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3,149
as of Feb 15,
2007

El Editor

"El Respeto al Derecho
Ajeno es la Paz"
Lic Benito Juarez

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Mercado Project Gains Full Head of Steam

Over 100 residents and businesspersons gathered this past Monday at Cavazos Jr. High to discuss what has been described as a new beginning in economic opportunity for North Lubbock.

The meeting held to discuss a new and awe-inspiring Mercado on North University created an atmosphere of communication and brainstorming that some said rivaled plans for the new Dallas Cowboy stadium.

"The people there were real excited about the project," said Natalia Salazar president of the Arnett Benson Neighborhood Association. "I think that this will be a wonderful project for all that live here and will bring new life to our neighborhood."

The innovative North University Mercado Mercado is being designed through a series of focusgroups known in the design world as a "charrette."

This basically that was done by those in attendance meeting in 10 small groups of 12 where they discussed and brought their ideas to the front for consideration.

Councilwoman Linda DeLeon scheduled the event to be held during one of her town hall meetings and said that she thought the the project could have a tremendous impact on North Lubbock and for that matter the entire West Texas area.

"We've seen a lot of things in North Overton, now we need to see things on the north side of Marsha Sharp Freeway," said DeLeon.

A major concern of many people included that the freeway combined with the Interstate would create a triangle to isolate the area from growth much like the same conditions happened in East Lubbock.

Integrated into the development plans, that are being done by the American Institute of Architects are wall murals, public art and other ingredients to reflect the culture of the area. The Institute is coordinating the charrette as an initiative of the local chapter and the national group's celebration of their 150th anniversary. The next charrette is schedule for March 19 also at Cavazos Jr. High.

Town Hall Meeting Creates Some Controversary

Monday's town hall meeting proved all to be what many people expected but not everyone was satisfied.

At least one dozen people that attended the meeting have said that they were specifically disappointed that questions they wanted to pose on City Councilperson Linda DeLeon were left unaddressed.

The failure to address the question was due to the fact that some Council members including DeLeon, Floyd Price and Mayor Miller left the meeting abruptly. South Beach club owner Chris Gonzalez told El Editor that he had some very specific questions that affected his livelihood.

"I want to know why Linda DeLeon is saying that the City is going to tear down my business!"

Gonzalez referred a meeting of the Hispanic Agenda where DeLeon told members that the City is "going to tear down South Beach."

The Club, mainly frequented by Hispanic and African Americans is located in the Depot district and is the hottest clubs in the area.

According to reports, Council members voted in executive session and in open session plans to purchase the Club to make way for a Visitor's Center and a baseball park for a minor league team.

Gonzales says that he has never been told anything about what is going on?"

"How can the City do this? They don't even want to talk to me about a business that I depend on for a living! And it's not like I having asked."

Gonzales has even submitted request for answers through the freedom of information act but has been denied because of his not knowing specific dates when the meeting was held.

We didn't go there to ask about the Chipindales, we had some serious question. Gonzales also said that other people were there to have other specific question about Arnett Benson and District one that were also left unanswered.

"Questions should have been taken and answered said Commissioner Ysidro Gutierrez who addressed the Council on Thursday saying that was a travesty of justice to close down a viable business tin which a Lubbock family depends on with questions being answered.

"How can the Lubbock City Council justify tearing down a business without even talking to the owners?" asked Gutierrez

Education Storm Warning, Two Decades Later

By José de la Isla

(First in a two-part commentary)

Twenty-one years ago, in 1986, Japan's Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone said his country had "become quite an intelligent nation, much more than the United States."

Then he threw dynamite onto the boast by adding, "In America there are quite a few blacks, Puerto Ricans and Mexicans. On average [the level] is extremely low."

Of course, African American and Hispanic members of Congress, among a large public, criticized the ignorant comment. But the prime minister put his foot in his mouth again by saying the United States was unable "to accomplish in education and other areas because it is a multi-racial society." More criticisms poured in.



Ultimately, Nakasone issued an apology of sorts, saying he believed U.S. "dynamism" came from its diversity.

In 1986, accelerated global competition from free trade was virtually non-existent. And the badly stated wake-up call from Japan came out upside down, as one about the U.S.'s ethnic diversity.

The initial Nakasone gaffe confused cause and effect. Our national diversity was in

no way responsible for the failure in the public schools and society. But now the inference is looming again.

A new Educational Testing Service report referencing immigration and demographics, "America's Perfect Storm: Three Forces Changing Our Nation's Future," says a less literate U.S. workforce is emerging that will have significant economic consequences by 2030.

Our high school completion rates peaked at 77 percent in 1969. Then they fell to 70 percent in 1995, where they remain. The United States ranks 16th out of 21 in high school graduation rates among advanced countries. That means, while the Bush Administration talks about channeling all high school graduates toward getting at least a two-year college degree, proportionately fewer are eligible than in 1969.

Back then, people with a bachelor's degree averaged 51 percent more income than individuals with only a high school diploma. By 2004, the difference widened to 96 percent. Obviously, to succeed economically, getting a degree matters.

In the 20 years from 1984 to 2004, reading scores for 13- to 17-year-olds have remained flat. And while math scores improved slightly among the three largest race/ethnic groups - blacks, whites and the burgeoning young Hispanic population - the wide gap between Hispanics and whites, as well as blacks and whites, has shown negligible progress.

"Demographic changes" is a fear expressed in ETS's "Perfect Storm," a metaphor that comes from the book title and movie by that name. Between now and 2015, the Census Bureau says international migration will be responsible for half of our nation's population growth. By 2030, Hispanics are expected to become 20 percent of the nation's population. So, ETS projects a decline in the United States' economic standing attributable to Hispanics.

ETS President Kurt Landgraf warns us that inadequate literacy skills and the retirement surge of the baby-boomer generation will be contributors.

But what we are really witnessing is how the education establishment is changing the discussion from reform to a blame game. Data is being assembled in a new way to make it seem as if all of a sudden, while no one was looking, the United States became too ethnically (largely Hispanic) diverse.

ETS's report can be a dangerous document. It misdirects attention from where it should go. The issue we must address is restructuring the education establishment and making prudent investments where they are needed.

We are getting, instead - you guessed it - "Help! The Hispanics Are Coming."

In that sense, the ETS report lacks sophistication, just like Nakasone did two decades ago. Maybe it's time to reassess the destructiveness of the prime minister's logic, recalling that it led to the resignation of Japan's minister of education.

Next: the real culprits.

[José de la Isla, a former educator, writes on social issues for Hispanic Link News Service. He is author of The Rise of Hispanic Political Power (Archer Books). E-mail joseisla3@yahoo.com.] (c) 2007

Eduaviso de Tormenta en la Educación, Dos Decadas Más Tarde

José de la Isla

(Primera entrega de un comentario de dos partes)

HOUSTON - Hace veintinueve años, en 1986, el primer ministro del Japón, Yasuhiro Nakasone, dijo que su país se había "convertido en una nación bastante inteligente, mucho más que los Estados Unidos".

Entonces le prendió dinamita a la presunción con añadir, "En América hay bastantes negros, puertorriqueños y mexicanos. Como promedio, [el nivel] es en extremo bajo".

Por supuesto que los miembros del Congreso africano-americanos e hispanos criticaron tan ignorante comentario. No obstante, el primer ministro metió la pata de nuevo al decir que los Estados Unidos no podía "tener éxito en la educación y en otras áreas por lo que es una sociedad multi-racial". Llovieron las críticas.

Al final, Nakasone emitió una especie de disculpa, diciendo que creía que el "dinamismo" de los Estados Unidos provenía de su diversidad.

En 1986, la competencia global acelerada con base en el libre comercio no existía, prácticamente. Y la maldicha aseveración de Japón, fue alarma que salió al revés, como si tratara de la diversidad étnica estadounidense.

La metida de pata inicial confundió causa y efecto. De ninguna manera fue responsable nuestra diversidad nacional por el fracaso de las escuelas públicas y la sociedad. Pero hoy vuelve a amenazar esta inferencia.

Un nuevo informe del Educational Testing Service (ETS -- servicio de evaluación educativa), al hacer referencia a la inmigración y a la demográfica, "America's Perfect Storm: Three Forces

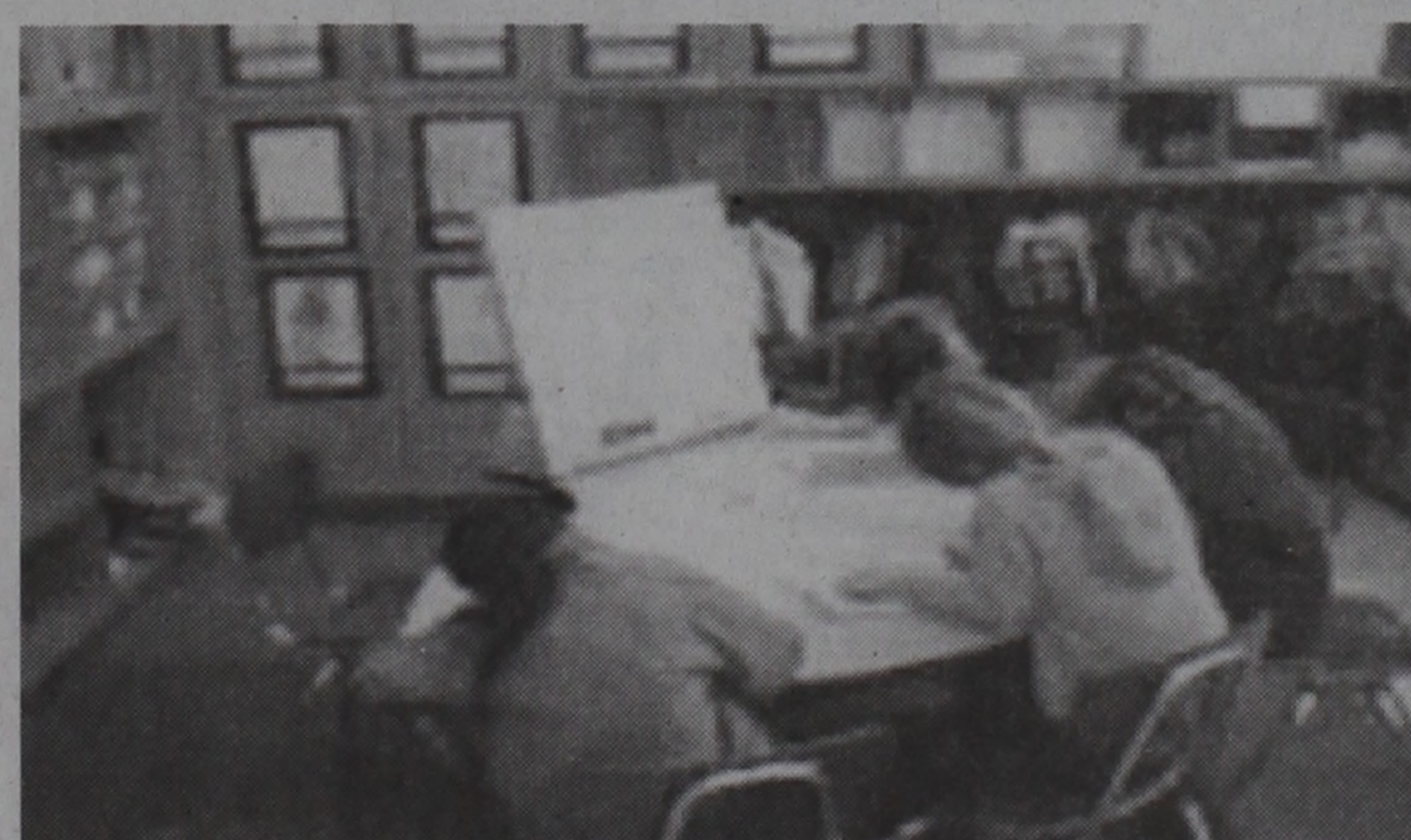
Changing Our Nation's Future" ("La tormenta perfecta de los EE.UU.: Tres fuerzas que cambian el futuro de nuestra nación"), indica que está surgiendo una fuerza laboral con menos preparación académica en los EE.UU., lo cual surtirá consecuencias económicas importantes para el 2030.

El punto más alto de nuestros índices de graduación de escuela secundaria, 77 por ciento, fue en 1969. Cayeron al 70 por ciento en 1995, el nivel actual. De 21 países avanzados, los Estados Unidos es el número 16 en términos de población que se gradúa de la secundaria. Esto significa que, mientras la administración de Bush habla de canalizar a todos los graduados de la secundaria hacia títulos universitarios de dos años como mínimo, en proporción, hay menos egresados calificados que en 1969.

En aquel entonces, las personas con título universitario tenían, como promedio, 51 por ciento más ingresos que las personas que tenían sólo un diploma de secundaria. Para el 2004, la diferencia aumentó a 96 por ciento. Es claro que para tener éxito económico, es importante tener un título universitario.

En los veinte años entre 1984 y 2004, los resultados de exámenes en lectura para estudiantes entre los 13 y los 17 años no han cambiado. Si bien han mejorado mínimamente resultados en matemáticas para los tres grupos étnicos/raciales más grandes - negros, blancos y la emergente población de jóvenes hispanos - no se ha visto mucho progreso en reducir la brecha amplia entre los hispanos y los blancos, ni entre los negros y los blancos.

"Cambios demográficos" es un temor que expresa el informe "Perfect Storm" del ETS, metáfora derivada del título del libro y de la película con el mismo nombre. Entre hoy y el 2015, el Buró del Censo indica que la migración internacional será la responsable de la mitad del crecimiento poblacional de nuestra nación. Para el 2030, se anticipa que los hispanos serán el 20 por ciento de la población nacional. Por ende, el ETS proyecta un declive en la posición económica de los Estados Unidos, atribuible a los hispanos.



El presidente de ETS, Kurt Landgraf, nos advierte que lo que contribuirá serán las destrezas académicas inadecuadas y la oleada de jubilaciones de la generación nacida entre 1942 y 1964.

Pero lo que en realidad estamos viendo es cómo el establecimiento educativo transforma la discusión de reforma a culpabilidad. Se está recogiendo datos de una manera que lo haga parecer

repentinamente, sin que nadie se diera cuenta, que los Estados Unidos se volvió demasiado diverso en términos étnicos (mayormente hispano).

El informe del ETS puede resultar ser un documento peligroso. Desvía la atención de donde debe dirigirse. El problema que hay que atender es la reestructuración del establecimiento educativo y el hacer inversiones prudentes, donde se necesitan.

Pero no - lo que nos están dando es - ya se sabe - "¡Socorro! Llegan los hispanos".

En ese sentido, al informe del ETS le falta sofisticación, así como a Nakasone le faltaba hace dos décadas.

Tal vez toque ya volver a evaluar lo destructiva que fue la lógica del primer ministro, recordando que resultó en la dimisión del ministro de educación del Japón.

A continuación: los verdaderos culpables.

U.S., Mexico to Discuss Competitiveness During Bush's Visit

MEXICO CITY -- U.S. President George W. Bush will take Mexico's competitiveness as a priority topic during his upcoming visit to the Latin American country in March, said a U.S. trade official on Tuesday.

"Competitiveness is an issue for both sides, not just Mexico," Larry Rubin, head of the U.S. chamber of commerce in Mexico, told reporters. "We are looking for ways the two nations can strengthen each other."

Rubin said the discussions between Bush and his Mexican counterpart Felipe Calderon should include Mexico's structural reform, which should be promoted swiftly.

He believed that structural reform would trigger an inpouring of U.S. investment into the country. "The U.S. and foreign investors are seeking places to invest," he added.

Rubin said Bush would arrive on March 12 in Merida, a city in the southeastern Mexican state of Yucatan.

The White House has announced that Bush is scheduled to visit Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico next month, adding that the visit aims to "underscore Washington's commitment to democratic governments in the region."

Venezuela, however, described the tour as "aiming at undermining Latin America's drive for unity."

"There's Bush coming to South America. For what? He's trying to divide," Venezuelan Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro said earlier Tuesday.

"They are not going to succeed. He's going to waste his time," he added.

Relations between Caracas and Washington have been tense in recent weeks with U.S. officials criticizing Venezuela's nationalization of key industries and President Hugo Chavez threatening to expel U.S. Ambassador William Brownfield for urging fair compensation for U.S. companies affected by the takeover.

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An Editorial and Commentary on the North University Mercado

The idea that once and for all the mostly "forgotten communities" of North, and to some extent East Lubbock, may one day in the future get to see a traditional "Mercado" or marketplace built in their neighborhood has created a sense of excitement within some members of this city's Hispanic community.

Although we try to maintain a positive attitude about these types of projects, we are also realists and sense that a word of caution may be in order here before we all get wrapped up too tight in our Zarapes; figuratively speaking of course, and buy into all the hype!

We would remind our readers that former city manager Lou Fox was once heralded as the Mercado visionary who would recreate San Antonio's Riverwalk and Mercado and that Lubbock would become a sort of miniature San Antonio on the Llano.

Well, as we all know, the "Fox" raided the henhouse and took off with all the golden eggs this city had to offer at the time and headed back south, his second home in France, or to raid another city council's taxpayer's account.

Aside from the cultural perspective, we agree that a project of this magnitude could bring about economic changes and opportunities to an area many neighborhood residents fear will suffer a geographical isolation once the Marsha Sharp Freeway is completed. In essence, the freeway itself will create a sort of a "concrete front-yard" to the Arnett Benson, Jackson, and Guadalupe neighborhoods: all mostly Hispanic.

And although there may not be historical buildings or architecture one can point to as symbols of the Hispanic population, these 3 neighborhoods are some of the city's most historic simply by virtue of the personal histories of the people who have lived there for many, many years. Therefore, it makes sense for the community to want something that symbolizes our Hispanic heritage.

As the city and organizers of this project continue down the cultural road to economic prosperity, we would like to point out some of what we perceive as unfinished business when it comes to projects relating to our mostly Hispanic north side. Perhaps there are lessons to be learned from past failures?

For starters we point to Fiesta Plaza. Here's the way it was described in a Daily Treador article dated 11/12/2003 by a Corbin Pemberton: "The plaza plans feature five different sizes of pavilions available for performers. Each area will be multipurpose. A small outdoor stage, a large covered pavilion and a multi-purpose court will each have full electrical infrastructure so they can be used for a variety of events."

The above statement does not come close to describing what is out there now. After more than 4 years of construction, most people have no idea what Fiesta Plaza is and it surely has not led to more economic development.

The second thing we would point to is an unfinished Hispanic Cultural Center which was to be developed at the former fire station building at 3rd and University. At this point, it's anybody's guess if this project, which is led by Fiestas del Llano and supported by some city funding, will ever be completed. Initially, the center was seen as a place that would "sponsor art and theater programs, serve as a dance studio for folkloric dance groups, provide office space for non-profit groups and offer health screening and services to the

community", according to a 2003 AJ article.

It got the community's hopes up. But, except for some landscaping work and the addition of some decorative columns; the original plans seem to all but have been abandoned; just like the plans to have some type of arch that would reach from one side of the street to the other and would stand as a symbol of our Hispanic culture.

Throw in the Vaquero Lake project which the Marc McDougal, Tom Martin and Gary Boren led city council just blew off in exchange for softball fields in SW Lubbock; the city boondoggle we call the Wells Fargo Amphitheater which no one ever uses; and you can see why we advise some caution here.

Having said that, a project of this type does have the potential of creating some economic opportunity; the major question is for who or whom? Will it go to the corporations and local businesses who can afford to have a commercial presence there versus those who can't afford it? How will the aforementioned neighborhood residents benefit other than staffing the retail and commercial establishments providing minimum wage jobs?

If the powers that be leading this effort really want to make an economic impact; we offer the following suggestions for their consideration:

- The architecture and building designs selected must genuinely be representative of Lubbock's Hispanic culture and not just a generic Mercado design. Case in point, a Taco Bell's architecture doesn't define the culture; and neither does the food they serve by the way.

- The city council must ensure economic parity or opportunity by passing city legislation that states that a certain percentage of all building and servicing contracts associated with the project must go to minority contractors. This must be a substantial percentage in order to create real economic opportunity.

- A minority business or minority entrepreneur preference scale of some kind must be developed to give small minority businesses or entrepreneurs equal footing. This would ensure that minority owned businesses similar to neighborhood restaurants like Joel's for example can compete against chains like Chili's or any other well financed franchise.

- The rezoning of the 2 block area between University and Ave Q, and the new Sharp Freeway and 3rd street which is scheduled to take place after completion of the Sharp Freeway should be taken into consideration; with the goal being that established design guidelines will complement Lubbock's Hispanic culture. For example, zoning laws might require that the new commercial designs match the architectural style of the Mercado and vice versa.

Our point is that if we are to realize real economic success within these communities which traditionally have been left out of the economic equation; then new and innovative methods of developing this project must be implemented. Otherwise, we are likely to end up with the same old results, or worse; no results.

It would be a mistake to view this project as something that will benefit this city's Hispanic community but then not take the necessary steps to ensure that the community has benefited. While we're in support of the project we cannot be tempted into accepting short term gains at the expense of long term benefits.

Therefore we welcome a discussion of all the issues involved and offer El Editor as a forum where local residents, organizations, elected officials, and other interested parties can have a public dialogue which will only ensure that the present vision of a Mercado will one day become a reality.

Lubbock: A Place Where You Can "Do-si-Do"; But You Better Not "Chipp-En-Dale"

This week I'm answering some phantom questions sent in by phantom readers...

By Abel Cruz

Q: What do you make of the whole Chippendale dancers thing?

A: Does it really surprise anyone that something like this happened? Well, it shouldn't. Hello? We do live in Lubbock don't we?

For whatever reason; past, present, and probably future city councils (will) feel that they have to legislate morality in one way or another. Why they feel they have to protect us from what they perceive as the wicked ways of the world is something I just don't get.

By the way, before we go any further I would like to state that I have declared this space a "No-Thrust Zone"; just in case the LPD is watching.

Q: Seriously, doesn't this further prove that Lubbock is once again behind the times?

A: I don't know about being behind the times, but it definitely says that those in charge of the city have a particular or certain view of morality or sexuality and by virtue of their position see nothing wrong with imposing their views on those of us who live here; regardless of the image it creates for the city. The truth of the matter is that a significant number of people who live here don't see anything wrong with shows of this nature. The fact that the 3 scheduled shows sold out should tell the city council something. Had they not sold out; had no one showed up, then that would have sent the opposite message. Look, it's about as ridiculous as thinking that if beer and liquor stores are located outside the city limits people won't drink alcohol!

Q: But some folks are saying that we are the laughing stock of the country; do you agree?

A: I don't know about being the laughing stock, but we've certainly opened ourselves up to being the "butt" of the joke.

Q: Do you think that 7 LPD officers and some undercover cops at Jake's was a little overkill?

A: Yes, of course it was. Although I guess they could have called in the SWAT Team to cool down all those in attendance who in the Chief's words had been subject to the dancer's intent of "sexually gratifying" them?

Q: Huh?

A: I know, all this simulated nudity and sexual gratification talk makes me feel, shall we say, a little "Chippi" too.

Q: What do you mean by "sexual gratification"?

A: Well I'm just repeating what Chief Jones said. He said, "You know, you're a grown up, you know what's moving towards sexual gratification". He said "the dancers' actions were specifically for sexual gratification". Apparently the dancers made certain movements and "thrusts" intended to cause sexual gratification or sexual arousal to those in attendance. I don't know if that's true or not,

or how the chief would know that the patrons were aroused. I don't know how you can tell whether a person is sexually aroused by another person's pelvic thrust, but maybe the police take a course in sexual arousal or excitability at the police academy or something. By the way, I know plenty of guys who could thrust their pelvis from now until eternity; and all they would arouse would be dirty looks or at best a yawn.

Q: What do you think about the town hall meeting where the mayor refused to address the Chippendale situation?

A: The first thing elected officials seem to do when confronted with a situation like this is say something like: "I cannot comment on something that is under investigation" or something to that effect. My question would be: Who passed the law that says that elected officials or public servants can't comment on these types of situations? It is absurd to think that they cannot comment; it's even more absurd for them to think that we believe them or that they are fooling anybody. Truth is they can comment if they want to; they just choose not to.

Q: So what did you think of police Chief Claude Jones calling a news conference to defend his officers and the dancer's arrest?

A: This I find un-freaking-believable. (Can I use the word freaking or is there an ordinance against that too?)

In the past year alone, at least one person has died as a result of the LPD's use of TASERS, the city is facing at least 2 lawsuits involving Lubbock police officers and the use of Tasers; no less than 3 individuals were murdered during a 3 day period between last Friday and Monday of this week. One police officer was caught driving a vandalized police cruiser damaged by other police officers while under the influence back in December. Did we see the Chief then? Of course not; all we got was the same old tired "I can't comment" line.

Q: So what makes this situation different?

A: My guess is that this time, the right people complained.

Q: The right people?

A: By that I mean, the people that were there decided the whole situation was ridiculous; that the police had gone off the deep end of the morals scale and they are demanding some answers.

Q: Do you think this situation will hurt the mayor's chances for re-election if he decides to run again?

A: Sorry I can't comment on the ongoing assessment that is presently being conducted by the voters of this city.

email -acruz@aol.com

READ EL EDITOR

Richardson for All American President

Commentary By: Ysidro Gutierrez

Last week's "Richardson has Chance to Invigorate Hispanic Vote" about New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson bid to become the first Hispanic President is just one more example of El Editor's timely stories which impact the Hispanic community in Lubbock. Only El Editor reported on the man that is not only the most qualified candidate but is also most likely to win the Democratic nomination and become the next President of the United States. If these come true, El Editor would again be the leader in establishing the local public dialog.

Governor Bill Richardson is the first Hispanic with a real chance of winning. El es uno de los nuestros. Nos conoce. Ha vivido la experiencia de nuestro pueblo. Habla nuestra idioma.

It shouldn't be long before the nation acknowledges him as an "All American" candidate. He is an experienced leader with a proven record who is proud of his accomplishments but focused on the future.

He has a well established record of accomplishments at the local, state, national and international level.

The Governor's record includes "tax reform." When he became Governor of New Mexico he immediately set about fixing the tax system. "The state tax system was unfair, unworkable, and uncompetitive," he said.

He began by cutting personal income taxes by 40%; cutting capital gains taxes by 70%; creating a high wage jobs tax credit; making the rural jobs tax credit permanent and enacting a 3 year tax holiday for high tech startups. It is clear that Bill Richardson's policies are pro-business and pro-growth. These are very appealing to the broad based American electorate.

Governor Richardson realized that NM had no modern infrastructure or support to attract business. NM was losing existing jobs and failing to recruit new jobs. The Governor moved to authorize direct investment in local companies that showed great promise for success and job creation. It became possible for businesses to work more closely with state and local government. His policies attracted research into wind energy technology and made NM a clean energy state. Aviation and aerospace, laser and optics technology and 900 million dollars in movie production came to NM in response to his policies. Entrepreneurs from around the country began to see NM as a business friendly state. These economic development initiatives combined with tax reform enable companies to fast track production and shipping.

His policies combined to create a tax favorable, business friendly climate which made NM prosper.

Governor Richardson is also a friend to local communities. He authorized the state to invest capital in rural communities. Local communities began the revitalization of their downtown areas resulting in job expansion and creation through small business development and historic preservation. The results were Presidential in scale. Over 600 new retail businesses in rural communities were added. Over 80,000 new jobs state wide were created. The lowest unemployment rate since 1978 was achieved. NM became 6th in the nation for job growth, and 7th in the nation in personal income growth.

Here in Lubbock we can appreciate Governor Richardson's accomplishment in saving Cannon AFB, since we lost our own Reese AFB. NM would have lost nearly 5000 jobs. Like Lubbock's Reese experience, closing Cannon would have been devastating to the NM economy. But Governor Richardson pulled out all the stops in working to convince the Base Closure Commission to keep Cannon open with a new mission and more jobs for NM. Saving Cannon AFB is an unquestionable act of leadership that could be considered a near miracle.

El Editor has shown great concern for education. Like this writer we all understand that education is the most assured path to prosperity for the individual and the community. Governor Richardson also understood that the key to attracting new jobs was to improve NM public schools and expand opportunities for a college education.

First he audited the school bureaucracy and cut waste. NM invested 600 million dollars in the classroom. School districts shifted administrative cost into teaching and new instruction. Under Bill Richardson teacher pay was raised to its highest level in 15 years. NM became 6th in the nation in high education standards.

Bill Richardson is focused on the future. He understands there is still much more to do but as he continues to transform NM he is also seeking the Presidency. If he uses the NM model he will garner broad based support.

"I believe we can resolve problems by bringing people together - Republicans, Democrats and Independents, the business community, churches, community groups," he said, "Building community support for your goals. That's how we can make NM better." His philosophy will serve America well.

"The Government is only a means to an end, but we can make government a catalyst to do the right thing. We have our work cut out for us in the years ahead I believe we can always do better and we can never stop trying," so says Bill Richardson El Editor is right, "Richardson has Chance to Invigorate Americans." It shouldn't be long before voters everywhere recognize and acknowledge him as the experienced leader America wants and needs.

He is running an "All American Campaign." His motto is "We can always do better, we should never stop trying."

--Source Video: "The NM Comeback"

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Linda DeLeon Townhall listen and shut up meeting

Dear Bidal,
The simulated Linda DeLeon (City of Lubbock Council person) town hall meeting this last Monday was a disaster. It was more of a sales pitch for the North University Mercado Project. In other words we were invited to sit down and listen while DeLeon, Councilwoman Price, and Mayor Miller told us how things are going to be. Ooops, I nearly forgot, Christy Martinez from the floor of the Cavazos theater was the appointed cheerleader for the pep-rally.

This must be the first town hall meeting where there was NO MEETING. DeLeon accused people there of being a "captive audience," for Les Nesman from FMX, after his vociferous outrage at their not listening or taking questions; but she had her own audience that ran out of the theatre along with Mayor Miller, and Price. People had important questions and comments to make as is customary in a real town hall meeting.

Over time and getting comfortable with her City Council seat, it seems that Linda DeLeon does not want to listen to the people that voted her in. Natalia Salazar, President, of The Arnett Benson Neighborhood Association had important questions that certainly are related to the Mercado Project for example what can be done to eliminate poverty in the area where the Mercado is going.

Other people wanted to ask questions about the youth in the area. They are certainly related to the Mercado Project, or does Linda DeLeon believe there will be no youth at the Mercado? I wanted to ask Mayor Miller about his stance on eminent domain since this is related to the development project. But Linda DeLeon and Floyd Price (brilliant actor in "Driving Miss Daisy"), along with the Mayor who has gone back on his word several times after being elected seem to have

wanted an antiseptic meeting/that is they had gloves on so as not to be in touch with the common people.

The attitude of the meeting was DON'T CALL US, WE'LL CALL YOU, since Linda DeLeon wanted the public to write down questions to be answered by the appropriate bureaucrat some time in the future.

The City Council and the Mayor have gone WILD.

Thanks -- Armando Gonzales

Super Precinct System

Now that the hoopla has died down surrounding the "super precinct" election, it is appropriate to comment on this bizarre concept. The reason for the super precinct system was to see if it increased turnout. Well, it didn't. In this regard, the concept was a failure.

Not only that; the new system made the whole voting process intimidating. In fact, for many voters, it was not simply inconvenient, slow and frustrating; it was downright scary. I think my own personal experience is representative. Despite having worked many elections since 1972, I was intimidated by election workers and election office officials during the election.

I was chased by Sheriff's deputies after visiting a newspaper stand and buying milk in a grocery store, and was confronted by District Attorney's representatives after a grueling 15-hour day working in a "super" precinct. Not so "super" after all.

I believe something like this was inevitable. The reason is that the voting sites were no longer low-key neighborhood events where your friends greeted you. They became monster assembly-line voting factories manned by faceless people constantly electronically monitored by power-mad officials in a warehouse-size bureaucracy downtown.

Paranoia and heavy-handed "law" enforcement hung heavy over the polls like a poison-

ous fog. To me, it was like East Germany under Communism.

The whole thing was monitored by Austin-based super-bureaucrats looking for "problems." Well, the system and the bureaucrats, and their paranoia were the problem. The solution is to boot the entire experiment and reinstate the neighborhood-based voting system.

Chico James -- Lubbock

Subject: Letter to the Editor
Date: Monday, February 19, 2007 2:50 PM
Transatlantic slave trade

To the Editor:
February 23rd is the 200th anniversary of the British Parliament's vote to abolish the transatlantic slave trade. It is also the release date of a film (Amazing Grace) about the man who led the British Abolition movement, William Wilberforce. While the film does not have much to do with abolition in the United States, Wilberforce certainly did.

Abolitionism had widely diffused origins and its advocates lived on both sides of the Atlantic. The movement's leaders wrote and visited, financed and supported each other from the late 1780s through the 1850s. In the United States, major figures including Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, and William Wells Brown publicly praised Wilberforce and were moved by his example. In 1815, one African American minister called him "the immortal Wilberforce," and upon his death in 1833, the principal of a school for free black children in New York City wrote a sixteen-page eulogy as a tribute to the British leader.

The abolition movement was always far more than one man's story. It begins and ends with the millions of black people who endured, resisted, rebelled, and ultimately overcame. But Wilberforce's is a story that

inspires us with a sense of the difference one person can make, and then what can happen when thousands or millions make a similar commitment and rally to a worthy idea whose time is at hand.

James G. Basker
President, Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History

State School Closure

From the investigative reporting I viewed last week on TV news about the Lubbock State School, it appears as if certain groups have come to the conclusion that the state school needs to be closed. From my point of view, more information could have been provided or emphasis placed on the real cause behind the current conditions at LSS!

Most of us in TSEU know, as we have been closely monitoring this situation for years, that the state and it's governing body, are the real cause behind the problems at the state school. Clearly an over all result of insufficient funding for the adequate operation of the state school! Texas State Employees union has information I we hope to get out on Monday or Tuesday in the Press. Please read the material and start letting the public know, as well as our local state legislators, what the real cause of the conditions at the LSS stem from! This is a time when we all need to pull together and help out the LSS employees, clients (and families), the city of Lubbock, Lubbock County, and the surrounding communities who also have ties to the LSS. If you have any questions concerning this matter please call me. Thank you, Miguel Torres, TSEU Region III Executive Board member.

El Editor

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Publisher Bidal Aguero

Jimmy Smits' Multi-Network Productions

After becoming President of the U.S. in the final season of *The West Wing*, Jimmy Smits turned his attention to producing his own projects. The results, three very high profile projects at three different networks. An untitled dramatic pilot at CBS written by Cynthia Cidre, *The Inside*, about a former Special Forces operative at FX, and an epic miniseries about U.S. immigration to be written by Gregory Nava (*American Family*, *Selena*) for ABC.

All three projects are being produced through Smit's El Sendero Productions and through the company's pod deal with ABC TV Studio.

The untitled CBS pilot by Cidre (*Mambo Kings*, *Tara Road*), follows the lives of three generations of the Duques, a powerful Latin American family in South Florida in the rum business. Smits will play the lead role of Alex Vega, an outsider who is handed control of Duque Rum by the ailing patriarch. Originally developed by CBS Paramount Network TV, the project is now a co-production with ABC-TV Studios because of Smits' production deal.

Smits will serve as an executive producer along with writer Cidre, Jonathan Prince, Polly Anthony and Jimmy Iovine.

However, the first project out will be *The Inside* about former Special Forces operative who goes undercover to infiltrate a notorious drug cartel and in the process gives up his identity and a family. In addition to writing, Todd Robinson (*Lonely Hearts*) will also executive produce along with Smits.

Smits will also re-unite with Gregory Nava, who directed him in the 1995 drama *My Family/Mi Familia*, on the, as yet, untitled epic immigration miniseries. A co-productions of ABC TV Studio and El Sendero, this project is also co-produced by Nava's El Norte Productions and Barbara Jitner-Martinez, Nava's producing partner.

Smits is repped by CAA, Brillstein-Grey Entertainment.

CHAYANNE TERNURA Y SENSIBILIDAD A FLOR DE PIEL

Chayanne se pone a especular y como si le fuera la vida en ello publica nuevo sencillo: "Si nos quedara poco tiempo".

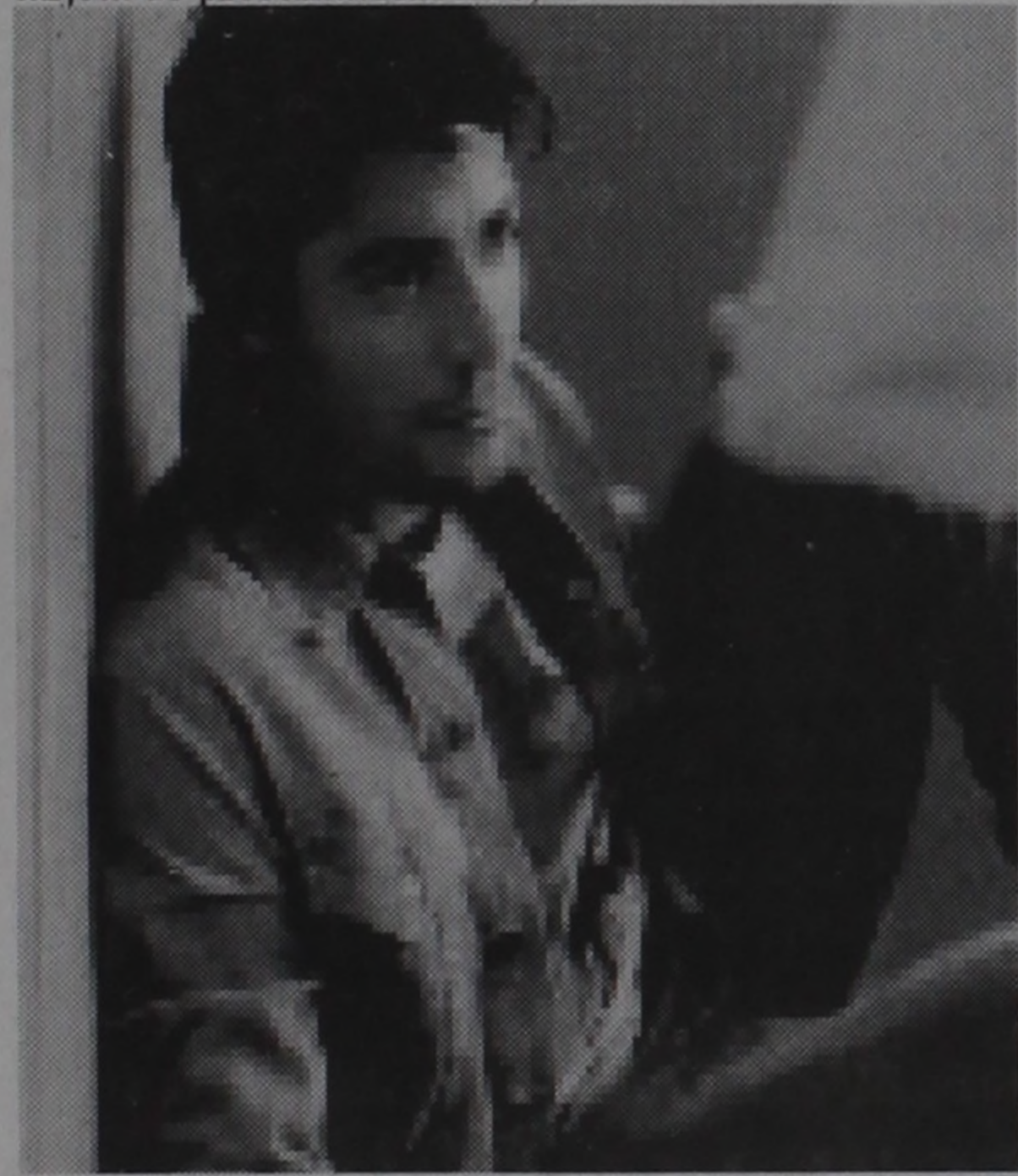
El cantante puertorriqueño estrenará álbum el próximo abril aunque aún no cuenta con título definitivo. La versatilidad de Estéfano en la producción y canciones plagadas de fragilidad y ternura del tipo de "Tengo miedo" se suceden en el que será el regreso a escena del boricua de la sonrisa eterna. Su amplia sonrisa continúa siendo su mejor tarjeta de presentación. Eso, sus

su álbum del mismo título.

No obstante, Estéfano se ha cutido con otros artistas de calado comercial: Alejandro Fernández ("Me estoy enamorando", "Te juro"), Azúcar Moreno ("Ay amor", "Mamma mía", "El amor se echa de menos"), Alexander Pires ("Amor de mujer", "Usted se me llevó la vida"), Lou Bega ("Gentleman", "Angelina Señorita"), Patricia Manterola ("Que el ritmo no pare"), o Cristian ("Miedo"), entre otros.

Es Chayanne quien, en este caso, ha dado todo de sí mismo y ha "trabajado como un esclavo" como él mismo mantiene. Grabado en Miami, Boston y Los Angeles, entre sus 11 canciones hay seis baladas, entre las que destacar "Tengo miedo", y cinco temas bailables del tipo de "Lola". Ocho Discos de Platino y tres de Oro en todo el mundo y un Disco de Platino en Estados Unidos.

Tras su disco "Desde siempre", una recopilación de sus éxitos románticos, y la larga y exitosa gira por Estados Unidos junto a Marc Anthony y Alejandro Fernández, Chayanne publica "Cautivo" en 2005 con el que alcanza el #1 en la lista latina de Billboard.



apasionadas coreografías, los ritmos trotones de algunos de sus "hits" y sus baladas amorosas compuestas para derretir el alma. Chayanne vuelve el próximo abril con un álbum del que no ha avanzado título pero del que sí ha revelado detalles del primer sencillo. Sony BMG es el sello que distribuirá este último trabajo.

La condicional apocalíptica De este modo, ya se sabe que una condicional apocalíptica, "Si nos quedara poco tiempo", será el tema que inaugure la presentación del disco en emisoras y televisiones. También, el hecho de que Estéfano www.estefano.com se encargue de la producción del mismo. Compositor, autor y maestro del sonido, este colombiano ha colocado cuarenta canciones en el top 40 de los más vendidos y se ha encargado de escribir canciones para artistas famosos como Shakira, Ricky Martin, Jennifer López, Gloria Estefan, Enrique Iglesias, Thalía, Paulina Rubio, Julio Iglesias o Marc Anthony.

Considerado uno de los próceres del sonido latino en Estados Unidos, Estéfano arrasó en compañía de Donato y canciones tan bellas como "Vuela muy alto", fueron magistralmente interpretadas por Jerry Rivera en

Shakira, Mana, Joan Sebastian, & RBD Top Billboard Awards

Miami, FL -- Finalists for the 2007 Billboard Latin Music Awards were recently announced during a live broadcast of Telemundo's *Al Rojo Vivo* con Maria Celeste. Rakim y Ken-Y, Shakira, RBD, India, Maná, Joan Sebastian, Mariano Barba, Anaís, Aventura, Fonseca, Toby Love and Wisin & Yandel are among finalists featured in multiple categories. The ceremony will be held on Thursday, April 26th at Bank United Center in Miami, Florida, and will be produced and broadcast live on Telemundo. A complete list of finalists can be found at the *Al Rojo Vivo* and Yahoo Musica sections at yahootel-emundo.com.



Topping the list as a finalist for seven awards is one of the most recognized reggaeton duos from Puerto Rico, Jose Nieves (Rakim) and Kenny Vazquez (Ken-Y), who together make up Rakim & Ken-Y, who have been dominating the airwaves with their bilingual hits. They are up for Hot Latin Songs Artist of the Year, Reggaeton Album of the Year "Masterpiece: Nuestra Obra Maestra," Hot Latin Song of the Year, Vocal Duet and Tropical Airplay Song of the Year, Duo or Group for "Tengo un Amor," and Hot Latin Song of the Year, Reggaeton Song of the Year, and Latin Ringtone of the Year for "Down."



Puerto Rican tropical singer India, also known as the "Princess of Salsa," and Mexican singer/songwriter Mariano Barba are both up for five awards. New artist, Mariano Barba, has taken the regional music world by storm with his album titled "Aliado del Tiempo," which is up for Regional Mexican Album of the Year, New Artist, and whose song by the same name is up for Hot Latin Song of the Year, Regional Mexican Airplay Song of the Year, Male Solo Artist, and

Regional Mexican Airplay Song of the Year, New Artist. Barba is also up for Songwriter of the Year. Finalists up for four awards include Mexican rock en español band Maná, Latin pop star Shakira, renowned Mexican singer and songwriter Joan Sebastian, Colombian singer/songwriter Fonseca, Mexican pop sensation RBD, popular bachata band from the Bronx Aventura, reggaeton duo Wisin & Yandel, Dominican newcomer Anaís, and Toby Love, who has gained popularity for his fusion of bachata and hip-hop. Those up for three awards include reggaeton superstar Daddy Yankee, internationally renowned pop singer, Ricky Martin, reggaeton singer and composer, Don Omar, and Haitian-American rapper and reggae artist, Wyclef Jean.

The awards are the grand finale to the 18th Annual Billboard Latin Music Conference. Now in its 18th year, this four-day event is being held April 23 - 26 at the InterContinental Hotel in Miami.

Human rights honor for Jennifer Lopez

Jennifer Lopez has been honored by Amnesty International for producing and starring in "Bordertown," a new film examining the murders of women in a Mexican border city. Lopez said she felt very humbled to receive the human rights group's Artists for Amnesty award this week from East Timor's Prime Minister Jose Ramos Horta, a Nobel Peace laureate.

The 38-year-old singer-actress plays an investigative journalist reporting on the serial killings of women in Ciudad Juarez, on Mexico's border with the U.S.

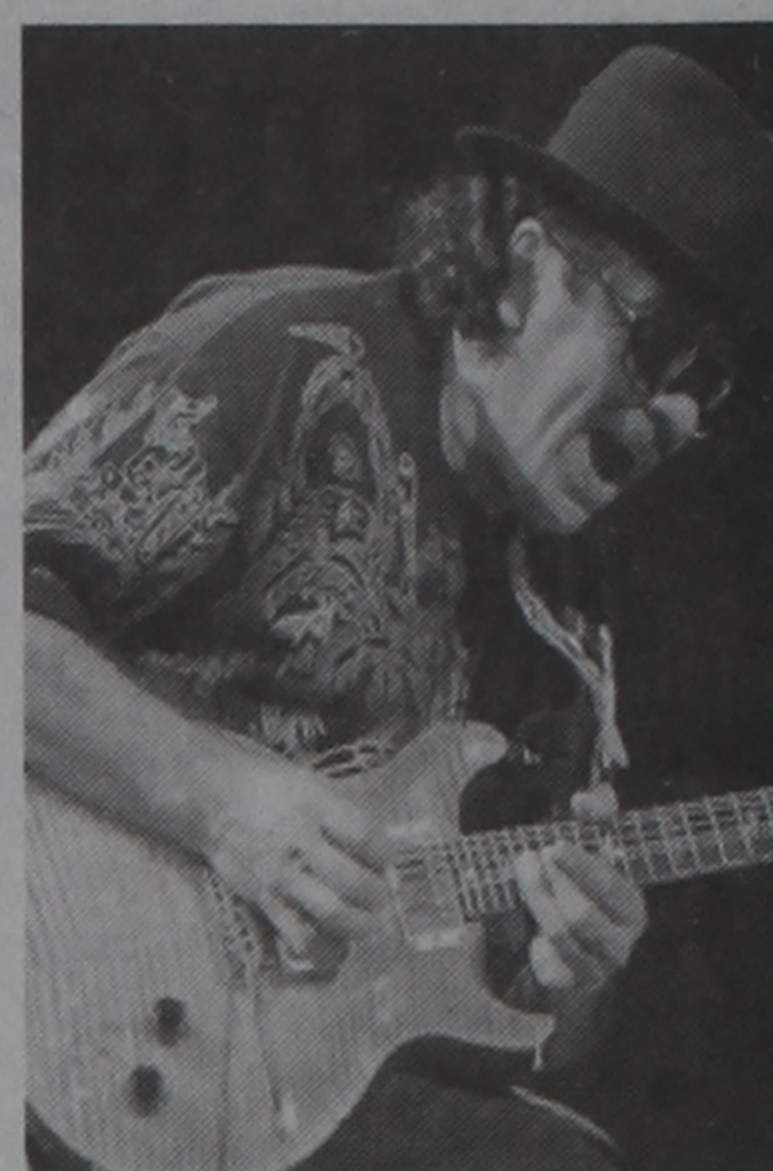
Amnesty International puts the number of women and girls killed in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua since 1993, many after being kidnapped and raped, at more than 400.

Lopez described it as "one of the world's most shocking and disturbing, underreported crimes against humanity."

Also at Wednesday's ceremony was Norma Andrade, whose 17-year-old daughter was found murdered in February 2001. She co-founded Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa (Our Daughters Back Home), which represents mothers and families of the murdered women.

"Bordertown," directed by Gregory Nava, was premiered Thursday at the Berlin film festival.

Santana plans to open themed restaurants



The newest addition to the roster of celebrity-inspired restaurants, Carlos Santana's Maria Maria, promises to deliver authentic Mexican cuisine in an atmosphere inspired by his music.

The 59-year-old musician and his wife, Deborah, announced a partnership this week with Walnut Creek-based Dudum Sports & Entertainment Corp., which developed Joe DiMaggio's Italian Chophouse in San Francisco and other celebrity-focused establishments.

Together, they plan to turn three existing Northern California restaurants into Maria Maria, named after Santana's Grammy-winning single.

The first restaurant is scheduled to open in Walnut Creek in April, followed by Mill Valley in May and Santa Rosa in June.

"The passion that we have for food and for creating a unique experience really resonated with Carlos and Deborah," said Jeff Dudum, DSE's chief executive.

"I couldn't be more excited about having the opportunity to work with them on restaurants that honor and celebrate Latin American culture, food and music."

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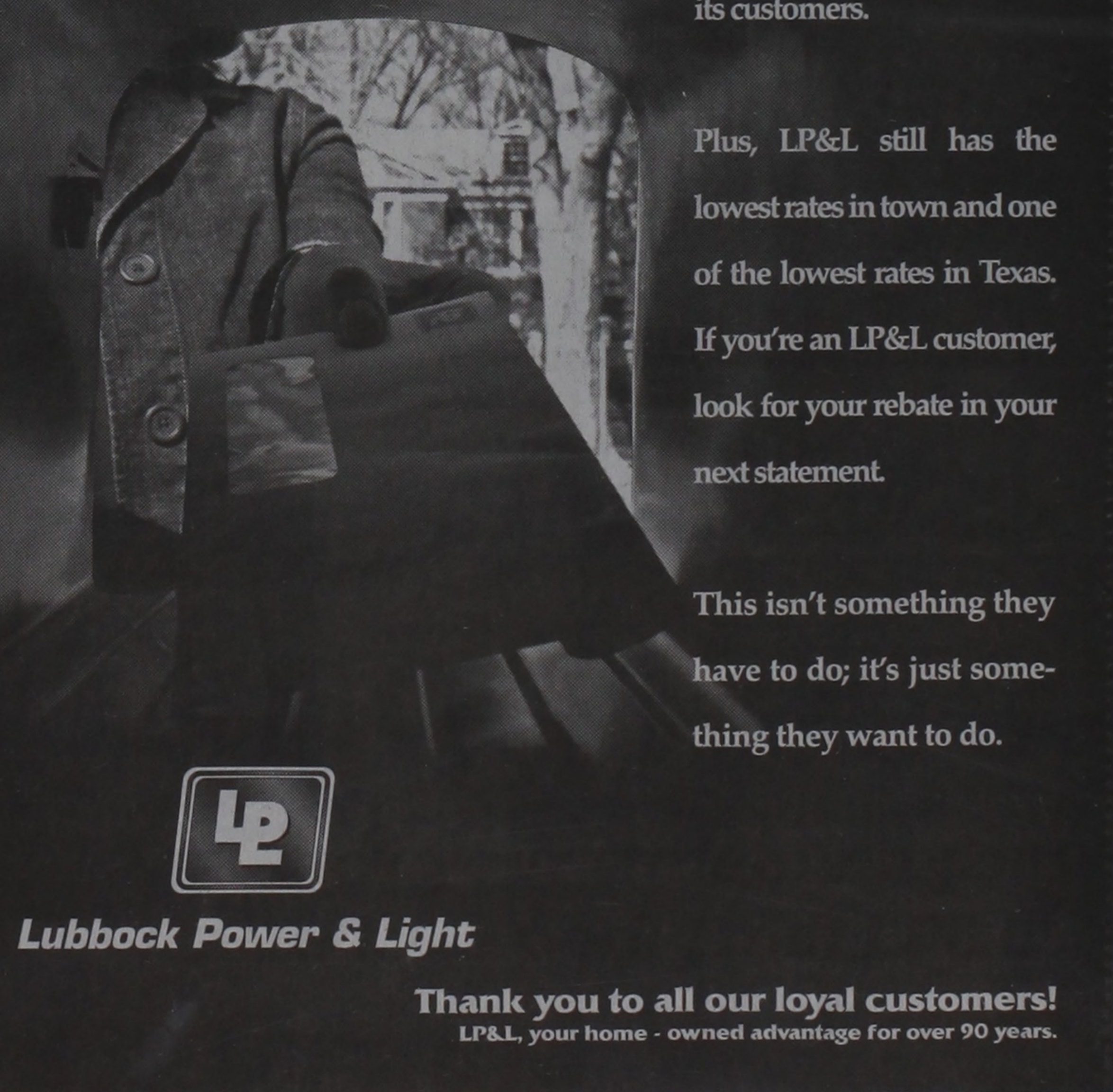
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Culpan muro por daños a la ecología



El domingo pasado, un grupo de activistas de Texas y California caminó a lo largo de las 14 millas de muro fronterizo entre California y Baja California, para protestar por el deterioro ambiental que el muro ha provocado en la zona y para exigir a las autoridades federales que den marcha atrás en la construcción de uno similar en el estado de Texas.

Sin embargo, no sólo las organizaciones activistas han expresado su descontento a partir de que esta iniciativa fuera aprobada, sino también los alcaldes y otras autoridades fronterizas de aquel estado que han realizado una tarea conjunta buscando involucrar a sus contrapartes de los estados de Chihuahua y Coahuila.

La primera de estas acciones tuvo lugar el 24 de mayo de 2006, cuando los regidores de la ciudad de El Paso, Texas, se unieron al alcalde John Cook en la firma de una resolución en la que expresaban su oposición a la participación de los soldados de la Guardia Nacional en las tareas de vigilancia fronteriza, al tiempo en que pidieron una reforma migratoria amplia en la que se incluya la emisión de visas de trabajo para los inmigrantes que, de otra manera, intentarán el cruce sin documentos.

Más tarde, el 5 de octubre de ese año, representantes gubernamentales de Texas, miembros de la Iglesia Católica, y activistas y organizaciones civiles, calificaron de "innecesaria y lamentable" la decisión del presidente George W. Bush de asignar recursos para la construcción del muro en la frontera con México, por la manera en que esto afectaría las relaciones entre ciudades hermanas, tales como El Paso, en Texas, y Ciudad Juárez, en Chihuahua.

Pero la acción más contundente fue la realizada por nueve de los 12 alcaldes de ciudades fronterizas de Texas durante la tercera semana de enero de 2007 en Washington, cuando acudieron a una reunión con el secretario del Departamento de Seguridad Interna (DHS) estadounidense, Michael Chertoff, así como con algunos congresistas, para hablar sobre su oposición al muro.

"Yo los invité a que vinieran a El Paso para que conocieran nuestro lado de la historia", dijo

hace unos días a La Opinión el alcalde Cook al referirse a su visita al Congreso. "Les dijimos que no queremos un muro en Texas porque nuestro principal socio comercial es México", señaló Cook. "Ésta es una cuestión histórica y cultural, pero también económica: por cada 10 empleos que se generan en la industria manufacturera de Ciudad Juárez, se genera uno más en El Paso. "Si el gobierno federal tiene dinero para construir un muro, que me lo dé y yo construiré un puente".

La posición sostenida por las autoridades es reforzada a cada momento por los habitantes de uno y del otro lado de la frontera, quienes no entienden cuál sería la utilidad de un muro en medio de una comunidad que cruza de un país a otro como parte de su vida cotidiana y que trabajan en restaurantes, hoteles, como jardineros o en cualquiera de las muchas empresas y negocios "del otro lado".

En el cruce entre El Paso y Ciudad Juárez se ve claramente. Bajo el puente "Paso del Norte" que comunica a ambas ciudades, ríos de gente van y vienen con bolsas, con ropa de trabajo, apurados.

"Qué tal, ustedes son los que vienen de California, ¿verdad?", pregunta un hombre del lado de Juárez, caminando hacia el cruce. "¿No me reconocen?". Aunque no lleva puesto el uniforme, su sonrisa hace que uno lo recuerde: es el guardia de seguridad de la oficina de Cook, cruzando al mediodía para ir a trabajar.

"Los detractores de la construcción del muro argumentan que esta medida no será de utilidad porque para que se construya un muro de acuerdo al proyecto aprobado se requieren 7,000 millones de dólares y el Congreso únicamente aprobó 1,200.

"Lo que queremos es hacerle comprender al gobierno que no se aumenta la seguridad con un muro", comentó Daniel Watman, uno de los activistas que participaron en la caminata del domingo. "Somos países vecinos y la cooperación no se logra dividiendo la historia. Ningún dividiendo la historia ha servido para mejorar la vida en un país".

Bilingual workers in demand

As the only Spanish-speaking staffer in his division, Dallas city employee Norman Herrera takes at least one call a day from a resident en español.

The questions range from where to pay a parking ticket to how to get trash pick up on a day other than Thursday.

"We get those calls in English all the time. When you get those in Spanish, you want to answer them," said Herrera, a special assistant to the Dallas mayor. "If we can't communicate with them ... I don't think we're doing our job."

Demand for bilingual employees like Herrera is growing across the U.S., at schools, hospitals, courthouses and other government offices, said Kevin Hendzel, spokesman for the American Translators Association. Many are recruiting and rewarding bilingual workers with extra pay.

The city of Austin, for example, will soon begin paying some employees an extra \$150 a month if they speak Spanish or are fluent in sign language. Employees must work in a department where the languages are in demand and prove their abilities through testing.

Federal rules require cities with large non-English speaking populations to offer language assistance. An executive order in 2000 began requiring agencies that get federal money to make sure programs and services are being provided to anyone with limited English skills.

"It's basically a civil rights issue," he said. "It's been a long time in development."

The extra pay a bilingual worker receives can vary, and is often linked to the specific language skills needed for the job.

In Dallas, bilingual employees receive stipends of \$110 or \$150 a month, depending their level of proficiency. San Antonio pays employees an additional \$50 monthly if using a second language helps them perform their duties.

"What happened is more of an evolution. It was our employees saying, 'Wait a minute, this is valuable skill. We are doing skills we weren't hired to perform,'" said Tim Welch, a spokesman for the Washington Federation of State Employees, a union which covers 38,000 workers.

About 4 percent of the U.S. population speaks little or no English, according to Census figures. And many may need help in their first language when doing anything from asking about their water bill to calling 911 for assistance.

Although language assistance is required for some agencies, the federal mandate is unfunded.

"Where the real struggle comes in is who pays for it. The patient, the state, the speciality?" said Hendzel, the spokesman for the translators group.

Economists: Health Care Expenses to Grow

Health care is expected to account for \$1 of every \$5 spent in the United States in another decade.

That means a rise in out-of-pocket expenses, such as the copays for medicine, from about \$850 this year to about \$1,400 in 2016, a 5.3 percent annual increase.

The cost of health insurance is projected to rise even more quickly during that same time - 6.4 percent annually.

Over the coming decade, spending on health care will continue to outpace the overall economy. By the year 2016, it will total nearly \$4 trillion, economists at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said in a report being released Wednesday.

Today, the number is closer to \$1 out of every \$6, or \$2 trillion.

Consumers are spending more on the latest treatments, despite their rising costs. For example, federal officials cite a significant increase in the use of imaging to detect blockages or other diseases.

Income will also play a significant role in the greater health spending. Historically, when income rises 1 percent, health expenditures go up about 1.5 percent, officials said.

"What that indicates is a desire to purchase good health," said John Poisal, deputy director of the government's National Health Statistics Group.

Dr. Mark McClellan, an analyst who used to oversee the Medicare and Medicaid programs, said greater spending on health care has its benefits. People are not having heart attacks because they're taking medicine that lowers their blood

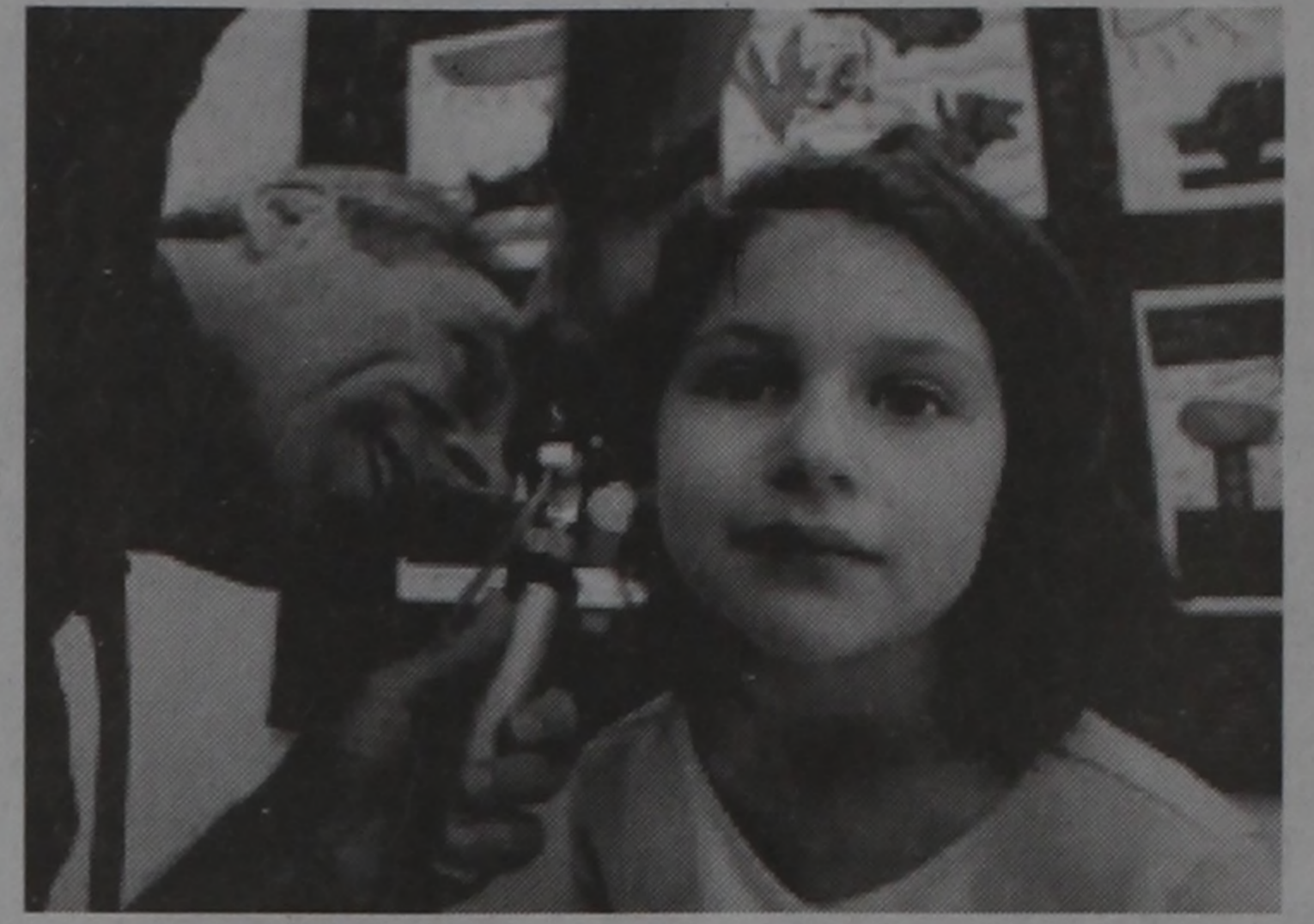
pressure and cholesterol. They're surviving cancer because of more frequent exams and new treatments.

"Greater health care spending is having a tremendous impact on the length and quality of people's lives," he said.

But the United States could be doing much better, he said.

lists the percentage of pneumonia patients at various hospitals who received a timely antibiotic, an indicator of the quality of care.

"The only force strong enough to change the course of health care is a marketplace where consumers have the information and the incentive to choose quality and keep costs low," Leavitt said. The economists said their study



"We know that much of the spending is going to treatments that are unnecessary or lead to medical errors, so we're not getting nearly as much value as we should," McClellan said.

Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt said the rising costs are creating anxiety for everyone and as well as a political will to change that trend.

"America's per capita health spending is the highest in the world," he said. "There is simply no place on the economic leader board for a nation that spends a fifth of its domestic product on health care."

The administration is pushing government agencies, insurers and health care providers to make information available that would help consumers become good shoppers. For example, Medicare

doesn't determine how much the rising costs will affect the average American family. There are too many factors involved, particularly when the federal government accounts for about half of overall health spending through programs such as Medicare, Medicaid and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The economists also predict that government programs will gradually replace employers when it comes to providing health insurance for millions of Americans.

"We are moving incrementally away from traditional sources of insurance, such as employer-based coverage, to a system comprising more federal and state government-provided health care," said the economists, whose report will be published in the journal Health Affairs.

Bilingual workers cont'd

In the case of Austin, officials set aside \$1 million this year to cover pay and testing for 600 city employees who likely will be eligible for bilingual bonuses. Dallas spends even more on stipends for nearly 1,000 of the city's 12,500 employees.

"It's been beneficial to be able to offer," Wright-Rogers said of the incentive program, which began in 1987. "It's been extremely positive for our city. We need to meet the needs of our community...while they're becoming more proficient in English."

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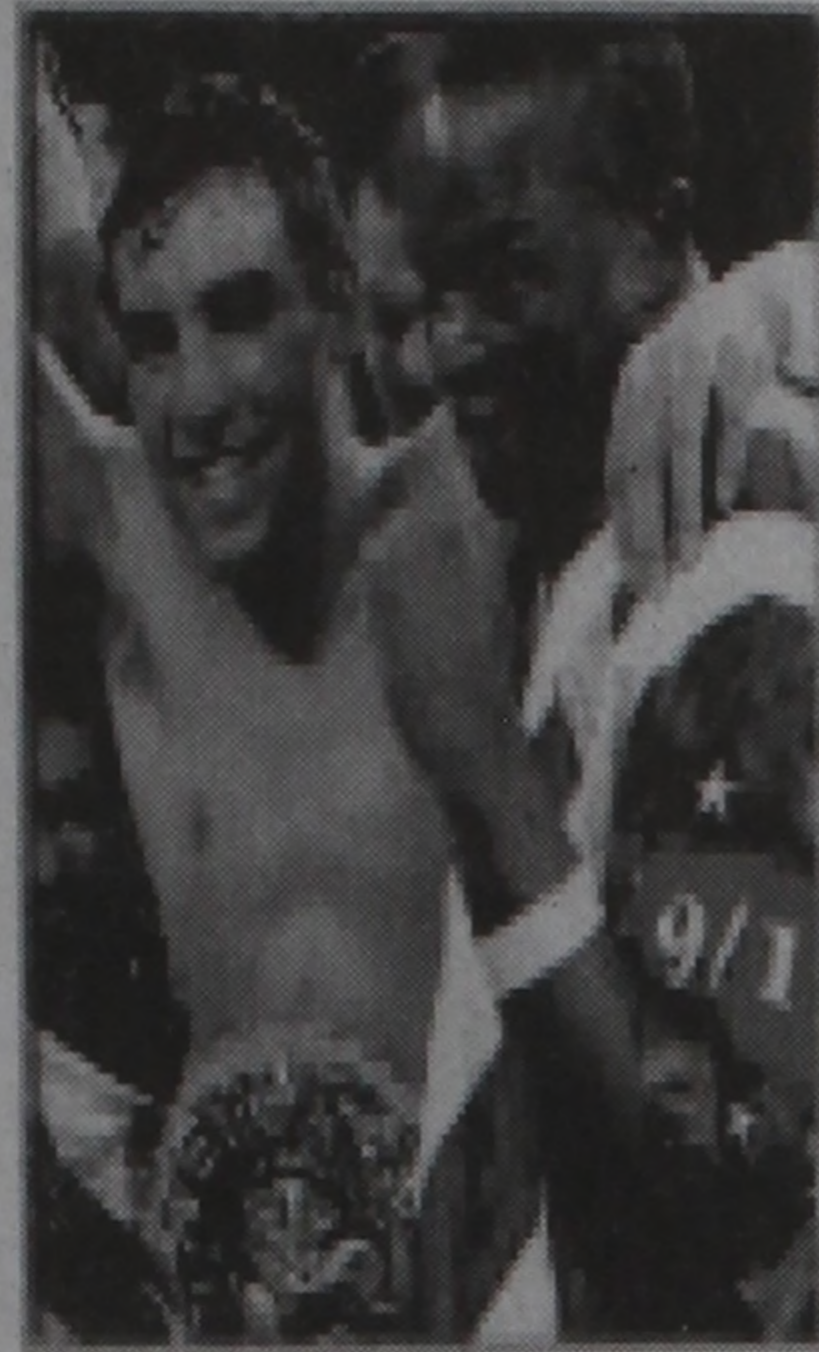
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De la Hoya y Mayweather comienzan promoción de su enfrentamiento

NUEVA YORK - Oscar de la Hoya apenas pudo hablar cuando llegó su turno de subir al estrado. Floyd Mayweather Jr. estaba gritando junto con algunos aficionados, posaba para las fotografías y hacía todo lo posible por interrumpir a su próximo rival.



"Este tipo me ha molestado durante un buen tiempo", dijo De la Hoya el martes, en el hotel Waldorf-Astoria, la primera parada de una gira por 11 ciudades, para promover la pelea entre

ambos púgiles por el título superwelter, prevista para el 5 de mayo en Las Vegas.

"Le falta algo de educación", añadió De la Hoya con una sonrisa. "Yo voy a darle una lección".

Hubo algunos insultos, principalmente del lado de Mayweather, durante la conferencia de prensa, rodeada por la deslumbrante producción _música, luces y videos_ que cabría esperar de un combate

cuyo eslogan es: "El mundo aguarda". Cuando De la Hoya (38-4 con 30 nocáuts) y Mayweather (37-0 con 24 nocáuts) se midan en el casino MGM Grand, en pos del título del boxeador hispano, la pelea impondría un récord de audiencia televisiva _bajo la modalidad de "pago por ver"_ y se transmitiría a 176 países, una cantidad sin precedentes.

Apenas en tres horas se agotaron las localidades. La conferencia de prensa incluyó también la colocación

de carteles y una pizarra electrónica que marcaba el tiempo que falta para el combate, frente al hotel. Cientos de aficionados y los representantes de unos 200 medios de información se congregaron para la ocasión. Mayweather, quien busca coronarse en una quinta categoría distinta, entró primero al salón, con la canción "Another One Bites The Dust", de Queen. Cuando De la Hoya ingresó, Mayweather se arrancó la camisa y presumió de su musculatura.

De la Hoya se levantó también la camisa y el saco para mostrar sus músculos abdominales. Después de que los entrenadores de cada boxeador intercambiaron algunas críticas, Mayweather tomó el micrófono. Reconoció que De la Hoya ha tenido algunos logros, pero garantizó que lo derrotará. "El podrá tener corazón, golpear más duro que yo y ser más fuerte, pero no hay un peleador más inteligente que yo", dijo Mayweather.

Cuando De la Hoya subió al podio, Mayweather comenzó a moverse para interrumpirlo. "Ya verán el 5 de mayo; cuando yo golpee a alguien, el dolor le dura una semana", dijo De la Hoya, mientras miraba a Mayweather. "Y créeme, te voy a hacer llorar". De la Hoya tuvo como entrenador a Floyd Mayweather padre desde finales del 2000. Pero el entrenador rechazó una oferta para estar en la esquina de De la Hoya contra su hijo, con quien ha tenido algunas diferencias.

De La Hoya plans to 'teach Mayweather lesson' in May 5

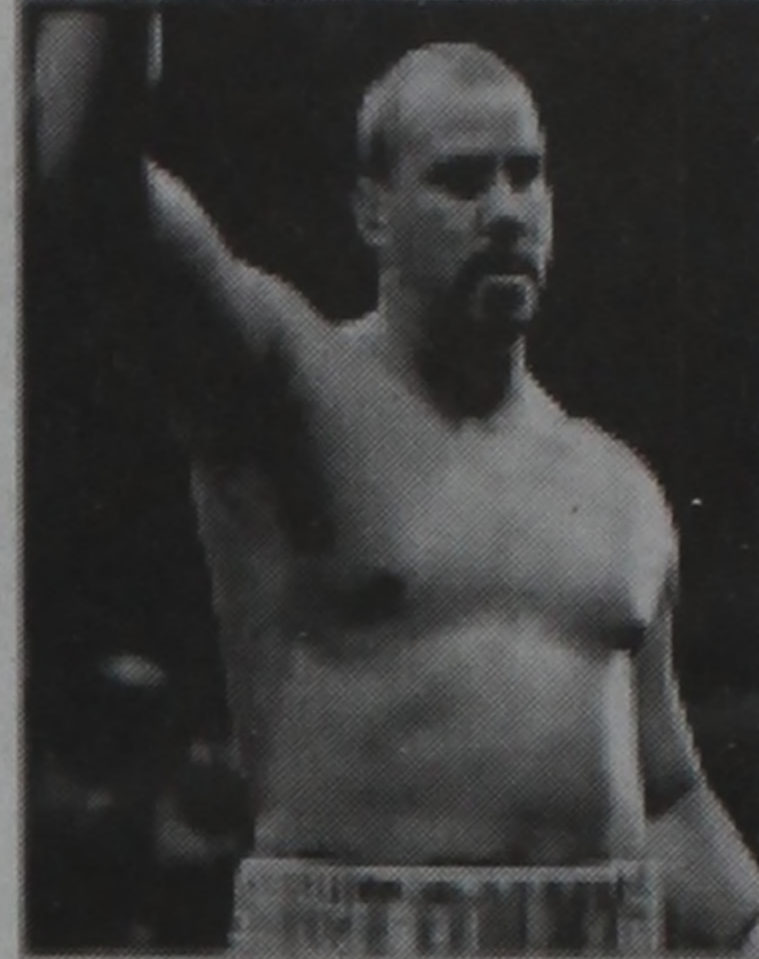
NEW YORK -- It was Oscar De La Hoya's turn to take the podium, and he could hardly get a word in. Floyd Mayweather Jr. was busy yelling back at rowdy fans, posing for pictures and doing everything he could to annoy De La Hoya. It's The Golden Boy against the Pretty Boy -- and, boy, what a scene it was. "This guy has been under my skin for a while," De La Hoya said Tuesday at the Waldorf-Astoria luxury hotel in midtown Manhattan. It was the first stop of an 11-city promotional tour in advance of their highly anticipated super welterweight title fight on May 5 in Las Vegas. "He's a little brat," De La Hoya added with a smile. "I'm

going to teach him a lesson." The trash talk flew, mostly from Mayweather's camp, throughout the press conference, which was marked by the type of lavish production -- music, lights and videos -- that's expected to accompany a fight with the slogan, "The World Awaits." When De La Hoya (38-4, 30 knockouts) and Mayweather (37-0, 24 KO's) square off at the MGM Grand hotel-casino for De La Hoya's title, the fight is expected to set pay-per-view records and be shown in a record 176 countries. It also sold out in three hours. With a crowd of close to 200 media and several hundred more fans in attendance, a digital countdown board was

displayed outside the press conference and huge promotional posters lined the walls. Mayweather, looking to win a title in his fifth weight class, was the first to enter the huge ballroom to Queen's "Another One Bites The Dust." He strolled down the red carpet that led to the podium, stopping frequently to shake hands and pose for pictures -- soaking in the cheers and jeers. He took off his brightly colored warmup jacket when he reached the podium, revealing a dark T-shirt. A few moments later, De La Hoya made his way in, wearing a sharp, black suit -- but not for long. As soon as De La Hoya started walking, Mayweather whipped off his shirt and flexed for the crowd. When De La Hoya reached the podium, he took off his suit jacket and pulled his dress shirt out of his pants to expose his abs. The wildness had officially begun, and it got wilder from there -- although both fighters eventually covered themselves

up. "We know his heart can be tested because he's laid down before," Ellerbe said, drawing a chorus of boos from the largely pro-De La Hoya crowd. "You're going to have hell on your hands on May 5." After a few careful words from Freddie Roach, De La Hoya's new trainer who'll begin working with him in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on March 1, it was Mayweather's turn. "I'm the top dog in the sport," boasted Mayweather, considered the best kilo-for-kilo fighter in the world, a moniker De La Hoya once held. When a fan yelled out that heart beats talent any day, Mayweather had the perfect comeback: "Well, 37 fighters had heart," he said. "And they all came up short." The 34-year-old De La Hoya, 2-2 in his last four fights, including a victory over Ricardo Mayorga last May, said he feels as though he's 25 -- back in his prime. "This is a fight where maybe it could solidify my legacy," De La Hoya said. "I want to close that book with a happy ending. onard Ellerbe, Mayweather's cornerman, fueled the fire by questioning De La Hoya's desire.

Morrison returning, says he is HIV negative



CHESTER, W.Va. (AP) - Former WBO heavyweight champion Tommy Morrison is staging a comeback, saying Tuesday that a positive HIV test that ended his career more than a decade ago was inaccurate. "I'm negative and I've always been negative and that should be the end of it," Morrison said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press. The 38-year-old will face John Castle in a four-round fight Thursday at Mountaineer Race-track and Gaming Resort. "The rug was yanked out from under my feet by a misdiagnosis," he said. "All I want to do is fight. ... It's unfinished business." State Athletic Commissioner Steve Allred said Tuesday he approved Morrison's participation in the fight after reviewing medical records and consulting with the Association of Boxing Com-missions' medical review committee. Allred said confidentiality laws prevent him from discussing Morrison's medical history or the records he reviewed. West Virginia does not have mandatory blood testing for boxers. "I assure you that West Virginia is doing due diligence to make sure everyone who steps into the

ring is healthy," Allred said. Morrison (46-3) and Castle (4-2) square off in one of seven bouts scheduled at Mountaineer. Morrison won the WBO title in 1993 by outpointing George Foreman. He lost it later that year. Morrison, who was featured in the movie "Rocky V," also served a couple of years in an Arkansas prison on drug and weapons charges. He announced he had human immunodeficiency virus in February 1996 and last fought in Japan that November, knocking out Marcus Rhode in the first round. Morrison said Tuesday that he has taken several HIV tests while preparing for his comeback and all have been negative. He has signed a contract with Top Rank promoters for at least eight fights this year. "I have no doubt I'll be a better fighter than I ever was before," he said. "I am more relaxed. ... Something that comes along with age causes you to simmer a bit."

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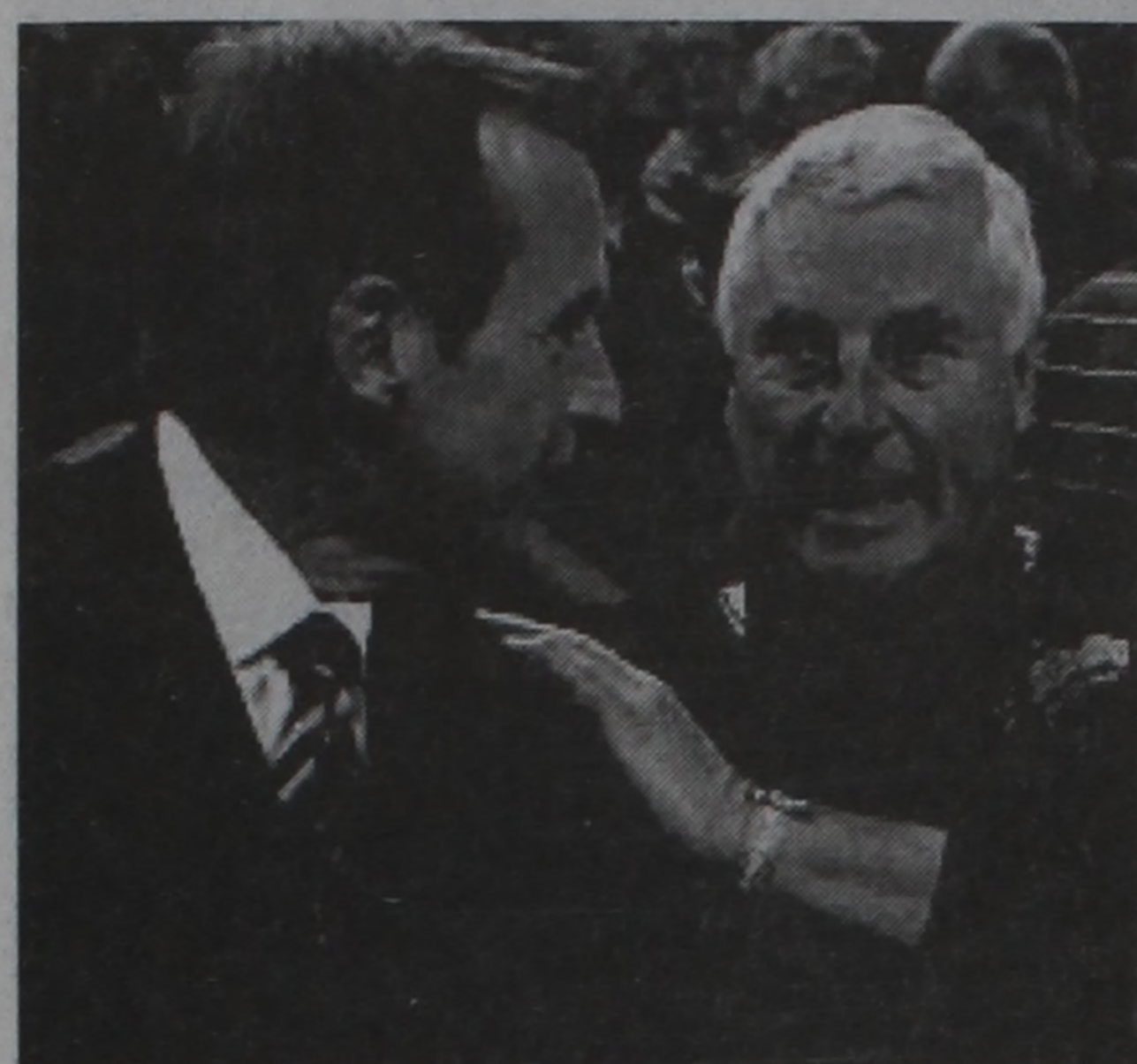
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Balanced Longhorns pummel Raiders, inch toward Big 12 top

AUSTIN, Texas -- Bob Knight considers Texas' Rick Barnes among his good friends in coaching circles. It hasn't helped him figure out a way to beat his buddy



on the court. A.J. Abrams scored 18 points and the No. 19 Longhorns stayed in the thick of the Big 12 race with an 80-51 win Tuesday night over Texas Tech.

Barnes ran his record to 12-2 against Knight, the winningest men's coach in college basketball. It was also Texas' second straight rout of the Red Raiders in Austin, who limped out of the Frank Erwin Center with a 34-point loss last season.

"We've had a very difficult time," said Knight, who was left sitting and stewing on the bench for much of this one. "We've on occasion been nonexistent. Tonight was one of those nights."

Kevin Durant added 17 points for the Longhorns (20-7, 10-3), who had all five starters score in double figures but didn't have a 20-point scorer for the first time this season.

The win keeps Texas a half-game behind Texas A&M for second in the Big 12 and a game behind leader Kansas. The Longhorns play both in their last three games.

"It's late in the season. People are playing like it's the last game of the season," Abrams said.

Alan Voskuil scored nine points to lead the Red Raiders (17-11, 6-7), who shot just 29 percent. Jarrius Jackson, who came in averaging 20.7 points, was 2-of-10

for 7 points. Justin Mason provided the Longhorns' scoring punch in the first half, hitting all five of his shots.

Durant, who had 37 points and 23 rebounds in a win over Tech in Lubbock earlier this season, scored his first basket on a steal and dunk and hit two 3-pointers in the first half. All of them came in a 24-8 run that opened up a 37-15 lead. With Durant drawing

Tech defenders, Mason had all kinds of room to roam to the basket or pull up for open jumpers. Texas shot 58 percent and led 48-26 at halftime.

"They were playing up on A.J. and Kevin and I was just fortunate to be able to get some open looks," Mason said.

"First half, I'm not sure we can play any better than that," Barnes said. Durant, who has made a case for national player of the year honors, is finding his scoring touch going through long dry spells as the season wears on. His first shot of the second half was an airball 3-pointer, but he followed it with a lighting-quick spin and 10-foot fadeaway jumper.

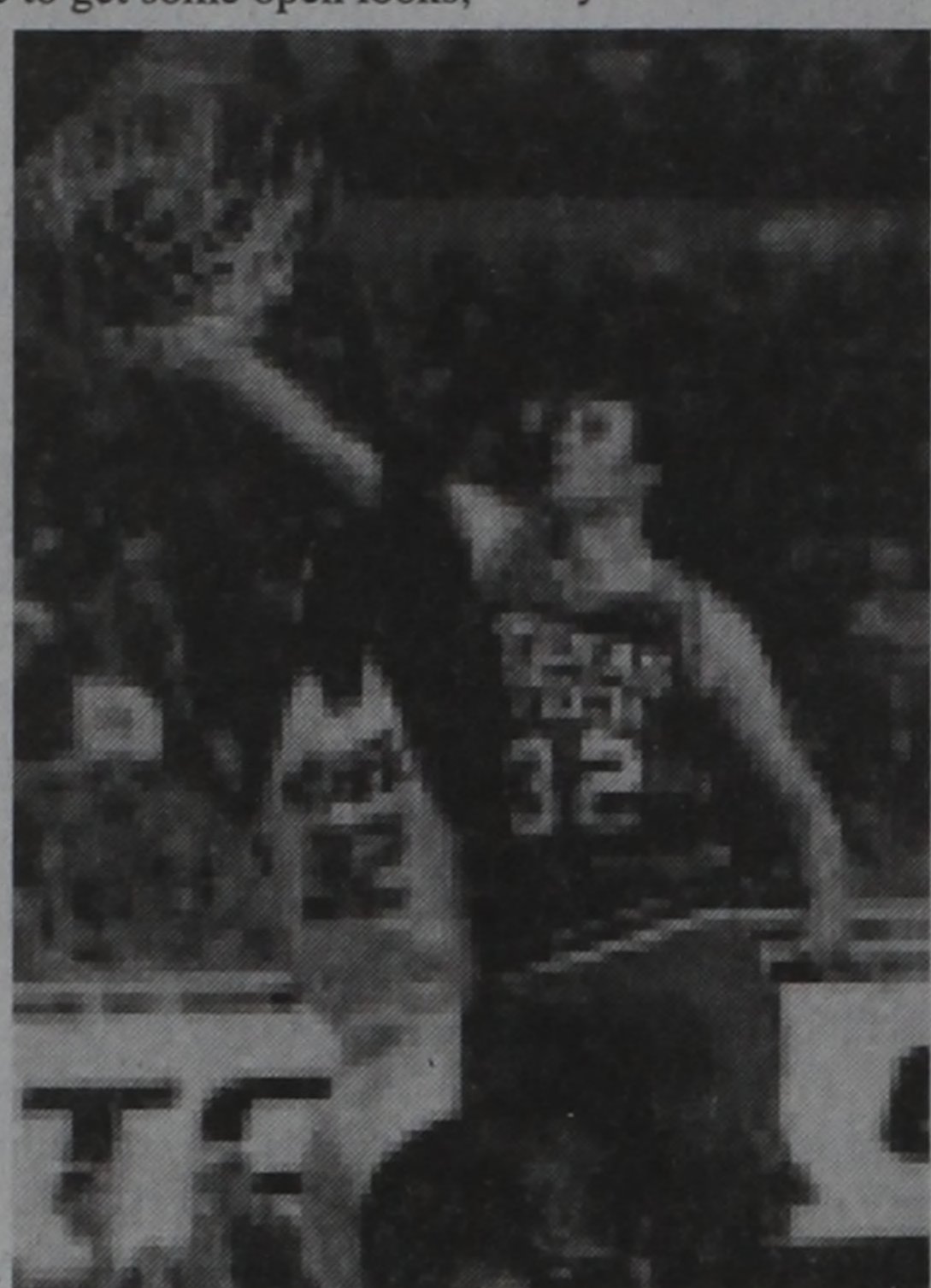
Durant, who scored 30 or more points in six of his first nine Big 12 games, hasn't scored more than

21 in the last four. "We never started out the season say Kevin Durant to score 30 points," Barnes said. "He got on a roll there where he was doing it, but he's not out there trying to do it."

D.J. Augustin hit a 3-pointer to open the second half and Mason fed Damion James with a nifty pass for a dunk. Abrams' second 3-pointer made it 62-35 with 12 minutes to play.

Durant took over the game late in the second half against the Red Raiders last month but didn't have to do much but watch his teammates score in this one. Texas kept bombing away from 3-point range, with Durant hitting one and Abrams popping two more to make it 73-40.

Defensively, the Longhorns never let Jackson become a factor. He had only one basket in the first half and didn't score in the second until making two free throws when Durant was hit with a technical foul with eight minutes left and Texas leading by 29.



Abrams played a big role on defense as well as the slight but quick guard stayed with Jackson and got help when he needed it. "I think for the last three games, we've chosen to put him on the best offensive

player and just said 'Be there, be around,'" Barnes said. "He's got very good stamina."

Texas Tech Red Raiders! Your the Best!!!

National Trio Day Set for Saturday

South Plains College has several reasons to celebrate National Trio Day as SPC Upward Bound and Star Center have assisted countless students prepare and succeed in college programs. On February 24, students, administrators, counselors and many more will celebrate National Trio Day to honor the students that have succeeded in college with the support of a Trio program.

These programs are very important to this region and deserve to be recognized, said Kelvin Sharp, SPC president.

Hearing the student testimonies of success further explain the importance of these programs. I praise the staff and everyone that gives these programs direction as they help improve the lives of students involved.

These programs also allow us to attract and retain students, many that are first generation, that need the support that these programs have to offer. Upward Bound, a Trio program fully funded by the U.S. Department of Education, provides high school students grades nine to 11 with the skills they need to be successful in college. Participants receive academic, personal and cultural enrichment to prepare them for higher education. The SPC Upward Bound Program serves six schools from Cochran, Hockley, Lamb and Terry Counties.

Upward Bound has helped me to work in groups and helped me to come out of my shell and talk to people, said Vanity Miranda, a four year Upward Bound student from Brownfield. Upward Bound helped me to work in groups, fill out applications and sort through the college paperwork. I plan to start SPC in the fall and major in psychology.

The STAR Center is a federally funded program designed to increase student's rate of retention, graduation and/or transfer to a four-year university. The center provides services to 160 students whether being first generation, non-traditional, economically disadvantaged or suffering from a disability either mental or physical. The services provided by the center are academic advising, tutoring, success workshops, support services and scheduled college visits.

The Star Center plays an important role as this is a place for students to feel comfortable and voice their concerns about their college experience, said Rita Quinonez, director of the SPC Star Center. "The first semester is the toughest and we provide a place of support to help them overcome any obstacles. The most rewarding part of my job is when a student is successful and seeing the enthusiasm and excitement in their eyes."

The Trio programs were established in 1965 and nationally over 10.5 million Americans have benefited from their services. The pre-college and college programs include Talent Search, Upward Bound; Student Support Services, Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Program and the Education Opportunity Centers.

Currently, over 2,600 projects are hosted at over 1,200 postsecondary institutions and more than 100 community agencies. These programs enable students, regardless of economic circumstance, race or ethnic background, to successfully enter college and graduate.

The Road to the 2008 Democratic Presidential Nomination

LAS VEGAS, Nevada (CNN) -- The road to the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination has a new stop between the Iowa caucuses and the nation's first primary in New Hampshire -- the Nevada caucuses on January 19, 2008.

Like in Iowa and New Hampshire, local Democrats say retail politics will dominate the race in Nevada -- but with a decidedly different look and flavor.

"You have to go to the swap meets and shake people's hands," said state Rep. Ruben Kihuen. "You have to go out to the rodeos and shake people's hands."

Kihuen, a Mexican-born member of the Nevada Legislature, is a young Democrat eager for his state to start a tradition in presidential politics.

To visit Kihuen's district is to see obvious signs of what makes this contest so different from the traditional opening contests in Iowa and New Hampshire. Nevada's Hispanic population is nearly 23 percent, compared to 3.5 percent in

Iowa and 2 percent in New Hampshire.

So, an early contest in Nevada guarantees greater focus on immigration, urban sprawl, gaming and other issues central to the Las Vegas service economy.

It also guarantees the first opportunity for Latinos, like union member Manny Barajas, to have an early voice in the presidential campaign.

"We are busboys, we are dishwashers, we are waiters, we are cooks," Barajas said, "but you know we impact a lot of the economy of the United States."

Barajas' union, the 60,000-member strong Culinary Workers Union, is already a major player in Nevada politics and now is intensifying its voter registration efforts -- in English and in Spanish -- because of the new presidential calendar.

"It is a big motivation to all our members," Barajas said. "We've got a unique opportunity to make our say."

It's an opportunity that convinced Barajas -- after 35 years in the United States -- to enroll in citizenship classes.

"Everybody asks me: 'Manny, why you being so long to become a citizen?' You know, the thing is that I need to be accounted for. I need to be able to vote," Barajas said. "That was missing for me in all my dreams, my American dreams and my Vegas dream -- me being able to express my opinion legally."

Citizenship classes end in a few months, and Barajas plans to cast his first vote in January -- when the Democratic nominating contest makes its new early stop in the West.

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