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Ajeno es la Paz"
Lic Benito Juarez

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Supreme Court Resignation Elevates Hopes for a Latino Nominee

Alma Dalia Rojo

Latino groups and legislators are closely watching the Sturm und Drang surrounding the selection of a replacement for retiring Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, saying they want to ensure that a potential nominee, if not Latino, is at least mindful of the issues concerning the community.

Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-Calif.) says the appointment of a Latino would be historic but, "the most important thing is not the ethnicity of the nominee, it's what does their record reflect in terms of how committed are they towards preserving the civil liberties and civil rights that Hispanics have achieved and are they going to use our system of justice to try to help lift that community up," she told Hispanic Link News Service.

An unofficial list of potential candidates has been circulating around Washington which includes several Hispanic names, such as Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Emilio Garza. The list continues to grow and includes 10 names suggested by the Cuban-American and the Hispanic National Bar associations.

For the first time in 30 years, Latino legislators will have the opportunity to vote for a Supreme Court nominee, with Sens. Mel Martínez (R-Fla.) and Ken Salazar (D-Colo.) as the first Hispanic

members of the U.S. Senate since 1975.

Martínez and Salazar declined to comment on any specific potential candidates, but stated their support for a "fair" process of appointment.

"I believe it is critical that the process going forward be fair, devoid of political assassination, and conducted with fairness and finality," Martínez stated.

His Democratic colleague added, "It is my hope that the President will follow through with his pledge to consult with the Senate to ensure the selection of a nominee that Coloradans and the nation can welcome and be confirmed with strong bipartisan support," Salazar said.

Douglas Abrams, a University of Missouri constitutional law professor, called the possibility of a Hispanic justice among "the finest American tradition" of firsts, recalling Louis Brandeis as the first Jewish justice in 1916, Thurgood Marshall as the first black justice in 1967 and O'Connor as the first female justice in 1981. "When you are 'first,' you are a role model and that is healthy for America," he said. "If the President does not appoint an Hispanic man or woman this time, he will likely do so soon. He certainly has a number of qualified names to choose from."

Experts speculate that President Bush could "save" the so-called Hispanic seat for

the expected retirement of Chief Justice William Rehnquist. However, others say the attorney general's proximity to the president may work to his advantage now.

Gonzales is endorsed by the League of United Latin American Citizens, because of his "outstanding qualifications, experience and judicial temperament," LULAC President Héctor Flores said. "(He) will be a fair-minded jurist who will apply the law in keeping with our great American traditions and review each case on its merits.

However, conservative groups have criticized Gonzales as "too moderate" for the Bush administration on several issues, including abortion and affirmative action, attacks that the president himself has called "unfair against a great friend."

Democrats, including Senate Minority leader Harry Reid, have said that the criticism reflects the "right-wing efforts to overturn the Latino community's progress over the years."

As the two sides compete for the stronger position, conservative and liberal interest groups may engage in the most

expensive nomination fight in the nation's history with an anticipated expenditure of up to \$100 million in television ads and other lobbying efforts.

"We're seeing such political divisions that are sometimes very profound and I think what we have in common as Americans is more important than what divides us," Mari Carmen Aponte, spokesperson for Hispanics for a Fair Judiciary, told Hispanic Link News Service. The HFJ is a coalition of Hispanic civil rights leaders and groups.

Aponte and others say they would like to see a nominee that reflects O'Connor's moderate views. Unanimously approved by the Senate in 1981, and on the bench for 24 years, O'Connor was the key swing vote on a number of issues, including affirmative action, voting rights and bilingual education.

After the president announces his nominee, the Senate Judiciary Committee will discuss it before sending it to the full Senate for a final vote. An announcement could come as early as this week.



Alberto Gonzales



Emilio Garza

Renuncia del Juez de Tribunal Supremo Alza Esperanzas de un Candidato Latino

Aldalia Rojo

Grupos latinos y legisladores vigilan de cerca el drama en torno a la selección del reemplazo para Sandra Day O'Connor, jueza del Tribunal Supremo, aseverando que quieren asegurar que el candidato, si no resulta ser latino, sea mínimamente conciente de los temas de inveterada para la comunidad latina.

La representante Linda Sánchez (demócrata por California), indica que el nombramiento de un latino sería un hito histórico, pero que "lo más importante no es la etnicidad del nombrado, sino lo que refleja su expediente en términos de su compromiso con proteger las libertades y los derechos civiles que los hispanos han logrado y que si va a utilizar nuestro sistema de justicia para ayudar a levantar la comunidad hispana", le dijo a Hispanic Link News Service.

Una lista extra oficial de posibles candidatos circula en Washington, la cual incluye varios nombres de hispanos, tales como el del fiscal de la nación, Anthony Gonzales y juez del quinto tribunal de apelaciones, Emilio Garza. Dicha lista continúa aumentándose para incluir a 10 nombres que sugirió los colegios nacionales de abogados cubano-americano e hispano.

Por primera vez en 30 años, legisladores latinos tendrán la oportunidad de votar por un nominado al Tribunal Supremo, con los senadores Mel Martínez (repblicano por Florida) y Ken Salazar (demócrata por Colorado) como los primeros miembros hispanos del Senado de los Estados Unidos desde 1975. Ni Martínez ni Salazar quiso comentar sobre candidatos en particular, pero declararon su apoyo por un proceso y nombramiento "justos".

de primerizos, al recordar a Louis Brandeis como el primer juez judío en 1916, a Thurgood Marshall como el primer juez negro en 1967, y a O'Connor como la primera jueza mujer en 1981. "Cuando se es "primero", es un ejemplo para los demás y eso le hace bien a los Estados Unidos", explicó. "Si el presidente no nombra a un hombre hispano o a una mujer hispana esta vez, lo probable es que lo haga pronto. De hecho cuenta con varios nombres de personas calificadas de los cuales escoger".

Los perito especulan que el presidente Bush podría "guardar" el llamo escaño hispano para la jubilación anticipada del juez principal, William Renquist. No obstante, otros alegan que la proximidad del fiscal al presidente podrá servirle de ventaja ahora.

La Liga de Ciudadanos Unidos Latino Americanos apoya públicamente a Gonzales por sus "calificaciones sobresalientes, su experiencia y su temperamento judicial", dijo Héctor Flores,

presidente de la organización. "Será un juez justo quien aplicará la ley de acuerdo a nuestras grandes tradiciones estadounidenses y quien revisará cada caso en base a sus propios méritos".

No obstante, grupos conservadores han criticado a Gonzales como "demasiado moderado" para ser nombrado, lo cual el presidente mismo han denominado ataques "injustos contra un gran amigo".

Los demócratas, incluyendo al líder minoritario del Senado, Harry Reid, han indicado que la crítica es un reflejo de "esfuerzos de la derecha por dar marcha atrás al progreso logrado por la comunidad hispana a través de los años".

Al competir ambos lados por una mejor posición, grupos de interés tanto conservadores como liberales podrán entablar la lucha por el nombramiento más costosa de la historia de la nación, con un gasto anticipado de hasta \$100 millones en comerciales de televisión y otros esfuerzos de cabildeo.

Hispanics Lag Behind in Retirement Accounts

SUZANNE GAMBOA,

Latinos save through retirement accounts at half the rate of the general population, and those with such accounts have less than one-fifth the retirement savings of the overall work force, according to a study Wednesday.

Changes in tax and financial policies and promotion of financial counseling could boost retirement savings by Latinos, said the study by the Pew Charitable Trust's Retirement Security Project and the National Council of La Raza, an umbrella organization of Latino groups.

The study "provides compelling evidence that Hispanics are woefully unprepared for retirement," said Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (news, bio, voting record), R-Fla.

The study found that Hispanics nearing retirement have the least retirement savings. More than half of households of Hispanics age 55 through 59 have nothing in retirement accounts, compared with a median balance of about \$10,400 for all households in that age range, the study said.

Among the study's recommendations for increasing savings:

Allow companies to automatically enroll new employees in 401(k) accounts in predetermined plans, with increases in contributions as the employee's income rises. Allow employees to opt out and to roll over the money to an IRA automatically when they switch jobs.

Allow U.S. households to deposit a portion of tax refunds into an individual retirement account (IRA). Currently, taxpayers can only put the money in one account, making it less likely that money will go to retirement savings.

Change tax laws so lower-income workers can benefit from tax breaks for savings and investments.

Allow recipients of public benefits such as Medicaid and food stamps to have more retirement savings and still qualify for the benefits.

Promote financial planning in the workplace and through federal policies.

The recommendations have been endorsed by groups as diverse as the conservative Heritage Foundation think tank and the liberal-leaning Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, as well as both Democratic and Republican lawmakers.

The number of Hispanics 65 or older is expected to grow to 15.2 million by 2050, or 17.5 percent of the retired population.

"Estamos viendo tales divisiones políticas que aveces son muy profundas y me parece que lo que tenemos en común como americanos es más importante que lo que nos divide", le dijo a Hispanic Link News Service, MariCarmen Aponte, vocera de Hispanics for a Fair Judiciary. La organización es una coalición de dirigentes y grupos de derechos civiles hispanos.

Aponte y otros dicen que les gustaría ver un nombramiento que refleje la perspectiva moderada de O'Connor. Tras ser nombrada por voto unánime del Senado en 1981, y habiendo servido en el Tribunal durante 24 años, O'Connor era el voto clave de varios temas, así como la acción afirmativa, el derecho al voto y la educación bilingüe.

Después que el presidente anuncie su nombramiento, el Comité Judicial del Senado lo discutirá antes de enviarlo al Senado completo para el voto final. Se podría tener un anuncio tan pronto como la próxima semana.

Latino Leaders Speak Out on Key Issues Facing Hispanic Community

Philadelphia, PA – The heads of nine major national Latino organizations will gather at the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) Annual Conference in Philadelphia for a roundtable discussion on some of the key issues facing the Latino community including immigration, political empowerment, education, and the Supreme Court vacancy. Empowering the Hispanic Community: A Roundtable with Latino Leaders will take place Tuesday, July 19 beginning at 3:00 p.m. in Room 108B of the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

Among the leaders confirmed for the event, which will be moderated by NCLR President and CEO Janet Murguia, are Ron Blackburn-Moreno, President, The ASPIRA Association; Guarione Diaz, President, Cuban American National Council (CANC); Hector Flores, President, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC); Manuel Mirabal, President, National Puerto Rican Coalition (NPRC); Alma Morales Riojas, President, MANA, A National Latina Organization; Cesar Perales, President and General Counsel, Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF); L and Arturo Vargas, Executive Director, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO).

Guest Commentary

Memín Pinguin - Stupidity is Stupidity

By Rodolfo Acuna

The minting of the Memín Pinguin stamp in Mexico points out the gap between civil rights conscious Mexicans and Latinos in the United States and Mexican officials who defend the minting as part of Mexico's past. According to them, Mexicans loved Memín Pinguin during the 1940s and that makes it okay. As proof a representative from the Mexican embassy made the ridiculous statement that "Speedy Gonzalez has never been interpreted in a racial manner" in Mexico. But perhaps that's the problem.

Mexican officials claim that Memín Pinguin "is a traditional character that reflects part of Mexico's culture." Yes, but so is the Confederate flag part of American culture and so are stereotypes about Mexican banditos and Mexican whores.

Memín Pinguin is a cartoon boy that represents the worse Jim-Crow-era stereotyping and reinforces the racism that exists in Mexico today where caricatures of Indians are common.

Start with Mexican President Vicente Fox who is tall and white. To this day criollo families control Mexico's social, economic and political culture and it doesn't matter that Benito Juárez was a Zapotec Indian. Although they are less than 10 percent of the total population of over 106 million people, criollos control the country. Thirty percent of the population IS Indians and they are disenfranchised. Indians make a majority of the Mexican population living below the poverty line.

Racism is embedded in Mexican culture and history. It is internalized through institutions and innocuous characters such as Memín Pinguin construct social perceptions. Jose Agustín Ortiz Pinchetti wrote in La Jornada, "During the last 100 years, the racism in Mexico has shown 3 characteristics: 1) it has slowed the process of modernization; 2) it has contributed to the dissolution of public consciousness 3) it has damaged the moral assets of the nation." Racism is the product of colonial Mexico when people were categorized by race and rewarded according to how much Spanish blood ran through their veins.

Most sociological studies conclude that there is a correlation between income and race. Bonfil Batalla "Mexico Profundo" is one of the rare Mexican books looking at race issues in Mexico and the difference between what Mexican law says and the reality that is expressed in the minting of Memín Pinguin. The truth be told, Mexican officials see nothing wrong with Speedy Gonzalez because they are in denial. (or maybe they associate Speedy Gonzalez with the peon who crossed over the border?)

Racism does psychological and cultural damage. Laughing at it is like laughing at a sick race joke. To say Memín Pinguin's cartoon funny is simply racist. Look at Spanish-language television commercials in Mexico that promote racial dominance.

Since the founding of Mexico those in power have attempted to create the illusion that all Mexicans are equal when in fact class can be distinguished by just looking at who drives new cars and who drive the clunkers.

The lack of race consciousness allows the hegemony of criollos and light skinned mestizos. It is a testament to a decadent public education system that ignores racism. You would have thought that the revolt among the Mayan population of Chiapas would have been a wake up call.

Moreover, Mexicans just don't know their own history. Up until 1700 more Africans entered Mexico than Spaniards and in 1810, ten percent of the population was listed as Afro-mestizo which means that between a fifth to a quarter of all Mexicans had African blood.

The stamp is not just "injurious to black people who live in the United States and Mexico," it hurts Native Americans on both sides of the border; it hurts the poor. Unfortunately, poor Mexican immigrants come to the United States often lacking a race consciousness and enroll in public school systems equally inept in teaching people their rights. We live in a country where racism is accepted and to do anything about it is "reverse discrimination" against privileged white males.

Letters to the editors imply that the rhubarb has been stirred up by opportunists who want to win votes. They make personal attacks on the Rev. Jesse Jackson and say that Memín Pinguin is the symbol of Mexico like "el Chavo del Ocho, Cantinflas and Capulina." Give me a break!

This just tells me that we have a long way in educating people for whether Latinos recognize it or not, they owe a huge debt to the civil rights movement and the principals of the Chicano Movement and Mexican American organizations before them. Mexicans are no longer in segregated schools because of a race consciousness. Latinos are

in the universities in large numbers because of this race consciousness. And there are immigrant rights organizations because of race consciousness.

I remember when Mexican intellectuals looked down on Chicanos as pochos and believed that the violation of immigrant rights was ok because they had abandoned the motherland. Well, that represents stupidity.

As to Memín Pinguin, the ignorance of Mexican officials does not make it right.



"Me parece crítico que el proceso sea justo, carente de asesinato político, y realizado con justicia y finalidad", dijo Martínez.

Su colega demócrata añadió que, "Espero que el presidente cumpla su promesa de consultar con el Senado para asegurar la selección de un nombramiento al que los de Colorado y de toda la nación puedan dar la bienvenida y que sea confirmado con sólido apoyo de ambos partidos", dijo Salazar.

Douglas Adams, profesor de legislación constitucional de la Universidad de Missouri, dijo que la posibilidad de un juez hispano estaría dentro de "la mejor tradición americana"

El Editor Léalo Primero Para lo Mejor
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America The Beautiful, A Mayor, A Court

Frank Gómez

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's inauguration concluded with the singing of "America the Beautiful." On the same day, Friday, July 1, President Bush announced the retirement of Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. These two events - a continent apart - hold great significance for Hispanics and for the nation.

Villaraigosa, as is often pointed out, is the "first Latino mayor of Los Angeles in more than a century." His "up from the barrio" appeal and the broad coalition of Angelenos that elected him testify vividly to an emerging demographic, political and economic landscape. They testify to the reality that United States has the potential to become truly beautiful - a kaleidoscope of increasingly diverse people accepting each other's differences and working together to find better ways.

Hispanics have long regarded one of our own on the

Supreme Court as one of the last milestones representing to full acceptance as a welcome, contributing and responsible part of this land. Each successive president has bested his predecessor by appointing Latinos to senior positions, not merely in social services agencies but also those shaping national policy. Alberto Gonzales' appointment as Attorney General is the most recent.

Filling the Court vacancy with a Hispanic, furthermore, would:

- add a voice to the decision-making process that the court has never had; ideology aside, ethnicity and gender make a difference;

- make the court look like America; with all the hoopla about Hispanics comprising 14% of the population, it is time;

- send a signal to federal agencies whose scorecard on Hispanic hiring is abysmal; yes, there are "qualified" Hispanics out there;

- tell America - and the world - that Hispanics have arrived, finally, as full-fledged citizens who deserve and have more than earned respect.

Now, some xenophobes out there are probably a bit more restless these days. First they had the census numbers. What a shocker! Why, my neighbor could be a Hispanic! Second, they see and hear more and more people speaking Spanish! Even Spanish-language ads at Superbowl halftime. Horrors! Third, most of America - and this is the beautiful part about it - embraces a new socio-political and cultural model that welcomes the "Hispanicization" of America. People hardly notice anymore when they hear our nation's second language spoken in public. And they know that countless public services would not exist without the hard work and sacrifice of Latino workers.

Antonio Villaraigosa has to succeed at making the mosaic of Los Angeles work. Other big city Latino mayors (Denver,

Miami, San Antonio) succeeded, but did not confront his challenges. The spotlight will be riveted on him. His success will send signals across United States.

Even if a Hispanic is not to become a justice of the Supreme Court, that some were considered also sends signals across America. This is another "first" that will happen sooner or later. And when it happens, "first this" and "first that" will fall by the wayside as the Nation get used to and welcome Hispanics into every walk of life in our country. It would help, too, if Hollywood and television stopped stereotyping Latinos.

Yes, Villaraigosa got it right. "America the Beautiful" can resonate powerfully not only in Los Angeles but throughout the land when Americans of all kinds are no longer called the first this and the first that. We have a way to go, but "poco a poco ..."

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America la Bella, Un Alcalde, Un Tribunal

Frank Gómez

La inauguración del alcalde de Los Angeles, Antonio Villaraigosa, concluyó con la canción "America the Beautiful". El mismo día, viernes, primero de julio, el presidente Bush anunció la jubilación de la jueza del Tribunal Supremo, Sandra Day O'Connor. Ambos eventos - a la distancia de un continente el uno del otro - tienen importante significado para los hispanos y para la nación.

Villaraigosa, como con frecuencia se señala, es el "primer alcalde latino de Los Angeles en más de un siglo". Su angel "salido del barrio" y la amplia coalición de angelinos que lo eligió son testigo vivo de un paisaje demográfico, político y económico emergente. Son testimonio a la realidad que los Estados Unidos cuenta con la posibilidad de ser verdaderamente bello - un caleidoscopio de un pueblo cada vez más diverso que acepta las diferencias entre sí y que obra conjuntamente para encontrar mejores maneras de obrar.

Los hispanos largamente han considerado que uno de los nuestros en el Tribunal Supremo como uno de los últimos hitos que representa nuestra aceptación entera como parte bienvenida, contribuyente y responsable de esta tierra. Cada presidente en sucesión ha hecho mejor que su predecesor al nominar a latinos a posiciones importantes, no sólo en las agencias de servicio social, sino también en aquellas que formulan la política nacional. El nombramiento de Alberto Gonzales como fiscal de la nación es el ejemplo más reciente. Que el vacante del Tribunal Supremo se llene con un hispano, además:

- * Añadiría una voz al proceso de decisiones de la cual el Tribunal nunca ha disfrutado; ideologías aparte, la etnicidad y el género sí hacen una diferencia;

- * Haría que el Tribunal sea un reflejo de Estados Unidos; con toda la alharaca sobre los hispanos como 14% de la población, ya es hora;

- * Enviaría un mensaje a las agencias federales cuyo expediente en cuanto a la contratación de hispanos es abismal; sí, existen hispanos "calificados";

- * Mostraría a los EEUU - y al mundo - que los hispanos han llegado,

finalmente, a ser ciudadanos con todos sus derechos quienes se merecen y quienes más que se han ganado, el respeto.

Ahora, es probable que algunos xenofóbicos están más que inquietos estos días. Primero, las cifras del Censo. ¡Qué increíble! Es que, ¡hasta mi vecino podría ser hispano!

Segundo, ¡ven y oyen a más personas hablando español! ¡Hasta comerciales de medio tiempo en español durante el Superbowl! ¡Horror! Tercero, la mayoría de los Estados Unidos - he aquí lo bello de todo esto - acoge un nuevo modelo socio-político y cultural que le da la bienvenida a la "hispanicización" de los Estados Unidos. Ni cuenta se da la gente ahora cuando oye la segunda lengua de nuestra nación expresada en público. Y saben que un sinnúmero de servicios públicos no existirían sin el arduo trabajo y sacrificio de obreros latinos.

Antonio Villaraigosa tiene que lograr hacer de Los Angeles un mosaico que funcione. Otros alcaldes latinos de grandes ciudades (Denver, Miami, San Antonio) lo lograron, pero no se enfrentaban con los retos que tiene Villaraigosa. La mira estará sobre él. Su éxito mandará mensajes por todo Estados Unidos.

Aun si no se convierte en juez del Tribunal Supremo un hispano, el que se consideró a algunos también manda un mensaje por todo Estados Unidos. Este será otro "primero" que ocurrirá tarde o temprano. Y cuando ocurra, "primer tal" y "primer cual" desaparecerán en el olvido al irse acostumbrando los estadounidenses a tener y dar la bienvenida a hispanos en todos los aspectos de la vida de nuestro país. Sería útil, también, que Hollywood y la televisión dejen de presentar a latinos en papeles de estereotipo.

Sí, Villaraigosa lo supo hacer. "America the Beautiful" pueden tener una poderosa resonancia no sólo en Los Angeles, sino también por toda la tierra cuando los estadounidenses de todo tipo ya no se consideran el primer tal y el primer cual. Nos falta camino por recorrer, pero poco a poco...

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VIEW FROM THE PIER

By Herman Sillas

Hey, UCLA finally legitimized me last month. Back in the '50s, I attended the Westwood university campus and graduated with a B.A. in political science. Not able to find a country that was willing to let me lead it, I enrolled in UCLA's law school.

Then I opened my one-man law office in Los Angeles, praying for clients. In the height of the turbulent '60s and with a last name like Sillas, I attracted Chicano activists as clients. Hey, I was the new lawyer on the block and young Chicanos needed help. They were shaking up the establishment asking for better schools, housing, employment, and elimination of discrimination. The civil rights movement was in full swing and Los Angeles was recovering from the Watts Riots of 1965. LAPD feared

that Chicanos would riot next.

It was a perfect setting for a young lawyer. Too many Chicanos were not graduating from high schools and they attributed it to more than just poor grades. They had enough education to know their Constitutional Rights. So the battle for change was on.

The other conflict in full swing was the internal struggle going on within each Chicano. He and she wrestled with the two cultures that swirled within, their parents' Mexican culture on the one hand and the American culture encountered all around them. Eventually, Chicanos figured it out. They were a new entity created from the two cultures. One thing was certain, they were Americans and demanded the rights given to all Americans.

By the 1970s, some had entered the professional ranks,

government positions, the movie industry, and educational institutions as teachers and professors. In the '80s, the focus was on business. By that time, Chicanos had learned that it takes money to change things. The media no longer referred to them as Chicanos. The new label was "Hispanic." The term seemed less threatening. Hispanic names appeared in the news and they weren't always linked to crime. They were elected officials, principals, school superintendents, teachers, engineers, and business leaders.

At universities courses were being offered about the Black, Chicano, and Asian experiences in the United States. The classrooms became filled with students eager to learn of their heritage. Standard American history books didn't reflect those experiences. As the

number of Hispanics increased on campus so did the number of Chicano courses.

By the '90s the new label given to Hispanics was "Latinos." By this time I had been a "Mexican American," "Chicano," "Hispanic" and "Latino." Yet, my kids still called me "Dad" and my wife called me "Honey." Boy, are they all messed up.

On May 24, 2005 UCLA celebrated its establishment of the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies. Chancellor Albert Carnesale praised the efforts of the students and professors who had committed themselves to expand the knowledge of all Americans to include all those who have contributed to our nation. Dr. Reynaldo F. Macias, the Founding Chair of the department, reviewed the struggle to make the studies program a department. A hunger strike in 1993 was the turning point. One hundred seventy-two students now major in Chicano studies at UCLA.

I looked around among the assembled 500 and saw old friends. A former congressman and ambassador, professors, and teachers mingled and talked of the old days. Young students, many only speaking English, listened to us old guys reminisce about the struggle.

A young Latina in UCLA's administration joyously reviewed her campaign experience volunteering for LA's new mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa. I smiled and reflected on the frustrated young Chicanos I had met in my law offices during the '60s. We had now become legitimized. It can hardly wait to see what the media calls us next. It might be just an American.

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My View...From the Giant Side of Texas

By Abel Cruz

Speaking at an event sponsored by LULAC during their National Convention a couple of weeks ago, the Rev. Jessie Jackson brought the crowd to its feet when he said that he wanted black kids to speak Spanish and "Spanish kids" to speak English. I guess he was referring to all those kids from Spain that invade our country every year, huh? How about saying that all kids, regardless of color, would be better academically prepared if they were bilingual? It may not rhyme like the Rev is used to speaking but it's what he meant isn't it?

Pretty lame from a man whose only Spanish vocabulary consists of the popular, "Si se Puede"

(it can be done) refrain; which he only uses when attending "Spanish vents"!

Two years ago, President Bush said that he would fire anyone from his administration if they were caught revealing confidential information. Press Secretary Scott McClellan, assured us that Karl Rove was not the source of the leak, under investigation at the time. Oops! It now seems that the source of leaked information revealed to a Time Magazine reporter, was none other than Karl Rove, Bush advisor and "architect" of the last Bush victory. But don't worry, my conservative Republican brethren, Rove is safe. The Bush-Whacking White House machine is in full battle mode deflecting all calls from Democrats to fire Rove. Apparently, all the BS about firing administration officials who reveal confidential information was just that, a bunch of BS!

Shame on the local sportscaster, who, when reporting on the recent death of former NFL Hall of Fame coach Hank Stram just couldn't resist mentioning that he had once coached former Texas Tech football player, E J Holub. Even for all these sports "homers" who bleed red and black and who are oblivious to everything that doesn't have a Tech connection, this was pretty low.

Speaking about homers, the local media isn't too far behind when trying to find a Lubbock connection to almost every news event. If for example, the third cousin, twice removed, of a person who won a considerable amount of money on a game show lives here, you can bet there will be a camera crew at their doorstep; ready to interview them about their third cousin twice removed! Please folks, try to control yourselves!

And the media are not the only ones on this ego trip. Just listen to the "giant side of Texas" TV commercial! The commercial claims that Bob Wills, the great Texas music legend, had a Lubbock connection. What? A web search of several websites dedicated to the life of Bob Wills never once mentions Lubbock or West Texas. They do mention cities like Fort Worth and Waco. I guess that's close enough for the chamber huh? As my good friend Doc, who attends the Bob Wills day celebrations held every year in Turkey, Texas would say: to claim that Bob Wills had a connection to Lubbock's music heritage is a bunch of malarky!

"Cynicism is an unpleasant way of saying the truth", said the American playwright Lillian Hellman. In my opinion, there are not enough cynics in the world. A little dose of reality never hurt anybody. Except those who would rather stick their heads in the sand and pretend that everything is wonderful...out here in "the giant side of Texas". Perhaps we can start with asking why according to the 2000 US Census 8.4% of the total population and 12% of families live below the poverty level in this city? Or maybe we can start by finding out why the median income for men is \$8,514 more than the median income for women. Must be based on good ole boy economics, huh?

True to his campaign promise, precinct 3 County Commissioner Sidro Gutierrez was the lone voice voting against raising Lubbock County commissioner's yearly salaries. On the one hand you have Gutierrez voting against the raise, while the other first term commissioner from precinct 4, Bill McCay believes that too much is being made of the salary issue. According to McCay, the amount is minimal when compared to the overall county budget. Minimal? If you are one of the county employees who hasn't received a raise in over 2 years is that how you would describe it, minimal?

For example, a person in a 15% tax bracket would net about \$800 per year after taxes and SS. That works out to about \$66 more per month. That equals to about 2 tanks of gas at today's outrageous gas prices. Minimal, huh?

Here's an idea for the commissioner's court, in the future, since the voters elect them to their post, let the voter's decide whether commissioners get a raise or not.

Imagine, on the job for just 6.5 months and you already get a \$1,000 raise because you voted yes to get it!

Boy that's what you call living large, out here in Lubbock, "the giant side of Texas"!

Email: acruztc@aol.com

Jim Hightower

"MAD COW, AGAIN"

How now, mad cow? U.S. officials have stumbled down a meandering trail of denials regarding this deadly, meat borne disease. When it was first detected in British cattle, the official line was that the brain-destroying disease could not be transferred from cows to humans, so not to worry - eat your burgers.

Then, when dozens of Brits began to die from eating the meat of contaminated cows, the line was that, well, yes, in Britain, but not in the USA, where we have regulatory firewalls to protect the public from cow madness. But, oops, recently officials had to admit that a mad cow had been found here - apparently, the government's firewall is nothing but a picket fence. Not to worry, though, said officialdom, for this was a Canadian cow, and besides, it's only one - so eat your burgers, all is well.

Now we learn that all is definitely not well. Last November, ag department officials found another cow that appeared to have the disease, but - good news, they said - we applied our "gold standard" test and it was negative, so all clear, eat your burgers. But such watchdogs as Consumers Union said this test was inadequate and another, more-sophisticated one should be done. Nonsense, barked US ag officials, who rejected the need for more testing, saying: "We are confident in the expertise of USDA's laboratory technicians."

But USDA's internal watchdog ordered the extra test done, and the cow was found to have the disease. Well, shrugged Ag Secretary Mike Johanns, "Science is ever evolving." Yes, but our policy makers are not. Johanns essentially defended the status quo on behalf of beef industry giants, saying in essence: Eat your burgers.

This is Jim Hightower saying... The denials and stalling must stop. All cows over 20 months old must be tested, and the industry must be banned from feeding any cow parts to cattle, including a ban on feeding cattle blood to calves. For more info, go to www.notmyfood.org

EL EDITOR

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John Leguizamo Habla Español

Es originario de Bogotá, pero tenía cuatro años de edad cuando sus padres —un puertorriqueño y una colombiana— tomaron la decisión de emigrar a Estados Uni-

dos, donde eligieron como nuevo lugar de residencia al sector de Queens, de la ciudad de Nueva York. Fue por tal razón que John Leguizamo creció e hizo toda su

carrera artística lejos de la cultura y la sociedad que lo vieron nacer el día 22 de julio de 1964.

Luego de esperar durante mucho tiempo a que se le diera la oportunidad de participar en algún filme latinoamericano, hablado en español, Leguizamo recibió hace algunos meses una llamada telefónica de parte del cineasta mexicano Alfonso Cuarón, en la que lo invitaba a interpretar el rol principal en la película Crónicas, que sería dirigida por el realizador ecuatoriano Sebastián Cordero. A continuación le dijo que en menos de 24 horas iba a tener en su casa una copia del guión.

Antes de terminar de leerlo, según el mismo Leguizamo, llegó a la conclusión que ese era el filme que había estado buscando durante mucho tiempo. Así que el actor no perdió tiempo en avisarle a Cuarón que sí, que le interesaba mucho participar en el proyecto.

Producida por las compañías Anhele y Tequila Gang, que tienen bajo su responsabilidad Cuarón y su colega mexicano Guillermo Del Toro, respectivamente, Crónicas —que se estrena este viernes en Nueva York y Los Angeles— relata una historia que transcurre en un miserable pueblo de Ecuador, en la que todos los hechos apuntan hacia un desconocido y siniestro asesino en serie, personaje al que Manolo Bonilla (Leguizamo), un reportero

de televisión amarillista procedente de Miami, bautiza con el nombre de "El Monstruo de Babahoyo".

Entusiasmado por la posibilidad que se le brinda de conver-

La Vibra, la dificultad más grande que tuvo Leguizamo durante el rodaje de Crónicas fue la de poder utilizar correctamente el idioma español.

"Te juro que no fue muy fácil

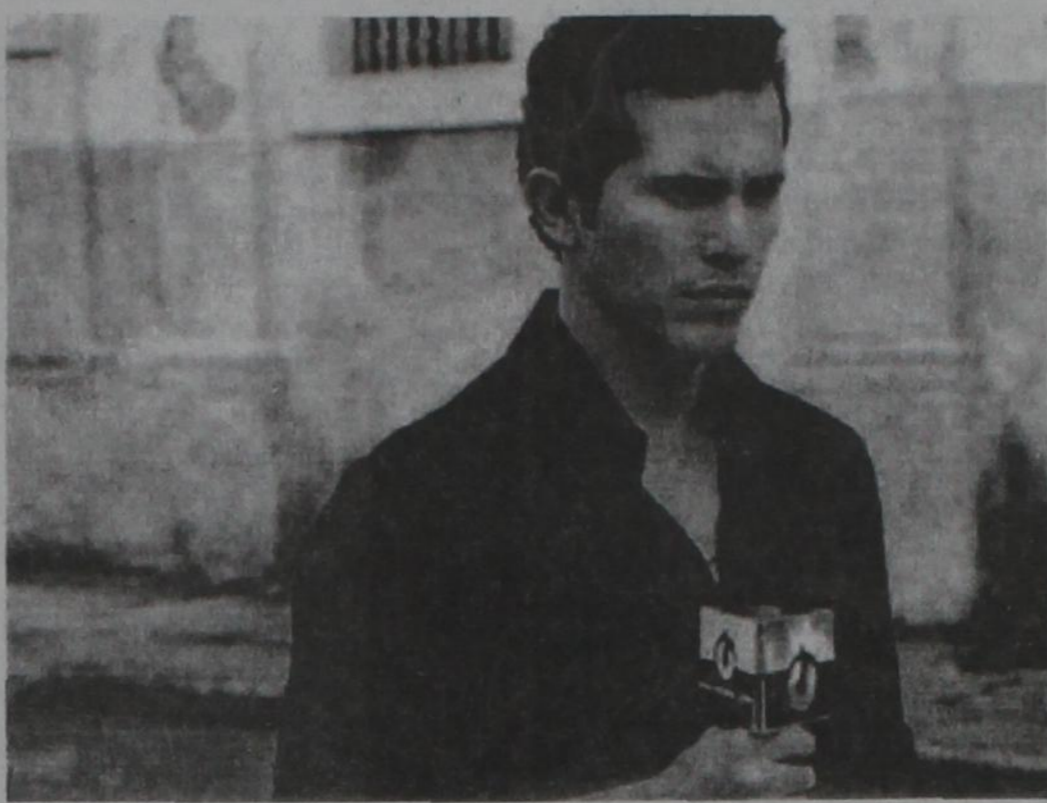
de la forma en que mi personaje debía expresarse durante las semanas que estuvimos filmando".

"A veces, a la mitad de una toma", continuó, "Sebastián paraba el rodaje y se ponía a platicar conmigo para explicarme, con mucha paciencia y tranquilidad, cómo tenía que pronunciar ciertas palabras. Finalmente, y aunque más de una vez me arrepentí por no conocer suficientemente bien mi propio idioma, todo salió como estaba planificado. Al menos eso dicen quienes ya pudieron ver Crónicas.

"Creo que tuve problemas con el idioma porque Manolo Bonilla es un hombre educado, que fue a la universidad a estudiar periodismo y tiene, por eso mismo, la capacidad para poder expresarse correctamente, lo mismo en inglés que en español", añadió Leguizamo. "Lo poco que yo sabía hablar en español, antes de empezar la filmación de Crónicas, lo aprendí de dos formas. Primero con mi familia, en mi casa, y luego en las calles de Nueva York, mientras iba creciendo. Gracias a que Bonilla es bilingüe tuve la oportunidad de ir libremente de un idioma a otro. Y eso, a final de cuentas, me ayudó mucho al momento de interpretarlo".

Protagonista de un buen número de películas estadounidenses que se han filmado en varios estados de México —como Romeo + Juliet, o Collateral Dam-

continúa en la página 5



tirse en celebridad televisiva, Bonilla trata de descifrar por sí mismo, y sin ayuda de la policía local, el misterio que rodea a los crímenes cometidos por dicho personaje. Pero conforme va avanzando en sus pesquisas también empieza a darse cuenta que no le será tan fácil salirse con la suya.

Según contó en entrevista con

aprenderme de memoria todos mis diálogos", explicó sonriente el actor y comediante. "Yo tenía ganas de participar en una película latinoamericana, pero nunca llegué a pensar que me iba a ser tan complicado hablar en español. Afortunadamente [el director] Sebastián Cordero me puso un par de asesores que estuvieron aconsejándome, todo el tiempo, acerca

10 Smoky Tips to BBQ Food Safely

Cooking outdoors was once only a summer activity shared with family and friends. Now more than half of Americans say they are cooking outdoors year round. Use these simple guidelines for grilling food safely to prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying and causing food-borne illness.

1. Defrosting

Completely defrost meat and poultry before grilling so it cooks more evenly. Use the refrigerator for slow, safe thawing or thaw sealed packages in cold water. You can microwave defrost if the food will be placed immediately on the grill.

2. Marinating

Meat and poultry can be marinated for several hours or days to tenderize or add flavor. Be sure to marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter. If some of the marinade is to be used as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion of the marinade before putting raw meat and poultry in it. However, if the marinade used on raw meat or poultry is to be reused, make sure to let it come to a boil first to destroy any harmful bacteria.

3. Transporting

When carrying food to another location, keep it cold to minimize bacterial growth. Use an insulated cooler with sufficient ice or ice packs to keep the food at 40° F or below. Pack food right from the refrigerator into the cooler immediately before leaving home. Keep the cooler in the coolest part of the car.

4. Keep Cold Food Cold

When using a cooler, keep it out of the direct sun by placing it in the shade or shelter. Avoid opening the lid too often, which lets cold air out and warm air in. Pack beverages in one cooler & perishables in a separate cooler.

5. Keep Everything Clean

Be sure there are plenty of clean utensils and platters. To prevent food-borne illness, don't use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked meat and poultry. Harmful bacteria present in raw meat and poultry and their juices can contaminate safely cooked food.

6. Cook Thoroughly

Cook food to a safe internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Meat and poultry cooked on a grill often browns very fast on the outside. Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe internal temperature. Whole poultry should reach 180° F; breasts, 170° F. Hamburgers made of ground beef should reach 160° F; ground poultry, 165° F. Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts and chops can be cooked to 145° F. All cuts of pork should reach 160° F. NEVER partially grill meat or poultry and finish cooking later.

7. Keep Hot Food Hot

After cooking meat and poultry on the grill, keep it hot until served -- at 140° F or warmer. Keep cooked meats hot by setting them to the side of the grill rack, not directly over the coals where they could overcook. At home, the cooked meat can be kept hot in a warm oven (approximately 200° F), in a chafing dish or slow cooker, or on a warming tray.

8. Serving Safely

When taking food off the grill, use a clean platter. Don't put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat or poultry. Any harmful bacteria present in the raw meat juices could contaminate safely cooked food.

9. Safe Smoking

Smoking is done much more slowly than grilling, so less tender meats benefit from this method, and a natural smoke flavoring permeates the meat. The temperature in the smoker should be maintained at 250° F to 300° F for safety. Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe internal temperature.

10. Pit Roasting

Cooking may require 10 to 12 hours or more and is difficult to estimate. A meat thermometer must be used to determine the meat's safety and doneness. There are many variables such as outdoor temperature, the size and thickness of the meat, and how fast the coals are cooking.

Pool Safety for Children

A swimming pool in the yard can be very dangerous for children. If possible, do not put a swimming pool in your yard until your children are older than 5 years. If you already have a pool, protect your children from drowning by doing the following:

*Never leave your children alone in or near the pool, even for a moment.

*You must put up a fence to separate your house from the pool. Most young children who drown in pools wander out of the house and fall into the pool. Install a fence at least 4 feet high around all 4 sides of the pool. This fence will completely separate the pool from the house and play area of the yard. Use gates that self-close and self-latch, with latches higher than your children's reach.

*A power safety cover that meets the standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) adds to the protection of your children but should not be used in place of the fence between your house and the pool. Even fencing around your pool and using a power safety cover will not prevent all drownings.

*Keep rescue equipment (such as a shepherd's hook or life preserver) and a telephone by the pool.

*Do not let your child use air-filled "swimming aids" because they are not a substitute for approved life vests and can be dangerous.

*Anyone watching young children around a pool should learn CPR and be able to rescue a child if needed. Stay within an arm's length of your child.

*Remove all toys from the pool after use so children aren't tempted to reach for them.

*After the children are done swimming, secure the pool so they can't get back into it.

Remember, teaching your child how to swim DOES NOT mean your child is safe in water.

CL & Associates/Hispanic Nurse Solutions

Hispanic Nurse Solutions, nació el verano del 2004 al raíz de sueños. El sueño de sus fundadores de proveer mejores oportunidades para aquellos quienes fueron enfermeros en sus países de origen, y de poder ayudar el sistema de salud que por ende nos sirve a todos tener un equipo bilingüe para darnos la posibilidad de comunicarnos en nuestro idioma de origen en situaciones que muchas veces son difíciles como un accidente automovilístico etc... Los sueños de aquellos quien hanelan regresar a su profesión amada. Como, todo Nuevo proyecto se encontraron con contrariedades 1) La compañía nacional de hospitales que originalmente había acordado de buscar una nueva solución a su viejo problema de escasez de personal de enfermería decidió no seguir adelante acudiendo a métodos viejo de reclutamiento pensando que el riesgo era muy alto. 2) La compañía educacional quien fue contratada par dar clases a ultima hora que solo proveerian cuatro dias de clases en un curso comprimido. Sin embargo, con todo estos obstaculos Sylvia Lambourg, Presidente no se dio por vencida su vieja experiencia como vendedora en la bolsa de valores le sirvio y personalmente contacto sobre mil hospitales a travez de la nacion. La respuesta siempre la misma, " si son enfermeros por que no estan trabajando como tal " la respuesta necesitan apoyo educacional, " imposible que sea tan facil de pasar el examen NCLEX-RN y que comiensen a trabajar deben tener problemas inmigratorios" puerta tras puerta "no, no....no " Hasta que llego el dia en Agosto cuando un pequeño hospital en Barstow, California, Barstow, Community Hospital enseño interes. Su directora de recursos humanos la Sra. Vickie R. Hendricks, MPA le dijo a Sylvia Lambourg " Yo, espero que esto funcione nosotros tenemos mas de 60 hospitales a travez de

la nacion. La respuesta de Lambourg "trabajara porque esto es el unico chance que estas personas tienen de poder de nuevo ser profesionales, se arriesgaran a todo dejaron sus países, muchas veces familias para buscar es sueño Americano que aun no se les había materializado. El hospital decidió empear puequeño decidieron patrocinar (2) personas .

De nuevo, otro reto para Hispanic Nurse Solutions, de los miles quienes originalmente los habían contactado muy pocos estaban interesados en trabajar en un hospital de solo 56 camas y en un pueblo pequeño. Lambourg, dijo " El problema es que muchas veces nuestro enfermeros extranjeros radicado aqui piensan que es facil lograr la licencia ; para algunos lo es pero obtienen la licencia y sin experiencia es difícil conseguir trabajo. Muchas veces en las ciudades grandes ganan el mismo sueldo sin embargo lo que cuesta vivir les es mucho mas en las ciudades. " En fin encontraron las primeras Maria Murphy, 48 oriunda de Panama quien en su país fue docente con mas de 10 años de estudios posgraduados en enfermería desde su llegada había hecho todo tipo de trabajo para sobre vivir desde recojer fruta a limpiar las calles despues de los huracanes en la Florida. Gloria Ramirez, 42 Colombia mama sola quien vivia en Orlando, Florida y trabaja como asistente de enfermería y muchas semillas solo tenia 10 horas de trabajo para mantener una familia entera. Clases comensaron en Diciembre, de nuevo otro problema Hispanic Nurse Solutions sabia que los metodos usuales de estudio no funciona para enfermeros graduados en otros países porque la forma de presentar las preguntas es muy diferente en los Estados Unidos. Decidieron diseñar su propio programa que consiste de repaso de materias, clases por teleconferencia, y preguntas!

Al fin, en Marzo de 2005 han-

bas Murphy y Ramirez triunfaron son enfermeras registradas. Las estadísticas disen que enfermeros extranjeros solo tienen un 40% chance de pasar la primera vez. Ramirez dijo " El trabajo que hacen uds. es increíble, no existe ninguna otra oportunidad para personas como nosotros quienes tenemos dificultades en el idioma, falta de conocimiento de la forma que los hospitales funcionan aqui". Hoy por hoy tanto ls enfermeras como el hospital. Estan satisfechos.

Despues, han seguido Daniel Guzman, 37 Argentino, quien trabaja como asistente de enfermero para un hospital en Palm Beach, cuyo hospital dijo preferir traer enfermeros de Suecia que ayudar a su propio empleado. Olga Lamazares-Abreu, 40 Cubana quien por nueve(9) años había luchado para obtener su licencia. Hoy, todos estos son "Hispanic Nurses" graduados y ejerciendo.

Todos han realmente comenzado a vivir el real sueño Americano: practicar su profesion, comprar una casa, educar a sus hijos, y ahorrar para un futuro. Ellos, tienen un pedaso de ese sueño despues de tantas dificultades tanto economicas como animicas

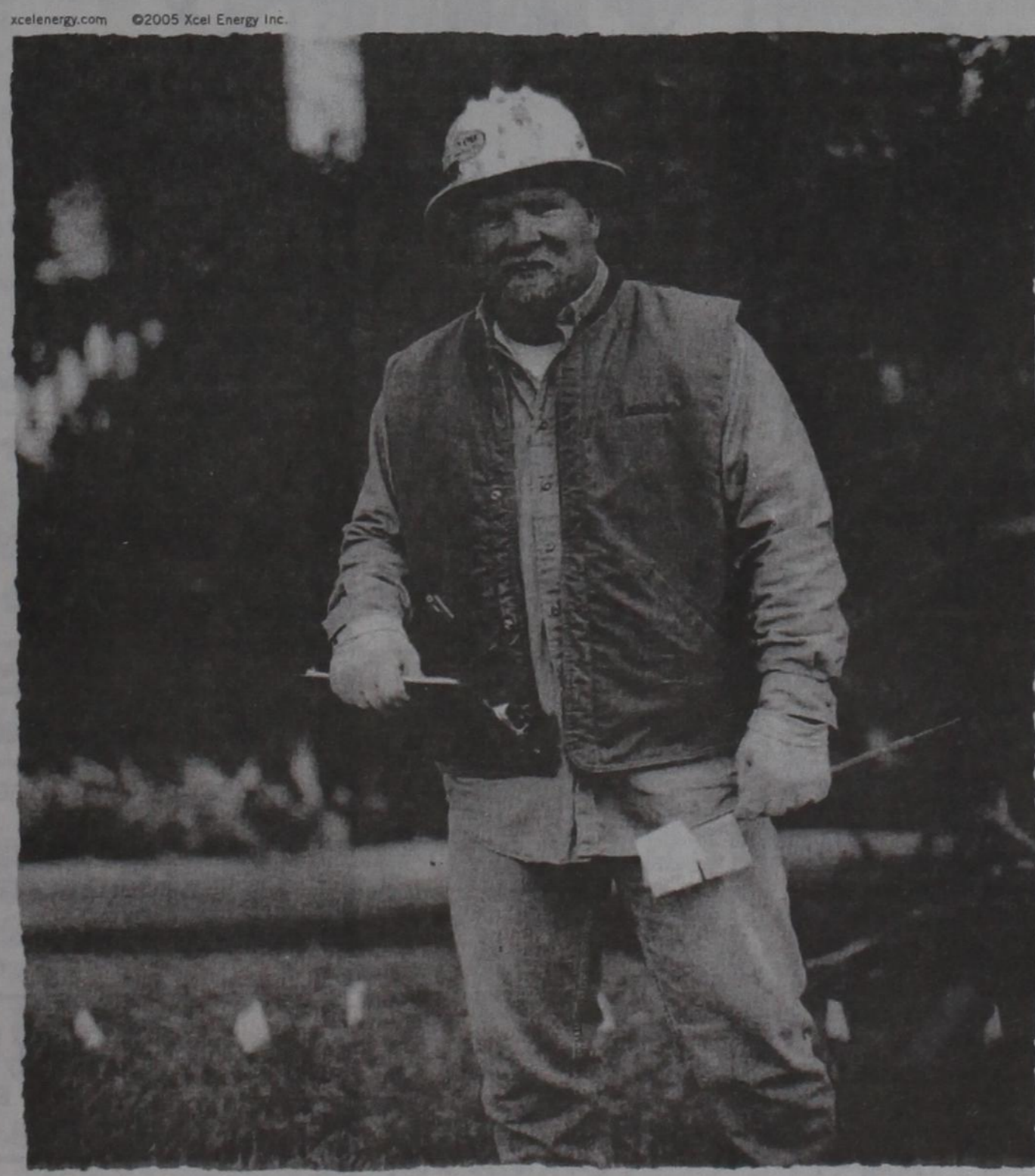
Hispanic Nurse Solutions, esta muy orgulloso de los resultados

que han tenido aproximadamente 70% de sus candidatos aprueban la primera vez. Mas halla CHS (Community Health Systems) informo a Hispanic Nurse Solutions que gusta expandir y trabajar con mas enfermeros Hispanos en otros de sus hospitales en California, Arizona, Nuevo Mejico, Texas, Wyoming y Utah. Son la cadena de hospitales mas grande a travez de la nacion que sirve a mercados rurales. Dijo Lambourg " Esto es una gran oportunidad ay que acordarse de nuestras raices lo mas importante para nosotros los Hispanos nuestras familias. Los pueblos ofrecen mas oportunidades para progresar para nuestros enfermeros quienes recien se unen al sistema Americano de salud. Los pueblos son mas economicos para vivir que nos da mejores oportunidades para tener esas cosas que son impresionables como una casa, tambien nuestros hijos no estan expuestos a los peligros de la gran ciudad, y mas aya permite poder ahorrar no solo para el futuro educacion de nuestros hijos, pero tambien para la vejez. Queremos brindarles a todos aquellos quienes realmente quieren ser R.N. lograrlo" Para mayor informacion visitenos al www.hispanicnursesolutions.com



Si ud. fue enfermera profesional y quiere regresar a su profesion amada en menos de 8 meses.


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Jack, Especialista
Para más consejos de seguridad, visite nuestro sitio Web.xcelenergy.com.



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Grupo Busca Niños Secuestrados y Explotados

Por Jake Rollow

Unos 13,000 hispanos menores de edad son secuestrados anualmente por gente desconocida - una cifra desproporcionadamente alta, algo que ha llamado la atención de la organización nacional que se dedica a rastrear niños desaparecidos.

Para mejor saber cómo pueden servir a la comunidad hispana, el Centro Nacional de Niños Desaparecidos y Explotados (NCMEC, por sus siglas en inglés) auspiciará una reunión comunitaria en Alexandria, Virginia, la sede de la organización, seguido por reuniones similares en San Antonio, la ciudad de Nueva York, Los Angeles, y Miami, antes que se termine la temporada veraneal.

Las reuniones están específicamente diseñadas "para averiguar qué es lo que la comunidad latina necesita de nosotros", comentó Ju'Riese Colón, quien encabeza los esfuerzos del Centro de acercamiento a la comunidad hispana. Las reuniones, añade Colón, también servirán para que el Centro pueda proveer sugerencias sobre seguridad en el verano e informar sobre los servicios de NCMEC disponibles a las familias que atiendan las reuniones.

Colón dice que hispanos comprenden el 23 por ciento de los 58,200 secuestrados que ocurren cada año por personas desconocidas, citando un reporte del departamento federal de Justicia del 1999 (las cifras más recientes). Según cifras del departamento federal del Censo, latinos menores de los 18 años son el 18 por ciento de la población estadounidense de esa edad.

El desproporcionado porcentaje es causado por varios factores socioeconómicos, dice Colón. Más padres hispanos trabajan largas horas y muchas veces de noche, obligándolos a dejar a sus niños a veces sin atender, explicó. "Personas deprimidas van a donde los niños están accesibles", añadió Colón.

Además, porque algunas familias hispanas temen o sospechan a los cuerpos policíacos o desconocen las leyes de Estados Unidos sobre custodia, muchos niños hispanos desaparecidos no son reportados,

añade Colón. Por ende, tantos como 200,000 hispanos jóvenes pueden estar desaparecidos anualmente, si se cuentan secuestrados por familiares, y los jóvenes que se han fugado de sus hogares, y si la cifra de 23 por ciento representa la realidad (El departamento federal de Justicia no publica la etnicidad de todos los 800,000 reportes de niños desaparecidos).

La oficina del NCMEC de acercamiento a la comunidad minoritaria fue creada en el pasado febrero, pero Colón dice que el acercamiento a la comunidad hispana siempre ha sido importante para NCMEC. Ha apareado especial atención desde el año 2002, cuando toda la atención de los medios se centró en el secuestro de una joven anglosajona, Elizabeth Smart, pero no le dieran la misma atención a un caso parecido, el de Laura Ayala, Colón explicó.

NCMEC actualmente provee todas sus publicaciones en español, y está produciendo anuncios radiales de servicio público en español. Para distribuir la información a la comunidad hispana, NCMEC está trabajando con el Consejo Nacional de La Raza (NCLR) y la Liga de Ciudadanos Unidos Latinoamericanos (LULAC), quienes tienen oficinas y afiliadas a través del país.

Además, siempre hay una persona hispano parlante disponible en el teléfono gratuito de NCMEC, 1-800-THE-LOST (843-5078), disponible las 24 horas al día, los 365 días al año.

NCMEC ha crecido poco a poco desde que fuera fundada en el 1984. Por mandato congresional, operaban en ese entonces sin fin de lucro, y con poco personal. Ahora tienen 300 empleados que trabajan desde el 5to. piso de sus oficinas en Virginia, con oficinas en Nueva York, la Florida, California, y Missouri. Desde su fundación, el centro ha manejado 104,000 casos, con un porcentaje de recuperación de 94.9.

NCMEC sirve como un centro de entrenamiento para coordinar y adiestrar a los cuerpos policíacos sobre los casos de niños desaparecidos anualmente. Aunque no es una organización in-

continúa en la página 5

Groups Looks for Missing & Exploited Latino Children

By Jake Rollow

A disproportionately high 13,000 U.S. Hispanic boys and girls are abducted by strangers every year, and the fact has grabbed the attention of the nation's top resource organization that tracks missing children.

To learn how it can better serve the Hispanic community, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children will hold its first town hall meeting planned to be held this summer. It will take place in Alexandria, Virginia, where the Center is located, and will be followed by town hall sessions in San Antonio, New York City, Los Angeles and Miami before the summer's out.

The meetings are specifically designed "to find out what the Latino community needs from us," says Ju'Riese Colon, who heads up the Center's Hispanic outreach. Additionally, they will give the Center opportunities to share summer safety tips and inform attending families of NCMEC services.

Colon says Latinos comprise 23% of the 58,200 non-family abductions that occur annually, citing a U.S.-Department of Justice report from 1999 (the last time such data was tabulated). According to U.S.-Census numbers, Latinos under 18 years old are only 18% of the U.S. population in that age range.

The disproportionate percentage is caused by socioeconomic factors, says Colon. More Latino parents work long hours and often at night, forcing them to leave their young ones unattended at times, she explains. "Predators go where children are accessible."

Moreover, because some Hispanic families fear or are suspicious of law enforcement, or aren't familiar with U.S.-custody laws, many missing Hispanics are not reported, Colon contends. Therefore, as many as 200,000 Latino youths may be missing annually, when family abductions and runaways are counted, if the 23% Hispanic ratio holds (DOJ did not publish the ethnicities of all 800,000 missing children reported).

NCMEC's minority outreach department was created last February, but Colon says Hispanic outreach has always been important to the organization. It's garnered special attention since

2002, the year media spotlighted the abduction of a white teenager, Elizabeth Smart, but gave no publicity to the comparable case of Laura Ayala, Colon explains.

NCMEC currently provides all its publications in Spanish and is producing Spanish-language radio and television public service announcements. To disseminate information to the Hispanic community, the Center is working with the National Council of La Raza and the League of United Latin American Citizens, which have local and affiliate chapters nationally.

There is also always a Spanish-speaker available at NCMEC's toll-free hotline, 1-800-THE-LOST, which operates around the clock, 365 days a year.

NCMEC has grown gradually since it was founded in 1984. Mandated by Congress as a non-profit entity, it had only a handful of staffers at the time. Now 300 employees operate from its five-floor Virginia office, and branch offices are located in New York, Florida, California and Missouri. Since its founding, the Center has handled 104,000 cases, with a 94.9% rate of recovery.

NCMEC serves as a clearing-house to train and coordinate law enforcement officials on missing child cases nationally. Although it is not an investigative operation, the Center employs members of the Federal Bureau of Investigations and Secret Service.

To help locate a missing child, NCMEC has been granted access to large privately owned databases that track and store people's names and addresses. With the help of U.S. Postal workers and retired law enforcement officials, the addresses are then checked to see if the child or a family member is indeed present.

Within minutes of when a child is reported missing - and it is the first few hours that are most crucial to recovery - the Center can also post photos in Wal-Marts throughout the region. When the case is not so quickly solved, NCMEC can send out photo postcards of missing children nationally. One in six of the children on postcards are recovered.

By morphing together photos of the child and a parent, the Center can also age-progress photos for postcards of children that have been missing for years. The

photos are often quite realistic. So accurate, in fact, that Forensic Imaging Specialist Glenn Miller tells the story of a young woman with long hair, whose age-progressed photo depicted her hair short. Once recovered, she cut her hair, explaining it looked better in the photo.

The Hispanic community specifically may have another asset when a child goes missing, according to Colon: the strength of its families. The large infrastructure Latino families often provide can be beneficial to track and recover a missing child, she says.

She's optimistic, explaining that NCMEC has received relatively more calls from Latino families in recent years.

"I'm very hopeful that we'll be able to reach Latino communities and educate them on how to keep their kids safe," she says.

How kids can stay safe this summer:

Before going anywhere, check first and regularly with parents.

Always take a friend.

Keep home door locked.

Stay away from bodies of water - creeks, ponds, rivers - when without a parent.

Never take shortcuts without permission.

Don't wear clothes that say your name on them.

Always trust your feelings.

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Mexico Involved in Most Child Kidnappings

By Jake Rollow

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children handles some 1,000 international abduction cases annually, nearly a third of which involve Mexico. In fact, more than any other country, the Center's international division cases concern children brought from or taken to Mexico.

The high volume is due to Mexico's proximity, the fluidity of the U.S.-Mexico border, the number of Mexican migrants in the States, and economic reasons, say staffers of NCMEC's International Division.

To handle the caseload, the international division's 10-person staff includes three Hispanics (one Mexican and two Bolivians) and is directed by Julia Alanen, who speaks Spanish fluently. Additionally, two legal interns will

join them from Mexico this summer.

NCMEC's international division manages cases in which the child is brought to or taken from the United States. Nearly all of its cases are family abductions and the team has access to all NCMEC's resources to locate the child. In any case, staffers may utilize privately owned databases of names and addresses, law enforcement officials nationwide, missing child posters at Wal-Mart and photo postcard mailings. They can acquire customs and passport information from the Department of Homeland Security, and may work with personnel of the Federal Bureau of Investigations, Secret Service and the U.S.-Postal Service.

In addition to locating the child, a large part of the divi-

sion's work is to guide law enforcement officials, attorneys, judges and parents through the legal processes relevant to international abduction, with which Alanen says they are frequently unfamiliar. Drafted at the 1980 Hague convention, the set of laws governing child abduction are fairly complex, country specific and are only in effect once two countries have agreed to them bilaterally. The United States has such agreements with 55 countries.

On incoming abductions, in which the child has been brought from another country to the United States, the case will be held in a U.S.-court where the child is located. The Center's international division works with attorneys and judges to determine where the child belongs. The outcome may depend on where the child's habitual residence is or, once moved from that residence (even if moved wrongfully), if the child has resettled elsewhere.

On outgoing abductions, in which the child has been taken from the United States, Case Specialist Maureen Heads says much of the Center's work is to assist the left-behind parent. Heads explains the legal process to such parents and may help them to create their petition, which will be used as argument in court.

Heads, a California-born Mexican, works primarily on outgoing cases to Mexico. She says the process can be difficult. Mexico requires original documents in petitions. In the case of birth certificates and divorce decrees, these are not always easy to procure if they were created in Mexico, contends Heads, who says this is common among her cases. Additionally, many of the left-behind parents she works with are undocumented and unsure what legal access they have. The Hague laws, however, do not pay attention to nationality. Finally, all documents must be translated, and not all left-behind parents are bilingual or able to translate the legal documents. The Center plans to have the two Mexican legal interns help with translation this summer.

The United States, like many of the wealthier countries that signed onto the Hague convention, does not pay the costs of international abduction cases. Therefore, the international division at NCMEC also works to maintain its International Child Abduction Network - a group of attorneys who take cases pro-bono or on a sliding scale, depending on the parent's finances.

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NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name: _____ Grade: _____
Parents name: _____
PARENTS SIGNATURE: _____
Parents Address: _____
Daytime phone (parent): _____
On a separate sheet of paper

SPOTLIGHT ON KIDS RULES

- No purchase necessary. Nomination forms will appear periodically throughout the year in the Avalanche-Journal and at Make Kids Count sponsor businesses around town. Forms also are available at The A-J Information Counter, 710 Ave. J.
- Nomination forms can be mailed to: Spotlight On Kids, P.O. Box 491, Lubbock, TX 79408, or can be dropped off at the A-J Information Counter, 710 Avenue J.
- All information, including a reproducible photograph of the child, must be included. INFORMATION

AND PICTURE WILL NOT APPEAR IN THE A-J WITHOUT VERIFICATION AND SIGNATURE FROM A PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN. Photos will be returned ONLY if a self-addressed stamped envelope is included.

- Only one Spotlight On Kids nominee will appear in the A-J each day.
- Selection will be made by A-J personnel based on the completeness of information, parental approval and the merits of the nominee, including family considerations, citizenship, volunteerism, classroom activities and accomplishment, good behavior, church involvement, caring for others, etc.
- All nominees agree to allow their names, and photographs to be published in The Avalanche-Journal without further compensation.
- The Avalanche-Journal is not responsible for submitting entries that are forwarded, late, lost, misdirected, damaged, illegible, incomplete or postage due.
- By entering, each contestant or their representative acknowledges acceptance of the rules and agrees to be bound to them.

NOMINATOR INFORMATION

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Viene de la Pagina 3

age—Leguizamo tuvo una reacción positiva hacia el complejo argumento de Crónicas. Tanto, que no se sintió intimidado por la falta de heroísmo y las pocas virtudes positivas que caracterizan a la mayor parte de sus personajes centrales.

"No me causó ninguna preocupación saber que Crónicas iba a tener un final pesimista y oscuro", dijo Leguizamo, quien vestía un discreto traje color azul la tarde de la entrevista. "Estaba harto de hacer películas como las que se filman en Hollywood todos los días, en las que los finales siempre son bonitos y felices. Yo pienso que una buena parte del público comparte esa idea conmigo. A mi no me parece natural que todas las cintas acaben como si fueran cuentos de hadas. Porque yo sé, perfectamente, que la vida real no es ninguna fantasía color de rosa".

Ese fue uno de los motivos por los que Leguizamo aceptó hacer el papel de Bonilla, al que define como un individuo cinico y arribista, al que no le preocupa pisar la dignidad y el profesionalismo de sus compañeros con tal de obtener lo que quiere.

"A Manolo no lo mueve ningún deseo de hacer justicia al tratar de descubrir quién es 'El Monstruo de Babahoyo', continuó explicando Leguizamo. "Lo que desea Manolo es demostrarle a los jefes de la estación televisiva para la que trabaja en Miami la valiosa habilidad periodística que posee".

El personaje espera que la televisora vea cuánto van a poder beneficiarse de su talento el día que acepten producirle su propio programa de televisión y presentarlo en horario estelar.

"Resolver los crímenes que afectan a las pobres familias ecuatorianas no es sino es la última prioridad que tiene en su vida alguien como Manolo Bonilla", explicó Leguizamo sobre su personaje.

Exhibir la falta de escrúpulos y el cinismo de quienes se dedican al negocio de producir noticias amarillistas en los países latinoamericanos, para que después ser transmitidas por las cadenas de televisión en español de Estados Unidos es, en opinión de Leguizamo, uno de los mejores aciertos que pueden encontrarse en Crónicas.

"Yo pienso que a esos señores lo único que les interesa es conseguir ratings altos para sus programas. Son igual que los gringos. Ellos viven para hacer dinero; no hacen dinero para vivir

—bien o mal— como nosotros", apuntó Leguizamo al referirse a dicho tema. "Cuando se producen esos programas de noticias sensacionalistas considero que se está ignorando por completo qué tan grande y maravillosa es la riqueza cultural que tenemos desde hace miles de años. Somos herederos de pueblos tan increíbles como los mayas y los aztecas. Y creo que debemos sentirnos muy orgullosos de saberlo".

En opinión de Leguizamo, un individuo con la actitud que tiene Manolo Bonilla no es nada extraño para él, porque ha conocido muchas personas parecidas durante el tiempo que lleva trabajando en distintos campos del espectáculo.

"A lo largo de mi vida he visto, dentro del mundo de la televisión, el cine y la política, a muchos individuos tan cinicos y ególatras como Bonilla. La mayor parte de ellos se considera el centro del universo, y que todos los demás sólo estamos dando vueltas a su alrededor como satélites. A lo mejor por eso yo siempre he sentido una curiosidad bastante especial hacia el comportamiento que tienen ese tipo de personajes", indicó.

"Por ejemplo", explicó, "no hay en Bonilla ningún chispazo de decencia y humanidad en la forma que percibe la tragedia del pueblo ecuatoriano. No lo mueve, tampoco, el deseo por ayudar a que se aplique un poco de justicia en ese parte del mundo. Al contrario. En todo lo que hace como reportero siempre trata de encontrar beneficio personal. Y yo creo que es interesante acercarse y conocer, de vez en cuando, cómo es esa parte oscura de la naturaleza humana. Gracias a una película como Crónicas yo tuve esa oportunidad".

Del con la experiencia que le dejó su reencuentro con un mundo al que le gustaría regresar con más frecuencia, Leguizamo considera que finalmente ha llegado el momento que los artistas latinos en Hollywood habían estado esperando desde hace mucho tiempo.

"Por más que quieran, los estudios de cine ya no pueden darse el lujo de seguir ignorándonos", dijo Leguizamo antes de dar por concluida la entrevista. "Nos hemos vuelto demasiado importantes para ellos. A partir de ahora las opciones que habrá para los latinos, de estar en películas cada vez mejores, han dejado de ser una pura ilusión. Tenemos a nosotros y a nuestra cultura están entre las mejores cosas que le han podido ocurrir a Hollywood en mucho tiempo, y yo te aseguro, man, que eso va más allá de ser una simple moda pasajera".

Viene de la pagina 4

investigativa, NCMCEC tienen en su personal a empleados del FBI y el Servicio Secreto.

Para ayudar a localizar a menor de edad desaparecido, NCMCEC tiene acceso a bancos de datos particulares que rastrean y guardan los nombres y las direcciones de individuos. Con la ayuda de empleados del correo, y personas jubiladas del campo de seguridad, las direcciones son comprobadas para ver si en verdad el menos o un familiar está en esa dirección.

A minutos de un reporte - y las primeras horas son las más importantes - el NCMCEC coloca fotos del niño desaparecido en las tiendas Wal-Mart a través de la región. Cuando el caso no se resuelve rápidamente, NCMCEC puede enviar foto-postales a nivel nacional de niños desaparecidos. Uno de cada seis niños en estas postales es recuperado.

Para niños desaparecidos por años, NCMCEC combina fotos de los niños y sus padres, acelerando la edad de los niños para tener una idea de cómo pueden parecer estos niños desaparecidos. De hecho, Glenn Miller, el especialista en este proceso, cuenta de una joven cuya "foto acelerada" la enseñaba con cabello corto. Al encontrarla, se cortó el pelo, diciendo que se veía bien así, como

en el foto.

La comunidad hispana en particular puede tener una ventaja cuando desaparece un niño, según Colón: la fuerza de voluntad de sus familias. La gran infraestructura familiar de los hispanos a veces puede ser de beneficio en rastrear y encontrar un niño o niña desaparecida, dice Colón.

Colón es optimista, explicando que NCMCEC ha recibido más llamadas de familias latinas en los últimos años.

"Tengo mucha esperanza que podremos llegar a la comunidad hispana y educarla sobre como mantener sus hijos seguros", dijo.

Como pueden estar más seguros este verano:

Antes de salir, avise a los padres primero.

Siempre salga con una amistad.

Mantenga la puerta de la casa con seguro.

Evite zonas de agua - rios, riachuelos, estanques - sin un padre o madre.

Nunca tome otra ruta sin permiso.

No se ponga ropa que lleve su nombre.

Siempre confie en sus impresiones.

Jake Rollow es un periodista en Washington, D.C.

Next in Line: Bernard Hopkins vs. Jermain Taylor

Undisputed middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins will face undefeated middleweight heir apparent Jermain Taylor in a fight being billed as "NeXt in Line" on Saturday, July 16 from the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada. The championship card will be presented by Golden Boy Promotions in association with DiBella Entertainment and televised and distributed live on HBO Pay-Per-View beginning at 9pmEST/6:00pmPST.

"Bernard Hopkins has always done things his own way, and this fight is no exception," said Oscar De La Hoya, President of Golden Boy Promotions. "At a time when most champions would waltz into retirement against easier opponents, Bernard is taking on the toughest available challengers, and making the final fights of his career the most meaningful."

It's a classic boxing match-up where Hopkins, the veteran warrior blessed with experience and skills that has led to a record-setting 20 straight title defenses, takes on Taylor, the enthusiastic upstart, who many boxing insiders believe is heir apparent to Hopkins' throne.

"Hopkins-Taylor is a significant crossroads fight between an undisputed world champion determined to cement his legacy and a rising star who is ready to challenge for the throne," said Mark Taffet, HBO Senior Vice President of Sports Operations & Pay-Per-View. "Boxing fans will not want to miss this important event."

For Hopkins, Taylor is just next-next in a long line of pugilist who have tried and failed to upset his throne. "Jermain Taylor has the skill and talent to become middleweight champion of the world one day," said Hopkins. It's just that the day won't be July 16."

The young Taylor views it differently. "Yes I am next," said Taylor. "The next undisputed middleweight champion of the world."

Bernard Hopkins (46-2-1, 32 KOs) is already assured a place in the Boxing Hall of Fame thanks to his ten-year reign atop the middleweight division and his amazing record. An old-school warrior who is the epitome of a Philadelphia fighter, the 40-year-

old "Executioner" is one of the rare fighters who just gets better and better with age. In his last bout, on February 19, Hopkins scored a dominating 12 round decision win over highly ranked British contender Howard Eastman. Hopkins, who has publicly stated he will retire upon his 41st birthday next January is ready for a hectic career finale that begins with Taylor.

"I give credit to Jermain for accepting this challenge," said Hopkins. "Unfortunately for him, he will not stop me from finishing out my career the way I've always done things - my way."

Jermain "Bad Intentions" Taylor (23-0, 17 KOs) is a 2000 US Olympic Bronze Medalist who has carried that success with him into the professional ranks. A versatile boxer with a stiff jab and thudding power, the 26-year-old resident of Little Rock, Arkansas has defeated former world

champions Raul Marquez and William Joppy. His spectacular victory over previously unbeaten Daniel Edouard at the Staples Center in Los Angeles last February made him the most logical contender for Hopkins WBC, WBA, IBF and WBO titles.

"Bernard Hopkins is a great champion and I have a lot of respect for him," said Taylor. "But I will not respect him once the bell rings. I have waited for this moment for my entire life, and I won't be denied on July 16. If Bernard won't pass the torch, I'll just take it from him."

A world-class undercard for "NeXt in Line" will be announced shortly.

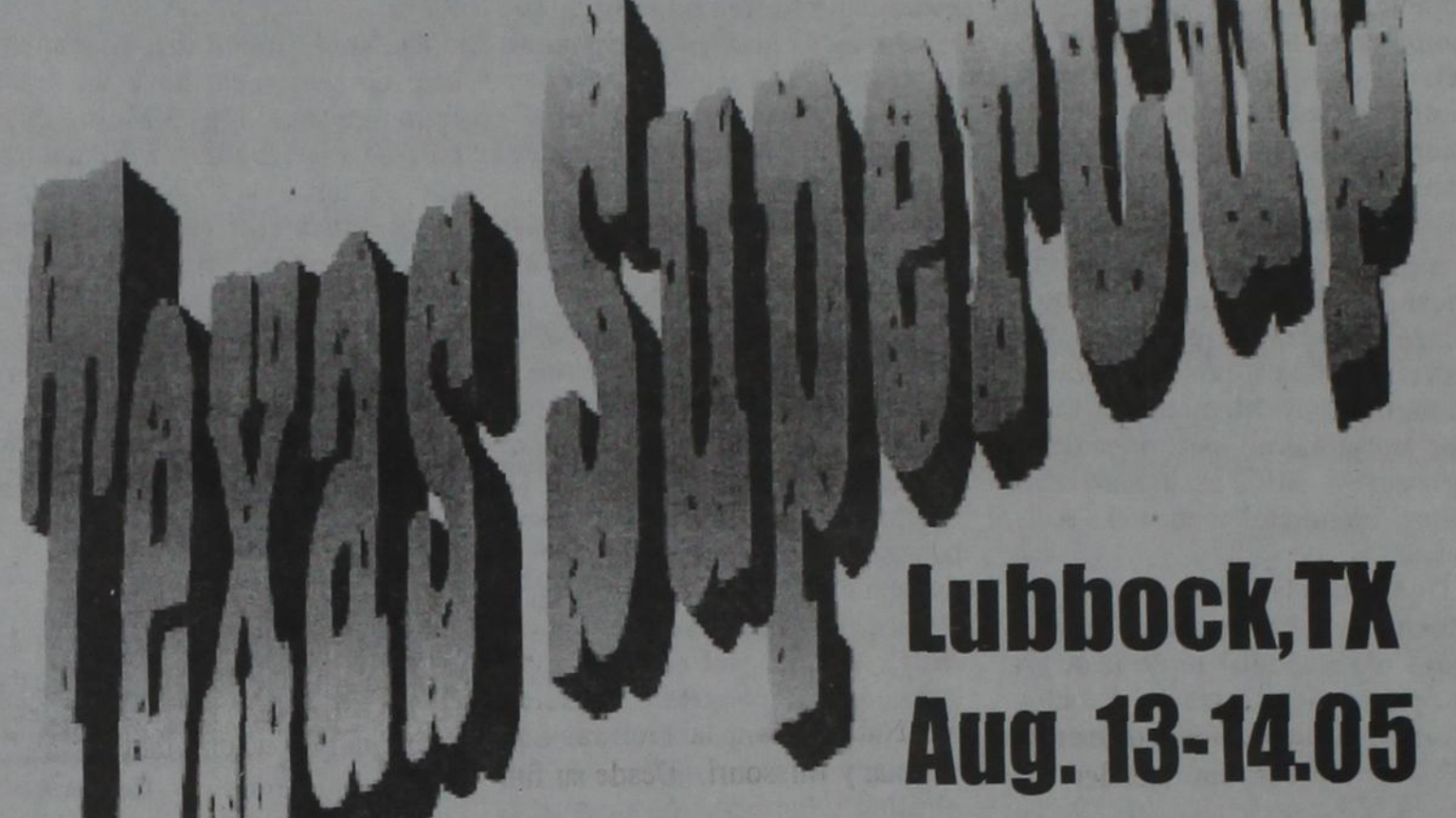
Tickets are priced: \$75, \$150, \$250, \$450, \$650. On sale Saturday, May 7 at Noon and are available at the MGM Grand Garden Arena box office outlet. Tickets also are sold at all Las Vegas TicketMaster locations (Tower

Records/WOW!, Smith's Food and Drug Centers, Robinsons-May stores and Ritmo Latino). Ticket sales are limited to eight (8) per person. To charge by phone with a major credit card, call TicketMaster at (702) 474-4000. Tickets also will be available for purchase at www.mgmgrand.com or www.ticketmaster.com.

For room packages and availability as well as event ticket information, call MGM Grand at (800) 929-1111 or (702) 891-7777 or log onto the World Wide Web at www.mgmgrand.com.

The Hopkins vs. Taylor pay-per-view telecast, beginning at 9pm ET/6pm PT on July 16, will be distributed by HBO Pay-Per-View and will be available to over 50 million pay-per-view homes. HBO Pay-Per-View is the leading supplier of event programming to the pay-per-view industry.

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Latino Food Purchasing Trends

An increasingly large and young Hispanic population will have a huge impact on food consumption. According to the Food Institute's just released Demographics of Consumer Food Spending, there are several reasons. First, Hispanic families spend more on food than the overall population - \$5,717 versus the average \$5,340 for all households. Second, the new study clearly shows that the under-25 group spends a greater proportion of its income on food than any other age bracket. Third, U.S. Hispanic shoppers make an

average of 26 grocery trips per month - three times greater than the typical shopper; their \$686 billion purchasing power in 2004 is expected to reach \$1 trillion by 2010.

"Restaurants also feel the impact of these demographic shifts and will continue to do so based on trends over the last few years," advised Irene Kennedy, Director of Research and Education for the Elmwood Park, NJ-based trade association. The new Demographics study indicates Hispanic diners spend 6.10% of their income eating out, an increasing amount - higher than average or than any

other group. This might help account for the 160% growth in ethnic casual restaurants between 1998 and 2003.

The unexpected, rapid growth of Hispanics caused major revisions in the Census Bureau's June 2005 figures, which are in-

corporated into Demographics. Hispanics accounted for 50% of the nation's population growth of 2.9 million in a one-year period. Perhaps more important, the greatest source of Hispanic growth is now births and not immigration.

Hispanics Lag in Retirement Accounts

By SUZANNE GAMBOA, Latinos save through retirement accounts at half the rate of the general population, and those with such accounts have less than one-fifth the retirement savings of the overall work force, according to a study Wednesday.

Changes in tax and financial policies and promotion of financial counseling could boost retirement savings by Latinos, said the study by the Pew Charitable Trust's Retirement Security Project and the National Council of La Raza, an umbrella organization of Latino groups.

The study "provides compelling evidence that Hispanics are woefully unprepared for retirement," said Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (news, bio, voting record), R-Fla.

The study found that Hispanics nearing retirement have the least retirement savings. More than half of households of Hispanics age 55 through 59 have nothing in retirement accounts, compared with a median balance of about \$10,400 for all households in that age range, the study said.

Among the study's recommendations for increasing savings:

Allow companies to automatically enroll new employees in 401(k) accounts in predetermined

plans, with increases in contributions as the employee's income rises. Allow employees to opt out and to roll over the money to an IRA automatically when they switch jobs.

Allow U.S. households to deposit a portion of tax refunds into an individual retirement account (IRA). Currently, taxpayers can only put the money in one account, making it less likely that money will go to retirement savings.

Change tax laws so lower-income workers can benefit from tax breaks for savings and investments.

Allow recipients of public benefits such as Medicaid and food stamps to have more retirement savings and still qualify for the benefits.

Promote financial planning in the workplace and through federal policies.

The recommendations have been endorsed by groups as diverse as the conservative Heritage Foundation think tank and the liberal-leaning Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, as well as both Democratic and Republican lawmakers.

The number of Hispanics 65 or older is expected to grow to 15.2 million by 2050, or 17.5 percent of the retired population.

Felicidades

Quinceañera

Amber Nicole Morales



Amber Nicole Morales will be honored with a Quinceañera celebration at 1:45 pm Saturday July 16, 2005 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 102 N. Ae. P. A reception and dance will follow at the Merchant's Building. Amber is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Alfredo and Rita Morales. She will be escorted by Anthony Perez.

Castañeda pide solución al cruce ilegal fronterizo

El candidato presidencial mexicano y ex canciller Jorge Castañeda declaró ayer ante un panel del Senado estadounidense que en la búsqueda de una solución al cruce ilegal de la frontera entre ambos países "nada que sea individual y coercitivo dará resultado".

"Nada que sea insignificante tampoco", agregó Castañeda al comparecer ante el Comité de Relaciones Exteriores del Senado en una audiencia sobre la cooperación en las fronteras de Estados Unidos con México y Canadá.

Castañeda, ex ministro de Relaciones Exteriores del presidente Vicente Fox, dijo que "la naturaleza bilateral del problema" de las migraciones por la frontera común era un "elemento crítico" que el gobierno del presidente George W. Bush se había resistido a comprender en años recientes.

Dijo que la participación de México resulta "esencial para el éxito" de cualquier reforma de las políticas migratorias en Estados Unidos, y que ella debe tomar en

cuenta a los mexicanos que ya están en Estados Unidos y los que vendrán, la creación de polos de desarrollo en México y los temas esenciales de seguridad.

"Es lo que llamo la 'nueva enchilada completa'", dijo Castañeda, quien se alejó del cargo en 2003 frustrado por el poco avance en el lado estadounidense hacia una reforma migratoria que regularice la situación migratoria de millones de mexicanos y que había sido uno de los compromisos de Fox en su campaña electoral.

Castañeda había hecho popular la calificación de "enchilada completa" a la posición de México en sus contactos sobre migraciones con Estados Unidos debido a la amplitud de los temas que deseaba incluir en un acuerdo que nunca llegó.

Junto con Castañeda se presentaron también en la audiencia el ex canciller canadiense Perrin Beatty, los senadores Ted Kennedy, John McCain y John Cornyn, y la congresista Katherine Harris, quien está coauspicando un proyecto de ley de seguridad y cooperación junto con el senador Dick Lugar, presidente del comité senatorial.

Castañeda admitió que los atentados terroristas de 2001 en Nueva York y Washington frustraron los avances hacia un acuerdo bilateral, pero dijo que los puntos de la negociación que se realizaron durante su gestión todavía seguían estando vigentes.

Hispanos tendrán mas peso en las decisiones

El senador Ken Salazar, uno de los dos miembros hispanos del Senado, declaró ayer que en la mesa de decisiones de Estados Unidos la comunidad hispana va a tener un peso cada vez mayor si se siguen creando las oportunidades para su participación, especialmente en la educación.

"Somos ya más de 40 millones", dijo Salazar al ser admitido como miembro del grupo de trabajo hispano del Senado, conformado exclusivamente por senadores demócratas con la misión de discutir temas de interés hispano y gestionar sus soluciones en el Congreso.

"Es importante que en el nivel más alto del Senado se atiendan los temas de interés de esa comunidad", dijo Salazar, representante de Colorado y que inició su gestión de seis años en enero, junto con el senador republicano de Florida, Mel Martínez.

Salazar y Martínez son los primeros miembros hispanos del Senado en casi 30 años. Junto con Salazar fue admitido también en el grupo el senador Barack Obama, de Illinois, apenas el tercer senador negro en más de 100 años.

El grupo de trabajo cambió también en la ocasión su liderazgo al asumir la presidencia en forma conjunta los senadores Joe Lieberman, de Connecticut y Jeff Bingaman, de Nuevo México.

Lieberman dijo que el grupo tiene el propósito de "honrar la promesa de representar fielmente los valores y voces de los hispanos en Estados Unidos... y abrirles canales de oportunidad y prosperidad".

Salazar dijo que los ocho miembros de su familia que fueron los primeros en graduarse en universidades lo hicieron a través de programas promovidos en el Senado.

"La educación de los hispanos es de muchísima importancia para asegurar su participación en el desarrollo de la nación", afirmó. "Éste es el momento de reforzar acciones en el Congreso para que la comunidad hispana pueda estar pronto en la mesa de decisiones de Estados Unidos".

El grupo de trabajo tiene 25 senadores y su agenda para este año incluye la promoción de los servicios de salud, educación, vivienda y beneficios para los veteranos.

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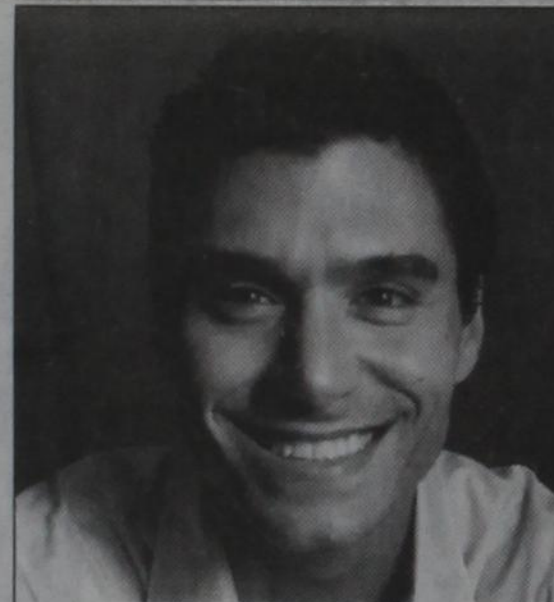
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