

A MILLION MORE LATINOS EXPECTED TO VOTE IN 2000

By James E. Garcia

Phoenix, AZ, May 27 — It would be the largest number of Latino voters ever cast in a U.S. presidential election: six million. The number could go higher still. Led by the efforts of the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute and the Southwest Voter Registration Project, Latino groups and activists across the country are mounting "Latino Vote 2000," a drive to register Hispanic voters and get them to the polls. The Southwest Voter Registration Project alone will be launching up to 150 get-out-the-vote drives throughout the Southwest in the coming months. The Hispanic Leadership Institute will be pushing its own campaigns throughout much of the rest of the nation.

Election Day turnout by Latino voters might well decide countless local and state races, as well as the presidency and control of the House of Representatives. Raising the stakes even more is the prediction that Latinos in unprecedented numbers may shift their support from Democratic to Republican candidates. With Republicans holding just a six-seat majority in the House, lawmakers are realizing just how critical the Latino vote could be. The nature of that slim margin was clarified by information released recently by the Tomas Rivera

Policy Institute.

The think-tank showed that in three Los Angeles-area congressional

relection by 6,800 voters, though 21,000 registered Latino voters didn't cast a ballot, according to Matt

piled, officials note that Latino response to the Census was better than expected.

The growth in Latino voter registration already has been striking. Juan Andrade, head of the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute, says the number of registered Latino voters nationwide increased by 164 percent from 1976 to 1996, but just 31 percent in the general population. In the 1996 general election, about 5 million Latinos voted, said Angela Acosta, a spokeswoman for the Southwest Voter Registration Project. Most of them voted Democrat and helped to reelect President Clinton in his race against Republican nominee Bob Dole.

Four years later, experts think as many as 1 million new Hispanic voters will go to the polls, though no one can predict if a majority will pick Al Gore or George W. Bush. Recent polls show the candidates in a tight race among Hispanics, though Bush has pulled slightly ahead among voters overall. As the major parties do their best to coax Latinos to pick their respective candidates, the voter registration groups have a less partisan objective: just getting Latinos to vote. "I think the challenge this year will be to keep Latino voters voting," said Acosta, explaining that

their largely successful efforts have led to hundreds of Hispanic candidates winning elections.

Latino voter registration efforts got an unexpected boost in the mid- and late-1990s, by a wave of so-called anti-Latino legislative initiatives, said Russell Jauregui, an attorney in Pasadena, Calif. and former Southwest Voter organizer.

He cited the sharp conservative shift in Congress on welfare and immigration legislation and California's Propositions 209, targeting affirmative action, and Proposition 227, which retooled bilingual education. As a result, hundreds of thousands of new Latino voters—many of whom had only just become naturalized citizens—were inspired to vote for Clinton's reelection in 1996. He won more than 70 percent of the Latino vote that year. This year, however, there is no "negative force" driving Latinos to the polls, said Andrade, and that has voter registration groups worried.

"We need another Pete Wilson," jokes Andrade, referring to the former California governor who led the push to pass Proposition 187. "We need to be beat up a little bit to get us into the fight."

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districts, each candidate's victory margin in 1998 was smaller than the number of registered Latino voters who did not cast a ballot. Higher Latino turnout could have changed the outcomes. In one instance, Rep. James Rogan, a Republican, won

Barreto, a Tomas Rivera researcher. This election, things could be different. Community leaders believe their effort will get out the Latino vote. Proof, they say, is in the success of Latino participation in the Census. While all the data hasn't been com-

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

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Comentarios de Bidal

by Bidal Agüero
Does Lubbock Really Want George Bush?

A few weeks ago I wondered how local radio talk show hosts were supporting George Bush. I wonder even more now that I read an interesting study recently was released by The People for the American Way, a pro-Republican policy group in Washington, that pointed out what Bush would bring to the Presidency. They wrote specifically about concerns of what is expected to be two Supreme Court appointments that could be made by Bush. According to the study titled "Courting disaster", it is frightening to think that the opinions of the Court.



- The study said:
- That Mr. Scalia and Mr. Thomas are "eager" to overturn *Roe vs. Wade*, the 1973 decision legalizing abortion.
 - That their approach to the financing of election campaigns would make campaign finance reform "all but impossible."
 - That they took such an extreme position on the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that four of their fellow justices determined that 28 previous Supreme Court rulings based on that law would have to be reconsidered if their view prevailed.
 - That they would prohibit the use of affirmative action, "even where it is shown to be carefully constructed to remedy past discrimination."
 - That they "would have made cigarette companies virtually immune from most lawsuits by completely forbidding any suits accusing the companies of intentional fraud and deliberate concealment of cigarette dangers."
- Given this, Bush's probable appointees would mostly side with these extreme positions of Scalia and Thomas to turn the court in an conservative extremist group of non-caring republicans that have little concern for real people.
- Do people in Lubbock really want this?

Los Hispanos Y La Enseñanza Superior: Las Cifras Cuentan Dos Relatos

Por Camilo Smith-Montealegre

Que las cifras hablen por ellas mismas. Es un axioma comprobado por el tiempo. Pero es un consejo que no lo lleva a uno a ninguna parte cuando se está hablando de hispanos y la enseñanza superior. En este caso, las cifras le llevan a uno en direcciones opuestas.

Hace pocos días, el respetado Servicio de Exámenes de Enseñanza, (ETS en inglés), de Princeton, Nueva Jersey, publicó un estudio detallado que proyecta el que los hispanos formarán el 15.4 por ciento de los estudiantes universitarios para el año 2015, aumentando desde el 10.6 por ciento en 1995.

El estudio precursor del ETS, titulado "Atravesando la Gran Línea Divisoria", proyectó un aumento notable del 73 por ciento en las matrículas de hispanos en las escuelas superiores. El mismo estudio calculó un aumento de 1.4 millones a 2.5 millones de alumnos hispanos en los recintos universitarios de los Estados Unidos en ese corto espacio de tiempo.

Sin embargo, cuando el ETS publicó su informe en el Capitolio el 24 de mayo, su autor principal, Anthony Carnevale, acompañado por la consultora Sonia Hernández, superintendente Aajunta de enseñanza de California, proyectó otro conjunto de cifras.

Hernández alertó: "La población de entre 18 y 24 años de edad aumentará con mucha mayor rapidez que aquéllos que están listos para ir a las escuelas superiores."

El estudio advierte sobre una brecha que se ensancha entre los jóvenes de edad universitaria — que representarán el 18.9 por ciento de todos los hispanos — y el 13.1 por ciento que se matricularán realmente en las instituciones de enseñanza superior. "Nuestros recintos estarán echando de menos a 550,000 alumnos hispanos," proyecta el estudio.

Carnevale advirtió que entre los años 1995 y 2015, la brecha entre los hispanos que asistan a las escuelas superiores y los demás grupos de la población estadounidense se ampliará realmente desde el 5.1 por ciento hasta el 5.8 por ciento.

Por comparación, la brecha negativa continuará siendo relativamente estable para los afroamericanos, cambiando del 2.5 por ciento al 2.6 por ciento, mientras que el actual porcentaje "extra" de alumnos asiático-americanos aumentará considerablemente, desde el 1.9 por ciento hasta el 3.1 por ciento.

La representación de blancos en el lado positivo disminuirá del 5.6 por ciento al 4.1 por ciento.

En el año 2015, California, Texas, la Florida y Nueva York tendrán los dos tercios del aumento de todo el país en hispanos de edad universitaria. Esto se debe, en gran parte, a un aumento continuo de la inmigración y a la cantidad de nacimientos en la "Generación Y" entre 1982 y 1996.

Uno de cada seis alumnos será hispano, a medida que los hispa-

nos lleguen a ser el mayor grupo no blanco en los recintos de las escuelas superiores y universidades.

Los factores específicos mencionados por el informe como impulsores del futuro aumento de la matrícula hispana son una mejor preparación académica, más alumnos de mayor edad que regresan a las escuelas superiores y la cantidad cada vez mayor de familias latinas que incluyen a padres o madres graduados de las escuelas superiores.

El informe insta a los elaboradores de cursos de acción para que se enfoquen en la desproporción de las matrículas en las escuelas superiores para los jóvenes hispanos, de quienes Carnevale enfatizó que "están perdiendo terreno en términos de su proporción equitativa de los pupitres universitarios".

Los aumentos del costo de las matrículas podrían incrementar la brecha todavía más, dijo Carnevale. El 43 por ciento de las familias hispanas con tres o más hijos no tienen ingresos suficientes, y por cada \$1,000 de aumento en la matrícula, del 6 por ciento al 8 por ciento de la población hispana pierde el acceso a la enseñanza superior, proyectó. Con el peso de los gastos de matrícula gravitando sobre los estados y las familias, Carnevale preguntó: "¿Quién va a pagar por todos estos chicos?"

Como reacción, Jamie Merisotis, presidente del Instituto para Cursos de Acción en la Ense-

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Hispanics & Higher Education: Numbers Tell Conflicting Stories

By Camilo Smith-Montealegre

Let the numbers speak for themselves.

It's an age-tested axiom. But it is counsel that leads you nowhere when talking about Hispanics and higher education. The numbers lead you in two opposite directions.

A few days ago, the respected Educational Testing Service of Princeton, N.J., released a detailed study projecting that Hispanics will make up 15.4 percent of the nation's college undergraduates by 2015. That's up from 10.6 percent in 1995.

The groundbreaking ETS report, "Crossing the Great Divide," projected a remarkable 73 percent jump in Hispanic college enrollment. It calculated a rise from 1.4 million to 2.5 million Hispanic undergraduates on

U.S. college campuses in that short period of time.

However, when ETS released its report on Capitol Hill on May 24, its principal author, Anthony Carnevale, accompanied by consultant Sonia Hernández, California's deputy education superintendent, projected another set of numbers.

"The population of 18- to 24-year-olds will grow much faster than those ready to go to college," cautioned Hernández.

The study warns of a widening gap between college-age youth — who will represent 18.9 percent of all Hispanics — and the 13.1 percent who will actually enroll in institutions of higher education.

"Our campuses will be missing 550,000 Hispanic undergraduates," the study projects.

Carnevale warned that bet-

ween 1995 and 2015, the gap between Hispanics and other groups in the U.S. population attending college will actually expand from 5.1 percent to 5.8 percent.

By comparison, the negative gap will remain relatively stable for African Americans, edging from 2.5 percent to 2.6 percent, while the present "extra" percentage of undergraduate Asian Americans will increase substantially — from 1.9 percent to 3.1 percent.

White representation on the plus side will diminish from 5.6 percent to 4.1 percent.

In 2015, California, Texas, Florida and New York will account for two-thirds of the nationwide increase in college-age Hispanics. This is due, in large part, to a continued surge in im-

News Briefs

Show Me the Money, Say Hollywood Executives

Philadelphia — Latino actors say too often in Hollywood, you can't be too dark or too light — or even speak English without an accent — to get a role portraying a Latino. Latino actors receive less than four percent of the hours worked in Hollywood. The reaction of Hollywood executives: more Latinos on TV and movies make sense — but not financially.

In a Screen Actor's Guild study conducted by the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, discussions with 1,200 Latino SAG members showed Latino actors continue to face stereotypes and limited access to roles.

Some of the study's findings:

- 73 percent of Latino actors say having a Spanish surname puts them at a disadvantage of finding roles.
- 45 percent said Latino actors only find roles if they fit the "mestizo" racial stereotype.
- 30 percent say they have been asked to speak English poorly or use a Spanish accent for roles they received or were offered.
- Latino actors work an average of ten days a year, well below the general SAG average.

Harry P. Pachon, president of the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, said the most disturbing viewpoint came from the executives, who maintained perceptions of how Latinos should be presented in Hollywood productions in order to be accepted by the mainstream.

Pachon said that although executives say Latino actors or subject matter does not draw well at the box office, they are missing an "untapped market" of \$404 billion in buying power.

"What we're asking for is an accurate portrayal of the American scene," Pachon said, according to *Daily Variety*. "How can anyone show Los Angeles or New York City without Latinos?"

Granddaughter of LAPD Chief Killed

Philadelphia May 30, 2000 (LATNN) — Lori Gonzalez was the driver of a car pulling out of a restaurant parking lot about one mile away from the Santa Monica Highway Sunday night when an unidentified man, seeking to shoot the man in the passenger seat, started to open fire. As the man ducked trying to avoid the bullets, Lori Gonzalez, the granddaughter of Los Angeles Police Chief Bernard C. Parks, was shot several times and killed. She was one week short of her 21st birthday.

Gonzalez, a graduate of beauty school, lived in Mission Viejo, Calif. with her father, Joe, where she attended Saddleback College. She was studying English to pursue her interests in creative writing.

Joe Gonzalez told the L.A. Times that she was a loving daughter who loved her family very much and was a hard worker. In addition to college, she also held down two jobs and worked with youth at the local church, said Joe Gonzalez. She once traveled to Tijuana, Mexico to help build houses for poor people. She was in Los Angeles Sunday visiting her mother.

The man with Gonzalez, say police, was the intended victim. According to sources for the L.A. Times, the man in the passenger seat has had brushes with the law. He was not hurt in Sunday's shooting and is not a suspect.

Bernard C. Parks, the father of four and grandfather of several children, could not be reached for comment Monday.

CUBA LIBRE, USA

By James E. Garcia

In the weeks after she snatched a crying Elian Gonzalez from his relatives' home in Little Havana on April 22, federal immigration agent Betty A. Mills received repeated death threats.

Mills had fought through a gauntlet of angry protesters as she entered the home and then struggled to make her way to a waiting van clutching the boy wrapped in a small, white blanket. At one point, as Mills emerged from the home, video footage shows a gray-haired man dragging Mills and the boy into some bushes, forcing armed agents to rescue her. The raid led to riots later that day.

This was the chaotic and recalcitrant portrait of our nation's Cuban American community dispensed by the unsparing news media to people across the nation.

And it is an image that has come to hurt Cuban Americans in many ways.

Foremost, the battle over Elian exposed what many regard as the waning power of the once indomitable Cuban exile community.

Nationally, it highlighted longstanding divisions between Cuban Americans and other Latino communities.

In Florida, meanwhile, the controversy has exacerbated usually political, ethnic and racial rifts between a segment of the state's Cuban Americans and other local citizenry.

This time, many Americans—including a growing number of Cuban Americans—believe that conservative Cuban leaders went too far when they used a child, six-year-old Elian Gonzalez, to wage their latest ideological assault against Fidel Castro, Cuba's communist dictator.

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Elian Circus Left Cuban Exiles the Big Losers

By Carlos Conde

In case anyone is still interested, Miami is back to normal, or at least what is considered normal for this city. The Cuban-American community is recovering from a gigantic emotional hangover after it apparently lost the battle for Elián, and things are back to the usual chaos.

The mayor fired the city manager for not informing him in advance about the seizure of Elián from his great uncle's house in Little Havana. The police chief quit over what he termed the (ITAL)CUBANO(ENDITAL) mayor's divisive policies. Spanish talk radio routinely trashed the U.S. government and Fidel Castro. City Hall was splattered for days with drive-by banana bombs -- as in "banana republic." And now a non-Cuban citizens group is threatening to hold a recall election.

It has happened before, and it will probably happen again. Nothing anyone says or does will keep the South Florida Cuban community from displaying its almost paranoid obsession with the Castro menace 90 miles across the water.

What seems to be different is that this time the exile community's political passions may work against it. The sympathy it once took for granted now appears on the wane, and its political passions are beginning to show strains on the U.S. psyche. Read the public commentary. The Cuban exile community's

once-indomitable support from key political elements in Washington may also be evaporating.

After the federal agents' raid in Miami, prominent Washington lawmakers the likes of Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, went ballistic -- publicly anyway. They announced they would hold public hearings. The calls went out for Attorney General Janet Reno's scalp.

A few days later, they started backtracking. Like the good politicians they are, they stuck their finger to the wind. At least two-thirds of the U.S. public supported the federal agents' raid. Almost as many said they opposed congressional hearings. So guess where that Washington political intervention is headed?

Fidel Castro is chortling all over his beard. The exiles played right into his hands.

What the Elián turmoil has done is strengthen Castro at home for standing up to the Yankee bully. It also provided him the forum he so desperately sought in the United States on lifting the economic embargo.

Island Cubans rallied behind him when he denounced Miami's Cuban "mafia" for politicizing a family tragedy by exploiting Elián's well-meaning but unsophisticated Miami relatives. Not only did the Miami Cubans hand Castro the ideal platform to extol the virtues of his re-

gime, but they made him look like a compassionate granddaddy.

More important, the debacle created the opportunity for a serious re-examination of the United States' 40-year economic embargo against Cuba. The exiled community made this its political linchpin. It considers any public dialogue taboo. Up to now, it has successfully muzzled congressional debate.

If U.S. policy hasn't toppled Castro in 40 years, it is not about to do so now. All the while, U.S. business interests are fuming about missed opportunities because of a policy they agree has failed and outlived its purpose.

When U.S. business eventually returns to Cuba, it will start years behind the commercial enterprise of the Canadians, Spaniards and Italians. They have already cornered an important part of the more lucrative market, such as the resort and construction business.

Many serious students of the embargo consider it a blatant double standard when this nation punishes Cuba for human rights violations but overlooks similar offenses by other nations, such as China. As the State Department has explained many times, Cuban policy requires a "different approach."

Congressman Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) has persuaded the House Ways and Means Committee to ask the International

Trade Commission to study the impact of the trade embargo, based on what he terms the "insanity and inhumanity of our current policy." Ending the embargo, he says, would be a "truly historic legacy" for the Clinton administration.

Lots of luck, say the exile community groups in Miami. Following the Elián revolt, a group of prominent Cuban civic leaders in Miami met to critique what happened and search for better approaches to such explosive issues. Not much resulted, except perhaps a better public relations plan to explain the virtues of the Cuban community.

One thing you can't fault the exile-led local government for is its chutzpah. In total, it cost almost \$6 million in protection and security services for all government agencies involved in the Elián affair. The nation's taxpayers got stuck for the \$1 million federal agencies' bill. The local tab comes to some \$4.8 million. The Miami-Dade County government asked the federal government to declare the civil unrest as a disaster and pay its \$2.6 million portion.

Federal officials told them to get lost.

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Mexican Elections

Throwing the Bums Out is No Guarantee That Democracy Will Follow

BY MARTIN ESPINOZA, PACIFIC NEWS SERVICE
ACAMBARO, GUANAJUATO, MEXICO -- After 71 years of paternalistic and authoritarian rule, it looks like Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) just might lose control of the presidency in the elections on July 2.

The latest polls have Vicente Fox Quesada, of the right-center National Action Party (PAN), running neck and neck with the PRI's Francisco Labastida Ochoa. And with only weeks remaining in the campaign, more and more people appear to be going over to Fox's camp and calling for democracy in Mexico.

Foreign observers have joined in. On a recent book tour, the novelist Mario Vargas Llosa warned that "genuine and authentic" democracy would be possible only when the PRI relinquishes power. Even if the PRI wins the elections honestly and fairly, he told reporters, "No one will feel as though democracy has finally come to this country."

There is, however, a possible flip side to Vargas Llosa's warning. If the PRI loses, many Mexicans are likely to feel as though they have finally achieved democracy -- they are so eager to see the PRI finally thrown out of Los Pinos (the Mexican White House) that they equate democracy in Mexico with the defeat of Labastida.

This is a lazy, if not dangerous, interpretation of democracy, one that has been reinforced by a Mexican press with little understanding of what constitutes a democracy.

What's more, candidates proclaiming themselves the champions of democracy have access to unprecedented quantities of public and private funds. In the first six months of this year, about 3 billion pesos (or about U.S. \$380 million) in public funds will be handed over to Mexico's 11 registered political parties for presidential and congressional campaigns and party activities.

Add private contributions, and an estimated \$20 per voter will be spent by July 2, making Mexico's elections the most costly in all of Latin America.

Most of this money will be spent on the presidential race. Indeed, few people even know their options are for congressional, state and local representatives.

At the local level, municipal supervisors are elected through a form of proportional representation. Candidates ride on the coattails of their party's mayoral candidate. They never have to run a campaign or make a single public appearance. If successful, they become part of secretive local governments that run towns and cities like feudal lords with the mayor as king or queen.

This is true even where opposition candidates have won control of municipalities from the PRI.

A PRD mayor governs the small, central Mexican town where I live, Acambaro at the southern end of the state of Guanajuato, where Vicente Fox was governor before making his bid for the presidency.

Acambaro's meetings of the board of supervisors are essentially closed to the public, because no effort is made to announce the sessions in advance -- the Supervisors themselves don't know when meetings will take place, since the mayor usually schedules them only 24 hours beforehand.

Members of the public are legally allowed to attend the meeting -- although it is held in a room so small there is barely enough room for bureaucrats to attend -- but they do not have the right to speak.

Municipal governments like ours are run with the same spirit of presidentialism (absolute political control by a presidential figure) that has guided the PRI for seven decades. The state legislature and governor approved the law defining the way Acambaro's local government is run. In many ways, this law simply reflects lack of knowledge of how a democracy works.

The impetus for democratic reforms is likely to come, if it comes at all, from members of Congress, but few are discussing real reforms. These would include weakening the president's control of the Senate (and consequently of the legislative process), requiring congressional approval of presidential appointments and significant budget measures, eliminating the political immunity enjoyed by corrupt politicians, making government documents public property, and much more.

None of these are currently the subject of public discourse which for the most part is strictly concerned with whether the PRI will be defeated, and political power change hands.

That may finally occur on July 2, but achieving real democracy is a far more complicated matter.

El Circo de Elian Dejo a Los Exiliados Cubanos Como Los Grandes Perdedores

Por Carlos Conde

En caso de que alguien esté interesado aún, Miami ha regresado a la normalidad, o por lo menos a lo que se considera normal para esta ciudad. La comunidad cubano-americana está recobrándose de un gran malestar emocional después e que aparentemente perdió la batalla por Elián, y las cosas han regresado al caos normal.

El alcalde despidió al administrador municipal por no informarle anticipadamente sobre el apoderamiento de Elián de la casa de su tío-abuelo en la Pequeña Hbana. El jefe de la policía renunció por lo que él calificó de "cursos de acción divisionarios del alcalde cubano." La radio de charlas en español censuró al gobierno de Estados Unidos y a Fidel Castro. El Ayuntamiento fue bombardeado durante días con plátanos-bombas lanzadas desde autos en movimiento -- implicando una "República Platanera." Y ahora un grupo de ciudadanos, que no son cubanos, está amenazando con efectuar elecciones de impugnación.

Ha sucedido antes y probablemente volverá a ocurrir. Nada que alguien diga o haga evitara que la comunidad cubana del sur de la Florida exhiba su obsesión casi paranoica con la amenaza de Castro, a 90 millas en el mar.

Lo que parece ser distinto es que esta vez las pasiones políticas de la comunidad exiliada pueden funcionar en su contra. La simpatía que una vez dió por sentada parece estar desvaneciéndose ahora, y sus pasiones políticas están empezando a mostrar tensiones sobre la psiquis estadounidense. Lean los comentarios públicos. El apoyo que una vez fue invencible para la comunidad cubana exiliada por parte de los elementos políticos claves de Washington puede es-

tar evaporándose también.

Después de la redada hecha por los agentes federales en Miami, prominentes legisladores de Washington, tales como el dirigente de la mayoría senatorial Trent Lott, y el presidente del comité de lo judicial, Orrin Hatch, se manifestaron enérgicamente -- al menos en público. Ellos anunciaron que efectuarían audiencias públicas. Se oyeron peticiones por el cuero cabeludo de la Procuradora General Janet Reno.

Pero pocos días después, empezaron a retroceder. Como buenos políticos que son, levantaron sus dedos para sondear el viento. Por lo menos los dos tercios del público estadounidense apoyó la redada de los agentes federales. Casi la misma cantidad dijo que se oponían a las audiencias congresionales. De modo que adivinen a dónde se encamina esa intervención política de Washington.

Fidel Castro está muriéndose de risa con toda su barba. Los exiliados jugaron directamente a sus manos.

Lo que el alboteo sobre Elián ha hecho es fortalecer a Castro en Cuba por hacerle frente al yanqui fanfarrón. También le dió el foro que él necesitaba muy desesperadamente en Estados Unidos para levantar el embargo económico.

Los cubanos de la isla lo respaldaron cuando denunció a la "mafia" cubana de Miami por inmiscuir a la política en una tragedia familiar, explotando a los parientes de Elián en Miami, bien intencionados pero carentes de refinamiento político. No sólo dieron los cubanos de Miami a Castro la plataforma ideal para elogiar a las virtudes de su régimen, sino que lo hicieron lucir como un abuelo compasivo.

Lo que es más importante, la

"debacle" creó la oportunidad para volver a examinar con seriedad el embargo económico de 40 años contra el gobierno de Cuba. La comunidad cubana hizo de esto su pieza política clave. Ellos consideran que no ha lugar a cualquier diálogo público. Hasta ahora, han silenciado con éxito el debate congresional.

Si las políticas de Estados Unidos no han derrocado a Castro en 40 años, no es probable que estén a punto de hacerlo ahora. Mientras tanto, los intereses comerciales de Estados Unidos están humeando debido a las oportunidades perdidas por razón de un curso de acción que ellos concuerdan en que ha fallado y sobrevivido a su propósito.

Cuando los negocios estadounidenses regresen a Cuba con el tiempo, empezarán con años de retraso con respecto a las empresas comerciales de los canadienses, españoles e italianos. Estos ya han acaparado una parte importante del mercado más lucrativo, tal como el negocio de las atracciones turísticas y de la construcción.

Muchos estudiosos serios del embargo lo consideran una norma doble flagrante cuando esta nación castiga al gobierno de Cuba por las infracciones de los derechos humanos, pero pasa por alto a las infracciones semejantes cometidas por otras naciones como China continental. Como lo ha explicado el Departamento de Estado en muchas ocasiones, el curso de acción sobre Cuba exige un enfoque diferente.

El representante Charles Rangel (demócrata por Nueva York) ha persuadido al Comité de Medios y Arbitrios de la Cámara para pedir a la Comisión Internacional de Comercio (ITC en inglés) que estudie el efecto del

embargo comercial, basándose en lo que él califica de la "locura y falta de humanidad de nuestra política actual." El dice, no obstante, que el finalizar el embargo sería un "legado histórico verdadero" para el gobierno de Clinton.

Buena suerte, dicen los grupos de la comunidad exiliada de Miami. Luego del alboroto sobre Elián, un grupo de dirigentes cívicos prominentes de Miami se reunió para criticar lo sucedido y buscar enfoques mejores para asuntos tan explosivos. No hubo mucho resultado, excepto quizás un plan mejor de relaciones públicas para explicar las virtudes de la comunidad cubana.

Algo por lo que no se puede culpar al gobierno local, encabezado por cubanos, es por su desenfado. En total, hubo un costo total de casi \$6 millones por concepto de servicios de protección y seguridad para todas las dependencias gubernamentales involucradas en el asunto de Elián. Los contribuyentes al erario federal tendrán que pagar \$1 millón por la cuenta de las dependencias federales. La cuenta local asciende casi a \$4.8 millones. El gobierno del Condado de Miami-Dade pidió al gobierno federal que declare a la intranquilidad civil como un desastre y pague su porción de \$2.6 millones.

Los funcionarios federales respondieron al condado con un rotundo no.

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Se Ve a Festivales Cinematograficos

Latinos Como Una Nueva Fuerza Cultural

Por Louis Aguilar

Los festivales cinematográficos latinos, pocos y espaciados por hasta cinco años, se han arraigado en toda la nación y están empezando a surtir efecto sobre las películas del llamado "mainstream"

Desde el Festival del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano de Providence, Rhode Island, hasta el Festival Cinematográfico Latino de Marín, en la Zona de la Bahía de San Francisco, los festivales cinematográficos latinos independientes atraen a multitudes que llenan los locales. El estimado de 15 a 20 de dichos festivales en Estados Unidos se ha convertido en una red sobre la que descansan los cineastas, tanto latinos estadounidenses como de la América Latina, con la esperanza de lograr una distribución nacional.

Varias películas producidas por mexicanos y latinos de Estados Unidos disfrutaron ya de distribución limitada debido al "circuito." Es posible que sean estrenadas a nivel nacional también.

"En una época éramos una curiosidad. Ahora somos una fuerza cultural," dice Pepe Vargas, fundador y director ejecu-

tivo del Centro Cultural Latino Internacional de Chicago.

Esta organización sin fines de lucro era antes el Cinema Latino de Chicago. El inmigrante colombiano lanzó el festival hace 16 años en el sótano de una biblioteca pública. Una sábana blanca funcionaba a veces como pantalla. En este año, más de 50,000 personas asistieron al acontecimiento de dos semanas, que destacó a más de 100 películas de la América Latina, Estados Unidos, Portugal y España. El 40 por ciento del auditorio no era latino, dice Vargas.

El año pasado, la ciudad dió al festival cinematográfico un espacio de terreno de primera clase en el distrito del Loop, el cual alojará a un conjunto artístico latino por valor de \$50 millones.

La mayoría de los festivales tienen menos de cinco años de existencia y son administrados por latinos de la Generación X. La mayor parte de ellos, tales como el Cine Las Américas, de tres años de edad, de Austin, Texas, han aprovechado los fondos indispensables de las empresas comerciales y los centros de arte.

Hasta la Institución Smithso-

niana de Washington está invirtiendo en esa actividad. Durante el Mes de la Herencia Hispana, entre el 15 de septiembre y el 15 de octubre, el Museo Nacional de Historia de Estados Unidos aloja el Festival Cinematográfico Nacional Latino Encuentros en Cine.

Los festivales prosperan porque a los latinos se les presenta raras veces en las películas del mainstream y de la televisión, en una época en que la población latina está aumentando considerablemente.

Los latinos han sido históricamente los menos representados de todas las personas de color, según el Hollywood Reporter, un boletín de la industria cinematográfica. Un estudio del Gremio de Actores de la Pantalla publicado a fines de 1999, muestra que los latinos perdieron terreno en la televisión del espacio de tiempo más importante en comparación con el año anterior, del 4 por ciento al 3.5 por ciento para los actores y del 3.1 por ciento al 2.3 por ciento para los directores. Los porcentajes son igualmente desconsoladores para los latinos en las películas.

"Los festivales cinematográficos latinos nos salvaron," dice

Evelina Fernández, escritora y actriz principal de Luminarias. La comedia romántica sobre cinco latinas profesionales en Los Angeles fue pasada por alto inicialmente por todos los estudios y distribuidores importantes. La película se estrenó en 55 teatros de la zona de Los Angeles en el fin de semana del Cinco de Mayo.

Fernández dice que los festivales crearon ovaciones populares y los miembros del auditorio proporcionaron gran apoyo emocional. "Los cineastas necesitan realmente de eso, después que vierten su alma en una película," dice. El éxito llega de otras maneras. El documental Nuyorican Dream, que se ha presentado en seis festivales latinos, ha sido comprado por Home Box Office y saldrá al aire más tarde en este año.

Tres películas mexicanas, "Santitos," "La Otra Conquista" y "Sexo, Pudor y Lágrimas," están ahora en distribución limitada en nueve estados. Eso podría ampliarse, dependiendo de su éxito en las taquillas. Cada una de ellas funcionó bien en el Sundance Film Festival, de alta influencia, y después utilizó los festivales latinos para continuar

ganando impulso.

Cada una de esas cintas ha sido un éxito en México, pero como siempre, se enfrentan a dificultades para ingresar en los teatros de centros artísticos -- los que presentan películas extranjeras -- en Estados Unidos. Esas películas son de costumbre europeas.

Carlos Bolado, el editor cinematográfico de una de las cintas en idioma extranjero que han producido mayores ingresos de taquilla en Estados Unidos -- la cinta mexicana "Como Agua para Chocolate," no pudo explicar ese prejuicio.

"Esa es una pregunta que hago a menudo a los posibles distribuidores, y nunca recibo una respuesta clara," dice Bolado, refiriéndose a la falta de películas en español en los teatros

de Estados Unidos que se especializan en las películas en idiomas extranjeros.

Bolado tiene actualmente otra película, Bajo Actualidad: El Límite del Tiempo, que ha obtenido críticas favorables en los festivales de todo el mundo.

Recientemente, su cinta ha estado en el circuito latino. Poco después, él empezó a recibir ofertas para distribución nacional en Estados Unidos.

(Louis Aguilar es el productor del festival de películas latinas de la Institución Smithsonian, que será presentado en el Museo Nacional de Historia Estadunidense en este año.)

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Noticias Breves

Los Jóvenes, Candidatos al Suicidio

por Pilar Franco

MEXICO, El suicidio se ha convertido en la tercera causa de muerte entre los jóvenes de México, que están agobiados por trastornos psíquicos o desórdenes de tipo familiar o social, según estudios médicos.

La conducta suicida es considerada ya un grave problema de salud pública en este país, donde viven cien millones de personas, 60 por ciento de las cuales tienen menos de 30 años.

Cecilia Bautista, directora del Hospital Psiquiátrico de la Secretaría (ministerio) de Salud, explicó a IPS que el tema es centro de una profunda investigación para identificar a los grupos de alto riesgo.

La cantidad de suicidios aumentó de 554 en 1979 a 2.459 en 1997. Más de 50 por ciento de los casos de este último año correspondió a personas de entre 20 y 30 años y otro 20 por ciento a menores de 20 años, según datos oficiales.

En la escala mundial, Sri Lanka ocupa el primer lugar en número de jóvenes suicidados en la franja de 15 a 24 años, seguido de China y Estados Unidos.

En México, como en casi todo el mundo, la muerte por esa causa es más frecuente entre los hombres, con una relación de tres a uno respecto de las mujeres, mientras que éstas intentan suicidarse cuatro veces más que la población masculina.

Esa circunstancia obedece, entre otros motivos, a que los varones recurren a métodos más contundentes y agresivos que los utilizados por las mujeres para quitarse la vida, señaló Bautista.

Las autoridades calculan que el intento es entre 10 y 20 veces mayor que el suicidio consumado. El problema para determinar esta relación está en que sólo las muertes deben ser reportadas, explicó la médica.

También explicó que, ante la grave tendencia que afrontan los jóvenes, el programa de salud mental de la Secretaría de Salud pone el acento en la prevención de los principales factores que predisponen a esa patología.

Estudios oficiales determinaron que 40 por ciento de los jóvenes que se suicidaron habían sufrido un episodio depresivo mayor.

También se comprobó que 50 por ciento de los que segaron su vida lo hizo bajo los efectos de drogas o alcohol y entre 10 y 35 por ciento tuvo algún trastorno de personalidad límite o antisocial, según esos informes.

Otra investigación realizada entre niños y niñas de entre ocho y trece años mostró que 66 por ciento tenía ideas suicidas y nueve por ciento registraba un intento claro.

A pesar de que no existen estudios precisos, la experiencia indica que a los cambios físicos y del pensamiento de los adolescentes, que comienzan en esa etapa a forjarse una personalidad, se suman ahora nuevos patrones de conducta familiar.

"Los padres mexicanos, que tradicionalmente no acostumbraban a promover demasiado la autonomía de los hijos, afrontan hoy el desafío de llenar las largas horas en las que sus hijos adolescentes están solos," señaló Bautista.

"Cada vez son más las mujeres que por necesidad económica y de desarrollo profesional se incorporan al mercado laboral," lo cual obliga a los hijos menores a pasar mucho tiempo solos, y eso "genera un riesgoso sentimiento de vacío," añadió.

Bautista agregó que en las grandes ciudades mexicanas, incluida la capital, "crece en sigilo un fenómeno denominado 'tendencia dark', de adoradores de la 'santa muerte', que presenta gran arraigo entre los jóvenes."

Rituales que ponderan la obscuridad y promueven conceptos como el vacío, la desesperanza o "la utilización de la vida en favor de la muerte" aglutinan una cantidad indeterminada de jóvenes mexicanos en un movimiento que no ha sido transitorio, afirmó.

En general, los habitantes de las ciudades son candidatos a padecer algún trastorno mental, como la angustia, la depresión o el pánico, contrario a lo que sucede en las zonas rurales, donde el fenómeno del suicidio es prácticamente inexistente, señaló.

Las autoridades han registrado un alto consumo de benzodiacepinas, tranquilizantes cuya enorme demanda hizo surgir un importante mercado paralelo. En esas condiciones, es imposible establecer el consumo real de esos medicamentos, explicó la funcionaria.

El programa de salud mental de la Secretaría de Salud pretende incidir en los grupos de alto riesgo mediante medidas de prevención y terapéuticas. En centros comunitarios, instituciones de salud y escuelas son impartidos servicios de orientación.

Bautista precisó que los médicos también constituyen un estrato de riesgo, por ser la profesión en el país con mayores índices de alcoholismo, además de proclive al consumo de anfetaminas para evitar el sueño.

"Los médicos trabajan cotidianamente con gente gravemente enferma y, al convivir con la muerte, acumulan altas cuotas de frustración y estrés. Un oncólogo puede controlar el mal de su paciente, pero la mayoría de las veces no lo cura," explicó.

La milenaria cultura maya, asentada en el sudeste mexicano y en otras áreas de este país y América Central, adoró a la diosa Ixtab, encargada de conducir a los suicidas al paraíso, según cuenta la tradición en México.

Gobierno y Maestros se Enfrentan Otra Vez en la Capital

por Diego Cevallos

México. - La ciudad de México permanece en jaque por la presencia de más de 30.000 profesores disidentes del magisterio oficial que, como todos los años por esta fecha, se instalaron en tiendas de campaña, autobuses y portales de edificios para exigir mejores salarios.

Siete por ciento de los 29 millones de niños y adolescentes matriculados en el sistema de educación del país quedaron sin clases desde el día 10, cuando los maestros huelguistas llegaron a la capital.

Entre mayo y junio de cada año, maestros de provincia ajenos a los sindicatos controlados por el gobernante Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) llegan a la capital para presentar sus demandas.

Miles de ellos marcharon este jueves hacia la casa presidencial, lo que generó una masiva movilización policial y trastornos en el tránsito de vehículos que aumentaron la ya alta contaminación de la ciudad.

La protesta de este año se agregó a la campaña para las elecciones presidenciales del 2 de julio, a las que están convocados 60 millones de votantes. Muchos maestros aprovechan las marchas callejeras para cuestionar al PRI y a su candidato a la Presidencia, Francisco Labastida, cuyo principal desafiante es el opositor Vicente Fox, del conservador Partido Acción Nacional.

El gobierno negocia cada año salarios y condiciones de trabajo con el Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación, grupo cercano al PRI, y lo mismo hace con los sindicatos de campesinos y de obreros y con otras organizaciones urbanas.

"Basta de corrupción, los maestros deben ser libres del gobierno y de su partido", dijo Oscar Emanuell, de la disidente Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación, el grupo que organiza la movilización del magisterio.

Ninguna huelga nacional se conoció en las últimas siete décadas en México, pues los principales sindicatos gremios mantienen "alianzas estratégicas" con el PRI, un partido que ue gobierna ininterrumpidamente desde 1929.

La relación corporativa entre sindicatos y gobierno sufrirá probablemente un descalabro si Fox gana las elecciones, como lo proyectan algunas encuestas, advirtieron los observadores.

El gobierno de Ernesto Zedillo, que finalizará su mandato en diciembre, señala que no puede atender las demandas de los profesores disidentes, y que éstos deben reanudar negociaciones con las autoridades de cada estado.

Los profesores, quienes exigen duplicar sus salarios, fijados en promedio inferior a 300 dólares mensuales. En el día bloquean edificios del gobierno, avenidas y embajadas, y pernoctan en tiendas de campaña levantadas en plazas del centro de la ciudad, o en autobuses y portales.

Maestros que duermen en el suelo, comen en lugares improvisados y evacúan sus necesidades fisiológicas en la calle son parte del escenario actual de la capital.

También se realizan protestas de profesores disidentes en cinco estados del sureste --Guerrero, Michoacán, Chiapas, Oaxaca y Yucatán--.

La población de México aumentó de 14 a 100 millones de personas en los 71 años que el PRI lleva en el gobierno, y el analfabetismo se redujo de 70 a 10 por ciento.

This Community Didn't Run From Its Problems

By Susana Vásquez

The story I'm about to relate happened here in Chicago. Actually, it's still happening.

It's a remarkable story, but not so remarkable that it couldn't happen other places, too.

In fact, in different forms and to different degrees, it is happening in some.

The story line starts in the fall of 1989, when six Catholic churches in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood agreed to contribute \$5,000 each to hire a community organizer.

At the time, the status of Latino families who lived in Pilsen reflected that of so many others who live in U.S. immigrant neighborhoods. In a word, bleak.

What's happening in the disintegrating inner-city neighborhoods that Latino immigrants inherit defies the unprecedented

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from Page 1 migration and to the number of "Generation Y" births between 1982 and 1996.

One of six U.S. undergrads will be Hispanic, as Hispanics become the largest nonwhite group on U.S. university and college campuses.

Specific factors cited by the report as helping increase future Hispanic enrollment are better academic preparation, more older students returning to college and increasing numbers of Latino families that include college-graduate parents.

The report urges policymakers to address the disproportion in college enrollment for young Hispanics, who, Carnevale stressed, "are losing ground in terms of their fair share of university seats."

Tuition hikes could increase the gap further, he said. About 43 percent of Hispanic families with three or more children have inadequate income, and for every \$1,000 increase in tuition, 6 percent to 8 percent of the Hispanic population loses access to higher education, he projected. With the weight of tuition expenses falling on states and families, Carnevale asked, "Whose gonna pay for all these kids?"

In reaction, Jamie Merisotis, president of the Institute for Higher Education Policy, cited to Hispanic Link the importance of such government programs as Pell Grants. "Failing to invest in those programs disproportionately impacts Hispanics," he said.

To ensure equal access to education, Sonia Hernández suggested early outreach and in-

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de la primera

fianza Superior (IHEP en inglés), mencionó a Hispanic Link la importancia de programas gubernamentales como las Subvenciones Pell. "El dejar de invertir en esos programas surte un efecto desproporcionado contra los hispanos," dijo.

Para asegurar el acceso equitativo a la enseñanza, Sonia Hernández recomendó una proyección temprana y el aumento de los gastos gubernamentales.

"El millón de latinos estará necesitando la mayor cantidad de ayuda," dijo ella, agregando: "La inversión temprana será compensada a largo plazo. Es algo que debe hacerse." Según las proyecciones del ETS, si los hispanos tuvieran el mismo nivel de instrucción e ingresos comparables con los de los blancos no hispanos, las economías estatales prosperarían considerablemente. Los estados que más se beneficiarían serían California y Texas, con \$51,000 millones y \$29,000 millones respectivamente.

El estudio precisa también la importancia de los hispanos para esta nación en la economía global. "Para asegurar el que las empresas puedan crear equipos de trabajo diversos, especialmente equipos de trabajadores selectos, una cantidad mayor de personas minoritarias debe ir a las escuelas superiores y graduarse. Está igualmente claro que la acción afirmativa, en una forma u otra, continuará siendo una parte necesaria de la estrategia general," dice el informe.

Art Ruiz, director de asuntos federales para State Farm Insurance, que está activa en las alianzas hispanas para los negocios y la enseñanza superior, comentó en la conferencia de prensa: "Este informe comprueba lo que los dirigentes mercantiles han conocido ya por algún tiempo. Los equipos de trabajo diversos son mejores solucionadores de problemas, más creadores, y mejores para satisfacer las necesidades de los negocios estadounidenses y sus clientes globales diversos."

(Monique Bhalla ayudó en la investigación para este artículo.)

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ed prosperity we are enjoying as a nation. Our young people are dropping out of high school at triple the rate of other students. One-third of our children have no health insurance. The number of Latino families living in poverty is still rising.

Those are reasons why this story is important to tell.

The six churches decided to approach the community's problems as challenges. With a little business acumen and a lot of faith, they focused on the assets in their community. And in May 1990, The Resurrection Project was officially launched.

This summer, as it marks its 10th anniversary, the project stands as a national model for Latino organizations and within the community development field as a whole. Now The Resurrection Project serves Pilsen,

creased government spending. "The one million Latinos will be needing the greatest assistance," she said, adding, "Investing early will pay off in the long run. It's a must."

According to the ETS projections, if Hispanics had the same education and commensurate earnings as non-Hispanic whites, state economics would gain considerably. Those states benefiting the most would be California and Texas, with \$51 billion and \$29 billion respectively.

The study also notes the Hispanic importance to this nation in the global economy. "To ensure that companies can create diverse work teams, especially teams of elite workers, more minorities must go to college and graduate. It is equally clear that affirmative action, in one form or another, will continue to be a necessary part of the overall strategy," it says.

Art Ruiz, federal affairs director for State Farm Insurance and is active in Hispanic business/higher-education alliances, commented at the press briefing, "This report verifies what business leaders have known for a while now. Diverse work teams are better problem solvers, more creative and better at meeting the needs of American businesses and their diverse global customers."

(Camilo Smith-Montealegre is a reporter with Hispanic Link News Service in Washington, D.C. Reporter Monique Bhalla assisted in researching this story.)

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Little Village and Back of the Yards, three predominantly Mexican immigrant communities located in Chicago's near-southwest side.

It has taken that initial investment of \$30,000 and turned it into more than \$30 million in community investment through the completion of 118 affordable new homes, 77 rental apartments, a day-care center and other innovative family programs. And it has launched as a Latino construction business incubator that employs more than 200 residents.

To reach its goals, The Resurrection Project galvanized the financial and social commitment of banks, government agencies, foundations, families and religious institutions, modeling how investing in Latino organizations and immigrants communities can generate a solid return.

Recent corporate and foundation recognition of The Resurrection Project's accomplishments include the 1998 Fannie Mae Foundation's Maxwell Sustained Excellent Award, the 1999 Sara Lee Foundation Chicago Spirit Award, and the 1999 Amoco Leader Award for Economic Development.

TRP's mission is to build relationships and challenge people to act on their faith and values to create healthy communities. The organization pulls from a church-based organizing model in everything it does. From developing new community programs to implementing new tax-credit housing projects, the organization keeps its focus on establishing relationships, devel-

oping leadership and building power.

The Resurrection Project marked its 10th anniversary with a fund-raising dinner May 24. William Osborn, chief executive officer of the Northern Trust Company, served as chair. More than 600 community residents and supporters attended.

The project's member-institutions now include 14 local Catholic churches: Assumption, Epiphany, Good Shepherd, Holy Cross/IMH, Holy Trinity, Our Lady of Tepeyac, Providence of God, St. Adalbert, St. Agnes, St. Ann, St. Paul, St. Pius V., St. Procopius and St. Roman.

Raúl Raymundo, TRP's executive director, calls what has been achieved just the beginning. In the next two years alone, the project will develop a new care center, a family health clinic and 91 rental apartments, and will launch an innovative college resource center.

Founding board member Raúl Hernández expresses The Resurrection Project's philosophy in the plainest of terms: "Our job is to stay and improve the community for our children. You can't run away from problems, or you'll always be running."

In these good times, it's a challenge that still needs more takers.

(Susana Vásquez is deputy director of the Project in Chicago, Ill. For more information about The Resurrection Project, contact its offices at 1628 W. 17th St., Chicago, IL 60608. Phon 312-666-1323.)

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In Television Land, Latinos Are Back In the Unemployment Line

By Antonio Mejías-Rentas
Last year, when the television networks announced their prime-time fall programming, the national media noticed there were no people of color in any of the 26 new shows introduced by ABC, NBC, CBS or Fox.

The reporting was not exactly accurate, since few mentioned that an actor of Hispanic heritage who changed his name from Emilio Estévez to Martin Sheen starred in the season's most watched new drama, "The West Wing," on NBC.

But the stories brought an unusual amount of "mainstream" attention to an issue that's all too familiar to Latinos, blacks, Asians and Native Americans. For years, people of color have complained about their virtual absence from prime-time entertainment programming, except for incidental, generally non-speaking appearances. When their faces do show on television, they're too often seen as marginal, usually criminal characters -- both in entertainment programming and in the news.

When compared to real population numbers, Hispanics continue to be the most underrepresented group on the small screen. While several hit shows featuring all African-American casts have been on the air for years, the last Latino series that aired for more than a season on network television was ABC's "Chico and the Man," which starred the late Freddy Prinze nearly three decades ago. But things appeared to be different in 1999. With all the media attention focused on them,

network executives accepted, albeit with hesitation, to meet with a coalition representing the various protesting racial and ethnic groups.

As the cameras sharply focused on them, the networks signed pacts with the groups. Done with the story, the media moved on, and everyone returned to work. And for a while, it looked as though things really would improve. Nonwhite characters began appearing in supporting roles on network shows -- a black best friend here, a Latino classmate there -- while the networks explained they needed time to develop new shows. With the audiences primed and networks in a giving mood, several "pilot" shows featuring Latinos were given the green light.

For a while, it seemed that every Latino actor in Hollywood had a job, preparing for the annual New York ritual known as the "upfronts," a single week in May when advertisers learn what the networks have in store for the fall. May has now come and gone, and Latino actors are back in the unemployment lines. Out of 26 new comedies and dramas announced by the networks, only two feature Latino actors in starring roles. None of the Latino pilots made it to the fall schedule, not even a much-touted CBS drama from director Gregory Nava with an all-star cast that included Edward James Olmos, Esaí Morales and Sonia Braga.

Adding insult to injury, several shows with Hispanic leads have been canceled. Those casualties include CBS's own

long-standing medical drama "Chicago Hope," whose ensemble cast included Héctor Elizondo. CBS will be returning "Family Law," which features Cristián de la Fuente in a recurring role, as well as its popular Friday night drama "Nash Bridges," with Cheech Marin in a lead role.

NBC has canceled two of its sitcoms with Latino actors in regular roles -- "Suddenly Susan," with Nestor Carbonell and "Jesse," with Bruno Campos -- but is keeping its new hit "The West Wing," which stars Sheen as the president of the United States.

The two new shows with Latinos are "Dark Angel," a science-fiction drama on Fox with Jessica Alba in the title role, and the new ABC hospital drama "Gideon's Crossing," that will have Panamanian singer-actor Rubén Blades in a featured role. One of ABC's biggest hits will have a new star in the fall, when Charlie Sheen replaces Michael J. Fox on "Spin City," but in an ironic programming twist, it will air opposite Martin Sheen's "The West Wing" on NBC, pitting father against son for ratings.

ABC's only current prime-time show with a Latino actor, "Sabrina the Teenage Witch" -- which last season added actor John Huertas -- is off its schedule, but was picked up by smaller network WB, which will bring back its popular sci-fi drama Roswell, with Majandra Delfino.

While UPN isn't scheduling any new shows with Latinos, it will keep its "Star Trek Voyager" drama featuring actor Robert

Beltrán for one more year.

Since the casting of co-star and regular roles for many of the shows has yet to be completed, a full count of Latino actors appearing on network television this fall won't be available for several weeks. That count should increase somewhat when both CBS and Fox begin casting for Elián González made-for-TV movies.

But Latino actors shouldn't rush to get off the unemployment line just yet. Just hours prior to the first "upfront" announcement last month, NBC struck a multimillion-dollar deal with the all-white cast of its hit sitcom "Friends." The network was only following the industry's latest trend, to appeal exclusively to the upscale, high-salaried viewers that advertisers crave. If the networks can't find enough rich white viewers to watch their shows, they can always create them. After all, last season's most successful program was the omnipresent "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" on ABC, where contestants have been, by the network's own admission, almost exclusively white and male.

Of course, where there are rich people, there usually are maids. And plenty of menial jobs for people of color.

(Antonio Mejías-Rentas, based in Los Angeles, covers arts and entertainment for the national newsweekly Hispanic Link Weekly Report.)

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En el Mundo De La Television, Los Latinos Vuelven al Desempleo

Por Antonio Mejías-Rentas
El año pasado, cuando las cadenas de televisión anunciaron su programación de otoño, los medios de comunicación se dieron cuenta de que no había gente de color en ninguno de los 26 programas nuevos presentados por ABC, NBC, CBS o Fox.

Los reportajes no siempre fueron exactos, puesto que pocos mencionaron que un actor con herencia hispana que cambió su nombre de Emilio Estévez a Martin Sheen protagonizaba lo que se convertiría en el drama nuevo con más televidentes de toda la temporada, "The West Wing," en NBC.

Pero la cobertura puso una cantidad poco antes vista de atención sobre un tema harto familiar para los latinos, los negros, los asiáticos y los americanos nativos.

Por años, la gente de color se ha quejado de su ausencia virtual de la programación de entretenimiento en los horarios principales, a no tratarse de personificaciones de poca consecuencia, muchas veces sin siquiera tener que pronunciar un solo parlamento. Cuando sus rostros se lo gran ver en la televisión, es casi siempre como personajes marginales, normalmente criminales -- tanto en los programas de entretenimiento como en los noticiarios.

En comparación con sus números verdaderos de población, los hispanos forman el grupo menos representado en la pantalla pequeña. Mientras que por años varios programas exitosos con elencos completamente afroamericanos han estado en el aire, la última serie latina que se vió en la televisión en inglés por más de una temporada fue "Chico and the Man" de la ABC, que tuvo al ya desaparecido Freddy Prinze de protagonista hace casi 20 años.

Pero las cosas aparentaban ser diferentes en 1999. Con toda la atención de los medios encima, los ejecutivos de las grandes cadenas aceptaron, aun titubeando, reunirse con una coalición representativa de los varios grupos étnicos y raciales que protestaban por la indiferencia de los primeros hacia ellos.

Con las cámaras fijamente enfocadas sobre ellas, las cadenas firmaron acuerdos con los grupos. Acabado el reportaje, los medios siguieron su rumbo, y todo el mundo regresó a trabajar.

Y hubo un tiempo en que parecía que las cosas sí mejorarían. Personajes no blancos comenzaron a aparecer en papeles secundarios en los programas -- un mejor amigo negro aquí, un compañero de clases latino allá -- mientras las cadenas explicaban que necesitaban tiempo para desarrollar nuevos programas.

Con el público a la expectativa, y las cadenas sintiéndose dadas, varios programas "pilotos" con actores latinos fueron bendecidos y enviados a producción.

En Hollywood, parecía que cada actor latino estaba empleado, preparándose para un ritual anual en Nueva York conocido como las presentaciones adelantadas, o "upfronts," una singular semana en mayo cuando las cadenas anuncian lo que tienen guardado para el otoño.

Ya mayo vino y se fue, y los actores latinos están de nuevo en el desempleo.

De los 26 nuevos dramas y comedias anunciados por las cadenas, sólo dos incluyen a actores latinos como protagonistas. Ninguno de los "pilotos" latinos llegó a ser incluido en su itinerario, ni siquiera un muy ponderado drama para la cadena CBS del director Gregory Nava, con un elenco de estrellas que incluía a Edward James Olmos, Esaí Morales y Sonia Braga.

Lloviendo sobre mojado, varios programas con protagonistas latinos han sido cancelados. Las bajas incluyen al drama ve-

terano de la misma CBS "Chicago Hope," en cuyo elenco figuraba Héctor Elizondo.

CBS sí regresará con "Family Law," drama en el cual Cristián de la Fuente tiene un papel recurrente, así como su popular serie dramática de los viernes por la noche Nash Bridges, con Cheech Marin en un papel protagonista.

NBC ha cancelado dos de sus comedias con actores latinos regulares -- "Suddenly Susan" con Nestor Carbonell y "Jesse" con Bruno Campos -- pero se queda con su nuevo éxito "The West Wing," que tiene a Sheen en el papel central del presidente de Estados Unidos.

Los dos nuevos programas con latinos son "Dark Angel," un drama de ciencia ficción de la Fox con Jessica Alba en el papel titular, y el nuevo drama de hospitales de la ABC "Gideon's Crossing," que dará un papel destacado al cantante y actor panameño Rubén Blades. Uno de los programas más populares de la ABC tendrá a una nueva estrella en el otoño cuando Charlie Sheen remplace a Michael J. Fox en la comedia "Spin City," pero en un giro irónico de programación, será vista en el mismo horario de la serie de Martin Sheen "The West Wing" en la NBC, confrontando a padre e hijo por en una disputa por los números de audiencia, o ratings.

La única serie de ABC que actualmente tiene a un actor latino en un papel regular es "Sabrina the Teenage Witch," que el año pasado añadió al actor John Huertas, no volverá a su horario regular en la cadena. Esta ha sido recogida por una cadena con menos audiencia, la WB, que también volverá a programar su popular drama de ciencia ficción Roswell, con Majandra Delfino. Mientras la otra cadena menor UPN no ha programado ningún programa nuevo con latinos, sí ha decidido mantener un año más su drama "Star Trek Voyager," con el actor Robert Beltrán.

Puesto que las contrataciones para los papeles secundarios y regulares en muchos de los programas todavía no ha sido completada, una cuenta completa de los actores que podrán ser vistos en la televisión este otoño no estará disponible por varias semanas. Esa cuenta aumentaría cuando CBS y Fox empiecen a hacer sus castings para sendas películas sobre Elián González.

Pero los actores latinos no deben pensar en abandonar las filas del desempleo todavía.

Apenas horas antes de que el primero de los anuncios "upfront" fuera hecho el mes pasado, la cadena NBC llegó a un acuerdo multimillonario con el elenco completamente blanco de su exitosa comedia Friends. La cadena simplemente estaba siguiendo la última norma de programación de la industria, que dicta apelar exclusivamente a los televidentes de mayor nivel económico que los anunciantes tanto ansían.

Si las cadenas no encuentran suficientes televidentes que caigan bajo esa categoría, igual los pueden crear. Después de todo, la serie más exitosa de la temporada pasada fue la omnipresente "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" ("Quien quiera ser millonario") de la ABC, un concurso en el que los participantes han sido, por admisión de la misma cadena, casi exclusivamente hombres blancos.

Claro está, donde hay gente rica, normalmente hay criadas. Y suficientes empleos serviles para la gente de color.

(Antonio Mejías-Rentas, en Los Angeles, cubre las artes y los espectáculos para el semanario nacional Hispanic Link Weekly Report.)

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Latino Film Festivals Seen As 'New Cultural Force'

By Louis Aguilar
Latino film festivals, few and far between as recently as five years ago, have taken root nationwide and are beginning to have an impact on mainstream film.

From the Providence Festival of New Latin American Cinema in Rhode Island to the Latino Film Festival of Marin in the San Francisco Bay Area, independent Latino film festivals draw capacity crowds. The estimated 15 to 20 such festivals in the United States have become a network that both U.S. Latinos and Latin American filmmakers rely on in hopes of gaining national distribution.

Several U.S. Latino and Mexican films are already enjoying limited theatrical release due to "the circuit." They may ultimately be released nationally, too.

"Once we were a curiosity. Now we are a cultural force," says Pepe Vargas, founder and executive director of the Chicago International Latino Cultural Center.

The nonprofit group was formerly the Chicago Latino Cine-

ma. The Colombian immigrant launched the festival 16 years ago in the basement of a public library. A white sheet served as the movie screen.

This year, more than 50,000 attended the two-week event, which featured more than 100 films from Latin America, the United States, Portugal and Spain. About 40 percent of the audience are non-Latino, Vargas says.

Last year the city gave the film festival a prime piece of land in the Loop district that will be home to a \$50 million Latino arts complex.

Most festivals are less than 5 years old and run by Generation X Latinos. Most, such as 3-year-old Cine las Américas in Austin, Texas, have tapped into essential corporate and arts funding.

Even the Smithsonian Institution in Washington is getting into the act. During Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, the National Museum of American History hosts the Encuentros en Cine National Latino Film Festival.

The festivals thrive because Latinos are rarely portrayed in

mainstream films and television at a time when the Latino population is booming.

Latinos have historically been the most under-represented of all people of color, according to the Hollywood Reporter, an industry newsletter. A Screen Actors Guild study released in late 1999 shows Latinos actually lost ground in prime-time television from the previous year; from 4 percent to 3.5 percent for actors, 3.1 percent to 2.3 percent for directors. The percentages are equally dismal for Latinos in film.

"They (Latino film festivals) saved us," says Evelina Fernández, the writer and lead actress of "Luminarias." The romantic comedy about five professional Latinas in Los Angeles was initially passed over by every major studio and distributor. The film was released in 55 theaters in the Los Angeles area on Cinco de Mayo weekend.

Fernández says the festivals created grass-roots buzz and audience members provided much emotional support. "Filmmakers really need that after they pour their soul into a film," she says. Success comes in other ways. The documentary "Nuyorican Dream," which has screened at about six Latino festivals, has been purchased by Home Box Office and will air late this year.

Three Mexican films, "Santitos," "El Otro Conquista" and "Sexo Pudor y Lagrimas," are now in limited distribution in nine states. That could expand, depending on their box-office success. Each film did well at the highly influential Sundance Film Festival and then used the Latino festivals to continue momentum.

Each film has been a hit in Mexico, but, as always, they face difficulty getting into ai-

house theaters -- ones that screen foreign films -- in the United States. Those films are usually European.

Carlos Bolado, the cinematic editor of one of the top-grossing foreign-language films in the United States -- the Mexican-made "Like Water for Chocolate" -- could not explain such a bias.

"That is a question I ask often of possible distributors, and I never get a clear answer," Bolado says, referring to the lack of Spanish-language films in U.S. theaters that specialize in foreign-language films.

Bolado currently has another film, "Bajo California: El límite del tiempo," that has won rave reviews in festivals throughout the world. Lately, his film has been on the Latino circuit. Shortly afterward, he began getting offers for national distribution in the United States.

(Louis Aguilar is producer of the Smithsonian's Latino film festival, to be staged at the National Museum of American History this year. For a free listing, with contacts, of 13 major Latino film festivals to be staged over the next 12 months, contact Hispanic Link at 1420 N St. NW, Washington, DC 20005; phone 202-234-0280, or e-mail: zapotecco(AT)SIGN.aol.com)

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"In the eyes of America," Miami Herald columnist Liz Balmaseda recently wrote, "we belong to a lunatic fringe, to a single-minded, heartless population intent on kidnapping the son of Juan Gonzalez. To them, as to Havana, we are not only the 'Miami Mafia,' we are, outside the northern militia lands, the only irrational dot on the U.S. map."

It is an unfair and narrow depiction, say Cuban Americans, though some say it is not surprising. Elena Freyre, director of the Miami office of the Cuban Committee for Democracy, charges that the negative publicity should be blamed in large part on the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) and its hard-line stance against U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno and the Clinton Administration. She thinks CANF, which bankrolled the legal challenge to keep the boy from returning to Cuba with his father, has created irreparable damage to her community's image.

"It's been a PR disaster," she said. "In Washington, traditionally hard-line Cuban Americans have certainly lost a lot of power. They spent so much political capital on keeping this kid here I don't know if they'll recover."

But to many Cuban Americans, especially those allied with the fervently anti-Castro wing of the community, the high drama of Elian's rescue from the sea after his mother's fatal attempt to bring him to freedom, and the subsequent struggle to keep the boy here was more than just a news story. It was an important chapter, they say, in their turbulent history.

To them, the only emotion more pure than the innocence of a six-year-old child is the Cuban American community's visceral disdain for Castro, the 73-year-old bearded despot whom they believe has "enslaved" Cuba's people for more than 40 years.

It is Castro who keeps them from their family and friends in Cuba. It is Castro's political repression that has led to the jailing, expulsion or death of thousands of Cuban dissidents. So, conservative exile leaders were determined not to let Castro win by returning the boy to Communist Cuba. It mattered little to them that the child and his father would be officially idolatized on a par perhaps with martyred Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara.

Almost from the moment that federal immigration agents delivered the child to his Miami relatives last November, CANF began orchestrating a no holds barred legal and public relations crusade to keep the boy in the United States and, in so doing, humiliate Castro.

But the effort backfired and as a result CANF's ability to shape U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba, its raison d'être, may have been weakened forever.

But the Elian episode isn't completely to blame. Cuba expert Julia Sweig, deputy director of Latin American Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, said if cracks have appeared in the once unshakable alliance between conservative Cuban exiles and their supporters in Congress, the battle over Elian didn't create it. It only laid it bare, she explains.

Sweig says that CANF's power began waning after the 1997 death of its former chairman, Jorge Mas Canosa, and was weakened further as a result of Pope John Paul II's visit to Cuba in 1998.

With rare exceptions, the Cuban exile lobby has always gotten its way in Washington, especially in Congress. Witness the nearly 40-year economic embargo against Cuba and the strengthening of that measure, twice, in the 1990s.

Yet, in recent years, another powerful lobbying group has begun challenging CANF and its allies and chipping away at its Washington support. Several U.S. business sectors now back proposals to boost trade with Cuba, chief among them is the U.S. farm industry.

In a sign that the Cuban American lobby is faltering, Republican-controlled committees in Congress recently approved legislation that would allow the sale of food and medicines to Cuba.

Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart, R-FL, vowed to defeat the measure, but Cuba watchers noted the unprecedented reaction by North Carolina's powerful Republican Sen. Jesse Helms: He let it happen. Helms is chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a staunch anti-Communist and co-author of the Helms-Burton law, which tightened economic sanctions against Cuba in the mid 1990s.

Sweig and other analysts say CANF's influence might have been further eroded if not for three events in the 1990s: the mass exodus by 30,000 Cuban refugees in 1994; the shoot-down by a Cuban fighter jet of an unarmed plane piloted by anti-Castro activists in 1996; and the Republican takeover of Congress in 1995.

George Fowler, a member of CANF's board of directors and the group's general counsel, rejects claims that CANF and its allies are losing power or that their struggle to keep Elian in the United States has hurt them.

On the contrary, Fowler said, Cuban Americans are more powerful and united than ever. And this November, he said, they'll prove it.

Fowler predicts that Cuban American voters across the country, especially in Florida, will express their dissatisfaction with President Clinton and Reno, for ordering the Little Havana raid, by casting votes against Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore and for Republican Gov. George W. Bush.

Fowler said Cuban Americans viewed Gore's decision to break publicly with Clinton over the Elian case as blatant political pandering.

Downplaying the significance of the legislation allowing food and medicine to be sold to Cuba, Fowler went as far as to say that his group really didn't care if the measure became law.

He also told Politico that he would support lifting the economic embargo against Cuba, as long as U.S. business owners weren't forced to sell their goods to Castro's government. Under Castro, Fowler said, direct business-to-business trade is not permitted.

No one disputes Fowler's claim that Cuban Americans, especially in Florida, are more united than ever. But a clear rupture with other Florida communities, particularly whites and African Americans, has emerged.

During the five-month stalemate over the boy's future between CANF's and its allies and Reno, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush maintained a clear distance and conspicuous silence, largely because his brother, George W. Bush, is the presumptive Republican presidential nominee.

Analysts say the Florida governor worried that if anti-government rioting in Miami erupted that he might have to call up the National Guard.

Statements by Miami Mayor Joe Carollo and Miami-Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas that local police would not help federal agents remove the boy from Little Havana were read by critics as a not-so-tact endorsement of civil disobedience or even violence. Carollo and Penelas refuted that characterization of their statements.

The last thing the Bushes wanted was a formal public alliance with potential rioters. In the end, rioting did break out after the raid and hundreds of protesters were arrested, but the local police managed to keep it under control.

In the weeks following the raid, the ethnic and political rifts that surfaced among South Floridians during the Elian controversy was so troubling to some community leaders that a closed-door peace summit was organized in early May.

At that meeting, Black, White and Hispanic leaders got together to talk about ways to reduce tensions between the communities. The Miami Herald reported that speeches made at the meeting "became passionate at times, particularly when architect Ron Frazier, an African American leader, "took the floor. He cited hot-button topics such as unequal immigration policy for Haitians and Cubans; the difficulty for non-Spanish-speaking native Miamians in getting jobs in an increasingly Latino community; the poor record of Cuban business interests in employing African-Americans; and the U.S. trade embargo on Cuba."

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La Historia De Una Comunidad Que No Huyo De Sus Problemas

Por Susana Vásquez
La historia que voy a contar sucedió aquí, en Chicago.
En realidad, está ocurriendo todavía.

Es una historia notable, pero no tan notable que no pudiera suceder en otros lugares también. Realmente, en diferentes formas y grados, está ocurriendo en algunos lugares más.

El hilo de la historia empieza en el otoño de 1989, cuando seis iglesias católicas de la vecindad de Pilsen, en Chicago, acordaron aportar \$5,000 cada una para reclutar a un organizador comunitario.

En aquel momento, la situación de las familias latinas que vivían en Pilsen reflejaba la de muchas otras que viven en vecindades de inmigrantes. En una palabra, sombría.

Lo que está ocurriendo en las vecindades de las ciudades interiores que se desintegran, y que los inmigrantes latinos heredan, desafía a la prosperidad sin precedentes de que estamos disfrutando como nación. Nuestros jóvenes están desertando de las escuelas secundarias a una tasa que triplica a las de otros estudiantes. La tercera parte de nuestros niños no tienen seguro de salud. La cantidad de familias latinas que viven en la pobreza está aumentando todavía.

Esas son las razones de que sea tan importante el contar esta historia.

Las seis iglesias decidieron enfocar los problemas de la comunidad a modo de retos. Con un poco de perspicacia de negocios y mucha fe, se enfocaron sobre las ventajas de su comunidad. Y en mayo de 1990, el Proyecto Resurrección fue lanzado oficialmente.

En este verano, a medida que señala su décimo aniversario, el proyecto se destaca como un modelo nacional para las organizaciones latinas, y dentro del terreno del desarrollo comunitario en su conjunto. Ahora, el Proyecto Resurrección presta servicios a Pilsen, Little Village y Back of the Yards, tres comunidades de inmigrantes predominantemente mexicanas, situadas en el lado del suroeste próximo a Chicago.

Dicho proyecto ha tomado aquella inversión inicial de \$30,000 y la ha convertido en más de \$30 millones de inversiones comunitarias mediante la terminación de 118 nuevos hogares costeados, 77 apartamentos para alquilar, un centro diurno de guardería infantil y otros programas novedosos para las familias.

El mismo sirve como una incubadora para los negocios latinos de construcción que emplea a más de 200 residentes y otros programas familiares novedosos.

Para lograr sus objetivos, que una vez fueron distantes, el Proyecto Resurrección galvanizó la dedicación financiera y social de bancos, dependencias gubernamentales, fundaciones, familias e instituciones religiosas, sirviendo de modelo sobre cómo las inversiones en las organizaciones latinas y las comunidades inmigrantes pueden producir réditos sólidos.

El reconocimiento reciente de empresas y fundaciones para los logros del Proyecto Resurrección incluyen al Galardón Maxell de Excelencia Sostenida para 1998 de la Fundación Fannie Mae, al Galardón "Espíritu de Chicago" para 1999 de la Fundación Sara Lee y al Galardón Amoco para 1999 de Amoco por Desarrollo Económico para Dirigentes.

La misión del Proyecto Resurrección es la de edificar relaciones y desafiar a las personas a fin de que actúen sobre su fe y sus valores con objeto de crear comunidades saludables. El proyecto parte de un modelo de organización radicado en la Iglesia para todo lo que hace. Desde el desarrollo de nuevos programas comunitarios hasta la implantación de nuevos proyectos de viviendas con créditos fis-

cales, el proyecto mantiene su enfoque sobre el establecimiento de relaciones, el desarrollo de la dirigencia y la construcción del poder.

Resurrección marcó su décimo aniversario con una cena para recaudar fondos el 24 de mayo. William Osborn, Funcionario Ejecutivo Principal de Northern Trust Company sirvió como presidente. Asistieron más de 700 residentes comunitarios y partidarios.

Las instituciones que son miembros del proyecto incluyen ahora a 14 iglesias católicas locales: La Asunción, la Epifanía, el Buen Pastor, la Santa Cruz/IMH, la Santísima Trinidad, Nuestra Señora del Te-

peyac, la Providencia de Dios, San Adalberto, Santa Inés, Santa Ana, San Pablo, San Pío V, San Procopio y San Román.

Raúl Raymundo, director ejecutivo del Proyecto Resurrección, califica a lo que se ha logrado de "sólo el comienzo". Solamente en los dos años próximos, el proyecto desarrollará un nuevo centro de atención, una clínica de salud familiar, 91 apartamentos para alquilar, y lanzará un novedoso centro de recursos para las escuelas superiores.

Raúl Hernández, miembro fundador de la junta de directores, expresa la filosofía del Proyecto Resurrección en los

términos más sencillos: "Nuestro trabajo es normalizar y mejorar la comunidad para nuestros hijos. No se puede huir de los problemas, o estaremos siempre huyendo."

En estas épocas buenas, es un reto que necesita aún de más receptores.

Susana Vásquez, es la directora asistente del Proyecto Resurrección en Chicago, Ill. Para más información, los lectores pueden comunicarse a las oficinas del proyecto en 1628 West 17th Street, Chicago, IL. 60608. Teléfono (312) 666-1323.

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Lubbock Graduate Has Big Dreams

Elizabeth Barraza may be petite but she has big dreams. She wants to build bridges or sky scrapers.

She edged a little closer to her dream Friday (May 12) when she graduated from South Plains College with an associate in applied science degree in drafting technology. She was among 643 students who received degrees or certificates during SPC's 42nd commencement exercises.

"I have always wanted to be involved in the process of building something big," said Barraza, a native of Lubbock and a 1997 graduate of Lubbock High School. Her parents are Alberto and Maria Martinez, and her husband is Nieves Barraza, Jr., a U.S. Marine.

She started off with drafting. "It was better for me to grasp it through drafting rather than jumping into something over my head," she explained. In her coursework at SPC, she learned how to use a sophisticated computerized drafting program called AutoCAD 2000.

Nothing stood in her way, even having a baby during her

freshman year in college.

The spunky young woman did not miss many classes during her pregnancy. Michael, now two, was born the Friday before spring break, and she was back in class nine days later. She kept up with her assignments and even finished a couple of weeks ahead of the other students. "I pushed it. I did not want to miss anything," she explained. "I knew if I needed any help at SPC, I could get it."

"Elizabeth was an excellent student and very motivated. Being pregnant did not slow her down one bit," said one of her instructors, Bob Wilson, associate professor of drafting technology and chairperson of the Industrial Technology Department. "Her work was outstanding quality."

She eventually wants to get a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering or computer science and transfer to San Diego State University.

"My husband and family have encouraged me to keep moving on," she says.

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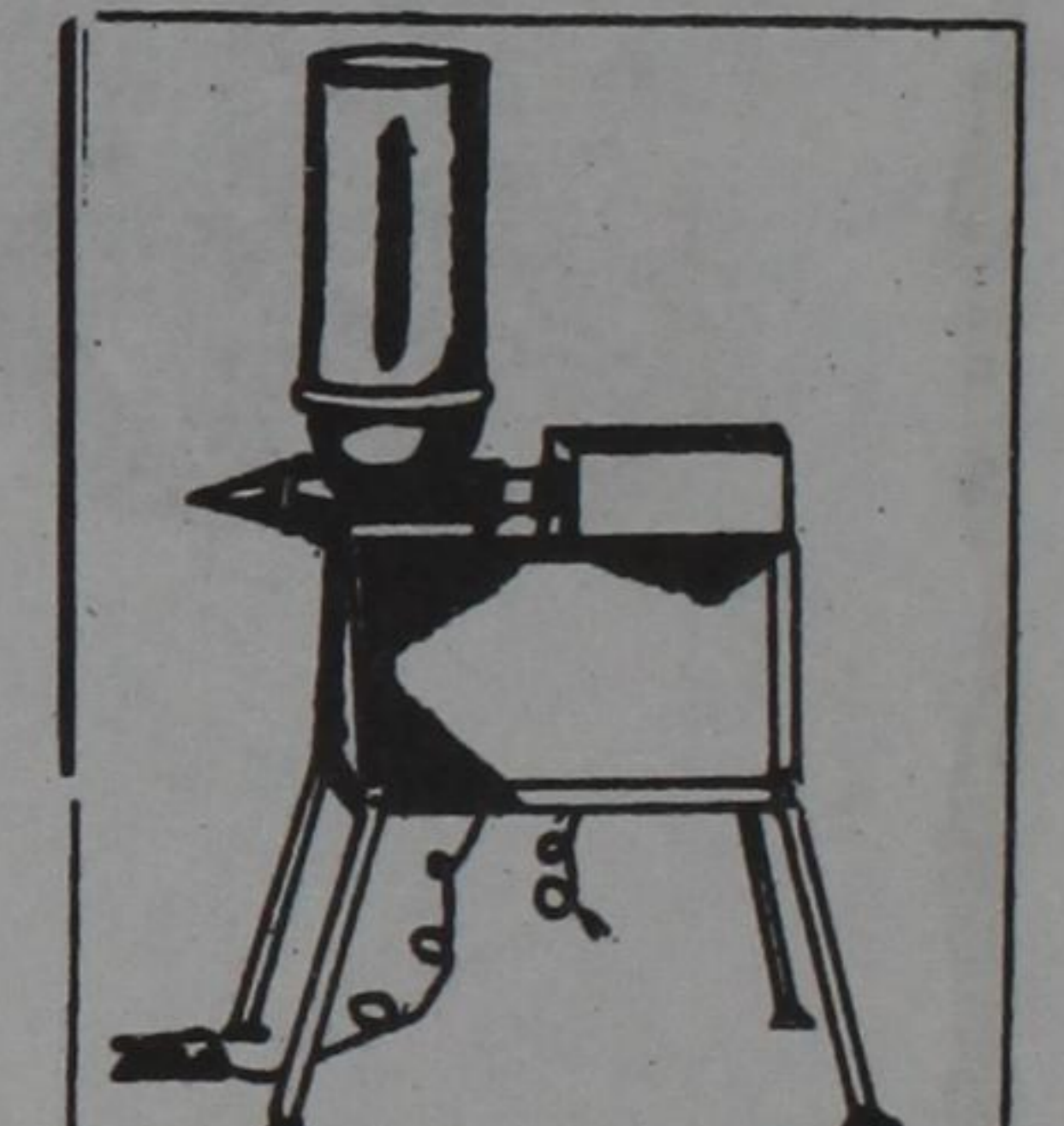
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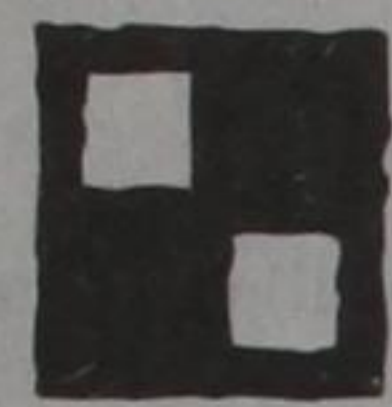
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