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# Education Becomes

## Political and Ideological Football

By Luis Nogales

In California's June 2 primary election, voters will be asked to decide on "English for the Children" Proposition 227, which would ban bilingual education throughout the state.

The subject of bilingual education requires sober discussion. It should be framed in the context of academic objectives, education theory and experience.

Instead, this crucial matter of whether, when and how to use a bilingual approach to teach students who enter school with limited English proficiency has become a political football.

The debate to date has consisted mostly of simplistic sound bites espousing the dogma of one or another ideological group. The quick-fix initiative offered by politician/businessman Ron Unz appears to have other than pedagogical motives. To dictate broadly and with finality to diverse communities on such a complex matter is just plain foolish.

Teaching English and improving the educational achievement of students with limited English-language proficiency is of paramount importance to our state.

The question is how to do it.

The Unz initiative does not answer the need. It bluntly proposes that all students whose understanding of English is limited be transferred to academic classes taught exclusively in English after one year of English-immersion classes -- whether or not they have learned English. Children of all ages and with varying levels of English proficiency will be put in one classroom, where most likely they will stagnate in academic subjects.

The proposal takes away all flexibility and decision-making powers from local school boards. It is a sweeping, untested

experiment with great potential to do irreparable harm.

Taking a more reasoned approach, the state legislature passed a bill this month which establishes standards for bilingual education and gives local school districts the power to fashion their own programs, with the districts' performances monitored through the State Department of Education. In effect, the bill leaves control of bilingual education to local school boards, communities and parents. It recognizes the need for flexibility to modify and improve programs based on experience.

Consider the resounding success of the Calexico Unified School District, located along the California-Mexico border in Imperial Valley. The school population, grades K through 12, is 98 percent Latino. More than 70 percent of the students enter the school system at different ages speak mainly Spanish.

Although Calexico is located in the second-poorest county in California, the school district has the state's lowest dropout rate among Latino students, as well as the highest percentage who go on to college (in some years more than 89 percent). Calexico High School graduates who participated in bilingual programs are attending or have graduated from this country's most prestigious universities, including Harvard, Stanford and the University of California.

What accounts for this superlative track record?

Well, to begin with, the leadership of the school district is engaged in the process of education, not politics. Their goal, simply stated, is to provide the best education for the students. Based on years of experience with limited-English-proficient students and studies that show cognitive development is important both to long-term

academic excellence and mastery of a non-native language, the district's objectives are to provide students with a foundation of analytical skills, impart sufficient knowledge of core subjects, and build English proficiency.

Calexico does not compromise the first two objectives for the sake of the third, or vice versa. Over the years, it has developed a curriculum to meet these educational objectives.

The teachers are trained accordingly. Parents are given a choice as to whether their children will participate in bilingual programs. After years of evaluation, the results clearly show that limited-English students who opted for bilingual education experienced higher achievement scores than those who did not.

Calexico's example notwithstanding, the statewide political rhetoric is such that Latino parents can be frightened into believing that their children will not learn English or will be stereotyped if they participate in bilingual programs. In many districts, bilingual education and its students are treated as a burden on teachers, on the district, and on taxpayers.

We don't know definitively in most districts whether students participating in bilingual programs have better or worse performance results than those who don't. Records have not been kept. Yet we are urged by Proposition 227 to eliminate bilingual education "on principle."

All parents want their children to learn English, as do the teachers and educational leaders who work in bilingual education. These programs are a tool to facilitate learning, to promote cognitive development and maintain confidence in academic abilities as the student learns a different language. Thus, it is vital that

(Continued Page 4)

# News Briefs

## GINGRICH WITHDRAWS SPANISH MESSAGE FULL OF ERRORS

Washington, May 12 - The office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich withdrew on Tuesday an error-plagued Internet message in Spanish, in which the congressman addressed the Mexican community in the United States on the Cinco de Mayo holiday.

The statement was made using a software program that translated the original message from English literally, causing numerous errors of grammar and syntax.

"It was not our fault, it was the computer," Gingrich's deputy press secretary Sandra Hernandez told EFE. "Now we know that we cannot have a machine do the translation."

The director of Latin-American Affairs of the Democratic National Committee, Lydia Torres, issued a statement calling the errors "embarrassing," and suggesting that Republicans "change their opinion about bilingual education."

Gingrich's office said the message was taken off the Internet on May 6, but the message remained posted until Tuesday at 4:00 p.m. (2000 GMT).

More than 40 percent of Hispanics, who represent 12 percent of the U.S. population and will soon become the biggest minority in the country, have said in polls they believe that Republicans do not represent them, and 61 percent of them said they want political candidates to speak to them in Spanish.

## Clinton Pushes Child Care, Support

President Clinton released new child care guidelines Saturday and pressed Congress to act on his child care reforms.

He also lashed out at a bankruptcy reform provision pending before Congress that would force mothers seeking child support to compete with banks and credit card companies for payment when fathers file for bankruptcy.

His administration issued two sets of guidelines: a step-by-step consumer guide from the Department of Health and Human Services for parents shopping for child care, and Justice Department advice on screening caregivers hired to work with children, the elderly and the disabled.

The guidelines recommended, among other things, criminal checks through the FBI's fingerprint records. Clinton has asked Congress to pass legislation eliminating state barriers to checking criminal backgrounds of child care workers. That plan must be approved by Congress and all 50 states.

Clinton also promoted his \$21.7-billion package to subsidize child care for working families.

The legislation is languishing in Congress, where some Republicans want to aid stay-at-home moms and others want to use available money to cut taxes for families instead. But GOP Sen. John Chafee, who wants new child care funding, said Clinton must do more to promote the cause.

## Dalai Lama Promotes Eastern Healing in U.S.

The Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader, led some of the country's top doctors and researchers in a discussion Tuesday of how Eastern healing methods could revolutionize mainstream medicine.

"According to my little experience, the mental attitude is very, very important when you face illness," the Dalai Lama told the conference at the Beth Israel Medical Center. "It's a crucial factor, the interaction between the mind and the body."

This fall, Beth Israel will begin clinical studies of patients using Eastern healing techniques such as meditation along with conventional treatment, spending \$2 million a year for the pioneer program. Among the panelists was Dr. Fred Epstein, head of the Dalai Lama hospital's department of neurosurgery.

"I've not been involved with Buddhism until now," he said. But he was moved to learn about the Eastern methods after reading a poem written by a 16-year-old patient two weeks before he died of brain cancer.

"He talked about what it was like to be terrified, alone, and struggling for life without support that didn't go further than the technical," Epstein said.

"I became convinced that treating a child with a tumor involves much more than taking the tumor out. Medicine in the West has been so technologically oriented that we've missed a great deal in caring for people."

Sitting at the head of a long flower-strewn table dressed in his traditional maroon Tibetan garb, the Dalai Lama discussed the powerful role of the mind in the healing process.

He later visited children at hospital who suffer from brain tumors, playing with them, tickling them and handing them flowers. The West, said the Dalai Lama, "pays so much attention to knowledge, and so little attention to the heart, to affection, to a sense of human caring."

## Domestic Violence Victims Get Tips

Victims of domestic violence soon may find it a bit easier to get safety tips and advice on how to escape abusive relationships. The information could be as handy as their workplace or the ladies' room of a local restaurant.

The nation's largest lawyers' organization has prepared a safety guide and is asking corporations to distribute it to employees and the general public. Among the suggestions:

-If you are being threatened or attacked, stay away from the kitchen where the abuser can find knives or other weapons.

-Keep a bag packed with things you would need if you had to leave quickly, such as cash, car keys, court papers, medical records or medicines. Keep the bag in a safe place or give it to a friend or relative.

-If a court has issued a protective order, keep a copy with you at all times along with emergency phone numbers.

Many women are not ready to go to court for a protection order or leave their abuser, but want to find out what their options are, says Michael Bedke, a Tampa, Fla., lawyer who is co-chairman of the American Bar Association's Commission on Domestic Violence.

Bedke specializes in real estate and banking law, but he also provides free legal help to victims of domestic violence and encourages other lawyers to do the same.

"If you only take one case a year it would be huge," said Bedke.

"You don't have to give up your private practice to do this."

The bar association panel is asking corporations to provide the brochures, perhaps by putting them in ladies' rooms where people can take one without attracting attention. The first company to sign on was Atlanta-based Church's Chicken.

The brochure gives the number of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, which can tell someone where to get help locally.

It also advises abuse victims to ask a local domestic violence program for help finding a lawyer who can get a court order requiring the abuser to stay away or aid in a criminal prosecution. (The National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE.)

## Income Boost Costly for Working Moms

A low-income working mother can lose money by getting a raise, says a Children's Defense Fund-Ohio report on child care.

Scientific research has confirmed that quality child care is crucial to a child's development, said Mark Real, the fund's director and legislative counsel.

"A child's experiences in the first three years after birth literally determine the wiring of his or her brain," he said.

The amount of money needed for child care was one of the most contentious topics of debate a year ago as the Ohio General Assembly considered a welfare reform bill that would push many single parents into the workplace. But since that legislation took effect in October, little has been said about the subject.

"There's been kind of a shakeout period," Real said. "We're trying to make sure this issue doesn't get lost." Because of the uncertainty over how much child care would be needed as Ohioans moved from welfare to work, the legislature set aside enough money for

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Vol. XXI No. 14

33

Established 1977 - Texas' Oldest Hispanic Owned Newspapers

Ensenanza Bilingue Se Vuelve Juego

de Politica E Ideologia

Por Luis Nogales

En las elecciones primarias del

2 de junio en California, se pediría a los electores que decidían

sobre la Proposición 227, "Inglés para los Niños", que prohibiría

la enseñanza bilingüe en todo el

estado.

Comentarios

de Bidal

by Bidal Agüero

When the announcement

of the Arnett Benson Barrio,

now sometimes

known as the

79415 area, was

to get \$700,000

for the youth

that resided

there in order to prevent

juvenile delinquency,

many organization that had

been working for many

years with the youth became

excited.

After struggling to keep

their program going for

many years through

donations, fund-raisers

and tireless efforts, a light

was seen at the end of the

tunnel to perhaps relieve

their time to be devoted

toward making their

programs work instead of

always having to raise

money.

Well it seems that their

dream was crushed in that

most of those programs were

refused and the State opted to

choose other state agency to

administer programs and

use their \$700,000 to probably

pay other bureaucrats.

There is no official word

as to who was funded but

reliable sources say that the

majority of the money

would go to Tech and the

MHMR center.

Next week we will do an

in-depth story on where the

money is going and why

community organizations

were denied.

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

# A Lot Of 'Yada Yada Yada' About Nada

By Patricia Guadalupe

There's a group of Latino leaders making a big fuss about a television show that prides itself on being about nothing.

These leaders, representing a group that includes the National Puerto Rican Coalition, the Puerto Rican Legal Defense & Education Fund and the National Council of La Raza, are up in arms about the next-to-last episode of "Seinfeld" in which the main characters get stuck in traffic during New York City's annual Puerto Rican Day Parade, and several crazy things happen.

The coalition got wind of the episode before it aired and in an outrageous moment that smacks of censorship, unsuccessfully demanded to see it beforehand. Scary that civil rights organizations would act like Big Brother.

So the "Puerto Rican Day Parade" installment aired, and most of it dealt with other situations, with the parade in the background.

In one protracted scene, Jerry Seinfeld calls a black motorist a "jackass" for not letting him through to an exit. Have the black groups complained? In other scenes, the parade is also just a backdrop.

But taking a cue from a Seinfeld sitcom scene, the coalition has complained loudly about

nothing. It's outraged! In one screen sequence, loony Kramer inadvertently throws a sparkler on a Puerto Rican flag and stomps out the fire.

Our leaders define the act as "desecrating the flag."

They charge that another scene depicts parade spectators as "insensitive to the cast" for not letting some cast members cross the street during the parade.

One of the more ridiculous charges the leaders make is that the show "stereotypes the gay community." Like this was the first time.

Be serious, please! For most of the time since it began airing nine years ago, the show has been in the top 10 because it doesn't take itself seriously. It makes fun of everyone. It's essentially always been no big deal; in other words, nothing's a comedy!

I ask, where were these Latino leaders when the show first made fun of Cubans? Dominicans? Gays? Feminists? Jews? Arabs? Indians? Blacks? Senior Citizens? Germans? Native Americans? Pakistanis? Etc.

According to this year's Report on Latino Viewing of Network TV, Seinfeld is the second-most-watched show in Latino households, and coincidentally, No. 2 among all households. So there have been plenty of us

chuckling along with everyone else when the show targeted for laughs the ethnic or social group of the week.

For nearly a decade, Latin leaders didn't complain. But now, when the show aired its next-to-last episode, we're supposed to be offended because it made fun of Puerto Ricans? I don't buy it. And neither do the many people I've spoken with.

Think about it. That episode could have been much more true to life - and worse. As a Puerto Rican and a former New Yorker, I used to enjoy being part of the parade crowd. The sea of flags, the salsa music, the marching bands and the aroma of boricua food on tony Fifth Avenue was a fun experience.

But it was never any fun being touched or pinched by losers in the throng who always seemed to be wearing sleeveless T-shirts that read "100 percent Boricua" and who called out "ay, mami."

It sure wasn't a barrel of laughs stepping on one of the many empty Budweiser cans that were left behind or watching the police repeatedly remind some people "no cooking allowed."

And it was downright annoying to hear carloads of revelers leaning on their horns for hours on end (although, I admit, the ones that honked out the Puer-

to Rican national anthem or imitated racetrack trumpets were pretty impressive).

Imagine if Seinfeld had mentioned any of that? This is one time I'm glad there were no New York Latino writers on that hit show.

There are plenty of issues to make a big fuss over. This isn't one of them. The complaining Latino leaders should cut the crazy cacophony. If we keep crying wolf over the small stuff, when the big baloney comes along, no one will pay attention. Please, pick your battles or you'll end up losing the war.

Or am I missing the point of all this commotion?

"There is a positive aspect," Parade President Ramon Velez has revealed to the press. "That is, millions of people are now exposed to the fact that there is a National Puerto Rican Parade."

You don't suppose that all this much-ado-about-nothing is just a publicity stunt to get more people to come to New York City for the parade on June 14? Not for nothing, but that would definitely be something. Yada yada yada.

(Patricia Guadalupe is a Washington correspondent for Hispanic Link News Service, National Public Radio's Latino USA, Radio Bilingue, WKAQ Radio in Puerto Rico and is a columnist for Hispanic Business magazine.)

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# Mucho 'Yada Yada Yada' Sobre Nada

Por Patricia Guadalupe

Hay un grupo de líderes latinos que se quejan sobre un programa de televisión que por muchos años se enorgullecía de decir que se trataba de nada: Seinfeld.

Estos líderes, una coalición de grupos que incluye a la Coalición Nacional Puertorriqueña (NPRC, en inglés), el Fondo de Educación y Defensa Legal Puertorriqueña (PRLDEF) y el Consejo Nacional de La Raza (NCLR), han formado un boleto sobre un episodio de la serie donde los protagonistas se encuentran sin poder salir de un embotellamiento debido al desfile puertorriqueño, el cual se lleva acabo cada año en la ciudad de Nueva York.

La coalición se enteró sobre el episodio antes de que saliera al aire y en lo que solamente se pudiera interpretar como censura, los líderes intentaron infructuosamente obtener una copia de antemano. Qué ironía de grupos que abogan por los derechos civiles!

"El Desfile Puertorriqueño" salió al aire, y una gran parte trató de otros asuntos, con el desfile en el fondo. En una escena, Jerry Seinfeld discute con un conductor afroamericano y le grita "burro" por no dejar que pasara por una salida. Se han quejado los grupos afroamericanos? En otras escenas, el desfile sigue en el fondo. Pero la coali-

ción aparentemente siguió el ejemplo de Seinfeld de quejarse sobre nada. Los líderes están enfurecidos. La coalición alega que el loco de Kramer, uno de los amigos de Jerry, profana la bandera boricua al pisarla varias veces para apagar un fuego. Lo que no dicen es que Kramer la incendió sin querer. La coalición también alega que una escena demuestra una "falta de consideración" del "público" a los protagonistas por no dejar que cruzaran la calle. Y una de las alegaciones más ridículas es que el programa enseña estereotipos sobre la comunidad homosexual. Como si eso nunca pasó en ese programa.

Por favor, un poco de seriedad! Desde que saliera al aire hace nueve años, el programa siempre tuvo mucho éxito precisamente porque era una comedia y no tomaron nada en serio. Se burlaban de todos. Nunca fue una cosa seria. En otras palabras, siempre era sobre nada. Nada en particular. Es más, los protagonistas se pasaban diciendo que todo era puro bla bla bla.

Me pregunto, dónde han estado estos líderes a través de los años cuando el programa se burlaba de Cubanos? Dominicanos? Homosexuales? Feministas? Judíos? Arabes? Indios? Afroamericanos? Alemanes? Personas Mayores? Pakistánies? Etc.

Según el 5to. Informe Anual Sobre Costumbres del Televi-

dente Latino, la comedia Seinfeld era el segundo programa más popular en hogares hispanos, y casualmente, No. 2 en todos los hogares a través del país. Por lo tanto, habían bastantes latinos entre los que se reían cada semana. Pero ahora, casi una década desde que comenzara el programa y después de que pasaran muchos años sin una queja de ningún líder latino, supuestamente se burlan de los puertorriqueños y deberíamos estar ofendidos. Por favor. Como que no hay otras cosas del qué quejarse. A mí no me convencen. Pienso que estos líderes exageran. Si nos ponemos a pensar, ese episodio de Seinfeld pudo ser peor. Como puertorriqueña y ex nuyorquina, me gustaba ver el desfile y ser parte del público. Era verdaderamente divertido e impresionante estar en ese mar de banderas, con la música salsa y la comida boricua. Y todo esto en la elegante 5ta. Avenida. Pero no era nada de divertido el ser acosada por los subdesarrollados vestidos con las camisetas sin mangas "100 por ciento Boricua" que gritaban "ay mami". Tampoco era muy divertido pisar el sinnúmero de latas de cerveza dejadas al acabar el desfile o ver a la policía llamar la atención a los que se ponían ilegalmente a cocinar en la acera. Y era bien desagradable el ruído interminable por horas después de las

bocinas de carros y la gritería de los pasajeros. Se imaginan si Seinfeld hubiera enseñado eso? Menos mal que nunca contrataron a ningún escritor nuyorquino latino, porque a veces la realidad duele.

Los líderes latinos que se quejan deberían saber que hay una lista sin fin de otras querellas más serias que pudieran investigar. Esta no es una. Si siguen protestando lo insípido, cuando ocurra algo verdaderamente grande y serio, nadie les hará caso. Por favor, escojan sus batallas o perderán la guerra.

Claro que toda esta conmoción pudiera tener sus beneficios. En comentarios a la prensa, Ramón Vélez, el presidente del desfile, dijo, "En mi opinión, esto tiene su aspecto positivo. Millones de personas ahora saben que hay un desfile nacional puertorriqueño".

Obliviamos no voy a decir que esta polémica es meramente un truco publicitario para que más personas acudan al desfile el 14 de junio. No es por nada, pero eso definitivamente sería algo.

(Patricia Guadalupe es corresponsal en Washington, D.C. de Hispanic Link News Service, Latino USA de la radio nacional pública, Radio Bilingüe, y WKAQ Radio Reloj de Puerto Rico y es columnista para la revista Hispanic Business.)

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# Sittin' Here Thinkin'

## Sex, Drugs and Professional Preparation

by Ira Cutler

Youth today face a wide range of barriers to becoming healthy, productive adults. During a pivotal time in their emotional and physical development, many adolescents are stymied by a host of negative forces in their environment including crime, inadequate education, poverty and a lack of adult role models from whom to learn the positive values of modern society. Among the many challenges adolescents face, two particular areas - premature, unprotected sexual behavior and the use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs - stand out as the greatest threats to the greatest number of adolescents.

The numbers are alarming. One of every 2 girls, and three of every four boys, have sexual intercourse by age 18, often without consistent use of contraceptives. While teen birth rates have dropped modestly in the past several years, nearly half a million American teen-agers still give birth each year. American teen pregnancy rates, even with the recent improvements, are far higher than any other Western democracy.

In addition, studies show that 55% of eighth graders and 81% of twelfth graders have tried alcohol. For too many, this is more than a one-time experiment - 15% of 8th graders and 30% of 12th graders report "heavy drinking" at least once in the prior two-week period. 1 in 7 junior high school students have tried marijuana and significant increases have also been noted in the use of LSD, heroin, cocaine, inhalants and the mis-use of prescription drugs.

There is no need to enter into a debate about whether adolescent sexual activity or alcohol/drug usage is always harmful. It is self-evident that unprotected sexual activity is unwise, that substance abuse and/or addiction are negative factors in the lives of people of all ages, and that every year great numbers of youth get themselves into deep trouble around these issues. One only needs to look at the mountains of data on poverty, interrupted and often never completed education, life-long unemployment and underemployment, to see the point.

With so much at stake, for so many youth, one might expect that extraordinary efforts would be in place to help them through these difficult times. Yet, it is evident that despite the considerable danger to very large numbers of young people, the vast majority of professionals in regular contact with youth are uncomfortable, unskilled and unprepared to intervene when youth are engaged in harmful sexual or alcohol/drug-related behavior. Most often, as a result of their own fears, feelings and lack of preparation, professionals either ignore the risk-taking behavior of adolescents or ineffectively preach and scold.

Recent research that our consulting firm has done suggests that there is little likelihood that adult professionals dealing day to day with adolescents - teachers, social workers, health professionals, probation officers, guidance counselors, clergy, foster parents, recreation staff and others - will have had any significant education or training around adolescent sexuality and/or substance abuse. Very few have received any training at all in discussing these matters with youth, or in intervening to reduce the considerable risks. As we see it, there is an alarming disconnect between the prevalence and seriousness of these behaviors, on the one hand, and the level of readiness of adult professionals to deal with these issues, on the other.

By and large, this is not the fault of the professionals themselves. After all, they are trained in universities and employed in institutions that pigeonhole their relationships with youth and that keep them trapped in very narrow categorical boxes. Geometry teachers are there to teach geometry, social workers to fill out required forms, probation officers to record violations and only a very few, the best of the best, break through, get to know the whole youth and make a difference in their lives. Now and then a professional steps out of character, goes beyond the narrow boundaries and becomes a hero. More often professional risk takers get into trouble for rocking the boat. Dealing with controversial issues like sex and drugs, except for youth already deeply in trouble, is rarely a part of the program in schools and social agencies, no matter how many million youth are getting hurt.

This is an outrage. As taxpayers and consumers of community services, parents should be confident that the adults who deal with their children are sensitive to and skilled around matters of such great importance. Instead, as things stand today, parents should be advised, perhaps even warned, that most professionals know no more about these subjects than do cab drivers or postal workers.

Surely issues around unprotected sexual activity and substance abuse are so critical, so dangerous to so many adolescents, that all professionals working with youth, regardless of setting or discipline, should be expected to have at least a minimum base of knowledge and skills.

Some years ago, as a result of growing public awareness and alarm about the prevalence of child abuse, many states established the principle that, by law, all professionals - teachers, doctors, nurses, etc. - have a public duty to report suspected incidents of abuse and neglect. Similarly, the key here may be to reach a point where we have established the principle that the risk of pregnancy and disease attendant to adolescent sexuality and the risks attendant to substance abuse are, like child abuse, everybody's business.

Perhaps establishing this principle could start in a few model, pioneering communities that were willing to take some risks. Those communities might, among other things, establish far-reaching, cross-disciplinary education and training around the real issues that adolescents face. In those communities all professionals would be required to have a minimum floor of common education and skills if they were going to work with adolescents, including training around the very difficult areas of adolescent sexuality and substance abuse. None of this would be easy, quick or painless but the professions, as things stand now, have no where to go but up.

The creation of such examples, however, would be well worth the investment. Getting from here to there would take visionary funders, courageous community leadership and high quality, sustained technical assistance over time.

Any takers out there?

Ira Cutler, 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'.

## Letter to the Editor

I am writing in response to and clarify misinformation contained in the letter to be editor written in the A.J. entitled "Vet Benefits Form" The process that was described by the letter writer is called enrollment.

The purpose for enrollment is two-fold. First, it allows the VA treatment facility to document its expected workload for budgetary purposes; and

Second, it allows flexibility in the specialty care area that benefits the veteran patient.

It is very important to note that the enrollment process does not end on Oct. 1 1998. Rather, patients will be enrolled when they appear for medical care after that date.

No eligible veteran will lose his or her medical benefits for failing to enroll by Oct. 1 1998.

Steve Johnson

Public Affairs official Amarillo and Lubbock VA Health Care Facilities.

and information on the Net that speak directly to the Latino community's needs and interests.

The random-sample survey was conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on which language the respondents preferred.

Not mentioned or measured in the report is the increasing number of Spanish-language Web sites and use of Spanish on the Internet. Maybe, until the present wave of resentment against foreign "intrusion" on the English language passes, that's better left to future study.

With publication of the national report and one with similar results that focused on the city of Chicago, the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute offered a series of recommendations to government, the corporate world and the community itself.

Topping the list, not surprisingly, is a plea to broaden outreach to unconnected households through schools and libraries, and to provide more classes, mentoring and expanded hours of operation.

Another calls for more services

mon "first-contact" point where they gained computer literacy, followed by school or college. They say they find the Internet useful as a source of information and as a vehicle to communicate (via e-mail).

Those not yet connected see it as an educational tool that can improve their lives and the lives of their children. Sixty-five percent feel their children don't have adequate Internet access.

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The study, commissioned by groups representing mental health providers and consumers,

Continued Page 4

## Study: Mental Health Spending Plummets

Mental health advocates say some of the savings from insurance companies spending less on mental health care over the past decade should help lift restrictions on access to care.

As inflation-adjusted spending has been cut in half, health plans have increasingly imposed restrictions. A typical health plan might pay for just 20 visits to a psychiatrist, while a diabetic could see a doctor as many times as the doctor felt was necessary.

"It's discrimination, pure and simple," said Laurie Flynn, executive director of the National

Alliance for the Mentally Ill, one of several groups to release a new study on mental health trends.

The report found spending for behavioral health fell 54 percent between 1988 and 1997, while total health care spending fell by just 7 percent. In 1988, behavioral health care accounted for 6.1 percent of total health spending; by 1997, it was just 3.1 percent.

Most of the savings can be attributed to the rise of managed care, which requires patients to get permission before using health services and

ratchets down payments to hospitals and doctors.

Advocates hope that the study, by the Hay Group business consulting firm, will fuel their arguments for stronger parity law. They say insurance companies have gone too far in slashing payments for mental health care, which includes treatments for substance abuse, severe mental illness and other problems.

The study, commissioned by groups representing mental health providers and consumers,



Muerte En La Catedral:

# El Proceso De Paz De Guatemala Sufre Un Gran Paso Hacia Atrás

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** En 1980, el asesinato del arzobispo Oscar Romero marcó un nuevo nivel de incivilidad en la larga guerra civil de El Salvador. Ahora, en Guatemala, el brutal asesinato del obispo Juan Gerardi ha cuestionado campanas similares y crea serias dudas acerca de la durabilidad del nuevo proceso de paz de ese país. Mary Jo McConahay, editora de PNS para América Central, ha realizado reportajes desde Latinoamérica para National Catholic Reporter, Choices, Mother Jones y otras publicaciones por más de una década.

By Mary Jo McConahay,  
Pacific News Service

**CIUDAD DE GUATEMALA** — El asesinato del obispo Juan Gerardi en su residencia el domingo a la noche plantea un grave desafío al incipiente proceso de paz del país, y representa la mayor prueba a la que ha sido sometido el gobierno del presidente Alvaro Azuá desde que subiera al poder dos años atrás.

Gerardi era un antiguo clérigo ampliamente respetado, y un crítico abierto de la violencia política que asolará al país durante 36 años. Fundó y presidió la Oficina de Derechos Humanos de la Arquidiócesis.

La naturaleza brutal del suceso (al menos una persona no identificada arrastró al obispo fuera de su coche al llegar a su casa y le pegó hasta que yaciera muerto) es contemplada como un severo mensaje para los trabajadores por los derechos humanos. El hecho ocurrió tan sólo dos días después de una solemne ceremonia en la que Gerardi y otros obispos presentaron un informe detallado de cuatro volúmenes sobre 442 masacres y otros hechos violentos.

El informe, que tardó tres años en completarse, menciona más de 55.000 personas muertas durante el conflicto civil que tuvo lugar entre 1978 y 1995. Declara asimismo que las fuerzas armadas fueron responsables del 79.9 por ciento de los asesinatos de civiles anónimos, las guerrillas de 9 por ciento, y que el resto fue perpetrado por desconocidos. Miembros de los cuerpos diplomáticos y la ganadora del premio Nobel de la Paz, Rigoberta Menchú, asistieron a la misa de reconciliación en la que fuera revelado el informe, y escucharon a Gerardi hablar apasionadamente sobre la necesidad de aceptar la verdad en la senda hacia la reconciliación nacional.

«El asesinato de Gerardi socava la poca fe que existe en el proceso depaz, y levanta el peor de los miedos de que éste fracase», expresó un observador por muchos años de los derechos humanos en la región, quien solicitó que su nombre no fuera utilizado. «Su significado depende de si el asesinato es investigado y llevado a juicio».

Monseñor Mario Orantes, pastor de la iglesia de San Sebastián donde residía Gerardi, dijo que encontró el cuerpo del obispo en el garaje alrededor de la medianoche, cuando fue a apagar una luz que Gerardi apagaba generalmente al regresar de sus acostumbradas visitas de domingo a su familia.

«Había un cadáver completa-



Juan Gerardi fue asesinado dos días después de que el clero católico de Guatemala entregara una investigación de tres años que da cuenta del "verdadero holocausto que vivió el pueblo" durante el conflicto armado (1960-1997).

mente ensangrentado, y dos enormes charcos de sangre.

«En un principio no lo reconocí porque habían destrozado su cara, perdiendo reconocerlo a través de su anillo de obispo», dijo Orantes a Radio Sonora. Al amanecer, parientes en duelo, religiosos y clérigos estaban en el aparcamiento de la iglesia junto a miembros de la misión de Naciones Unidas para la verificación de derechos humanos, dijeron fuentes de la iglesia. No había indicios de robo.

El gobierno pareció no reaccionar rápidamente en público frente al ataque. Mientras que muchos guatemaltecos escucharon las primeras noticias a través de la radio extranjera y emisiones de televisión, la mayoría de las estaciones locales continuaron con sus noticias deportivas y otros programas durante las primeras horas de la mañana. Una de ellas ocupó el aire con un largo editorial atacando a Jennifer Harbury, la abogada estadounidense que atrajo atención pública sobre los abusos a los derechos humanos por parte del ejército.

Numerosos sacerdotes católicos y trabajadores laicos, así como cientos de catequistas, murieron durante la guerra civil, casi todos a manos del ejército. A comienzos de los años '80, Gerardi tomó la iniciativa — algo extremadamente raro en la Iglesia Católica en el mundo entero — de declarar temporalmente su diócesis de Quiche, la más afectada por la violencia (263 masacres, de acuerdo al informe) y donde un gran número de personas fueron asesinadas.

En ese tiempo, el mismo Ger-

ardi consiguió apenas escapar de su propio asesinato durante una visita pastoral, cuando un campesino que escuchó de antemano planes para una emboscada corrió a advertirlo. Algunos trabajadores de la iglesia expresaron sentimientos de culpa por haber abandonado estas comunidades, si bien otros dijeron que el cierre de la iglesia en Quiche era la única manera de salvar a los trabajadores que quedaban. A veces las misas se llevaban a cabo en secreto. En años recientes, incluso después de que lo peor de la guerra hubiera pasado, Gerardi fue infatigable en consignar el abuso de los derechos, hablando abiertamente de desapariciones forzadas y amenazas a líderes estudiantes y laborales, y a activistas por los derechos humanos.

El informe supervisado por Gerardi, llamado «Guatemala: Nunca Más», fue el trabajo del Proyecto para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica, con cuartel general en un laberinto de oficinas detrás de la catedral de la ciudad, de cientos de años. Los investigadores, guatemaltecos de buena educación — algunos de los cuales habían regresado luego de años de exilio para trabajar en una atmósfera nueva y prometedora tras el fin de la guerra — llevaron consigo grabadoras y cuadernos de apuntes y

surcaron ríos en medio de la selva y senderos montañosos que conducían a pueblos pequeños, en los que buscaron asentamientos ocultos de sobrevivientes. Un 61 por ciento de los testimonios fueron provistos en lenguas indígenas mayas.

El homicidio de Gerardi recuerda el asesinato del arzobispo Oscar Romero en El Salvador, en 1980, a manos de un escuadrón de la muerte de derechas. Romero, un paladín de los derechos humanos durante la guerra civil del país, hizo un llamado a los soldados para que no obedezcan órdenes que los pusieran en la posición de matar campesinos desarmados.

A fines del año pasado, el obispo Samuel Ruiz, de San Cristóbal, estado mexicano de Chiapas, y el obispo Raúl Vega, quien le acompañaba, sobrevivieron a una emboscada de hombres armados. Ruiz ha denunciado la fuerte presencia militar y la existencia de grupos paramilitares en pro del gobierno quienes, afirma, obstruyen la búsqueda de una solución pacífica a la insurrección en ese estado.

La muerte de Gerardi arriba 16 meses después de la firma de acuerdos entre las guerrillas y el gobierno.

Mental Study - From Page 2

also found

— In 1997, 48 percent of health plans imposed limits on the number of outpatient visits each year, usually 20 per year. That's up from 26 percent in 1988.

— Nearly half the plans that imposed a limit on outpatient visits in 1988 allowed 50 per year. In 1997, only 17 percent allowed 50 visits.

— In 1997, 57 percent of plans imposed a limit on the number of days a patient could be treated in a hospital. In 1988, just 38 percent had a limit.

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## TTU Museum Celebrates International Museum Day 1998

Join the Museum for International Museum Day 1998 on Saturday, May 16. Events are planned for the general public from 12:30 to 4:00 p.m. The ICOM mandate for IMD 1998 below:

“During its 12th General Assembly in May 1977, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) established International Museum Day. On May 18th of each year, this day provides museum professionals with the opportunity to show that museums are an important means of cultural exchange and enrichment, helping the development of mutual understanding, cooperation and peace among people.

For International Museum Day 1998, the ICOM has decided to pursue last year's theme: Fighting Against the Illicit Traffic of Cultural Property with the hope that museum professionals will continue to inform their communities of the serious threat endangering the world's heritage, and encourage them, to safeguard these treasures for the enrichment of present and future generations.”

**MUSEUM Activities**  
12:30 PM\*—International Museum Day begins in the Museum's courtyard with a concert featuring Lubbock's The Yellow House Ramblers

1:15 PM\*—A performance and comments on the Mexican dances by the Ballet Folklorico Nuestra Herencia in the courtyard.

(\*Please bring your sack lunch and your blanket to sit on the grass and enjoy the programs. cold drinks will be provided to attendees.)

2 PM—a round table discussion will take place in the Museum's Kline Room. “Historic Preservation in the City of Lubbock,” a discussion led by Sally Abbe, M.A., Planner II of the City of Lubbock, and “Protecting Archaeological Resources, What We Can Do” led by Patricia A. Mercado-Allinger, M.A., State Archeologist, Texas Historical Commission. Dr. Eileen Johnson, Director of Lubbock Lake Landmark and the Museum's Curator of Anthropology, will act as moderator. Anyone interested in museums, galleries, libraries, art history, archaeology, architecture, and natural history is encouraged to attend this presentation.

**Lubbock Lake Landmark Activities at the Nash Interpretive Center**

11 AM to 4 PM—The 31 minute film, “Silent Witness: Protecting American Indian Archaeological Heritage,” narrated by Robert Redford is featured. (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department charges a fee: \$2 for adults, \$1 for students, and children under 6 free.)

All International Museum Day activities at the Museum are free to the public. For more information regarding International Museum Day activities, please contact the Education Division at (806) 742-2432. For information about the Lubbock Lake Landmark activities, call (806) 742-1116.

**El Editor**  
**P.O. Box 11250,**  
**Lubbock, TX**

## Bilingual Education from Page 1

the student keep up with learning the basic subjects, math, history, etc., especially in our rapidly evolving information age.

We already have plenty of Latino students and dropouts, for example, who speak workable English but have failed in core subjects. They are relegated to the low-paying, low-skill jobs in our economy.

The experience of our immigrant parents and grandparents who were simply thrown into English language classes does not make this the best practice to emulate. We now know more about the process of learning and cognitive development, and we should use this knowledge to formulate optimal educational policies.

No pseudo-reformers are advocating that physical education departments toss non-swimmers into the middle of the school pool to sink or swim. Why drag up the old, failed sink-or-swim scheme to “teach” children who haven't yet learned English?

For those whose opposition to bilingual education is really based on a position against linguistic and cultural pluralism to maintain a unified society, their interests are best aligned with methods that produce the best educated and trained citizens.

Pluralism is not the enemy. Ignorance and prejudice are the real threats to a democratic and unified society. Citizens who do not complete high school and do not achieve their highest potential cost our society.

As ethnic and social demographics continue to change in this state, we cannot allow ourselves to be led by those who divide society into “we and they.”

## From Page One

inglés, como también lo quieren los maestros y dirigentes de la enseñanza que trabajan en la enseñanza bilingüe. Estos programas son un instrumento para facilitar el aprendizaje, para fomentar el desarrollo cognitivo y mantener la confianza en las capacidades académicas, a medida que el estudiante aprende un idioma distinto. Así, resulta vital que el estudiante continúe aprendiendo las asignaturas básicas, matemáticas, historia, etc., especialmente en nuestra edad de la información, que evoluciona rápidamente.

Ya tenemos bastantes estudiantes y desertores de la enseñanza latinos, por ejemplo, que hablan un inglés aceptable pero que han fracasado en las asignaturas principales. Estos son relegados a los empleos de poca paga y bajas habilidades de nuestra economía.

La experiencia de nuestros padres y abuelos inmigrantes, que fueron sencillamente lanzados dentro de las clases en inglés, no hace que ésta sea la mejor práctica para emular. Sabemos ahora más acerca del trámite del aprendizaje y del desarrollo cognitivo, y deberíamos emplear este conocimiento para formular cursos de acción óptimos en materia de enseñanza.

No hay pseudo-reformadores que estén abogando porque los departamentos de educación física lancen a los que no saben nadar al centro de las piscinas escolares para que se hundan o naden. ¿Por qué arrastrar al antiguo sistema fracasado de hundirse o nadar para “enseñar” a los niños que no han aprendido aun el inglés?

Para aquellos cuya oposición a la enseñanza bilingüe se basa realmente en una postura contra el pluralismo idiomático y cultural, a fin de mantener una sociedad unificada, sus intereses se hallarían mejor alineados con los métodos que produzcan a los ciudadanos mejor instruidos y

“their children and ours.” We must live together in this society, one way or another.

In the past 15 years, California has plunged to become one of the five lowest-ranked states in the nation on per-capita spending for students in grades K through 12. How ironic that one of the richest states in the country chooses to be one of the poorest investors in its citizens' future.

Yes, we need standards and accountability. But we also need adequate resources.

Bilingual education is a matter of serious import and as the Calexico example shows, bilingual education programs should be allowed to evolve or devolve, as particular circumstances dictate, in an orderly manner with educational priorities clearly in mind. Calexico has shown that with trained bilingual teachers, evaluation followed by proper adjustments in curriculum, proper textbooks, good-faith discussions, and unambiguous administrative accountability, a well-designed bilingual education program can enhance the academic success of non-English-proficient students.

All our children -- including those who now speak predominantly in Spanish, Chinese, and other foreign languages, are society's future. We need them to be as educated and skilled as possible to compete in the global economy. These students and their need for a curriculum which suits them won't go away because a state proposition banning bilingual education is passed.

The consequences of neglecting their educational requirements will affect the viability of our society both in the near and longer term. Let's invest in all the children of the state of California. On June 2, I will vote NO on Proposition 227.

capacitados.

El pluralismo no es el enemigo. La ignorancia y el prejuicio son las verdaderas amenazas para una sociedad democrática y unificada. Los ciudadanos que no terminen la enseñanza secundaria y que no logren sus posibilidades más elevadas, le cuestan a nuestra sociedad.

A medida que las cifras demográficas étnicas y sociales continúan cambiando en este estado, no podemos permitirnos que seamos dirigidos por aquellos que dividen a la sociedad entre “nosotros y ellos”, entre “sus hijos y los nuestros”. Debemos vivir juntos en esta sociedad, de un modo u otro.

Durante los 15 años más recientes, California se ha sumido hasta llegar a ser uno de los cinco estados con más bajas calificaciones en la nación en cuanto a los gastos por cápita para los estudiantes desde el kindergarten hasta el 12x grado. Cuán irónico es que uno de los estados más ricos del país decida ser uno de los peores inversionistas en el futuro de sus ciudadanos.

Sí, necesitamos normas y responsabilidad. Pero también necesitamos recursos adecuados.

La enseñanza bilingüe es un asunto de importancia grave y, como lo muestra el ejemplo de Calexico, debería permitirse que los programas de enseñanza bilingüe evolucionaran o desaparecieran, a medida que lo dicten las circunstancias particulares, de modo ordenado y con las prioridades de enseñanza claras en la mente. Calexico ha mostrado que, con maestros capacitados, una evaluación seguida por ajustes adecuados al plan de estudios, libros de texto apropiados, debates de buena fe y responsabilidad administrativa bien definida, un programa bien diseñado de enseñanza bilingüe puede realizar el éxito académico de los estudiantes que no tienen dominio completo del inglés.

Todos nuestros niños -- incluyendo a aquellos que hablan ahora predominantemente en español, chino y otros idiomas extranjeros, son el futuro de la sociedad. Necesitamos que ellos tengan tanta enseñanza y habilidad como sea posible, a fin de que puedan competir en la economía global. Estos estudiantes y su necesidad de un plan de estudios que sea adecuado para ellos, no desaparecerán porque sea aprobada una proposición estatal que prohíba la enseñanza bilingüe.

Las consecuencias de descuidar sus necesidades de enseñanza afectarán a la viabilidad de nuestra sociedad, tanto a corto como a largo plazo. Invirtamos en todos los niños del estado de California. El 2 de junio, votaré que “NO” sobre la Proposición 227.

Luis Nogales es comerciante de Los Angeles, graduado de la Escuela Secundaria de Calexico, de la Universidad Estatal en San Diego y de la Escuela de Derecho de la Universidad de Stanford. Es miembro de varias juntas corporativas de directores, incluyendo a la de Edison International. Es también miembro de la Junta de Fideicomisarios de la Fundación Ford y de la Comisión de Enseñanza Post-Secundaria de California.)

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MENTAL STUDY - From Page 2

also found

— In 1997, 48 percent of health plans imposed limits on the number of outpatient visits each year, usually 20 per year. That's up from 26 percent in 1988.

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## Latinos De Los EE.UU. Se Unen A La Carrera En Comunicaciones Electronicas

Por Joseph Torres

Es posible que los hispanos no terminen vendiendo bolsas de maníes y naranjas a lo largo de la llamada supercarretera de información de la nación después de todo.

Los estudios más preliminares que contaron a los pasajeros hispanos en el "viaje" del país hacia las comunicaciones electrónicas pintaron un cuadro atemorizador. Pero ahora, uno de nuestras entidades multi-disciplinarias más respetadas, el Instituto "Tomás Rivera" para Cursos de Acción (TRPI en inglés), de Claremont, California, trae noticias estimulantes.

El mismo halla que durante los cinco años más recientes, la cantidad de hispanos que son propietarios de computadoras y usan la Internet ha acelerado de tal modo -- quizá no tanto como el "Enterprise" de la serie "Star Trek" -- que al menos ahora está a la par con la población en general. No obstante, todavía existe una diferencia del 17 por ciento. Pero proporcionalmente entre 1994 y 1998, la el porcentaje de familias hispanas propietarias de computadoras fué el doble que para todas las familias estadounidenses, 130 por ciento contra 65 por ciento.

El estudio de 16 páginas, publicado en este mes y titulado "Cerrando la Línea Divisoria Digital", revela que la propiedad de computadoras en las familias hispanas ascendió desde el 13 por ciento en 1994 hasta el 30 por ciento en 1998 (contra el 26 por ciento al 43 por ciento para todas las familias de los Estados Unidos). El uso de la Internet en las familias hispanas aumentó del 2 por ciento al 15 por ciento.

En el decenio que precedió a 1994, la "línea divisoria digital" que separaba a los hispanos del resto de la nación se había ensanchado. Pero en los cinco años más recientes, según hace notar el autor del estudio, Anthony Wilhelm, "la combinación de más computadoras por un valor menor de \$1,000 en el mercado y un aumento del poder adquisitivo de los hispanos entre la clase media ha resultado en un aumento astronómico de la propiedad de computadoras y del uso de la Internet entre las familias hispanas".

El TRPI terminó de entrevistar a 804 familias hispanas de toda la nación en febrero último. Las respuestas a cerca de 50 preguntas proporcionan una gran cantidad de detalles, los cuales indican que el costo, no la cultura, fué y todavía es el obstáculo

mayor. El presidente del TRPI, Harry Pachón, señala que los logros académicos y la ocupación son otros factores determinantes claves.

Ligeramente más de la mitad de todos los administradores o profesionales hispanos tienen ahora una computadora, y ligeramente más de la tercera parte están conectados a la Internet. Casi las dos terceras partes de las familias hispanas que ganan \$50,000 al año o más tienen computadoras, y el 40 por ciento de ellos están conectados a la Internet.

Dos tercios de los hispanos con instrucción universitaria son poseedores de computadoras. Para aquéllos que tienen instrucción inferior a la secundaria, la cifra se ciere ligeramente por encima del 10 por ciento, bajando a los dígitos sencillos cuando se mide a los usuarios de la Internet.

Casi la tercera parte (el 31 por ciento) de los adultos hispanos que respondieron al cuestionario dijeron que ni han usado una computadora. De los que no las tienen, el 24 por ciento dijo que es seguro o muy probable que compren una en este año.

Aquellos hispanos que están "en línea" (conectados a la Internet) mencionan a su lugar de trabajo como el punto de "primer contacto" más común, donde obtuvieron conocimiento de las computadoras, seguido por una escuela o una universidad. Ellos dicen que hallan que la Internet es útil como fuente de información y como vehículo para comunicarse (por la vía del correo electrónico).

Los que no están conectados aún la ven como un instrumento de enseñanza que puede mejorar sus vidas y las de sus hijos. El sesenta y cinco por ciento de ellos piensa que sus hijos no tienen un acceso adecuado a la Internet.

(Joseph Torres es el editor del semanario nacional Hispanic Link Weekly Report en Washington, DC.)

Los lectores pueden obtener un ejemplar del informe de 16 páginas enviando un cheque, giro postal o bancario por \$10 a: TRPI, 241 E. 11th St., Steele Hall, 3rd floor, Claremont, CA 91711. Teléfono (909) 621-8897, FAX (909) 621-8898.

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## Aprueba Senado Restaurar Beneficio De Alimentos

Por Judy Holland

Washington- El Senado de Estados Unidos aprobó abrumadoramente ayer la reanudación de beneficios en estampillas de alimentos con un valor de 88 millones de dólares a inmigrantes legales.

Con lo anterior se revierte parte de restrucción del sistema asistencia social formulada por el Congreso en 1996, la cual eliminó los beneficios federales a casi un millón de inmigrantes legales.

La votación de ayer continúa un ánimo favorable al inmigrante que comenzó el año pasado cuando el Congreso, en el acuerdo sobre equilibrio del presupuesto, votó para restaurar ingreso suplementario de seguridad y servicio médico Medicaid a varios inmigrantes legales,

quienes quedaron despojados de beneficios como consecuencia de la restrucción del sistema de bienestar social.

La disposición sobre estampillas alimentarias forma parte de una iniciativa de ley, acompañada de recursos por mil 900 millones de dólares, la cual ampliaría el seguro de cosechas agrícolas, crearía un nuevo programa de investigación agrícola y agrega mayores recursos para desarrollo rural.

El voto senatorial de 92 a favor 8 en contra restauraría las estampillas a los 250 mil inmigrantes legales, incluyendo a personas de mayor edad y discapacitadas así como a los menores de edad, que se encontraban en territorio estadounidense el 22 de agosto de 1996, cuando fue aprobada la iniciativa de ley de restrucción del sistema de bienestar.

La nueva medida ampliaría asimismo de cinco a siete años el tiempo que estarán disponibles las estampillas para cerca de 43 mil refugiados políticos y personas que han solicitado asilo político aquí contra persecución religiosa y política en el extranjero.

Si bien la reanudación se aplica a menos de un tercio de los cerca de 935 mil inmigrantes legales que quedaron sin beneficios bajo la ley de asistencia social, partidarios de la misma señalan haber estado dispuestos a aceptarla como un pago de anticipo.

Los ocho senadores que votaron en contra de las estampillas de comida fueron los republicanos Phil Gramm, de Texas, Judd Gregg y Robert Smith, de

Nueva Hampshire, Jesse Helms, de Carolina del Norte, James M. Inhofe y Don Nickles, de Oklahoma, John Kyl, de Arizona y Jeff Sessions, de Alabama. Anteriormente, el Senado rechazó, por votación 77 a 23, una medida presentada por Gramm para eliminar la disposición sobre estampillas.

En un discurso ante el pleno antes de la votación, Gramm dijo que la reanudación de las estampillas a inmigrantes legales sería "una política destructiva" que alearía una "Selección adversa" de personas a acudir a Estados Unidos "para tratar de vivir de los frutos del trabajo de otros".

Y, agregó, "quiero que vengan con las mangas de la camisa levantadas y listos para trabajar y no con las manos extendidas listos para recurrir a la asistencia social".

Dijo asimismo: "El mayor problema de esta iniciativa es que coloca un gran anuncio de luz neón en la frontera de Estados Unidos de América: Vengan a obtener asistencia social". Yo opino que ello está ofreciendo el incentivo equivocado para que la gente venga a Estados Unidos".

Gramm había solicitado previamente que la medida fuera sometida a una conferencia bicameral para hacer cambios técnicos, que según partidarios de la iniciativa señalaron era un claro intento de eliminarla.

Gramm insistió en su deseo de que los conferencistas consideraran conceder estampillas solo a refugiados y solicitantes de asilo político que se encontraban en Estados Unidos en agosto de 1996, cuando la restrucción se elevó a ley.

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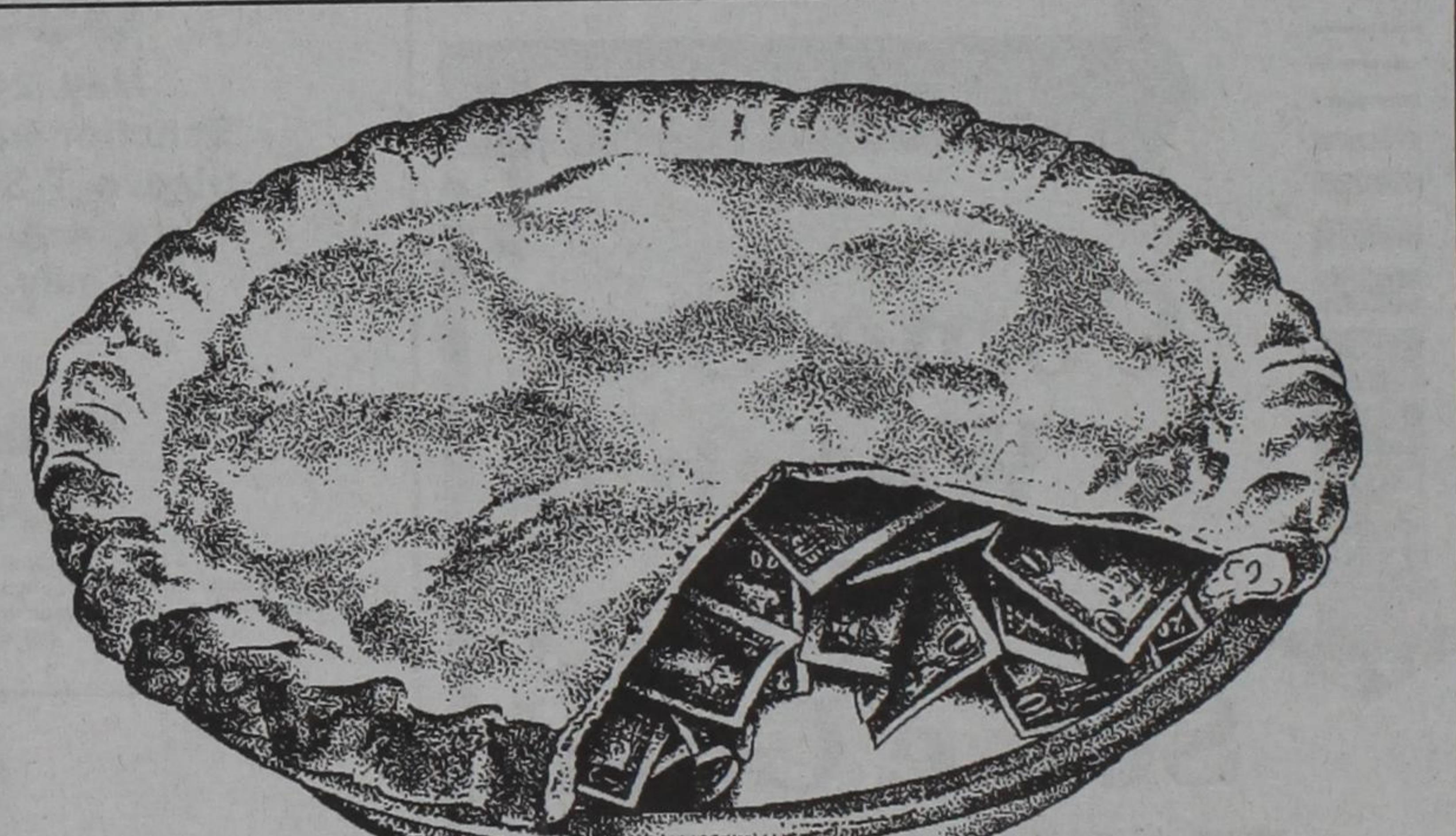
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# Is Larry Dierker Having The Last Laugh, Or What?

By Peter Schmuck

Everybody made comparisons to Jerry Coleman when Dierker came out of the broadcast booth to become manager of the Houston Astros last season, underestimating the baseball acumen of the former Astros pitcher and missing a more contemporary comparison -- with Joe Torre, who spent considerable time in front of a microphone before leading the New York Yankees to a world title in 1996.

Dierker turned out to be a pretty good manager and the Astros turned out to be a pretty good team, going to the playoffs for the first time in 11 years in his rookie year as manager.

Now, faced with another difficult test, he has the Astros back in first place in the National League Central, and has a lot of upside potential yet to exploit.

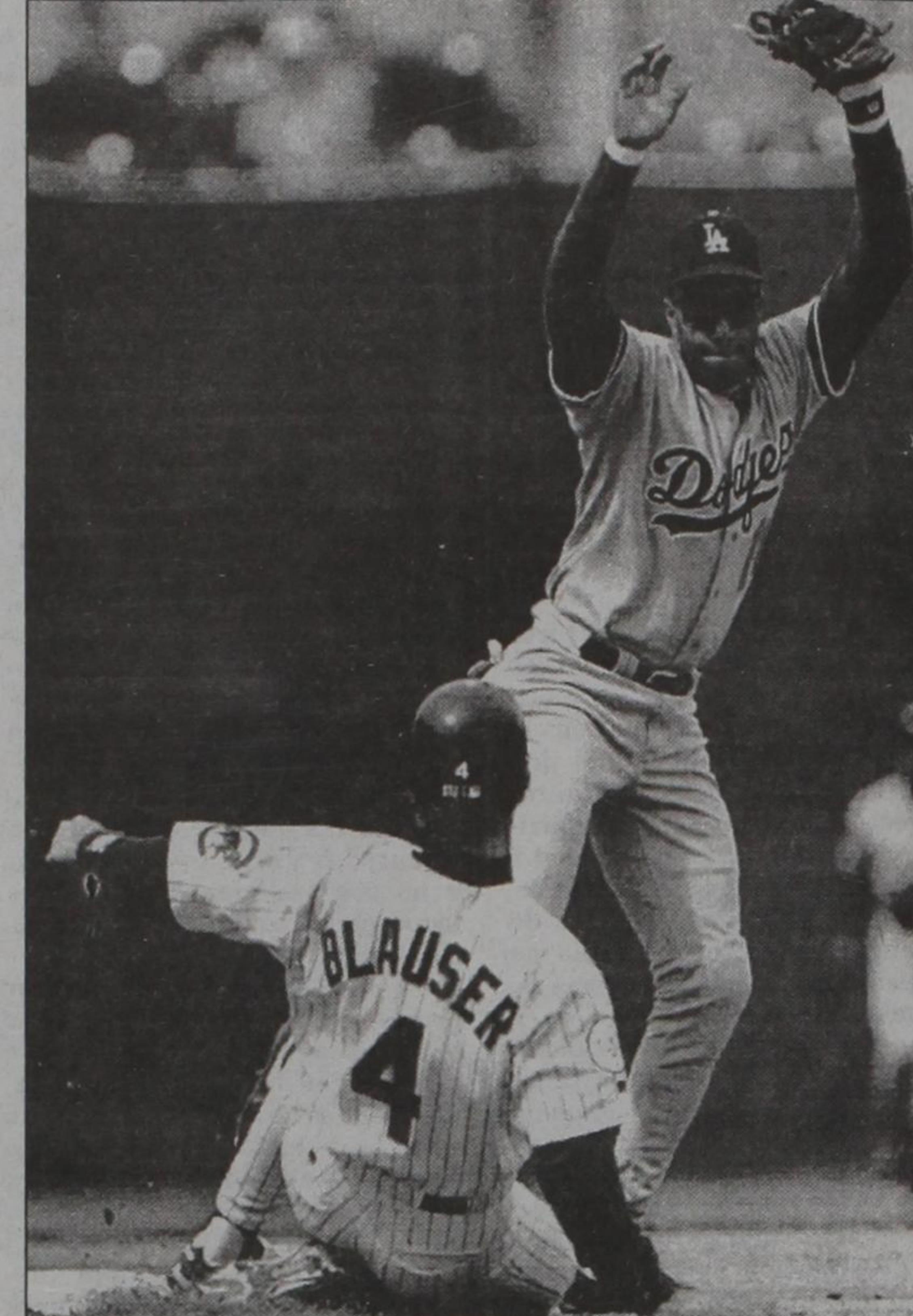
The conventional preseason wisdom on the Astros held that they would have a tough time defending their 1997 division championship because they would have to do so without pitching ace Darryl Kile, who became a free agent over the winter and signed with the Colorado Rockies. That may yet turn out to be the case, but the Astros have been able to balance solid pitching and defense with one of the most productive offensive lineups in the league to get right back on top of the NL Central standings.

They set a club record with 17 victories in April and recently ran off an eight-game winning streak to emerge on top of several surprisingly solid division rivals . . . and there may be more to come. Hard-hitting first baseman Jeff Bagwell hasn't really joined the fight, struggling

through an early-season slump that has him well off pace of his career numbers, and catcher Brad Ausmus is just beginning to emerge from a deep early-season funk.

"When you think about one of your lead horses, Jeff Bagwell, hitting just (.241 going into this week) and being almost a non-factor for the first part of the season, and Shane Reynolds, who we were looking to bounce back in a big way, getting off to a slow start, and yet we set a

franchise record for wins in April, I'm very pleased," general manager Jerry Hunsicker said recently. He should be. The Astros have gotten big performances from starters Mike Hampton and Jose Lima and Saturday got a major shot in the arm when veteran lefthander



Pete Schourek came off the disabled list to throw five shutout innings against the rival Milwaukee Brewers.

If they miss Kile, they are doing a pretty good of hiding it. The pitching staff ranks among the top five in combined ERA and -- through 34 games -- had allowed fewer walks and home runs than any other National League club. All this in spite of injuries that could keep projected No. 3 starter Ramon Garcia and No. 4 starter Chris Holt off the mound until after the All-Star break.

If they miss the usual contribution from Bagwell, that is not in

evidence either. Outfielder Derek Bell has picked up the slack with the best start of his career and newcomer Moises Alou also has been a major offensive force. Only the high-powered Colorado Rockies and Atlanta Braves have scored more runs. Only three NL clubs have hit for a higher combined average.

"When we get the other guys going, it ought to be a lot of fun," Dierker said. "I don't think

the guys who are on a tear right now are going to continue to hit .375 or .400 like they have . . . but I don't think the guys who are struggling right now are going to continue to struggle the whole year either."

That should balance out like everything else has for the Astros, who entered the week ranked among the National League's top five clubs in hitting, pitching and fielding.

Funny, the Central division was supposed to be the soft underbelly of the National League,

but it has turned out -- so far -- to be the most competitive division in baseball, with the Brewers and Cubs right behind the Astros and (through Saturday)

only 5 1/2 games separating all six divisional rivals.

## BIG TEST IN TAMPA

The fledgling Tampa Bay Devil Rays were starting to wonder about the depth of their fan base after drawing an average of about 31,000 for their first 13 regular season games at Tropicana Field.

That was good enough to rank them 11th in the American League, but it was far enough behind the early season pace of the other three 1990s expansion teams that it raised questions about the long-term drawing power of the club.

Not to worry, said owner Vince Naimoli. Devil Rays fans were just waiting for the club's high-profile division rivals and a couple of other premier American League teams to spice up the schedule.

The first test of that theory came last weekend, when the Orioles arrived in town for a three-game series. Sure enough, the crowds were bigger. Saturday night's game drew 42,486, the largest crowd since Opening Day.

## NO WARTS ON MUS-SINA COMEBACK

Orioles pitching ace Mike Mussina was forced onto the disabled list by an inflamed wart three weeks ago, his absence coinciding with the worst of a lengthy slump that dropped the defending division champion well behind the Yankees and Red Sox in the AL East. Now he's back, and the club seems to be coming back with him.

Mussina pitched 7 2/3 scoreless innings in his first appearance after having the wart removed from the index finger on his pitching hand and went four outs farther on Saturday night, pitching the first complete-game shutout in the short history of Tropicana Field. He has pitched 16 2/3 consecutive scoreless innings since coming off the DL. "There was no pressure on me," said Mussina. "Things could only get better. They couldn't get much worse."

**CLEVELAND REDS**

The Cincinnati Reds didn't waste any time putting top prospect Sean Casey in the major league lineup, though it's been barely a month since a thrown ball fractured his eye socket and

forced him to have surgery.

Casey, who was acquired from the Indians in the late March deal for starting pitcher Dave Burba, is being touted by Reds GM Jim Bowden as a potential franchise player, and he did nothing to dispel that notion with a 3-for-4 performance in his first major league start at first base last week.

"He can hit, I don't think there's any doubt about that," manager Jack McKeon said after that game. "And I think hell hit for power. Maybe 15 to 18 home runs. He may get them this year." Casey isn't the only former Indians prospect to make an impression in a Reds uniform.

Pitcher Scott Winchester, who was acquired from Cleveland in the John Smiley deal last year, has moved into the Reds rotation and is pitching effectively.

## FRIGHTENING FREE AGENT

Poor Willie Blair. Well, actually, he's rich Willie Blair, but

the Arizona Diamondbacks' first big-time free agent pitching acquisition hasn't been able to buy a victory. He entered the week winless in eight starts and has to be wondering when he's going to start earning that \$11.5 million the D-Backs have agreed to pay him over the next three years.

"I'm going to be disappointed if I'm making \$10," Blair told reporters recently. "I want to go out and win every time. It doesn't matter how much I make."

Blair hasn't won since September 8 of last year. He hasn't gotten much help from the Diamondbacks offense -- which has scored two runs or fewer in six of his starts -- but he hasn't helped himself much with a 6.10 ERA.

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### AND WHO WOULD BELIEVE MULESHOE!

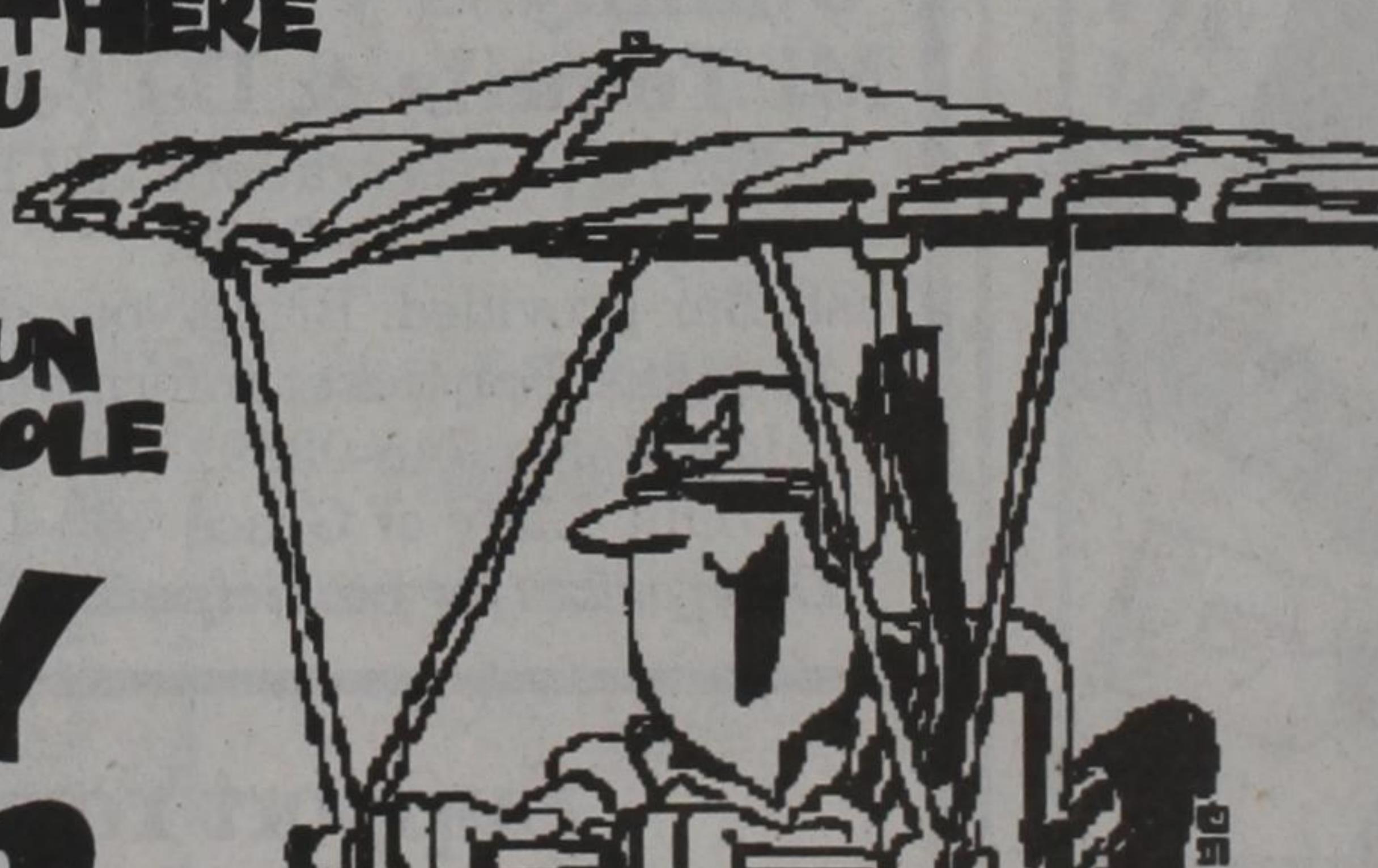
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