

# En busca de soluciones nuevas en la era postacción afirmativa en E.U

NOTA EDITORIAL: Los estadounidenses llevan décadas alegando en torno de la acción afirmativa. Recién nos hemos tomado el tiempo para advertir que los beneficiados (negros, morenos y mujeres) son en su mayoría de la clase media. Así, la acción afirmativa tal vez sea injusta con los blancos pobres dado que ellos no constituyen un grupo minoritario reconocido. Al buscar soluciones para contrarrestar las injusticias sociales, necesitamos analizar la importancia de las clases sociales.  
 POR RICHARD RODRIGUEZ, PACIFIC NEWS SERVICE

Hace unas cuantas semanas un maestro de leyes de la Universidad de Texas se metió en un lío, pues dijo que los africano americanos y los mexicanos llevan las de perder en estudios de nivel universitario porque sus culturas toleran el fracaso. Jesse Jackson voló a Austin para dar un discurso acalorado. Hubo estudiantes que exigieron la destitución del maestro.

Todo sucedió en la misma tónica en que por años se ha discutido el asunto de la acción afirmativa. Como siempre, ambas partes entraron en discusiones de raza y etnicidad y ambas partes ignoraron el problema de fondo: la desigualdad social.

Aunque la acción afirmativa ya dejó de existir en California, hasta el momento nadie ha dicho la verdadera causa del fracaso: La acción afirmativa

fue injusta con los blancos pobres.

Los europeos no tienen empacho en hablar de algo que a nosotros los estadounidenses se nos dificulta: las clases bajas. Aparte de oír expresiones despectivas para los blancos pobres -- llamados "rednecks" (sureño reaccionario de la clase baja rural) y "trailer park trash" (escoria de campamento de trailer)-- rara vez se entera uno de que la clase media reconozca la existencia de clases. En estos tiempos el único villano hollywoodense, en términos de ideología progresista, es el hombre blanco rural.

Lo racial es lo que cuenta en los Estados Unidos; la metáfora racial es la que importa para hacer las distinciones sociales. Hablamos de diferencias entre negros y blancos, mas no de diferencias entre ricos y pobres.

Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison. Los escritores estadounidenses describen magníficamente lo que significa ser parte de una minoría racial. Pero son pocos los escritores de los Estados Unidos que describan tan magníficamente lo que significa ser pobre. No tenemos a ningún escritor de la talla de D.H.

Lawrence (inglés, hijo de un trabajador de las minas de carbón), quien desde chico se avergonzaba por tener tersas las manos.

El maestro de la universidad de Texas vio con facilidad que los estudiantes que estaban abandonando sus estudios eran mexicanos o africano americanos. No se le ocurrió pensar si serían pobres.

Por otro lado, los estudiantes encolerizados que acusaron de racista a ese maestro no tomaron en cuenta lo obvio: EN EFECTO y a menudo, los estudiantes pobres vienen de las barriadas y de familias que sí toleran el fracaso, o que al menos han aprendido, sabiamente, a tener pocas expectativas.

Tengo idea de lo que significa ser pobre. Mis padres son originarios de pueblitos mexicanos. Aunque en los Estados Unidos ascendieron a la clase media, ellos aún saben que la vida es difícil. La educación vale la pena, si es que funciona.

Constantemente conozco gente joven que tiene ganas de estudiar en la universidad, pero Mamá necesita que el hijo mayor empiece a trabajar. Más vale tener unos centavos contantes y

# News Briefs

## CA Poised to End Bilingual Education

First, California voters did away with benefits to undocumented immigrants. Then they got rid of affirmative action. Now, in what is rapidly emerging as the brand-name ballot issue for 1998, bilingual education may meet its end, reports US News.

Last week, petitions were filed for English for the Children, a ballot measure sponsored by Silicon Valley millionaire Ron Unz that would virtually eliminate bilingual education in California. It is all but certain to qualify for the June 1998 ballot. The initiative would require that all students in public schools be taught primarily in English unless their parents request otherwise. Children who don't speak English would be placed in English immersion classes, normally for no more than a year.

California, with its burgeoning immigrant population, leads the country in students who are not proficient in English at 25 percent, compared with 6.7 percent of students nationally. If the initiative passes, as is expected, it will have implications for the way English is taught throughout the United States.

The initiative is expected to be strongly supported by Latinos and other immigrants. A recent Los Angeles Times poll showed 84 percent of Latinos said they would support the bilingual-education initiative, surpassing even the 80 percent of white voters who said they would back it. Immigrants tend to regard English as the language of upward mobility and want their children to learn it as quickly as possible.

The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, HN3451@handsnet.org, opposes the initiative and has blocked reforms in the past. The group says the measure is really an attack on Hispanic culture and political power. "This is the third in a chain of anti-immigrant, anti-Latino proposals," says Joseph Jaramillo, a staff attorney for MALDEF.

With roughly \$400 million a year spent on bilingual education, a number of constituencies stand to lose money if the measure passes. Schools receive several hundred extra dollars for each student in a bilingual class. Teachers can earn up to \$5,000 extra annually for working in bilingual programs, and unions fear the referendum could jeopardize that bonus for some 20,000 teachers.

## CA Moves to Evict Undocumented Immigrants Getting Aid

Thousands of undocumented immigrants and their families could be evicted from state-subsidized housing within the next year under tough new rules proposed by the Wilson administration, reports The San Francisco Chronicle.

The regulations, which would force nearly 50,000 tenants to prove their citizenship or documented residency, have drawn protests from housing advocates who claim the rules exceed anything required under the 1996 federal welfare reform act.

Under the proposed rules, which could be implemented early next year, tenants receiving state housing assistance will be systematically checked for birth certificates or immigration papers. If a single member of a household is an undocumented immigrant, the entire household would be evicted.

The regulations will cover more than a dozen housing assistance programs, ranging from farmworker housing projects to loans and grants to nonprofits to build affordable housing. There are waiting lists of one to two years for some of the rental assistance programs.

This year the Wilson's office identified over 200 public benefits scheduled to be discontinued, ranging from professional licenses and unemployment benefits to student financial aid and job placement services.

In September, the state Housing and Community Development department was one of the first agencies out of the gate with its "verification" regulations. Last week, the department concluded the last of three public hearings on the proposed rules in Sacramento and Los Angeles.

The department must still review the public comments and decide on any modifications before the regulations can go into effect. Mallory said he expects the process to be completed by early next year.

Housing groups are painting a grim picture of the fallout from the new rules. They argue that homelessness could rise dramatically as poor families are evicted and new rentals are held up while the state completes the time-consuming citizenship verification process.

In San Francisco, for example, the mayor's office estimates that between 1,000 and 1,200 rental units could be covered by the regulations. The state estimates that occupants of as many as 25,000 housing units receive some form of state public assistance covered by the law.

There is no hard data on how many households would be affected because verification of immigrant status has not yet occurred. Mallory estimated that as many as 5 percent of households could face eviction.

## Catholic Run HMO Bars Abortion Coverage

A Roman Catholic nonprofit health maintenance organization states it will not provide abortions or other family planning measures for its 60,000 Medicaid members, reports The New York Times.

Fidelis Care of New York, sponsored by the eight Catholic dioceses in the state, is a Medicaid-only H.M.O. covering a 26-county area, including New York City.

In August, when the State Health Department approved the Fidelis Care bid to take over Better Health Care Inc., which is based in Buffalo, the Catholic group announced that it would not continue family planning for the estimated 40,000 members of the H.M.O. it was absorbing.

State law allows for this. Medicaid patients enrolled in a health maintenance organization must get all their care from the doctors in their network.

But state officials allowed an exception for family planning like abortions and contraceptives. A woman on Medicaid seeking an abortion, for example, can get one from any doctor that accepts Medicaid -- without approval from her H.M.O.

Although abortion-rights advocates had lobbied for this free access policy, they told The Sunday Gazette of Schenectady that the purpose was "turned on its head" when state officials declared that health maintenance organizations could choose not to cover any reproductive health care at all.

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

# EL EDITOR

Vol. XXI No. 8

Week of November 20 to November 26, 1997

Lubbock, Texas

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## Comentarios de Bidal

by Bidal Aguero

Last night while listening to the late news on Channel 11, I heard a person from the Reese Re-development Center yell "We're Four Million dollars richer." The person speaking was talking about a recent grant from the State to establish a new program at the now closed Air Force Base.

When I heard the news, I couldn't help but think of my friend Eden.

Eden is one of those persons who was laid-off because of the Base closure. He was working for an independent contractor of the federal government.

He specialized in preparing safety equipment for pilots.

Not that Eden should be a person to feel sorry for because he has always been resourceful enough and has enough skills to work to make enough money to pay his bills and put food on the table.

But Eden doesn't have a permanent job.

We hear daily about how grants are received in order to get jobs for displaced workers and how programs are continually being funded in order to help displaced workers. We hear daily about how the money that is received to re-develop Reese will provide jobs.

Yet Eden doesn't have a permanent job. As probably do many other persons who lost their jobs because of the closure and who have chosen to stay in Lubbock.

It really makes me wonder who those people are that are being hired by the four million dollars and who are those people that are working at different government programs in order to find jobs for the displaced workers.

\*\*\*Pico de Gallo\*\*\*

I received a flyer this week inviting me to a planning session for a function to be held "to honor Chancellor John Montford for his vision" in promoting cultural diversity.

Perhaps we have been missing something.

Happy Thanksgiving From El Editor

# Curanderos And the Age of Mass Media

By: J. L. Rodriguez

They claim to have the power to heal - defiantly calling themselves "Curanderos" from the spiritual world. They appear on local Spanish television stations and radio stations virtually every time we tune in, offering the cure for all personal and medical problems. There are always the offers of magic potions that cure anything from alcoholic and cheating spouses to financial hardships, and sometimes one may boldly promise cures for chronic conditions such as cancer and the like. Conditions that any person in desperation is readily willing to sacrifice any amount necessary, as long as there is even the slimmest hope that they or their loved ones might be cured.

It is no secret that as an ethnic culture, Hispanics hold higher degrees of value on Spiritual ideologies. Is this a trait that now more than ever makes us an attractive target for today's "Media Curanderos"? (Groups that travel from town to town promising to cure all that we suffer via the Mass Media).

Through our ancestry we have all known of spiritual healing by prayer and herbal medicines but, in the past it seems this practice was never exploited. The true practice of spiritual healing never solicited customers, those that healed never amassed huge profits and they certainly never implemented massive advertising campaigns.

Has Mass Media become a tool now being used to bilk the elderly, the poor and those in desperation of their hard earned salaries or Social Security Checks?

Preliminary research seems to point that these traveling curanderos tend to target only communities that offer Spanish media outlets. But, not all Spanish media allows them to advertise. That's because some broadcasters do not see this form of advertising as ethical.

One local broadcaster that does not allow this type of solicitation is Ernest Barton, owner of KEJS FM. When asked if he felt it posed an ethical question Barton said, "It's up to the individual media but, we don't allow their advertising messages to be aired on our station." Primarily because he questions their legitimacy.

In Lubbock, of the five Spanish media companies, two companies do allow it. One of the companies that offers the messages is Paisano Broadcasting, the owners of

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TRABAJOS GARANTIZADOS

AMULETO GRATIS

both KBSO AM and the low power television station that airs the Univision network. Paid programs and advertising from "curanderos" regularly appear on both of their stations. The other is Ramar Communications, the owners of KXTQ FM (Magic 93) and the low power television station that airs the Telemundo Network.

Chuck Heinz, the General Manager of Ramar Hispanic Media, the division that manages Magic 93 and Lubbock's Telemundo station, feels it does not pose an ethical question. When asked if he felt there was a concern that those in desperation might be taken advantage of by these groups, his response was "The same argument could be made about the South Plains Fair. In either case we don't force people to go there."

According to Blas Mojica of VG&M Production, a local production company, what Ramar Communications does do is to go out of their way to protect the large amounts of advertising revenue they receive from these groups.

"Ramar went as far as to cancel the time slot that we were buying from them for a production of ours, a comedy show that made fun of the "brujeria" that these guys promote on their programs... It had to of been because the station was receiving pressure from the groups," Mojica said.

Currently two groups of "Media Curanderos" operate in Lubbock. The money amounts that these groups solicit start at \$40.00 by one and \$50.00 by the other, however, that is only for the first visit. Thereafter, the costs will vary according to someone I spoke with

on the telephone. The person wouldn't identify himself but, he did say he was a "curandero" claiming to have all the powers of one.

Today's "Media Curanderos" portray the ability to tap into either White or Black Magical powers. White Magic being the power to dissolve us of evil spells placed on us through others by tapping into the spiritual world. Black magic is perceived as the act of placing evil spells or endeavoring into the evil world.

When I asked him how much he normally charged, he said that would vary depending on the amount of visits needed. "It's like when you go to a doctor," he said. I can't tell you how much it is going to cost until you come in and I analyze the severity of the spell."

According to him black magic spells were usually placed by adversaries or someone jealous of us to cause bad luck, financial problems or even death.

There are unconfirmed reports locally that people have paid as much as \$1,500 to these groups.

What would seem as a disparity is that the clientele that usually end up desperately seeking relief are those that are under poverty guidelines. Raising the question. Are the poor squandering much of the valuable resources that they need to survive due to a form of mal-practice?

It would certainly seem ironic that someone would be profiting highly from the one element in our lives that eliminate the pain of despair brought upon by our economic conditions - our spirituality.

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# La Accion Afirmativa - Lo Mejor De Lo Peor

Por Miguel Pérez

Winston Churchill dijo una vez que la democracia es la peor de las formas de gobierno, con la excepción de todas las demás. Yo pienso lo mismo sobre la acción afirmativa.

Hasta que a alguien se le ocurra algo mejor para rectificar las desigualdades y la discriminación que aún existen en nuestra sociedad, la acción afirmativa es la mejor de las peores soluciones.

Idealmente, la mejor solución sería ninguna solución, la cual es la postura de quienes prohibirían la acción afirmativa. Pero su concepto idealista de "una sociedad ciega al color" es igual que el comunismo, bello en teoría pero irreal en la práctica. Y, sin excepción, la peor forma de gobierno.

Si los que desean prohibir la acción afirmativa salieran con una idea mejor, muchas más personas estarían dispuestas a escuchar. Pero todo lo que ellos proponen es el comunismo... caramba! Quiero decir, "una sociedad que no distinga los colores."

Puede que se necesite un cubano-americano anti-comunista, defensor de los derechos civiles, para hacer el siguiente argumento, pero ahí va.

Las tablas se han virado. Aquellos republicanos que lucharon más árdamente contra el comunismo -- y con razón -- están pidiéndonos ahora que aceptemos un concepto igualmente elusivo. Y aquellos dirigentes de los derechos civiles que han co-

queteado con los dictadores comunistas están abrazando un concepto más realista.

Y, ¿por qué es el concepto de una sociedad que no distinga colores tan falto de realismo? Porque muchas de las personas que lo promueven son provocadores raciales bien conocidos. Estas son personas que no pueden ocultar su motivo verdadero: Empujar a las mujeres y a los ciudadanos estadounidenses que no son blancos de regreso al siglo pasado.

Estas son las mismas personas que emplearon tácticas anti-democráticas para obstaculizar una votación en plenaria del Senado en una gestión para impalar la confirmación del abogado Bill Lann Lee como jefe para los derechos civiles. Eso es sencillamente porque Lee, el primer asiático-estadounidense postulado para esa plaza, concuerda con la postura del presidente sobre la acción afirmativa y continuaría defendiendo los programas que son todavía ley en la mayor parte del país.

Estas son las personas que se las arreglaron para aprobar la Proposición 209 en California, al proponerse terminar con las preferencias, lo cual desvió a muchos electores porque suena bien en teoría.

Estas son las personas cuya norma "sin colores" de gobierno pareció estar en camino a la victoria cuando el Tribunal Supremo rechazó una demanda contra la Proposición 209 el 3 de noviembre -- sólo para que los electores de Houston les tiraran la puerta

en sus caras el 4 de noviembre.

A diferencia de los electores de California, a quienes se les preguntó si desmantelarían los programas que concedían empleos "en base a raza, sexo, color, etnicidad u origen nacional," a los electores de Houston se les preguntó con una medida mayor de realidad si querían "poner fin al uso de la acción afirmativa para las mujeres y las personas minoritarias" en el empleo y la contratación.

La redacción hizo toda la diferencia. La negativa de Houston a eliminar los programas de acción afirmativa hizo volar la marea, por lo menos temporariamente.

El 6 de noviembre, el Representante George Gekas, republicano de Pennsylvania, asombró a una concurrencia audiencia al pedirle a un comité de la Cámara que postergara indefinidamente la legislación que eliminaría los programas federales de acción afirmativa, no porque haya visto la luz de pronto, sino porque los campeones de una hipocresía "sin colores" se dieron cuenta de que necesitaban conseguir mayor apoyo público. Gekas dijo a los reporteros que "el lanzarse de cabeza dentro del asunto sin edificar un consenso nacional sólo se vería como político y divisionista."

Lo cual significa: Prepárense para una medida mucho mayor de provocación racial por parte de aquéllos que alegan no ver los colores.

También significa que aquéllos que apoyan la acción

afirmativa tienen que probar que poseen las cualidades de liderazgo del Alcalde de Houston, Bob Lanier, quien se aseguró de que a los electores de su ciudad se les hiciera una pregunta realista en las boletas, y se mantuvo firme en contra la prohibición del programa.

Esta es la hora para que aquéllos que creen en la democracia se pongan de pie y rechacen las gestiones encaminadas a dividir al pueblo de los Estados Unidos a lo largo de las líneas raciales.

¿Por qué fracasaría una sociedad sin acción afirmativa -- de igual modo que fracasó el comunismo? Porque, cuando se les deja a merced de sus propios dispositivos, sin algunas salvaguardas gubernamentales en materia de derechos civiles, los seres humanos no son infalibles. Algunas personas en ambos extremos del espectro -- desde los comunistas hasta los racistas -- procurarán siempre privilegios especiales, riqueza y poder a costa de los desventajados, y hasta mediante la opresión contra éstos.

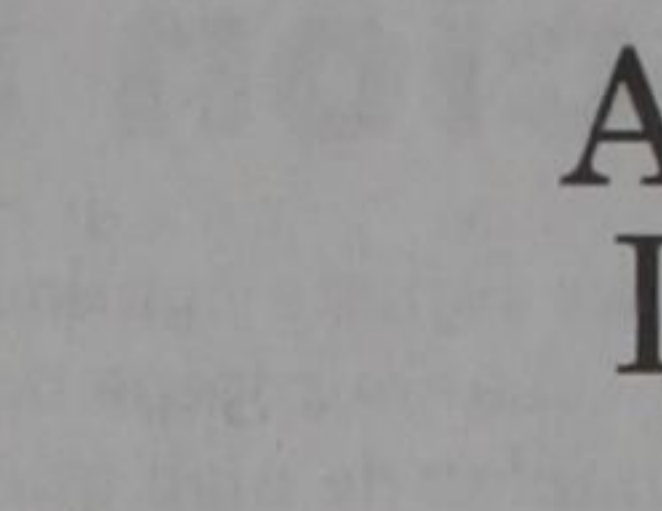
La democracia y la acción afirmativa son protecciones necesarias contra nuestros peores instintos humanos.

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

Propiedad literaria registrada por Hispanic Link News Service en 1997. Distribuido por The Los Angeles Times Syndicate

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# Sittin' Here Thinkin'



## A Glimpse of Immortality by Ira Cutler

This past Saturday I met my week old, twin granddaughters for the first time. They are not yet walking and their conversation is a little limited, but they are very special young ladies. They are tiny, healthy, sometimes squirmy when you hold them, obviously of above average intelligence and sensitivity, well-mannered, alert and extraordinarily good-looking. Even a non-grandfather would say so.

The reproductive process is a remarkable thing when you stop and think about it. Somehow these little girls, who began at a molecular level only months ago, have miraculously become full fledged human beings and, for me, that is the best available evidence for the existence of God and/or meaning in the universe.

The miracle is a continuing one -- every day they are busily about the business of becoming fully independent, even now when they are totally dependent. On Saturday I fed them and each of them tried, with the tiniest of hands, to hold the bottle themselves. Even at a week old they are straining for mastery over their world. A short while ago they could not even breathe or take nourishment independent of their mother and, before we know it, they will be driving a car and going out with boys we do not like.

Even before their birth, the very idea of my granddaughters lengthened my time horizons and engendered notions of immortality. Most of us imagine that we will be around to see our children grow up, that we will be there to help them over the rough spots. But grandchildren force you to think beyond your own lifetime -- into a future peopled by folks who came from you and to whom you owe a debt. Grandchildren spur thoughts about how to make the world better for one's descendants in ways that children do not.

Their birth has occasioned the formation of a community of people who share a deep commitment to the safety and well-being of these very vulnerable children. All of what we all have -- our affection, energy, resources, connections, skills -- will if necessary be devoted to seeing to it that, even in the worst of times, they are okay. None of us have had to say this aloud to each other. Instead, we all inherently know that, because they are our children, grandchildren, nieces, cousins or step-sisters, we will do whatever needs to be done for them. We are closer to each other now, since we share this common trust.

My granddaughters are entangled in and sheltered by a web of tangible and intangible supports, a system of both personal and public safety nets. They and their mother received extraordinary medical care in a health care system that is, in part, supported by the public. In my daughter's state, and in many states, there is a recognition that the health of newborn children is a public responsibility and a wise investment and there are programs and supports made available. When they are a little older, my daughter will be going to a public university's graduate school, supported by low cost loans, and the kids will go into a day care program that, again, the public has wisely chosen to subsidize.

The sad thing -- the only sad thing in this otherwise wholly joyous moment -- is knowing there are millions of other children, equally marvelous and miraculous, who are far less fortunate. Their families, no less loving, are in many cases not well equipped to help. They need additional help, the help of a broader community, but our society is not yet prepared to offer the unconditional support for our neighbor's kids that we each do for our own. Our sense of community, as a people who believe that all of the kids are all of our kids, has a long way to go.

Maybe someday, in a new future down the road, caring and concern will be spread more widely and every child, not just Morgan, not just Lilit, but all the kids of all the families, will get what they need to grow and thrive.

But meanwhile, I have a lot to do. We have to continue the debate about whether or not they will turn out to be identical, to talk about whose nose they have, and I am trying to identify a stock that I can buy now for a pittance and which will make them and their grandchildren rich forever. I have to call my daughter tonight, too, to find out if they ate okay, and did they sleep through the night, and is anybody walking or talking or sitting up yet.

I am having a ball. Ira Cutler, HN4072@handsnet.org, 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'.

# Affirmative Action - Best of the Worst

By Miguel Perez

Winston Churchill once said democracy is the worst form of government, with the exception of all the other forms. I feel the same way about affirmative action.

Until someone comes up with something better to correct the inequalities and discrimination that exist in our society, affirmative action is the best of all the worst solutions.

Ideally, the best solution would be no solution at all, which is the position of those who would ban affirmative action. But their idealistic concept of "a colorblind society" is like communism -- beautiful in theory, but unrealistic in practice. And without exception, the worst form of government.

If those who would ban affirmative action could come up with a better idea, more people would be willing to listen. But all they propose is communism. Oops, I mean, "a colorblind society."

Maybe it takes an anti-communist, Cuban-American civil rights defender to make this argument, but here it goes:

The tables have turned. Those Republicans who fought hardest against communism -- and they were right -- are now asking us to accept an equality-illusory concept. And those civil rights leaders who have flirted with communist dictators are embracing a more realistic concept.

Why is the concept of a colorblind society so unrealistic? Because many of the people promoting it are well-known race-baiters, not people who seek racial harmony. These are people who can't hide their real motive: to drive women and non-white U.S. citizens back to the last century.

These are the same people who used undemocratic tactics to block a vote by the full Senate in an effort to spike attorney Bill Lann Lee's confirmation as civil rights chief. That's simply because Lee, the first Asian American nominated for that post, agrees with the president's position on affirmative action

and would continue to defend programs that are still the law in the most of the land.

These are the people who managed to pass Proposition 209 in California by proposing to end preferences, which swayed many voters because it sounds good in theory.

These are the people whose colorblind standard of government seemed to be on the path to victory when the Supreme Court rejected a challenge to Prop. 209 on Nov. 3 -- only to have the door slammed in their faces by Houston voters Nov. 4.

Unlike California voters -- who were asked whether to dismantle programs that awarded jobs "on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin" -- Houston voters were more realistically asked if they wanted "to end the use of affirmative action for women and minorities" in employment and contracting.

The wording made all the difference. Houston's refusal to eliminate affirmative action programs turned the tide, at least temporarily.

On Nov. 6, Republican Rep. George Gekas of Pennsylvania startled a packed hearing by asking a House committee to delay action indefinitely on legislation to kill federal affirmative action programs -- not because he suddenly saw the light, but because the champions of a colorblind hypocrisy realized they would need to gather more public support. Gekas told reporters that "rushing headlong into the issue without building a national consensus will only be seen as political and divisive."

Which means, get ready for much more race-baiting by those who claim to be colorblind.

It also means those who support affirmative action have to prove they have the leadership qualities of Houston Mayor Bob Lanier, who made sure his city's voters were asked a realistic ballot question, and who stood firmly against banning the program. This is the time for those who

believe in democracy to stand up and reject efforts to divide U.S. residents along racial lines.

Why would a society without affirmative action fail -- just as communism? Because when left to their own devices, without some federal civil liberty safeguards, human beings are not infallible. Some people on both ends of the spectrum -- from communists to

racists -- will always seek special privileges, wealth and power at the expense, and even oppression, of the disadvantaged.

Democracy and affirmative action are necessary guards against our worst human instincts.

(Miguel Perez is a columnist with the Bergen Record in New Jersey.) (c) 1997, Hispanic Link News Service. Distributed by Los Angeles Times Syndicate

# The Recycled Pearl Of The Antilles

By Agustin Blazquez

My advice: Don't drink the rum.

The amazing -- and sometimes horrifying -- ingenuity that has developed out of desperation in Cuba continues to come to light via information smuggled out of Cuba by private sources and independent press agencies.

It puts the long-heralded "Yankee ingenuity" to shame.

Ingenuity isn't a new development of Fidel Castro's more recent "special period in time of peace." Cubans have been forced to solve their own day-to-day shortages for three decades. Indeed, after Castro arrived, their living standard went down the drain with democracy. No one lives with abundance anymore except Castro, his elite and the foreigners.

This constant problem-solving attitude, figuring out how to survive by obtaining food and other bare necessities, is a feverish activity that keeps Cubans' minds occupied, thus forestalling their efforts to eliminate the cause of their hardship.

Castro conveniently keeps people distracted while putting the blame elsewhere -- such as on the U.S. embargo. It's foolish to believe that he wants this situation changed. When internal pressures rise, Castro liberalizes -- just a little -- the island's tightly controlled economy. But when signs of prosperity occur, he

invariably slams the door again. He doesn't want his failure to be exposed by the success of individual entrepreneurs.

He doesn't give a hoot about the people. His concern, as always, is power and control.

Foreign visitors to Cuba marvel at the array of 1950s-era cars that still run. They are a tribute to the little guy's ingenuity. Jacinto Jimenez of Cuba Press says that one car's air filter was repaired using Granny's hair net, and a rusted gasoline duct was replaced by an enema hose.

Somehow, electricians keep equipment working by eliminating components -- even complete circuits.

Sometimes there's no rum in its own land, and when it reappears, the price is 20 percent of an average monthly salary. This pushes Cubans to become expert rum makers. In many dilapidated kitchens there are improvised distillation tubes. Some of these experts claim that yeast can be substituted with baby's poop.

They certainly recycle. So, you foreigners visiting Cuba, beware of homemade rums.

Cubans refill disposable lighters and convert old washing-machine motors into water pumps, fans and even into cotton-candy machines. You can find a toothbrush used to replace a typewriter's carriage return lever. Fuse box locks become locks for refrigerator doors.

# El Editor Newspaper

is a weekly bilingual published every Thursday by Amigo Publications in Lubbock Texas, 1502 Ave. M, 79401. Tel. 806-763-3841. Subscribing \$40 per year payable in advance. Opinions and commentaries expressed by guest columnists do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publisher or of advertisers. Editor/Publisher -- Bidal Aguero

Change goes in. Change comes out.

NEED KNOWS NO SEASON.

Food has become that valuable. A fluorescent tube becomes an oil lamp.

The list could fill an encyclopedia.

According to Lucas Garvey from the Cuban Independent Press Agency, in addition to "Olympic-size" rats in Havana, the other infestation of note is lice. For the lice, Cuban ingenuity's only solution so far is the hot comb or shaving. In a neighborhood barbershop in Havana, there is a sign that says "No haircuts for people with lice." This is what remains of Cuba. If you're old enough, you may remember that the island was once known as the "Pearl of the Antilles." (Agustin Blazquez, an artist and writer, fled Cuba in 1965. He now lives in Silver Spring, Md. Jaums Sutton assisted in the preparation of this column.) (c) 1997, Hispanic Link News Service. Distributed by Los Angeles Times Syndicate

# La Perla De Las Antillas Reciclada

## Texas Sweatshop Found Using Child Labor

U.S. Newswire - The U.S. Department of Labor announced today that it found nine children, the youngest only nine years old, illegally employed in a garment sweatshop in Sherman, Texas

"Child labor violations rank among the most serious found in a garment shop," said Secretary of Labor Alexis M. Herman. "It's bad enough that sweatshops are unsafe for adults and must be eliminated. It is unconscionable for children to be exploited in sweatshops."

Grayson Sewing, owned by Jimmie Shaw, was found by the department's Wage and Hour Division to have employed nine children during the summer of 1997 in violation of the federal child labor law. Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), it is illegal to employ any minor younger than 14 years of age outside of agriculture and to employ any minor under the age of 16 in manufacturing. It is also unlawful to employ 14- or 15-year-old minors later than 9 p.m. when school is out for the summer (or 7 p.m. at other times)

The department's recent investigation found that minors, ranging in age from 9 to 15, were employed to sweep the shop and fold, bag and tag garments. Seven of the nine children were under the legal age of 14. Two 15-year-olds worked until 10 p.m., and there were occasions when some of the minors worked as late as midnight. The sewing shop has been assessed child labor civil money penalties of \$32,750

The department's investigation of Grayson Sewing -- the third since 1993 -- also found the shop in violation of the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the FLSA. Back wages of \$12,566 are due 22 workers, including minors who worked there. An additional amount of \$9,625 has been computed in civil money penalties for repeat and willful violations of the FLSA

The department is seeking an injunction against the company to prevent minimum wage, overtime, child labor and recordkeeping violations in the future.

Grayson Sewing was producing ladies clothing for four Dallas-based manufacturers. Of the four, SGS Studios, Alexander Campbell and Bonnie Boynton, have agreed to pay the back wages that accrued while work was done on their goods. The fourth manufacturer, Sunny South, refused to pay any back wages. In addition, SGS Studios agreed to sign a consent agreement, which will be entered in U.S. District Court, requiring the monitoring of its contractor shops in the future

In July 1997, eight Dallas manufacturers formed the Dallas Apparel Manufacturers Association and signed an agreement to comply with the minimum wage, overtime, child labor and recordkeeping provisions of the FLSA. These manufacturers contract with approximately 45 percent of the area contractors.

The Wage and Hour Division in Texas actively participates in the department's "No Sweat" initiative -- a multi-prong strategy to eradicate sweatshops in the U.S. garment industry. Last year, the division conducted 59 investigations in Texas and recovered nearly \$83,000 in back wages for 195 garment workers.

Contact: David Saltz of the U.S. Department of Labor, 202-219-8211

Por Agustín Blázquez

Mi consejo: No beban el ron

La increíble (y a veces horripolante) inventiva desarrollada en Cuba debido a la escasez, se revela en informaciones provenientes de las agencias de prensa independientes.

Esta inventiva no es producto del cacareado "periodo especial en tiempo de paz." Los cubanos se han visto forzados a resolver sus problemas diarios por tres décadas. De hecho, Castro hundió el nivel de vida. Nadie vive con abundancia, excepto él, su élite y los extranjeros.

Tratar de resolver problemas, figurar como sobrevivir y encontrar comida, es una actividad febril que mantiene la mente cubana ocupada, distrayéndola de otros esfuerzos para eliminar la causa de su desgracia. Castro mantiene al pueblo ocupado con esta técnica mientras culpa a otros como la causa: "el embargo imperialista." Es ridículo creer que Castro quiere cambiar esta situación.

Cuando las presiones internas se agudizan, Castro libera (un poquito) su regimientada economía. Pero cuando esta evidentemente prospera, Castro cierra la puerta nuevamente. Aparentemente le aterra la exhibición de su fracaso ante el triunfo del peque-



ño negociante. A Castro no le importa el pueblo; su prioridad es poder y control.

Los visitantes extranjeros quedan maravillados con los autos de los cincuenta aún funcionando. Estos son un tributo a la inventiva popular. Jacinto Jiménez de Cuba Press informa que el filtro de aire de un auto fue reparado usando la redicilla de pelo de una abuela y el oxidado conducto de gasolina fue remplazado por un tubo de goma para lavados rectales. Mágicamente los electricistas reparan equipos, eliminando componentes y hasta circuitos enteros.

Hasta el ron se fue de Cuba, pero cuando éste reaparece, su precio supera la quinta parte del salario promedio mensual, empujando al cubano a convertirse en "experto" fabricante de ron. En muchas cocinas dilapidadas han florecido versiones improvisadas de serpientes de destilación. Algunos de estos "expertos" afirman que la levadura puede ser sustituida por caca de bebe. Sin duda reciclan todo. Visitantes extranjeros: Cuidado con el ron casero.

Rellenan las fosforeras desechables con gasolina y el motor de una lavadora puede

convertirse en bomba de agua, en ventilador y hasta en aparato para producir algodón de azúcar. Se puede encontrar un cepillo de dientes sustituyendo al espaciador de una máquina de escribir y refrigeradores herméticamente cerrados con cierres arrancados de cajas de fusibles. Así de valiosa es la comida. Un tubo fluorescente fundido se transforma en lámpara de aceite. La lista llenaría una enciclopedia.

Lucas Garvey de la Agencia de Prensa Independiente de Cuba informa que además de las olímpicas ratas habaneras, la otra epidemia notable es la de piojos. Sin embargo, para los piojos, la inventiva cubana aún no ha encontrado otro remedio que el peine caliente o afeitarse la cabeza. En una barbería de una vecindad habanera hay un letrero que dice, "No se recorta a nadie con piojos."

Y aquí los dejo con los restos de Cuba, antes conocida como La Perla de las Antillas.



Foto de Fidel Castro tomada por la televisión cubana durante la inauguración del V Congreso del Partido Comunista.



Ceremonies were held this past week to rename the Arnett Benson Center in honor of Maggie Trejo. Dubbed the Maggie Trejo Super Center the remodeled center provides recreational as well as educational program. In picture, (L-R) Robert Trejo (son), Luis Trejo (husband), Alfredo DeLaRosa (father) & Mrs. Trejo. The new center is directed by Olivia Reyes.

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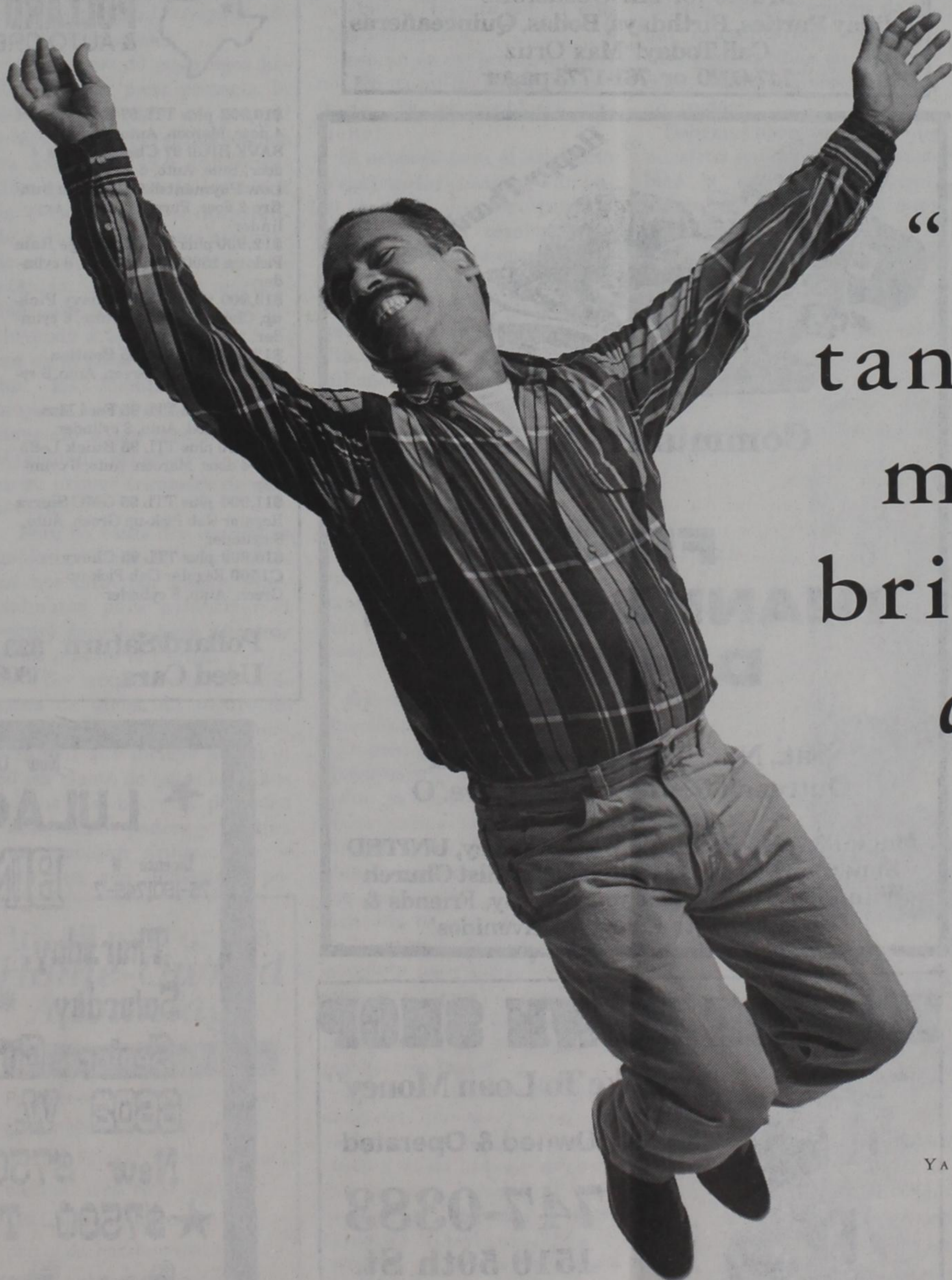
Lugar Donde Compró Su Boleto:

"Mi compañero de trabajo lo compró en una tienda de autoservicio."

Lo Bueno De Haber Ganado:

"Poder compartir con mis compañeros algo tan especial".

\*Se pagarán durante 20 años.



"Estaba tan feliz que me puse a brincar como canguro".

CARLOS FLORES



YA HAY MÁS DE 200 MILLONARIOS.  
TÚ PODRÍAS SER EL PRÓXIMO.

Drugs in the NBA, Part 1

# High means more than jumping

By SELENA ROBERTS

Contrary to the wholesome image marketed by the National Basketball Association, 60 to 70 percent of its 350-plus players smoke marijuana and drink excessively, according to conversations with more than two dozen players, former players, agents and basketball executives.

"If they tested for pot, there would be no league," said Richard Dumas, the former Phoenix Suns guard who was banned from the league for drug and alcohol use and now plays in Europe. "Weed is something guys grow up doing, and there's no reason for them to stop. Because almost everyone does it, no one wants to test for it. They're afraid to."

Two decades ago, the league nearly collapsed under a perception that its athletes were high on cocaine. Now, many people are saying the NBA's 14-year-old drug policy is so antiquated and ineffective that it protects players despite behavior that is illegal and commonplace.

Under the collective bargaining agreement, the league allows mandatory drug testing of rookies only, does not list marijuana as a prohibited substance, and prevents teams from testing veterans for cocaine and heroin except under rare circumstances.

"The policy is ridiculous," said Karl Malone, Utah's All-Star forward and last year's most valuable player. "Marijuana is not tested for, and yet that is the big thing guys are getting in trouble with in the league. It's terrible. What you're saying to the young kids playing in college is this: Smoke all the pot you want to, because it won't be detected until you are picked up by the cops and it's all over the newspapers."

Malone could have been talking about any of three players who were involved in marijuana cases over the summer: Philadelphia's Allen Iverson, Portland's Isaiah Rider and Toronto's Marcus Camby. A

possession charge against Iverson was dropped in a plea bargain, Rider pleaded no contest and Camby agreed to do community service to avoid prosecution. The publicity has tarnished the polished image pushed around the globe.

According to many of the players interviewed, when the games end, the night is just beginning. Marijuana, drinking and clubs are part of a post-game party scene in almost every NBA city. Cocaine, once the bane of pro basketball, has fallen out of favor, but a fast-paced life style has been thriving in a league that is increasingly richer and younger. More exotic drugs are available, including MDMA, an amphetamine also known as ecstasy or the love drug because it supposedly enhances sex.

Six years ago, the sport was stunned with the revelation that Magic Johnson had tested positive for HIV, prompting a painful discussion of sexual promiscuity. Recent cases, like the trial of broadcaster Marv Albert, speak of a party life spinning out of control.

Aside from problems with marijuana, NBA players have been written up in police reports on almost 20 occasions in the last year for accusations ranging from driving under the influence of alcohol to domestic violence.

There are no formal statistics on marijuana use in the NBA.

"It wouldn't surprise me if it was close to 70 percent," said Robert Pack, the Dallas point guard. "I haven't seen 70 percent of guys do it, but everyone knows guys who do."

Orlando Magic point guard, Derek Harper, agrees with the estimate.

"It's scary, because you don't know when guys are using it. You don't know if guys are under the influence while they're playing or what the case is."

NBA commissioner David Stern admitted in a recent interview that he has "serious questions concerning drinking and



Utah Jazz star forward Karl Malone supports more stringent drug tests in the NBA.

marijuana," and that perhaps too much attention was paid to economic issues in the last collective bargaining agreement, signed more than a year ago. If the owners decide to reopen the agreement in July, the league will propose tightening the drug policy, Stern said, by suggesting some degree of private testing that might allow the union to supervise it, and that would include marijuana.

But the National Basketball Players Association has historically resisted mandatory testing.

"I think the union has a balancing act," Stern said. "I think anyone representing someone is fair in saying, 'Don't discriminate by asking us to take oaths and allegiances that you don't place on other people.' Saying, 'Are or have you been a member of the pot-smoking party,' is a series of words that raises a sense of witch hunting."

"I think we and the union sort of disagree as to where you draw the line."

Next week: Fast is a lifestyle  
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# Cowboys Still Have Unfinished Business With Packers

By DENNE H. FREEMAN  
IRVING, Texas (Nov. 19) - The Dallas Cowboys, despite dominating Green Bay in the 1980s and 1990s, still have some unfinished business with the Packers.

The Cowboys have never won a game at Lambeau Field, site of Sunday's meeting with the Packers.

That doesn't mean they're intimidated by going there.

"We're not going to be awed because Green Bay won the Super Bowl last year," coach Barry Switzer said Tuesday. "Our guys still think they're Super Bowl champions because they have won three of them in the 1990s."

There are some interesting streaks going into the game. The Cowboys have defeated the Packers in their last eight meetings, including last year, when Green Bay was Super Bowl bound. However, seven of those victories were at Texas Stadium. The other was in Milwaukee in 1991.

The Cowboys are 0-3 at Lambeau.

"What happened in the past has nothing to do with this game," Switzer said. "This game is a big game for a lot of people. The people in Green Bay have had this one marked on their calendars for a long time."

"But it has a different flavor than what everybody predicted. This game is significant because both teams need a win. Green Bay is fighting for its division and needs a win. We need a win to go 7-5. Then if we win the rest of our games at home, we could be 10-6, which is the record we had last year, and it got us into the playoffs."

Switzer said the reason the Cowboys have had success against the Packers is match-ups.

"Troy Aikman, Emmitt Smith and Michael Irvin have all played well against Green Bay," Switzer said. "They have to step up again on Sunday."

All three were instrumental in their come-from-behind 17-14 victory over the Washington Redskins last

Switzer said. "If we can win Sunday it gives us a good chance because three of our last four games are at home."



In the 1990s, in all our games after Nov. 15, we have a 25-3 record at home."

Switzer said he has never been to Lambeau Field, but has seen it numerous times on television.

"I'm sure it will be a very emotional atmosphere," Switzer said. "I'm sure they will give us a big welcome to town."

Dallas got some good injury news from trainer Jim Maurer on Tuesday. Maurer said offensive tackle Erik Williams, who missed the Washington game with a leg injury, will return to practice.

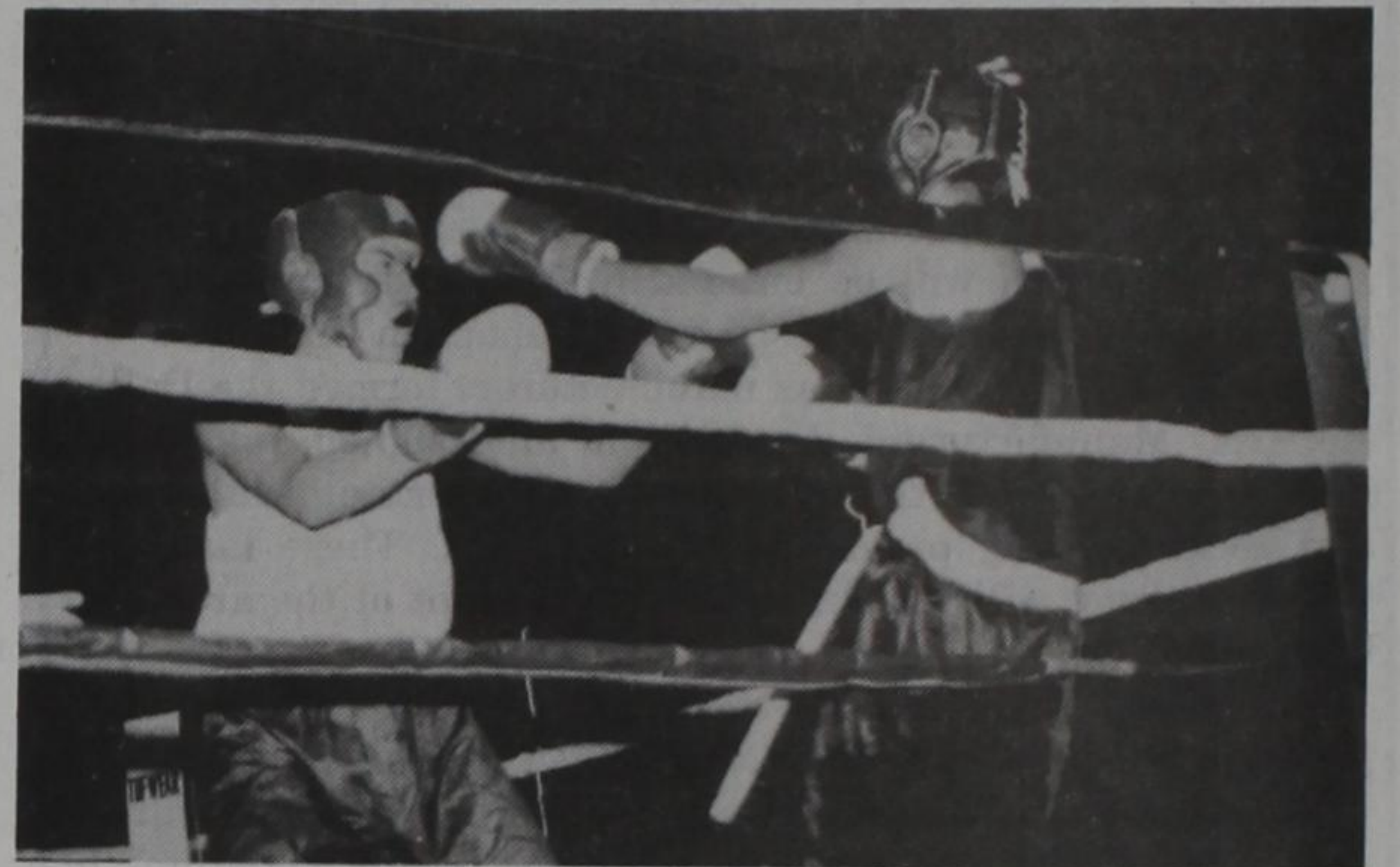
Rookie Tony Hutson filled in for Williams last week and played well.

"Tony didn't allow any sacks and I thought he would get embarrassed," Switzer said. "He's a good backup, but it's good to know Erik will be back."



Sunday. Aikman took Dallas on a 97-yard scoring drive in the final minutes, capping it with a touchdown pass to Irvin and a 2-point conversion pass to Smith.

"This is the time of year championships are won,"



A very successful boxing tournament was held this past Saturday staged by the North Lubbock Boxing Club. Boxing clubs attended from throughout West Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma and New Mexico.

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News Briefs From Page One

Expecting poor women to go outside their health care networks for family planning is unrealistic, said Lois Uttley, of Family Planning Advocates of New York State.

"It's quite unworkable for poor women, many of whom do not have cars, do not have phones, do not have adequate child care," she said. "We are quite concerned about women unknowingly and unwittingly being enrolled in a plan that doesn't provide coverage for these services."

The numbers of poor women receiving Medicaid through health maintenance organizations in New York will skyrocket. Earlier this year, the Federal Government gave Gov. George E. Pataki approval to make H.M.O. membership mandatory for most Medicaid recipients in the state.

Mark Lane, president of Fidelis Care, said his company would give members who ask for it a list of doctors and clinics accepting Medicaid for birth control and abortions. But he told The Gazette that Fidelis Care could not accept money for programs it finds morally objectionable.

"That does not mean we will impose that belief -- simply, suggest, anything of the like -- to our members," Lane said. "We are conscious of the rights of all Medicaid beneficiaries."

De La Primera Pagina

sonantes ganados en Safeway o McDonald's que un diploma universitario que a lo mejor ni garantiza empleo.

Cualquier persona que le haya dado clases a niños pobres sabe lo difícil que es quitarles el temor al éxito. Tenemos al niño del que se burlan sus compañeros varones por hablar el inglés correctamente; tenemos a la niña cuya familia considera que las mujeres no requieren de una educación.

Después de tantas décadas de alegar la validez de la acción afirmativa, apenas en últimas fechas estamos tomándonos la molestia de advertir que la mayoría de los negros, los morenos y las mujeres que se han beneficiado son de la clase media. Todavía casi a nadie se le ocurre pensar que la acción afirmativa tal vez haya sido injusta con los blancos pobres, en cuanto que los blancos pobres no constituyen un grupo minoritario reconocido oficialmente.

Francamente, en el campus universitario ni siquiera se nota la presencia o, mejor dicho, la ausencia del blanco pobre. La moda de la clase media, por décadas, ha sido la ropa de mezclilla del obrero.

Yo conozco a alguien que no tenía más que un par de tenis cuando fue a Harvard, y que nunca había tenido corbata. Después de dos años abandonó sus estudios en Harvard. Supongo que algunos de sus maestros pensaron que dejaba escuela por ser hispano.

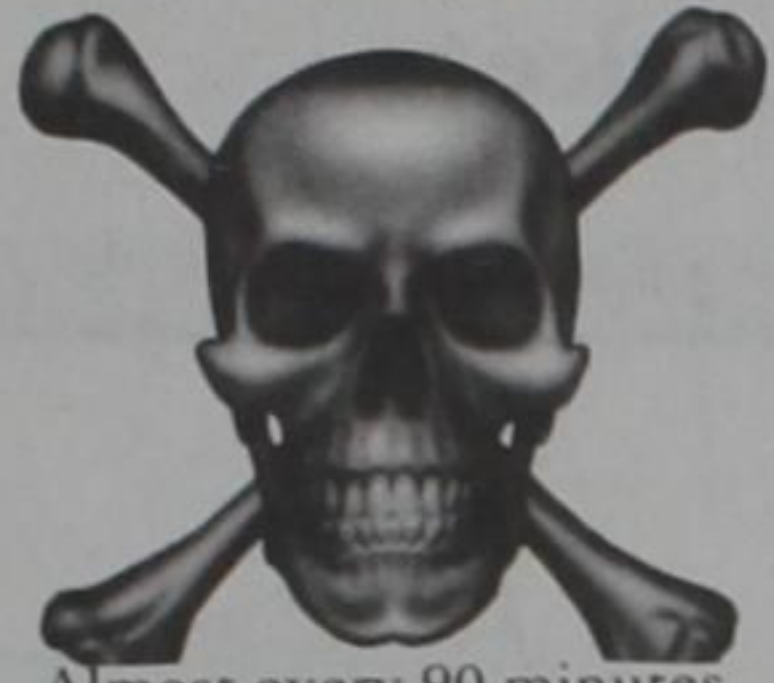
En mi caso, yo tuve la ventaja de tener a mis padres y de tener, además, a las monjas irlandesas -- cuyas familias pertenecían a la clase obrera.

Ellas carecían de ese temor clasemediero (hoy común en los maestros de la clase media) de cambiar demasiado a sus alumnos. Para las monjas estaba claro que la educación no es un ejercicio de amor propio. Para ellas estaba claro el precio de la educación, el precio que paga el corazón.

De vez en cuando conozco estadounidenses clasemedieros que salieron de la clase baja. Vivían en barrios bajos y en campamentos de trailer en el oeste de Texas. Nunca se habían imaginado tener el éxito que tienen actualmente, pero están desconcertados por una sensación de pérdida y de traición, son ya tan distintos a sus padres.

Si los estadounidenses tan sólo oyéramos sus relatos, tal vez por fin aceptaríamos la existencia de clases sociales. Y quizás sabríamos cómo proceder, ahora que la acción afirmativa ya no existe, y que aún quedan tantos muchachos pobres por educar.

Traducido por Rudolph Aceves, PNS



Almost every 90 minutes in America, a driver who fails to yield is hit by a train.

# Atendiendo La Salud De Los Niños Latinos

Por Donna E. Shalala

Cada año marcamos el comienzo del Mes de la Herencia Hispana celebrando los aportes que han hecho los latinos a la historia de nuestro país.

Pero este año yo señalé el comienzo de las festividades enfocándome en el futuro de nuestro país: Nuestros niños. Asistí a una mesa redonda sobre los jóvenes latinos, auspiciada por el Instituto Nacional para los Niños Latinos; y en Los Angeles, el Departamento Federal de Salud y Servicios Humanos auspició el primer Simposio Nacional de Salud Hispana de todos los tiempos.

Hablamos de cuán lejos hemos llegado para proteger la salud de los niños en general y la salud de los niños latinos en particular: La inmunización con vacunas de los niños de todos los grupos, incluyendo a los latinos, han alcanzado un nivel máximo sin precedentes. Las tasas de mortalidad para todos los grupos, incluyendo a los latinos, se hallan en el nivel más bajo de todos los tiempos. Y más mujeres embarazadas, incluyendo a las latinas, están obteniendo atención pre-natal en su primer trimestre de gestación.

Pero en estas dos reuniones hablamos también de cuán lejos nos falta por llegar, especialmente para garantizar el seguro de salud para nuestros niños que no lo tienen.

Hay actualmente 10 millones de niños sin seguro de salud en nuestro país -- una cantidad que incluye a casi el 30 por ciento de todos los niños latinos. La mayoría de estos niños tienen padres y madres que trabajan arduamente -- pero que son demasiado po-

By Donna E. Shalala

Every year we mark the beginning of Hispanic Heritage Month by celebrating the contributions Latinos have made to our country's past.

But this year, I marked the beginning of the festivities by focusing on our country's future: our children. I attended a roundtable on Latino youth hosted by the National Latino Children's Institute; and in Los Angeles, the Department of Health and Human Services hosted the first-ever National Hispanic Health Symposium.

We talked about how far we have come in protecting children's health, in general, and Latino children's health, in particular: Infant immunizations for all groups, including Latinos, are at an all-time high. Infant mortality rates for all groups, including Latinos, are at an all-time low. And more pregnant women, including Latinas, are getting prenatal care in their first trimester.

But at both of these gatherings, we also talked about how far we have to go, especially in securing health insurance for our children who don't have it.

There are 10 million uninsured children in our country today -- a number that includes almost 30 percent of all

Latino children. The majority of these children have parents who work hard -- but are too poor to afford private insurance, not poor enough to be eligible for Medicaid and just poor enough to fall through the cracks.

These children are less likely to get annual checkups, four times as likely to delay needed care for acute conditions and more likely to miss school because of illness. In short, they are children who face enormous barriers in their ability to grow, learn and reach their God-given potentials.

That's not a Latino problem. It's not a minority problem. It's a national problem.

The recently passed balanced budget agreement gives us a tremendous opportunity to solve that problem, not just for Latinos, but for all working families: The new Children's Health Initiative makes a \$24 billion commitment to cover as many as half of our nation's uninsured children. It's the largest single investment in children's health in 30 years.

Our goal is simple: Insure as many children as possible, as quickly as possible -- and most important -- as effectively and comprehensively as possible.

We will do that in a federal-state partnership, similar to Medicaid. Our guidance to the states is clear. We are giving the states the flexibility to develop plans that best fit their needs. We are insisting that they provide a comprehensive benefits package to all children who qualify. And we are making sure that all of us are accountable for the results.



We must help ensure that private plans do not drop children in the hopes that our new initiative will pick them up. And we must make sure that states are insuring new children -- not displacing current coverage.

The fact is, this program will succeed only if it reaches all the children who really need it. Most of the uninsured children we are trying to reach have parents who are

low-income, but employed. A large number of them are eligible for Medicaid and don't receive it -- often because their parents don't know they qualify.

Many Latino children face additional barriers in getting healthy and staying healthy. To reach these children, we must enlist the help of everyone who comes in contact with them and their families: teachers and school nurses, Head Start and community health centers, businesses and the media, both in English and Spanish.

We must make sure our approaches are culturally sensitive and culturally relevant. And we must continue to work together. That's the only way that we will meet this challenge.

The Nobel Laureate Octavio Paz once said, "In Hispanic morals, the true protagonist is the family." I would add that for Hispanic health, the true protector is also the family. That's why we should commit ourselves to improving the health of Latino families every day of the year. And we should not rest until every child has access to health care. That's the best way of celebrating our heritage, and the best way of securing our future.

bres para costear un seguro privado, no lo suficientemente pobres para ser elegibles para Medicaid, y si lo suficientemente pobres como para caerse por las grietas.

Estos niños tienen menos probabilidades de recibir exámenes físicos anuales; cuatro veces las probabilidades de postergar la atención necesaria en enfermedades agudas y mayores probabilidades de faltar a clases debido a enfermedades.

En resumen, éstos son niños que enfrentan obstáculos enormes en su capacidad para crecer, aprender y llenar al máximo el talento con el que Dios los bendijo.

Ese no es un problema latino. No es un problema minoritario. Es un problema nacional.

El acuerdo para el equilibrio presupuestario recién aprobado nos da una oportunidad tremenda para resolver este problema, no sólo entre los latinos, sino para todas las familias que trabajan: La Iniciativa para la Salud de los Niños compromete \$24,000 millones para amparar a tanto como la mitad de los niños no asegurados de nuestro país. Es la mayor inversión singular en la salud de los niños en 30 años.

Nuestra meta es sencilla: Asegurar a tantos niños como sea posible, tan rápidamente como sea posible y --lo que es más importante -- tan eficaz y completamente como sea posible.

Haremos eso a través de un entendimiento federal-estatal, semejante al Medicaid. Nuestra orientación a los estados es clara. Les estamos proveyendo a los estados flexibilidad para desarrollar los planes que mejor se ajusten a sus necesidades. Estamos insistiendo en que proporcionen un conjunto de beneficios completo para todos los niños que cualifiquen. Y nos estamos asegurando de que todos nosotros seamos responsables por los resultados.

Tenemos que ayudar para asegurar que los planes privados no se desentiendan y suelten a los niños esperando que nuestra nueva iniciativa los recoja. Y debemos asegurarnos de que los estados aseguren a nuevos niños -- sin desplazarlos de la cobertura actual.

El hecho es que este programa sólo tendrá éxito si alcanza a todos los niños que verdaderamente lo necesitan. La mayoría de los niños que no tienen seguro, a quienes esta-

mos tratando de alcanzar, tienen padres que reciben ingresos bajos, pero que están empleados. Un gran número de ellos son elegibles para el Medicaid, pero no lo reciben -- a menudo debido a que sus padres no saben que son elegibles.

Muchos niños latinos enfrentan obstáculos adicionales para llegar a estar saludables y permanecer saludables. Para alcanzar estos niños debemos reclutar la ayuda de todos los que estén en comunicación con ellos y sus familias: Maestros y enfermeras escolares; centros de Head Start y centros de salud comunitarios; los negocios y los medios de información -- tanto en español como en inglés.

Debemos asegurarnos de que nuestros enfoques sean sensibles y relevantes culturalmente. Y debemos continuar trabajando juntos. Ese es el único modo en que podremos hacer frente a este desafío.

Octavio Paz, ganador de un premio Nobel, dijo una vez, "En la moral hispana, la verdadera protagonista es la familia." Yo agregaría que, para la salud hispana, la ver-

dadera protectora es también la familia. Esa es la razón por la cual deberíamos comprometernos a mejorar la salud de las familias latinas todos los días del año. Y no de-

beríamos descansar hasta que todos los niños tengan acceso al cuidado de la salud. Ese es el mejor modo de celebrar nuestra herencia, y el mejor modo de asegurar nuestro futuro.

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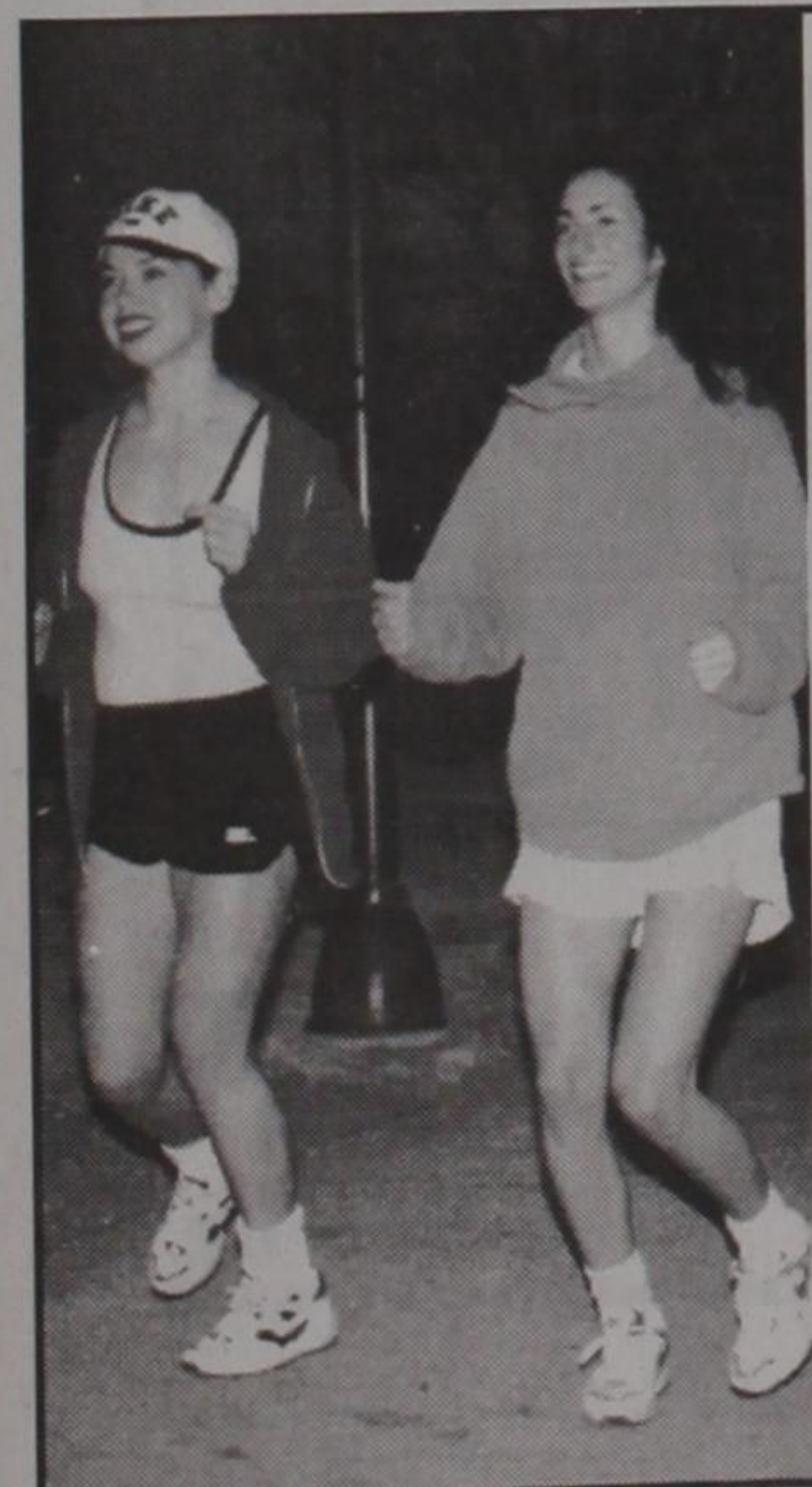


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