

El Editor

Casualties of
War in Iraq
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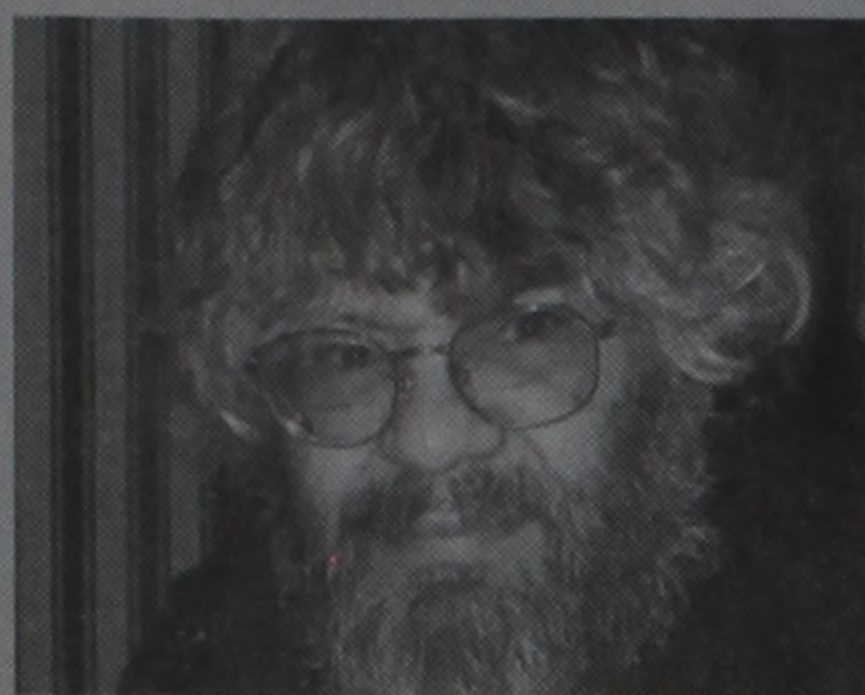
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Lubbock, Texas 79401

Comentarios

de Bidal Aguero

This week we asked our readers about the race for Governor.



Surprisingly, to me at least, we got an equal amount of answers favoring each of the candidates.

I guess it is a surprise to me because in reading each of the candidate's platforms and in knowing the policies we have been subjected to under Rick Perry, I can't see how any politically educated Hispanic would support some of the candidates that will be on the ballot.

As pointed out in the lead story, there are definite differences in the candidates and it is time for our leaders in this community to stand up and shout, start giving direction and telling people how to vote.

Of course as a newspaper our endorsement will be forthcoming but can we really afford to wait?

Some city leaders have been invited an event called "Solutions for Our Future" that will take place at the Spirit Ranch this coming Monday. According to the letter of invitation, "the purpose of this special meeting of presidents of all the major universities and colleges in our area is to discuss the value of higher education and the solutions needed to ensure America's place of prominence in the future."

Sounds interesting. A report on this next week.

The Fair is just about over and I am sure that there have been plenty of heart-burn stomachs suffering throughout this past week. Our hearts go out to all but "quien les manda!"

I have always wondered how many of those scholarships that are awarded by the Fair Association go to minorities. Perhaps someone will look into that question.

And perhaps someone will also start asking how come no Hispanics are ever elected or appointed to the Fair Association.

It has been over 6 months since Hispanics in Lubbock took to the street in support of basic human rights for undocumented workers. We saw a march in which may carried signs saying "Today we March - Tomorrow we Vote." It has yet to be proven whether this slogan will become true. Perhaps we will see in November.

Our hope are that many of our people will realize the importance of voting and realize that marching is not enough. During the march we saw many faces that we personally knew and many that we know that they, if united, can help us make a difference. "Vamonos recios Razal!"

Have any comments? Write Bidal at eleditor@sbcglobal.net

Texas Race Both Colorful and a Little Kinky

Among those seeking to become governor are a Jewish cowboy comedian and 'one tough grandma.' Many voters are undecided.

This November in Texas, voters will be asked to vote in a four-way race for governor that has begun living up to its billing as one of the most colorful contests in recent Texas history.

In addition to the GOP incumbent and Kinky Friedman, a cigar-chomping comedian, there is Carole Keeton Strayhorn, another independent candidate, who waged a losing battle to be called "grandma" on the ballot, and Democrat Chris Bell, who is pushing a "Don't Mess with Ethics" reform plan, a play on the state's famous anti-litter slogan, "Don't Mess with Texas."

Whether the Texas campaign will be close as well as colorful, however, remains to be seen.

Polls have consistently shown that Perry, who analysts say lacks the folksy charisma that helped popularize former governors such as Ann Richards and George W. Bush, is vulnerable to defeat — some surveys gauge his support as low as 31%. Yet, with a little more than a month left in the race, no challenger has made a move, raising the likelihood that a splintered vote will get Perry reelected.

A Survey USA poll taken two weeks ago showed Perry with 35% of the vote, followed by Bell and Friedman with 23% each and Strayhorn with 15%. A Zogby International/Wall Street Journal poll earlier had shown the race much closer, with Perry at 31%, Bell at 25%, Friedman at 22% and Strayhorn at 11%.

A fifth candidate, Libertarian James Werner, is trailing far behind the rest but hopes to play the spoiler.

Texas political experts said that although Perry maintained a sizable lead, many voters still were undecided. All four major candidates have enough money to

run television ads, making it impossible to predict who will come out on top on election day.

"Nobody has gotten quite close enough to scare" Perry, said Bruce Buchanan, a political science professor at the University of Texas at Austin. "But we

have not seen the heaviest barrage of attack ads, and in a multi-candidate race, it's not always the person launching the attacks who winds up benefiting."

Strayhorn — the Texas comptroller who calls herself "one tough grandma" — initially was considered the most serious challenger, thanks to a combination of personality, a hefty war chest and an insider's knowledge of statehouse politics. But her campaign has not taken off.

At a stop this week beside the Houston Ship Channel — where the supporter who introduced Strayhorn also cracked wise about Perry's cheerleading past — the comptroller attributed her poor poll numbers to the fact that she remarried and has a new last name.

"Now that people know me as Strayhorn — now that they know that's who the 'one tough grandma' is — I'm going to be moving up," she said. "It's either four more years of the same thing, or one tough grandma who's going to shake Austin up."

Bell, a former congressman and Houston City Council member best known for lodging an ethics complaint against then House Majority Leader Tom Delay (R-Texas), was widely perceived as a

sacrificial lamb months ago, and his campaign has struggled with minimal support from the Democratic Party.

But Bell has been gaining traction, thanks in part to the verbal gaffes of Friedman — who angered African American leaders by calling Hurricane Katrina

that included a racial slur. The resulting negative news coverage pains Friedman, not just because he believes the joke was taken out of context, but because the clip — a chronicle of his darker days abusing drugs and alcohol — isn't funny.

"I was flying on tequila and God knows what urban spices," Friedman said. But, he added, "these things all seem to be boosting" his candidacy by attracting support from



Texans tired of political correctness.

Friedman's political guru, Dean Barkley, managed Ventura's winning Minnesota race and talked the former governor into leaving the Baja surf for a barn-storming trip across Texas college campuses with Friedman this week. The pair have been greeted like rock stars, and some of their stops have turned into autograph sessions.

As they were eating breakfast with reporters Wednesday, while a documentary crew filmed the scene, a waitress passed Friedman a note handwritten on the back of a bill, telling the candidate that she — and all the Republicans she knew — were planning to vote for him.

"This is what's going to win the election right here," Friedman said as he got up, taking the note with him. "Rick Perry is a nice guy, but he doesn't know the waitress' name. I know the waitress' name — and I might even ask for her phone number."

**Register by Oct. 6 to
Vote on Nov. 7**

Squeezing Border Business:

The Cost of Sealing the Border

The nation's pursuit of a sealed border would cost taxpayers and businesses tens of billions of dollars.

It would require new fencing, technology and additional agents, and would mean lost revenue for border businesses.

Border cities such as San Diego and El Paso and Laredo, Texas, already have lost millions since officers began more rigid checks after Sept. 11. The Silva Super Market in El Paso has survived, like most businesses on the border, but makes less than it used to because customers stay home rather than endure lines to get across that can be hours long, owner Martin Silva says.

"This type of security affects both economies," Silva says. "I think you'll find that all along the California to Texas border."

The government could find and allocate the money required to attempt a border seal but historically has made such major priority shifts only for national-security threats or programs to keep the economy afloat, says Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow in foreign-policy studies at the Brookings Institution, a nonprofit public-policy think tank in Washington, D.C.

"We could actually shut that border and we wouldn't have to bankrupt ourselves," he says. "You could if you decided it's your top priority."

That's very unlikely, a Star investigation found.

While some experts and politicians rank sealing the border as the top U.S. policy priority, the nation as a whole doesn't agree, O'Hanlon says.

Unless terrorists begin pouring in through the southern border, politicians and citizens probably will balk at the costs, he says: "My guess is that we'll come to the conclusion that it's just not worth it."

Costs of Border Seal

The complexity and enormity of the proposed solutions make it difficult to pin down an exact price tag for an attempted border seal.

Even if natural barriers such as canyons, rivers and shifting sand didn't make a full-border wall impossible, fencing the nearly 2,000 miles simply would cost too much, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff already has said.

At \$3.2 million per mile — the estimate used by the office of U.S. Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif. for the 700 miles of fencing the House of Representatives wants to build — a borderlong fence would cost \$6.4 billion.

The 700 miles of double fencing supported by the House would cost an estimated \$2.2 billion plus maintenance. The Senate approved a proposal for less fencing and more vehicle barriers, but last week decided to consider supporting the 700-mile fence as well.

A "virtual fence" of cameras, sensors, aerial drones and other technology would cost an estimated \$5.5 billion or more, says U.S. Rep. Harold Rogers, R-Ky.

Costs for those projects could double if they encounter the environmental and logistical problems that plagued construction of 14 miles of secondary fence in San Diego in the mid-1990s.

Fences, barriers and other equipment to seal the border would require agents to monitor them, too.

The U.S. Border Patrol has about 10,500 agents on the southern border, more than five per mile, agency officials say. In his 2007 fiscal year budget, President Bush requested \$454 million for 1,500 new agents and associated costs including relocations, information-technology upgrades, and training and construction costs to update agency facilities, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection press release says. That's part of his larger plan to add 6,000 agents by 2008.

Using that figure — \$302,806 per agent — it would cost \$4.2 billion to hire the 14,000 agents the Senate has proposed hiring. It would cost an additional \$21.8 billion to hire 72,000 more and reach a total of 100,000, which would provide the same coverage that proved successful when the Border Patrol slowed traffic in El Paso in the mid-'90s.

The government would have a better shot at stopping illegal immigration if it invested those billions in developing the Mexican economy and eliminated backlogs for legal entry, says Deborah Meyers, senior analyst for the Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan think tank in Washington, D.C.

The money also could fund a program to help employers verify that applicants are legally able to work in the United States, says Judy Gans, immigration policy program manager at the University of Arizona's Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy. Those concepts have support from some analysts and politicians, but an expanded border fence has garnered much more.

Actual Costs

The cost of a 14-mile steel mesh fence under construction in San Diego offers a reminder that projects can go over budget.

In the early '90s, officials estimated the secondary fence would cost \$14 million — \$1 million per mile, says John Pike, director of Virginia-based GlobalSecurity.org, a nonpartisan security-information Web site.

The first nine miles rang up at \$39 million, or about \$4.3 million per mile, with all associated costs. Last year, the Department of Homeland Security approved an additional \$35 million to complete the final five miles, 3 1/2 of which were delayed by rugged terrain and legal wrangling about environmental concerns. The president requested another \$30 million in his 2007 budget. All that would push the total cost for the 14-mile fence to \$104 million, or \$7.4 million per mile.

With steep cliffs, rugged mountains, sand dunes, deserts and large stretches of private land in Texas where some of the 700 miles of new fencing would go, that project could encounter simi-



lar setbacks.

"The San Diego precedent demonstrates that this is clearly more complicated than it sounds at first blush," Pike says. "It's not like fencing in your backyard so your dog doesn't get out."

Border Businesses Hit Hard

The economic ramifications of increased border security hit businesses on the border, too.

When the Silva Super Market opened in 1920 on the northern bank of the Rio Grande, a single wooden bridge connected El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. The U.S. Border Patrol didn't exist.

Today, four concrete bridges arch above the concrete-funnelled Rio Grande, connecting the two cities. Customs and Border Protection officers check everyone who crosses.

For nearly 11 miles, three layers of steel-mesh fence stand between the river and El Paso. Hun-

dreds of Border Patrol agents monitor the area day and night on dirt roads between them.

For all the changes, one constant remains: Nearly half of the customers at the Silva Super Market are from Juarez.

"We are one economy. I can't stress it enough. Any border town will probably tell you that," says Martin Silva, whose grandfather founded the store. "You have both American and Mexican nationals shopping in Juarez and El Paso, and that just contributes to the overall health of both country's economies."

Money in the borderlands is fluid. Mexicans come to the United States to buy clothes, shoes, toilet paper and groceries. Americans head south for tequila, medicine and souvenirs, and to visit dentists and bars.

(Continued on page 6)

CANDIDATE'S FORUM

This week El Editor features David Van Os, the 2006 Democratic candidate for Texas Attorney General.



I am David Van Os and I'm looking forward to being sworn in as your people's Lawyer next January. I've got a message...I've got a message for the big oil companies and the insurance monopolists and the utility barons and all the other robber barons that are praying and pillaging on the people of this state: You better go ahead and spend every penny of your billions of dollars to try to beat me in this election because, when I get sworn in, I'm coming after you!

Think back. Think back around 10 years ago. Take your memories back to around 1996. We were all looking forward to a bridge to a new century and the new millennium. At that time, it looked like it was going to be a pretty good century. Well, something got in the way. A bunch of gangsters stole an election and took over the country and what they've been doing for the last 5 and a half years...they've been showing us that they want to wipe out constitutional checks and balances. They want to abolish the rule of law. They want to extinguish the rights and liberties of the people and they've turned the country over to the corporate robber barons. And you know what? They didn't come from here and when they went to Washington they left their junior partner gangsters in charge in Austin. What that means is that we here in Texas...we here in Texas are the ones that have to dig that evil up by its roots because no where else can it be dug up and eradicated they way it's got to done. We Texans...we Texans have a moral responsibility to our fellow Americans in 49 other states to take care of it right here.

I've got a message also to the representatives of the embedded corporate media. Keep writing...you keep writing newspaper stories making fun of our democratic candidates talking about how the...you keep saying the Democratic party doesn't have candidates and all that kind of stuff. How dare you make fun of citizens who are fulfilling the highest obligation and most noble duty in democracy? Our Democratic party, we are all the heirs...we are all the heirs of the great democrats of the past. We are all the heirs of the founder of our party, Thomas Jefferson the author of the Declaration of Independence. We are all heirs of Andy Jackson. We are all heirs of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. We are all heirs of Ralph Yarborough. You know, Ralph Yarborough went around the state saying, "Put the damn on the lower shelf so the little people can reach it." Well, hell! The damn is so high up now the little people can't even see it. We have got to put it back down because the Democratic Party is the party of the people...inaudible...and this Democratic Party is going to take this country back.

Your friends and neighbors...your friends and neighbors...your good neighbors and friends who have been voting Republican are not the enemy folks. They are the victims. The enemies are the ruthless political hustlers who've been tricking them and conning them out of their votes. And, it is our duty to lead the people of this state to make sure that we take it back from those power grabbers who use it for nothing but personal gain and restore it to the people of this state. It is an historic duty. It is a moral obligation. And, there is no tomorrow. There is no wait for next year. There is no rebuilding, keep your powder dry or any of that kind of nonsense. It's now! We've got to do it now. Right now. Right now 2006.

You have a magnificent...you have a magnificent Democratic ticket for your statewide candidates because they're all from the grassroots. None of them were picked from up above by kingmakers or influence peddlers or would be power brokers. They are all grassroots Democrats. They're all fighting Democrats. And, they're all doing this because they want to take a stand and fight back and put the state back into the hands of the people. Our message, all of us together...our message to the people of this state is, "We're taking a stand. Join us in this fight! Join us in this fight to return this state to the people who own it. Put it back in the hands of the people of the state. It does not belong to the CEOs of the insurance companies and the oil executives and the utility barons. It belongs to the people. It belongs to all of the people of this state. The people you represent here as delegates and this year we are going to take it back. Thank you all very much.

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IRAQ: QUESTION AND NOT MANY ANSWERS: PART III

Op-ed by Todd Klien

Adopt a New Plan
Congress and the public must reverse Bush's recent claim that we will remain in Iraq as long as he is president, and the Democrats must state a clear alternative that is realistic and specific. It is not realistic, nor responsible, to promote a total withdrawal of troops from Iraq, at least not within the next twelve months.

However, it is quite plausible to expect the current Iraqi unity government to take the steps necessary, and within their power, so that we can make changes that will allow our troops to begin to be drawn down within the next few months, and once the drawdown begins to escalate the pace of that drawdown over a brief period of time.

The Iraqi population is divided along three major groups; the Sunni Kurds, the Sunni Arabs, and the Shia. Up to now the focus of "rebuilding Iraq" has been to force these groups to largely ignore the divisions and the implications "rebuilding Iraq" has meant to the individual groups.

The Sunni insurgents have no real motivation to come into the coalition when doing so has meant giving up their monopoly on power and the Shia have had little interest in dealing seriously with the Sunni Arabs while they rightly feel they are the aggrieved majority that was formerly oppressed by the Sunni leadership.

However, the Shia also feel that now with the support and influence of Iran, and to a lesser extent with a shield of protection provided by the US troops in and around southern Iraq, that they are immune from compromise.

The Sunni Kurds are inclined to involve themselves in national affairs only so far as it promotes their regional interests. Those dynamics make for a weak national unity government that will face constant assault so long as its existence presents a threat to a significant segment of society and creates a climate of distrust among the others.

It is time to fully accept this and develop a form of government largely acceptable to the Sunnis and the Shiites. Though the notion of a confederated Iraq has been circulated for some time it has gotten much more attention as all other options seem to have been exhausted.

The most recent proponent of such a plan is Senator Joe Biden, and the plan existentially is to give much more power to the states, or more exactly the regions, in terms of policing and local laws.

Short of creating three separate and independent states, this plan would establish three separate but united states in much the same fashion as the early United States of America under the Articles of Confederation.

The issue of oil revenue sharing is critical to making this plan workable and the current federal government has within its power the ability to resolve that matter just as it can address the issue of devolving more power, or autonomy, to the regions.

As Iraq continues to war with itself the question is really a matter of adopting this plan and beginning to drawdown our troops as its success allows us to do, or remaining with the failed policy of trying to hold together a society in which the major parties have yet to affirm that goal, nor banded together to assist the US forces as an equally committed partner.

If we choose to stay the course we will likely see a splintering of the regions along the three groups with Iran having an ever greater control over the Shia population—essentially as Iran does over the Shia south of Lebanon.

This alternative model will be vastly more successful as its aims will be in keeping with the popular will of the Iraqi people. In return we should expect Iraq to not only carry its fair share of the burden of this war in terms of national security forces, but in terms of the financial cost of the war.

It is fair and realistic for Bush to inform the Iraqi government that it will no longer receive free financing from the American public and that beginning the first of next year they will be expected to repay the US for any money disbursed from that time forward. That could be as grants or low interest loans but in either case the Iraqi government must know that the free ride is over.

Within the next six month they should expect to have returned to pre-war levels of oil production, and if they fail to adopt this plan or live up to the benchmarks and timetables we have set out for them we will reduce our aid to their government to a trickle in the south and center of the country.

Beyond that, it is reasonable to expect Iraq to quickly stabilize its oil production and exceed pre-war production within the next year, and to provide a steady flow of oil for our domestic needs as the country that ultimately liberated them from Saddam Hussein's tyranny.

Furthermore to ensure mutual, regional compliance with this plan and some degree of trust among the three regional parties within Iraq the US should consider establishing a permanent base in the northern area of the Kurdish region as well as possibly just north of Baghdad.

This will also aid Iraq in its self-defense as a permanent US presence within their country will have some deterrent effect on its neighbors, chiefly Iran.

Lastly, and with great reservation, we should be clear with the Shia of Iraq that if they do not go along with the confederation plan

there will be severe consequences that will be to their detriment.

The US should state our willingness as a last resort to pullout of Iraq and back the Sunni Kurds and Arabs in their willingness to adopt this plan, or in the event that the Shia obstinance forces a full-blown civil war.

While this is the last thing we should want to have to do (and certainly we should not deal directly with those Sunni insurgents with American blood on their hands) yet, such a risk to the Shia would surely give the Iraqi Shiites and Iran grave pause.

Regardless, our national interests are involved in ensuring that the Shia know that they must remain in some union with the Sunni of Iraq, and that they will be expected to share the oil revenues from the south with their Sunni compatriots.

Ultimately, if the Iraq War is not righted immediately it is on the brink of spiraling into an irreparable disaster and catalyst for a regional war. That would spell complete disaster for the region as the Sunni and Shia sects of Islam split into openly warring neighbors and total failure for the Bush presidency.

It is time Bush backed the confederation-model for Iraq with the three regions holding together only in so much as they have to for mutual benefit along a faint sense of national identity and shared oil revenue wealth.

Under this plan the government and people of Iraq will receive the bounty of vast oil reserves and the easy money that comes with it to fund great public and private projects as well as peace, stability and self-defense against Persian hegemony.

With enough regional support for this plan derived from a regional summit (including support from the United Kingdom, Italy, Poland, and NATO as well), a permanent US military base in the Kurdish north (and possibly north of Baghdad), threat of the US backing of the Sunnis of Iraq over the Iraqi Shia it is realistic to believe there is a solution to be had in Iraq after all.

Yet, it cannot be stressed enough that President Bush must begin this process by first calling for a regional summit of Iraq's Persian and Arab neighbors—something so far he has stubbornly failed to do.

A regional summit including Iran will be critical to Iraq's success and have global implications for US relations in all other endeavors, such as Iran's intentions for nuclear armament.

A regional summit and pursuit of the described plan is the clearest course away from this brink of disaster Bush currently has us all hanging on, now we can only hope he takes it.

God help Iraq, the Middle East, and us if not.

COMMUNITY VOICES

This week El Editor asked who our readers favored in the Texas Governor's race.

Strayhorn.....she's the only one that has a chance to defeat Perry
Salvador Becerra via email

I have not had the opportunity to hear all the issues each candidate has been presenting. I have heard more from Kinky Friedman than the other two. I will be paying more attention to their issues since the election is not too far away. If I don't like what I hear from Chris Bell or Carole Keeton Strayhorn, I may just vote for Kinky Friedman just to upset the vote. He is a good writer - one point for him. I know it will be a tough election since not many candidates do what they say they are going to do. We will just have to wait and see.

Minerva Alaniz via email
During a "Meet the Candidate" forum sponsored by El Editor Newspaper, Chris Bell, the Democratic candidate for Governor said, "All we have to do to win is for Democrats to unite." He is right; there are enough Democratic Voters in Texas to win a 5-Way race.

Ysidro Gutierrez via email
Señor Bidal ,no se no eh escuchado aninguno.
Olivia Ramirez via email

I read that when Kinky Friedman was asked about how he would communicate his platform to in minority communities in Texas, Kinky said he "doesn't eat tamales in the barrio, doesn't eat fried chicken in the ghetto and doesn't eat bagels in Jewish communities."

Strayhorn is says that she want to put the Rangers on the border in charge of security.

We don't have to even discuss what Rick Perry is going to do for minorities. We already know what he has done.

I don't think you should even have to ask Hispanics who they are favoring with those kind of choices. Chris Bell is the only answer to some of our problems. An what many people do not know is that this year since the vote is going to be split, we have a chance to win!

Jose Ramirez via email

CARTAS - LETTERS

I read the letter to the editor of the week of Sept 7 about our spanish radio stations.

We are very lcky we have Spanish stations here in Lubbock. I am lossing my dear husband to diabetes and every day I send him a song. Thanks to Power 106 and the good music they play, he hears his song and dedication while he works.

A Loving Wife
Dear Editor,

The Trans-Texas Corridor (TTC) project championed by Gov. Rick Perry will bring about mass evictions of Texans from their homes, farms, and ranches. "Quick Take" authorized by HB 3588 will be used to force homeowners out in just 91 days. The 50 year contract with a foreign corporation is still a secret after over a year.

Our grassroots, crosspartisan group has created a short video, to help inform more Texans of the more than half a million acre Perry TTC plan, and it is easily available for viewing online at: www.StopPerryLandGrab.com

Thank You, -- Sal Costello
Founder of People for Efficient Transportation

Well I just recieved another one of those racist emails full of lies. Just like most of them, it came just in time to get everybody worked up again right before the elections, so they'll vote for the group that will attack this problem head on for them just like they did last November in the House. They continue to say they want to stop all these hispanics from taking over america! Works every time for them!

Something has to be done to stop this kind of filth. This type of talk continues to empower and embold the racists types who are just sitting on the edge, waiting to hear about these kind of things so they can build up enough courage to let out their racist remarks and vengeance against Hispanics and other minorities! Had one at work today again say something about how sick and tired he was of hearing spanish spoken. He said that there wasn't any room for it here in America! Sick, very sick people! Their illness is the purest form of racism known to mankind! It will continue to build and get worse, just as it has gotten to this point, unless we start speaking out and doing something about it now!

At this time I would like to thank Abel Cruz for the articles he writes sometimes in "El Editor," denouncing and speaking out against these types! But we all need to do more! We also need to do more in our own back yards.

To many hispanics are going along with some of this rhetoric Also, I've noticed this more among the youngsters. It happens for obvious reasons. They never went through what we went through when we were young, and they don't recognize it today in the stealth form it's put out to them! But some hermanitos go along with them because they are to comfortable in their present lifestyle, and want to keep it that way. So they just pretend like they don't see or hear any of it! Alberto's, is what I call them! Jose, you keep up the good work up north for us too with the Blue latinos!

Thanks, m,torres

"Community Voices" would like to hear from you, the readers. You may remain anonymous, but El Editor reserves the right to edit all comments for offensive language, offensive or distasteful content, or personal attacks, and for space. Mail your comments to Community Voices, 1502 Ave M, Lubbock, TX 79401, or email your comments to eleditor@sbcglobal.net

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Asst. Director of Sales - Amalia Aguro
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Do You Want Your Money In Spanish or English?

By José de la Isla
C-Span televised a curious exchange recently. Near the end of a panel offering conservative perspectives on the November elections, Jim Boulet stood and said, "Muchas gracias, mi amigo." Boulet is an advocate for making English the nation's official language.

He complained about a Republican congressman who favored voting in non-English languages, how George Bush failed to repeal Bill Clinton's executive order on languages, about immigrant issues, guest workers and Harriet Miers.

"The base is starting to feel, 'Yes, national security is important, but - you know, geez - will you take our issues as seriously on other matters as we take them?'"

If I understand correctly, he was saying language issues are as critical as, say, a terrorist attack.

John Fund, a Wall Street Journal columnist, added that Bush had "missed an incredible opportunity to partially unite the conservative movement" because they believe "in one nation, one people" and "in assimilation which is what all of our forebears had to go through." He failed to mention that so does nearly everyone and that assimilation is not the same thing as conformity.

John Gizzi, of Human Events magazine, then went on a rant about bilingual education. He brought up Tom DeLay, spending on bilingual education, and then said, "Business began to point out that their ATM machines, cash disposal machines, were in other languages, and started to look at it."

He was upset that some ATMs ask customers how they want to do business, in English or español?

Many discussions like this about "bilingual" are really code language to object to teaching bilingual capacity. Some circles fear a language plague, led by Spanish.

You see, retaining Spanish has come to suggest an unwillingness to "assimilate." And that is the stuff that some people want to call a "culture war."

But au contraire. We ought to worry seriously about the reverse, that not enough people are fluent in Spanish, and other languages, for that matter.

Spanish is the second most common language in the United States. The U.S. is the fifth largest Spanish-speaking country in the world, after Mexico, Spain Colombia and Argentina.

Yet the U.S. Spanish-language population is still only 12 percent of the national population. And about half of these persons, according to Wikipedia, also report speaking English "very well."



Big 12 Play kicks off, questions continue

Ok, Big 12 fans, it's almost time to get in-your-facemask serious about football.

There is still a little nonconference tidying up to do Saturday when Texas blows out Sam Houston State and Iowa State hopes to not get embarrassed at home against I-AA Northern Iowa.

After that it's nine weeks of Big 12 teams taking on each other in what could be one of the more compelling conference races in the league's 11-year history.

Texas and Iowa State gave us a little tease last Saturday of what's to come when nonconference competition ends and it's Big 12 all the time.

While Texas and Iowa State have one more nonleague game and the Oklahoma schools take the weekend off, eight Big 12 teams kick off their conference schedules Saturday.

The Big 12's hope to produce a second consecutive national champion probably has already ended. Defending



national champion Texas lost at home to No. 1 Ohio State in the second week, and a replay official snatched the thrill of victory out of Oklahoma's hands a

week later at Oregon. After Colorado's near miss at upsetting No. 9 Georgia (14-13) last Saturday, the Big 12 is 0-9 against Top 25 competition. So perhaps it's

time to just beat up on each other

"I wouldn't get my shorts in a bunch too much over that," Iowa State coach Dan McCarney said of the Big 12's futility against ranked competition. "I think when this whole college football season is over, all of us associated with the Big 12 will be able to hold our heads high."

Missouri and Texas A&M are the league's only remaining undefeated teams at 4-0. And both could fall as early as Saturday, when the Tigers and Aggies are involved in two of the weekend's best Big 12 matchups.

Colorado's game at Georgia demonstrated how wild, wacky and unpredictable the Big 12 race could be this season. The

league's only winless team, the 27-point underdog Buffaloes led Georgia 13-0 before faltering.

That impressive performance indicates the Buffs are finally catching on to new coach Dan Hawkins' system. And it should get the attention of Missouri (4-0) when the Tigers play host to the Buffs on Saturday.

On paper, the Texas Tech (3-1) contest at Texas A&M is the best game of the Big 12 bunch. We should find out a lot in a matchup of teams that both remain a mystery.

Many of us still don't understand how Tech's explosive offense was almost shut down in 12-3 loss at No. 17 TCU. And A&M coach Dennis Franchione remains on the hot seat because the

Aggies have not been all that impressive in four wins over mediocre competition.

The Red Raiders rebounded from their loss at TCU with a 62-0 thrashing of Southeastern Louisiana. But did Tech coach Mike Leach, who was livid with his team after the TCU game, learn much from the blowout of the I-AA Lions?

"We played better. But are we one-game, one-quarter or one-series-wonder kind of guys?" Leach said. "We've got to see if we're a team that can do it week after week."

Every Big 12 coach is asking himself the same thing. In 10 weeks, when Kansas at Missouri and Oklahoma at Oklahoma State closes out the conference schedule on Nov. 25, we'll all know the answer.

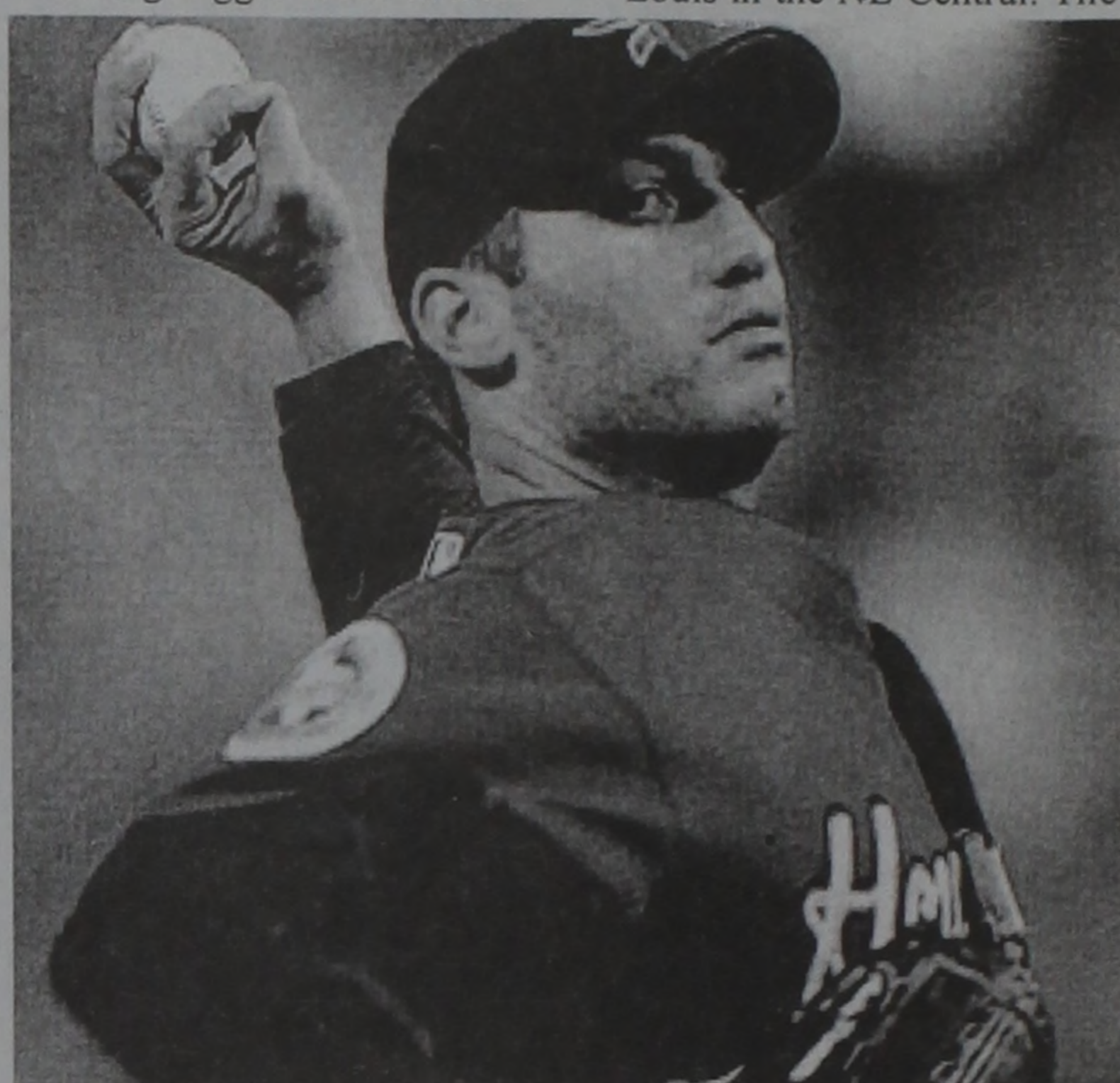
Astros still in hunt for playoffs after seventh straight win

The Houston Astros figured out how to take the pressure off themselves -- and that's how they earned

the chance to play pressure-packed games during the last week of September.

Craig Biggio drove in three

times for second-place Houston, which moved within 1 1/2 games of fading St. Louis in the NL Central. The



runs and Andy Pettitte pitched the surging Astros to their seventh straight victory Tuesday night, 7-4, over the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Mike Lamb scored three

Cardinals lost their seventh straight, 7-5, to San Diego.

A week ago, the NL champion Astros seemed just about done. All of a sudden,

continued on page 4

Fresh spinach may return to stores soon

It's safe to eat spinach grown outside California's Salinas Valley, federal health officials say, and the leafy greens could return to produce shelves in a few days.

An ongoing outbreak of E. coli linked to fresh spinach had sickened 166 people in 25 states through Friday. That's up from 157 victims in 23 states a day earlier, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For more than a week, the Food and Drug Administration has recommend people not eat fresh, raw spinach. State and federal investigators since have traced the contaminated spinach back to three California counties, and already farm inspections there are turning up possible problems.

On Friday, officials said spinach grown anywhere outside that area is safe to eat, but industry needs to figure out how to let consumers know the origin of what they're buying before the green can return to sale, said Dr. David Acheson of the FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition.

"The public can be confident that spinach grown in those non-implicated areas can be consumed and industry is working to get spinach from these areas back on the market," Acheson told reporters.

"I anticipate it will be fast," he later said of that process. "Whether it will be three days, four days, I don't know. That will be an industry determination."

Of those infected in the outbreak, 88 have been hospitalized, including a Wisconsin woman who died. Two other deaths have been reported in suspected cases, a child in Idaho and an elderly woman in Maryland, but those cases are still being investigated.

A team of 20 state and federal investigators on Friday were to visit the 10th California field associated with the contaminated spinach, said Mark Roh, the FDA's acting regional food and drug director for the Pacific region. Inspectors were looking for standing water, animal droppings and anything else unusual, as well as assessing the sanitation practices of farm workers. They also have taken 188 water, soil and produce samples from fields and processing plants.

The team already has spotted some potential problems.

"There are some situations of concern, may I say, that



would warrant some possible corrections in the near future," Roh told reporters by telephone. When asked to elaborate, a spokeswoman broke in and said the FDA would not, citing the ongoing nature of the investigation. The farm and plant inspections are expected to last another week.

Last week, Natural Selection Foods LLC of San Juan Bautista, Calif., recalled all its spinach and spinach-containing products. Many people reported eating the company's spinach, sold

under multiple brands, before falling sick. And a package of Dole baby spinach, one of those brands, taken from a victim's refrigerator tested positive for E. coli.

On Friday, S.T. Produce, based in Seattle, became the third company to recall salad products that may have included Natural Selection spinach. The other two are River Ranch Fresh Foods of Salinas, Calif., and RLB Food Distributors of West Caldwell, N.J.

S.T. Produce said its salads

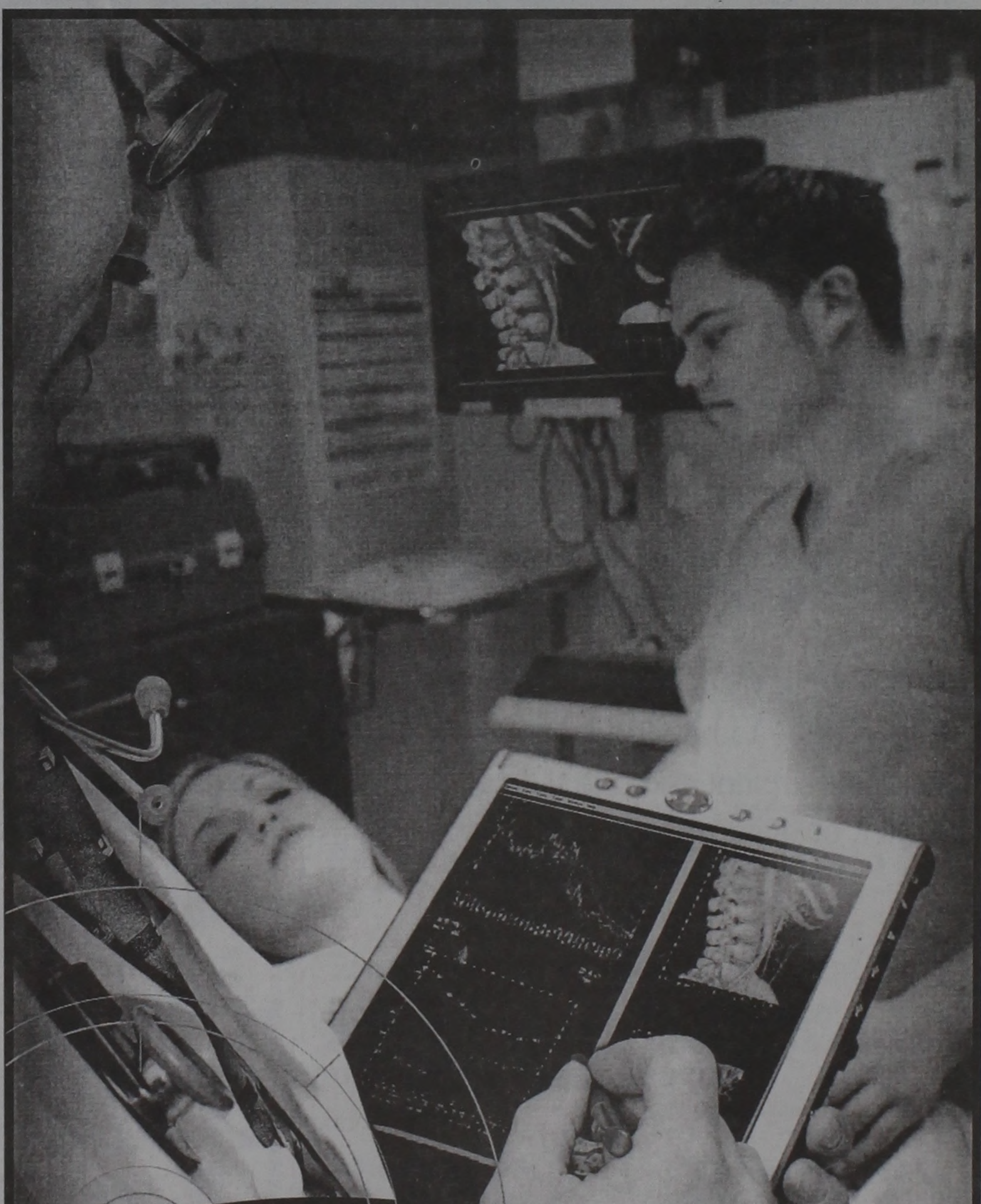
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70,000 cheer Saints back to New Orleans

More than 70,000 people welcomed football back to New Orleans last night as the Saints played their first game at the Superdome since Hurricane Katrina hit a year ago. The Saints improved to 3-0 with a 23-3 win over the Atlanta Falcons.

After a Super Bowl-like pregame show that included a performance by supergroups U2 and Green Day, the Saints wasted no time turning their welcome-home party into Mardi Gras: The Falcons' first drive went three-and-out, and special teams demon Steve Gleason sliced through the middle of the Atlanta line to smother Michael Koenen's punt. The ball skidded across the goal line, where Curtis Deloatch fell on it for a touchdown, the first given up by the Falcons this season.

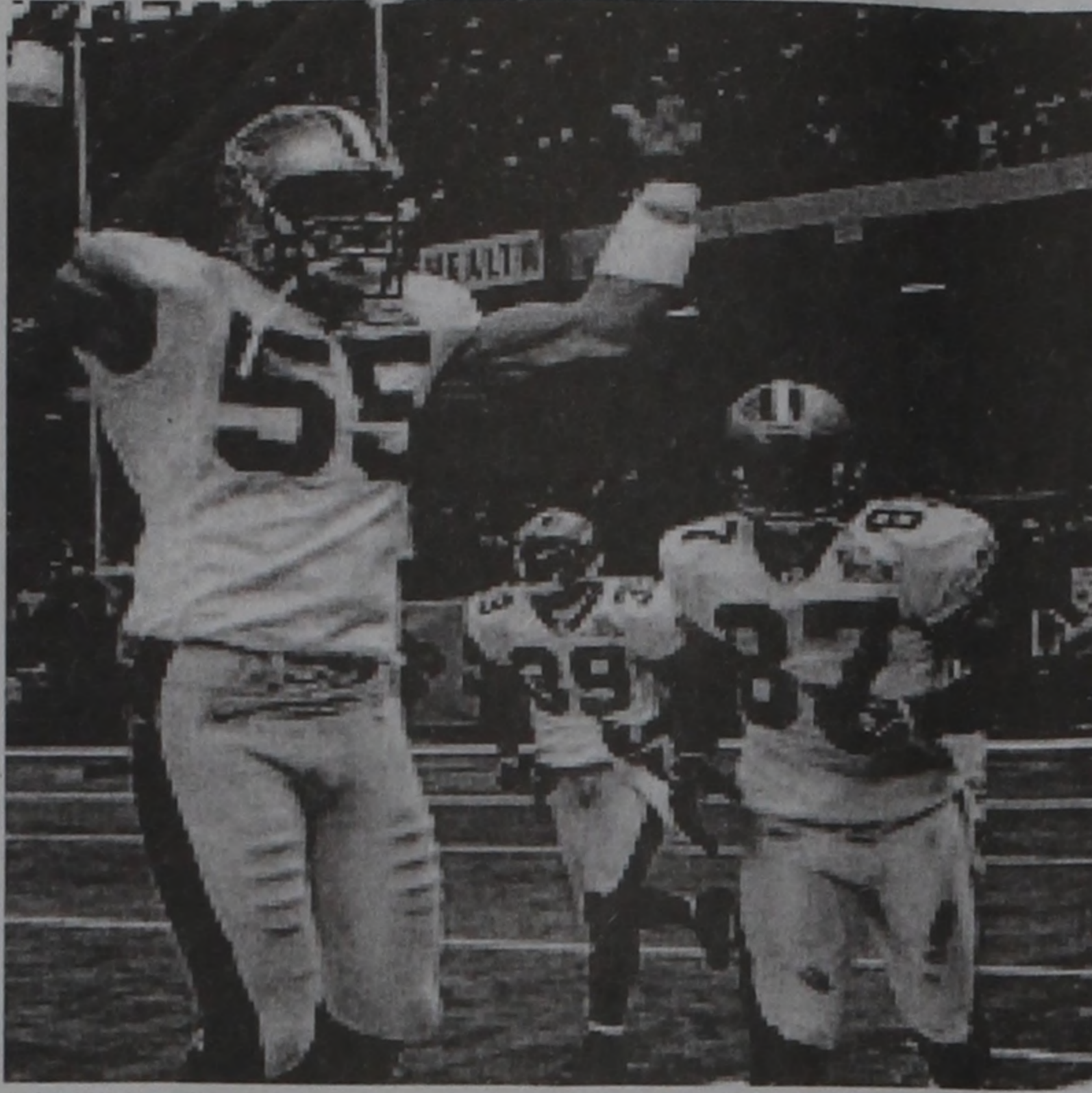
Just like that, the Saints sent an emphatic message to the NFL and the entire country: New Orleans is open for business.

DeLoatch ran over to the stands and pointed at the crowd of 70,003, as if to say, "Take that Katrina!" Undoubtedly, many more were cheering around this still-recovering city, some of them vowing to set up televisions outside government-issued trailers that pass for homes more than a year after the storm blew ashore, the levees broke and the water poured through.

"That set the tone," Brees said. "That's when we all knew. This was our day, our night."

"From the moment I signed with the Saints, I was looking forward to this," said quarterback Drew Brees, who joined New Orleans during the offseason. "It was a great night. It's something we'll never forget."

Benson, the Saints' once-reviled owner, broke out his parasol when it was over, bouncing off the field to "When the Saints Go Marching In" and reveling in the cheers of a fan base that feared he would take their



team away.

The Saints dedicated a game ball to the entire city.

"It meant a lot to them when the Saints didn't leave in their time of need," rookie Reggie Bush said. "When the people of New Orleans needed something to look to for confidence and something to be proud of, they looked to the Saints."

The Saints (3-0) poured it on against the Falcons (2-1), who fell behind 14-3 in the first quarter and never recovered.

Devery Henderson scored New Orleans' second TD on an 11-yard double-reverse, taking a handoff from Bush and cutting inside the pylon with help from a gutsy block by quarterback Drew Brees.

How could that play not work? When working on it in practice, the Saints dubbed their bit of chicanery "The Superdome Special."

John Carney kicked two field goals in the second period, including a 51-yarder that cleared the crossbar as time ran out. The Saints trotted to the locker room with a 20-3 lead and a rousing ovation ringing in their ears. The Falcons straggled off in the opposite direction, as if they already knew this wasn't going to be their night.

"As tough as it is to lose a game, I'd be lying if I said there isn't a little, little, little piece of me that didn't

appreciate what this game meant to this city," said Falcons coach Jim Mora, whose father is the winningest coach in Saints history. "It meant a lot."

Of course, a Saints win seemed in the stars even before the kickoff. This was intended to be a showcase for New Orleans' rebirth, as frustrating and halting as that process has been for so many.

Fans clad in gold and black strolled around the French Quarter throughout a brilliantly sunny day, ready to look forward instead of looking back at those awful scenes of suffering inside the Superdome in the days after Katrina. Those who had tickets to get inside the 31-year-old stadium found it spruced up with new scoreboards, bright video screens and plenty of fresh paint, all part of a \$185 million renovation that was designed to keep the Saints from moving to San Antonio, Los Angeles or some other NFL-deprived city.

Showing the significance of the game, former commissioner Paul Tagliabue and his successor, Roger Goodell, were both at the Superdome. Signs were hung throughout the stadium, sending messages such as "Home Sweet Dome" and "Thank You America. New Orleans & Saints Are Here

to Stay."

Even the referees chipped in, picking up a flag on a dubious pass interference call that could have extended a Falcons drive late in the third quarter.

About the only thing that didn't go right for New Orleans was a first touchdown for Bush. Still, "Saint Reggie" gave the fans several chances to cheer their rookie sensation, rushing for 53 yards and catching four passes for 19 yards.

Deuce McAllister handled the bulk of the ground attack, with 19 rushes for 81 yards. Brees was 20-of-28 passing for 191 yards. His favorite receiver was rookie Marques Colston, the fourth-to-last pick in this year's draft, who grabbed seven passes for 97 yards.

"If we had lost, the fans still would have been partying, they still would have been happy, because the organization is still in New Orleans," receiver Joe Horn said. "But we wanted to put the icing on the cake."

And what a cake. The Saints seized first place all to themselves in the NFC South while matching their wins from all of last season. Forced to play in San Antonio, Baton Rouge and East Rutherford because of the Superdome's massive damage, New Orleans struggled to a 3-13 record as a team without a home.

Now, they're home for good.

Astros Still in Hunt

from page 3

they're right in the middle of another pennant race.

"This is unbelievable right now," Pettitte said. "I mean, really, you don't know what to say. ... Maybe we ought to keep saying we got no shot, you know?"

Pettitte won his third straight decision and the Astros improved to 79-78, the first time they've been over .500 since June 22 -- the day Roger Clemens made his initial start of the season in a loss to Minnesota.

The Astros gathered in the clubhouse after their game to watch the Padres rally past the Cardinals.

"We're playing good ball now," manager Phil Garner said. "We're doing the kind of things that I like to see our team do. We're coming up with some big hits when we need them."

Jason Bay and Jose Bautista homered for the Pirates, who have lost five in a row but had won eight of nine at home. Pittsburgh's Freddy Sanchez went 4-for-5 to raise his NL-leading batting average to .346.

Sanchez now leads by 11 points over Florida's Miguel Cabrera, who went 1-for-4 in a loss to Cincinnati.

"I don't think it's over yet," Sanchez said. "I just have got to take it one game at a time."

"We've been through so much as a team this year that nothing really does phase us," Biggio said. "Whatever the situation is, you handle it the best you can and hopefully you pick each other up as a club, and over the last week we've done a real nice job of that."

'Fijación de los Grammy Latino con Shakira



compatriota Shakira en la misma categoría", añadió el cantautor colombiano sin reponerse de la sorpresa.

Fonseca compite en las categorías de Mejor Álbum del Año, Álbum Tropical Contemporáneo y Canción Tropical.

"Desde un principio sabíamos que estábamos haciendo algo chévere aunque sin expectativas, jamás pensamos que íbamos a ser reconocidos y más por los propios músicos", dijo Visitante, del grupo boricua Calle 13, cuyo verdadero nombre es Eduardo Cabra Martínez.

"Estoy bien contento de estar nominado con mi hermano", añadió por su parte René Pérez Joglar, mejor conocido como Residente, cantante del dúo.

Calle 13, que se ha convertido en la sensación del la música urbana, recibió nominaciones en las categorías de Mejor Artista Nuevo, Álbum de Música Urbana y Video del Año.

Alejandra Guzmán, el alma de la presentación, recibió dos postulaciones: Mejor Álbum de Rock Vocal (Indeleble) y Mejor Canción de Rock (Volverte a amar).

"Es una catarsis de todos mis sentimientos, es un disco que habla de recuperarse, de estar bien, de amarse a sí mismo", dijo Guzmán sobre el significado que tienen las postulaciones para ella.

En el renglón de la música mexicana el cantautor Joan Sebastian obtuvo tres nominaciones en las categorías de Álbum de Banda, Álbum Gruperio y Mejor Canción Regional Mexicana. Le siguió Ana Gabriel con dos.

Los Tigres del Norte fueron nominados en la categoría de Mejor Álbum Norteño por su trabajo Historias que contar.

"No teníamos idea de que esto iba a ocurrir y estamos muy felices con esta nominación", dijo Jorge Hernández, director musical y voz principal del grupo.

Los llamados "Jefes de los Jefes" compiten contra Ramón Ayala y sus Bravos del Norte (Ya no llores), Palomo (Pasión), el grupo Pesado (Tu Sombra) y Michael Salgado (Volver, volver).

En la categoría de Mejor Álbum de Salsa fueron nominados India (Soy diferente), Víctor Manuelle (Decisión unánime), Tito Nieves (Hoy, mañana y siempre) y Gilberto Santa Rosa —quien obtuvo dos nominaciones, una en solitario por su trabajo Directo al corazón y otra con el Gran Combo con quien grabó Así es nuestra Navidad.

Por primera vez la cumbia y el vallenato, ambos géneros de origen colombiano, fueron incluidos como uno de los géneros a premiar. Las nominaciones recayeron en Alfa 8, Binomio de Oro de América, Jorge Celedón y Jimmy Zambrano, Los Hermanos Zuleta e Iván Ovalle.



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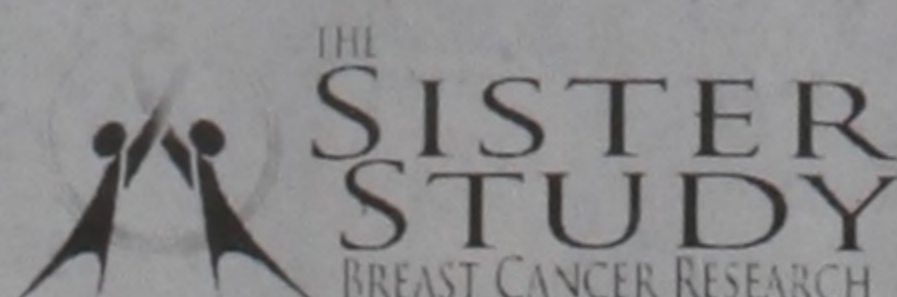
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José de la Isla

C-Span pasó por televisión hace poco un intercambio curioso: al finalizarse un panel sobre perspectivas conservadoras referentes a las elecciones en noviembre, Jim Boulet se puso de pie y dijo en español, "Muchas gracias, mi amigo". Boulet promociona hacer del inglés el idioma oficial de los Estados Unidos.

Se quejó de un congresista republicano quien está a favor de votar en idiomas que no sean el inglés, de cómo George Bush no pudo revocar una orden ejecutiva promulgada por Bill Clinton sobre los idiomas, de temas de inmigración, trabajadores invitados, y de Harriet Miers.

"La base comienza a sentir que, 'Si, la seguridad nacional es importante, pero - sabes, pucha - ¿le pondrán la misma seriedad a otros de nuestros temas que les ponemos nosotros?"

Si mal no entiendo, lo que decía era que los temas sobre el idioma tienen tanta importancia como, por ejemplo, un ataque terrorista.

John Fund, columnista del Wall Street Journal, agregó que Bush había "perdido una oportunidad increíble de unir parcialmente el movimiento conservador" porque creen "en una nación, un pueblo" y "en la asimilación, lo que es por lo que todos nuestros antepasados tuvieron que pasar". Dejó de mencionar que así tiene que hacer casi todos y que la asimilación no es lo mismo que el conformismo.

John Gizzi, de la revista Human Events, prosiguió con una perorata sobre la educación bilingüe. Trajo a colación a Tom DeLay, el gasto en la educación bilingüe, y después dijo, "El sector comercial comenzó a señalar que sus cajeros automáticos, sus máquinas de dispensa de efectivo, estaban en otras lenguas, y

comenzaron a verlo".

¿Le irrita que algunos cajeros automáticos les pregunten a los clientes cómo quieren proseguir, en inglés o en español?

Muchos de los debates por este estilo sobre lo "bilingüe" ocultan en realidad un código lingüístico de oposición a la enseñanza de una capacidad bilingüe. Algunos círculos temen una plaga lingüística, con el español llevando la batuta. Como verá, el mantener el español se ha convertido en la sugerencia de una falta de voluntad en "asimilarse". Y es esto lo que algunos quieren llamar una "guerra cultural".

Pero, au contraire. Lo que debería darnos más pausa es lo contrario, que faltan personas que hablen español, u otros idiomas, para tal caso.

El español es el segundo idioma más hablado en los Estados Unidos. Los Estados Unidos es el quinto país más grande de habla hispana en el mundo, siguiendo a México, España, Colombia y Argentina.

Sin embargo, la población estadounidense de habla hispana continúa siendo sólo el 12 por ciento de la población nacional. Y una mitad de estas personas, según Wikipedia, también

indican que hablan inglés "muy bien".

Un informe del Centro Hispano Pew de marzo del 2004 muestra que el 72 por ciento de latinos de primera generación en los EE.UU. dominan el español. Pero, para la tercera generación, la cifra se vuelve el 78 por ciento domina el inglés.

El bilingüismo aumenta en la segunda generación, pero después disminuye a sólo 22 por ciento en la tercera generación. Este no es un buen agüero, necesariamente, por lo que la fluidez en el idioma de los hijos se ve en rápido declive. El bilingüismo disminuido, como ventaja nacional, implica disminución en las ventajas naturales a las comunicaciones y las relaciones tanto en el extranjero como en casa.

El mismo estudio mostró que, al volverse el inglés más dominante con el paso de las generaciones, los latinos siguieron manteniendo vínculos más fuertes con la familia que los que no son latinos y no adoptaron maneras de ser menos responsables.

¿Acaso no sugiere esto que a veces conviene ir a paso lento al ir asimilándose?

Entonces, ¿cuál es el problema? ¿Por qué no levantar el grito por los más

de 50.000 de nosotros que estudiamos el chino, y los 83.000 estudiantes que llevan cursos de mandarín o cantonés con el sólo fin de mantener su idioma natal? ¿Acaso esto impide la asimilación? ¿No hay algunos cajeros automáticos que preguntan también con caracteres chinos?

La conexión entre los cajeros automáticos y el español sí lleva a un tema de sustancia, sin embargo. El grupo que reacciona negativamente a los cambios demográficos en este país no les encuentra nada positivo. Lo que es más, no saben

reconocer al español como "capital social", una forma de confianza que permite que las personas entren en actividades de reciprocidad.

Esta es la razón por la que los cajeros automáticos les resultan tan irritantes a los críticos. Si ellos no saben aprovechar nuestro capital social nacional, sí que lo harán los cajeros automáticos.

Así vemos cómo una máquina los va reemplazando no sólo a ellos, sino también al fracaso de su manera de ser.

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Despite the fashionista fascism, 'Ugly Betty' shows inner beauty



In a season already brimming with solid new shows, "Ugly Betty" sets its own standard: It's three or four good new shows at the same time.

It's a sharp-witted workplace comedy about the fashion industry. No, it's a parody of soap operas. No, it's a sweet-natured dramedy about a Latino family. Oh, wait, it is a soap opera, complete with mysteries as intriguing as they are over the top.

Actually, the ABC show is all of those things. Thanks to some agile writing and performances that are alternately witty and soulful, "Ugly Betty" also is a lot of fun to watch.

It also turns out to be a smart, subtle portrayal of how it feels to be a minority splayed awkwardly between two cultures. But that pales, ultimately, because "Ugly Betty" works so well as entertainment it transcends race, culture and surface-level considerations.

Adapted from a hugely successful Colombian telenovela ("Yo Soy Betty la Fea," which translates to "I Am Betty the Ugly"), the show both lampoons and takes advantage of the form's most outrageous conventions. Passions run white-hot. Faces get slapped.

And everyone's up to something shadowy, if only because life is so much more interesting that way.

As the premiere opens, Betty Suarez (America Ferrera, "Real Women Have Curves") sits eagerly awaiting an interview for an entry-level job with Meade Publications, the Conde Nast-like home of elegant fashion magazines. Trouble is, Betty's wide-eyed enthusiasm and nonfashion sense -- she's wearing a purple plaid jacket, lime-green blouse, red-framed glasses and braces on her prominent teeth -- don't fit in with the Gotham fashionista sensibility that reigns at Meade.

Sent home without an interview, Betty limps back to Queens, and the house she shares with widowed dad Ignacio (Tony Plana), sister Hilda (Ana Ortiz) and fashion-conscious nephew Justin (Mark Indelicato), only to discover that her dorky boyfriend, Walter, has taken up with Gina, the Suarez family's slutty neighbor.

Things can only get better, and they do instantly, when Meade's chief executive, Bradford Meade (Alan Dale), calls to offer her a job as executive assistant to the new editor of his company's top fashion magazine, Mode.

What Betty doesn't know is that the only reason Meade wants to hire her is because he knows she's the only woman in New York the Mode editor -- his own feckless son, Daniel (Eric Mabius) -- won't try to sleep with.

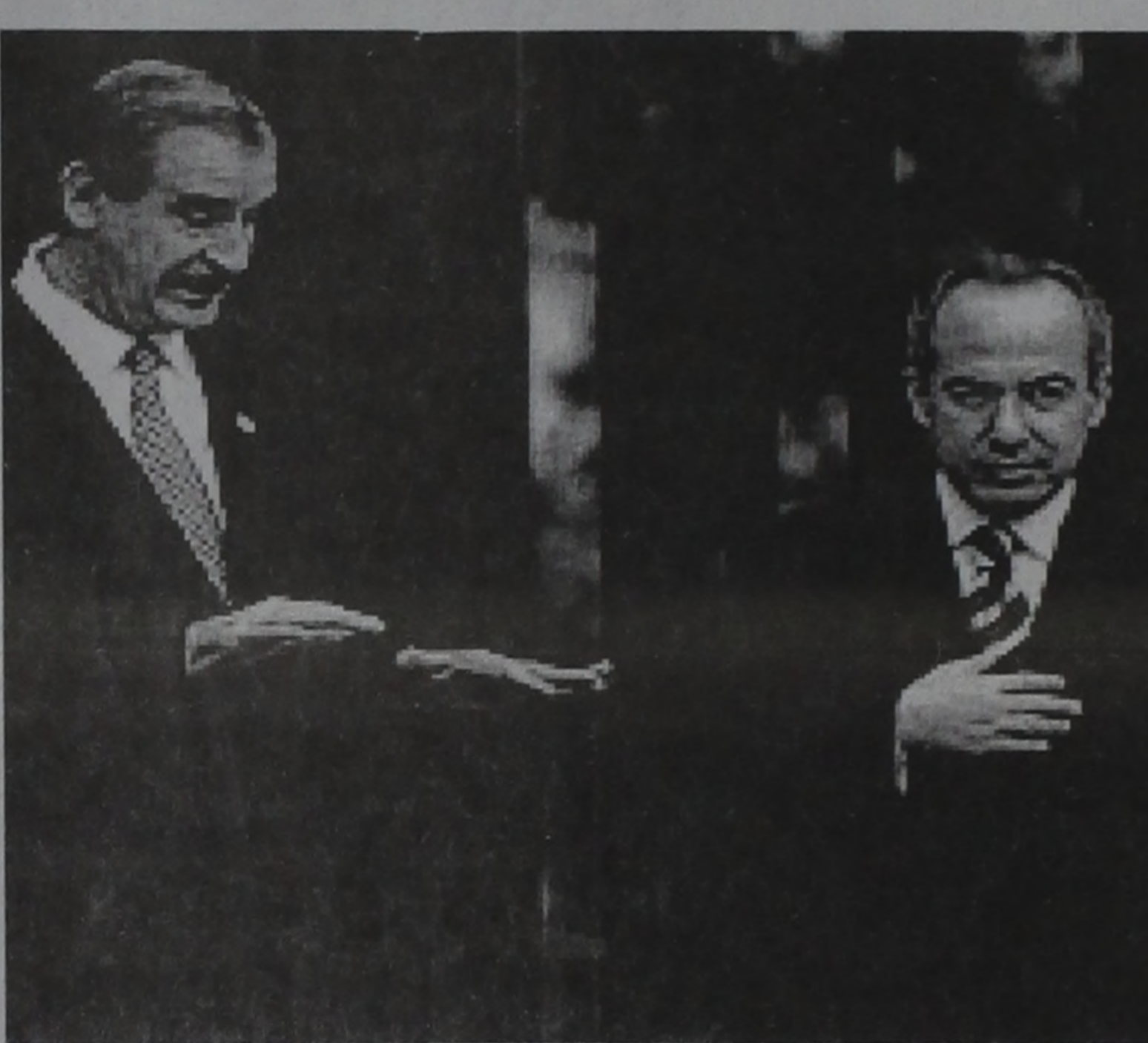
But there's so much that Betty doesn't know about life at Mode.

Calderón acepta que ola de violencia supera a gobiernos

El presidente electo Felipe Calderón denunció que los asesinatos y la violencia del narcotráfico han superado las capacidades de los gobiernos de la capital y varios estados del país.

Calderón expresó que la oleada de violencia no sabe de ideologías y afecta a gobiernos controlados por cada uno de los tres principales partidos políticos del país. Señaló especialmente a la ciudad de México y los estados norteros de Sinaloa y Tamaulipas; el sureño Guerrero y su estado natal, Michoacán.

"A mí me parece que la narcoviolencia, como se le llama, pues ya ha superado los límites de gobierno del Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), del Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), del Partido de la Revolución Democrática



(PRD). Lo mismo gobiernos de Baja California que a gobiernos del Distrito Federal, Michoacán, de Guerrero, de Tamaulipas o Sinaloa", dijo Calderón en una entrevista radiofónica. Calderón superó por un

señalar que "coincidimos exactamente con el presidente electo Felipe Calderón".

"Seguimos en esa lucha, combatiendo el narcotráfico y luchando. No está superado, pero hay que hacer mucho para hacerlo", dijo Aguilar durante su conferencia de prensa diaria en Los Pinos, la residencia oficial del presidente de la república.

Sobre los comentarios de Calderón, agregó: "Lo suscribo, lo reafirmo como parte del gobierno de la república".

La embajada de Estados Unidos en la ciudad de México ha manifestado desde hace tiempo su preocupación por la creciente violencia en la frontera norte, donde hombres y mujeres, incluso policías e investigadores, han sido asesinados a tiros casi a diario, siendo secuestrados también decenas de estadounidenses.

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To schedule an appointment, or if you need more information, please contact Nancy Mojica, EJVP Coordinator, or Mary Ann Newsom, EJVP Secretary, at 763-4557

A Los Latinos:

¿Que Estrategia Tienen en Nevada?

George Muñoz

Atención organizaciones latinas: ¿qué estrategia tienen en Nevada?

Les va a hacer falta una estrategia por lo que Nevada está por convertirse en un estado clave para la determinación de las elecciones presidenciales. El Comité Nacional Demócrata le ha otorgado a Nevada la autorización para unirse a Iowa en realizar una

conferencia presidencial (caucus por su expresión en inglés) antes de realizarse el primer voto en el estado de Nuevo Hampshire. La conferencia de Nevada tendrá lugar el 19 de enero del 2008, entre la de Iowa, el 14 de enero, y el voto primario de New Hampshire el 22 de enero.

Así Nevada tendrá voz en el voto para determinar el candidato demócrata para la

presidencia de los Estados Unidos. Lo que a Nevada le importe será de importancia a los candidatos a presidente. Aquí entran los latinos.

Nevada cuenta con una población grande y creciente de hispanos. Según cifras del último censo, el 23,7 por ciento de los 2,4 millones de habitantes de Nevada es hispano. Para las elecciones presidenciales del 2008, el porcentaje podrá llegar al 25 por ciento. Los hispanos son la fuerza detrás del reciente crecimiento en Nevada. Entre los años 2000 y 2006, se podía atribuir el aumento de 45 por ciento de la población de Nevada a los hispanos, principalmente mediante la migración.

A menos que las organizaciones hispanas estén bien establecidas en Nevada, los latinos perderán la oportunidad de tener influencia sobre las políticas y programas de los candidatos demócratas con aspiraciones presidenciales.

¿Desde cuándo no hemos visto que un candidato a presidente se enfoque en la hacinación de las escuelas, los delitos callejeros, la falta de acceso a capitales, en la vivienda, la discriminación en el lugar de empleo, así

como la capacitación laboral, las becas universitarias, y la ciudadanía para los inmigrantes que trabajan duro, y que acatan las leyes?

Muchos de estos temas son el enfoque de las mayores organizaciones hispanas.

A pesar de tener una gran presencia en Nevada, los hispanos no surtirán gran efecto sobre la política en Nevada a menos que se registren para votar, se unan a grupos defensores de derechos, y se enteren bien de los detalles de los temas. Nada de esto ocurrirá sin harta labor de nuestras organizaciones hispanas dedicadas al comercio, la educación, la política y los derechos civiles.

El hecho que gran parte de la población hispana de Nevada constituye migrantes recientes al estado, muchos aún no se han integrado por completo a las comunidades ni se han registrado para votar. Además, la edad promedio de los hispanos que viven en Nevada es de 26 años, comparada con la edad promedio en total del estado, que es de 35 años, lo cual resulta en que sólo un 13 por ciento de los votantes registrados en Nevada es

hispano.

Sin embargo, cualquier grupo que represente un porcentaje del voto mayor del 10 por ciento puede surtir un efecto sobre el resultado de una elección en un estado sin clara definición de preferencia por un partido político, como por ejemplo Nevada. La población votante de Nevada votó por Bill Clinton en 1996, y por George W. Bush en el 2000 y el 2004. Con apenas un dos por ciento de cambio en el voto, los resultados electorales para el estado habrían cambiado en cada una de aquellas elecciones. Por esta razón es que el voto emergente de los hispanos recibe y se merece atención a nivel nacional.

Es probable que los temas de particular interés a los mexicano-americanos serán el enfoque de atención en Nevada por lo que el 80 por ciento de hispanos en aquel estado son de ascendencia mexicana. Los temas de empleo, como el salario mínimo e igualdad de oportunidades en el empleo también recibirán mucha atención, porque son de importancia los sindicatos en Nevada. El catorce por ciento de la fuerza laboral en

Nevada forma parte de un sindicato. Los hispanos se están convirtiendo en el mayor y más reciente número de miembros de algunos de los sindicatos. Son aproximadamente el cincuenta por ciento de los miembros del Sindicato Culinario.

Las conferencias presidenciales suelen ser complejas, por lo que se enfatiza la importancia que los hispanos colaboren mediante grupos y organizaciones. (El término "caucus" [conferencia presidencial] se deriva de un vocablo algonquino que significa "reunión de caciques").

Se selecciona a los delegados mediante una serie de reuniones municipales. Los que se desempeñan mediante grupos tienen mejores posibilidades de seleccionar a candidatos que favorezcan sus intereses. Nuestras mayores organizaciones hispanas deben presentarse visiblemente y levantar la voz cuando los caciques se reúnan en Nevada para la Conferencia Presidencial Demócrata en enero del 2008. Toda la nación estará a la expectativa.

Study Finds Electoral Discrimination Still Real Threat

Four decades after the passage of the Voting Rights Act, ballot-box discrimination is still a reality faced by minority elected officials and leaders, according to a study released Monday by the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, or NALEO.

In the study, "I Was Asked If I Was a Citizen: Latino Elected Officials Speak out on the Voting Rights Act," more than half of the 190 respondents in 24 states said they personally had experienced discrimination while running for or even holding public office.

"The Latino community is proud of the progress we have made toward achieving full political participation and representation in the last three decades," Rosalind Gold, senior director of Policy, Research and Advocacy at NALEO Educational Fund, said in a statement. "However, it is clear from our study's findings that our nation still has more work to do. For 40 years, the Voting Rights Act has been a powerful tool to combat many of the problems our community still confronts. To sustain future Latino political progress, it is critical that the president and the Department of Justice must vigorously enforce the act."

The reported discrimination ranged from a perceived double standard in how campaign laws were enforced, with a greater onus falling on those campaigning for Hispanic candidates, to outright threats or intimidation. For example, one respondent said that

Hispanic voters were told they had to post a yard sign for a non-Hispanic candidate because the sign had a police insignia on it.

The respondents also reported more subtle discrimination, such as slates of candidates that don't include Latino candidates or racial or ethnic appeals meant to exclude the Hispanic candidate.

The study, conducted by Dr. James Thomas Tucker of Arizona State University, also reported that more than half the respondents had seen or experienced discrimination against voters themselves. Those charges fly to the heart of the Voting Right Act, which specifically forbids discrimination against voters and allows federal monitors to be placed in locales where discrimination has occurred in the past.

That discrimination might include problems with voter assistance, challenging the rights of someone to vote, require checking in at the polling place, removing polling places in some neighborhoods or even the composition of who works at the polls. About one in four respondents reported seeing problems in these areas.

One reported, "Election officials purposely turn(ed) voters away by using delay tactics and rude behavior ... using derogatory language to intimidate and chase away voters."

More than four out of five respondents said they see a need for more Spanish-language assistance, both in the written materials provided and at polling places.

Latino Congreso Expected to Blast Immigration Bill Direction

National Latino Congreso organizers have scheduled a press conference Wednesday to oppose what they say is Congress' last minute attempt to pass enforcement-only immigration legislation.

One of the immigration reform proposals is building a 700-mile border fence that would cost more than \$2 billion.

Earlier this month, National Latino Congreso organizers held a five-day conference of Hispanic leaders and community members, billed as the first comprehensive gathering of Hispanic leaders in nearly 30 years.

Some of its organizers include the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, National Hispanic Environmental Council, the League of United Latin American Citizens and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF).

The gathering was aimed at developing a national policy agenda for Hispanic advocacy organizations. One of the resolutions adopted by the National Latino

Congreso is an opposition to local law enforcement of federal immigration law.

The National Latino Congreso also supported comprehensive immigration reform bills related to students and agricultural employees that the "U.S. House of Representatives ignored and are not part of the bills being debated this week," the organizers said.

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About 960,000 people cross from one country to the other every day, the U.S. Embassy in Mexico reports.

From the late 1970s to 2001, Mexicans accounted for \$2.3 billion a year in retail spending in Laredo, Brownsville, McAllen and El Paso, a 2006 study from the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas showed. That's about 26 percent of total retail trade in the four Texas border cities and 2 percent of overall Texas retail sales, Fed economist Roberto Coronado says.

Mexican visitors have a \$3 billion impact on the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas, says Suad Ghaddar, an economist with the Center for Border Economic Studies at the University of Texas-Pan American. That spending supports more than 64,000 jobs, Ghaddar says.

The impact in California is about \$4.5 billion, she says, supporting 67,000 jobs.

Direct spending by Mexican visitors to Arizona hit \$963 million in 2001, a study by the UA Economic and Business Research Center showed.

After Sept. 11, the government instructed Customs officers to run more background checks and ask more questions of border crossers.

Subsequently, the number of people

passing into the United States fell by 16.5 percent, from 290 million in 2000 to 242 million in 2004, the most recent data available, the Federal Reserve Bank study says.

Longer wait times discouraged many from making the trip to El Paso, Silva says.

Increased waits in San Diego -- about 45 minutes per vehicle -- cost the county 8.4 million trips a year that would yield nearly \$1.3 billion, a 2006 study by the San Diego Association of Governments shows. Two-hour waits for semitrailers carrying goods cost the county \$455 million in annual revenue, the study says. The losses will continue if wait times continue to rise, the study says.

But while the wait times discourage border crossers, they don't stop them from somehow buying the goods they can't get south of the border, the Federal Reserve bank study reported.

Despite longer waits, retail trade along the border has grown since 2001, suggesting Mexicans spend more in fewer trips, says Tom Fullerton, an economics professor at the University of Texas-El Paso.

The crackdown after Sept. 11 had a short-lived negative impact, Nogales Mayor-elect Ignacio Barraza says. Sales taxes have held steady since, he says.

"They are prepared, rather reluctantly, to wait in line as long as they have to in order to come and make their purchases," Barraza says.

Downtown El Paso has lost about a quarter of all business since Sept. 11, but

few stores have shut their doors, Silva says. Border shoppers and store owners from San Diego to Brownsville echo that theme: Business hasn't recovered since Sept. 11, but as long as the ports of entry remain open, enough Mexicans will cross to keep businesses afloat.

Silva tells a story to explain. In the late 1990s, after the Border Patrol launched Operation Hold the Line to cut down on illegal crossing, a Juarez maquiladora bought 1,500 gift certificates as employee Christmas gifts. He wondered how many would be redeemed considering most maquiladora workers didn't have visas to cross into the United States.

By the end of the holiday season, 1,350 had been redeemed. Whether the workers crossed illegally or gave the certificates to relatives, it showed cross-border commerce can survive border enforcement, Silva says.

Inefficiency equals losses

It's not border enforcement programs, but inefficient implementation that causes problems, says Maria O'Connell, president of the Border Trade Alliance, a Phoenix-based group that promotes free and efficient trade.

For instance, she says, the requirement that U.S. citizens carry their passports when crossing the border starting in 2008 won't affect commerce if there are enough agents and sufficient technology. If not, she says, "that can create economic chaos at the border."

As a resident of El Paso, Silva, the market owner, respects the extra time customs officers spend questioning crossers to keep out terrorists and criminals. But he can't deny it strains the symbiotic relationship between Juarez and El Paso.

"When people feel they have a two-hour wait to cross a bridge that should normally take five minutes, they tend to stay away," he says.

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