

Hispanics Finish '96 Rollercoaster Ride, Brace For '97

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By Louis Aguilar

In 1996, 5 million Latinos voted in the most stunning display of their political power in U.S. history. It was also the year that more than a million immigrants, most of them Latino, became naturalized citizens.

The sheer power of those numbers and the backlash they sparked made those events the top stories of the year for U.S. Latinos, as identified in a December Hispanic Link survey of 117 leaders and activists.

Completed just before President Clinton made his final selections for his new Cabinet, the survey also addressed his responsiveness to the nation's 32 million Hispanics.

While the record Latino vote and naturalization drives placed first and second, the anti-immigrant and anti-Latino sentiment that swept the nation ranked third on the list of the year's 10 biggest Latino stories.

Barely a quarter (27 percent) of the respondents -- which included political leaders, academics, corporate executives, artists, community activists, journalists and college students -- felt that conditions improved for Hispanics in 1996.

Barely a third (36 percent) expect them to improve in 1997.

Despite garnering more than 72 percent of the Latino vote in November, more than half of the respondents gave Clinton a "C" grade for his first-term performance on Hispanic issues. Expectations for his second term were mixed. Slightly more than half of those surveyed framed them as somewhat or very low.

Other results:
-- 54 percent said they didn't expect the president to name a Latino to the Supreme Court, while 34 percent felt he would.

-- Only 40 percent said they expected him to equal his first-term record of appointing at least two Hispanics to his new Cabinet; 15 percent predicted no appointments; 38 percent expected one.

In the end, Clinton named one Latino to his new Cabinet -- former Transportation

owners in the nation. Many respondents saw this -- No. 5 on the list -- as one of the signs of Latino progress that goes vastly underreported.

"I started my flower shop in an affluent Anglo neighborhood. Everyone here has been great. That's the best story I've heard all year," says 35-year-old Eduardo Lopez of Milwaukee. "Most news you read about or see on TV is generally bad news, so I guess that applies to Latinos too. But I really do think that many Latinos are making progress and the media is not paying attention to that."

LA MARCHA: The civil rights march and rally held in Washington, D.C., Oct. 12 was viewed by nearly six out of 10 respondents as having limited success. The scores: 33 percent rated it successful; 58 percent said it had limited success; and 8 percent called it unsuccessful.

Much of the disappointment surrounded what some described as a lack of organization before the march and little follow-up in various communities since the event.

UNITY CONFERENCE: Nevertheless, the idea of holding a "unity" conference for Latinos was embraced by 92 percent of those who answered the survey. No one rejected the idea, but a few expressed a wait-and-see attitude.

BEATING BY SHERIFFS: The video image

of Riverside County, Calif., sheriffs beating undocumented workers apparently lingers. It ranked ninth on the top 10 list.

LA MACARENA: Even in popular culture, there seemed to be a sense of ambivalence. In 1996, Latinos could see Kathie Lee Gifford dance La Macarena even as she fended off charges of being linked to a Central American sweatshop.

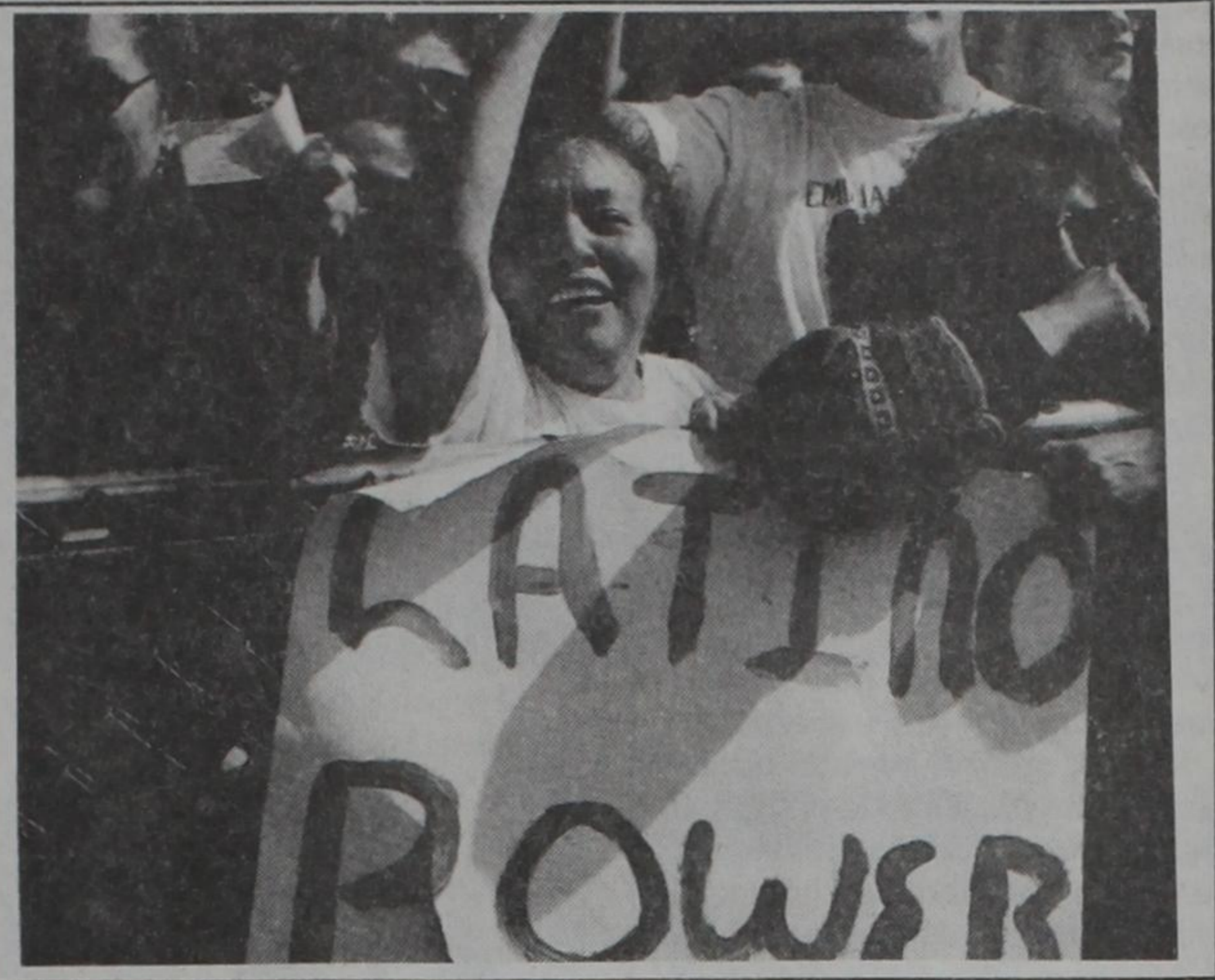
A third of the respondents thought La Macarena was a symbol of cultural mockery, a third thought it was a symbol of cultural pride, and another third thought it was silly for us to even ask the question.

NUNS PROTEST: A memorable image of courage ranked 10th on the list of top stories. Sister Dianna Ortiz's hunger strike in front of the White House as well as her high-profile media campaign forced the U.S. government to release information on her 1989 rape and torture case in Guatemala. The Mexican-American nun continues her fight with officials.

"She moved me so that I'm beginning to cry just thinking about it now," said Helena Ford-Sanchez, a bank loan officer in Dallas, Texas. "Just when things can look so bad, as they can for so many Latinos, we have to remember the strength our values and culture give us."

(Louis Aguilar of Washington, D.C., is editor of the national newsweekly Hispanic Link Weekly Report.)

TOP 10 LATINO STORIES IN 1996
Here are the top 10 Latino stories of 1996 as selected by 117 Hispanic leaders and activists in a December survey conducted by Hispanic Link Weekly Report. Points were awarded 10-down-to-1 in descending order.



Secretary Federico Pena as Department of Energy chief. He also selected Rep. Bill Richardson of New Mexico as United Nations ambassador and Aida Alvarez, a Housing and Urban Development Department official, to head the Small Business Administration.

Survey respondents' disappointment with the president was palpable. "After he signed the welfare bill, I lost all faith. I couldn't stomach voting for him again," said Inglewood, Calif., librarian Adalin Torres-Zayas.

The welfare bill ranked eighth among the top 10 stories, while the passage by California voters of the anti-affirmative action Proposition 209 ranked fourth.

With more than a million Latinos now owning small companies, they have become the fastest growing segment of small business



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Los Hispanos Terminan 1996 En Montana Rusa Y Se Preparan Para 1997

Por LUIS AGUILAR

En 1996, cinco millones de latinos votaron en el despliegue más asombroso de su fuerza política en la historia de los Estados Unidos. Fue también el año en que más de un millón de inmigrantes, la mayoría de ellos latinos, se convirtieron en ciudadanos naturalizados.

El sólo poder de estas cifras y la resaca que provocaron hicieron de esos acontecimientos las noticias principales del año para los latinos de los Estados Unidos, como fueron identificados en una encuesta de Hispanic Link en diciembre entre 117 dirigentes y activistas.

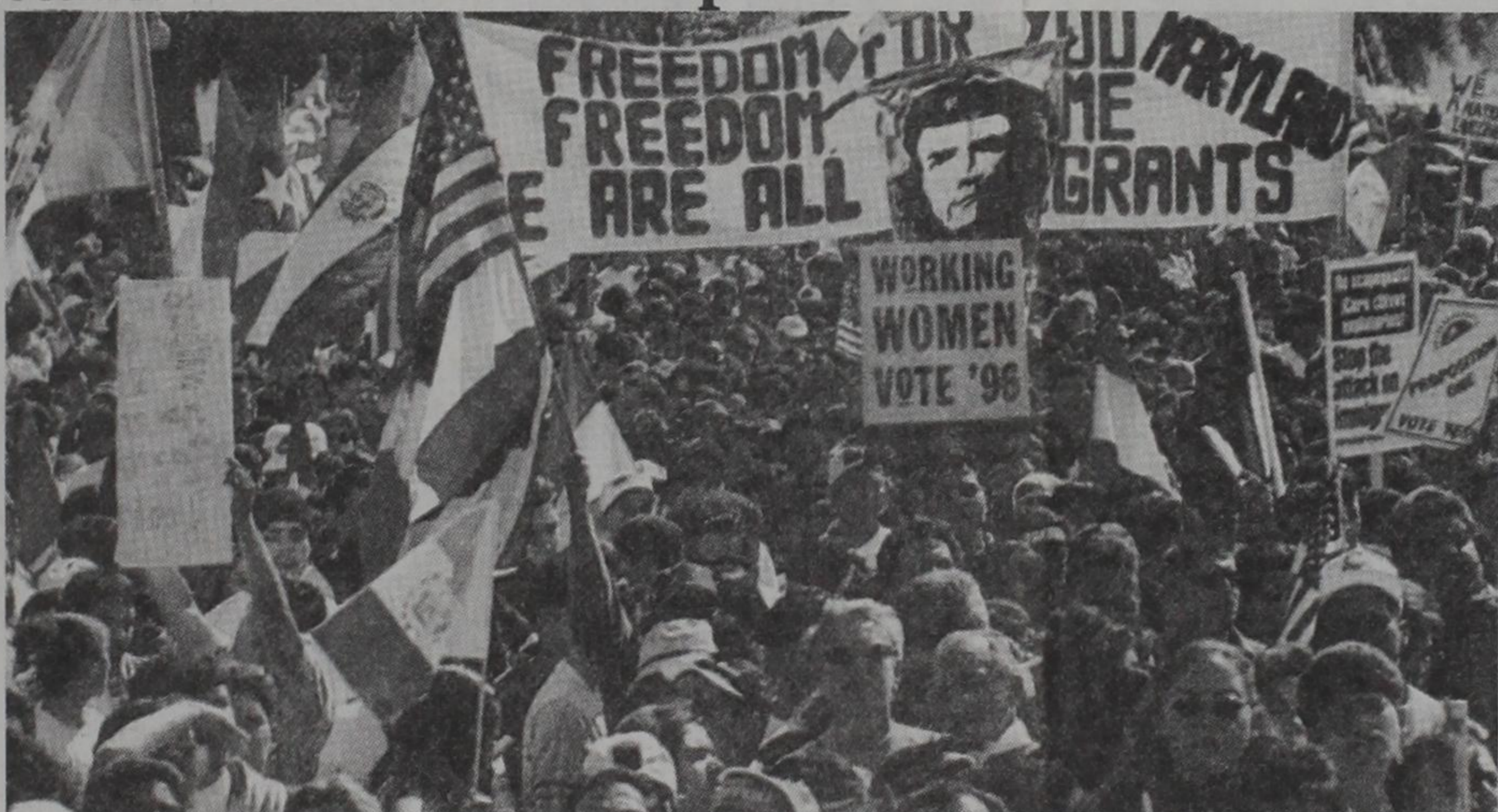
Terminada inmediatamente antes de que el Presidente Clinton hiciera sus selecciones finales para sus nuevas plazas del Gabinete, la encuesta se enfocó también sobre su sensibilidad hacia los 32 millones de hispanos de la nación.

Aunque la votación latina sin precedentes y las campañas de naturalización quedaron en los lugares primero y segundo, el sentimiento anti-inmigrante y anti-latino que barrió a la nación se clasificó en tercer lugar en la lista de los diez asuntos hispanos mayores del año.

Escasamente la cuarta parte (27 por ciento) de los respondientes -- que incluyeron a dirigentes políticos, académicos, ejecutivos de empresas, artistas, activistas comunitarios, periodistas y estudiantes universitarios -- creyeron que las circunstancias mejoraron para los hispanos en 1996.

Escasamente un tercio (36 por ciento) esperan que mejoren en 1997.

A pesar de haber obtenido más del 72 por ciento del voto latino en noviembre, más de la mitad de los respondientes dieron a Clinton una calificación de "C" por su historial del primer período sobre los asuntos latinos. Las expectativas para su segundo período fueron mixtas. Ligeramente más de la mitad de los encuestados las definieron como algo



bajas o muy bajas.

Otros resultados:

-- El 54por ciento dijo que no esperaban que el presidente nombrara a un latino para el Tribunal Supremo, mientras que el 34por ciento creía que sí lo haría.

-- Sólo el 40por ciento dijo que esperaban que él igualara su historial del primer período de nombrar por lo menos a dos hispanos en su nuevo Gabinete; el 15 por ciento pronosticaba ningún nombramiento; y el 38 por ciento esperaba uno.

Al final, Clinton seleccionó a un latino -- el ex-Secretario de Transporte Federico Peña, para encabezar al Departamento de Energía -- en su Gabinete central. También seleccionó al Representante Bill Richardson, de Nuevo México, como Embajador ante las Naciones Unidas, y a la funcionaria de Viviendas y Desarrollo Urbano, Aida Alvarez, para dirigir la Administración de Pequeños Negocios.

La desilusión de los respondientes a la encuesta con el presidente era palpable. "Después que él promulgó el proyecto de ley para la reforma de la asistencia económica pública, perdí toda la fe. Yo no podría tolerar el votar por él otra vez", dijo la bibliotecaria Adalin Torres-Zayas de Inglewood, Calif.

El citado proyecto de ley se clasificó en octavo lugar entre los diez asuntos principales, mientras que la aprobación de la Proposición 209 contra la acción afirmativa estuvo en cuarto lugar.

Con más de un millón de latinos que ahora son propietarios de empresas pequeñas, ellos han llegado a ser el segmento de más rápido crecimiento entre los propietarios de negocios pequeños de la nación. Muchos respondientes veían a esto -- el No. 5 de la lista -- como una de las señales del progreso latino que se queda falta de información ampliamente.

"Empecé mi floristería en una vecindad de anglo-americanos acomodados. Todo el mundo aquí ha sido excelente. Ese es el mejor relato que he oído en todo el año", dice Eduardo López, de 35 años de edad, de Milwaukee. "La mayoría de las noticias que se leen o que se ven por televisión son por lo general malas noticias, de modo que me imagino que eso se aplica también a los latinos. Pero realmente creo que muchos latinos están realizando bastante adelanto y que los medios informativos no están prestando atención a eso".

LA MARCHA: La manifestación de los derechos civiles y la asamblea celebradas en

Washington, DC. el 12 de octubre fueron vistas por casi seis de cada 10 respondientes como que tuvieron un éxito limitado. Ellos clasificaron al citado acontecimiento:

Como que tuvo éxito: 33 por ciento

Con éxito limitado: 58 por ciento

Infructuosas: 8 por ciento

Gran parte de la desilusión rodeaba a lo que algunos describieron como una falta de organización antes de la marcha, y poco seguimiento en las diversas comunidades desde el acontecimiento.

LA CONFERENCIA DE

UNIDAD: Sin embargo, la idea de realizar una conferencia de "unidad" para los latinos fue respaldada por el 92 por ciento de los que respondieron a la encuesta. Nadie rechazó la idea, pero unos pocos manifestaron una actitud de esperar para ver.

LAS GOLFIZAS POR PARTE DE LOS

ALGUACILES DIPUTADOS
La cinta de video de los diputados del alguacil del Condado Riverside, en California, golpeando a los trabajadores indocumentados, aparentemente se mantiene. La misma quedó en noveno lugar en la lista de los diez asuntos principales.

LA "MACARENA": Aún en la

News Briefs

In Regaining Poor's Rights, LSC Fears GOP Ire

By rejecting a congressional ban prohibiting federally financed lawyers from filing class-action lawsuits on behalf of poor people, a Manhattan judge provided encouragement last week to a group of lawyers around the country who are preparing similar constitutional challenges to the restrictions, reports The New York Times.

Yet several lawyers say they fear congressional Republicans could become rankled if Legal Services Corp.

HN1215@handsnet.org staff lawyers and local offices sue their bosses over the right to file new class-action lawsuits, a set of restrictions that was accepted just six months ago.

Legal Service leaders, who nearly lost all federal financing last summer before grudgingly accepting the ban on class-action suits, say there could be dire consequences on Capitol Hill for the organization.

"There is an extreme political risk in bringing this kind of litigation," said Alan Houseman, a lawyer for the Legal Services Corp. and the director of the Center for Law and Social Policy in Washington. "But in a lot of ways, the organization is in a box."

He said that the worst-case scenario would be if the entire program fell victim to some individual lawyers' success on the constitutional battlefield.

"If other judges agree the restrictions are unconstitutional, key congressional supporters will say, 'If we can't restrict it, we'll just kill it,'" Houseman said. "And those who oppose the program will say, 'Look, I told you so, they just figured out a way to get around the restrictions.'"

For nearly three decades, lawyers for the indigent have challenged the government on behalf of thousands of poor people who may be unaware of their rights. But last May congressional Republicans tried to abolish Legal Services, saying they objected to what they view as left-leaning ideology and arguing that the class-action lawsuits were too costly.

Lawyers say the restrictions have had an even more profound effect in the states that rely almost entirely on federal funding, primarily in the south and southwestern United States, including Texas. In 17 states, at least 80 percent of all Legal Services money comes from the federal government. In New York, the Legal Services agencies get about half their money from the government.

Several states' Legal Services groups have come up with novel ways to get around the restrictions. In Vermont, for example, the Legal Services organization split into two groups. One group, financed by state and private money, continues to file class-action lawsuits; another group, financed by the federal government, does not.

Houseman said that several "major" lawsuits would be filed in the coming weeks, challenging the constitutionality of the restrictions.

Medicare to Test Care Systems

In an attempt to make managed care a more appealing health care choice, the government is set to launch a pilot program that offers Medicare recipients more options, reports Associated Press.

Under the demonstration, new options will include:
- Provider-sponsored networks, which are like HMOs but organized by coalitions of doctors and hospitals (available in Orlando, Philadelphia and Houston).

- Preferred-provider organizations, or PPOs, which allow users to go outside the network but attach a financial penalty (available in Philadelphia).

- A hybrid plan, where one plan offers an HMO, a PPO and a point-of-service plan, which allows limited out-of-network services with higher penalties (available in rural southern Virginia).

Beginning Wednesday, the first phase of the program will be available to Medicare beneficiaries in Philadelphia, Houston, Orlando, Fla., and southern Virginia, the Health Care Financing Administration said Friday.

Later in 1997, the demonstration is expected to include 19 health care plans in Florida, California, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Montana, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas.

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Azucar Amarga 'Algunas Veces HayQue Decir Algo'

Por MIGUEL PEDREZ

Es una versión cubana moderna de "Romeo y Julieta". Pero esta vez, las fuerzas que se alzan entre dos amantes jóvenes son las ideologías políticas.

Gustavo se ve a sí mismo como el "hombre nuevo" que la revolución cubana prometió crear. Es un graduado sobresaliente de la Academia Lenin, de La Habana, un comunista tan devoto que se le ha concedido una beca para estudiar en el extranjero. Pero se enamora de Yolanda, una bailarina joven de espíritu libre que critica abiertamente al régimen de Fidel Castro y no quiere nada más que huir a Miami. El admira a Castro; ella odia al dictador.

"Tú debes ser el último comunista sobre la tierra", le dice ella al joven de quien está enamorada -- a pesar de sus puntos de vista políticos radicalmente opuestos. Es una escena tan real que podría estar sucediendo muchas veces en la Cuba de hoy.

Pero ésta ocurre en una nueva película poderosa y absorbente, "Azúcar Amarga", que se exhibe actualmente en unos cuantos teatros de la zona metropolitana. Por fin, he aquí una película inspirada por personas y acontecimientos de verdad, que presenta un cuadro realista y de ese modo muy feo, de la vida bajo el comunismo en Cuba.

Durante decenios, los exiliados cubanos -- y me cuento a mí mismo entre ellos -- hemos buscado en vano un modo de explicar a nuestros amigos no cubanos de qué modo se siente uno al vivir bajo el régimen de Castro. Algunas veces pensamos que todas nuestras gestiones han fracasado. Hay aún demasiados estadounidenses ingenuos o desinformados, así como otros en todo el mundo, que miran hacia Cuba y ven a un dirigente rebelde carismático en vez del dictador que

más ha durado en el mundo, la antítesis de todo aquéllo que él dijo al principio que apoyaba.

Nosotros, los cubano-americanos, acostumbramos a resignarnos a lo mismo, diciendo: "El comunismo hay que vivirlo", para comprender lo que se siente. Si sólo hubiera un modo, los exiliados se preguntan a menudo a ellos mismos, de hacer que nuestros amigos no cubanos experimenten la represión degradante, el hambre y las demás dificultades de la vida en Cuba. Si sólo por un momento pudiéramos hacerles sentir nuestro dolor.

Pero ahora un cineasta cubano-americano, León Ichaso, nos ha dado una película apasionada, en español con subtítulos en inglés, que responde a esas preguntas y cumple esa misión.

"Azúcar Amarga" le hace a uno sentir la represión contra los cubanos jóvenes que procuran la libertad de expresión. Muestra la falta de tolerancia del régimen hacia los inconformes e ilustra vividamente la brutalidad de los esbirros de Castro. Gráficamente, exhibe los extremos a los cuales han tenido que recurrir algunos jóvenes cubanos para protestar contra el régimen.

"Si tengo que escoger entre el socialismo o la muerte, escojo la muerte", declara un joven mientras se inyecta sangre contaminada con el SIDA, en una escena grabada en cinta de video de una protesta-suicidio de la vida real, que fué informada por los periódicos importantes de los Estados Unidos.

La cinta le hace sentir a uno la vergüenza que experimentan algunos turistas extranjeros cuando se dan cuenta de que están disfrutando de las playas, los "clubs" y los hoteles de Cuba, a los cuales se niega el acceso para la mayoría de los cubanos. Mues-

tra el modo degradante de que las jóvenes cubanas recurren a la prostitución y por el cual los médicos y otros profesionales cubanos, incluyendo a muchos que habían sido fidelistas fieles, han renunciado a sus profesiones en que se les pagaba con pesos para trabajar en empleos de turismo que dependen de las propinas en dólares que les dan los extranjeros.

"La Revolución está a la venta", dice un psiquiatra que trabaja como pianista en una cantina de hotel sólo para turistas. El dejó a un lado sus ideales socialistas cuando vio que, sólo con las propinas, él podía ganar más en una noche que su sueldo mensual como psiquiatra.

Mientras que la mayoría de otras películas sobre la desgracia de vivir bajo el comunismo en Cuba han sido documentales que, por su naturaleza, dejan de mencionar gran parte de la emoción humana, esta cinta le hace a uno querer reír y llorar junto con los personajes.

Empero, en gran medida como un documental, esta cinta es muy real. Sus personajes, aunque imaginarios, se basan en historias de la vida real, artículos periodísticos y grabaciones en video de acontecimientos que ocurrieron en Cuba durante los cinco años más recientes. "Yo realmente no escribí el guión", dice Ichaso sarcásticamente. "Lo escribió Castro".

La película está tan próxima a la vida que le hace a uno sentir la ansiedad que se soporta constantemente al vivir bajo un régimen totalitario. Es semejante al temor extraño -- y a la vergüenza por la degradación humana -- que se siente al ver una película sobre la persecución de los judíos en Alemania bajo los nazis.

Quizás esto sea porque la

creación de Ichaso se inspiró en la película de Steven Spielberg titulada "Schindler's List" (La Lista de Schindler). Ichaso dice que admira la decisión de Spielberg en cuanto a dejar de hacer películas comerciales y de alta ficción, y hacer una película que re-creara vividamente la realidad vergonzosa del holocausto.

El agrega que la única diferencia es que Spielberg hizo su película de estudio con un presupuesto alto, "para que nadie olvide que el holocausto ocurrió", y él hizo su producción independiente con un presupuesto bajo "para que el mundo se entere de nuestro propio holocausto cubano. Desgraciadamente, ha habido sordera, ceguera e ignorancia sobre los horrores que nuestro pueblo soporta diariamente".

Ichaso, que ha logrado algún éxito como director de películas en Hollywood ("Sugar Hill"), así como en calidad de cineasta independiente ("El Super" y "Crossover Dreams"), dice que él sintió recientemente el llamado de sus raíces cubanas. "Creo que todos los cineastas y artistas tienen una responsabilidad: No se puede hacer solamente comedias y cintas de acción. Algunas veces hay que decir algo".

En "Azúcar Amarga", Ichaso dice todo lo que los cubano-americanos han venido diciendo durante 37 años, pero lo hace a través de un medio que puede atraer a muchos oyentes más y hacerles ver la realidad amarga de la vida actual en Cuba. Cuando "Azúcar Amarga" llegue a las tiendas de videocintas, no se sorprendan si uno de sus amigos cubano-americanos les dice que él alquiló una cinta que él quiere que ustedes vean.

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

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Bitter Sugar 'Sometimes You Have To Say Something'

By MIGUEL PEREZ

It's a modern-day, Cuban version of "Romeo and Juliet." But this time the forces standing between two young lovers are political ideologies.

Gustavo sees himself as the "new man" the Cuban Revolution promised to create. He is an outstanding graduate of Havana's Lenin Academy, such a devout Communist that he has been awarded a scholarship to study abroad. But he falls in love with Yolanda, a free-spirited young dancer who openly criticizes the Fidel Castro regime and wants nothing more than to flee to Miami.

He admires Castro. She hates the dictator. "You must be the last Communist on earth," she tells the young man with whom she is falling in love in spite of their radically opposing political views.

It's a scene so real that it could be happening, many times over, in today's Cuba.

But this one takes place in a powerful and gripping new film, "Bitter Sugar," currently playing in a few metropolitan-area theaters. At last, here's a movie inspired by real people and events, presenting a realistic, and thus very ugly, picture of life under Cuban communism.

For decades, Cuban exiles -- I count myself among them -- have searched in vain for a way to explain to our non-Cuban friends just how it feels to live under the Castro regime. Sometimes we feel all our efforts have failed. There are still too many uninformed or perhaps naive people in the United States, and others throughout the world, who look toward Cuba and see a charismatic rebel leader instead of the world's longest-reigning dictator, the antithesis of everything he initially stood for.

We Cuban Americans usually end up resigning ourselves to the same saying: El comunismo hay que vivirlo. "You have to live communism" to truly understand how it feels. If only there was a way, we exiles often ask ourselves, to make our non-Cuban friends experience the degrading repression, hunger and other difficulties of life in Cuba. If only just for a moment we could make you feel our pain.

But now a Cuban-American filmmaker, León Ichaso, has given us an impassioned movie, in Spanish with English subtitles, that answers those questions and fulfills that mission.

"Bitter Sugar" makes you feel the repression against young Cubans who seek freedom of expression. It shows the regime's lack of tolerance for dissidents and vividly illustrates the brutality of Castro's goons. Graphically, it displays the extremes to which some young Cubans have gone to protest against the regime. "If I have to choose between socialism or death, I choose death," a young man declares as he injects himself with AIDS-tainted blood, in a scene from a real-life, videotaped suicidal-protest that was reported by major U.S. newspapers.

The film makes you feel the shame some foreign tourists experience when they realize they are enjoying Cuban beaches, clubs and hotels to which most Cubans are denied access. It shows the degrading way young Cuban women turn to prostitution and in which Cuban doctors and other professionals, including many who had been faithful Fidelistas, have given up their peso-paying professions to work tourism jobs that depend on dollar tips from foreigners.

"The Revolution is for sale," says a psychiatrist who works as a pianist in a tourists-only hotel bar. He set aside his socialist ideals when he saw that on tips alone, he could make more in one night than his monthly salary as a psychiatrist.

Whereas most other films about the misfortune of living under Cuban communism have been documentaries that, by nature, fail to convey much human emotion, this film makes you want to laugh and cry along with the characters.

Yet much like a documentary, this movie is very real. Its characters, although fictional, are based on the real-life stories, newspaper accounts and video footage of events that took place in Cuba during the past five years. "I didn't really write the script," says Ichaso sarcastically. "It was written by Castro."

The film is so true-to-life that it makes you feel the anxiety one constantly endures while living under a totalitarian regime. It's similar to the strange fear -- and shame for human degradation -- one feels while watching a movie about the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany.

Perhaps this is because Ichaso's creation was inspired by Steven Spielberg's "Schindler's List." Ichaso says he admires Spielberg's decision to stop making commercial and highly fictional films to make one movie that vividly re-created the shameful reality of the holocaust.

He says the only difference is that Spielberg made his high-budget, studio movie "so that no one will forget the holocaust occurred," and he made his low-budget, independent production "so that the world will find out about our small Cuban holocaust. Unfortunately,

there has been a deafness, a blindness and an ignorance about the horrors our people endure on a daily basis."

Ichaso, who has achieved some success as a Hollywood film director ("Sugar Hill"), as well as an independent filmmaker ("El Super" and "Crossover Dreams"), says he recently felt the calling of his Cuban roots. "I believe all filmmakers and artists have a responsibility: you can't just make comedies and action movies. Sometimes you have to say something."

In "Bitter Sugar," Ichaso says everything Cuban Americans have been saying for 37 years, but he does it through a medium that may draw many more listeners and make them see the bitter reality of life in Cuba today. When "Bitter Sugar" gets to the video stores, don't be surprised if one of your Cuban-American friends tells you he rented you a movie he wants you to see.

In Puerto Rico, The Christmas Holiday Isn't Over Yet

By LANCE OLIVER

GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico -- On a warm, tropical island where a reindeer has never set hoof and a flake of snow wouldn't stand a chance, you might imagine a bundled-up old fellow like Santa Claus would encounter tough sledding.

And in some ways, he has. Where else do kids sing irreverent Christmas carols deriding Santa as an overeater, among more impertinent barbs? Defenders of Puerto Rican traditions are alarmed by rapid inroads such mainland icons have made into the local culture, and how they've diminished centuries-old customs of the island.

To oversimplify, it's a question of Santa Claus versus (ital) los tres reyes (unital) -- the three kings.

In Puerto Rico, Christmas was traditionally a religious holiday without today's heavily commercial overtones. In earlier times, the island was more thoroughly Catholic. The celebration began on Dec. 8 with a liturgy, according to Marcelino Canino, who has written several books on Puerto Rican folklore and tra-

Sittin' Here Thinkin' New Year's At The Diner

By Ira Cutter

"What a year, huh?" Arthur Bupkiss said. "It seems like it went by real fast but, when you think about it, an awful lot happened. It started out wild, too -- remember that? -- remember we had that foot and a half of snow in one day?"

Arthur and his buddies were sitting at their familiar table, eating breakfast and shooting the breeze. Coffee cups and dishes were everywhere, half the crowd was smoking up a blue cloud and no one had to go anywhere any time soon. Arthur, Vinnie, Larry and Mel were at the center of it and others were passing by.

"For me, this year will always be about the Yankees," Larry said. "When my team wins it makes my year and I've got every one of those play-off and World Series games on video tape. I'm going to watch them forever."

"I'm never going to forget TWA 800," Mel said. "Those people dead in the water and the frogmen bringing them up, body after body, and never figuring out how it happened. I've seen a lot of crashes and tragedies but that one really sticks with me. What do you think, Arthur? You think they shot it down?"

"How can you know?" Arthur asked. "They tell you one thing and then another thing but at the end of it they say 'bomb, missile or mechanical' which is just what they said on day one. And then they try to nail that Richard Jewell guy on the Atlanta bombing -- I tell you, the FBI had a losing team this year."

"What about the Oklahoma bombing," Vinnie said. "Was that this year or last year? What ever happened with that guy that did it? I wonder if they're ever going to have that trial?"

Vinnie, you will recall, is deeply into trials and has been ever since the OJ trial. He watches Court TV and likes to talk about cross examination techniques and jury selection and closing arguments and he is desperately disappointed that the OJ civil trial is going on outside his view.

"Nobody has mentioned the election," Arthur pointed out. "We will all remember that stinker as long as we live. What a joke to come up with those two clowns out of 250 million people. What an insult."

"Talk about stinkers," Larry said. "How about the Olympics? Only really interesting things were Ali lighting the torch and that little gymnastics girl twisting her ankle. Everything in between was a bunch of little soap operas on tape delay."

"What amazes me," Vinnie said. "Is that we are all still here. Whatever happens we keep coming in here and drinking coffee and shooting the breeze. We change jobs and get divorced and everything else changes but here we are, coffee and eggs and cigarettes, just shooting the breeze every day. It is like everything changes but nothing changes."

"Got that right," Larry said. "Nothing changes in here, for sure. Gus never paints the place or changes the menu or hires new waitresses or changes their uniforms. I been looking at this same table top since I was in high school."

"Same people come in here, too, year after year," Mel said. "But none as long as me. I was here before Gus, if you can believe it."

"Wait a minute, though," Vinnie said. "You know that fat guy with the beard who used to sit over there writing while he ate breakfast? There's a change -- he hasn't been here lately."

"This is going to sound crazy, but I had the idea at one point that he was writing about us," Larry said. "You know, writing down what we said. Hey, Gus. Hey, whatever happened to that guy that was always writing over there?"

"The sausage and eggs over easy? He got married," Gus said, filling everybody's cup. "Must be getting his eggs at home."

"I talked to him once, you know, around last New Year's eve," Arthur said. "We talked about what he was writing all the time and he said some boring stuff about being in the consulting business and having to write reports. He's okay."

"I wonder about next year," Vinnie said. "You know, like, what's going to happen that we have no idea about now? I saw a guy on tv who said there was going to be another big depression and another guy who said Clinton will probably get indicted over this Indonesian campaign money but, when you get down it, who the hell knows what is coming?"

They sat then, in silence, each with his own thoughts about this year and next. The smokers smoked and the coffee drinkers sipped as they felt the weight of all that had been and all that was yet to come. Then, in a sort of a group sigh that only people who talked regularly could master, they shrugged off the heavy thoughts and came back to the diner.

"Anyway," Vinnie said. "About that guy? I don't get it. Why would anybody but us care what he said about anything?"

Ira Cutter says he's seeking a semi-legitimate outlet for thoughts and ideas too irreverent, too iconoclastic, or just too nasty for polite, serious, self-important company. He promises us a Monday column most weeks. More recently Ira has become involved in communicating in another way, through speeches which he calls Standin' Here Talkin'.

anticipation over the arrival of the Biblical figures.

As with many cultural issues in Puerto Rico, the tension between the traditions of Santa Claus and the three kings has political overtones. Joining U.S. cultural traditions versus maintaining the purity of Puerto Rico's own customs sounds a lot like the annexation-vs.-independence argument.

Economic class also plays a role. "Those who believe the American culture guarantees the pleasure of the dollar filter these traditions into their children," Canino says. "But among the poorer, humbler classes, Santa Claus is not as important. They prefer the kings."

Despite Santa's high profile, Puerto Rico's older traditions are not likely to disappear. People still sing the same old songs and Puerto Ricans steadfastly stick to their traditional roast pork and (ital) arroz con gandules, (unital) a dish of rice and pigeon peas.

"In few houses will you find fruitcake and candy," Canino says.

If the adoption of new traditions does not necessarily mean discarding old ones, then Baltasar, Melchior and Gaspar haven't taken their final horseback ride delivering gifts just yet.

(Lance Oliver, former editorial page editor of the San Juan Star in Puerto Rico.

which was founded by an upper-class family of Spanish descent, incorporated the U.S. symbols in its lavish window displays.

The displays became major attractions at Christmas, with families coming to town just to see the elaborate scenes. Santa, snowy landscapes and other foreign influences were front and center, while the three kings were off in a corner.

"It was a question of what would produce money and create an attraction," he says.

Indeed, while aggressive attempts to "Americanize" Puerto Rico during the early part of the century were only mildly effective, the sheer commercial force of Christmas has pushed Santa Claus to ever greater prominence, overshadowing, in some homes, the later arrival of the three kings.

Today, many families deal with the dual gift-giving holidays by showering children with toys and games from Santa on Christmas and clothes and useful items from the three kings on Jan. 6. In the eyes of a 5-year-old, this arrangement does nothing to enhance the excitement or



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DINERO SEGURO.

**Hispanos
1996**

de la pagina 1

cultura popular, parecía haber una sensación de ambivalencia. En 1996, los latinos pudieron ver a Kathie Lee Gifford bailando "La Macarena", aún mientras ella se defendía de las acusaciones de estar vinculada con un taller de explotación lleno de trabajadores centro-americanos.

Un tercio de los respondientes pensó que "La Macarena" era un símbolo de burla cultural; otro tercio pensó que era un símbolo de influencia cultural, y otro tercio pensó que era tonto el que nosotros siquiera hiciéramos la pregunta.

LA PROTESTA DE UNA MONJA: Una memorable imagen de valor quedó en el décimo lugar en la lista de asuntos principales. La huelga de hambre de la Hermana Dianna Ortiz frente a la Casa Blanca, así como su campaña de alto perfil en los medios informativos, obligaron al gobierno de los Estados Unidos a publicar información sobre su caso de violación y tortura en 1989 en Guatemala. La monja méxicoamericana continúa su lucha con los funcionarios.

"Ella me emocionó tanto que estoy comenzando a llorar de sólo pensar sobre ello ahora", dijo Helena Ford-Sánchez, funcionaria de préstamos en un banco de Dallas, Texas. "Sólo cuando las cosas puedan parecer tan malas, como puede ocurrir para tantos latinos, tenemos que recordar la fuerza que nuestros valores y nuestra cultura nos dan".

(Louis Aguilar, de Washington, DC., es editor del semanario nacional Hispanic Link Weekly Report.)

Propiedad literaria registrada por Hispanic Link News Service en 1996. Distribuido por The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

LOS 10 ASUNTOS LATINOS PRINCIPALES DE 1996

He aquí los diez asuntos latinos principales de 1996, como fueron seleccionados por 117 dirigentes y activistas hispanos en la encuesta hecha en diciembre por HisWeekly Report. Los puntos fueron concedidos de 10 hasta 1, en orden descendente.

1. Los latinos votan en can-



Carrying a banner that proclaims "a country without borders," Latinos marched for their civil rights.

tidades sin precedentes y más hispanos son elegidos para cargos públicos. (895 puntos)

2. Más de un millón de inmigrantes, la mayoría latinos, se convierten en ciudadanos naturalizados. (788 puntos)

3. Un brote de sentimiento anti-inmigrante y anti-latino barre a la nación. (784 puntos)

4. Los electores de California aprueban la Proposición 209 contra la acción afirmativa. (744 puntos)

5. El crecimiento de los pequeños negocios latinos marca el paso en la nación. (528 puntos)

6. Los latinos desfilan y se reúnen en Washington, DC., el 12 de octubre. (451 puntos)

7. La brecha de realizaciones educativas entre los estudiantes latinos y anglo-americanos continúa ensanchándose. (441 puntos)

8. El Congreso aprueba y el Presidente Clinton promulga el proyecto de ley sobre la reforma de la asistencia económica pública. (387 puntos)

9. Los diputados del alguacil de Riverside County, California, son descubiertos por la televisión golpeando a trabajadores indocumentados. (324 puntos)

10. La monja méxicoamericana Dianna Ortiz ayuna frente a la Casa Blanca, obligando al gobierno de los Esta-

dos Unidos a publicar información sobre su violación y tortura en Guatemala. (299 puntos)

VOCES

LA MARCHA: "La próxima vez debería ser mayor..."

"Cuando yo estaba en La Marcha, oh, era bello el ver a toda clase de miembros de 'la raza' allí mismo, cerca de la Casa Blanca. Era terapéutico el ver a toda clase de latinos allí, chicanos y puertorriqueños y centro-americanos y todos. 'Aquí, en Filadelfia, todas las personas que fueron están todavía emocionadas y tratando de hacer cosas en la comunidad, pero no parece ir mucho más allá de eso. La próxima vez, debería ser mayor y mejor'." -- Horacio Romero, estudiante universitario, Filadelfia.

LA MACARENA: "Una cosa buena y una cosa mala..."

"Es tanto una cosa buena como una cosa mala. Puede parecer trivial. Pero hace diez años, nadie le habría dado a 'La Macarena' la hora del día. 'Ahora, la influencia latina está muy empotrada en la cultura colectiva, y eso es una buena señal. Pero el que los políticos la usen como un gesto simbólico mientras aprueban legislación perjudicial para los latinos, eso es patético'." -- Cristina King-Miranda, administradora de artes,

Washington Performing Arts Society, Washington, DC. **CLINTON:** "Sobre los nombramientos, él se lleva una D..."

"En conjunto, Clinton merece una C. Sobre los nombramientos (de latinos) se lleva una D. Aunque evidentemente él lo hizo muy bien en algunos campos, hay otros en los que no hay latinos. No los hay en los Departamentos de Comercio, Defensa y Energía. 'Los latinos no votaron por los republicanos porque éstos adoptaron una postura contraria a los inmigrantes. El modo de que los latinos votaron contra eso es la declaración más

importante, en verdad, en los meses recientes. Es claro que envié un mensaje de que no toleraremos esa retórica'." -- Lydia Camarillo, directora ejecutiva del Proyecto del Sur-este para la Inscripción y Enseñanza de Electores (SVREP en inglés), San Antonio.

CLINTON: "Me gustaba al principio..."

"¿No están desilusionados los latinos por la política? 'Aunque soy republicana, me gustaba Clinton al principio. El parecía ser humanitario y nombró a unos pocos latinos simbólicos. Pero no lo veo hacer nada sobre los ataques

contra los inmigrantes. El podría, al menos, adoptar una postura más explícita sobre eso. 'Aquí en Minnesota, nuestros trabajadores indocumentados más numerosos son los canadienses. Pero, ¿sobre quiénes ven ustedes al Servicio de Inmigración y a los medios informativos enfocándose? Sobre los latinos. Nadie puede hacerme creer que este asunto no tenga un elemento racial'." -- Carmen Robles, vice-presidenta de la Junta de Instrucción Pública de Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Propiedad literaria registrada por Hispanic Link News Service en 1996. Distribuido por The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

Hispanics 1996 From Page 1

1. Latinos vote in record numbers and more Hispanics are elected to public office. (895 points)

2. Over one million immigrants, most of them Latino, become naturalized citizens. (788 points)

3. A surge of anti-immigrant and anti-Latino sentiment sweeps the nation. (784 points)

4. California voters pass the anti-affirmative-action Proposition 209. (744 points)

5. Latino small businesses growth paces the nation. (528 points)

6. Latinos march and rally in Washington, D.C., Oct. 12. (451 points)

7. Educational achievement gap between Latino and Anglo students continues to widen. (441 points)

8. Congress passes and President Clinton signs the welfare bill. (387 points)

9. Riverside County, Calif. sheriffs are exposed on TV beating undocumented workers. (324 points)

10. Mexican-American nun Dianna Ortiz fasts in front of the White House, forcing the U.S. government to release information on her 1989 rape and torture in Guatemala. (299 points)

VOICES

LA MARCHA: "Next time, it should be bigger..."

"When I was at La Marcha, oh man, it was beautiful to see all kinds of la raza right there next to the White House. It was therapeutic to see all kinds of Latinos there, Chicanos y puertorriqueños y Central Americans y todos.

"Here in Philadelphia, the people who went are still excited and trying to do things in the community, but it doesn't seem to reach much beyond that. Next time, it should be bigger and better." -- Horacio Romero, college student, Philadelphia

LA MACARENA: "A good and bad thing..."

"It's both a good and bad thing. It may seem trite. But 10 years ago, no one would have given La Macarena the time of day. Now Latino influence is so ingrained into mass culture and that's a good sign. But for politicians to use it as a token gesture as they

pass legislation toward Latinos, that's pathetic." -- Cristina King-Miranda, arts administrator, Washington Performing Arts Society, Washington, D.C.

CLINTON: "On appointments, he gets a D..."

"Overall, Clinton gets a C. On appointments (of Latinos) he gets a D. While obviously he did very well in key areas, there are some areas where there are no

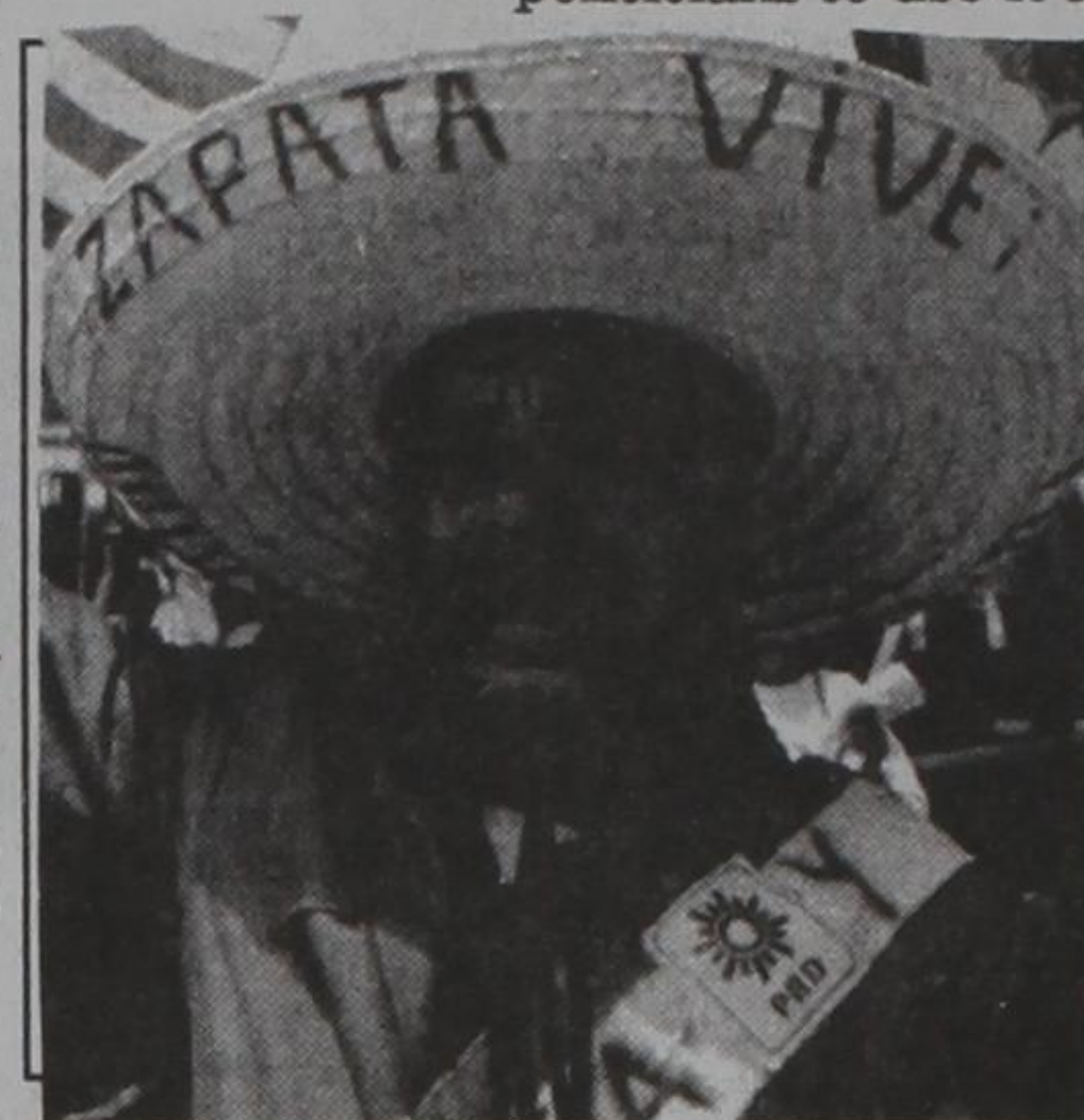
Latinos. No Latinos in Commerce, Defense and Energy."

"Latinos didn't vote for Republicans because they took an anti-immigrant stance. The way Latinos voted against that is the most important statement, certainly in the last few months. It clearly sent a message that we won't tolerate that rhetoric." -- Lydia Camarillo, executive director, Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, San Antonio

CLINTON: "I liked him at first..."

"Aren't Latinos always disappointed by politics? Even though I'm Republican, I liked Clinton at first. He seemed humanitarian and he appointed his token few Latinos. But I don't see him doing anything about the attacks on immigrants. He could at least take a more vocal stand against it.

"Here in Minnesota, our biggest undocumented (workers) are Canadians. But who do you see the INS and the media focusing on? The Latinos. No one can tell me this issue doesn't have a racial component." -- Carmen Robles, vice-president, Minnesota Board of Education, St. Paul, Minn.



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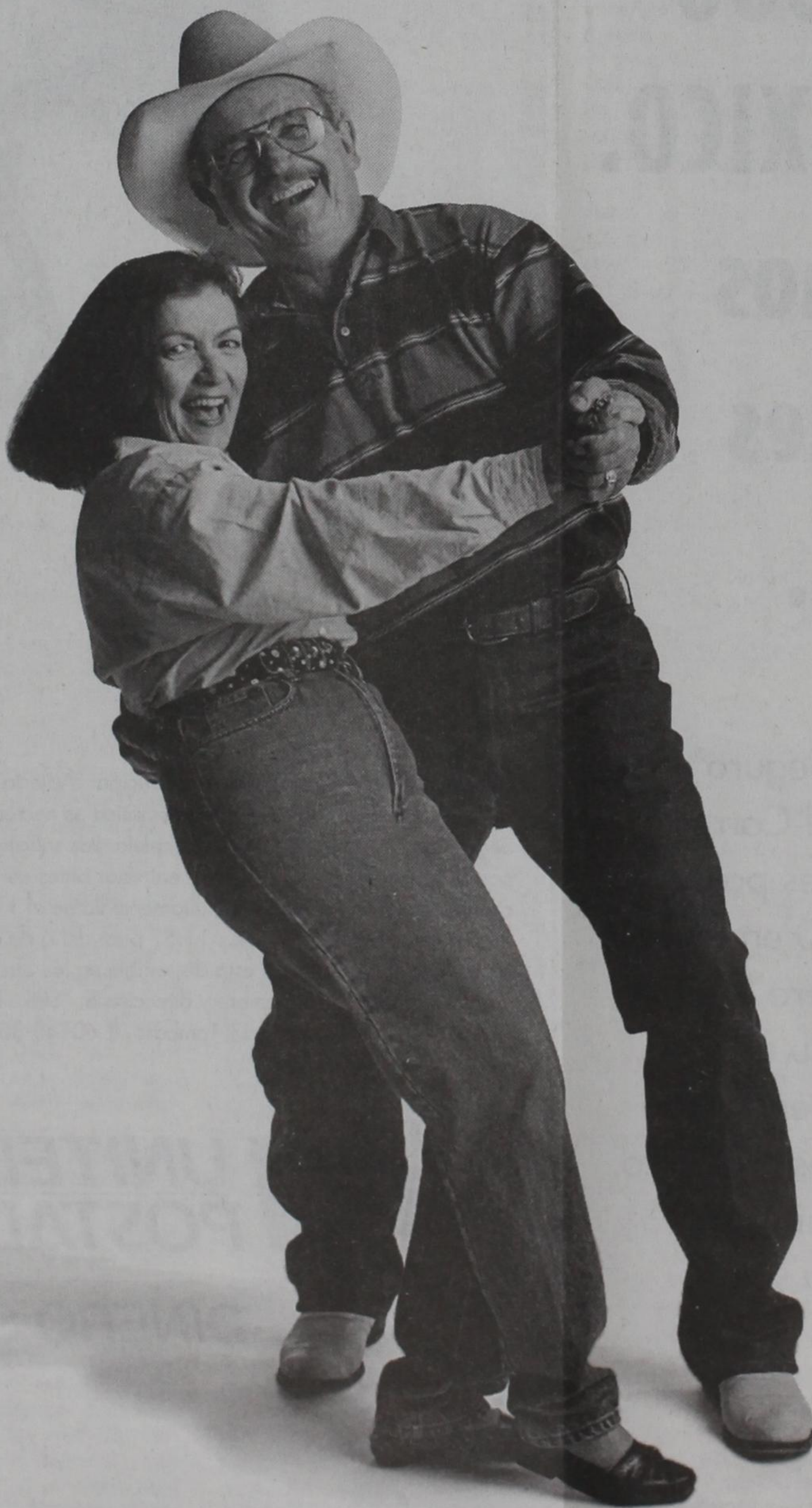
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"Cuando vi que tenía los seis números ganadores, me puse a bailar de felicidad".

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News Briefs

San Francisco Names "Poverty Czar"

After just six months as head of San Francisco's Department of Human Services, Michael Wald has been tapped to become Mayor Willie Brown's "poverty czar," reports The San Jose Mercury News.

Wald, who took over the human services post July 1, will coordinate the city's policy on homelessness, welfare and immigration.

Brown said Wald's mission will be to develop an anti-poverty plan with the city agencies that deal with the poor: human services, the housing authority, the health department, the redevelopment agency, and the mayor's offices of housing and homelessness.

"An office of homeless and poverty is not an asinine idea," said Paul Boden of the Coalition on Homelessness. "Structurally, this makes sense. Wald is a better choice than the other choices this administration is making. He's spent several months at (the department of human services). That will help us in making some changes. On a policy level, he is along the same lines we are."

Wald, a former Stanford law professor and deputy general counsel for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the Clinton administration, is considered an expert on child and family welfare laws and public policy.

Wald has obtained his position amid federal immigration and welfare overhauls, which could affect thousands of poor people in San Francisco. They could lose such state and federal benefits as food stamps, aid to families with dependent children, Medi-Cal and Supplemental Security Income. Experts estimate the changes could mean a cut of \$150 million in benefits.

States' Use of Welfare \$ Disputed

Federal and state welfare officials have become embroiled in an unforeseen dispute about how much power the states have over the use of their own money to help poor people under the new welfare law, reports The New York Times.

The question is whether states, in spending their own money, must follow the restrictions that apply to the dollars that they receive from the federal government.

States are creating their own programs to help people who become ineligible for federal benefits under the federal law. Some states want to use state money to aid families who do not meet the law's stringent work requirements. Others want to help elderly immigrants who will lose federal benefits because they are not citizens.

The dispute, which arose at a meeting of federal and state welfare officials earlier this month, centers on whether state spending would have to meet federal criteria, including those that disqualify certain applicants.

Federal officials say they are considering such an interpretation. States contend that they should be able to spend their own money to help poor people in any way they want.

In each of the next six years, states must spend at least 75 percent to 80 percent of what they spent on welfare in 1994. In some cases, if they want to tap a special federal contingency fund for welfare programs, they must spend 100 percent of the 1994 amount. And they are subject to financial penalties if they cut state welfare spending below the levels specified by Congress.

But federal officials say that the state spending must meet certain federal criteria, or else it will not count toward the requirements of the new law. Under one interpretation of the law many of the new restrictions on the use of federal money would be applied to the use of state money as well.

Under the law, state outlays count as "qualified state expenditures" only when the money is used for "eligible families." And federal officials say that the federal law defines who is eligible.

Olivia Golden, a former program director at the Children's Defense Fund and now the top welfare official at the federal Department of Health and Human Services, raised the issue at a meeting with state officials in Phoenix earlier this month. And in the last week, federal officials offered a legal justification for this view, while emphasizing that they had not reached any conclusions.

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Texas Tech's Hanspard Going Pro

By KELLEY SHANNON
SAN ANTONIO - Byron Hanspard, an All-America running back at Texas Tech and a Pentecostal minister, is forging his senior year because the NFL offers a bigger platform to spread his faith.

Hanspard's 2,084 rushing yards this season was the fifth-best total in NCAA history. He won the Doak Walker Award presented annually to the nation's best running back.

Hanspard, who often cites Bible passages when discussing football, said playing on Sundays in the NFL won't clash with his religion.

"If the Lord felt that it would hurt me a lot, he wouldn't have told me to go to the NFL," he said. "I don't have to go to church on Sunday to worship."

Hanspard is the third underclassman so far to declare his pro eligibility, joining Iowa State running back Troy Davis and Indiana tailback Alex Smith.

Hanspard and Davis, college football's first two-time 2,000-yard rusher, are likely to be among the top running backs chosen.

Hanspard announced his decision to turn pro one day after rushing for a season-low



64 yards in the Red Raiders' 27-0 loss to Iowa in the Alamo Bowl.

That was only the second time this season Hanspard was held below 100 yards. The other game was the last of the regular season, when Hanspard rushed for 84 yards against Oklahoma.

Hanspard has been preaching part-time at Community Baptist Church on Lubbock's

Alamo! Iowa 27, Texas Tech 0

SAN ANTONIO - Sedrick Shaw ran into the Alamo Bowl spotlight. Byron Hanspard ran into the aroused Iowa defense.

Shaw rushed for 113 yards on 20 carries and upstaged Hanspard, a 2,000-yard rusher this season, as No. 21 Iowa shut out the Red Raiders 27-0 Sunday night.

"I had about 50 people here watching me," said Shaw, who attended Austin's LBJ High School. "I want people to remember me as someone who gave his best in every situation."

Shaw, Iowa's career rushing leader, surpassed his season average of 91 yards per game. Hanspard, the Doak Walker Award winner as the nation's top running back, carried 18 times for 64 yards, about a third of his 190-yard season average.

The Hawkeyes have faced eight of the nation's top 20 rushers this season, and only Northwestern's Darnell Autry managed to reach his season average.

"They are one of the better defenses that we have faced this year," Hanspard said. "They played a physical, fast defense."

Hanspard said the Texas Tech offense didn't execute well and that he was frustrated over not getting his running game going.

"You try to go out and make the big play, but I'm just one person," he said. "You win as a team, you lose as a team."

Publicity surrounding Hanspard all week had overshadowed Shaw. Hanspard plans to announce Monday whether he will forego his final year of eligibility and turn pro.

The Hawkeyes (9-3) finished their thrashing of the Red Raiders (7-5) with a 14-yard touchdown run by Rodney Filer with 2:09 left, capping a 99-yard drive.

It was the first shutout of Texas Tech since a 31-0 loss to Arkansas in 1987.

"The defense stole the show," Iowa coach Hayden Fry said. "To shut down the top running back in college football - at least (preventing him from) getting into the end zone - was one of the highlights of my career."

"When you just get stomped like that, it's hard to find anything good to talk about, to tell you the truth," Texas Tech coach Spike Dykes said.

Iowa got on the scoreboard in the first quarter after Plez Atkins intercepted a pass by Texas Tech quarterback Zebbie Lethridge at the Red Raiders 47 and ran it to the 39.

A 13-yard pass from Matt Sherman to Tim Dwight and two runs by Shaw moved Iowa to the 1. Sherman ran it in for the touchdown with 11:21 remaining in the period, putting the Hawkeyes on top 6-0.

Iowa made it 14-0 on a 20-yard touchdown run by Shaw with 5:30 left in the second quarter after an 80-yard drive.

lower-income east side. After each home game, he has delivered a brief sermon to his teammates and coaches.

He is a member of Lay Ministers for Christ International, a nationwide evangelical organization that counts the Green Bay Packers' Reggie White among its membership.

Hanspard said he decided about two weeks ago he would enter the NFL draft but wanted to wait until after Sunday's game to make his plans public.

"The decision that I have made has come through much prayer, much seeking ... just really on my knees," he said.

After his news conference, Hanspard hugged Texas coach Spike Dykes. He talked with his coach for a while then left the downtown hotel wearing a sweatshirt, sunglasses and a

Sherman passed to Chris Knipper for the 2-point conversion.

As time expired before halftime, the Hawkeyes boosted their advantage to 17-0 on a 36-yard field goal by Zach Bromert. He had just missed a 41-yard attempt, but got a chance to kick it from five yards closer after an offside call against Texas Tech.

The Red Raiders' only scoring threat of the half ended when Jared Greaser's 42-yard field goal attempt sailed wide right.

Dykes lamented that missed opportunity. "We did a lot of beating ourselves - there's no doubt about that - all the way to missing a chip-shot field goal," he said.

Shaw was named the game's best offensive player, and Iowa's Jared DeVries was named best defensive player.

smile. "We've had a lot of fun together, and we're going to miss him," Dykes said. "He's given us more than we could ever give him."

Hanspard said he has been told by draft analysts he'll be taken in the first round or early second round.

Davis beat Hanspard for the first Big 12 rushing title (2,185 yards to 2,084), but Hanspard won the Doak Walker Award. Hanspard finished fifth in Heisman Trophy voting; Davis was second.

Hanspard, 6-foot and 193 pounds, Hanspard played in high school in DeSoto, Texas, and was sought by Notre Dame, Nebraska and Colorado. He said that while he was in the shower the Lord told him to go to Texas Tech.

Hanspard, a junior who turns 21 next month, said he hopes to one day get his college degree.

Hanspard ran for 761 yards as a freshman. The Red Raiders were co-Southwest Conference champions that year and played in their first Cotton Bowl in 56 years.

Hanspard followed that by rushing for 1,374 yards as a sophomore. He went over 100 yards in each of his last five games that season and kept the streak going until the Oklahoma game this year.

Hanspard had 115 yards in the season opener against Kansas State, then a school-record 272 against Oklahoma State. He would rush for more than 200 yards four more times while setting school records for single-season and career yards (4,219).

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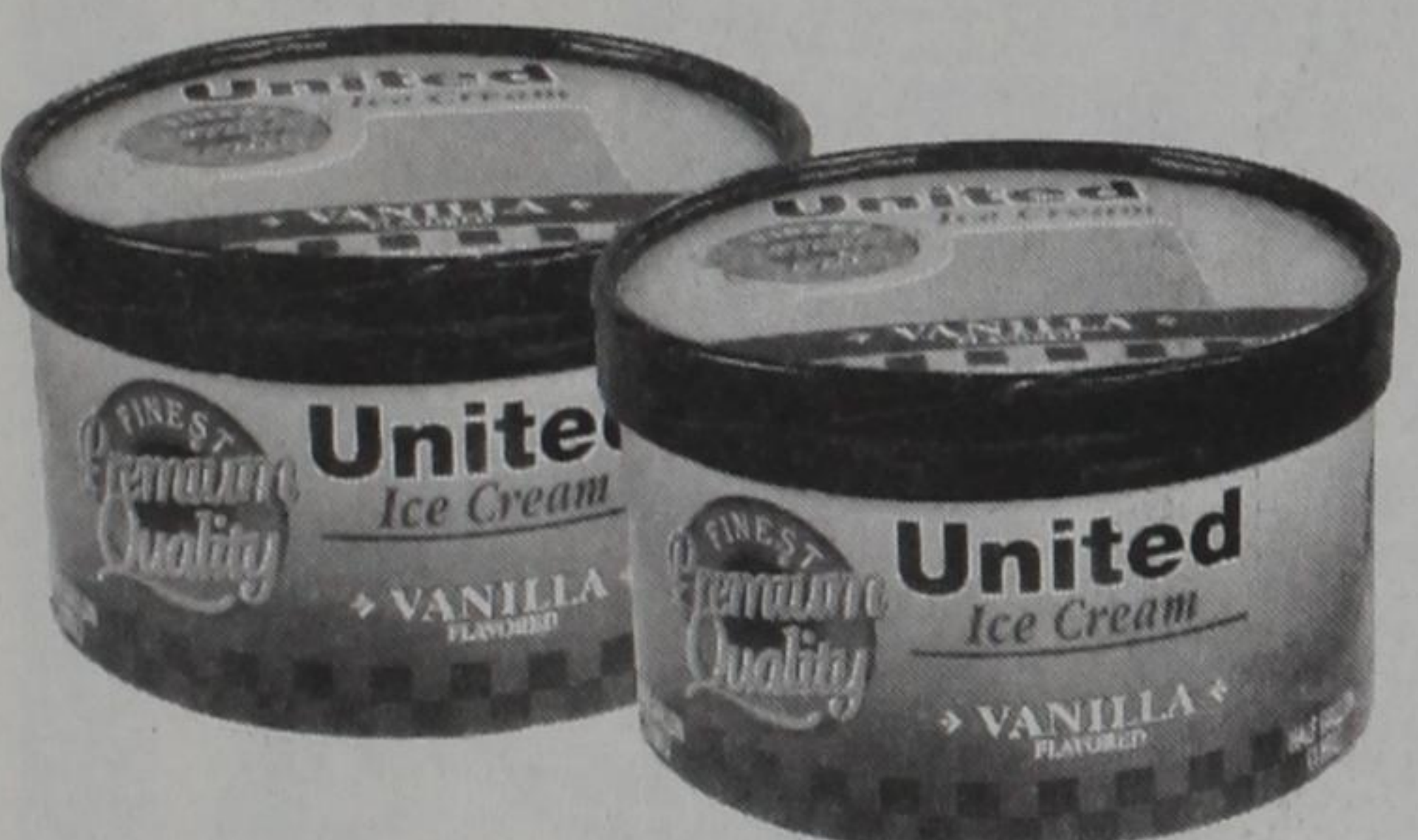
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98¢ lb.
Price good January 1-January 31



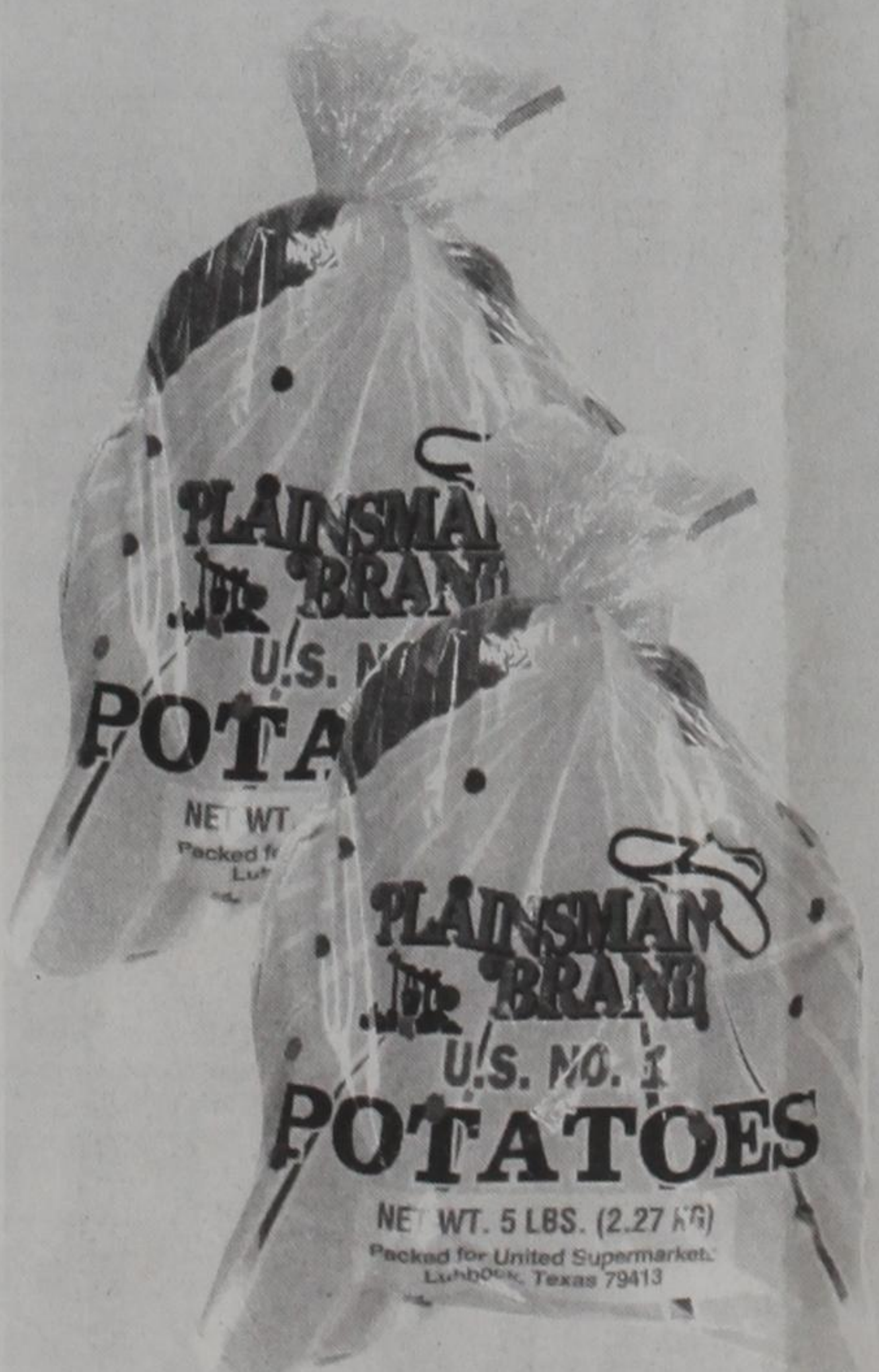
HY•TOP PREMIUM QUALITY VEGETABLES

Golden Corn: Whole Kernel or Cream Style; Cut Blue Lake Green Beans 14.5-15 oz.

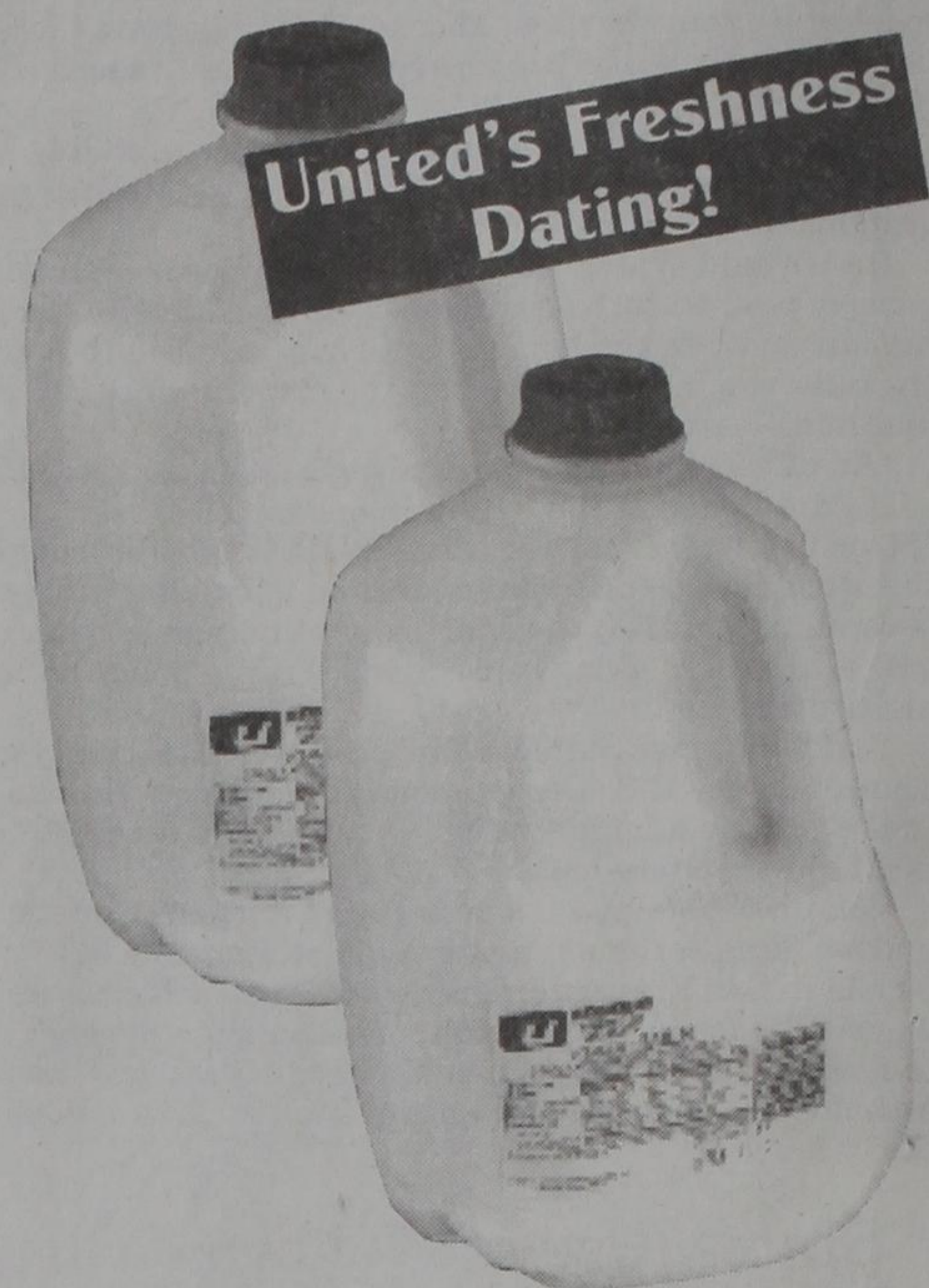
3 For \$1



UNITED PREMIUM QUALITY SPLIT TOP WHEAT BREAD
1 1/2 lb. Loaf **88¢**



PLAINSMAN COLORADO #1 RUSSET BAKING POTATOES
5 lb. bag **69¢**



UNITED PREMIUM QUALITY MILK
Homogenized or Lowfat 1 Gallon **\$1.98**



HY•TOP PREMIUM QUALITY MACARONI & CHEESE DINNER
7.25 oz. **3 For \$1**



COKE, SPRITE or MINUTE MAID
All Varieties 6 pk./12 oz. **\$1.68**

SOME ITEMS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ALL UNITED LOCATIONS.

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE WE ACCEPT THESE QUALITY CARDS

Prices Effective JANUARY

WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Due to the Popularity of Our Low Prices, We Must Reserve Quantity Rights. No Sales to Dealers. We Accept Food Stamps and WIC Cards.

