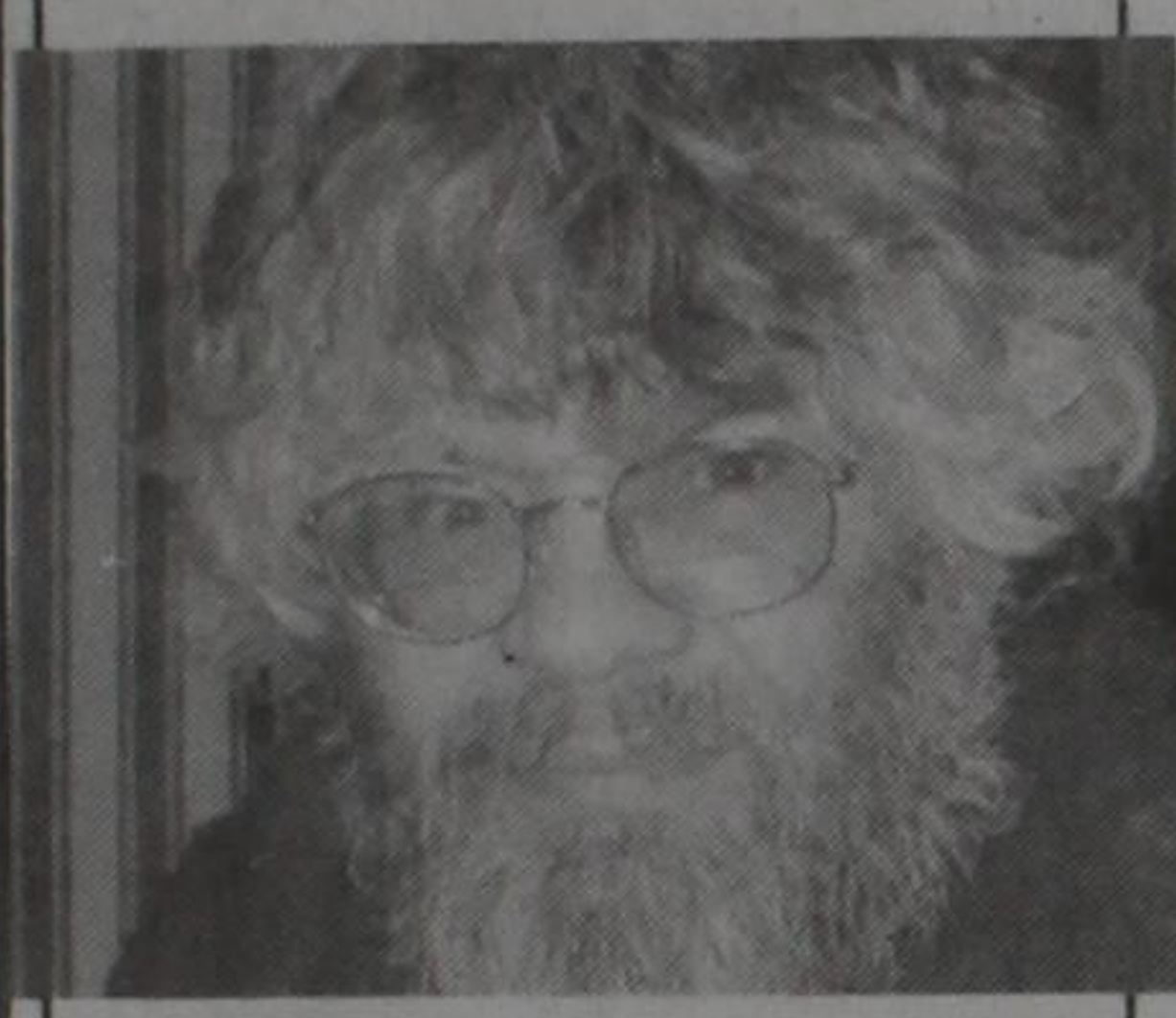


Source: All figures from Texas Health and Human Services Commission

According to official Texas Health and Human Services Commission statistics, average CHIP enrollment will drop in 2005 to around 347,000 which is a one-third reduction from 2003.

the reductions result from a combination of changes, some of which actually terminate CHIP coverage for children who were previously enrolled and others which discourage continued coverage.

Comentarios de Bidal Agüero



It seems that never a week goes by that I or someone from our office helps out one of our friends, a neighbor or just someone that needs it by giving them a ride to the food stamp, the AFDC or the DHS offices.

God knows that there are always plenty of people in Lubbock who need help. As explained to our readers by one of our front page stories, people needing help in the future will not have the opportunity to explain their situation to someone in person or for that matter to anyone from the Department of Human Services.

This will happen as a consequence of a new law that will consolidate 4 different social service agencies into one central agency. The plan to do this has been quickly developed and is expected to go into effect by 2005.

That is if the proponents of the plan are not successful in deterring the plan by convincing State Legislators to reconsider the law after weighing all the damaging effects.

The organization, which has been working to change the Legislation, has most actively been the Texas State Employees Union. They're most pressing reason is because 10,000 of their fellow workers will lose their jobs if the law is completely put into effect.

Of course a second reason is that given all the facts, anyone can plainly see that efforts to balance the State budget do not necessarily have to take the road on the backs of the needy, the handicapped, the poor children, the elderly, the lower and middle income citizens of the State of Texas and especially not on the backs of the hard working employees of the State.

Efforts are currently targeted toward asking County Judges and Commissioners to draft resolutions requesting that legislators reconsider the law. Members of the group have met with local officials to encourage them to start discussions that might lead to developing a resolution and follow the actions of other officials in Bexar, Travis and other counties.

As private citizen we too are encouraged to call or write our representative to deter implementation of the law.

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Southwest is hot spot among Democrats - Arizona, New Mexico are wild-card states

By Sarah Schweitzer Boston Globe Staff

ALBUQUERQUE -- November 24, 2003 - Most can only stumble through stock Spanish phrases -- and none can claim roots here -- but Democratic presidential candidates are flocking to the Southwest, talking water rights, immigration policy, and gaming before audiences of Native Americans, Latinos, and Northern transplants as the region assumes wild-card status in the battle for the Democratic nomination.

Arizona and New Mexico have not been traditional power players in the nomination process, often holding their elections too late for the results to register nationally. But for the 2004 presidential race, both have pushed their elections to the front of the nomination calendar, part of the contingent of seven contests scheduled for Feb. 3, a week after New Hampshire's primary.

Within that group, New Mexico and Arizona are particularly significant because voters there seem more undecided than in South Carolina and Missouri, where US Senator John Edwards and US Representative Richard A. Gephardt, respectively, are native sons, and Oklahoma, where Edwards and US Senator Joseph I. Lieberman have invested heavily.

Winning the Southwest, some political analysts say, would be a dramatic show of strength. With their urban centers and sizable Latino populations, Arizona and New Mexico are possible bellwethers of

the monster electoral prizes of California and Texas, which vote a month later.

As such, Arizona and New Mexico would be vital links for candidates hoping to consolidate early wins, such as former Vermont governor Howard B. Dean, who leads in New Hampshire and narrowly trails Gephardt in Iowa, and those hoping to mount come-from-behind attacks, like retired Army general Wesley K. Clark, who entered the race late and has opted to skip the Iowa caucuses.

"Arizona and New Mexico are good test cases to see if Gephardt or Clark can put up a barrier to Dean," said Ruy Teixeira, a political demographer. "Those are the states where they have to stop him."

Acutely aware of this dynamic, Dean campaigned in New Mexico last week, far from the burghs of New Hampshire, where he has comfortably discussed Iraq and health care.

Standing before Native Americans in Albuquerque, Dean fielded questions about his positions on gaming and tribal sovereignty and his refusal to recognize the Abenaki tribe in Vermont, a decision he attributed to concern about the building of casinos there.

An hour later, he joined Latino leaders at the National Hispanic Cultural Center, basking in the praise of Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico, chairman of the Democratic National Convention. While Richardson said he could not endorse a candidate, he all but threw his support to Dean.

(Continued Page 3)

Sera Una Navidad Muy Oscura

Lideres Republicanos le Niegan a Trabajadores Extensión del Desempleo

Millones de trabajadores latinos no tendrán unos días de fiestas felices sin empleo quienes necesitan de la extensión del seguro por desempleo para poder sus gastos en lo que buscan trabajo. La mayoría republicana en el Congreso rehusó extender los beneficios federales del seguro por desempleo, el cual expira dos días después de Navidad para millones de hispanos y otros trabajadores.

A pesar de que la economía ha tenido un aumento moderado en las semanas recientes, el desempleo entre los latinos sigue en aumento. El 7.4 por ciento de los latinos se encuentra desempleados.

"Es inconcebible para mí que los líderes republicanos estén jugando a ser el Grinch (y robarse las navidades) otra vez," dijo la Líder Demócrata de

la Cámara de Representantes, Nancy Pelosi. "Dos días después de Navidad el programa de extensión del seguro por desempleo se va a expirar - así negándole el beneficio a cerca de 90,000 trabajadores a partir de las semanas siguientes. Luego de seis meses, esto afectará a casi 2.2 millones de estadounidenses."

Desde que el Presidente Bush entró a la Casa Blanca, 3 millones de empleos se han perdido en el sector privado - el peor historial de creación de empleos de cualquier Presidente desde Herbert Hoover. Casi 9 millones de estadounidenses aun permanecen desempleados, un millón y medio de los cuales son latinos.

En octubre, el número de las personas que estaban desempleadas



Esfuerzos por representantes del la Union de Trabajadores de Tejas estan en el proceso de tartar de convencer a los Comisionados de Lubbock y la area que pasen una resolución encontra la implementación de una nueva ley que combinara el trabajo de 12 agencias a cuarto. Las agencias afectadas seran las que sirven a la gente pobre incluyendo niños, ancianos, gente desahilitada y gente con necesidades fuera de su alcance.

Auna que la ley 2292 ya paso en la ultima legislatura, trabajadores de la Union quiere traer rallización al publico que los afectos seran muy severos y que se debe de estudiar mas antes de implemntar. Ellos estan en el proceso de convencer a los Comisionados de Lubbock que deben de pasar una resolución que urge que se delate la implementación de la ley para que se hagan mas estudios en los efectos a la gente.

LÉA EL EDITOR PRIMERO

por mas de 26 semanas, era de 2 millones - el triple que durante los comienzos de la Administración Bush, y permanece aun en los altos niveles en 10 años. En realidad, casi π de los desempleados han estado sin empleo por mas de seis meses. Y cada vez se alarga más y más el tiempo que se tardan en encontrar trabajo.

"Por segundo año consecutivo los republicanos se ganan el 'Grinch Award' - robándole las Navidades a millones de familias trabajadoras al negarle los beneficios de desempleo. Es demasiado para ellos el tener compasión? Las familias trabajadoras necesitan y merecen estos beneficios. Los republicanos necesitan parar de acribillar a las familias trabajadoras con el pretexto de la política partidista," dijo la congresista Linda Sánchez, Vice Presidente del Caucus

Laboral y de las Familias Trabajadoras.

Los demócratas tenemos una agenda que ayudará a las familias de nuestro país. Los congresistas Charlie Rangel (D-NY) y Ben Cardin (D-MD) han presentado un plan que continuará los programas de extensión de beneficios por desempleo por seis meses adicionales, aumentari el tiempo que los trabajadores desempleados pueden obtener los beneficios de 13 a 26 semanas, y provera beneficios por desempleo a 1.4 millones de trabajadores quienes habian agotado sus beneficios federales extendidos.

Hay \$20 mil millones en el fondo federal destinado a los beneficios por desempleo, el cual está financiado por los impuestos por desempleo deducidos de las nóminas de los trabajadores.

Si Martinez se lanza al Senado de EEUU, sera un beneficio "Inmenso" para los republicanos

Por Kevin Eaton

Por lo visto la Casa Blanca se prepara para respaldar al secretario de vivienda y desarrollo urbano, Melquiades "Mel" Martinez quien va en pos de capturar un escaño abierto con la dimisión del senador demócrata de Florida, Bob Graham, el próximo año.

Actualmente no hay ningún hispano que sirva en la cámara superior, de 100 escaños. Como se va perfilando cada vez más el que Martínez se lance, será para los republicanos un beneficio "inmenso" en su plataforma para el 2004, al querer convencer a más electores hispanos que el partido sí que vela por sus intereses.

Activistas de muchos años por el partido demócrata como Andrew Hernández, hoy profesor de ciencias políticas en la St. Mary's University en San Antonio, y como Mickey Ibarra, consultor político, anterior asesor principal al presidente Clinton, utilizaron la palabra "inmenso" para enfatizar la importancia del lanzamiento de Martínez.

Según Hernández, para los hispanos, "Martínez le pone buena cara al partido republicano. La presencia de él hace que todos los candidatos republicanos sean más competitivos".

Ibarra define a Martínez como "un dirigente republicano moderado con experiencia cuya presencia logra unir y no dividir (el partido)". Martínez, cuya historia personal es inspiración para muchos, podría atraer a electores tanto hispanos como no hispanos y hacerse con respaldo más allá de las divisiones partidarias, sugiere Ibarra.

Ambos ven a una candidatura de Martínez como un problema

serio para el partido demócrata, en particular si la Casa Blanca le provee con respaldo visible durante las elecciones preliminares. Antes que el popular senador Graham de Florida anunciara su jubilación, Martínez había dicho que no le interesaría enfrentarse con el titular. Ahora que el escaño queda libre, admite públicamente que "lo estoy pensando". En privado, según algunos informes de la prensa, le cuenta a sus amigos cercanos que sí se lanza.

Al ser contactada por Hispanic Link, vocera de la Casa Blanca, María Tamburri midió con cautela sus palabras. El presidente Bush elogia la labor de Martínez de los tres años que ha servido como secretario de vivienda, explica, y el presidente respetará cualquier decisión que Martínez opte por tomar.

Vocera del Departamento de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano, Kelley Keeler, respondió a las preguntas de Hispanic Link al indicar que Martínez está conversando con y escuchando a sus amigos cercanos y a su familia.

El último de los pocos hispanos que han servido en el Senado estadounidense fue el demócrata Joseph Montoya de Nuevo México, elegido por última vez en 1970.

Martínez salió de Cuba a los quince años como parte de la Operación Pedro Pan, vuelos auspiciados por la iglesia católica con el apoyo del gobierno estadounidense que trajeron a miles de niños cubanos a los Estados Unidos. Vivió con padres adoptivos y en centros juveniles hasta reunirse con su propia familia, que dejó Cuba cuatro años después de él.

Se ha vinculado fuertemente

con Miami, cuenta Joe García, director ejecutivo de la Fundación Nacional Cubano-Americana (CANF por sus siglas en inglés). Martínez formó parte de la junta directiva de CANF de 1989 a 1994, dimitiendo del puesto para lanzarse a la campaña electoral por jefe del condado Orange, en el centro de Florida, la cual ganó. Mantiene buenas relaciones tanto con el presidente Bush como con el gobernador de Florida, Jeb Bush, lo cual podría resultar ser de particular importancia en las elecciones preliminares de aquel estado.

También le sirven cambios recientes realizados en el proceso de elecciones de Florida. Antes, si ningún candidato recibía por lo menos 50 por ciento del voto en las elecciones preliminares, los dos que habían recibido más votos iban a una segunda vuelta. Hoy se ha eliminado la segunda vuelta, lo cual permite que el candidato que tiene la pluralidad avance directamente a las elecciones generales.

Sergio Bendixen, dueño de una empresa de encuestas y analista político señala que al ser respaldado por un bloque importante de electores hispanos, Martínez se beneficiaría en un campo electoral lleno que incluiría oposición con respaldo de las fuerzas conservadoras de la mayoría blanca del estado.

Representante Katherine Harris, anterior secretaria de estado de Florida quien fue co-directora de la campaña de George W. Bush en aquel estado y quien certificó el voto a su favor, también está considerando lanzarse a la campaña electoral preliminar del partido republicano. El partido, además de la Casa Blanca, por lo visto la considera una candidata

problemática, por lo que no tiene apoyo generalizado. Ha declarado, sin duda presionada por el partido, que si se lanza Martínez, ella no lo hará.

El alcalde del condado de Miami Dade, Alex Penela, también de ascendencia cubana, ha recaudado \$1.2 millones para competir en las elecciones preliminares demócratas para el senado, sin embargo el que no haya apoyado la campaña de Gore y Lieberman en el 2000 opaca sus posibilidades.

En el estado de Illinois, abogado mexicano-americano Gery Chico, demócrata y anterior presidente de la junta educativa de Chicago, ha recaudado \$2.8 millones para hacer campaña para un escaño abierto del Senado estadounidense, mientras que en California, anterior tesorera federal Rosario Marín, una republicana quien también es de ascendencia mexicana, piensa retar a la titular Barbara Boxer, demócrata.

Los tres a estas alturas no son considerados los candidatos más fuertes, y como señala el analista Hernández, "Los mandamases políticos son como los banqueros de inversiones. Su respaldo lo ponen con los que pueden ganar".

Como equilibrio a aquella lógica es la realidad que el partido demócrata debe encontrar un candidato hispano para el Senado si se lanza Martínez. El desconocido Chico, quien se enfrentará con fuerte oposición en las elecciones preliminares de candidatos más conocidos por el partido, podrá ser la persona indicada.

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STOP HB2292 IT IS AN ATTACK ON ALL TEXANS

The plan for victory over privatization is:

1. ORGANIZE
Organize our agencies and universities. We need an organization with the political power that can take on the corporate powers who plan to run the show in Texas. The most basic organizing action is to ask the co-worker next to us to fill out a State Employees Union membership form.

2. MOBILIZE
Go into action to stop disasters like HB 2292 and workforce program privatization. Hundreds of small actions all over the state - visiting legislators, going to hearings and meetings, educating co-workers, contacting newspapers, and other creative actions - can slow down & stop disasters like HB 2292.

3. Join CWA COPE! Build our political power by building CWA COPE. Our COPE fund is the war chest it will take to defend the legislators who have stood up for working Texans, and to defeat the ones who are attacking.

While HB 2292 legislates the most radical reconfiguring of health and human services since the State of Texas began providing them, it requires next to no public input on the implementation. The advisory councils must hold public hearings before making recommendations, but they are not required to accept input from the hearings, and the commissioner is not required to accept any of the recommendations of the councils.

HB 2292 forms a 7-member Health and Human Services Transition Legislative Oversight Committee, made up of two state representatives (appointed by the House Speaker), two state senators (appointed by Lt Governor), and three members of the public.

HHSC will create a "transition plan" by Dec. 1, 2003 and must make transition plan status reports and updates on a quarterly basis thereafter. The development of the plan requires HHSC to hold public hearings in all the various geographic areas of the state. HHSC is also required to develop a "work plan" for the provision of the health and human services.

Structural Changes to Health & Human Services Agencies
The following agencies will be eliminated: *Texas Department of Human Services *Texas Department of Health *TX Dept of Mental Health & Mental Retardation *Texas Rehabilitation Commission *Texas Department of Aging *Texas Commission for the Blind *TX Comm for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing *Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse *Interagency Council on Early Childhood *Texas Cancer Council *Texas Health Care Information Council

The services provided by these agencies will be moved to the following new agencies: *Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services *Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services * Texas Department of State Health Services *Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (formerly TDPRS)

The Health and Human Services Commission will be greatly expanded. Governing boards and councils will be eliminated, to be replaced by a Health & Human Services Council & with new departmental councils which have advisory powers only. State services will be substantially reduced, including the privatization or elimination of up to 10,000 positions.

Elimination of agencies, privatization, and office closures. HB 2292 mandates conversion of all DHS eligibility services to privatized call centers. Most DHS offices would be closed. DHS would disappear from hundreds of Texas towns, and thousands of jobs in Texas communities would be lost. Instead of a face-to-face meeting with a caseworker, most applicants would be forced into a call center system that is notoriously unfriendly, especially to those with language barriers or the elderly.

HB 2292 eliminates specialized agencies that provide services for people with disabilities and mental illness. All such agencies would be shoe-horned into one of the five mega-bureaucracies that will be created.

500,000 Texans would lose services.
Changes in CHIP (Childrens Health Insurance Program), Medicaid, TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and other programs will eliminate benefits for up to half a million Texans. CHIP changes will cut 166,000 children who would have been eligible. In Medicaid, elimination of mental health services for adults, postponing a planned change-over to 12-month coverage for children, and cancellation of funding for the Medically Needy program will reduce participation by up to 408,000 (from projected participation without changes). TANF clients will face full-family benefit cut-offs for any violations of the Personal Responsibility Agreement.

Who will profit? HB 2292 also requires the consolidation of several Medicaid disbursement and collection functions, including the Vendor Drug Program, into one division. These services must be contracted out. Affiliated Computer Services (ACS) is considered a strong contender for the contract. ACS is the current CHIP contractor through its Birch & Davis subsidiary, and recently got the \$100 million contract to handle Medicaid claims. ACS is the biggest contractor for privatized workforce services through the 28 local workforce boards in Texas, and is a heavy contributor to many state officials' election campaigns.

Martinez run for U.S. Senate would be "Huge" boost for GOP

By Kevin Eaton

The White House appears ready to throw its support behind U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Melquiades "Mel" Martinez to capture the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by Democrat Bob Graham of Florida next year.

At present, no Hispanic serves in the 100-member upper chamber. If, as is increasingly likely, the 57-year-old Martinez runs, he would become a "huge" asset to the 2004 Republican ticket in its effort to convince more Hispanic voters that the GOP has their interests at heart.

Such longtime Democratic Party activists as Andrew Hernández, now a political science professor at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, and Washington political consultant Mickey Ibarra, former senior advisor to President Clinton, used the word in emphasizing its importance.

For Hispanics, says Hernández, "Martínez puts a friendly face on the Republican Party. His presence makes all GOP candidates more competitive."

Ibarra defines Martínez as "an experienced, moderate GOP leader who unifies rather than divides." With a compelling personal success story, Martínez could attract non-Hispanic, as well as Hispanic, voters and draw support across party lines, Ibarra suggests.

Both see Martínez's candidacy

as a serious problem for the Democratic Party, particularly if the White House provides him with visible primary backing.

Before popular Florida Senator Graham announced, that he wasn't going to run for re-election, Martínez had stated that he wasn't interested in taking on the incumbent. Now that the seat is open, headmits publicly, "I'm thinking about it." Privately, according to some press reports, he's telling close friends, it's a go.

Contacted by Hispanic Link, White House spokeswoman María Tamburri chose her words carefully. President Bush commends the work Martínez has done in his three years as HUD secretary, she says, and the president would respect any decision Martínez makes.

HUD spokeswoman Kelley Keeler answered Hispanic Link's inquiries by stating that Martínez is talking with and listening to close friends and family.

The last of only a few Hispanics ever to sit in the U.S. Senate was Democrat Joseph Montoya of New Mexico, who was last elected in 1970.

Martínez left Cuba at age 15 as part of Operation Peter Pan, an airlift sponsored by the Catholic Church and supported by the U.S. government that brought thousands of Cuban children to the United States. He lived with foster parents and in youth fa-

cilities until he was reunited with his own parents when they were able to leave Cuba four years later.

He has built strong ties to Miami, says Cuban American National Foundation executive director Joe García. Martínez sat on CANF's board from 1989 to 1994, resigning to campaign, successfully, for Orange County Chairman in Central Florida. He has good relations with President Bush and Florida Gov. Jeb Bush.

This could prove of particular importance in that state's GOP primary. Recent changes in the Florida election process also help. In the past, when no candidate in party primaries received 50 percent of the vote, the top two vote-getters had to vie in a run-off. Now the run-off has been eliminated, and the primary candidate with the largest plurality moves directly to the general election.

Pollster/analyst Sergio Bendixen notes that with a good-size Hispanic voting bloc behind him, Martínez would benefit in a crowded primary field that included opponents backed by the state's white conservative forces.

U.S. Rep. Katherine Harris, the former Florida Secretary of State who served as co-chair of George W. Bush's campaign in that state and certified the presidential vote in his favor, is also considering entering the GOP primary. The party, including the White

House, reportedly sees her as a problem candidate, lacking general appeal. No doubt with prompting, she has stated that if Martínez enters the race, she won't run.

Miami-Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas, also of Cuban heritage, has raised \$1.2 million to compete in Florida's Democratic Senate primary, but his lack of strong commitment for the Gore-Lieberman ticket in 2000 clouds his chances.

In Illinois, Mexican-American attorney Gery Chico, a Democrat and former president of the Chicago Board of Education, has raised \$2.8 million to run for an open U.S. Senate seat, while in California, Rosario Marín, a Mexico-born Republican who recently resigned as U.S. Treasurer to return to California, plans to challenge incumbent Democrat Barbara Boxer.

All three at this point are considered underdogs, and as analyst Hernández points out, "Top political powerbrokers are like investment bankers. Their backing goes to those who can win."

Balancing that logic is the reality that the Democratic Party needs to find a Hispanic Senate candidate of its own to support if Martínez runs. Outsider Chico, expected to face stiff primary opposition from party insiders, could be that person.

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GOP Leaders in Congress Deny Workers Additional Unemployment Insurance

It's Going to be a Blue Christmas for many Hispanic American Families

There will be no happy holidays for thousands of unemployed Hispanic American workers who need extended unemployment insurance to make ends meet. Republican leaders in Congress are refusing to extend federal unemployment insurance benefits, which will expire two days after Christmas for tens of thousands of Latinos and other hardworking Americans.

Despite the economy's modest growth in recent weeks, Hispanic unemployment rose to a staggeringly high 7.4 percent.

"It's inconceivable to me that Republican leaders are poised to play the Grinch again," House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi said. "Two days after Christmas, the current extended unemployment benefits program is scheduled to expire -- denying benefits to nearly 90,000 workers every week thereafter. Over six months, this will affect almost 2.2 million Americans."

Since President Bush took office, 3 million private-sector jobs have been lost -- the worst record of job creation of any President since Herbert Hoover. Nearly 9 million Americans remain unemployed.

In October, the number of those unemployed for more than

26 weeks was 2 million - triple the number at the beginning of the Bush Administration and remaining at the highest levels in 10 years. In fact, nearly one-quarter of those unemployed have been out of work for more than six months. And it is taking longer and longer to find a job.

"For a second year in a row the Republicans win the Grinch Award-- stealing Christmas from millions of working families by denying them unemployment benefits. So much for their claim of being compassionate. Working families need and deserve these benefits. Republicans need to stop stifling working families in the name of partisan politics," said Congresswoman Linda Sánchez, Co-Chair of the Labor and Working Families Caucus.

Democrats have an agenda to help our country's families. Congressmen Charles Rangel (D-NY) and Ben Cardin (D-MD) have put forth a plan that would continue the extended benefits program for an additional six months, increase the time that unemployed workers can get benefits from 13 to 26 weeks, and provide unemployment benefits to 1.4 million workers who have already exhausted their federal extended

benefits. There is \$20 billion in the federal fund dedicated to unemployment benefits, which is financed by unemployment taxes deducted from workers' paychecks.

"For the second year in a row, Congress has adjourned for the

holidays without extending unemployment benefits. Somehow we can afford tax breaks for millionaires and a war in Iraq, but we can't afford to help the unemployed," Rep. Charles E. Rangel (D-NY), Ranking Democrat on the Ways and Means Committee, said. "It's a disgrace."



Jobs & Illegal Immigrants

Commentary from Science Christian Monitor

For many years employers have been required to verify that immigrants or temporary residents have the right to work in the United States when hiring them. All job applicants are supposed to sign a federal I-9 form and provide supporting documents to verify their work eligibility.

Predictably, this rule has led to a surge in black-market phony identification and immigration documents. Employers hire immigrants who appear to have valid documents, only to find out later that they don't have permission to work. Businesses complain this leads to work shortages at inconvenient times, as well as the loss of trained workers.

Congress responded in 1997 with a voluntary pilot program in six states - California, Florida, Illinois, Nebraska, New York, and Texas - that allows employers to verify within three days of hiring that the worker's Social Security number is valid and that he or she is eligible for employment.

The program worked so successfully that Congress voted in November to extend it for five

more years and make it available nationwide. That should greatly ease the burden on businesses: If enough use the system, it could also cut down on the hiring of illegal immigrants.

That could help the Social Security Administration, which is grappling with \$374 billion in funds it can't match to any valid Social Security number. Much of that money is paid to the system by illegal immigrants who have given employers false Social Security numbers. When Social Security can't match a name with a number, it sends a letter to the employer and employee, notifying each of the discrepancy. This blows the cover of illegal immigrants, who either leave or must be fired.

But the employment verification system won't do anything to match illegal immigrants with the billions in payroll deductions they have paid to Social Security. As with most issues of illegal immigration, the solution to that problem depends on Congress passing legislation to allow long-time illegal immigrants to return to their home countries and apply for preferential visas to live lawfully in the US.

Southwest is Hot Spot for Demos

(from page one)

Although Dean has landed a number of critical ethnic endorsements in the region, he is campaigning along broad, populist lines.

He told Native Americans last week, "The problems that you have as Native Americans are the same problems everyone else has."

Dean supporters say, among other factors, they are hoping Dean will be seen as a Democratic successor to Senator John S. McCain of Arizona, the 2000 Republican presidential contender who, like Dean, cast himself as an outspoken maverick.

"There is this attitude out here in the West that we need to speak up a little louder and be recognized," said Frank Costanzo, Dean's state director in Arizona. "And people perceive the governor that way -- willing to tell you straight out."

Dean has been among the most aggressive candidates to court New Mexico and Arizona, having made 11 trips to the states this year and hired 12 paid staff members. By contrast, Gephardt has made five trips and has four paid staff members, Clark has made four visits and has seven paid staff members, and Senator John F. Kerry of Massachusetts has made 10 trips since October and has 12 paid staff members.

Lieberman has made six trips to Arizona. Edwards's campaign did not return telephone calls seeking data.

With little reliable polling available in the Southwest, it is difficult to assess the candidates' standing, although some contenders say their own num-

bers show that the jostling has yet to register with voters.

"Arizona is wide open," said Geoff Garin, a pollster for Clark. "In part because none of the candidates, other than Joe Lieberman, are particularly well known."

Garin added that voters have responded positively to Clark's military background.

Meanwhile, Lieberman is considered a strong contender in the Southwest. In this large, spread-out region -- where television ads, not retail politics, carry the day -- his early name recognition could be key.

Also, observers say, Lieberman's moderate message could resonate with white Democrats -- particularly transplants from the North -- who tend to be more conservative and vote in greater numbers than the region's Latinos, who make up 25 percent of Arizona's population and 42 percent of New Mexico's.

"Latinos will not be the ones to tip the balance for any of the Democrats," said Richard Herrera, a professor of political science at Arizona State University. "They will be noticed, but they won't create the percentage."

There is irony in Arizona taking on outside influence in the Democratic nomination process. It has long suffered a reputation as a poor predictor of presidential nominees, having selected John Lindsay as its Democrat of choice in 1972 and Steve Forbes as its Republican in 1996, both of whom later saw resounding defeats.

The candidates for the 2004 Democratic nomination are enduring a cultural learning curve, extending their messages beyond ethanol and family farms, which play well in Iowa, to urban sprawl and US-Mexico relations.

80,000 Demonstrate in Mexico City against Fox's Proposed Tax Increases



Union members, left-wing activists and farmers by the thousand marched to the capital's central plaza Thursday in a major display of opposition to the president's plans to raise taxes on food and medicine and sell state-owned assets.

The crowd estimated by police at 80,000 packed major avenues from Mexico's independence monument to the city center. The march had been billed as Mexico's largest in years, but the turnout fell short of the 150,000 predicted by organizers.

The march was largely peaceful, with demonstrators chanting "Our country is not for sale!" Still, authorities dispatched thousands of police to guard against possible violence, arresting at least four people in the afternoon along Reforma Avenue, the capital's main drag.

The protest reflected growing frustration with President Vicente Fox and proposals that have led to increasing political paralysis and a sharp drop in the peso against the dollar.

"The only solution will be a national strike, to stop them from selling what little we Mexicans have left to the foreigners," said Rosalia Prado, a middle school teacher dressed in the yellow colors of the leftist Democratic Revolution Party.

Speaking Thursday about the marches from Michoacan state, Fox said "we should all enjoy Mexico's unprecedented new climate of liberty ... freedom of expression and the right to protest are never going to be blocked by my administration."

Fox recently commented that the country "is doing wonderfully" -- a statement that sharply contrasted with the cur-

rent economy, and led one local newspaper to run an ironic headline, "Another Day Here In Wonderland."

Protesters, who converged in three columns to the city's central plaza, are mostly opposed to the president's proposal to eliminate a sales tax exemption on food and medicine and to allow more private investment in the state-run electricity sector to ease projected power shortages.

Ramiro Gomez, a rancher from Chihuahua, showed up riding a chestnut-colored horse to protest the government's free-market policies.

"We have an abandoned countryside," Gomez said. "Nobody is making money, now production is paralyzed and many of the producers have emigrated. We want national sovereignty in food, and to consume only Mexican corn, beans, wheat and meat."

Marchers included movie pro-

duction workers whose jobs are threatened by Fox's proposal to sell off a state-owned movie studio.

"We risk becoming a subsidiary of Hollywood, and losing our identity as Mexicans," said German Ramirez, a set builder at a state-owned movie studio who would lose his job under Fox's proposals.

Juan Molinar, a congressional leader from Fox's conservative National Action Party, defended the sales tax increases, calling the exemptions for food and medicine "a huge subsidy for purchases by the wealthy, with money that could be spent helping the poor."

Molinar said National Action is willing to compromise on the tax changes, but Fox has had little success at lobbying lawmakers.

Fox's troubles have taken a toll on one major political supporter, congressional leader Elba

Esther Gordillo. She is fighting off an attempt by disgruntled members of her Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI, to oust her from her leadership post for being too close to Fox.

"The worst thing is that Fox has lost control," said Rosendo Flores, an electrical workers' union leader and organizer of the march. "He's isolated, and even so he insists on imposing totally erratic policies."

The struggle over the reforms, which featured Gordillo in a public row with fellow PRI leader Roberto Madrazo, has unsettled financial markets, sending the peso to a record low of 11.355 against the U.S. dollar on Wednesday.

"As long as there is no clear outlook on what is going to happen with reforms, volatility will continue," Mexico's central bank governor, Guillermo Ortiz, said Wednesday.

El secretario de Seguridad Interior de los EU, Tom Ridge, propone legalizar a los indocumentados

Con unas palabras que, además de sorpresa, suscitaron optimismo entre los proponentes de una reforma migratoria en Estados Unidos, el secretario de Seguridad Interna, Tom Ridge, reconoció que los inmigrantes indocumentados no constituyen una amenaza para este país y, por lo tanto, se les debe dar algún tipo de "estatus legal".

Los comentarios de Ridge surgieron durante una reunión comunitaria que tuvo lugar el martes pasado en la Universidad de Miami. Dado en respuesta a la pregunta de un participante sobre una posible amnistía para los indocumentados.

Aunque Ridge subrayó que cualquier cambio en la legislación migratoria debe ser aprobado antes por el Congreso, dijo que ha llegado el momento de que la nación aborde el problema de la inmigración indocumentada.

Las palabras del secretario emocionaron a los que apoyan la inmigración indocumentada y al representante Jeff Flake, que promueve una propuesta de ley que le daría residencia legal a los inmigrantes indocumentados por medio del trabajo. Según Flake, "quienes trabajan ilegalmente en el país necesitan un marco legal. El secretario Ridge comprende que esto debe ir unido a una aplicación sería de la ley en los lugares de trabajo", expresó el representante de Arizona.

"El asunto de fondo es que, como país, tenemos que controlar la presencia de ocho a 12 mil-

lones de indocumentados y darles alguna clase de estatus legal, pero también, como país, tenemos que decidir cuál será nuestra política migratoria y hacerla cumplir", señaló el secretario.

El responsable de la seguridad interna del país se refirió en términos por demás elogiosos a los indocumentados al reconocer que hacen grandes aportes con su trabajo y sus impuestos a la economía del país.

No amnistía
Aclaró, sin embargo, que no está en favor de una amnistía general.

"No estoy diciendo que los hagamos ciudadanos porque han violado la ley al entrar aquí. Uno no premia ese tipo de conducta entregando un certificado de ciudadanía. Tenemos que determinar cómo legalizar su presencia y, entonces, como país, tomar una decisión de ahora en adelante sobre cómo será el proceso de entrada y, dejar claro que, si se viola ese proceso, tenemos los recursos para afrontar el caso", puntualizó.

Ridge agregó que piensa que los legisladores están listos para abordar el asunto de los indocu-

mentados porque hay ya numerosas propuestas en el Congreso sobre este tópico.

Los asistentes de Ridge precisaron que los comentarios del secretario no se pueden interpretar como un giro en la postura de la Casa Blanca sobre su política migratoria, puesto que el fue muy claro al señalar que no apoya una amnistía y que cualquier cambio debe ser hecho por el Congreso.

Sin embargo, en opinión de representantes de varias organizaciones defensoras de los inmigrantes...

continúa en la página 6



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Scholarship assistance for memberships and program offerings in the Lifelong Learning Community is available through an application process. Scholarships will be awarded after committee review, based on financial need. All application information is confidential. The application deadline for the spring semester is January 30, 2004. The scholarship program is made possible by a grant from the Helen Jones Foundation.

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La Historia de Juan Diego es de las Mejores

Juan Diego's Story is the Best Kind

Por Victor Landa

Dicen que murió una mujer de infarto el momento que el Papa santificó al indio Juan Diego en la Ciudad de México hace 16 meses. Formaba parte de la multitud reunida alrededor de la basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, escuchando el procedimiento mediante los altoparlantes. O fue víctima de sus emociones poderosas, o del calor intenso, de la fatiga profunda o el poder del nuevo santo. Y allí murió, entre el gentío en la ciudad más populosa del mundo. El mismo Papa estaba de rodillas a sólo unos pocos metros.

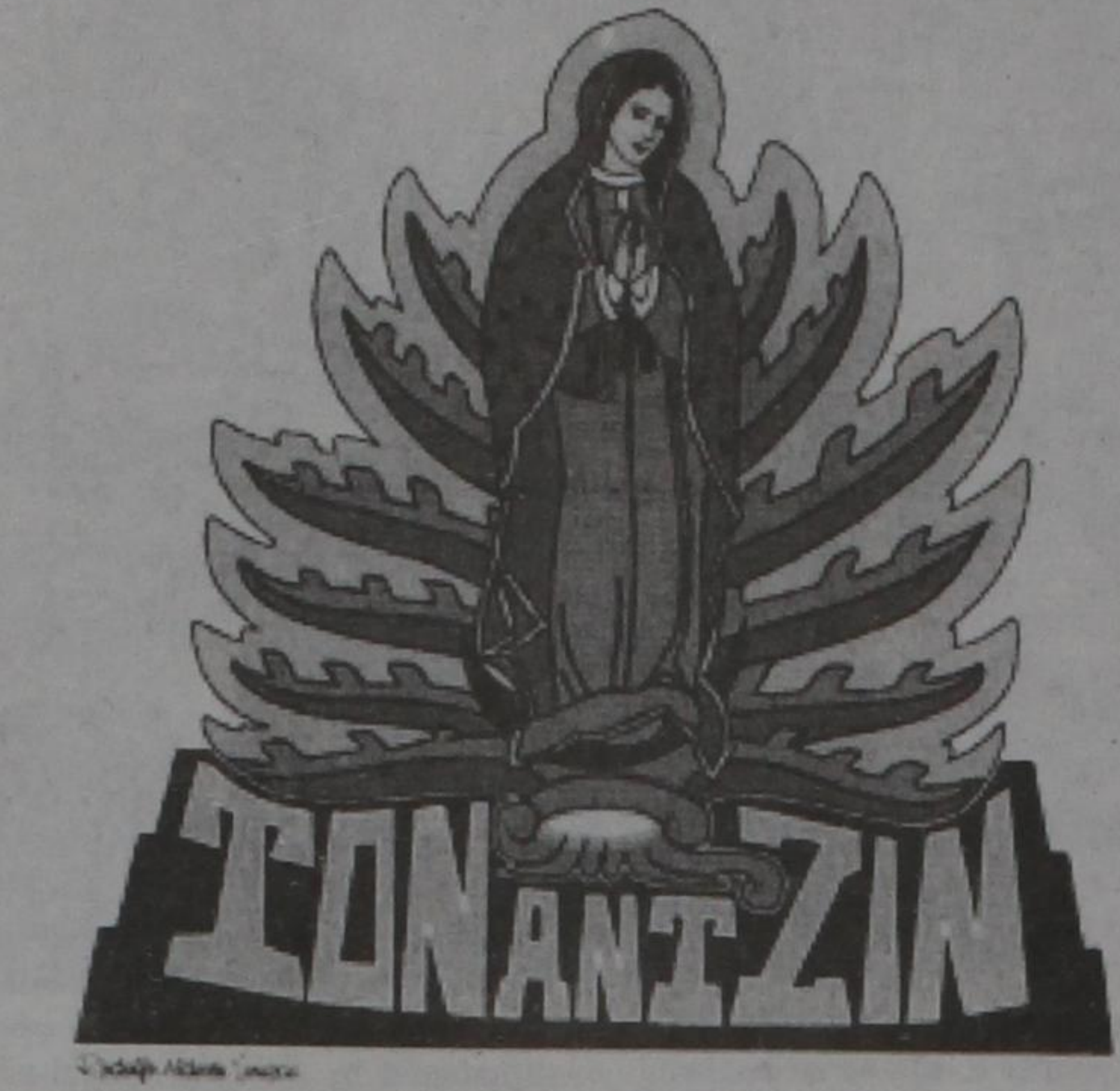
Lo más maravilloso de esta historia es que no se ha verificado nunca. Existe simplemente para que hagamos con ella lo que queramos. Es de las mejores historias, afijada de cabos sueltos para poder llenarla al gusto de cada uno.

Es así también la historia de Juan Diego. El 9 de diciembre, 1531, según reza, Juan Diego caminaba por una zona llena de colinas al norte de la Ciudad de México llamada Tepeyac cuando se le apareció la Virgen para pedirle que construya una iglesia allí en honor a ella. Juan Diego le informó a un obispo escéptico de la aparición, quien lo mandó de vuelta al lugar a los tres días para comprobarla. Juan Diego volvió con el don de bellas rosas de Castilla, envueltas en su tilma, un poncho liviano que llevaba una imagen, la de la mujer misteriosa. Millones de creyentes continúan rindiéndole tributo a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe cada 12 de diciembre.

Otra versión de la historia narra que Juan Diego era un indio pobre de unos cincuenta años, con mujer e hijos, muy respetado entre sus congéneres. Cuando murió su esposa, se fue a vivir al lado de la antigua basílica en una choza, dedicando el resto de su vida a la devoción de la Virgen de Tepeyac.

Otra más dice que era un terrateniente con dinero sin hijos, pero con varias esposas. Otra dice que nunca existió Juan Diego. Según esta última, la más cínica de todas las historias de Juan Diego, al indio lo inventaron los misioneros fanáticos que querían convertir a los mexicanos.

La historia permite suficiente ambigüedad como para rellenar la imaginación de los teóricos de complot, los revolucionarios, los dedicados a la espiritualidad new-age, y a los católicos devo-



tos. Por ende, quizás convenga que el Papa haya viajado hasta México para formalizar la creencia más popular.

Después de todo, el Juan Diego que importa es el que los creyentes llevan en sus corazones.

Entonces, era un indio humilde, pero privilegiado en los ojos de la Virgen. Es "el más pequeño de mis hijos" en la cima del honor.

Me imagino que será difícil para la gente de un país en su mayoría protestante entender el fervor religioso de los de un país mayoritariamente católico. Los matices entretejidos en la devoción a Juan Diego se pierden con facilidad, pero haré lo posible por explicarlos.

La santificación fue una simple formalidad. Ya era santo Juan Diego para los miles de fieles guadalupanos. Sus rasgos, su postura (siempre de rodillas ante la Virgen) y su tez le identificaban como "uno de los nuestros". Se le destaca precisamente porque no sobresale la normalidad. Se identifica la gente con él por lo que era de tez morena, humilde y sencillo. Y fue a uno así a quien se le apareció la Virgen.

No hace falta más para hacer de cualquier hombre santo en los corazones de millones de personas humildes, sencillas y de tez oscura. Cuando el Papa elevó a Juan Diego al altar de los Santos Católicos, elevó a su vez una etnicidad entera, un pueblo entero.

La iglesia ahora venera a Juan Diego con el mismo fervor como sus seguidores lo han hecho durante siglos. Y en un país en el que un porcentaje estimado de 95 por ciento de la población es

católico, es una cosa espectacular.

No es raro que se diga que una mujer haya muerto en el momento en que a Juan Diego lo hicieron santo. Dicen que su corazón explotó con la emoción ferviente de la bendición. ¿Será posible?

¿Por qué no?

Creemos en la bolsa de valores y veneramos la juventud. De allí a venerar a Juan Diego, ¿es tanto? Yo diría que el indio santo es más verdadero que el dinero hecho de papel y la cirugía plástica.

Juan Diego es meramente humano, desprovisto de la carga usual. Es la simplicidad llana, sin todas esas capas de ideas y juicios y expectativas. Es el es cogido.

¿Quién, entre nosotros, acostados en la oscuridad, oyéndonos los pensamientos, maravillados con el frágil palpitante del corazón, no se armaría al espíritu del indio santo?

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By Victor Landa

They say that a woman died of a heart attack the moment the pope canonized the Indian Juan Diego in Mexico City 16 months ago. She was in the crowd outside of the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, listening to the proceedings on a loud speaker.

She either fell victim to her overwhelming emotions, to the intense heat, to exhaustion or to the power of the new saint. And there she died, in the middle of a throng of people in the most populated city in the world. The pope himself was kneeling in prayer just yards away.

The wonderful thing about this story is that it has never been verified. It's just there for us to do with it what we may. It's the best kind of story, afflicted with loose ends so that it can be filled to one's own satisfaction.

The story of Juan Diego is like that, as well. On Dec. 9, 1531, it goes, Juan Diego was walking in a hilly area north of Mexico City called Tepeyac when the apparition of the Virgen appeared and asked that a temple be built in her honor. Juan Diego reported his encounter to a skeptical bishop, who sent him back three days later for proof. Juan Diego returned with a gift of beautiful roses, wrapped in his *tilma*, a lightweight poncho, which bore an imprint of the image of the mysterious woman. Millions of believers continue to pay tribute to Our Lady of Guadalupe every Dec. 12.

One version of the story has it that Juan Diego was a poor Indian in his 50s, with a wife and children, a respected elder in his community, and that when his

wife died he took up residence in a hut on the side of the old basilica and dedicated the rest of his life to the devotion of the Virgin of Tepeyac.

Another says that he was a wealthy landowner who had no children and several wives. Still another story says that Juan Diego never existed. According to this, the most cynical of the Juan Diego stories, the Indian was conjured by zealous missionaries in their quest to convert the Mexican natives.

There's enough ambiguity here to fill the imagination of conspiracy theorists, revolutionaries, new-agers and devout Catholics. So maybe it's a good thing that the pope traveled all the way to Mexico to formalize the most popular belief.

After all, the Juan Diego that matters is the one the believers carry in their hearts.

So the Indian was humble yet privileged in the eyes of the Virgin. He is el más pequeño de mis hijos, in the place of highest honor.

I imagine it must be difficult for the people of a country that is largely Protestant to understand the religious fervor of the people of a country that is overwhelmingly Catholic. The nuances that are woven into the devotion to Juan Diego are easily lost, but I'll try to explain them.

The canonization was a mere formality. Juan Diego was already a saint in the minds and hearts of millions of faithful

Guadalupanos. His features, his posture (always kneeling before the Virgin) as well as his skin tone all identified him as *uno de los nuestros* -- one of ours. He

stands out precisely because he is ordinary. People identify themselves with him because he was dark-skinned, humble and simple. And it was to one such as this that the Virgin appeared.

This is enough to make any man a saint in the hearts and minds of millions of humble, simple, dark-skinned people. When the pope elevated Juan Diego to the altar of Catholic saints he elevated as well an entire ethnicity, an entire people.

The church now looks upon Juan Diego with the same reverence that his followers have had for centuries. And in a country that is by some estimates 95 percent Catholic, it is an amazing thing.

It's no wonder that a woman is said to have died the moment Juan Diego was made a saint. They say that her heart exploded in the rush of the blessing.

Is it possible?

Why not?

We believe in the stock market, and we venerate youth. Is Juan Diego such a leap? I would say that the Indian saint is more real than paper money and a face-lift.

Juan Diego is a mere human without all the attending baggage. He is stark simplicity, without all the layers of ideas and judgments and expectations. And he was chosen.

Who among us, lying in bed in the dark, listening to our thoughts, amazed at our fragile heartbeat, wouldn't cling to the spirit of the Indian saint?

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Una Visita a Lupe

Por Elisa A. Martínez

En agosto, mi hija Analissa que vive en Nueva York se fue con su violoncelo a viajar por Europa. Yo seguí su viaje por carta electrónica. Un día me escribió con muchos puntos de exclamación.

"Mami, entré a la catedral de Notre Dame en París y me encontré a Lupe! ¡¡¡¡¡ Allí estaba con una bandera mexicana grande! Cuando la vi, me sentí como que estaba en casa", me dijo.

Se me humedecieron los ojos. Lupe me había traído a mi muchachita a casa por unos minutos.

El día 12 de diciembre festejamos a Lupe, la hermosa Virgen Morena. Este día 12 debe de ser el día más hermoso de todo el año porque surge música continua todo el día, mezclándose con el perfume de miles de flores naturales que se van presentando a sus pies en todos los altares guadalupanos del mundo. Todo el día llegan sin cesar las pere-

grinaciones a la basílica de México. Muchos llegan en camiones y otros a pie. Todos llevan un motivo común. Van a felicitarla en éste su día y a demostrarle su cariño. Muchos de los fieles llegan por la noche cantando y rezando con lamparitas encendidas mientras los músicos esperan su turno para entrar y cantarles las mañanitas al frente del altar.

Se le apareció al indio Juan Diego en enero de 1531 y le pidió que se le construyera una iglesia en ese mismo lugar. El nombre de la Virgen de Guadalupe es sinónimo de la palabra México. Ella es el símbolo de la esperanza para la gente pobre y la gente de piel morena que vive bajo la opresión como vivió Juan Diego.

La noche del histórico 16 de septiembre, como no tenía bandera el Padre Miguel Hidalgo y

Costilla, sacó de la sacristía del santuario de Atotonilco un lienzo con la imagen de la Virgen de Guadalupe y con éste encabezó al ejército de hombres armados con armas burdas para derrotar a los tiranos españoles. En nuestra época este estandarte con la imagen guadalupana es el que llevan delante los que también luchan por la justicia del sindicato de Trabajadores Agrícolas del fallecido César Chávez.

Esta hermosa dama vive en el corazón de todo mexicano sin importar su religión o nivel económico. Su imagen es la que pintan en los muros de todos los barrios del mundo. Ella les trae esperanza y consuelo a todos los que unen sus manos morenas en oración.

Es la patrona de las Américas y la reina de los mexicanos.

El Papa Juan Pablo II ha visitado México muchas veces como devoto de la Virgen Morena. Se ha arrodillado ante su altar en la Villa Guadalupe y la imagen de esta Virgen está allí en la 'tumba de los Papas' donde descansarán los restos de este Santo Padre.

Este día 12 será como de costumbre. Iré a la misa de las "mañanitas" a las seis de la mañana donde nos acompañará el mariachi y veremos a los danzantes del grupo de matachines de la parroquia. El sacerdote y el pueblo declararán en voz fuerte y emotiva: "¡Viva México y que viva la Virgen de Guadalupe!"

Este octubre fui a la ciudad de Nueva York. Visité la catedral de San Patricio. Entré por la puerta del lado y lo primero que vi fue a Lupe. Allí estaba con la bandera tricolor y muchas velas encendidas y me rodeaba el perfume de las rosas simbólicas.

Cuando la vi, sentí un calor muy acogedor y como Analissa, me sentí en mi casa.

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A Visit to Lupe

By Elisa A. Martínez
This past August, my daughter Analissa and her cello took a trip to Europe. I followed her journey through daily e-mails.

"Mamá," she wrote with many exclamation points, "I walked into Notre Dame and I saw Lupe! She was there with a big Mexican flag by her side. When I saw her I was home."

My eyes got a little wet. Lupe had brought her home to me for just one minute.

On Dec. 12, we celebrate Lupe. This beautiful dark-skinned Virgen de Guadalupe. It has to be the most beautiful day of the year because there is music played in her honor all day, mixed with the fragrance of thousands of fresh flowers laid at her feet.

Pilgrimages arrive at the basilica in Mexico in a steady flow.

continued on page 6

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La falta de cumplimiento de esta o cualquier otra Regla Oficial dará como resultado la descalificación. 3. **IMPORTANTE:** Junto con tu formulario de participación, también debes incluir una composición original escrita a mano en letra de imprenta o a máquina de 250 palabras o menos en la que describas "lo que la herencia hispana significa para mí". Envía tu formulario y tu composición, con porte postal de primera clase a: Fanta "Honor Hispanic Heritage" Scholarship Essay Contest, 6101 Avenue A, Lubbock, TX 79404. Los formularios de participación y composiciones deberán ser recibidos a más tardar para el 12/31/2003. Las composiciones no podrán incluir obscenidades ni exhibir una imagen desfavorable del patrocinador. Límite de una composición por estudiante. El patrocinador no es responsable de materiales enviados que hayan sido extravíos, demorados, con porte postal insuficiente, mutilados, dirigidos a la dirección equivocada o sean ilegibles. 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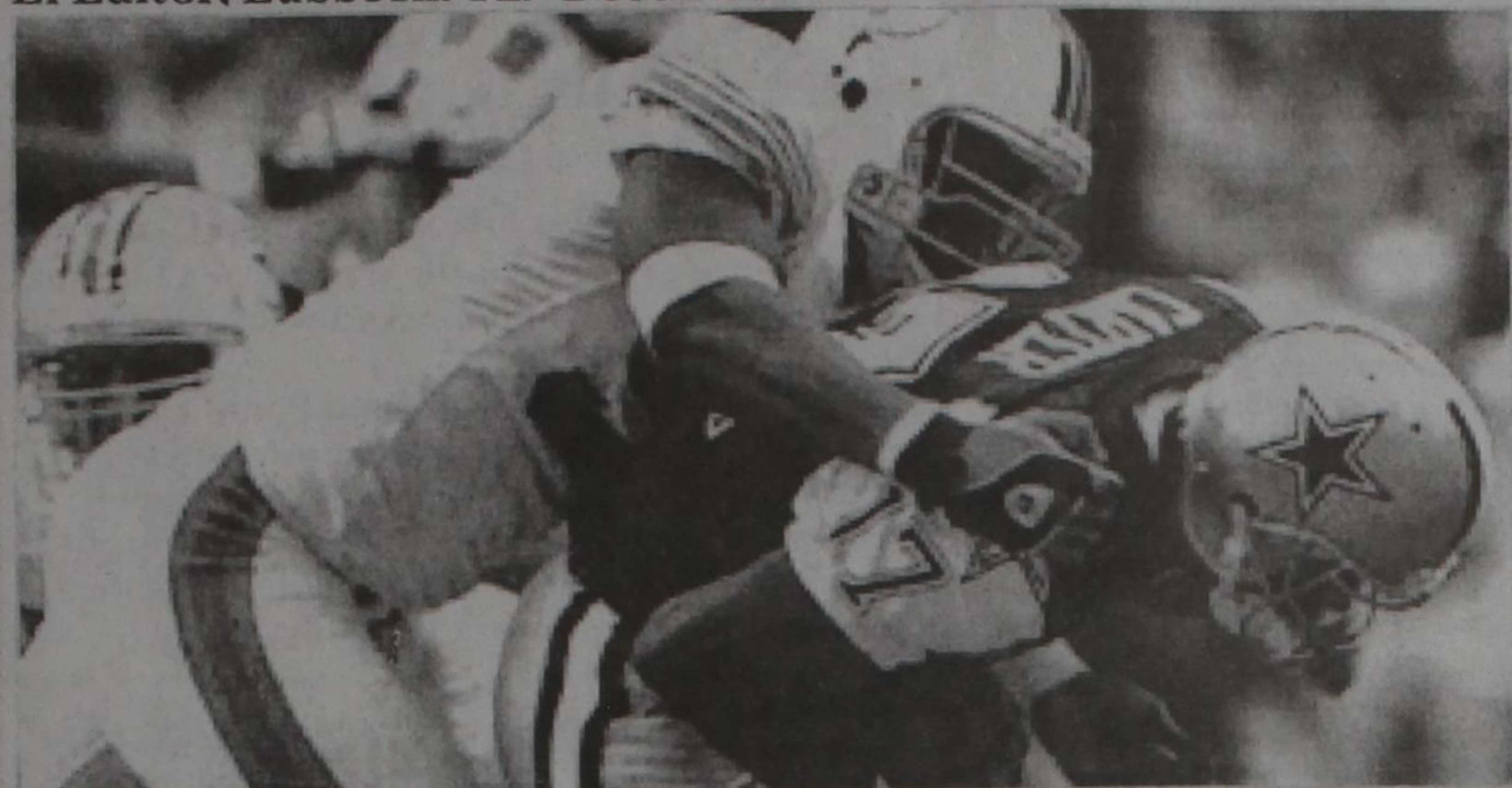
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Quincy is the Man

Cowboys owner Jerry Jones gave struggling third year quarterback Quincy Carter a vote of confidence and says he has played well enough so far to come back as the starter in 2004.

"I'm there today. I'm there today," Jones said when asked if the Cowboys were hoping, by season's end, to determine if Carter is the quarterback of the future or if they need to go find someone in free agency. "With what we've got and what we've seen today, I see nothing that says Quincy can't be our quarterback."

He said "not that I know of" when asked if anything could happen in the next three weeks to change his opinion.

"Listen, all I am saying is, here we are poised to get in the playoffs, and the kind of quarterbacking I like is to be sitting here with three games to go in the season; and we have a chance to have that kind of success," Jones said. "Based on how far he has come, how far

Red Raiders Report:

Strategy and Personnel

BOWL SCENARIO: Texas Tech vs. Navy, Houston Bowl, Dec. 30 - Texas Tech put up huge numbers and QB B.J. Symons became the Division I-A single-season record holder in passing, yet the Red Raiders were relegated to another lower-tier bowl, their third in four years under coach Mike Leach. What that says is the Red Raiders are going to have to improve defensively and earn more respect within their own conference to earn respect among bowl representatives. The matchup against Navy, though, is one of the most intriguing. The Midshipmen run the triple option and feature the top rushing offense in the country, a stark contrast to the throw-at-will attack of Texas Tech.

PLAYERS TO WATCH
IR/RB Wes Welker -- Labeled by Leach as "probably the greatest overachiever I've ever seen," Welker plays a key role in the Red Raiders' success as the Big 12 leader in receptions per game (7.5). He also averages 11.9 yards on punt returns, with two touchdowns.

QB B.J. Symons -- Any yards Symons adds in the passing game will count on his NCAA-record total, which stands at 5,336 yards. The NCAA ruled last season to begin counting bowl games in statistics.

DE Adell Duckett -- With two more sacks in the loss to Oklahoma, Duckett leads the Big 12 with 14 and ranks among the national leaders with a 1.17 average per game. Duckett recorded 7.5 sacks in November and broke the Tech record of 12 set two seasons ago by Aaron Hunt.

PRO POTENTIAL
The big question will be where Symons gets drafted after his sensational season as a one-year wonder at quarterback. Although much of Symons' yards are generated off short dumps, he has a strong arm and showed decent mobility before he was hobbled by a sore knee. Unless he wows the scouts after the season, he looks like a mid-round pick at best. WR Carlos Francis is the most dangerous Tech receiver in terms of athletic potential, though 6-3 Mickey Peters could get a look, as could Wes Welker because of his skills as a return man. C Toby Cecil is a lineman who could move on.

he has evolved, everything in the book, I don't have going out and getting a veteran quarterback on my mind."

Jones left himself wiggle room, of course. The caveat, "as things stand today," punctuated almost all of his sentences. None of which dampened his immediate message, which was, "Carter is our guy. We believe in him."

Because the Cowboys realize, whatever Carter's shortcomings and failings may be, he is their best and only hope to make the playoffs.

"Oh no, I'm playing him," Cowboys coach Bill Parcells said Monday when asked if Carter was his guy no matter what. "That's what he has to do. No one else can do it. He has to do it."

What is unknown is how Carter will respond to the pressure. He mentally imploded last season when criticism from within and elsewhere intensified after he started poorly. And while Carter has shown a lot of growth in a lot of areas this season, poise under pressure is only something that can be demonstrated in pressure situations.

"You know me. I never get shaken by anything," Carter said. "I'm looking forward to coming out this week and letting it rip again and keep ripping it and ripping it again. So, that's just me. You know me. Don't nothing shake me."

Which is good, because the Cowboys' next three games are the biggest of Carter's NFL career.

The Cowboys probably need to win two to guarantee a playoff berth. And while Jones parked himself firmly behind Carter, he readily admits that failing to make the playoffs after a 5-1, then an 8-3 start, would be a major disappointment. That said, he remains confident they can reach the postseason.

"We're having some struggles right now," Jones said. "You don't want to be struggling as you go into the end of the year, but, if you're going to struggle, I'd rather struggle after having some success early so that we've got the wins and we've got a lot to play for."

"I think [the loss to Philadelphia] is overstated relative to it being a curtain for the season, casting a shadow on the season or undermining the success we've had this season."

What Jones reminded Carter when he pulled him aside for a sit-down Tuesday morning was Carter is a big reason for that success.

He reminded Carter of how he has gone from being benched and left for waiver-wire fodder to Dallas' starting quarterback and a candidate for the NFL Comeback Player of the Year. He suggested that Carter draw strength from his

achievements when fingers begin pointing in his direction and his shoulders get burdened with blame.

Which is now and which is why Jones went public Tuesday.

He realized Carter needed a show of support, and Jones delivered, privately and publicly.

"If you are asking me if these next three games are a laboratory to evaluate Quincy Carter, I'm saying Quincy has been evaluated around here the last three years, and what he has done since he was benched last year is admirable in my mind," Jones said. "He has competed, won the starting job and been the quarterback to get us to where we are today. And, as of today, I'm in good shape for what Quincy can be for the Cowboys in years to come."



Jimmy Carter was the first president to walk the inaugural parade route from the Capitol Building to the White House.

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King agrees to pay \$7.5M to Norris

NEW YORK -- Promoter Don King agreed to pay former champion Terry Norris \$7.5 million on Wednesday, just as a jury was debating damages on the boxer's claim that King stole money from him, Norris' attorney said.

King agreed to pay \$3 million by next week and the remainder within 15 months, said attorney Judd Burstein, who said the settlement in the 7-year case might encourage other fighters to sue the promoter.

"I think this is the beginning of the end for Don King," Burstein said. "A lot of people now realize he can be held accountable for what he's done."

Former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson is also suing King in New York, claiming King stole more than \$100 million while promoting his fights after his release from prison in 1995. That case has yet to go to trial.

"If anything, from what I've heard, the Mike Tyson case is even more overwhelming," Burstein said.

King, who is promoting an eight-fight card Saturday night in Atlantic City, N.J., could not immediately be reached for comment.

Burstein said Norris, who has brain damage from punches, had no money left from a career in which he made millions in purses. Norris was the 154-pound champion in the 1990s, beating Sugar Ray Leonard in 1991 in his biggest fight. He lost his last three fights and finished 47-9 with



Hasim Rahman, from left, of Baltimore, Md., boxing promoter Don King and John Ruiz pose for a picture during a news conference in Atlantic City, N.J. Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2003. Rahman and Ruiz will meet for the "interim" WBA heavyweight championship at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City, N.J. Saturday, Dec. 13, 2003.

31 knockouts.

Norris retired in 1998, and he was denied a license to fight again in 2000 by Nevada boxing officials who heard testimony that his speech was slurred and he had brain damage from fighting.

Norris sued King and his former manager, Joe Sayatovich, alleging the two conspired to

pay him less than what he should have made for fights after Sayatovich borrowed \$200,000 from King in 1994.

The case went to a New York State Supreme Court jury this week, and Burstein said King agreed to settle when jurors came back and asked the judge for a calculator and a magnifying glass.



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Viene de la Pagina 3

grantes. las declaraciones del secretario abren una "luz de esperanza" para la reforma migratoria.

"Aunque Ridge no ofreció detalles de qué clase de legalización se podría dar, es muy positivo que un funcionario de su nivel haya reconocido que los indocumentados no son terroristas y que, por el contrario, contribuyen con sus esfuerzos a la economía de este país", dijo Marcelo Gaete, director de Programas de la Asociación Nacional de Funcionarios Latinos Elegidos y Nominados (NALEO).

"El solo hecho de abordar este tema desde el ángulo de los

aportes de los inmigrantes ya es positivo porque cambia el tono del debate. lo lleva a otro nivel", aseguró.

Buena señal

Para Katherine Cullinton, abogada de inmigración del Fondo Mexicanoamericano para la Defensa Legal y la Educación (MALDEF), "es una señal muy buena que Ridge haya aclarado que los indocumentados no presentan riesgos para la seguridad del país porque éste es precisamente el principal argumento en contra de un acuerdo migratorio".

Cullinton agregó que las razones para reanudar las conver-

saciones sobre un acuerdo migratorio son hoy más fuertes que antes del 11 de septiembre de 2001, cuando los atentados terroristas detuvieron los avances que habían hecho los presidentes George Bush, de Estados Unidos, y Vicente Fox, de México.

"Si hace dos años había un clima positivo para que se diera ese acuerdo, hoy los motivos son todavía más poderosos porque la economía necesita más mano de obra inmigrante. Por otro lado, ante las próximas elecciones, el Partido Republicano desea conquistar el voto de los latinos y un acuerdo migratorio le ganaría muchas simpatías entre este grupo", dijo.

Por su parte, Angélica Salas, directora ejecutiva de la Coalición de Los Angeles para los Derechos de los Inmigrantes (CHIRLA), indicó que, aunque es muy bueno que Ridge haya aceptado que es mejor para la seguridad del país darles un estatus legal a los inmigrantes, falta ver qué clase de legislación migratoria se impulsa.

"En general, creo que es positivo que haya un reconocimiento de que se debe abordar el problema de la inmigración indocumentada, sobre todo en el actual clima antiinmigrante. Pero tenemos que ser muy cautos en cuanto a los resultados. Nosotros abogamos por programas de legalización que les den a los indocumentados todos los derechos y no sabemos hasta qué punto esto vaya a ser así", advirtió.

Salas explicó que dentro del Partido Republicano hay varios proyectos de ley que pretenden

dar sólo visas temporales de trabajo, sin ninguna prerrogativa a cambio. "Este tipo de programas no beneficiarían a los inmigrantes. Tenemos que impulsar medidas que realmente les abran una vía para ser residentes legales con todos los derechos".

La directora ejecutiva de CHIRLA afirmó que, a pesar de las declaraciones de Ridge, no cree que en los próximos meses se vaya a anunciar una amnistía para los millones de indocumentados en el país.

"Es más probable que se aprueben proyectos que beneficien a ciertos grupos, por ejemplo el HR 3142 que le daría después de cierto tiempo la residencia legal a los campesinos y la llamada Dream Act que favorecería a los estudiantes indocumentados. Pero hablar de una amnistía total sería algo muy sorpresivo", concluyó.

Frialdad crítica

Entre algunos funcionarios y miembros del Congreso las declaraciones de Ridge fueron recibidas de manera más fría y crítica.

Asa Hutchison, subsecretario de Seguridad para el Transporte y las Fronteras, manifestó que los comentarios de Ridge reflejan simplemente el debate que hay en el Congreso sobre inmigración.

A su vez, el congresista J.D. Hayworth, republicano de Arizona, aseveró que le parecía inconcebible que Ridge hablara a nombre de la Administración Bush de manera unilateral y que seguramente sus palabras despertarían gran oposición en el Congreso.

A Visit to Lupe

from page 4

Many arrive in chartered buses, and many more on foot. They are there for only one reason, to say "Happy Birthday" and to show her she's loved.

Many arrive during the night with prayers, singing and carrying lit candles as the groups of musicians wait for their turn to serenade the beautiful lady with the birthday song *Las Mañanitas*.

She appeared to the Indian Juan Diego in January of 1531 and asked that a church be built on that place. She's become a symbol of hope for the poor and the dark-skinned people who lived in oppression, as did Juan Diego.

It was her likeness that was

stamped on the banner that Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla took from the chapel in Atotonilco and led his ragged but determined army against the Spanish tyrants on that historic 16th of September, and to the present it is her likeness on the banners of the United Farm Workers that were led by César Chávez.

This beautiful lady is in the heart of every Mexican, regardless of religion or station in life. She's painted on hundreds of walls in all the barrios of the world.

She instills comfort and hope in every pair of brown hands that clasp in prayer.

She is the patroness of the Americas and the Queen of Mexico.

Pope Paul II has made many trips to visit the basilica to kneel before her in prayer, and she is there in the *tumba de Papas* in Rome, where John Paul II will rest when he dies.

This Dec. 12 will be no different, and I will attend the mass of *Las Mañanitas* at six in the morning, where there will be mariachis playing and *matachines* dancing, and where the priest will proclaim in a loud voice filled with emotion: "¡Viva México y que Viva La Virgen de Guadalupe!"

In October I went to New York City. While there I visited St. Patrick's Cathedral. We walked in through the side door, and there she was. Lupe with a big Mexican flag, with many flickering candles lit at her feet and the smell of the symbolic roses that had been placed in vases all around her.

When I saw her I was home. (c) 2003, Hispanic Link News Service. Distributed by Tribune Media Services International.)

¿Que Pasa? Santa Claus & Mrs. Claus Are In Town

Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived at Santa Land in Mackenzie Park to listen to the wishes of Lubbock and area children. The opening of the event was on Wednesday evening.

The City of Lubbock has hosted Santa Land for the past 47 years, and as always, admission for both young and old is free. Santa Land is open nightly from 6 pm until 10 pm, and the last night for visitors is Dec. 23. The for Santa Land is the East Broadway entrance on the south side of Mackenzie Park.

LHCC Upcoming Events

The Lubbock Hispanic Chamber of Commerce cordially invite the members and interested new members to attend its Annual Business Meeting, Board of Directors elections and its Christmas Party on Thursday, Dec. 18, 2003.

The events are schedule as follow: 5 pm refreshments & networking; 5:30 pm Business meeting; 6:30-8:30 Christmas Party. The event will held at Emma's Restaurant located at 1602 Main Street in the Private meeting room. The sponsor of the event will be KiCorp.

Get a Break on Taxes

Before you get too wrapped up in the holidays, keep in mind that another less festive time is just around the corner - tax season. Fortunately, there's still time if a tax deduction tops your holiday wish list. All you have to do is donate your used vehicle - running or not -- to the National Kidney Foundation's Kidney Cars Program, and you may enjoy a much sought after year-end break.

All you need to do is call 1-800-448-2277. Vehicles are sold at auctions or for parts, with 70% of the proceeds supporting the work of the National Kidney Foundation of West Texas.

For more information or to donate your car, van, truck or boate, call or donate online at www.kidney.org/funds/cars.cfm

Lubbock Animal Shelter to be closed for repairs

The Lubbock Animal Services, the largest animal welfare organization on the South Plains, will be forced to close at 1 p.m. on Friday, December 12, so that electrical repairs and upgrades can be made.

Protect Your Pets During Cold Weather

Lubbock Animal Services, the largest animal welfare organization on the South Plains, is asking people to remember that pets are affected just as much as people by cold weather. Animals risk hypothermia and other cold-related threats when the temperature drops.

"Pets without shelter often freeze to death overnight when the wind chill can drop temperatures well below freezing," says Cantrell. "They need protection from the elements to be able to survive our cold winters."

Pet owners are urged to take a few basic precautions in order to make sure that their pets stay warm and happy this winter. All animals should have a shelter that protects them from wind, rain, and snow, and by facing the opening to the shelter south, pets can be protected from cold north winds. Outdoor pets should be given extra food in the winter so that their bodies have more fuel to burn to keep themselves warm. A frozen water dish means that the pet goes without water, so it is important that owners make sure that water dishes contain clean, unfrozen water that the pet can easily drink. Older pets as well as younger ones are particularly at risk to weather extremes.

State law and city ordinances require owners to provide food, water, and shelter for their pets at all times and failure to do so could result in a citation or charges of cruelty to an animal being filed against the owner.

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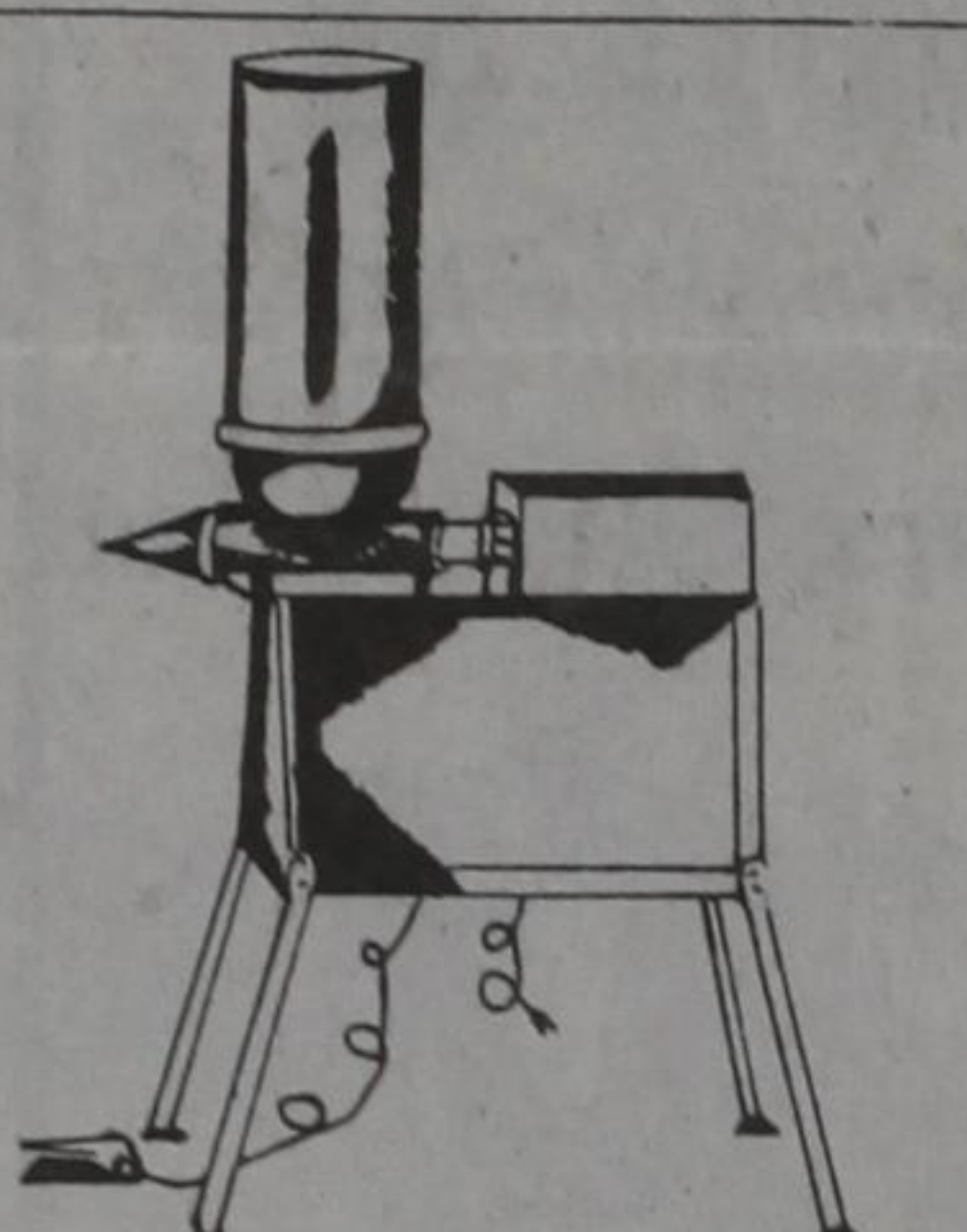
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