

TX Health Dept Wants Name-Based HIV Reporting

Dallas Morning News--The Texas Department of Health has recommended that health care providers be required to report the names of HIV-infected individuals, the Houston Chronicle reports.

Although the department stresses that the names would remain confidential, AIDS advocates fear the proposed rule would discourage people from being tested and seeking treatment for the virus.

Since 1994, Texas policy requires HIV-infected individuals be identified by a 12-digit code to the Department of Health. However, only 26% of positive HIV tests are tracked under this system. Under the proposed policy change, the department says it hopes to boost the percentage of reported cases to allow health care providers to help more people earlier.

"We can now do many things to help a person with HIV stay healthy longer, if we find out about their illness early enough," says Dr. Sharilyn Stanley, chief of the Health Department's bureau of HIV and STD prevention. She added that "more than 45,000 cases of AIDS have been reported in Texas with no breaches of confidentiality."

A number of groups, including the American Civil Liberties Union and the AIDS Foundation in Houston oppose name-based reporting, and instead suggested the agency should "refine its current system of assigning numbers to people who test positive for HIV" so that the department's figures would more accurately reflect the incidence of HIV in the community.

John Paul Barnich, former chair of the AIDS Foundation in Houston, called the proposal a "bad idea," and will discourage people from getting tested. Dianne Hardy-Garcia, executive director of the Lesbian-Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, encouraged the department to exhaust other methods for increasing reporting or "ensure confidentiality by enacting a fine form disclosing names."

The agency is accepting public comment on the proposal before the final proposal is submitted to the Texas State Board of Health in November. See the Kaiser Family Foundation's website <http://www.kff.org> for more information.

VA Salvation Army Can't Handle Jump in Requests

With a sharp rise in requests for help, the Salvation Army chapter in Leesburg, Va., has had to turn away many requests for food, clothing, medicine and rent to people seeking help, the Washington Post reports.

The organization, which serves a last resort for people when the Loudoun County Department of Social Services is flooded with requests, had to deny assistance to 72 people since May.

"In the last three or four months, we've seen dramatic increases in the amount of people turning to us for help, but we are limited by contributions and are badly in need of money," says Capt. Karen Humphreys, commanding officer of the Loudoun branch of the Salvation Army.

The increase may be due in part to the new welfare eligibility requirements instituted in March, Humphreys and other county social services officials say. The new requirements add stringent guidelines to work requirements and time limits for welfare recipients.

"July and August are usually slow months as far as welfare services are concerned," says Cheryl Fields, the social services caseworker for the Salvation Army. "Our concern is how busy we normally get around the time when school opens. I don't see an end to this."

Problems with "Healthy Families" Program Enrollment

The Healthy Families application form's "complexity, along with myriad other bureaucratic issues, is among the reasons many observers believe California's insurance program for children from low-income families will not meet expectations," Modern Healthcare reports.

E. Richard Brown, a professor at the University of California-Los Angeles Center for Health Policy Research, said, "It's a program that needs to be a lot more user-friendly. ... They need to be able to bring in children in from the ground up."

In addition to the 27-page application that "requires a calculator, copies of records from the Internal Revenue Service and Immigration and Naturalization Service, utility bills and pay stubs," critics cite "the premiums charged, lack of assurances available to immigrant families about how the information on the forms will be used and whether glitches in the state's outreach program can be quickly addressed."

As of August 3, only 5,000 children had enrolled since the program was launched July 1; the state estimates that 500,000 will eventually enroll.

California Health Services Director S. Kimberly Belshe noted that the state is launching a \$17 million program "to train members of various community groups to help applicants fill out the forms." Participating community groups are paid \$25 for every child signed up. Belshe also noted that much of the information requested on the application is required by the federal government.

"You can't expect a program of this scope to get off the ground flawlessly," she said, adding, "One of the consistent findings is that many people believe the program is too good to be true, that they can't believe the government would provide such low-cost options"

Medicare Commission Wants Public Input

Washington Times--The National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare yesterday asked the public to offer solutions to the program's long-term financial problems.

The public "Call for Solutions" establishes an August 24 deadline for an opportunity to testify before the panel. The public is asked to address three "main questions":

-How would this proposal successfully finance Medicare? Would new sources of money be needed? Would this strengthen the program's finances?

-How would this idea encourage more efficiency? How would it curb costs while ensuring quality care?

-How would the proposal affect Medicare beneficiaries' pocketbooks?

Public input should be mailed to the commission at this address: Call for Solutions, c/o National Medicare Commission, 101 Independence Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20540-1998, <http://thomas.loc.gov/medicare/Solutions-2.html>

The "Call for Solutions" is posted on the commission's website, located at <http://thomas.loc.gov/medicare/>.

Ar A Los Hispanos Si Nadie Sabe Quienes Son

Por Carmen Alicia Fernández
Washington, 19 ago (EFE).- La disputa sobre las técnicas para realizar en Estados Unidos el censo del año 2000 promete ser una de las más duras que se registrarán el próximo mes en el Congreso.

Pero mientras los políticos de ambos lados insisten en que están representando los derechos de los latinos, que en el conteo poblacional de 1990 quedaron mal representados, la realidad es que en este país todavía no se sabe realmente qué es un hispano.

Y es que ni siquiera la Oficina del Censo, que incorporó el término a principios de los 80, ha logrado determinar a quiénes realmente engloban los términos "hispanic/latin/spanish".

La realidad es que en vez de irse aclarando, la categoría es cada vez más confusa.

Los hispanos se benefician de los programas de Acción Afirmativa, incluyendo puestos de trabajo en el Gobierno e ingresos a las universidades, e incluso son considerados en el Congreso como una de las cinco razas que conviven mayoritariamente en este país, al lado de los indígenas, los blancos, los negros y los asiáticos.

Además, los distritos electorales son diseñados para



asegurar que haya representación latina equilibrada.

Pero a la hora del conteo las estadísticas incluyen a los hispanos dentro de cualquiera de las razas y en los cuestionarios del censo, además de la clasificación étnica hay una casilla para marcar si se es hispano.

Analistas políticos y demográficos admiten que el tema de la hispanidad es confuso para un país acostumbrado a

pensar en blanco y negro.

"En la mayoría de los casos se está tratando a los hispanos como un grupo 'no blanco' y la realidad es que muchos hispanos se consideran blancos", explica el experto de la Institución Brookings, Peter Skerry.

En el censo de 1990 el 53 por ciento de los hispanos también marcaron la categoría de blancos y el tres por ciento la de negros.

"Lo que verdaderamente importa es qué se considera la persona. Si alguien tiene un ancestro que vino de un país hispanoparlante hace 300 años y se considera hispano, entonces así se cuenta", explicó el demógrafo de la rama de estadísticas étnicas e hispanas de la Oficina del Censo, John Reed.

Así, los demógrafos oficiales incluyen ahora en sus encues-
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EL EDITOR

Vol XX1 No. 47 Week of August 20 to August 26, 1998 Lubbock, Texas

Established 1977 - Texas' Oldest Hispanic Owned Newspapers

How To Count Hispanics If Nobody Knows Who They Are

By Carmen Alicia Fernández
Washington, Aug 18 (EFE).- The congressional debate on ways to carry out the U.S. Census for the year 2000 promises to be a tough one next month.

While politicians from both sides insist that they are representing the interests of Hispanics, who were badly represented in the national population count of 1990, the truth is that in this country a Hispanic is still not defined.

The problem is that the Census Office, which introduced the term at the beginning of the 1980s, has not been able to determine who are included in the terms "Hispanics, Latinos and Spanish."

The reality is that instead of becoming clearer, the category is becoming ever more obscure.

However, those who fall under this category benefit from Affirmative Action programs, including government employment and university admission, and Hispanics are also considered among the five major groups living in the United States, together with Indians, Whites, Blacks and Asians.

Besides, the electoral districts are designed to assure a balanced Hispanic representation.

However, when it comes to a population count, statistics include Hispanics within any race, and in the Census questionnaire Hispanics appear together with the other ethnic groups.

Political and demographic analysts say the term "Hispanic" is confusing for a country that is accustomed to thinking in Black and White.

"In most cases Hispanics are being treated as a non-White group and the truth is that most Hispanics feel that they are White," an expert from Brookings Institute, Peter Skerry, explained.

In the 1990 Census, 53 percent of Hispanics also marked the box labeled White and 3 percent checked the one for Blacks.

"What really matters is what the person considers himself. If someone has a relative that came from a Spanish-speaking country 300 years ago, and feels Hispanic, then he should be considered as such," the demographer for the Census Office's ethnic and Hispanic statistics branch, John Reed, said.



The Texas Migrant Council Annual "Labor of Love" was a great event. Over 1000 migrant families from surrounding counties attended this event. The event was organized to inform migrants as to services available in Lubbock and West Texas. Drought condition have left many migrant and seasonal farmworkers without work and unable to find shelter and adequate living conditions.

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

Comentarios de Bidal

by Bidal Agüero
Since the voting down of the increase in sales tax that would have funded economic development and now with the closing of TI and the downsizing of Methodist and St. Mary hospitals there has been continuing talk about what to do to boost Lubbock's economy and get it back on its feet.

To that goal the City Council together with others have been holding what are called public meetings with a Task Force that will make recommendations. The upcoming meeting will be held at the Maggie Trejo Center, several have been held throughout the City. Ten attend the first meeting held at Mae Simmons and 50 attended the last meeting held in West Lubbock.

All those attending are expressing what they think should happen. Many are saying that economic development should be funded through private funds.

I have a little skepticism in believing that a comprehensive program would be adequately funded through donations. I guess my skepticism exists because Lubbock is now almost 100 years old and private business to date has yet to act.

In spite of whether they will or not one issue that must be discussed in the minority community is how much input will we have as to what happens. Will be again be left out in the cotton fields while many important issues are being discussed that will affect the lives and futures of our community?

Recently it came as a surprise that our communities -- specifically the minority community -- were told that they were going to be targets of a new crime prevention operation. Although powers that be are saying the program is not aimed at one particular race or ethnic group one can only wonder if those that enforce crime will target the real drug dealers, many of whom probably live in high priced homes in West Lubbock.

Cut opinions toward new programs will only be heard if we express our options publicly. If we don't express those opinions at the Economic Task Force meeting, it will probably be too late to complain later. The meeting is scheduled for 7 PM on Thursday, Aug. 27.

Letters to the Editor

Hillary Was Right

Some time ago, Hillary Clinton stated she believed her husband's problems had been created by a right wing conspiracy. At the time few people took this seriously. Today, with the recent revelations concerning 'The Dress'...

P.S. - Now it is The Tie(s). This whole deal has degenerated into a surrealistic soap opera.

Dear Editor,

Some will surely say I must be jealous or crying sour grapes because I didn't get an invitation to the June 23, 1998 'Community Dinner' celebrating the formation of Covenant Health System.

Dear Editor,

The Republican Party for years now has failed to see the importance of the Hispanic Community. Perhaps because in the past Hispanics did not go out to vote in large numbers.

¿Deberiamos Celebra El 13 De Mayo Y No El 16 De Septiembre?

Por Ray Rodriguez

'Si conmemoramos el 16 de septiembre para celebrar la declaración de independencia de México y el 5 de Mayo para reconocer la derrota del ejército francés en Puebla, ¿por qué pasamos por alto el 13 de mayo?'...

continente fué asumido rápidamente por los demagogos políticos. El interés de los Estados Unidos en adquirir territorio mexicano no era un secreto.

costumbres de la nación que los había aceptado. Sam Houston probablemente resumió mejor la actitud de ellos cuando declaró enfáticamente que él no había venido a Texas para vivir bajo el yugo de los 'grasientos'.

recibieron su primera prueba de combate durante la Guerra Mexicana, serían los generales que dirigieran el conflicto más sangriento de la historia de esta nación.

Intrigado por el comentario de mi amigo, fui a mi casa para verificar si ese era el caso en verdad. Encontré una cita atribuida a John O'Sullivan, a quien se acredita haber originado la frase 'Destino Manifiesto'.

Para permitirles hacer eso, se les pusieron tierras a su disposición gratis, o por la suma ínfima de 12.5 centavos por acre.

Con la anexión de Estados Unidos de un vasto imperio que llegaba hasta el Pacifico, el asunto de la esclavitud llegó a ser una preocupación primordial. ¿Siguiría la esclavitud a la bandera?

La pérdida de la mitad de su territorio fué un golpe del que México nunca se ha recuperado. El que la guerra no fuera un capítulo glorioso en ninguna de las historias orgullosas de las dos naciones puede explicar el por qué ambos países han decidido pasar por alto el 13 de mayo.

"A las puertas del milenio"

Por Roberto Blum

El tiempo perdido, los santos lloran El tiempo corre en una sola dirección. Del pasado hacia el futuro. Y hasta ahora, con toda nuestra tecnología, no hemos encontrado la forma de darle marcha atrás.

Why Ignore May 13?

By Ray Rodriguez

'If we commemorate Sept. 16 to celebrate Mexico's declaration of independence from Spain and May 5 (Cinco de Mayo) to acknowledge the defeat of the French army at Puebla, why do we ignore May 13?'...

Instead, they rallied against the laws and customs of the nation that had taken them in. Sam Houston probably summed up their attitude best when he stated emphatically that he had not come to Texas to live under the greasers' yoke.

México Procedera Contra Incumplimiento del TLCAN Por Parte de USA

WASHINGTON, D.C. (VMM).- El gobierno Mexicano pidió una junta de la Comisión Libre Comercio (Free Trade Commission), creada conforme el Tratado de Libre Comercio (TLCAN - NAFTA) a fin de resolver la disputa referente a la violación unilateral del gobierno de los Estados Unidos al no permitir la entrada a los camiones mexicanos a los estados fronterizos.

El TLCAN (NAFTA) establece que a partir del pasado 17 de Diciembre de 1995, ambos países permitirán a internación de los camiones de carga a los estados fronterizos.

El mecanismo de solución de controversias tiene 3 fases. Primero se llama a a consultas a nivel técnico. Si esto no se resuelve se procede con el segundo paso citando a una junta de la Comisión de Libre Comercio (Free Trade Commission).

Los argumentos de la administración Clinton sobre seguridad, son simple pretextos y absolutamente falsos declaró Emilio D. Santos, Presidente de la Asociación de Importadores y Exportadores de la Cámara (U.S.) Nacional de Comercio.

Aunque se impemite el TLCAN en su pelenitud, los transportistas nunca seran una competencia con las líneas nacionales, pues solo podran transportar carga internacional, con destino y origen al extranjero y nunca flete domestico interno.

Nuestro ingreso real (deflactado y medido en dólares estadounidenses de 1995) por habitante se triplicó en los últimos cien años. De 197 dólares en 1895 pasamos a 609 en 1994.

Hemos perdido oro que se traduce en mas de 50 millones de mexicanos que hoy viven en la pobreza. 26 millones de almas que apenas se pueden mantener unidas a cuerpos enfermos y desnutridos, millones de niños que no conocen sino dolor, enfermedad, hambre y la insatisfacción de sus necesidades más esenciales.

Hoy, a unos días de oír el cuarto informe del presidente Zedillo, y en un entorno de creciente incertidumbre, debemos reflexionar seriamente sobre lo que los mexicanos hemos hecho mal. No es tiempo de responsabilizar al entorno internacional, o a la globalización de nuestros problemas internos.

No es la naturaleza la que repartió cartas marcadas en nuestra contra. No. Somos nosotros los únicos responsables y solo nosotros podremos cambiar el futuro.

The United States' interest in acquiring Mexican territory was no secret. A lesser known fact is that in 1842 U.S. naval forces attacked and captured Monterey, Calif. To their chagrin, they learned that no state of war existed between the U.S. and Mexico.

Also, as a result of our nation's first war of aggression, 150,000 Mexican nationals were added to the nation's population. The ensuing cultural clash has remained a bone stuck in the craw of the United States. Today, 150 years later, the repercussions continue to plague U.S./Mexico relations.

Templos De Esperanza

Por Carol Zapata-Whelan

Llegaste a través del agua, Vincent, Hijo querido, y sacaste un estrella del mar. alcanzaremos a través Radiante, tuviste su luz arenosa del cielo, entre dos dedos hasta que vuelvas a sacar una estrella.

Estoy en una habitación llena de libros y de ropa sin doblar. En un estante, junto al Diccionario Larousse y un libro de texto de español, hay una vieja fotografía de mi hijo, Vincent, a los cuatro años de edad; está de pie ante una higuera, con los brazos extendidos hacia las ramas retorcidas: "Te amo, árbol".

Descanso los ojos y el espíritu en esta foto sacada años antes de que un gene durmiente se levantara a retorcer la vida derecha de Vincent.

Vincent padece de un trastorno genético raro, la Fibrodysplasia Osificante Progresiva (FOP en inglés). La FOP es un estado irreal, tan irreal que a penas cabe en la imaginación.

Cuando oí "FOP" por primera vez, no entendí nada de nada, y la cabeza se me llenó de "Los heraldos negros" de César Vallejo: "Hay golpes en la vida, tan duros... Golpes como del odio de Dios".

Pero no hay "odio de Dios". Y aunque la enfermedad sea tan difícil de decir que debe recortarse a tres letras, tan anacrónica que parece más bien castigo bíblico, la FOP no es venganza divina; es un ímpetu para la esperanza.

Dios envía fuerza, y es la fuerza que llega cuando uno se encuentra contra la pared. Bueno, la FOP no es pared, es jaula, jaula hecha de hueso.

Con toda mi fuerza, busco y busco claves, puertas, senderos que liberen a mi hijo. Anoche recibí un mensaje:

"Mamá! Te llaman de las Filipinas!" Brian, mi hijo mayor, me dio el teléfono. Yo le había escrito a una sanadora cuya dirección había ofrecido Sor Paulina, maestra de Vincent y su ángel guardián. Le había enviado a la sanadora una foto de nuestro hijo de 11 años y un relato: "La

Proteína Edifica un Segundo Esqueleto" de la revista "Science" de agosto de 1996, sobre un trastorno que osifica a los músculos y las articulaciones con inflamaciones extrañas. Los niños normales se convierten en estatuas de hueso vivientes.

Tomé el teléfono. "Buenos días", me dijo una voz muy amable, mientras mi familia se cernía sobre la mesa de la cena, abriendo paquetitos blancos de fideos.

"Buenas...noches", contesté. "Su carta ha sido providencial", dijo la voz de acento asiático. "Pocos días antes de que llegara, soñé con su hijo".

Un espasmo de júbilo y de pánico me tomó la garganta, y tuve que ponerme un dedo en el oído. No es fácil, en mi casa llena con cinco niños, escuchar relatos de sueños: "Dos noches antes de recibir su mensaje, ví que un alma pasaba por una llama. A la noche siguiente, ví la cara de un niño extranjero; entonces recibí su carta. El niño en mi sueño era Vincent".

La voz continuaba, pero no se escuchaba por una pelea sobre "galletitas de la fortuna". Antes de que pudiera excusarme para ir al otro teléfono, la palabra "maleficio" se filtró.

"Ha habido", escuché, sentada en otro cuarto, "en la familia de la madre o del padre, una maldición o un pecado que se ha heredado".

Pero acaso, ¿no había Cristo sanado un ciego y exonerado a la familia? Esta teoría parecía medieval, antediluviana, y por otra parte, muy sensible. A lo mejor, yo no había entendido bien.

"El problema de mi hijo no es hereditario", dije, explicando la mutación genética. Traté de imaginarme a al sanadora, que era una monja; sería joven de cara lavada, con el cabello negro y áspero debajo de tela de lino blanco. Tendría un aspecto de paz y de claridad.

La monja hablaba con una seguridad sencilla: "Esta maldición viene de generaciones anteriores; de un mal que el

sufrimiento purificará".
¿Cuál familia llevaba el pecado sin pagar? Tenía que ser la mía: Más probablemente, el tatarabuelo Tiburcio desvelado con el vino y las cartas, jugándose los viñedos Zapata uva por uva. Y, ¿qué tal las raíces de mi esposo? ¿Un irlandés enojado? El discordio más probable tendría que venir de la rama francesa, pero con un nombre tan sobrio como "Le Sage", eso parecía imposible.

De seguro que la maldición estaba en mi árbol genealógico. ¿Acaso no me había dicho aquella médica australiana, aún cuando fuera por error, que la plaga estaba en mi sangre? El día del diagnóstico, me torcí el brazo. "Le falta flexibilidad", anotó, tomándome la mano: "Su pulgar es demasiado corto", reprendió. La herencia materna: un mal gene.

Concordé con la monja sobre el poder extraordinario de la oración, pero empecé a sentir un leve disgusto por esa voz amable. Sin importar lo que le preguntara, ella estaba contestando una pregunta distinta. Ella no podía entenderme tampoco a través del inglés, los satélites, el mar y las 15 horas de diferencia entre nosotros.

Finalmente colgué el teléfono y me senté en la soledad de la habitación de ropa sin doblar y de libros; volví la otra foto de Vincent, tenía una estrella de mar, tomada el verano pasado durante un tratamiento experimental. Me gusta pensar que se ve radiante en esa foto.

De repente, me dí cuenta de que Sor Pauline nunca nombró la orden religiosa de la sanadora, me llegó una nueva visión de la persona que me había llamado. No era la imagen de una joven en el abreviado hábito blanco de las monjas católicas. Ví una forma casi borrada en una toga canela, con piernas flexibles y manos delicadas; entonces ví la estatua, de oro rodeada de incienso, con la mirada de la soledad.

Prefiero pensar que la amable voz asiática de anoche fue la de una monja budista que se equivocó de número de teléfono.

(Carol Zapata-Whelan, de Fresno, California, es catedrática universitaria.)

Temples Of Hope

By Carol Zapata-Whelan

You reached through the water, Vincent, and pulled up a starfish Radiant, you held its gritty light between two fingers. Dearest son, We will reach through the sky until you can pull out a star again.

I am in a room full of books and laundry. On a shelf by the Diccionario Larousse and a Spanish reader is an old picture of my son, Vincent. He is four years old, standing before a fig tree, arms stretched out toward the gnarled branches: "I love you, tree." I rest my eyes and my spirit on this photo taken years before a sleeping gene would rise up to gnarl Vincent's perfect life.

Vincent has a rare genetic disorder, Fibrodysplasia Ossificans Progressiva (FOP). FOP is an unreal condition, so unreal that it is in the imagination.

When I first heard FOP, the letters made no sense, and my head filled with Cesar Vallejo's verse: "There are blows in life, so difficult...Blows as if from God's hate." But there is no "God's hate." And while the disease is so hard to say that it must be cut to three letters, so anachronistic that it is more like a Biblical punishment, FOP is not divine vengeance; it is an impetus to hope.

God sends strength, a strength that arrives when one is pushed against a wall. Well, FOP is not a wall, it is a prison -- made of bone.

With all my strength, I look and look for keys, doors, paths that might free my son. Last night, I received a message.

"Mom! It's from the Philippines!" Brian, my oldest, held out the receiver. I had written to a healer whose address Sister Isabel, Vincent's teacher and Spanish guardian angel, had offered. I had sent a picture of our 11-year-old son and a story, "Protein Builds Second Skeleton" from Science of August '96, about a disorder that ossifies muscles and joints with strange swellings. Normal children become living statues of bone. I took the phone. "Good morning," said a very kind voice, just as my

family hovered over the dinner table, opening little white cartons of long brown noodles.

"Good -- evening," I answered.

"Your letter has been providential," said the voice with an Asian accent. "A few days before it came, I dreamt about your son."

A spasm of joy and panic took my throat, and I had to put a finger to my ear. It is not easy, in a resonant house of five children, to hear dreams related: "Two nights before I got your message, I saw a soul pass through a flame. The next night, I saw the face of a foreign boy. Then I got your letter. The boy in my dream was Vincent."

The voice continued, but was drowned out by a fight for fortune cookies. Before I could excuse myself to change phones, the word "hex" filtered through. "There has been," I heard, sitting in a different room, "in the family of the mother or the father, a malediction or sin passed on."

But hadn't Christ healed a blind man and exonerated his family? This theory seemed medieval, ancient, and on the other hand, very sensible. Maybe I had misunderstood.

"My son's problem isn't inherited," I said, explaining genetic mutation. I tried to picture this healer, who was a nun: she would be young with a scrubbed face, coarse black hair hidden under white linen. She would have a look of peace and clarity.

The nun spoke with simple conviction. "This malediction comes from generations past; from an evil that suffering will purify."

Whose family bore the unpaid sin? It had to be my side: most likely, the legendary Tiburcio up late with wine and cards, gambling away the Za-

pata vineyards grape by grape. What about my husband's roots? An angry Irishman? The most likely mischief would have to come from the French branch, but with a name like "Le Sage," it seemed impossible.

Surely, the curse was in my bloodline. Hadn't that Australian doctor told me, even if by mistake, that the plague was in my blood? The day of the diagnosis she twisted my arm. "Not very flexible," she noted, taking my hand. "Your thumb is too short," she reprimanded. My inheritance. A blighted gene.

I agreed with the nun about the extraordinary power of prayer, but I began to feel a strange distaste for her kindly voice. No matter what I asked, she seemed to be answering a different question. She could not understand me, either, across the English language, the satellites, the sea, and the 15 hours between us.

I finally hung up and sat with a lonely stillness in the room full of laundry and books, looking at another picture of Vincent holding a starfish, taken last summer during an experimental treatment. I like to think that he is radiant in that photo.

After some musings, I realized that Sister Isabel had never mentioned the healer's religious order. A new vision of my caller flashed past. It was not the image of a young woman in the white habit of Catholic nuns. Instead, I saw a form almost erased in saffron robes, with supple legs and dancer's hands. And then I saw the statue, gold muted in incense, eyes steeped in solitude.

I prefer to think that the kind Asian voice of last night belonged to a Buddhist nun who dialed the wrong number.

(Carol Zapata-Whelan, of Fresno, Calif, is a university professor.)
Watch for ABC's coverage of FOP in September. For information on FOP, contact IFOPA at (407) 365-4194; <http://www.med.upenn.edu/ortho/fop>

EL EDITOR

#1 In News Every Week!!

Cantan. Bailan. Ganan LOTTO Texas.

Todos nosotros deberíamos divertirnos así cuando nos retiremos.



LA HISTORIA:

Los 17 miembros del Grupo Salvaje compraron sus boletos como grupo. Después del sorteo se reunieron en casa de Jimmy para revisar todos los boletos. Al revisarlos, descubrieron que habían igualado tres de seis números en algunos boletos. Para asegurarse, Nora y Jean decidieron volver a revisar. Fue entonces cuando descubrieron que no sólo habían igualado tres números, ellos habían igualado los seis números.

EL DINERO:
\$6,666,666.75

LOS NÚMEROS:
3 9 12 28 36 43

LA CANCIÓN MÁS SOLICITADA:
"Estamos En El Mundo Del Dinero"



MÁS DE 290 MILLONARIOS Y LA CUENTA SIGUE.

INS Plans to Fix Naturalization System

On Friday, August 7, 1998, the Clinton Administration and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) announced a comprehensive plan to improve citizenship services and increase resources available to process naturalization cases. The plan includes organizational and management changes within the INS, in addition to the redirection of \$171 million to the naturalization system.

The funding request of \$171 million must be approved by Congress. The INS intends to use the funds to reduce the backlog of 1.9 million citizenship cases and to process new cases. Many applicants in the backlog have been waiting two years or longer to complete the naturalization process. According to INS Headquarters, the naturalization backlog in the Boston District is 45,097 applicants.

Muriel Heiberger, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition, urged Congress to give swift approval to the Administration's request to redirect funds that have already been appropriated to the Justice Department.

Both Congress and the INS agree that the naturalization system is broken. Now that the INS has formulated a promising plan to fix the system, it is up to Congress to act quickly to permit the plan to take effect, said Heiberger. Congress will make or break the future of the citizenship process, she added.

INS Commissioner Doris Meissner also announced on Friday that the agency will delay implementation of a naturalization fee increase from \$95 to \$225 until January 15, 1999. By that time, the INS expects to make progress in reducing the citizenship backlog.

Health Premiums Soar for Small Businesses

Small businesses nationwide that buy health insurance for their employees are facing "steeper increases than larger firms," leaving them "with the tough choice of either cutting employees benefits or watching monthly expenses soar."

According to a study this year by KPMG Peat Marwick, companies on average are preparing for 6% increases next year. But small businesses will "face rates that are about 30% higher than what large companies pay for equivalent plans," according to the National Federation of Independent Businesses.

Managed care plans say they have to raise their rates because of "higher administrative expenses" and the demand for "trendy prescription drugs like Claritin and Viagra."

John Bertko, an analyst with Berkely-based Reden & Anders, said "providers also charge small companies higher premiums because they represent a statistically bigger risk." Many small companies who employ young and healthy workers do not buy health insurance. This leaves the pool of small business accounts leaning "toward older employees who are more likely to have expensive illnesses," notes Bertko.

Another reason for small business' higher rates is that they "are less predictable due to the small number of employees" and tend to have a higher job-turnover rate. "Because they're less easy to predict than a large company with many employees, providers are going to err on the side of conservatism because they need to protect themselves against worst-case scenarios," said Anthem Vice President Rich Phillips.

Other small business owners contend they get stuck with high rates because they do not have the negotiating clout that larger businesses do. But Dean Kemp, Kaiser Permanente's small business manager, said, "The idea that we charge small companies higher rates because they can't negotiate is just wrong."

However, small business advocates believe if their purchasing power were pooled, they would see less expensive rate hikes. A bill strongly backed by U.S. House Republicans would allow small businesses to join forces across state lines to pool together. The measure, sponsored by U.S. Rep. Dennis Hastert (R-IL), has passed the House and is awaiting a vote in the Senate.



The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) has presented Jitendra (Jim) T. Shah, P.E., of the Society's West Texas Chapter with the William J. Collins, Jr. Research Promotion Award at the Society's Annual Meeting June 20-24 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

ASHRAE, founded in 1984, is an international organization of 50,000 members in more than 120 countries, including 6,000 student members; and 156 chapters in the United States and Canada, including chapters in Cairo, Hong Kong, India, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Taiwan, and Western India; 245 student branches and 45 Associate Societies. Its sole objective is to advance through research, standards writing and continuing education the arts and sciences of heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration to meet the evolving needs of the public.

The award honors a chapter research promotion chair who excels in raising funds for ASHRAE research, and is named in honor of Presidential Member William J. Collins, Jr., who was instrumental in organizing ASHRAE's research promotion program.


Jim and his committee raised \$15,180.00 for ASHRAE Research exceeding their goal for the year by 52%. Jim attributes his success by doing "Textbook" job planning, starting early, involving current and past leaders in the effort and thanking those who contributed and recognizing them publicly. He also acknowledges the West Texas Chapter members and ASHRAE's Region VIII and Society leaders who encouraged and supported his efforts.

Jim was selected for the William J. Collins, Jr. Award while he was president & research committee chairman for the ASHRAE 1996-97 term. During his presidency, the West Texas ASHRAE Chapter had the honor to be the first Chapter in Region VIII to host a presentation by an ASHRAE distinguished lecturer Eileen Duiganan-Woods, P.E. who spoke on "Design and Installation of HVAC Systems from A to Z".

Jim is now the Industrial Engineer for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) at their headquarters in Huntsville, Texas. Prior to joining TDCJ, Jim worked for the consulting firm of Fanning, Fanning and Associates, Inc.

Jim and his family are now living in Huntsville, Texas, where he is employed by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice in the Facilities Division as an industrial engineer.

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From Page One

tas una categoría para los "blancos" no hispanos y para los "negros" no hispanos.

El funcionario explicó que obviamente no se considera hispano a alguien que se identifique como polaco e hispano, pero se acepta la denominación con cualquiera que tenga algún vínculo con algún país latinoamericano o España.

Para muchos allí terminan las similitudes pues hispano puede ser alguien rubio o negro y también se puede ser recién llegado o descendiente de los habitantes originales de estados como Nuevo México o Texas, que pasaron en el siglo anterior de depender de México a hacerlo de Estados Unidos.

A los hispanos tampoco les hace mucha gracia el ser agrupados en una categoría panracial.

En la Encuesta Política Nacional Latina de 1992, en la que se entrevistó a 3,000 hispanos, el 75 por ciento dijo preferir ser identificado por su nacionalidad original, como mexicano-americano, cubano-

americano o puertorriqueño.

El 18 por ciento dijo preferir latino o hispano y el siete por ciento expresó el deseo de ser identificado sólo como estadounidense.

Sin embargo, otros como Gilbert Casellas, designado por el presidente Bill Clinton en el Consejo bipartidista de Supervisión del Censo, considera que los hispanos "comparten suficientes cosas en común" para ser considerados un grupo minoritario.

Lo mismo consideran líderes que creen que primero hay que establecerse como un grupo con poder económico y político antes de comenzar a discutir las diferencias.

Así, ahora la Oficina del Censo pronostica que para el año 2005 los hispanos serán el 12 por ciento de la población estadounidense y el sector privado indica que el poder económico de los latinos crece en millones de dólares cada día.

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Privatizing The Common Good:

The Cuny Decision

By Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo
Neoliberalism has arrived on U.S. shores!

Most people don't know what neoliberalism is, and don't care. But all of us, especially Latinos, feel its effects.

The best way to understand neoliberalism is to examine the way that its vocabulary has invaded our thinking about civic life. It has reduced all public decisions to an economics metaphor. Governments get "downsized." Tax-payers have to examine the "bottom line" of social programs. Private firms are supposed to invoke "the magic of the marketplace" to give us all more for less. Neoliberals have been successful in planting the idea in many people's heads that government should act like a business.

Now, I'm in favor of curtailing unessential costs. But by everything I've seen, big business wastes more money than most public services. For example, at Brooklyn College where I teach, we are bound as a public institution to take the lowest possible bid on services and machinery. In my department, the professors must donate the costs for food at a reception for graduating students and their families because the college cannot "waste" funds on anything not absolutely essential.

¿Deberíamos Celebrar

El 13 de Mayo

Y No El 16 de Septiembre?

Por Ray Rodriguez

"Si conmemoramos el 16 de septiembre para celebrar la declaración de independencia de México y el 5 de Mayo para reconocer la derrota del ejército francés en Puebla, ¿por qué pasamos por alto el 13 de mayo?"

A lo que estaba aludiendo mi amigo era que, el 13 de mayo de 1846, los Estados Unidos declaró guerra a un vecino amistoso y pacífico.

"Sospecho que la razón por la cual lo pasamos por alto", continuó diciendo él, "es porque el llamado Destino Manifiesto, que llevó a la guerra con México, se basaba en el mismo tema que usó Hitler para justificar sus guerras de agresión -- la necesidad de "espacio vitalD".

Intrigado por el comentario de mi amigo, fui a mi casa para verificar si ese era el caso en verdad.

Encontré una cita atribuida a John ODSullivan, a quien se acredita haber originado la frase "Destino Manifiesto". Para justificar la anexión de Texas, él declaró que Estados Unidos debía ocupar todo el continente "para el desarrollo libre de nuestros millones que se multiplican anualmente".

El grito del Destino Manifiesto y su inferencia de nuestro derecho a conquistar al continente fué asumido rápidamente por los demagogos políticos.

El interés de los Estados Unidos en adquirir territorio mexicano no era un secreto. Un hecho menos conocido es que, en 1842, las fuerzas navales estadounidenses atacaron y ocuparon a Monterey, California. Para su disgusto, se enteraron de que no existía ningún estado de guerra entre los Estados Unidos y México. En una medida característica de la hospitalidad mexicana, el gobernador invitó a los invasores a Los Angeles, donde se les ofreció comida y bebida y después se les presentó una cuenta por los daños.

Los Estados Unidos han codiciado a México desde principios del decenio de 1820, cuando muchos residentes de los Estados Unidos buscaron refugio en Texas después que Estados Unidos sufriera una depresión económica corta pero grave. Ellos llegaron procurando una oportunidad para comenzar de nuevo.

Para permitirles hacer eso, se les pusieron tierras a su disposición gratis, o por la suma ínfima de 12.5 centavos por acre. Todo lo que México pidió a cambio fué que ellos se convirtieran en "hijos del país", hijos e hijas leales. Uno esperaba naturalmente

On the other hand, my brother, who is a corporate executive, takes his golf clubs along with him when he flies to a business seminar at a resort in Key West, Florida. My brother works as hard as I do, but he gets a lot more perks -- and is a lot more sun-tanned. I just don't understand the neoliberal premise that if we ran government "like a business" the public would save money.

I think that institutions like schools and hospitals should be there to keep the profit motive out of service to the common good. Who except neoliberals want hospitals to treat only the patients who can bring in a profit? Who except neoliberals want public schools to produce earnings on Wall Street, even if they have to skimp on teachers' salaries or remediation programs for the handicapped?

The recent decision by the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York (CUNY) is an example of creeping neoliberalism. Even though the state coffers are full and the city is awash in a \$2 billion surplus, the trustees have shut the door of the university's four-year colleges to any student who needs what is called "remediation." The university imposes remediation

que los intrusos mostraran agradecimiento por su buena fortuna. En vez de eso, se alzaron contra las leyes y las costumbres de la nación que los había aceptado. Sam Houston probablemente resumió mejor la actitud de ellos cuando declaró enfáticamente que él no había venido a Texas para vivir bajo el yugo de los "grasientos". Por haber estado activo en deshacerse de los indígenas Cherokees en Tennessee, su desprecio hacia los mexicanos puede comprenderse fácilmente.

Dada esta actitud general entre los inmigrantes del Este que se habían asentado en Texas, no es sorprendente que el Presidente Polk no tuviera dificultad para fabricar la mentira de que se había derramado sangre estadounidense en suelo estadounidense por parte de México a medida que él llevó a este país a la guerra. Los detalles de la guerra y el hecho de que México perdió la mitad de su territorio son bien conocidos y no es necesario contarlos aquí. Lo que es importante es la consecuencia del conflicto.

Con la anexión de Estados Unidos de un vasto imperio que llegaba hasta el Pacífico, el asunto de la esclavitud llegó a ser una preocupación primordial. ¿Siguiría la esclavitud a la bandera?

En última instancia, la cuestión de la esclavitud sería arreglada por la Guerra Civil -- a un precio terrible para la nación. Irónicamente, muchos de los oficiales subalternos, incluyendo a Lee y a Grant, que recibieron su primera prueba de combate durante la Guerra Mexicana, serían los generales que dirigieran el conflicto más sangriento de la historia de esta nación.

También, como resultado de la primera guerra de agresión de nuestra nación, 150,000 mexicanos fueron agregados a la población de este país. El choque cultural resultante ha continuado siendo una polémica en los Estados Unidos. Hoy, 150 años después, las repercusiones continúan plagando a las relaciones entre los Estados Unidos y México.

Como si presintieran el precio ominoso que habría que pagar, muchos residentes de los Estados Unidos se opusieron a la guerra calificándola de injusta. Abraham Lincoln la denunció en el Congreso. David Thoreau y otros ciudadanos se negaron a pagar impuestos para apoyarla.

La pérdida de la mitad de su territorio fué un golpe del que México nunca se ha recuperado. El que la guerra no fuera un capítulo glorioso en ninguna de las historias orgullosas de las dos naciones puede explicar el por qué ambos países han decidido pasar por alto el 13 de mayo.

tion when students fail tests in mathematics, reading or writing.

But many students do not fail the tests because they are stupid or unable to do college work. Research has shown that the most common reasons students need remediation are either that they have learned English as a second language or that they have not been prepared adequately by the high schools. Latinos make up a large number of such students.

Over the years, we have found that the college is the first school that many students have ever attended where the emphasis is on learning from books instead of dodging bullets and falling plaster. Until now, the colleges have done an excellent job of providing an atmosphere to get an education while benefiting from a little extra help to overcome the disadvantages of poverty. Many students take advantage of the opportunity, and they blossom. The investment in education pays big dividends.

But neoliberalism has decreed that a handful of political appointees (the Board of Trustees) can override the experience and wisdom of skilled educators. It's like a bunch of plumbers deciding the fate of the NASA space program. Complex social issues don't go away when they are subjected to ideological slogans that gather election-year headlines.

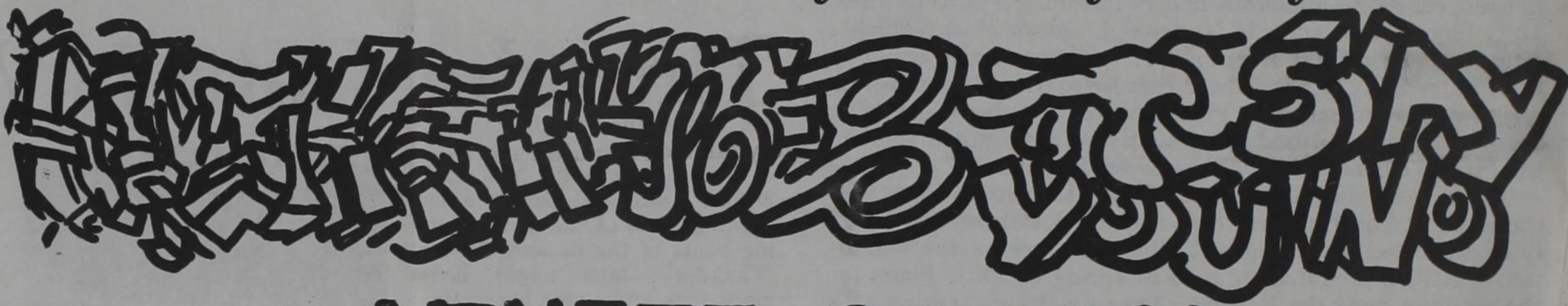
Latinos who understand how neoliberal policies have produced great suffering in Latin American countries, where the luxury of the few is more important than the common good of the majority, must now face the same enemy within the United States' borders.



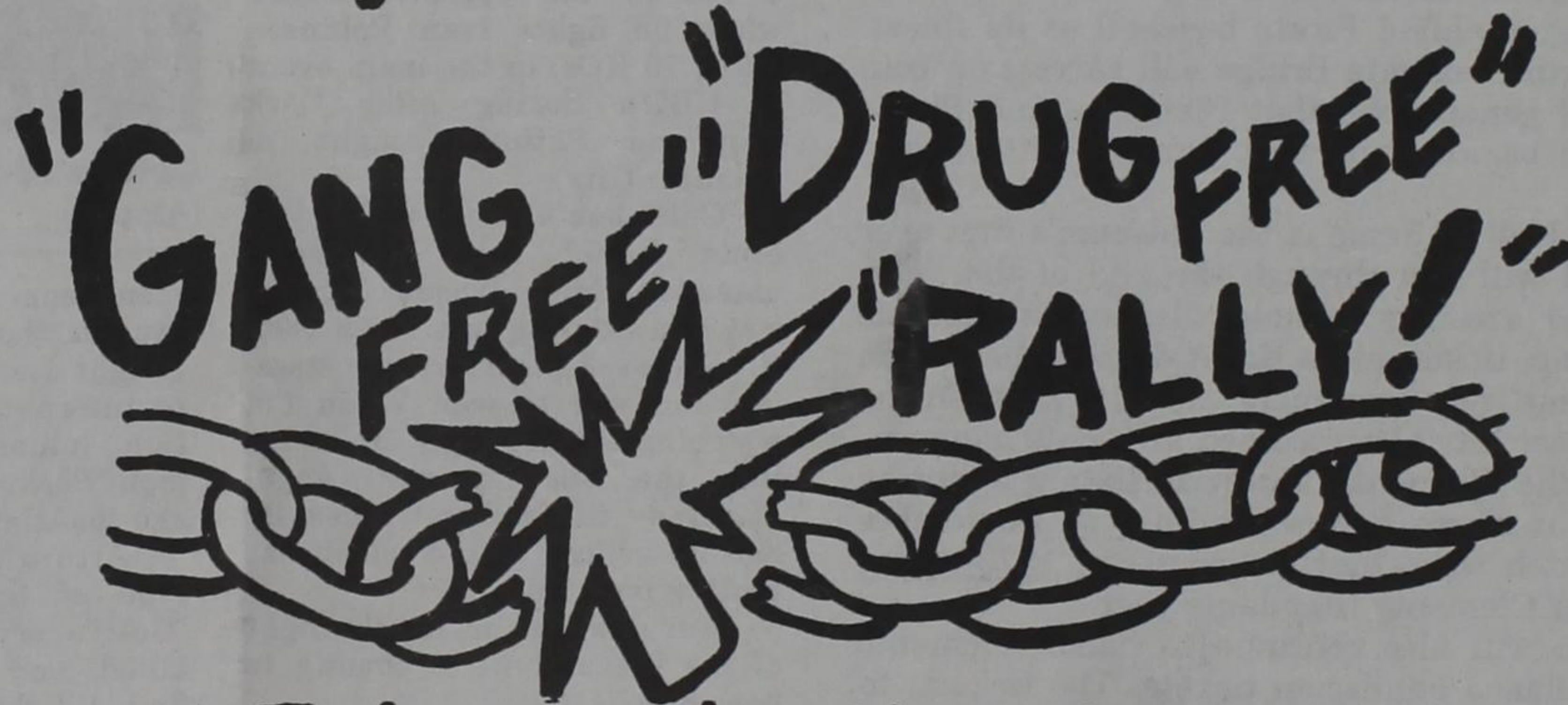
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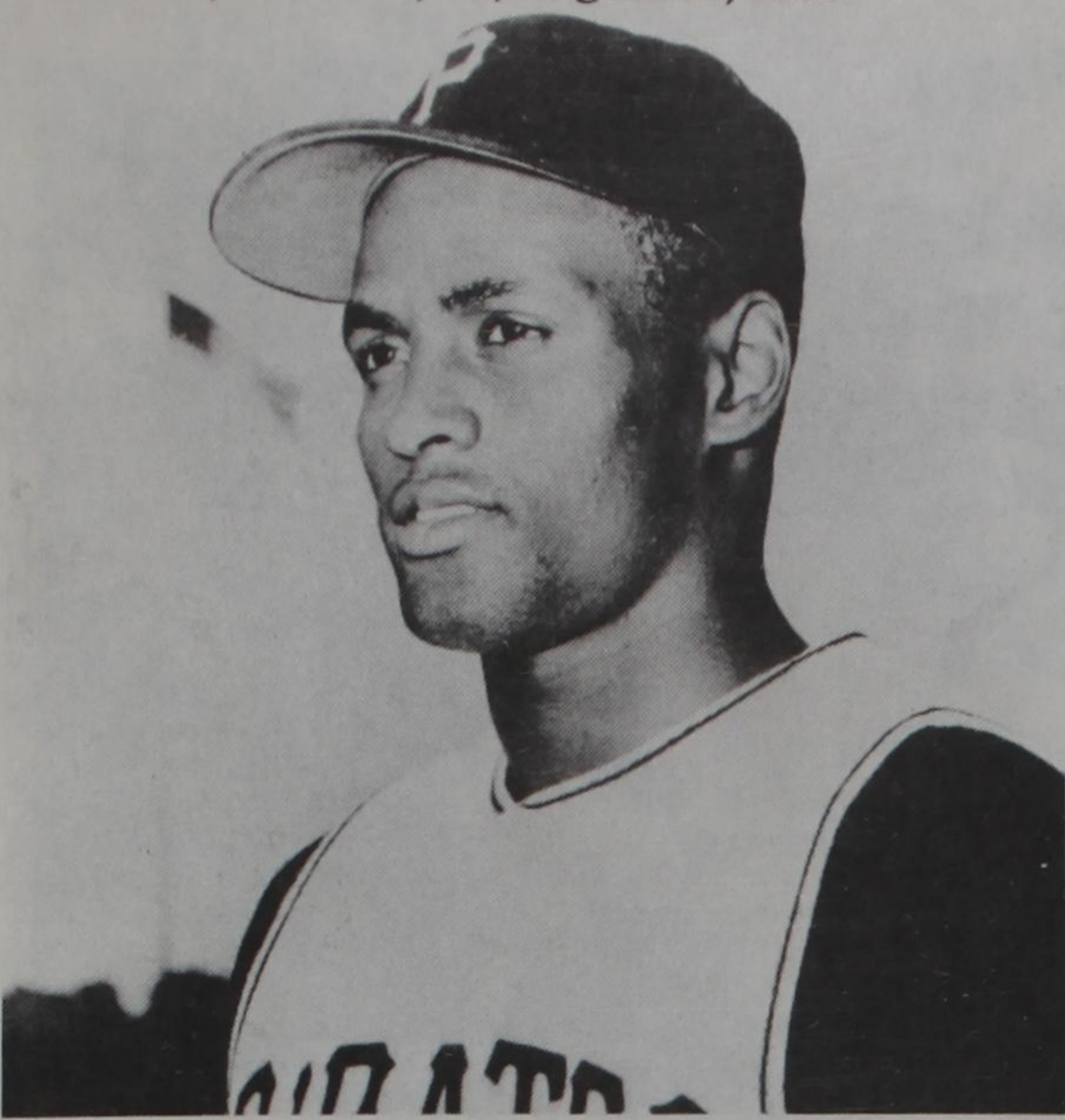
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25 Years Later, The World Still Remembers Roberto Clemente:

Pittsburgh Re-christens 6th Street after baseball legend

by Elbert Garcia

On December 31, 1972, baseball lost one of its brightest stars as legend Roberto Clemente lost his life in a plane crash while flying relief supplies to Nicaraguan earthquake victims. 25 years later, his dedication both to the game and life are being celebrated.

The city of Pittsburgh announced earlier this month that it was renaming a major municipal suspension bridge after the Puerto Rican legend. Baseball's Hall of Fame, to which Clemente was inducted in 1973, is honoring the Pittsburgh Pirates with a year-long exhibit as issuing a commemorative admission ticket all throughout 1998.

"I can think of no better tribute to the memory of Roberto Clemente and the pride that he brought to Pittsburgh than renaming the Sixth Street Bridge, the Roberto Clemente Bridge," said Chairman of the Allegheny County Commissioners, Bob Cranmer upon announcement of the renaming of Pittsburgh's 6th Street Bridge.

A 12 time All Star, Clemente played rightfield for the Pittsburgh Pirates for all of his eighteen seasons in the National League, collecting numerous honors including 4 batting titles, 12 Golden Gloves and the National League's Most Valuable Player (MVP) in 1966. His number 21, permanently retired by the Pirates in 1973, flies above rightfield, the only number to do have that honor. (All Pirate retired numbers, including Clemente's, are featured prominently on the outfield walls of the Pirates current home, Three Rivers Stadium.)

The 60 year old bridge is one of three identical bridges that connect Pittsburgh's North Side with its downtown and is fully incorporated into designs for the city's new baseball stadium, PNC Park, slated to open in spring of 2001. Plans for the stadium have the Roberto Clemente Bridge serving as a pedestrian walkway during Pirate home games, with fans being able to enter the ballpark directly from the bridge.

"It is extremely fitting that the name Roberto Clemente, one of this country's most cherished and revered athletes, will forever grace the bridge that will serve as an entrance to the Pirates' new home," said Pirates' Chief Executive Officer and Managing General Partner, Kevin McClatchy.

"The Great One" exemplified Pirate baseball at its finest. PNC Park and Roberto Clemente Bridge will serve as a constant reminder to all generations that Clemente and Pirate baseball will forever be an important part of Pittsburgh," said Cramer

The exhibit at the Hall of Fame is the Museum's first ever bilingual exhibit and will run through the end of the year. Some of the featured artifacts include Clemente's cap, his 1960 World Series ring, ticket and a ticket & scoresheet from Clemente's final game on September 30, 1972 when he stroked his 3,000 career hit. Also included are some memorabilia that celebrate the Clemente legacy including a button from Clemente Day at Three Rivers Stadium on September 24, 1971, the #21 patch worn by the Pirates in 1973 and a medal issued to honor Clemente that same year.

The Hall of Fame will also continue to honor Clemente through specially designed admission tickets. The tickets, to be distributed throughout the rest of the year, feature artwork from Hall of Fame photographer Miles Stewart Jr. And are being underwritten by the TOPPS baseball card company.

"The admission ticket is a wonderful keepsake for Museum visitors," said Hall of Fame Vice-President Frank Simio. "It features a sensational photo collage of Clemente-related artifacts from our collection and is designed to look like a traditional card."

The tickets have been a hit with the fans who regularly visit the Hall of Fame. "Museum visitors have been both surprised and excited to receive the ticket," said Simio

In a addition to his 3,000 career hits, Clemente also struck 240 homeruns, drove in 1,350 RBIs and finished with a and lifetime .317 batting average. He also hit safely in all 14 World Series appearances, collected a 1971 World Series Most Valuable Player Award and two World Series Rings (1960 & 1971).

His tragic death in 1972 prompted the Hall of Fame's Board of Directors to unanimously wave the customary five year period for induction, opening the door for the Baseball Writers Association of America (BWAA) to hold a special election on Clemente's behalf. By an overwhelming vote of 93%, Clemente became the first player of Latin American descent to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. Since then only four players have been inducted; Al Lopez in 1977, Juan Mariscal in 1983, Luis Aparicio in 1984, and Rod Carew in 1991.

The Clemente exhibit, located in the Library Exhibit room, will run until December 31. Open seven days a week all year around, the Hall of Fame's operating hours are 9:00am - 9:00pm until September 30th and from 9:00am to 5:00pm from October 1st to April 30th.

Cowboys & Cowgirls This Week

INSIDE SLANT

Now the pressure is on this Dallas Cowboys' offense, which supposedly is being retooled this year under the guidance of new head coach Chan Gailey, who also serves as the offensive coordinator.

Why pressure in the preseason? In just the fourth preseason game?

Well, put it this way: In the past two preseason games, the Cowboys have scored no more than three points, Richie Cunningham kicked a field goal in each game. And even though the first-team offense played in just the first quarter of each game, it could not account for a touchdown and only has accounted for one total, that coming in the preseason opener against Seattle.

Still, why the pressure?

Gailey has been pointing to Saturday's game at St. Louis as the team's dress rehearsal, where he will give his first-team offensive unit -- complete with Troy Aikman, Emmitt Smith, Michael Irvin and the first-team offensive line -- at least one full half of duty. In fact, Gailey said the Cowboys will game plan a little, but only a little, since they have but two full days of practice remaining this week before leaving Friday for St. Louis.

Now then, if the Cowboys are unproductive Saturday against the Rams, that could destroy any amount of confidence they might have compiled during this summer's training camp. Gailey sold his club on his offense during camp, but questions could oc-



MOOSE: Johnston is ahead of schedule. Cur if points are harder to come by than even last season, which caused owner Jerry Jones to send former offensive coordinator Ernie Zampese off to New England.

"We're not where we need to be by any means," Gailey said. "That's obvious. But we can get there, and that's what we'll spend the next three weeks working on. We still have some time."

Even though Smith did not play in Monday's night's 21-3 loss to New England in Mexico City, the Cowboys' problems did not stem from who was running the football. The offensive line appeared to have taken a step backward, not only failing to open holes for the running game, but also

failing to provide Aikman with sufficient protection. Although Aikman was not sacked, he was hit numerous times during his first-quarter appearance.

"I thought we had made some progress in our pass protection," Gailey said.

One of the culprits was right guard Everett McIver, who was playing for only the second time in a game-like situation since missing 11 days after suffering his neck laceration. McIver did play 21 plays against the Saints in last week's scrimmage, but appeared rusty against the Pats.

Two things have been most troubling for the Cowboys: their inability to produce big plays and convert on third down. Without big plays -- and the biggest pass play has been a 32-yard catch by free-agent Jeff Ogden in mop-up time -- third down conversions become of utmost importance. But the Cowboys have converted just five of 28 chances in the past two games. In fact, Gailey became so desperate for his first-team offense to hang on to the football Monday night that he went against common sense, going for it on a fourth-and-one play from his own 39. The Cowboys failed to convert, setting up New England's first touchdown.

So if there is going to be a confidence-builder, it had better be this weekend because, as Gailey says, "You don't want your players to think nothing will go right" heading into the season.

And right now, those thoughts must be prevalent.

Holyfield May Face Lewis For \$20 M

LONDON - The Home Box Office television network has offered Evander Holyfield \$20 million to fight Lennox Lewis and unify the world heavyweight boxing titles.

HBO spokesman Seth Abraham said Holyfield asked for \$20 million for the fight and now had no reason not to take it.

"The only reason this fight will not go ahead is if Evander Holyfield does not want it," Abraham said when he announced the offer in London today.

Abraham said Holyfield's contractual obligations with promoter Don King and the Showtime network did not prevent him from fighting Lewis.

"I believe he wants this fight. It's what everyone wants ... except Don King. King is the only obstacle to this fight," he said.

"What we want to see is the reunification - this would be the only unified crown in world boxing."

"Evander's record of accomplishment would be spoiled without a fight against the only man who is his true peer today - his equal in the heavyweight ranks," he added.

Abraham said the venue - either of two venues on the East Coast of the United States - the date, either Dec. 5 or Dec. 12, and the purse can be guaranteed.

The promoters are billing the bout as the fight fans have been waiting to see since 1992, when Riddick Bowe trashed the WBC title belt after failing to fight Lewis - then a challenger.

Lewis is expected to earn \$10 million if Holyfield agrees to put his WBA and IBF world title belts on the line for the unification fight.

HBO also announced it had completed a seven-fight deal with Lewis, commencing with his fight against Zeljko Mavrovic in September.

Lewis' second scheduled fight in the new deal is the proposed Holyfield bout in December. He will fight at least two times on HBO per year until 2000.

HBO senior vice president Lou DiBella said Lewis' contract was the most lucrative the cable network had signed with any current boxer, including Oscar De La Hoya, Roy Jones Jr., and Prince Naseem Hamed.

Thunder Gatti Is Very Real

By Joe Skrec

With his powerful fists, Hollywood looks, and penchant for fighting some of the most exciting bouts of the decade, Arturo "Thunder" Gatti might have more fans than any boxer this side of Oscar De La Hoya.

And everyone in the boxing business is talking about him.

The popular New Jersey pugilist, the former International Boxing Federation junior lightweight champion, will even have a fan in the opposite corner when he fights Ivan Robinson (25-2, 10 KOs) in the main event of HBO's Boxing After Dark show on Saturday night in Atlantic City.

"Gatti has a heart as big you could have," said Robinson's manager, Eddie Woods. "It's always an exciting fight with Gatti because of his heart, his stamina and will to win. When I'm watching a Gatti fight at home, like the one against (Angel Manfredy in January) I usually end up yelling at the television, rooting for him."

"But now he's in for the fight of his life and we're coming to beat him."

Manfredy and a nasty cut stopped the 26-year-old Gatti (29-2, 24 KOs) during the eighth round on Jan. 17 in Atlantic City. The loss ended Gatti's 23-bout winning streak but didn't snap his string of exciting bouts, which included memorable comeback victories in title defenses against Wilson Rodriguez (1996) and Gabriel Ruelas (1997).

"I call Arturo, 'The Cardiac Kid,'" said Lou DiBella, an HBO executive

who helps secure bouts for the premium cable network. "And I've experienced quite a bit of heartburn watching him fight. But I love to watch him fight. He's pure excitement. It's like watching a Rocky movie."

GATTI IS VERY REAL TO Joe Souza, a cutman who'll be in the slugger's corner for the seventh consecutive bout on Saturday night. The San Antonio-based Souza miraculously kept Gatti's eyes opened on March 23, 1996 and allowed him to get off the canvas to stop Rodriguez and produce one of the most exciting finishes in recent memory.

"Gatti is one hell of an exciting fighter, even a dead man could see that," said Souza, who learned his trade from the late Ace Marotta. "I always enjoy his fights more when I get home and watch them on tape."

Sometimes, it's hard to believe what you're seeing. You never know what to expect out of Gatti from one round to the next.

"Arturo's a rare breed in today's fight game. He gives fans their money's worth every time he enters the ring," said promoter Dino Duva, president of Main Events. "His fights are not for the faint of heart."

Harold "The Shadow" Knight works the corner of World Boxing Council heavyweight cham-



Gatti is 29-2 with 24 KOs. (Allsport)

pion Lennox Lewis but keeps an eye on the 130-pound division. Knight lost a 15-round decision to International Boxing Federation junior lightweight champion Rocky Lockridge 10 years ago in Atlantic City.

"Arturo Gatti is a throwback type of fighter," Knight said. "Gatti's style is to kill or be killed, and I don't think you'll find a fight fan anywhere who doesn't like that attitude. Arturo's going out there to knock you out even though he might get knocked down trying."

LAST OCT. 4, MINUTES BEFORE Lewis scored a first-round KO of Andrew Golota, the heavyweight champion watched from his dressing room -- glued to the TV, according to Knight -- as Gatti rallied to notch a fifth-round technical knockout of former world champion Gabriel Ruelas.

"We were all going crazy watching that fight, Lennox included," Knight said. "You can't help but get excited watching Gatti. What makes him so exciting is that even when he's in trouble, he always has a puncher's chance."

Nobody needs to remind Robinson, who spent significant time with Gatti during some of Pernel "Sweet Pea" Whitaker's training camps in Virginia Beach, Va.

"You can never take Arturo Gatti lightly because he has the heart of a champion and is always capable of pulling something from his bag of tricks," said Robinson, who fought and lost three bouts to De La Hoya as an amateur. "This is going to be like one of those Mike Tyson fights when you want to make sure you don't want to leave your seat. Make sure you take care of anything you've got to do before the fight starts because it's going to be exciting."

Robinson was supposed to challenge the very exciting Shane Mosley, the International Boxing Federation's undefeated lightweight champion, at the Apollo of Temple of June 27 but was forced to withdraw after his eye was nicked in sparring. Robinson's disappointment has been replaced by a bout against Gatti.

A former United States Boxing Association champion, Robinson, 27, lost a 12-round decision to then-IBF champion Philip Holiday on Dec. 21, 1996.

Robinson's only other setback, a third-round TKO, came against Israel "Pito" Cardona last summer.

"We've always taken training camp seriously, but this one has been different because I've been so isolated from my family," said Robinson, who, with wife Tanya, has two children. "This is the opportunity I've been waiting for all my life. Beating Arturo Gatti would be a dream come true and give me a chance to write my own ticket to a big-money fight."

Gatti said: "Anyone who fights me knows they have to fight for their life because I'll never quit."

El Editor

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