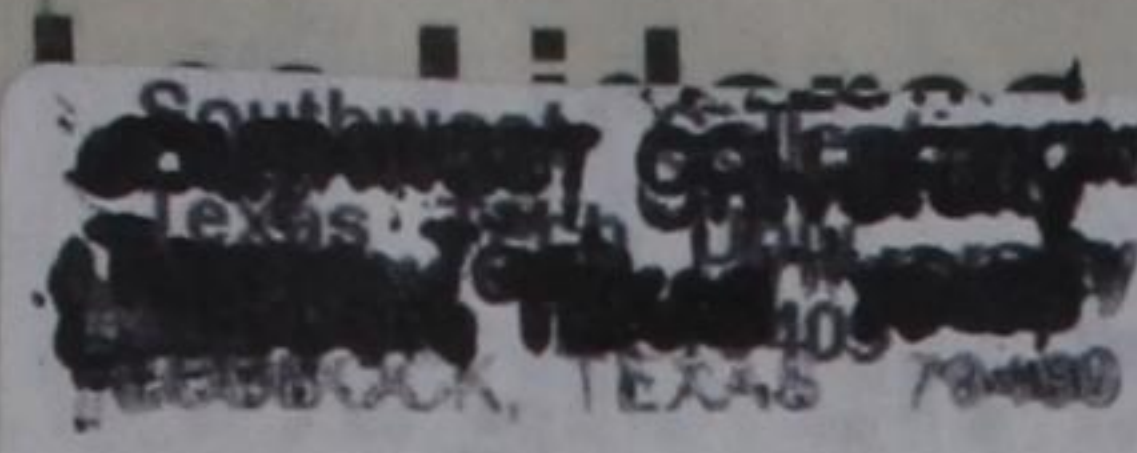




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Democrático "llevaron al colegio" hoy a los Republicanos y al candidato gubernamental George W. Bush por las carencias del liderazgo de éstos respecto un educación excelente para los Latinos.

Durante una conferencia de prensa, el Presidente Nacional del DNC, Joe Andrew y la Vicepresidente General del DNC, Loretta Sánchez (D-CA) se unieron al Teniente Gobernador de California, Cruz M. Bustamante, al Rep. Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), y al Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA) para ilustrar el fallido récord en educación para Latinos de George W. Bush's en Texas.

"Bush dice que no quiere dejar atrás a ningún niño, pero eso es exactamente lo que hacen sus propuestas federales" dijo la Vicepresidente General del DNC, Loretta Sánchez (D-CA). "No tiene ningún plan serio para resolver las perentorias necesidades de nuestros estudiantes, como por ejemplo, hacer la educación superior más asequible". Las familias Latinas deberían preocuparse de la falta de liderazgo de Bush en estos temas", dijo Sánchez. Presidente Nacional del DNC, Joe

Andrés LLevan los Republicanos al Excelente para los Latinos



(Left to right) Rep. Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), DNC General Co-Chair Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA), DNC National Chair Joe Andrew, and Democratic Hispanic Caucus President Nelson Diaz

abandono, no arriesgados esquemas de impuestos y vouchers que amenazarían los préstamos a los estudiantes y dejarían a las escuelas públicas a la intemperie."

El teniente Gobernador de California, Cruz M. Bustamante dijo, "Con un estado que se clasifica entre los peores en el número de abandonos escolares de minorías, y en resultados del examen SAT, Bush no está preparado para resolver las particulares necesidades de los estudiantes Latinos," dijo Bustamante.

Democratic Party Leaders Take Republicans to School on Educational Excellence for Latinos

Democratic Party Leaders today criticized Republicans and Presidential candidate George W. Bush for their lack of leadership on educational excellence for Latinos.

At the press conference, Democratic National Committee (DNC) National Chair Joe Andrew and DNC General Co-Chair Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) joined California Lt. Governor Cruz M. Bustamante, Rep. Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), and Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA) to highlight George W. Bush's failed education record for Latino students in Texas.

"Bush says he wants to leave no child behind, but his federal proposals do just that," said DNC General Co-Chair Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA). "He has no comprehensive plan to address the most pressing needs of our students, such as making higher education more affordable. Latino families should be wary of Bush's lack of leadership on this issue," said Sanchez.

DNC National Chair Joe Andrew said, "Latino school children need real reform and a real commitment to improving access to higher education and the high dropout rate, not risky tax and voucher schemes that would threaten student loans and hang failing public schools out to dry." California Lt. Governor Cruz M. Bustamante said, "With a state that ranks near the top in the percentage of dropouts among minority students and near the bottom in SAT scores, Bush is not ready to tackle the unique needs of Latino students," said Bustamante.

News Briefs

Campaign in Favor of Official Cesar Chavez Holiday Continues

Los Angeles, - California politicians and agricultural workers continue pressuring the state government to declare an official holiday in honor of deceased United Farm Workers Union (UFW) founder Cesar Chavez.

The California Senate is preparing to vote this week on a bill declaring a paid holiday in memory of Chavez, who is known for his fight for better living and working conditions for agricultural workers.

Thousands of UFW members will launch a new publicity campaign which includes sending postcards to Governor Gray Davis urging him to sign a bill pending in the state assembly.

This bill, backed by Democratic legislators, proposes to declare the Monday or Friday closest to March 31 (Chavez's birthdate) as a paid holiday in memory of the union leader.

On Sunday, hundreds of demonstrators marched in San Jose, California, carrying placards and chanting, "Cesar Chavez," to demand that the state finally approve the holiday in his memory.

The demonstration was led by well-known local leaders including San Jose Mayor Ron Gonzalez, Chief of Police Bill Landsdowne and councilwoman Cindy Chavez.

Gonzalez took advantage of the march to urge the Hispanic public to go to the polls on November 7. At the same time, he praised the work of the UFW, he invited new voters from agricultural communities to register.

This campaign is relying upon a 50,000 dollar fund of deceased Sacramento Mayor Joe Serna allocated for the UFW.

In Los Angeles, the People and Health Organization of San Fernando Valley has announced a festival, to be held Sunday, to commemorate Chavez's anniversary. During festival, signatures in favor of the bill will be gathered and to Sacramento.

Conrado Guzman, director of the People and Health Organization, said that joining the festivities will be California politicians in favor of the proposed official holiday for Chavez who stands out for his non-violent methods and boycotts against landowners.

Approximately 600,000 signatures were gathered by the end last year in an earlier UFW campaign in the rural areas of California.

Republican legislators in the state assembly reject the proposal because they think that California has enough paid holidays, and one more could affect the state's economy.

Last January, Democratic senators unanimously approved the proposal while Republicans abstained from voting.

Democratic Senators Richard Alarcon and Richard Polanco promoted the passage of the bill in the streets of Los Angeles as well as in the state legislature.

Bill 984 will be debated this week.

Although legislators have debated similar bills for a Cesar Chavez celebration in states like California, Texas and Arizona, only government advisors from San Fernando, California, and Phioria, Arizona have approved legislation in favor of the union



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

EL EDITOR

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Cesar Chavez: Legacy of a Latino Leader

By LatinoLink Staff

In the next few weeks, Latinos throughout the United States will be remembering the life of late labor leader and civil rights activist Cesar E. Chavez. His birthday is March 31.

Chavez, founder of the United Farm Workers union, will long be remembered as a leader that Mexican immigrants, Chicanos and other Latinos praised for his commitment to social justice.

Chavez fought to improve working conditions for farm workers, including pushing for higher wages and fighting for the right to work in a pesticides-free environment.

Send us your thoughts about Cesar Chavez. At an early age, Chavez migrated from Arizona to California to work in the fields. He once said that he attended 37 schools. He had no choice but to drop out of school after he completed the eighth grade. His father had injured himself in an accident and could no longer work, so Chavez left school to help support his family.

"You have a man who only went to the eighth grade and was able to build a lasting organization like the United Farm Workers," said Dolores Huerta, UFW co-founder.

"He was also a great believer in non-materialism. You know, that we had to build wealth, not for ourselves but to use the money that we earned to fight for justice," she said.

Chavez made labor history by staging national grape boycotts -- which many people still observe today -- against some of the most powerful growers in California. He headed

could be achieved through non violence. Chavez stood by the same principles. Chavez fasted many times. "A fast is first and foremost, personal," Chavez once said. "It

is a fast for the purification of my own body, mind and soul. The fast is also a heartfelt prayer for purification and strengthening for all those who work beside me in the farm worker movement."

In 1968, Chavez fasted for 25 days, drinking only water. He did so again in 1972 for 24 days. And in 1988 he fasted for 36 days. The working conditions of farm working families pushed Chavez to risk his own life and prove that victory could be had through non-violence.

"Non-violence is hard work," he once said. "It is willingness to sacrifice. It is the patience to win."

Chavez is often described as a generous and humble man. "Before he died he got his first Social Security check. It was \$400 and he told his brother, Richard, 'What am I going to do with all that money,'" recalled Huerta.

On April 23, 1993, Chavez died in his sleep near his birth place of Yuma, Arizona. He was 66. More than 50,000 people from throughout the United States attended his funeral. He was buried in a plain pine coffin near his office in La Paz, Calif.

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Cesar Chavez
Photo by George Elfie Ballis
Copyright: SunMt

In Lubbock a march in honor of Chavez will be held starting at 3 pm from downtown and will move to Buddy Holly Center. There will be Tributes and entertainment including and art and writing contest. For more information call 791-3545

marches from Delano to Sacramento, about 360 miles, to help bring attention to farm workers' working conditions.

Although Chavez had to leave school, he never stopped learning. He was an avid reader. In his office, he had hundreds of books on topics ranging from philosophy to unions to economics. He also read biographies such as the life story of Mahatma Gandhi, who was known for his message that social change

The Census Forms Debate: Defining Race and Ethnicity

By MELANIE FELICIANO

Ever since U.S. Census forms began appearing in mailboxes across the country last week, Latinos have been furiously debating the difference between race and ethnicity. The words are often used interchangeably, but their definitions are completely different.

Race: A social construct that groups people under three categories: Negroid, Caucasoid and Mongoloid. Everything else is a mixture of the above.

Ethnicity: Socially defined cultural characteristics shared by a group of people. An ethnic group may share common origin, history, values, language, attitudes and behavior.

According to several university ethnic studies websites, the term "ethnics" in the United States came to be used around World War II as a polite term referring to Jews, Italians, Irish and other people considered inferior to the dominant group of largely British descent.

"When Italians and Jews first immigrated to the U.S., they were not considered white," said Raul Quiñones-Rosado, a co-director and trainer at the

Institute for Latino Empowerment, based in Caguas, Puerto Rico. "But then they were integrated into the white collective."

Quiñones-Rosado, a member of the Latinos Undoing Racism Network, claims that Latinos checking the "white" box is the government's way of increasing the white population count.

In an effort to alert the public of the network's concerns, Quiñones-Rosado is circulating an email explaining how fair-skinned Latinos may eventually share the same "fate" as other immigrants who were once considered ethnic.

"As the percentage of people of European descent decreases in relation to the numbers of Latinos/as, African Americans, and other People of Color...will white Latinos/as be counted as whites, thus maintaining the numeric majority -- and dominant power status -- of people of European descent?" according to an email from the network, whose members include El Centro de la Raza in Seattle, Wash., and the New England Learning Center for Women in Transition in Greenfield, Mass.

"The race identifier

historically has been a stickler for Latinos," said Arturo Vargas, executive director of the National Association of Latino Elected Officials and 1990 director of the national MALDEF census campaign. "Let's say they count 100 people: 50 white, 25 black, 25 Asian. But let's say 20 whites say they're also Latinos, and 25 blacks say they're Latinos. The bureau will distinguish between Hispanic and non-Hispanic as separate categories."

He added that Latinos who identify themselves as "Other Race" and write in Mestizo will not be counted as Mestizo Latinos, but "Other Race" Latinos.

"If it were up to the Census Bureau, it would have identified me, of Mexican origin, as white," he said, adding that NALEO was just appointed to the advisory committee of the Census Bureau for 2010.

Race, according to the Census Bureau, is key to implementing any number of federal laws like the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, and determines distribution of federal funds to numerous organizations across the

country. These include historically black colleges, schools needing improved bilingual education programs, and agencies that provide services to particular racial or ethnic groups, such as screening for hypertension or diabetes among Mexican Americans.

"Civil rights organizations have had a lot of input in the race and ethnicity question," said Johanna Silva, a U.S. Census representative in San Francisco. "It's not a preference issue, it's tied to funding and it's opening itself up to be more inclusive."

Since this is the first year the census is allowing people the freedom to check as many boxes as they want, some say the census questions aren't as limiting as people are making them out to be.

"Perhaps rather than mix race and national origin together, and rather than use race, we might use ethnicity based on national origin," said Ronald Takaki, ethnic studies professor at the University of California at Berkeley and a pioneer in American history revisionism. "This appears to be what the census is doing

regarding Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, etc."

However, Quiñones-Rosado and the Latinos Undoing Racism Network is urging people to disregard the race question altogether. He said what originally seemed like a conscious government effort to ask more politically correct questions regarding Latinos has instead raised the question of why the issue of culture and race is important.

"It's not so much a sociological and anthropological question, it's about the politics of race," he said. "What needs to happen is we need to be honest about what we're really

counting. What we're really talking about are social groups that have some political meaning which would be black, white, Latino, Asian. Race is the illusion, but it speaks to the political reality, and that needs to be addressed."

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U.S. Mexico Journalists Join in Milestone Meeting

By Oswaldo Zavala

Some 100 Mexican and U.S. Latino journalists participated in a historic encounter in Mexico City last month to discuss "Mexican media and democracy at the crossroads." After two days of interaction, the scribes walked away with the promise of a broader binational agenda, emphasizing media-related and political issues that penetrate both nations.

Giving the March 17-18 event additional significance, Mexico's three leading presidential candidates accepted invitations to speak. Individually, they conversed with reporters and editors whose interests brought questions and perspectives from both sides of the border.

With Mexico's July 2 presidential election approaching, the conclave attracted Francisco Labastida of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which has ruled the country for 71 years; Vicente Fox of the National Action Party (PAN) and the Alliance for Progress and Change (Alianza por el Progreso y el Cambio); and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, of the leftist National Revolutionary Party (PRD) and the Alliance for the People's Revolution (Alianza por la Revolución del Pueblo). They were pursued by a dozen additional Mexican journalists who follow their candidates on a daily basis.

In a recent national poll, Labastida slightly ahead of Fox -- each with about 40 percent of voter support -- and Cárdenas at 20 percent but gaining.

Cárdenas was the first to speak. He called on the U.S. Hispanic journalists to produce and inspire more consistent and accurate coverage of his country's electoral process. "If you follow the election in

Mexico," he said, "you can contribute by making the count of each vote more transparent."

The formal agenda inspired debate on topics ranging from U.S.-Mexico economic, political and cultural relationships to human-rights and press freedom issues south of the border.

"There is a mutual benefit when U.S. and Mexican reporters talk about these issues," said panelist and Los Angeles Times assistant managing editor Sergio Muñoz. "This is the best way to determine how we as journalists can help our countries understand one another."

The event, he added, could well become a milestone in improving the fairness and accuracy of media coverage of both countries.

Other conference participants included Jesús Blancornelas, crusading editor of the Tijuana weekly Zeta, who still travels with bodyguards after surviving a 1997 assassination attempt ordered by Mexican drug lords; NBC news producer Cecilia Alvear, who specializes in Latin American coverage; Mexican author/journalist Claudia Fernández; and Rossana Fuentes, an editor with Mexico City's Reforma newspaper.

Alvear said that many U.S. journalists report on Mexico from a narrow, north-of-the-border perspective. Over the years, she said, "I don't think that we have changed our coverage much. We still have to fight for every minute to air our stories."

The event was conceived and developed by reporters and correspondents from the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, Region V, which includes Texas and editorial

leaders of the Juárez newspaper El Diario. It received financial support from the Freedom Forum and 11 news organizations, including the Dallas Morning News, the Associated Press and the Houston Chronicle.

NAHJ President Nancy Baca was one of many who expressed hope that NAHJ and other organizations will pursue frequent and expanded binational interchanges. "It's too bad that editors and publishers from every major U.S. media outlet weren't there," she said.

Dallas Morning News executive editor Gilbert Bailón agreed but made it clear that the U.S. media should not have an active role in Mexico's electoral process. "If we can help democracy by covering the election, so be it," he told Hispanic Link.

Freelance Mexican journalist Alejandra Xanic pointed out that both Mexican and U.S. media generally limit their coverage to each other's disasters, corruption, conflicts or tragedy.

She credited newspapers in northern Mexico and U.S. newspapers in the Southwest for offering some of the better coverage and context.

Angel Otero, editor of El Diario in Ciudad Juárez, cited unique challenges in covering border stories in cities such as his own, where drug cartels operate fearlessly. "A change of government (from the ruling party) doesn't come with a solution to drug trafficking," he said. "El narco is our main national challenge."

Responding to questions dealing with drugs, democracy, the military and poverty, the long-entrenched PRI's Labastida acknowledged that his country

faces many problems.

"One out of four Mexicans lives in poverty," he said. "Like any Mexican, I don't want more poverty in my country." He pledged, if elected, to direct added resources to create new jobs, improve police-force quality and attack government corruption at all levels.

His remarks, delivered in Spanish, did not draw the same excitement as did Fox's the following day. Fox spoke mostly in English. The tall, former Coca-Cola executive and governor of Guanajuato -- wearing cowboy boots -- consistently drew chuckles by referring to his PRI opponent as "Mr. Más de lo mismo" ("Mr. More of the same").

"We are ready to kick the PRI out of Los Pinos (Mexico's presidential office)," he declared. He recited a list of new schemes to move the nation's economy up a notch and promised to make the benefits of NAFTA reach the isolated, impoverished indigenous people who comprise 10 percent of Mexico's 100 million population.

Fox, who has visited the United States frequently during the past two years, added that he is building a network of 400,000 expatriate Mexicans living in the United States who will call relatives in Mexico at election time to urge them to end PRI's rule. He said that if elected, he would allow Mexicans residing in the United States to vote in future presidential elections.

(Oswaldo Zavala, a native of Mexico who lives in Washington, D.C., reports for Hispanic Link News Service and corresponds for the Mexican weekly news magazine Proceso.)

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Pray Brown Is Not Trapped by Bygone Fantasies of Violent Revolution

By Earl Ofari Hutchinson, PNS

I was disappointed, but not totally surprised, to hear that Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin -- better known by his radical trademark name, H. Rap Brown -- is the suspected shooter of two Atlanta sheriff's deputies that left one dead and one seriously wounded.

Though it's dangerous and irresponsible to convict Brown of murder before all the facts are in, I still immediately thought of the evening in 1968 when I and a small knot of black journalists stood near the podium at the Los Angeles Sports Arena at a Black Panther fund-raiser.

Brown sat in the middle of the stage garbed in a shiny black leather jacket and a black beret cocked at an angle on his head. He was flanked by a small army of black leather-jacketed bodyguards and assorted hangers-on.

The crowd of several thousand roared with delight when a speaker announced that Brown had been "appointed" and had accepted the title of Minister of Justice of the Black Panther Party. This was the culmination of Brown's militant odyssey from student dissident, to civil rights worker, to chairman of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. By then black radicals regarded SNCC as a badly tainted relic of the civil rights movement that they deeply reviled.

His speech to the crowd was defiant, brash, laced with profanities and filled with threats to kill the police and calls for blacks to burn down America's cities. As I soaked in his performance with a mixture of awe and fascination, I still wondered whether he really believed this fantasy vision of violent revolution that he was selling the crowd. His speech was designed to stir the red hot emotions of the audience.

The warning flares soared higher the more I heard him speak during the next few months. Brown, at times, seemed to take special delight in picking words that had maximum shock value on crowds. Yet what was needed was not bold threats to destroy the "white establishment," "the white man," "white devil," or white oppressor" but concrete activities and programs for those genuinely committed to change.

Even the title of his book, "Die Nigger Die," was calculated for hyper shock effect. It was long on attacks on those moderate black leaders Brown branded "Negro sell-outs" and "Uncle Toms" and lengthy exhortations urging blacks to kill and die for the revolution. Yet it was totally devoid of any strategy or program for black political and economic empowerment.

By the mid 1970s, the Panthers were in their final death agonies. Panther leaders dropped like flies from police bullets and their own bullets, degenerated into dope dealing, hustling and extortion, or drifted away afflicted with terminal disillusionment with the failed promises of the black movement. A few even managed to swap their black jackets and berets for Brooks Brother suits and slide neatly into posts at universities, corporations and elected office.

The free clinics, free breakfast program, legal aid, voter registration, business development programs and community organizing campaigns to combat police abuse devised by early Panther organizers that had given so much hope to so many were badly faded memories.

But Brown was unrepentant. He remained trapped by his tough guy image and seemed destined to be a permanent casualty of his violent rhetoric. He seemed utterly incapable of making the transition from radical mouthpiece to effective community organizer and leader. There were repeated brushes with the law that ended in a bungled robbery attempt and a shoot-out with New York police. This landed him in prison for five years.

Brown reversed his downhill slide in 1976 when he embraced Islam, re-christened himself with a Muslim name, did his mea culpas for his past, and made his peace with America. He took his new role as spiritual leader and tireless worker against drugs and prostitution and for community betterment seriously. Yet his arrest for assault and possession of illegal weapons, though the charges were dropped, sent up another warning flare that many believed he was still prone to act out the violent rhetoric of the 1960s that had caused him and so many other blacks such terrible personal grief and pain.

Brown may or may not be the triggerman in the murder of a sheriff's deputy and the wounding of the other deputy and I sincerely pray that he isn't. But his eventual capture or death will almost certainly trigger another round of media reflection on how he, the Panthers and other 1960s black radicals drowned the genuine idealism and passion for social change of thousands of blacks in an ocean of selfishness, greed, opportunism and nihilistic violence. Some of this will be true, but what it misses is the sacrifice and struggle of thousands of men and women against injustice.

And for a time that certainly included Brown.

Periodistas Estadounidenses y Mexicanos Se Unen en Historica Reunion

Por Oswaldo Zavala

Unos 100 periodistas mexicanos y latinos de Estados Unidos, sostuvieron un encuentro histórico en la Ciudad de México el mes pasado para deliberar sobre "los medios informativos mexicanos y la democracia en encrucijada." Después de dos días de una dinámica interacción, los escribas se marcharon con la promesa de un programa de trabajo binacional más amplio para seguir enfatizando los asuntos relacionados con los medios de información y la política que penetran en ambas naciones.

Dando al acontecimiento de los días 17 y 18 de marzo una importancia adicional, los tres principales candidatos presidenciales de México aceptaron invitaciones como conferencistas. Individualmente, los tres dialogaron con reporteros y editores cuyos intereses produjeron preguntas y perspectivas de ambos lados de la frontera.

Con las elecciones presidenciales de México -- fijadas para el 2 de julio -- aproximándose, el conclave atrajo a Francisco Labastida, del Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), que ha gobernado al país durante 71 años; a Vicente Fox, del Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) y la Alianza para el Cambio; y a Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, del izquierdista Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD) y la Alianza por México. Los tres fueron perseguidos por unas cuantas decenas adicionales de reporteros mexicanos que siguen sus campañas diariamente.

Las encuestas nacionales más recientes muestran a Labastida ligeramente adelante de Fox -- cada uno con el 40 por ciento del apoyo de los electores -- y a Cárdenas en un 20 por ciento, pero aproximándose.

Cárdenas fue el primero en hablar. Pidió a los periodistas hispanos de Estados Unidos que produzcan e inspiren una información más constante y exacta del proceso electoral de su país. "Si ustedes siguen las elecciones en México," dijo, "pueden contribuir al hacer que el conteo de cada voto sea más transparente."

El programa de trabajo formal inspiró al debate sobre asuntos que fluctuaron desde las relaciones económicas, políticas y culturales entre los Estados Unidos y México hasta los asuntos de los derechos humanos y la libertad de prensa al sur de la frontera.

"Hay un beneficio mutuo cuando los reporteros estadounidenses y mexicanos hablan sobre estos asuntos," dijo un miembro del grupo y uno de los editores de Los Angeles Times, Sergio Muñoz. "Este es el mejor modo para determinar de qué manera nosotros, como periodistas, podemos ayudar a nuestros países a comprenderse

mutuamente."

El acontecimiento, agregó Muñoz, bien podría convertirse en uno de gran importancia para mejorar la equidad y la exactitud de la información en los medios de comunicación de ambos países.

Otros participantes de la conferencia incluyeron a Jesús Blancornelas, editor del semanario de Tijuana Zeta, que viaja todavía con guardaespaldas después de sobrevivir a un intento de ejecución en 1997, ordenada por los barones mexicanos del narco-tráfico; a la productora de noticias de la NBC Cecilia Alvear, que se especializa en informar sobre Latinoamérica; a la autora y periodista mexicana Claudia Fernández; y a Rossana Fuentes, editora del periódico Reforma de Ciudad de México.

Actualmente, manifestó Alvear de la NBC, muchos periodistas de Estados Unidos informan sobre México desde una perspectiva muy estrecha del norte de la frontera. Durante los años, dijo ella, "no creo que hemos cambiado mucho nuestra información. Todavía tenemos que luchar por cada minuto para llevar al aire nuestros relatos."

Con un año de preparación, el acontecimiento fue concebido y desarrollado por reporteros y corresponsales de la Región V de la Asociación Nacional de Periodistas Hispanos (NAHJ en inglés), que incluye a Texas, y por dirigentes editoriales del periódico de Juárez El Diario. Recibió apoyo económico del Freedom Forum y de 11 organizaciones de noticias, incluyendo al Dallas Morning News, a la Associated Press y al Houston Chronicle.

La presidenta de la NAHJ, Nancy Baca, fue una de los que manifestaron sus esperanzas de que NAHJ y otras organizaciones continuarán manteniendo intercambios binacionales frecuentes y ampliados. "Es demasiado malo el que los editores y publicistas de todos los medios informativos importantes de Estados Unidos no estuvieran aquí," dijo.

El editor ejecutivo del Dallas Morning News, Gilbert Bailón, estuvo de acuerdo, pero aclaró que los medios informativos de los Estados Unidos no deben tener un papel activo en el proceso electoral de México. "Si podemos ayudar a la democracia al informar sobre las elecciones, que sea así," dijo a Hispanic Link.

La periodista mexicana independiente Alejandra Xanic señaló que tanto los medios informativos mexicanos como los estadounidenses limitan por lo general su información a los desastres, la corrupción o los acontecimientos que involucran conflictos o tragedias de la otra parte. Xanic dio crédito a los periódicos del norte de México y a los del suroeste de Estados Unidos por ofrecer lo que ella

considera como mejor información y contexto.

Angel Otero, editor de El Diario en Ciudad Juárez, mencionó retos singulares para informar sobre los asuntos fronterizos en ciudades como la suya propia, donde los cárteles del narcotráfico funcionan sin temor. "Un cambio de gobierno (del partido gobernante) no viene con una solución al narcotráfico," dijo. "El narco es nuestro principal reto nacional."

Al responder a las preguntas referentes a los narcóticos, la democracia, los militares y la pobreza, Labastida, atrincherado en el PRI por mucho tiempo, reconoció los muchos problemas que su país se aún enfrenta.

"Uno de cada cuatro mexicanos vive en la pobreza," dijo. "Como cualquier mexicano, no quiero más pobreza en mi país." Prometió, de ser electo, enfocar recursos adicionales para crear nuevos empleos, mejorar la calidad de la fuerza policiaca y atacar vigorosamente a la corrupción gubernamental en todos los niveles.

Sus observaciones, pronunciadas en español, no provocaron la misma emoción que las de Fox al día siguiente. Fox habló

mayormente en inglés. El ex ejecutivo de la Coca-Cola y ex gobernador de Guanajuato, de alta estatura y expresivo -- equipado con botas de vaquero -- provocó risas ahogadas constantemente, al referirse a su opositor del PRI como "el Sr. Más de lo Mismo."

"Estamos listos a sacar al PRI a puntapiés de Los Pinos (la oficina presidencial de México)," declaró. Recitó una lista de nuevos planes para llevar a la economía de la nación a un nivel más alto y prometió hacer que los beneficios de NAFTA lleguen a los pueblos indígenas aislados y empobrecidos, que forman el 10 por ciento de la población de 100 millones de México.

Fox, que ha visitado a Estados Unidos frecuentemente durante los dos años recientes, agregó que está formando una red de 400,000 mexicanos expatriados que viven en Estados Unidos, que llamarán a sus familiares en México al tiempo de las elecciones para instarles a poner fin al gobierno del PRI. Agregó que, de ser electo, permitirá que los mexicanos que viven en Estados Unidos voten en futuras

Bob Jones University And The Census Have Something in Common

By Rick Gonzales

I could not help thinking about Bob Jones University's now-rescinded ban on interracial dating, wondering out loud who the South Carolina fundamentalist school would have let me date.

I, like most Latinos born in this country, got labeled "white" at birth. In fact, 91 percent of us are categorized as white, according to Census data used in the book "Understanding," a compilation of statistics describing the United States at the millennium. At the same time, 5 percent of us get categorized as black, 3 percent as Asian and almost 1 percent as Native American. But like most Latinos, I am not white, I am not black, I am not Asian, and I am not Native American.

Why? The same interracial dating that Bob Jones University decided to allow in the year 2000 has been going on in Latin America since 1492. In some Caribbean Latino families, I am told, parents even encourage their children to "get something we don't have" when choosing a husband or wife. Across the Americas, there are Latinos of Japanese and Chinese heritage, Irish and English heritage, French and Italian heritage, even Jewish and Middle Eastern heritage. We Latinos are the most multiracial, multiethnic ethnic group on the planet.

For example, Mexican-Americans -- who make up 65 percent of the U.S. Latino

community -- come from a country where 85 percent of the people have some European heritage and 85 percent have some Native American heritage. Labeling us as one denies us the other.

A few years back, my mother, hospitalized after a car accident, noticed that her attending nurse had labeled her as "Spanish." Despite her painful situation, she joked, "Not even my toes are Spanish." To be sure, many of our ancestors came from Europe. But the point is, at least some of them were living in North America centuries before Europeans "discovered America" and named it all something they could pronounce.

So who would Bob Jones let me date? On its face, the question seems quite ridiculous. But in banning interracial dating, the university made the same fundamental assumption the U.S. government did in compiling its statistics. Both assumed anyone could be neatly categorized as white, black, Asian or Native American.

To remedy this, the Census in its 2000 poll has, for the first time, allowed participants to check more than one race. When I first heard the news, I cheered.

Finally someone recognized I am not white.

But in filling out the form over breakfast last week, I discovered the Census did not go far enough to handle the nuances of the Latino

experience. The form allowed me to check white, but none of the other categories quite fit. The Native American category represented only indigenous people from within the United States and suggested naming a tribal identity.

"Do you know which Indians your family came from?" my wife asked.

"Were they the Aztecs?"

"I don't know," I replied.

At the time of the European conquest, 80 percent of the native peoples of North America lived in what today is Mexico, representing hundreds, if not thousands, of now forgotten tribes.

"Do you know what tribes in Africa your ancestors came from?" I asked my wife, who has black, non-Hispanic whites and U.S. Native Americans on her family tree.

"No," she said.

At that point, I checked "Native American" and wrote in the tribal identity, "Unknown Mexican Indians." Then we decided to white that out.

Finally I checked "Other" and wrote in "Mexican Indians."

This trouble over the Census may seem like a simple snafu, but it brings to the fore one of the fundamental differences between Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic cultures.

Anglo-Saxon cultures, such as those in the United States, South Africa and the United Kingdom, historically have viewed interracial marriage as less than proper.

Hispanic cultures tolerated interracial mixing to such an extent that they began to categorize people. In the process, they gave the English language such pejorative words as "Sambo," mixed Native American and black; and "mulatto," mixed white and black.

That tolerance, however, has created a culture that Bob Jones University, the U.S. government and the general public cannot seem to define. A Washington reporter who covered the complex Middle East once asked me in bewilderment, "So are you Spanish or Native American?"

My response was simple: "Neither and both."

Whatever the case, I am glad I never attended Bob Jones University. I never would have been allowed to date.

(Rick Gonzales of Austin, Texas, is a new media journalist who may be reached at [enrique\(AT\)SIGN@lumni.utexas.net](mailto:enrique(AT)SIGN@lumni.utexas.net))

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¡Están en el correo!

Los trabajadores del Servicio Postal de los Estados Unidos comenzaron hoy a distribuir 98 millones de cuestionarios del Censo 2000 a alrededor del 83 por ciento de las residencias de la nación, en el primer censo nacional del nuevo siglo.

Los paquetes de cuestionario consisten en aproximadamente 83 millones de formularios cortos (siete preguntas) y 15 millones de formularios largos (52 preguntas).

Enumeradores del censo, mientras tanto, están entregando personalmente alrededor de 22 millones de formularios adicionales a viviendas que no tienen calles con nombres y residencias sin número, la mayoría de ellas en áreas rurales y remotas. Estas representan aproximadamente el 17 por ciento de las unidades de vivienda del país.

"Contestar un cuestionario del censo y devolverlo por el correo es fácil", dijo el director de la Oficina del Censo, Kenneth Prewitt. "El formulario corto pide menos información que la que hay en la licencia de conducir. Demora alrededor de 10 minutos completar el cuestionario corto y aproximadamente 38 minutos contestar el cuestionario largo".

"Alrededor del 99 por ciento de los estadounidenses podrán devolver sus cuestionarios por correo. El resto simplemente dará sus respuestas a un enumerador, quien las registrará en el formulario".

Aunque la proporción varía según sea la densidad de la población, en la mayoría de las zonas alrededor de 5 de 6 residencias recibirán el formulario corto, mientras que entre el resto, 1 de cada 6, recibirá el formulario largo.

Los cuestionarios fueron precedidos por una carta de avance enviada la semana pasada dando a los residentes la opción de pedir cuestionarios en cinco idiomas, además del inglés: español, tagalog, coreano, chino y vietnamita. Posteriormente este mes, la Oficina del Censo enviará una tarjeta recordando a los residentes que devuelvan el formulario por correo.

Se pide a las personas que devuelvan los formularios lo más pronto posible.

En enero, Prewitt desafió a

los gobiernos estatales, locales y tribales, a sobrepasar la respuesta postal de 1990 por lo menos en 5 puntos porcentuales. Una mayor respuesta significará que la Oficina del Censo no tendría que contratar tantos enumeradores para que visiten las familias que no devuelven por correo el formulario. También podría reducir el costo esperado del censo, calculado ahora en 6.500 millones de dólares.

En 1990, la tasa de respuesta fue del 65 por ciento nacionalmente, pero varió ampliamente de lugar a lugar. Funcionarios de la Oficina del Censo, preocupados porque los formularios del censo puedan perderse entre el creciente volumen de propaganda postal, han pronosticado una tasa de respuesta del 61 por ciento para el 2000.

La Oficina del Censo ha dado varios pasos para hacer la respuesta más fácil.

Los formularios son más cortos y más fáciles de completar que en 1990. Los encuestados pueden llamar a un número telefónico gratis incluido en los cuestionarios para ayuda en llenar el formulario. También hay disponible asistencia en otros idiomas.

Los encuestados pueden visitar cualquiera de miles de centros de ayuda con los cuestionarios, abiertos en la tarde y los fines de semana para obtener asistencia. En todos los centros, los encuestados que no hablen inglés pueden obtener una guía idiomática en cualquiera de los 37 idiomas que les permitirán ver las preguntas en su propia lengua.

Algunos centros tendrán guías en 12 idiomas adicionales. Las guías están también en la Internet en <<http://www.2000.census.gov/iqua/guides.html>>.

Las personas pueden ver los cuestionarios en el sitio de la Oficina del Censo en la Internet, en <<http://www.2000.census.gov>> e incluso completar el formulario corto online.

Durante marzo, la Oficina del Censo también realiza operaciones especiales para contar a las personas sin dirección fija que viven en dormitorios, hogares de ancianos, prisiones, refugios, parques de casas móviles, residencias para vagabundos y

otros grupos que no viven en residencias convencionales.

Los datos del Censo son confidenciales y por ley no pueden ser compartidos con otras agencias, organizaciones encargadas de hacer cumplir la ley, los tribunales o cualquiera otra organización. Según las provisiones del Título 13 del Código de los Estados Unidos, los empleados de la Oficina del Censo juran mantener los datos confidenciales y enfrentan una multa de hasta \$5.000 y cinco años de prisión si revelan información personal sobre los encuestados.

Por primera vez, los encuestados pueden identificarse como perteneciendo a más de una raza. Las personas pueden registrar tantas categorías de razas como deseen.

Los hispanos pueden ser de cualquier raza; por lo tanto, hay una pregunta sobre el origen hispano y otra sobre la raza en el cuestionario.

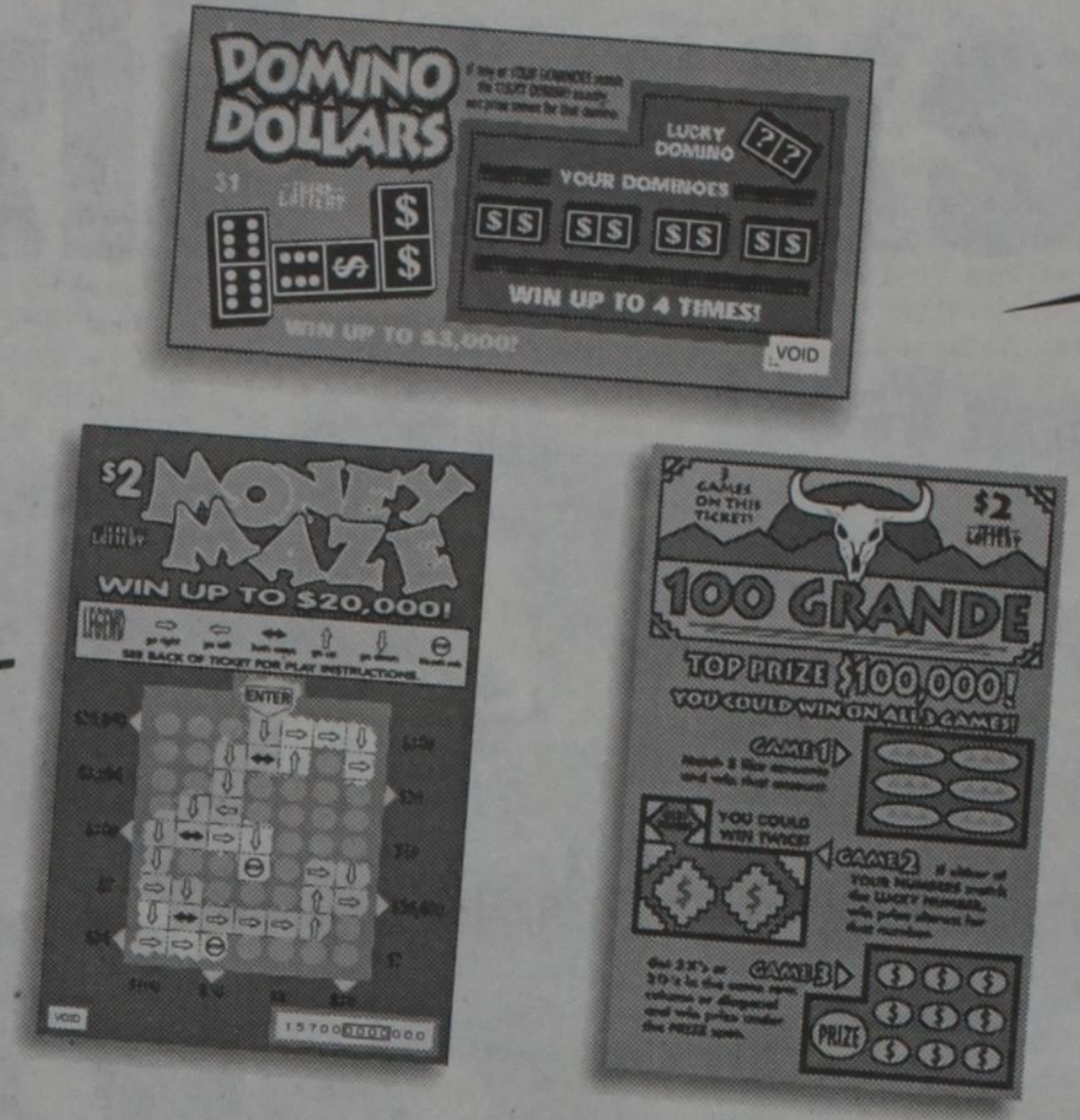
El cuestionario tiene espacio para información sobre cinco miembros de una familia. Cuando hay más de seis miembros, los encuestados escriben los nombres adicionales y un representante de la Oficina del Censo los contactará para mayor información.

El formulario corto contiene seis preguntas sobre población y una sobre vivienda. El cuestionario largo tiene 31 preguntas sobre población (incluyendo las seis preguntas sobre población del formulario corto) y 21 preguntas sobre vivienda (incluyendo la contenida en el formulario corto). Las preguntas son incluidas en el cuestionario del censo sólo si cumplen una necesidad legal o programática. Para información acerca de las bases legales o programáticas de las preguntas, vea el sitio de la Oficina del Censo en la Internet <http://www.census.gov/dmd/www/content.htm>.

Un completo conjunto de reglas de residencia, estableciendo donde son contados los estudiantes, los residentes de hogares de ancianos, el personal militar, los vacacionistas de invierno en zonas de verano y otros, puede ser encontrado en el sitio de la Oficina del Censo en la Internet en http://www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/resid_rules.html.

La Oficina del Censo todavía está contratando trabajadores para labores del censo. Vea el sitio de la Oficina del Censo en la Internet <<http://www.census.gov/jobs2000>> o llame al 1-888-325-7733

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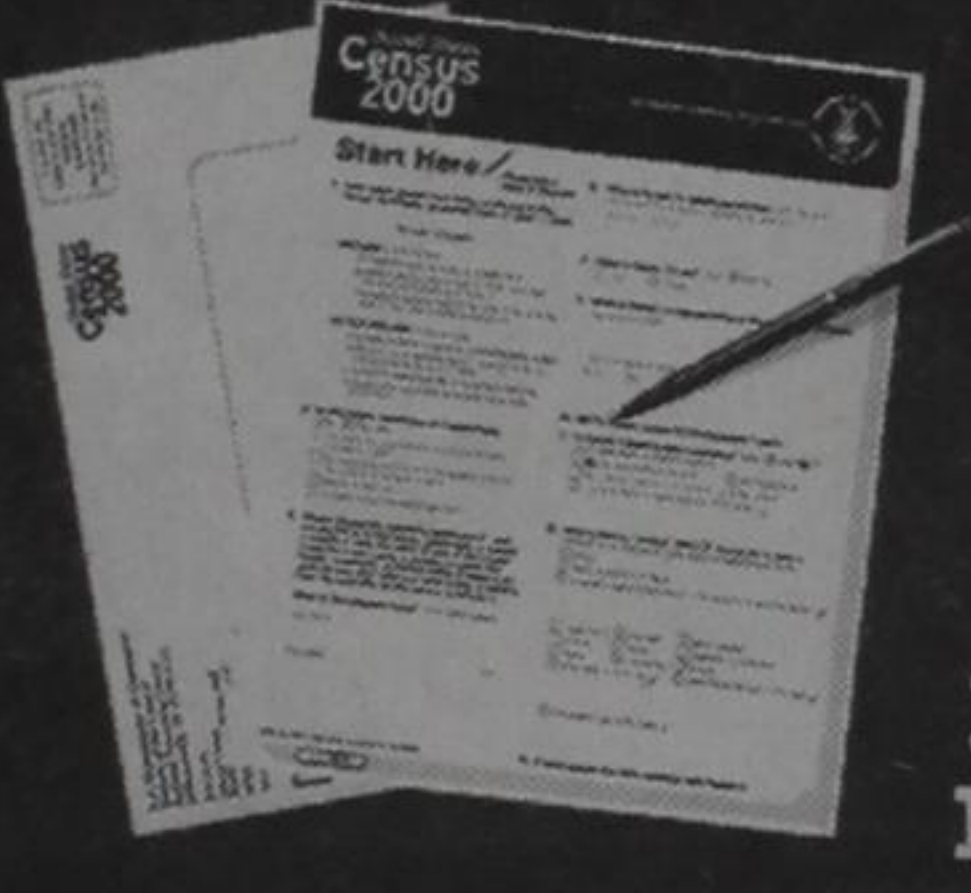
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Resulta que a los papás de Pablito se les olvidó llenar el formulario del Censo y no se dejaron contar. Lo que significa que Pablito tampoco cuenta. Y si más padres como los de él no llenan el Censo, lo más probable es que las comunidades donde viven no recibirán los programas y servicios que más necesitan. Y nadie quiere eso, ¿verdad? El Censo 2000 es sencillo y confidencial. Y es para todos, ya sean ciudadanos o no. Así que cuando reciba el formulario, llénelo y envíelo. Hay que darle una voz a Pablito y a toda la comunidad.



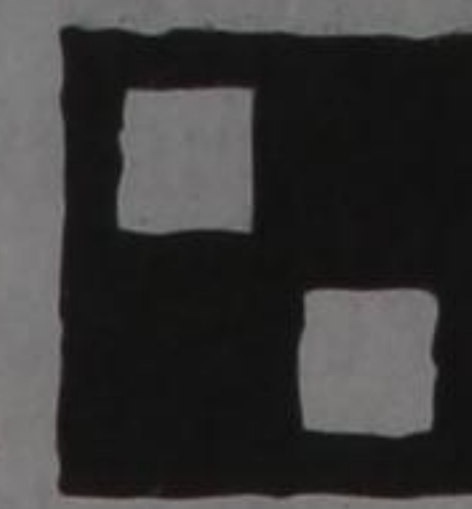
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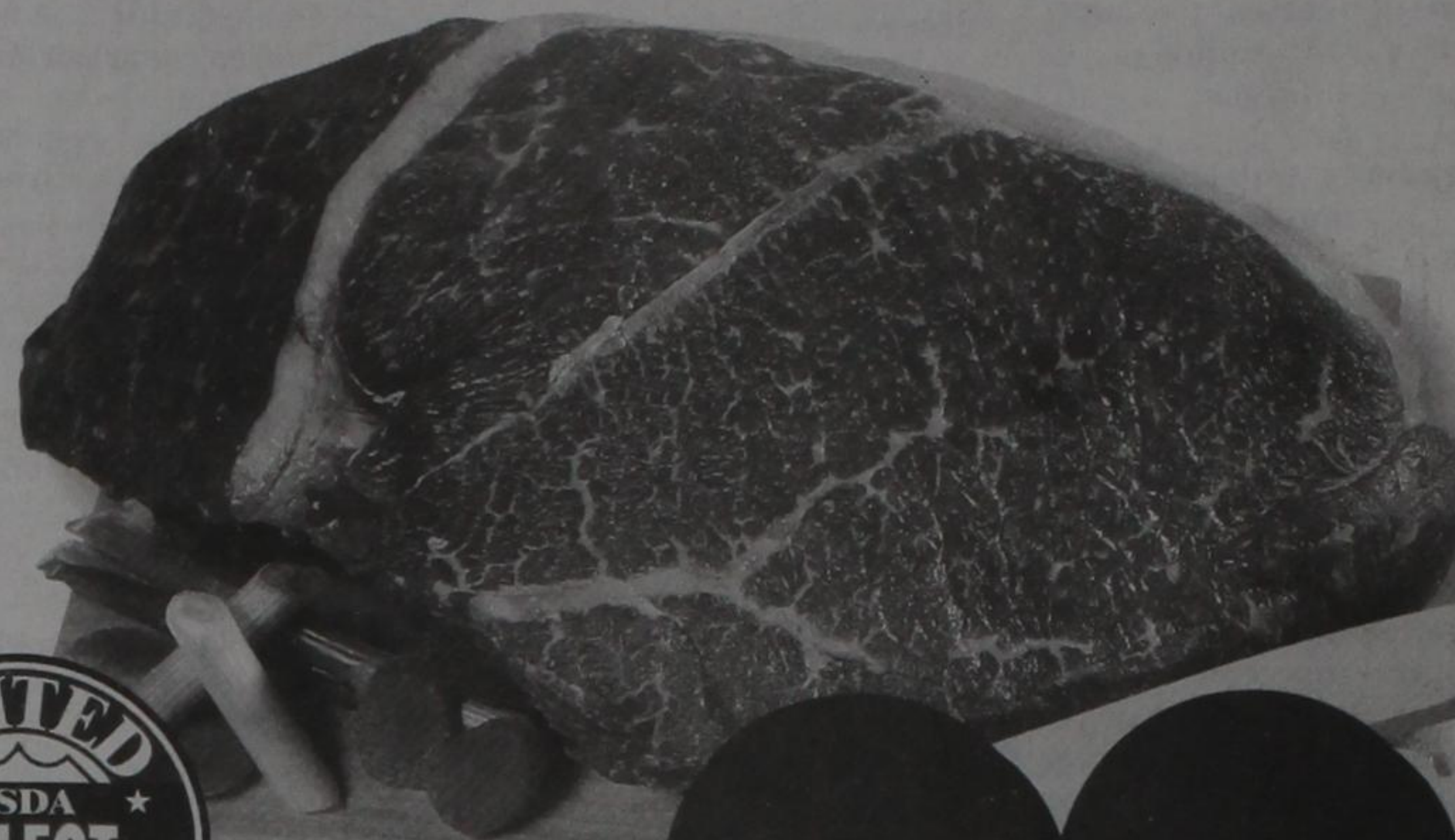


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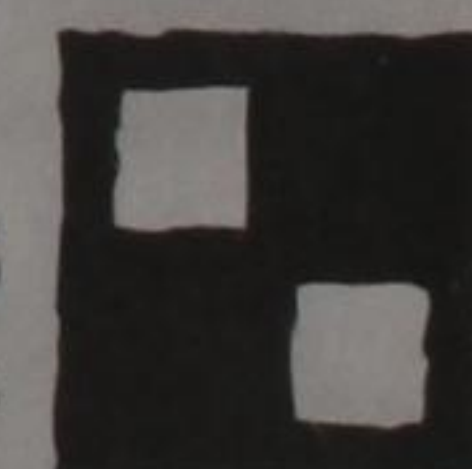
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Three US Boxers Advance in Boxing

TAMPA, Fla. Jeff Lacy, who had to win in both the ring and arbitration to get this far, took another step toward reaching the Olympics on Monday at Exposition Hall.

He scored a 9-0 decision over Alex James of Grenada in a first-round match at 165 pounds at the Americas qualifying tournament.

Lacy, of St. Petersburg, Fla., had won a title at the U.S. Olympic trials. He then lost 12-9 to Arthur Palac at the box-offs, then made the U.S. team by outpointing Palac, 10-9. Palac, of Hamtramck, Mich., appealed to the American Arbitration Association, but the appeal was rejected. If it had been upheld, Palac and Lacy would have had to fight again to see who made the U.S. team.

Lacy was not especially sharp Monday night, but said, "I had to figure this guy out. I wanted to take it round by round and come out with the win."

Four of Lacy's nine points came in second round when he forced James to take a standing 8-count. Lacy recorded four scoring blows in the round.

Marshal Martinez of Fontana, Calif., 132, and Jermain Taylor of Little Rock, Ark., 156, the only U.S. boxers in action, also advanced.

There are 154 boxers from 23 in countries in North, South and Central America and the Caribbean competing for 22 berths in the Sydney Olympics in September. There also will be Americas qualifying tournaments at Mexico City from April 17-22 and Buenos Aires from May 23-28. Cuba, as

the world's No. 1 team, is exempt and assured of 12 boxers in the Olympics.

Martinez pounded Fabricio Nieva of Argentina with left hooks in the last three rounds and won 14-2 at 132 pounds.

After the first of the four 2-minute rounds, Martinez said, "My coach told me the left hook was open," said Martinez, who rocked the taller Nieva several times with the punch, especially in the final round when he outscored his opponent 7-0.

Although Martinez looked poised, he admitted, "I was nervous. I don't want to go to Mexico, I want to home."

Taylor forced Fritz Roberts of St. Vincent to take two standing 8-counts and stopped him in the second round.

"I could see he was kind of green," Taylor said.

In another 132-pound bout, Darling Jimenez, of Yonkers, N.Y., boxing for his native Dominican Republic, outpointed Jewel Lewis of Grenada 8-3.

Jimenez is one of four naturalized U.S. citizens boxing for the Dominican Republic. He failed to make the U.S. team.

One of the other three, Jerson Ravelo of Newark, N.J., outpointed Gean Guimaraes of Brazil 9-2 at 165 pounds. Ravela was beaten 18-8 in the U.S. trials quarterfinals.

First-round bouts also were held in the 112, 139 and 201-pound classes Monday night.

Two of the winners at 112 pounds were Omar Narvaez from Argentina, and Carlos Valcarcel of Puerto Rico.

Narvaez, who outpointed Jose Navarro of Los Angeles, the

Nearly 100 Million Census 2000 Questionnaires in the Mail, Census Workers to Deliver the Rest

They're in the mail!
U.S. Postal Service workers today began to deliver 98 million Census 2000 questionnaires to about 83 percent of the nation's residences in the first national census of the new century.

The questionnaire packages consist of about 83 million short forms (seven questions) and 15 million long forms (52 questions).

Census enumerators, meanwhile, are personally delivering about 22 million additional forms to homes that do not have street-name and house-number addresses, mostly in rural and remote areas. These represent about 17 percent of the nation's housing units.

"Filling out a census questionnaire and mailing it back is easy," said Census Bureau Director Kenneth Prewitt. "The short form asks for less information than is found on your driver's license. It takes about 10 minutes to fill out the short-form questionnaire and

about 38 minutes to fill out the long-form questionnaire.

"About 99 percent of Americans will be able to mail back their questionnaire. The rest will simply give their answers to an enumerator, who will record them on the form."

Although the rate varies according to population density, in most areas about 5 out of 6 homes will receive the short form, while the remaining 1 out of 6 will receive the long form.

The questionnaires were preceded by an advance letter sent last week giving residents the option of asking for questionnaires in five languages besides English: Spanish, Tagalog, Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese. Later

this month, the Census

Bureau will send a reminder card asking residents to mail back the form.

People are asked to mail the forms back as soon as possible.

In January, Prewitt challenged state, local and tribal governments to surpass their 1990 mail response rate by at least 5 percentage points. A higher response rate would mean that the Census Bureau would not have to hire as many enumerators to visit households that do not mail back the form. It also could reduce the expected cost of the census, now set at \$6.5 billion.

In 1990, the response rate was 65 percent nationally, but varied widely from place to place. Census Bureau officials, concerned that census forms may get lost in the rising deluge of junk mail, have forecast a response rate of 61 percent for 2000.

The Census Bureau has taken several steps to make responding easier. The questionnaires are shorter and easier to complete than in 1990. Respondents may call a toll-free number listed on the questionnaire for assistance in filling out the form. Help also is available in other languages.

Respondents may visit any of thousands of questionnaire assistance centers, open evenings and weekends, to get help. At all the centers, non-English-speaking respondents may acquire a language guide in any of 37 languages that will allow them to see the questions in their own language. Certain centers will have guides in an additional 12 languages. The guides also are on the Internet <http://www.2000.census.gov/iqa/guides.html>.

People may view the questionnaires on the Census Bureau's Internet site at <http://www.2000.census.gov> and even fill out the short form online.

During March, the Census Bureau also conducts special operations to count people with no fixed address or who live in dormitories, nursing homes, prisons, shelters, trailer parks, transient housing and other group or nonstandard housing.

Census data are confidential and by law may not be shared with other agencies, law-enforcement organizations, the courts or any other

organization. Under the provisions of Title 13 of the U.S. Code, Census Bureau employees are sworn to keep the data confidential and face a fine of up to \$5,000 and five years in prison if they disclose personal information about respondents.

For the first time, respondents may identify themselves as being more than one race. People may check off as many race categories as they wish.

Hispanics may be of any race; therefore, there is one question on Hispanic origin and another on race on the questionnaire.

The questionnaire has room for information on six household members. Where there are more than six members, respondents fill in the additional names, and a Census Bureau representative will contact them for more information.

The short form contains six population questions and one housing question. The long form has 31 population questions (including the six short-form population questions) and 21 housing questions (including the short-form housing question). Questions are included on the census questionnaire only if they serve a legal or programmatic need. For information on the legal or programmatic bases of the questions, see the Census Bureau's Internet site <http://www.census.gov/dmd/www/content.htm>.

A complete set of residency rules telling where students, nursing home residents, military personnel, "snowbirds" and others are counted can be found on the Census Bureau's Internet site at http://www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/resid_rules.html.

First results of Census 2000 will be the state population totals used to reapportion the U.S. House of Representatives, which must be delivered to the President by Dec. 31, 2000. More detailed data used to redraw U.S. and state legislative districts must be delivered to governors and state majority and minority leaders by April 1, 2001.

The Census Bureau is still hiring workers for census jobs. Check the Census Bureau's Internet site <http://www.census.gov/jobs2000> or call 1-888-325-7733 for job information.

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Debes ser mayor de 18 años ó más para comprar un boleto de la Lotería de Texas 2000.

Photos by John Cervantez

Fifth Annual Viva Aztlan Winners

by Bidal Agüero

This year marked the 5th time that Lubbock Centro Aztlan has celebrated the Viva Aztlan Festival. Throughout its history event brought together ballet companies from Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Chicago and has even hosted an award winning ballet from Tijuana Mexico.

Children as young as 3 years old up to adults in their senior years have participated in showcasing the beauty and splendor of our culture as expressed through traditional dances developed and passed down throughout generations.

Tears never fail to fill my eyes as I witness the magnificence of the dresses being worn by little kids as they dance across the stage doing their best to help their group perhaps win an award that will physically show everyone the fruits of their work in studying dance. To the dancers their excellence will be exhibited on a mantle and will be concrete proof as to their dedication to promoting the Hispanic culture.

Besides the aesthetic of the event, the economic value brings real benefits to Lubbock. With over 1000

participants, the Festival contributed over \$280,000 to Lubbock's economy.

Lubbock was twice a winner in that the Ballet Folklorico Aztlan of Lubbock directed by Zenaida Aguero Reyes won four trophies including the coveted Best over-all Award in Division B. Other awards won by Aztlan in their division were Best Contemporary, Best Choreography, and Best Technique and Form. Lubbock's San Patricio Ballet Folklorico also help to recognize Lubbock by winning Best Creative Award.

Last year's winner, "Back of the Yard" from Chicago of Best of Festival won the award for the second time along with Division A awards in Best Contemporary, Best Choreography, Best Costume and Best Over All. Besides their performance in competition Back of the Yard ballet also presented a special performance for the Festival.

Other winners in Division A were Mexico España from San Antonio - Best Traditional and Best Technique and Form. Other winners in Division B were Grupo Folkloric Miztli from Corpus Christi who won Best Traditional and Best Costume

In the Children's Division Lubbock's Aztlan won Best Creative and Las Adelitas from Ralls won Best Contemporary. San Antonio's Mexico España won Best Traditional, and Best Technique and Form. Best overall in Children's Division was again won by Back of the Yard. They also won Best Choreography and Best Costumes.

Texas Tech University help to add a separate aspect to the Festival by presenting two \$500 scholarships to the winners of the individual competition. The scholarships were won by Horacio Nieto Jr from Corpus Christi Miztli Ballet and Marilina Galarza from Lubbock St. Patrick's Ballet.

Many of the members of the Lubbock Hispanic Chamber attended the event and also contributed monetarily to enable Festival. Most noted of our contributors were Southwestern Bell, United Supermarkets, Lubbock Avalanche Journal, Civic Lubbock Inc., El Editor Newspaper and the Lubbock City Council as recommended by the Lubbock Arts Alliance Our thanks to the Chamber for their help.



Gracias Todos Y Viva Aztlan
Los Esperamos el próximo año en Lubbock

Mordiendo La Lengua En la Politica Cubana

Por Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo

El gran ganador en la disputa internacional sobre la suerte de Elián González, de 6 años de edad, es la comunidad cubanoamericana de Estados Unidos. Al escribir este artículo, todavía no está claro si la decisión de un juez federal el 21 de marzo será suficiente para enviar al sobreviviente del naufragio de regreso con su padre en Cuba. Sin embargo, el mundo ha visto que la comunidad cubanoamericana ha roto con la línea del partido de los anticastristas recalcitrantes de Miami.

A pesar de las gestiones de la Fundación Nacional Cubano-Americana (CANF en inglés) y de sus *aduladores*, que tratan de monopolizar a los medios informativos en nombre de todos los cubanoamericanos, voces diferentes y nuevas fueron escuchadas en esta odisea que lleva meses de duración, para tratar de decidir qué es lo mejor para Elián.

Ahora sabemos que es posible ser anticastrista y luchar con ambigüedad moral sobre los valores familiares y lo que es mejor para un niño. También es evidente que una suma cada vez mayor de cubanoamericanos acepta a la revolución como un hecho histórico, aún cuando estén listos para criticarla por sus fracasos.

La diversidad de las opiniones de los cubanoamericanos no debería llegar como una sorpresa, porque la comunidad está formada por distintas clases de inmigrantes. Unos pocos son exiliados políticos en el sentido estricto; personas expulsadas de Cuba, a menudo después de languidecer en prisión por su oposición al régimen. Puesto que ellos han sufrido en carne propia por sus convicciones políticas, son merecedores de respeto y admiración aún por parte de aquellos en desacuerdo con sus ideologías.

Irónicamente, hay un núcleo semejante de partidarios de línea dura que viven en Cuba y lucharon por la revolución -- Fidel Castro entre ellos. Sería ingenuo esperar que cualquiera de estas personas cambien de sentimientos acerca de los demás. Pero, afortunadamente, la mayoría de estos contrarios pertenece a una generación que está envejeciendo ahora. El grupo de cubanoamericanos de más rápido crecimiento es el de aquéllos que o bien fueron

traídos a estas costas cuando eran tan pequeños como Elián, o bien han nacido y crecido en este país. Es desde este último grupo que se han escuchado las más elocuentes de las voces nuevas.

Una pregunta que se hará de aquí a algunos años es por qué el caso de Elián González llegó a ser 'la paja que rompió el lomo del camello'.

Algunos señalarán a la muerte del dirigente carismático de la CANF, Jorge Más Canosa, como el comienzo del fin para el poderoso cabildo que él había construido.

Otros insistirán en que la visita del Papa en 1998 fue el primer combate importante perdido por los partidarios de línea dura en el frente de las relaciones públicas. La aceptación por parte del Papa Juan Pablo II del gobierno revolucionario estuvo unida con una crítica de las políticas que niegan la libertad. Muchos católicos cubanoamericanos han adoptado ahora la perspectiva del papa, descartando a la noción desgastada de que no debe darse cooperación al pueblo de la sociedad cubana, porque -- se dijo -- el gobierno revolucionario caerá pronto del poder.

Creo que los anticastristas de línea dura perdieron influencia porque se apoyaron excesivamente en el odio y el temor. Estas son tácticas que proporcionan acceso rápido a la prominencia, pero no dan un cimiento seguro para mantenerse en el poder. Como enseñó el dirigente puertorriqueño Pedro Albizu Campos: "El odio os embrutece."

Los anti-castristas cubanoamericanos sucumbieron a las mismas cosas que ellos pretendían resistir. Por ejemplo, se dijo que los comunistas destruían a las familias, separando por la fuerza a los niños de sus padres, haciéndoles el lavado de cerebro a los jóvenes para que dijeran lemas políticos y sirvieran a los intereses ideológicos antes que amar a sus padres. Empero, los partidarios de la línea dura presionaron para secuestrar a Elián lejos de su padre, obligando al niño al trauma de la separación familiar que ellos, en su odio, atribuían a Fidel Castro.

Los partidarios de la línea dura decían que era inconcebible que cualquiera deseara vivir en

Cuba actualmente. Por lo tanto, ellos propagaron acusaciones infundadas y patentemente falsas sobre el padre de Elián y el deseo de sus abuelas para llevarse de regreso a Cuba. El testimonio de los representantes del Consejo Mundial de Iglesias o del gobierno de Estados Unidos de que el padre de Elián era un padre preocupado fue descartado como mentiras coercitivas. Cuando se informó que la opinión pública de Estados Unidos favorecía que se reuniera al niño con su padre, los arqueros de los partidarios de línea dura alegaron que los medios informativos eran parte de una conspiración izquierdista. Inicialmente, los partidarios de línea dura dijeron que ellos se atenderían a una decisión de los tribunales, pero tan pronto como el juez dictaminó en contra de ellos, presentaron toda clase de excusas para deslizarse de sus promesas. Hasta han tratado de manipular a los símbolos religiosos, situando a Elián en la compañía de Moisés y Jesús, como si Dios estuviera comprometido ideológicamente con la CANF.

Juan González, el reconocido reportero del New York Daily News, descubrió una serie de arrestos por conducir en estado de ebriedad y un historial de encarcelamiento para los miembros de la familia que quería criar a Elián. Al enfrentarse a la evidencia de que los parientes de Elián radicados en Miami no eran ángeles, el abogado de la familia emprendió una patético intento por cambiar de asunto, mencionando una declaración en una asamblea pública en La Habana. "¿Por qué el INS no investiga el abuso del niño por parte de sus familiares de Cuba?" se preguntó, ya que una de las abuelas de Elián "se mordió la lengua cuando lo vio". Pero en español, la expresión "morderse la lengua" es un modismo que significa sencillamente evitar decir algo. Lo que dijo realmente la mujer fue que ella reprimió sus emociones para no alarmar a Elián. O bien los anticastristas han olvidado el español, o este fue un cínico intento para meter de contrabando una mentira cruel entre el público estadounidense.

Toda la vida está llena de opciones difíciles e intereses en conflicto. Ahora sentimos simpatía por los

cubanoamericanos, porque los vemos luchando para hacer lo correcto. Antes, nos alimentaban con la política del odio, con imágenes de los cubanoamericanos rechazando cualquier postura en su contra. No podemos esperar que los partidarios de línea dura desaparezcan inmediatamente: La demagogia ideológica y la política apasionada de todos los matices siempre se hallarán presentes en nuestras comunidades latinas, no

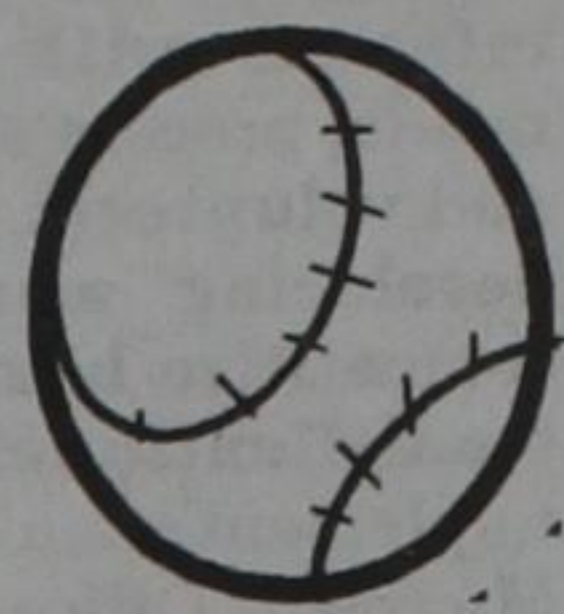
solamente entre los cubanoamericanos.

Sin embargo, a medida que una sociedad madura, la libertad de expresión abre el camino para voces nuevas y opiniones diversas, algo que está sucediendo en la isla de Cuba, así como en Estados Unidos. Podemos estar agradecidos de que las dificultades de un pequeño de 6 años hayan impulsado a la comunidad cubanoamericana a crecer.

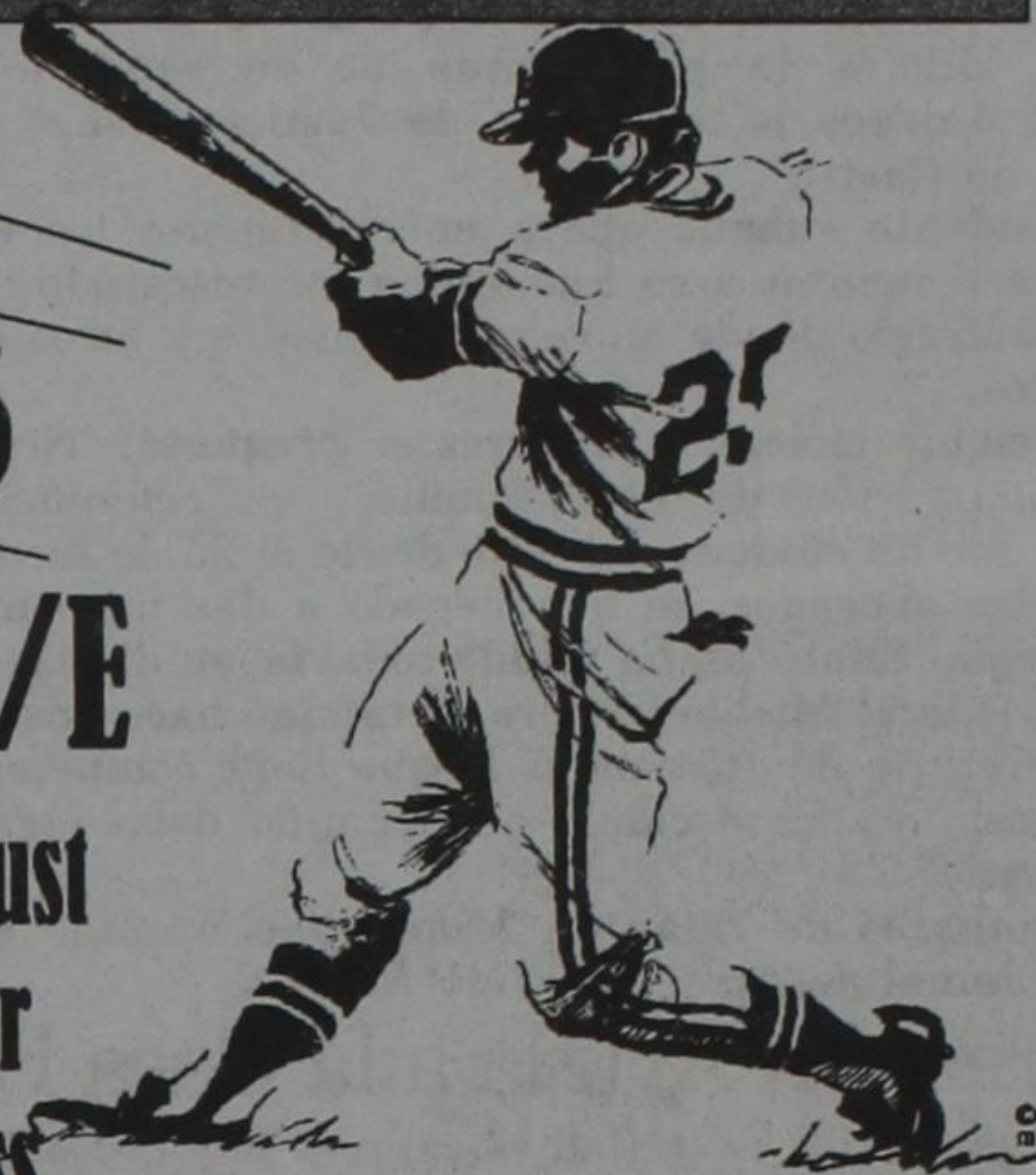
(El Dr. Anthony M. Stevens-

Arroyo, anteriormente vicepresidente del Comité Estatal de Nueva York de la Comisión Estadounidense sobre los Derechos Civiles, es catedrático es Estudios Puertorriqueños y Latinos en la Escuela Superior de Brooklyn, Universidad Municipal de Nueva York, y director de la Oficina de Investigación para la Religión en la Sociedad y la Cultura.) Propiedad literaria registrada por Hispanic Link News Service en el año 2000. Distribuido por Los Angeles Times Syndicate.

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Noticias Breves

Familiares de Elian No Se Comprometen a Entregar a Niño

Miami (EEUU).- Los abogados de los familiares en Miami del niño náufrago cubano Elián González se negaron hoy a comprometerse por escrito a entregarlo a las autoridades de Inmigración si pierden una apelación para impedir su repatriación a Cuba.

El abogado Mario Díaz, uno de los seis abogados de Lázaro González, tío abuelo de Elián, dijo "que no se ha aceptado nada", al salir de una reunión con funcionarios del Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización (INS).

Los abogados presentes en la reunión no quisieron dar más detalles y dijeron que primero tenían que informar a su cliente, Lázaro González, para decidir los próximos pasos.

Ante esta negativa, es posible ahora que el INS siga adelante con su amenaza de suspender el jueves el permiso provisional de estancia en Estados Unidos de Elián, para iniciar inmediatamente los trámites de repatriación a Cuba, donde lo reclama su padre, Juan Miguel González.

El Departamento de Justicia había convocado anoche a los abogados de Lázaro González a esta reunión tras amenazar con que, si no aceptaban comprometerse por escrito a entregar al niño en el caso de perder una apelación judicial pendiente, se revocaría el estatus migratorio de Elián.

El portavoz de los familiares de Elián en Miami, Armando Gutiérrez, dijo a la prensa que no se sabe de quién está recibiendo órdenes la secretaría de Justicia, Janet Reno, "si de Clinton o de Castro".

El presidente cubano apoya enérgicamente los esfuerzos del padre para recuperar a su hijo, quien fue rescatado en noviembre tras un naufragio donde murieron su madre y otros diez cubanos inmigrantes.

Visiblemente molesto, Gutiérrez se preguntó: "No sé qué es lo quiere Inmigración de esta familia", en referencia a Lázaro González, que ha cuidado del niño desde el 25 de noviembre.

Según los abogados, se han negado a dar un compromiso por escrito porque Elián "no ha tenido todavía 'su día en la corte'".

El juez federal Michael Moore dictaminó hace dos semanas que sólo la secretaria de Justicia es la que tiene competencia sobre el asunto y ésta ya ha decidido que el niño debe regresar con su padre a la isla.

Los familiares de Elián en Miami han apelado esta decisión ante el Tribunal de Apelaciones de Atlanta.

Retraso en Ayuda a la Casa Blanca

Washington, - La Casa Blanca expresó hoy preocupación por el retraso que puede seguir teniendo el trámite legislativo para aprobar la ayuda de cerca de 1.600 millones de dólares a Colombia para combatir el narcotráfico internacional.

Una portavoz de la Casa Blanca dijo que le preocupa que el presidente de la Cámara de Representantes, el republicano Dennis Hastert, haya abierto la puerta para considerar la asignación a Colombia separada de un paquete de fondos de emergencia.

"Nuestra posición es que es importante que esta legislación se apruebe ahora porque esa ayuda se necesita con urgencia", sostuvo Linda Ricci, portavoz del Gobierno de Bill Clinton.

La Cámara de Representantes llevará a votación esta semana el paquete legislativo que incluyen unos 9.000 millones de dólares en fondos de emergencia para Colombia y las operaciones militares en Kosovo, entre otros asuntos.

Pero el congresista Hastert reconoció que al final pueden tener que acceder a la propuesta del Senado de EEUU para que este grupo de proyectos sea dividido en medidas independientes, lo que retrasaría más su aprobación.

La ayuda a Colombia, que el presidente Bill Clinton propuso que totalice unos 1.600 millones de dólares durante los próximos dos años, tiene apoyo suficiente para ser aprobada en el Congreso, pero hay dudas sobre su contenido y el trámite que debe seguirse.

El líder de la mayoría republicana del Senado, Trent Lott, ha reafirmado que aunque la Cámara baja apruebe la ayuda a Colombia como un paquete de emergencia, los senadores examinarán esa asignación por medio del trámite regular.

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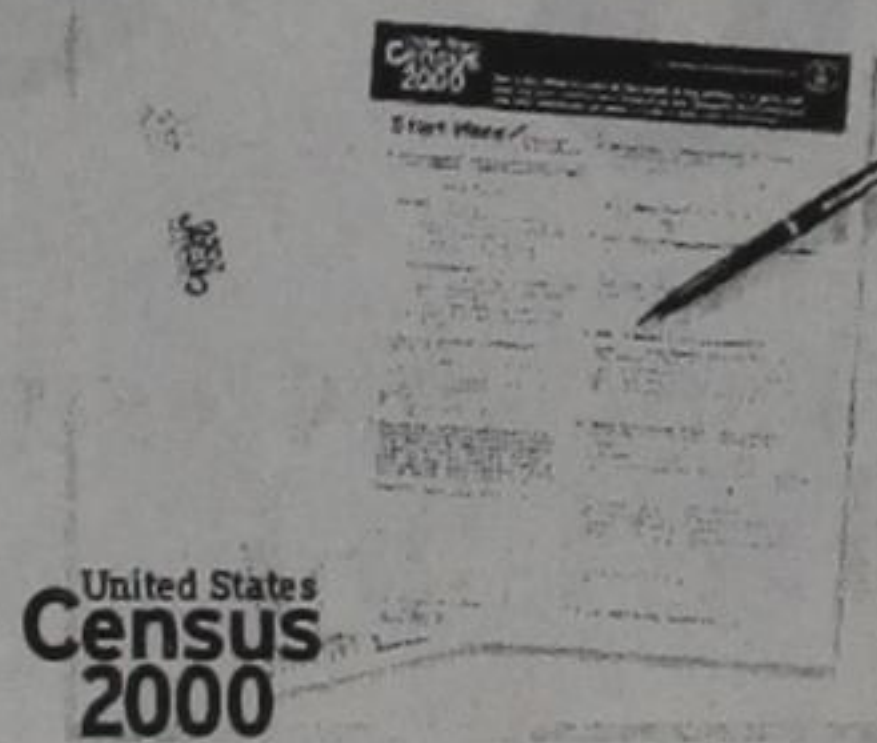
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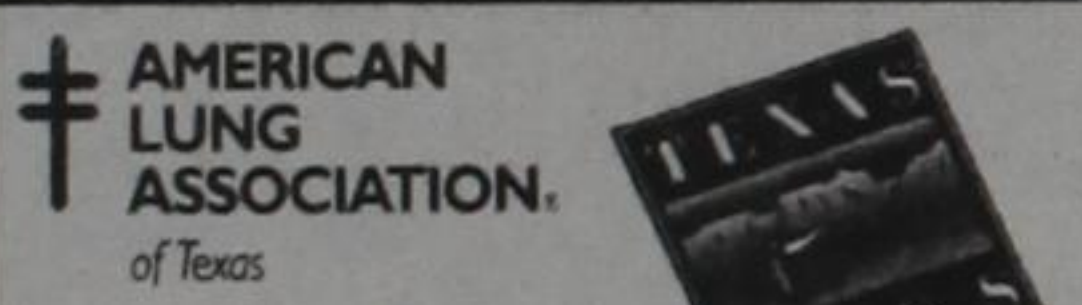
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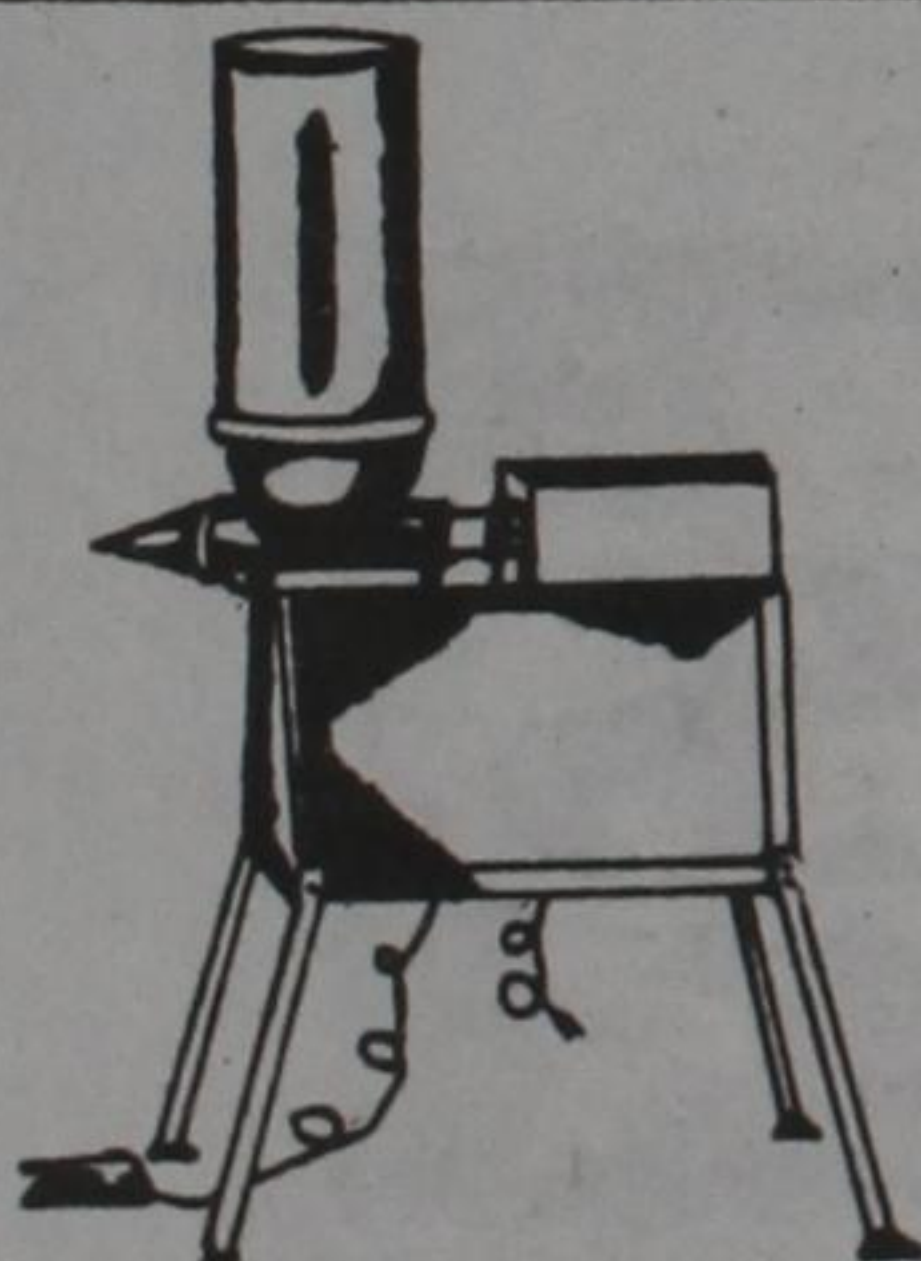
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