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Comentarios de Bidal

Richardson's Withdrawals, spoils Reality Show Scenario

By Charlie Erickson
Hispanic Link News Service

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Hispanic leaders are absorbing New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson's decision to decline President-elect Barack Obama's nomination as Secretary of Commerce with a mix of sorrow and disbelief.

The reality show scenario of a black president circled by a strong Hispanic supporting cast hit a snag even before Obama could take the oath.

Both men are progeny of international mixed marriages, Obama with a Kenyan father, Richardson with a Mexican mother.

Both built reputations as public servants of conviction and strength, of contagious confidence, who together could inspire this nation to believe in itself again.

"An individual of great integrity and commitment," Dialogue on Diversity president Cristina Caballero described Richardson to Hispanic Link News Service, sharing a common reaction to his retreat. She singled out his support on women's issues when he served 14 years in Congress. "When our organization started nearly 20 years ago, he was one of the first two leaders to step forward."

The morning after Richardson's Jan. 4 announcement, the Washington Post's headline story called his withdrawal "the first visible crack in what had been one of the smoothest presidential transitions in modern history."

In its lead editorial, the Post credited him with making "the right decision" and questioned the Obama transition team's failure to do its homework.

The Post editorial stated that while Richardson's confirmation "would inevitably have been delayed and the controversy an unnecessary distraction for the new Obama administration, ... it's unclear whether the political ground simply shifted on them in the wake of the (Illinois Gov. Mark) Blagojevich arrest." Blagojevich is accused of inviting cash offers in return for appointment to Obama's vacated U.S. Senate seat.

Political realities, not people, drive the news machines in this town.

A federal probe was initiated this past summer into whether Richardson's office or a political action committee he helped form encouraged a New Mexico state agency five years ago to hire a California company whose president made contributions totaling \$100,000 to two Political Action Committees associated with Richardson.

Speculation had been building in Washington that a "pay-to-play" allegation involving a Richardson supporter could turn his confirmation hearing into a media feeding frenzy. Kindled by a growing public distrust of federal leadership, it was ignited by revelations concerning Blagojevich, alleged to have put the U.S. Senate seat being relinquished by the president-elect up for bid.

None of the Hispanic organizational leaders Hispanic Link News Service contacted expect Richardson to end up in jail. He has been charged with nothing, convicted of nothing. Almost to the person, Hispanic leaders accept his "unequivocal" statement that he and his Administration "have acted properly in all matters and this investigation will bear out that fact."



The danger is a political one. Had he chosen to tough out his conformation hearing, the flack would have sliced up not just his own image. The effectiveness of Obama's administration would take

shrapnel, too.

The pending investigation, Richardson said, "promises to extend for several weeks or, perhaps, even months."

Such an eventuality could impede Obama's quick-start response to the national economic crisis and deflect attention from other matters of serious concern.

Obama accepted Richardson's withdrawal with expected deep regret, stating that he looked forward to "future service to our country and in my administration."

As Hispanics continue to express confidence in Richardson's ethical behavior, Obama's two remaining Hispanic nominees on his 20-member Cabinet — U.S. Rep. Hilda Solís of California as Secretary of Labor and Senator Ken Salazar of Colorado as Secretary of Interior — confidently await their Senate confirmations.

Intent on making Obama keep his promise of creating a diverse administration, members of the influential National Hispanic Leadership Agenda have already conferred and forwarded to Obama's transition team the names of half a dozen seasoned, highly qualified individuals to replace Richardson.

John Trasviña, NHLA's Washington-savvy chairman and president of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, told Hispanic Link News Service that the group identified several individuals with strong credibility in the community who will receive widespread support if they're nominated.

(Charlie Erickson is editor of Hispanic Link News Service in Washington, D.C. E-mail:

Hispanics and the Economic Downturn Housing Woes and Remittance Cuts

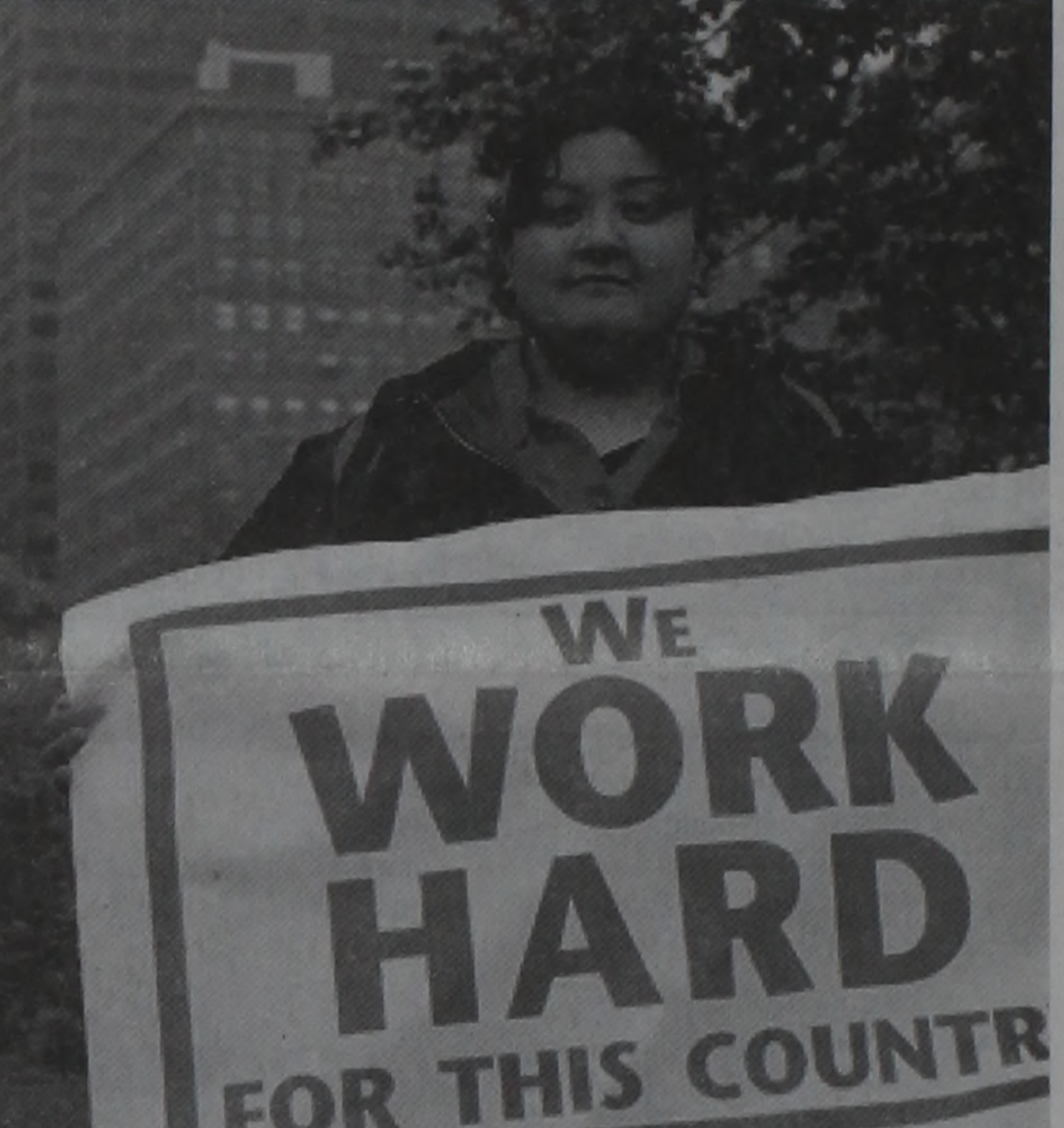
Like the U.S. population as a whole, Latinos are feeling the sting of the economic downturn. Almost one-in-ten (9%) Latino homeowners say they missed a mortgage payment or were unable to make a full payment and 3% say they received a foreclosure notice in the past year, according to a new national survey of 1,540 Latino adults conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center, a project of the Pew Research Center. Moreover, more than six-in-ten (62%) Latino homeowners say there have been foreclosures in their neighborhood over the past year, and 36% say they are worried that their own home may go into foreclosure. This figure rises to 53% among foreign-born Latino homeowners.

The survey also finds that the economic downturn has had an impact on the amount of money that Latinos sent to relatives or others in their country of origin in the past year. Among Hispanic immigrants who sent remittances in the last two years, more than seven-in-ten (71%) say they sent less in 2008

than in the prior year. Latinos hold a more negative view of their own current personal financial situation than does the general U.S. population. More than three-in-four (76%) Latinos, and 84% of foreign-born Latinos, say their current personal finances are in either fair or poor shape, while 63% of the general U.S. population says the same.

As a result of current economic conditions, many Latinos are adjusting their economic behaviors. More than seven-in-ten (71%) report that they cut back spending on eating out. More than two-thirds (67%) planned to curtail holiday spending. Over one-fourth (28%) report that they helped a family member or friend with a loan.

The report, authored by Mark Hugo Lopez, Associate Director, Gretchen Livingston, Senior Researcher, and Rakesh Kochhar, Associate Director for Research, is available at the Pew Hispanic Center's website, www.pewhispanic.org



You might say that the Texas Legislature this year is playing a "Good, Bad and the Ugly" show. The good is because they say they will really pay attention to education this year. The bad is because they are saying that they might not have enough money for the educational program. The ugly is because they are saying that the programs they will cut out are health programs and enrichment programs such as bilingual education. *Todavía tenemos tiempo.*

The bond proposal died before it even got to the starting line. Most of the Councilmen are saying that the public is not ready to vote even on general improvements such as streets and sewer line, much less on soccer fields and softball fields. They say that the national economy is not strong enough. When are they going to learn that it is not the national economy but the fact that people are out of jobs and out of money here in Lubbock... the giant side.

The Mayor also got up in front of people this week and told everyone that the town was in good shape. He pointed to the streets that have been built in the past years and how they have enabled the traffic to flow better. Who really cares about the streets? What we want is better jobs, food in our pantry and a warm place to sleep.

With the price of utilities, how can one afford to drive around on those nice streets? Well, we'll see you next week. Hay te wacho cucaracho! I'll be back! Next time with more information on what is going on at the City. Ah, and I almost forgot about the swearing in this week a new elected official. I am sure that he is more than happy to start getting that good check this week. More money to waste, what can I say!

Are Juries Prejudiced Against Non-English-Speaking Plaintiffs?

(Chicago, Ill.) — A recent study has exposed a serious breach of equality in the courtroom that has long outraged Jeffrey Kroll, of the Law Offices of Jeffrey J. Kroll.

The study, <http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/university-study-indicates-better-lawsuit/story.aspx?guid=%7B2C765FC4-99EF-43A2-BEE6-1C9315A389E7%7D&dist=hppr> sponsored by Texas Tech University, found that English-speaking plaintiffs are 15 percent more likely to obtain a favorable jury trial verdict than non-English-speaking Hispanics when suing in a court of law.

"It's unacceptable that in our democratic society, some people are being treated like second-class citizens in the courtroom," Kroll says. "Nobody knows this is going on, and it's just not fair."

Non-English speakers who have been injured and are suing in a personal injury or wrongful death case should make sure their lawyer knows how to keep the jurors' judgment from being clouded by language bias.

"Tragedy doesn't discriminate, but people do — including jurors," Kroll says.

However, he says the apparent disadvantage non-English-speaking plaintiffs have in a jury trial can be overcome by the manner in which a lawyer presents evidence. Kroll himself has successfully represented several non-English-speaking plaintiffs and had several settlements in excess of a million dollars in which the plaintiff did not speak English. Kroll counters a potentially prejudiced jury by choosing from an arsenal of techniques he has stockpiled from his 17 years' experience as a trial lawyer, including the following:

Use of visual aids. Kroll uses photographs, videotapes or old home movies that show the injured person engaging in "joyful" activities before the incident in order to draw a stark contrast to the plaintiff's life after the incident. He used this technique to demonstrate that one of his clients, who was part of a mariachi band, had suffered a crushing injury to his hand that prohibited from playing in the band any longer.

"Before and after" witnesses. Kroll asks for testimony from English-speaking individuals that knew his client both before and after the occurrence. For example, when he represented a Hispanic client who loved soccer, he had a witness testify about his observations of the plaintiff's soccer abilities before the accident, and how the plaintiff had to watch a soccer match from the sidelines after the accident.

Jury selection. Lawyers must pinpoint and de-select jurors who may be prejudiced against non-English speakers. Kroll says this is one of the most crucial areas for lawyers to take into account, and they must realize that some people are prejudiced, and may go into trials with racially or ethnically motivated agendas of their own.

Above all, Kroll emphasizes that people who have been injured and are bringing a lawsuit must make sure they are dealing with an experienced trial lawyer who will take their language into consideration.

Jeffrey J. Kroll is the principal at the Law Offices of Jeffrey J. Kroll, a Chicago law firm known for its compassionate representation of victims of auto, truck and bus accidents. For more information about Jeffrey J. Kroll and the Law Offices of Jeffrey J. Kroll, visit www.kroll-lawfirm.com.

GOP Faces First Test on Immigration

By Mario Solis-Marich

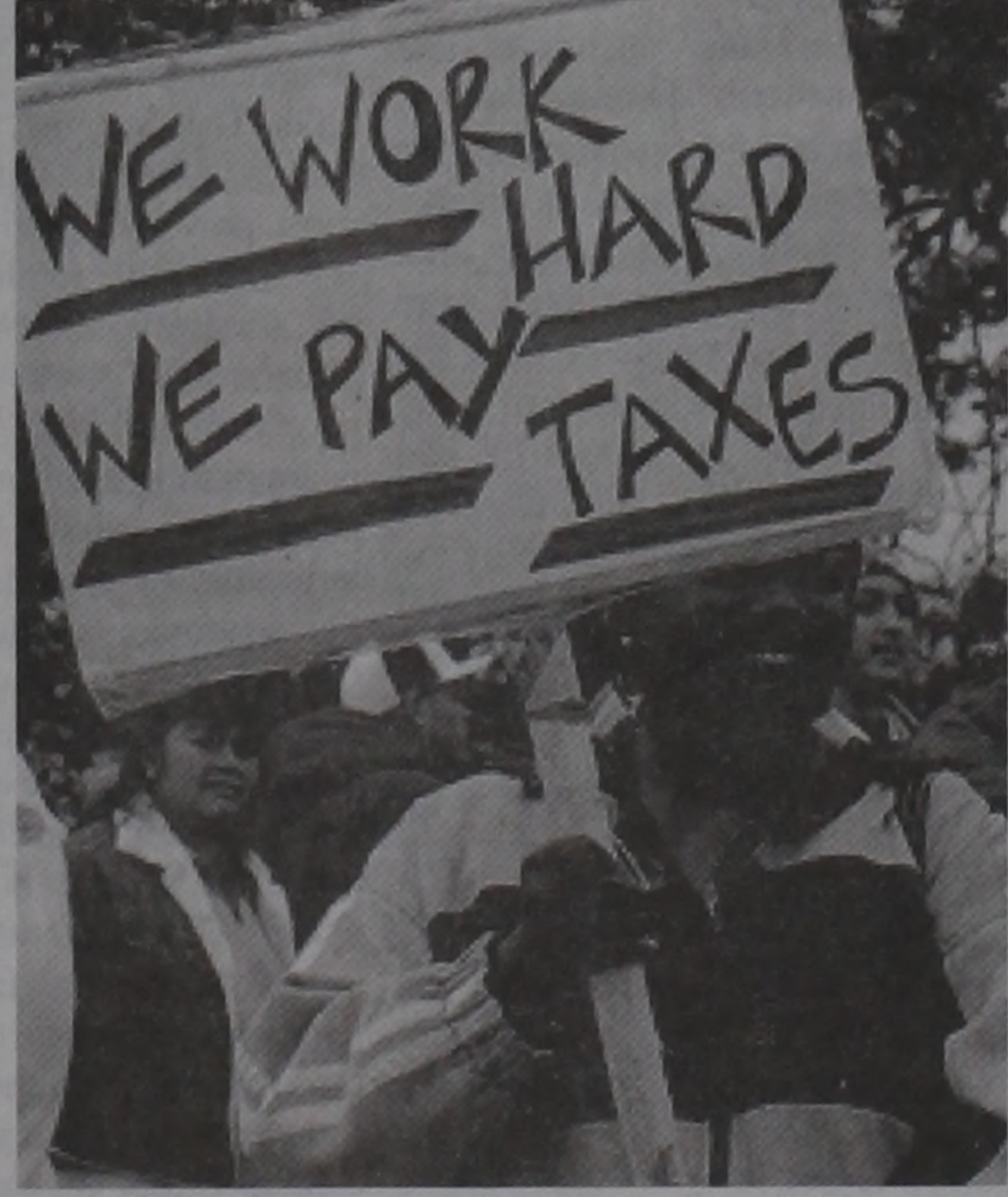
SCHIP Vote Critical to Party's New Image, Willingness to Solve Tough Problems

Washington, DC — The House is set to vote on legislation to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) this week, and the Senate Finance Committee will also take up companion legislation. On the table are key provisions that would help more Latino children access health care by eliminating the five year waiting period legal immigrant children must endure before qualifying for coverage under federal law.

This will be the first test on immigration for the Republican Party following crushing defeats in November 2008, when millions of Latino voters walked away

the Party's imagine among Latino voters and prompting this mass exodus from the Party.

According to Frank Sharry, Executive Director of America's Voice: "This is the first test of the Republican Party on immigration since its historic losses with Latino voters in 2008. Will Republicans in Congress heed the advice of their party leaders and replace anti-immigrant rhetoric with reasonable solutions? Or will they reach for the playbook of the past, and try to turn health care for children into a heated political debate?"



"The American people didn't just vote for change in November, they voted for politicians to come together to solve tough problems. If the Republican Party fails to learn the lessons of the past, it is doomed to become a regional party for decades to come."

America's Voice — Harnessing the power of American voices and American values to win common sense immigration reform. <http://www.americasvoiceonline.org>

WASHINGTON, Jan. 12 / PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA) condemns the Bush Administration's latest attempt to thwart Constitutional protections provided to immigrants. In Matter of Compean, 24 I & N Dec. 710 (A.G. 2009), Attorney General Michael Mukasey held that immigrants do not have a constitutional right to effective counsel under the Due Process Clause (or any other provision in the Constitution). The Attorney General's decision declared that even immigrants who have been prejudiced by their attorney's ineffective or fraudulent representation do not have the right to have their cases reconsidered. The text of Matter of Compean is available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/vll/intdec/vol24/3632.pdf> <http://globalmessaging1.pnnewsire.com/clickthrough/servlet/clickthrough?msg_id=6196759&adr_order=46&url=aHR0cDovL3d3dy51c2Rvai5nb3YvZW9pci92bGwvaW50ZGVjL3ZvbDI0LmZmZlucGRm>.

Immigration law is very complex — a labyrinth that only a competent lawyer can navigate. Immigrants regularly fall prey to illegal schemes and ineffective representation by unscrupulous attorneys, non-attorneys, and notarios. The courts ensure that the "standard of fairness" is met by guaranteeing that immigrants have the opportunity to be represented by competent and effective counsel. Judicial precedent has recognized that the high stakes of a removal proceeding, coupled with the maze of immigration rules and regulations, make evident the necessity of the right to counsel.

Now, Attorney General Mukasey has reversed the decades of Court precedent and only a handful of cases "may" be considered under the grace of the Department of Justice. "The decision of the Attorney General runs afoul to basic principles of fairness and protection and condones fraudulent schemes and their consequences against

the most vulnerable group in our society," stated Ramona E. Romero, the HNBA National President. According to Victor Nieblas, Chair of the HNBA's Immigration Law Section, "Attorney General Mukasey's decision green lights the unauthorized practice of law and continuing attacks on immigrants by individuals motivated by greed. The Latino community, as well as the entire immigrant community, will suffer greatly as a result."

The legal reasoning in Matter of Compean is wrong and the decision should be overturned by President-Elect Barack Obama's administration. The HNBA will continue to work with elected leaders and the judicial system to protect access to justice and the fair administration of the law for all.

The Hispanic National Bar Association is an incorporated, not-for-profit, national membership organization that represents the interests of the more than 100,000 attorneys, judges, law professors, legal assistants, and law students of Hispanic descent in the United States, its territories and Puerto Rico. For more information about the HNBA, please visit www.hnba.com <http://globalmessaging1.pnnewsire.com/clickthrough/servlet/clickthrough?msg_id=6196759&adr_order=46&url=aHR0cDovL3d3dy50bmlmLnVbQ%3D%3D>.

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Guest Commentary

JOURNAL UNFAIRLY PINS HOUSING CRISIS BLAME ON LATINOS

By José de la Isla
A Jan. 5 Wall Street Journal story by Susan Schmidt and Maurice Tamman mugged some Latino leaders connected with housing advocacy. Congressional Hispanic Caucus members and CHC's separate but closely allied nonprofit public policy institute came under close scrutiny for the appearance of an overly close association with troubled mortgage lenders. The Journal article said congressional representatives and the institute received contributions for dubious purposes.

Schmidt and Tamman asserted Congressional Hispanic Caucus members "received donations from the lending industry and saw their constituents moving into new homes, pushed for eased lending standards, which led to problems."
* At least \$2.3 million in political contributions were made to members of the Hispanic Caucus at the height of the subprime mortgage expansion in 2005.

Countrywide Corp., Washington Mutual, and New Century Financial, Ameriquest Mortgage Corp., Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were among the companies mentioned that contributed and participated in an internship, research and advocacy program, called Hogar, administered by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute.

Aracely Panameño, of the Center for Responsible Lending, was said to have attempted to warn Hogar with data about shortcomings in housing lending practices and impacts on Latinos.

The biggest judo chops were saved for California Congressman Joe Baca, the immediate past chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and a longtime advocate for opening up first-time home-buyer opportunities. Roughly 9,200 families in San Bernardino, Calif., Baca's district, lost homes to foreclosures.

AmeriDream Inc., a nonprofit housing company and an Hogar sponsor, provided a \$25,000 charitable contribution in October 2008 to a foundation set up by Baca. Baca backed AmeriDream's seller-financed down-payment assistance program with money that originated from home builders who made donations to the nonprofit.

The program was outlawed last year through new housing legislation. Now Baca is cosponsoring a bill to allow similar, but not the same, approach for seller-financed down-payment assistance to low-income Federal Housing Administration borrowers.

The WSJ story's tone and impression was that of borderline wrongdoing or at least ethically challenged activity. Lapses in good judgment, yes. Coming under the soft, romantic sway of money, probably. But having Latinos take the brunt of the subprime mess is taking it too far.

There's no question subprime schemes front-loaded Latino clients, although so far data is unavailable by ethnicity. Nationally 1.5 million homes (not just Hispanic households) were lost and another 2 million families with subprime loans are in danger of losing theirs in the near future.

Esther Aguilera, president of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, told WSJ she was shocked by the story's conclusions and its accusations. They missed the point about the root causes of the housing crisis and "protections for families from unscrupulous predatory lenders," she said.

Ed González of the Real Estate Associates Latinos in Houston, told me by e-mail that lending fundamentals were clearly compromised during the go-go years. Now, he asks "who/what made the decision to overlook or minimize lending guidelines?"

There is plenty of blame to spread around and other aspects to investigate. But, for scapegoating purposes one would have to believe Latinos were turning the dials on world banking vaults and making puts and calls on hedge funds and packaging mortgages on Wall Street for Europe and China.

So trying to hang the jacket on what seems like an "Industrial-Latino Housing complex" is, to say the least, going too far. While it may have uncovered some of those reaching into the cookie jar, they are not the ones who baked the bad batch.

Getting little attention is another damage done by this housing collapse. It is one affecting many families of this generation who will now look at the American Dream thing as just another scam.

[José de la Isla writes a weekly commentary for Hispanic Link News Service. He is author of The Rise of Hispanic Political Power (Archer Books). E-mail jseisla3@yahoo.com.] ©2008

WALL STREET JOURNAL INJUSTAMENTE ASIGNA CULPA DE LA CRISIS DE VIVIENDA A LOS LATINOS

José de la Isla
Una nota del 5 de enero en el Wall Street Journal escrita por Susan Schmidt y Maurice Tamman fue un asalto a algunos dirigentes latinos conectados con temas de vivienda y defensa comunitaria.

Miembros de la asamblea de congresistas hispanos, Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC por sus siglas en inglés) y el instituto de políticas públicas aliado pero separado de la misma, se vieron bajo intenso escrutinio por aparentar tener una asociación demasiado unida con prestamistas de hipotecas problemáticos.

Schmidt y Tamman aseveraron que miembros del CHC "recibieron donaciones de la industria prestamista y vieron que sus electores se mudaran a nuevas casas, presionando por normas menos estrictas de préstamo, lo cual llevó a problemas".

Las contribuciones políticas a miembros de la asamblea de congresistas hispanos llegaron a ser al menos \$2.3 millones durante el auge de la expansión de hipotecas no preferenciales en el 2005.

Countrywide Corp., Washington Mutual y New Century Financial, Ameriquest Mortgage Corp., Fannie Mae y Freddie Mac se incluyen entre las empresas mencionadas que contribuyeron y participaron en un programa de pasantía, investigación y defensa de derechos, llamado Hogar, que administrara el instituto de la asamblea, CHCI por sus siglas en inglés.

Aracely Panameño, del Center for Responsible Lending, se dice intentó advertir a Hogar con datos sobre los defectos en cuanto a las prácticas en temas de préstamos de vivienda y su impacto sobre los latinos.

Los golpes más duros se reservaron para el congresista por California, Joe Baca, el más reciente presidente del CHC y defensor de muchos años por ampliar las oportunidades para personas que compran vivienda por primera vez. Unas 9,200 familias en el distrito que representa Baca, San Bernardino, perdieron sus casas por ejecución de su hipotecas.

AmeriDream, Inc., una empresa de vivienda sin fines de lucro y que auspicia Hogar, hizo una contribución caritativa de \$25,000 en octubre del 2008 a una fundación que estableciera Baca. A su vez, Baca respaldó el programa de asistencia con la cuota inicial financiado por el vendedor de AmeriDream con fondos que originaron con empresas de construcción de viviendas quienes hubieran hecho donaciones a la empresa sin fines de lucro.

El programa fue declarado ilegal el año pasado mediante nueva legislación sobre vivienda. Ahora Baca es uno de los congresistas que auspicia un proyecto de ley que permitiría un enfoque similar, pero no igual, para asistencia con la cuota

inicial financiada por el vendedor para prestatarios de bajos recursos en el programa de la Federal Housing Administration.

El tono y la impresión que deja la nota del Wall Street Journal fue de haber estado al filo de cometer un delito o de haber incurrido en una actividad poco ética. Lo que hubo fueron lapsos de juicio, eso sí, que llegaron bajo la suave y romántica influencia del dinero, probablemente. Pero culpar mayormente a los latinos por los líos ocasionados por las hipotecas no preferenciales es llevarlo demasiado lejos.

No cabe duda que las intrigas con hipotecas no preferenciales afectaron grandemente a clientes latinos, aunque hasta el momento no hay datos que indiquen el perjuicio cometido según la etnicidad de la víctima. A nivel nacional, se perdieron 1.5 millones de hogares (no sólo de hispanos) y otros 2 millones de familias que tienen actualmente préstamos no preferenciales están en peligro de perder sus casas en un futuro cercano.

Esther Aguilera, presidenta del CHCI, le dijo al Wall Street Journal que le asombraban las conclusiones y acusaciones de la nota publicada el 5 de enero. No entendieron el punto sobre las causas originales de la crisis de vivienda ni sobre "protección para las familias asediadas por prestamistas abusivos y sin escrúpulos", mantuvo.

Ed González, de Real Estate Associates Latinos en Houston, me dijo por correo electrónico que las prácticas fundamentales de hacer préstamos se vieron claramente comprometidas durante los años de auge. Ahora, pregunta, ¿quién o qué agencia tomó la decisión de obviar o minimizar las directivas para hacer préstamos?

Hay culpa de sobra para distribuir y otros aspectos que investigar. Sin embargo, para propósitos de buscar un chivo expiatorio, uno tendría que creer que los latinos iban girando las esferas de cámaras acorazadas en los bancos y jugando a la bolsa y empaquetando hipotecas en Wall Street para Europa y la China.

Por ende, intentar atribuir la culpa en lo que parece ser un "complejo industrial de vivienda latina" es, como menos, ir muy lejos. Pero sí tiene que hacer con exponer a algunos de los que se descubrieron con la mano en la masa. Pero ellos no son los que la convirtieron en tamales podridos.

Otro daño causado por el colapso de la industria de vivienda es el que afecta a muchas familias de esta generación quienes verán ahora lo del sueño americano como simplemente otra estafa más.

[José de la Isla redacta un comentario semanal para Hispanic Link News Service. Es autor de "The Rise of Hispanic Political Power (Archer Books, 2003). Comuníquese con él a: jseisla3@yahoo.com.] © 2009

"Freedom of Expression"

An Open Forum Where Readers Express their Views and Opinions

WELCOME BACK TO THE LAND OF 'MI CHANTE', GOVERNOR RICHARDSON

By José Armas
Hispanic Link News Service
ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — It's good to have you back, Governor Richardson, in "The Land of Enchantment," or, as the 45 percent of us whose roots go back to Spain (via Mexico and Latin America) playfully refer to it, "The Land of Mi Chante." My humble home.

Now that President-elect Barack Obama has accepted your withdrawal as his Secretary of Commerce, there's no need for you to flirt with fortunes elsewhere. Really, we need you here in the nation's most Hispanic state.

You've already done tons of stuff in our state. You built an awesome political machine. You've ruled with a velvet glove, albeit with brass knuckles underneath. You even defended our tradition of staging cock-fights until the national press ridiculed you too often.

Some folks here may have hoped you would stay gone, but not me. Once upon a time, I said you could become one of our best governors ever. So I know you want to take care of some unfinished business.

I'm talking about our unfulfilled Latino agenda. When you ran successfully twice for governor and unsuccessfully once for president, lots of gente voted for you because you are Latino. Now it's payback. It's your turn to put our agenda on the front burner. Not because we are Latino — but because, at 45 percent, we're now the majority of the state and have great needs. Our kids make up 55 percent of our schools' students. This is the "New Reality" that needs your attention. Latinos have a great work ethic, are patriotic, have strong family values — and are loyal.

Despite our great attributes, New Mexico is among the worst states to raise a child. Our dropout rates are criminal, we have the largest number of working poor, and our health disparities are growing. Since there are more of us than any other racial/ethnic group in the state, including non-Hispanic whites, our conditions must be addressed. As goes the well-being of Latinos, so will go our state's future. In other words, what's good for Latinos is good for New Mexico.

Alas, our needs are being neglected. Only you can shake the state's executive and legislative cages to address this "New Reality."

Frankly, if whites suffered the magnitude of our problems, there would be a revolution. At the very least, a responsible governor would declare a state of emergency and marshal every possible resource, human and financial, to fix the crises, which include:

>> OUR SCHOOLS: If educators had improved our graduation level just one percent each year for the past 20 years, our dropout rates would be only — wait a minute! — 25 percent. Our public schools have been practicing malfeasance or nonfeasance too long now. They are disproportionately failing Latinos. Just change this and you'll become immortal.

HEALTH: Our Latino health disparities are growing. Is it any wonder? Nearly 27 percent, count 'em, of New Mexicans speak a language other than English. A recent study shows that 90 percent of health care delivery agencies are violating patients' civil rights and endangering their safety by not having trained medical interpreters. Shake up our health departments and make them keep New Mexico's plurality population healthy, as only you can.

WORKING POOR: Resources are allocated by population and priority. If Latinos are the majority with major needs, it's not rocket science to deduce that reallocation of resources and decent paying jobs could help our working poor elevate our state. Yeah, parity in your Cabinet would be nice, too.

STATE OFFICE OF LATINO/HISPANO AFFAIRS: Let's put aside the loud whispers accusing you of being responsible for blocking legislation to create such an office over the past five years. Nationally, many other states have them. Here at home we do for blacks and women. I'm sure you know such an office could be enormously useful just by issuing an annual report on the status of Latinos to help you and our state legislature allocate resources fairly. Of your own administration's 23 highest-level appointees, only seven are Hispanic.

Oh! And use your power as a border-state governor and your influence with the incoming administration in Washington to block the construction of that multi-billion-dollar wall cutting off the United States from its Mexican neighbor. It has not, nor will it ever, protect us from terrorists. It will just separate families and hard-working people from jobs that we need them to do. By putting an end to this waste of ever-more-precious federal funds, you will eliminate the deadly conditions immigrants suffer to enrich our economy.

Welcome home.
(José Armas, PhD, of Albuquerque, has advocated on behalf of the Hispanic community as an organizer, writer, scholar and publisher for half a century. E-mail: armas@swcp.com) ©2009

Oh My! Obama!

By: Ysidro Gutierrez
The longer you live the weirder things become. George Bush, the Republican President, was supposed to be a Conservative; but under his administration Government grew 65%, and spending increased by tens of trillions. There is nothing conservative about bigger government and spending like drunken sailors. Drunken sailors resent having the spending of the last eight years compared to them.

The Bush years were not Conservative. In fact they were Liberal. The opposite of what the American people elected him to do. Bush loyalists argue that he had little choice. His administration was driven in large measure by the 9/11 terrorist attack. History will judge the validity of this defense. That will take about 30 to 50 years.

This commentator has often said "How goes the war in Iraq - goes the George Bush legacy." This prediction was made before the US and Global economic meltdowns of 2008. A recession was expected in 2008 but no one predicted its severity. Predictions about the Bush legacy must now be revised. The failed stimulus package and the failed \$350 Billion give-away to Wall Street came under his watch. In his last weeks as President, the two failed attempts to re-boot the economy apparently were not enough to convince him to stop. This week, once again, he asked the Congress to release \$380 Billion more, supposedly to help the economy recover — same as the two failed attempts.

The American people have well formed opinions about the George Bush years. The November 2008 General election stands in stark witness to this reality. The Bush years being behind us, and with clear 20/20 vision the American people can easily measure and observe the 65% growth in government and form solid opinions. Conservative believe that the bigger government gets — the greater the loss of individual freedoms enjoyed by the American people.

On Tuesday, the new president Barack Obama, will become the most powerful man in the world. It is impossible to predict the direct his administration will take. But Obama has given the American people small hints. The people he is appointing to his cabinet and the people he is having lunch with are indicators of how he will govern. For example: he had lunch with Conservative columnists and met with Sean Hannity — one of his worst critics. What do these say about the new president? Liberals are furious and Conservatives baffled.

This commentator has noticed the "Cold" rhetoric from Democrat leaders in the Senate and House and the criticism from the Liberal Left. I must wonder what it is about their candidate that is egregious enough to warrant their indignation. Is Barack Obama, the Democrat, who is supposed to be Liberal: govern right-of-center? Is this what Liberals fear?

Obama promises \$1 Trillion deficits every year for years to come; at the expense of American tax-payers. If you thought things were bad under Bush, you don't know what "BAD" is. If Obama does this it will lead to inflation and unemployment.

Obama says he will create hundreds of thousands of new government jobs; at the expense

of American tax-payers. If you thought things were bad under Bush, you don't know what "BAD" is. If Obama does this, Government will become more oppressive and Americans will lose individual freedoms. Think of it is these terms: Government governs and the governed are us.

Obama hints at negotiating with terrorists — this is really bad; no one of sound mind believes it is possible to negotiate with terrorists. Think of it in these terms: Terrorist says: "I want to kill Jews!" Obama says: "How many?" Prudent people know it's insane and impossible to negotiate with terrorists.

As a political observer, this commentator enjoys making predictions, it's kinda fun. Here is one that I heard on TV. Charles Krauthammer, conservative columnist and commentator, predicts that the economic meltdown of 2008 will be owned by Obama by the summer of 2009.

This means that the American people will blame Obama for the economic disaster. If this comes true, my prediction of "How goes the war in Iraq — goes the Bush legacy" will have a chance of coming true too.

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Solis, Obama's Labor Pick, Vows To Protect Workers



President-elect Obama's nominee for labor secretary to lead a key Senate panel Friday that her top priority is protecting workers, especially in the current economy.

Hilda Solis will be confirmed by Democrats at her confirmation hearing, both for her resume and for her personal story. Republicans, some of whom attempted to draw Solis into a discussion about labor union laws, were largely rebuffed.

"She has been a voice for the voiceless, with a true passion for fairness and justice," said Massachusetts Democrat Edward Kennedy, chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

Goals For Department

Solis is the daughter of two working-class Latino immigrants and the first in her family to graduate from college. She credits unions with giving her parents the opportunity to succeed in the United States.

In 1994, Solis was the first Hispanic woman elected to the California Senate. There, she spent years working to protect low-income families from pollution from nearby factories. In 2000, she received the John F. Kennedy Prize in Courage award for that work.

Solis told the committee Friday she has several goals for the Labor Department: giving workers better training and expanded unemployment insurance; raising wages and retirement benefits; and focusing — in particular — on combat veterans returning to the private sector.

Republican Doubts

Solis' long support for stronger labor unions prompted some Republicans to question whether, as secretary, she would approach

labor and business interests with an equal hand.

"This is a very, very important position," said Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT). "It can't be used to the other. It has to be handled fairly."

Hatch did say he intended to vote to confirm Solis.

Among Republicans' concerns was Solis' sponsorship of the so-called Employee Free Choice Act, which would make it easier for workers to form unions. The bill passed in the House two years ago but stalled in the Senate. At Friday's hearing, Solis declined to give her opinion on that legislation, saying she had not consulted with Obama on the matter.

Some Democrats also pushed Solis on specific issues.

"Everybody's talking about green jobs like they're going to be some big green bullet that's going to solve problems," said Maryland Democrat Barbara Mikulski.

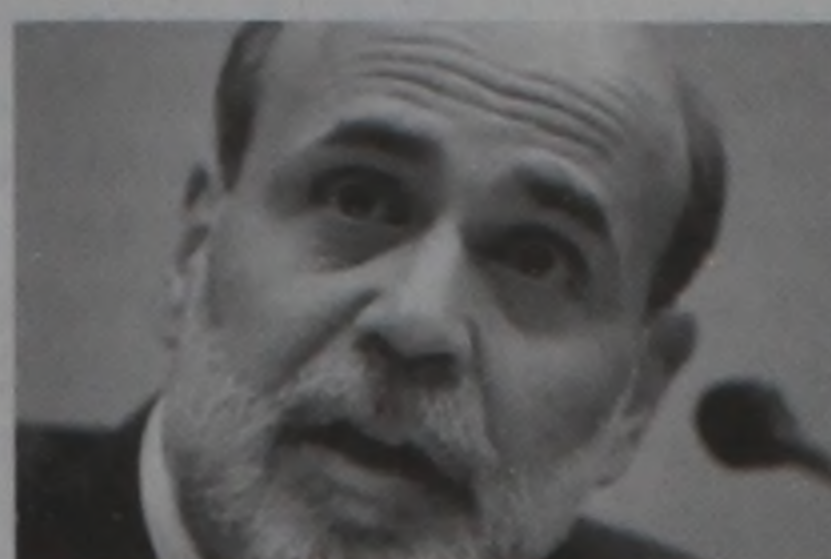
Mikulski urged the nominee to consider more training funds for health care jobs.

Bernanke Urges Strong Measures for Lasting Economic Recovery

U.S. Fed Chairman Bernanke said in a speech given here on Tuesday that fiscal actions are unlikely to promote a lasting recovery unless they are accompanied by strong measures to further stabilize and strengthen the financial system.

He said that the Fed will do its part to promote the economic recovery, but other policy measures will be needed as well. The incoming Administration and the Congress are currently discussing a substantial fiscal package that, if enacted, could provide a significant boost to economic activity.

"With the worsening of the economy's growth prospects, continued credit losses and asset markdowns may maintain for a time the pressure on the capital and balance sheet capacities of financial institutions," he said, "Consequently, more capital injections and guarantees may be needed to ensure credit and the normalization of credit



markets."

History demonstrates conclusively that a modern economy cannot grow if its financial system is not operating effectively, he added.

"Should the Treasury decide to supplement injections of capital by removing troubled assets from institutions' balance sheets, as was initially proposed for the U.S. financial rescue plan, several approaches might be considered," he said.

Public purchases of troubled assets are one possibility. Another is to provide asset guarantees, under which the government would agree to absorb, presumably in exchange for warrants or some other form of compensation, part of the prospective losses on specified portfolios of troubled assets held by banks.

Yet another approach would be to set up and capitalize so-called bad banks, which would purchase assets from financial institutions in exchange for cash and equity in the bad bank.

In addition, efforts to reduce preventable foreclosures, among

other benefits, could strengthen the housing market and reduce mortgage losses, thereby increasing financial stability.

Bernanke emphasized the importance of financial supervision on the process of striving to stabilize financial markets and institutions.

"We need stronger supervisory and regulatory systems under which gaps and unnecessary duplication in supervisory authority and responsibility are clarified, and oversight powers are adequate to curb excessive leverage and risk-taking," he said.

According to Bernanke, regulatory oversight should be coordinated internationally to the greatest extent possible and the work of strengthening the financial infrastructure should be continued. In addition, the supervisory authorities should develop the capacity for increased surveillance of the financial system as a whole, rather than focusing excessively on the condition of individual firms in isolation.

"We must take care not to take actions that forfeit the economic benefits of financial innovation and market discipline," he emphasized.

Job losses hit 2.6 million as layoff pain deepens

A staggering 2.6 million jobs disappeared in 2008, the most since World War II, and the pain is only getting worse with 11 million Americans out of work and searching. Unemployment hit a 16-year high of 7.2 percent in December and could be headed for 10 percent or even higher by year's end.

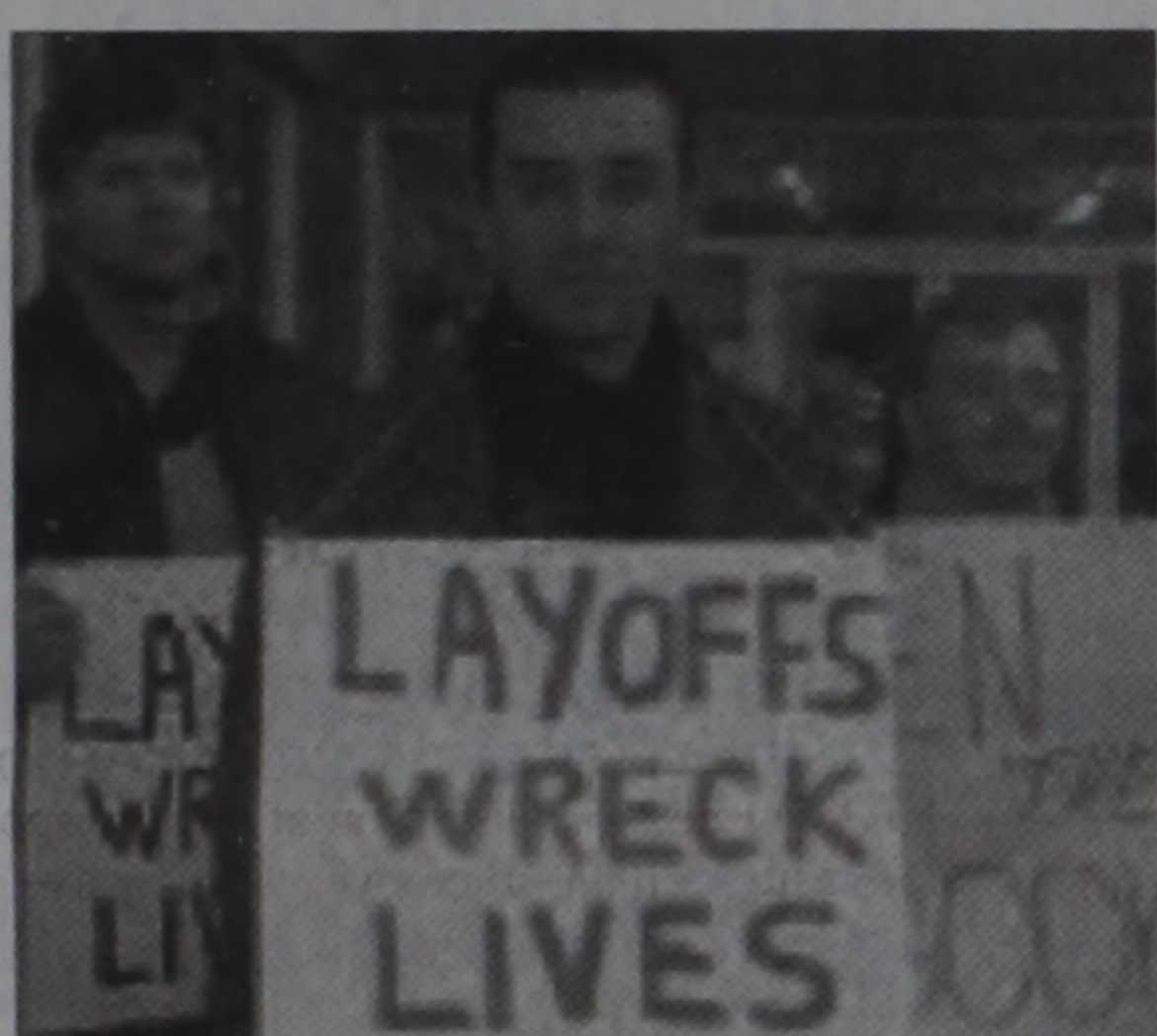
Friday, airplane maker Boeing Co. said it plans to cut about 4,500 jobs this year, and uniform maker G&K Services Inc. is eliminating 460 jobs.

Employers also are cutting workers' hours and forcing some to go part-time. The average

for two years. With add-ons by lawmakers, the package could swell to \$850 billion or higher.

The unemployment rate zoomed from 6.8 percent in November, 7.2 percent last month, the highest since January 1993.

The rate for blacks climbed to 11.9 percent, the highest since the spring of 1994. The rate for Hispanics rose to 9.2 percent, the highest since May 1996. The rate for teenagers rose to 20.8 percent, the highest since September 1992.



Friday's government figures were "a stark reminder," said President-elect Barack Obama, that bold and immediate government action is needed to revive a national economy that's deep in recession and still sinking.

More than a half million jobs melted away as winter took hold in December — 524,000 in all, the government estimated — and the true carnage will almost certainly turn out to be even worse when the figures are nailed down more clearly a month from now.

work week in December fell to 33.3 hours, the lowest in records dating to 1964 — and a sign of more job reductions in the months ahead since businesses tend to cut hours before eliminating positions entirely.

"There is no indication that the job situation will stabilize anytime soon," said Stan Won Sohn, economist at the Martin Smith School of Business at California State University. "This could turn out to be one of the worst economic setbacks since the Great Depression."

Last year was the first that payrolls had fallen for a full year since 2002, and the loss was the most since 1945, when nearly 2.8 million jobs disappeared. Though the number of payroll jobs in the U.S.

has more than tripled since then, losses of this magnitude are still brutal.

The nation's jobless rate averaged 5.8 percent last year — up sharply from 4.6 percent in 2007 and the highest since 2003.

During President George W. Bush's nearly eight years in office, a net total of 3 million jobs were created. In President Clinton's two terms, roughly 21 million jobs were generated.

Economists predict a net total of 1.5 million to 2 million or more jobs will vanish in 2009, and the unemployment rate could hit 9 or 10 percent, underscoring the challenges Obama will face and the tough road ahead for job seekers.

All told, 11.1 million people were unemployed in December. An additional 8 million people were working part time — a category that includes those who would like to work full time but whose hours were cut back or those who were unable to find full-time work. That was up sharply from 7.3 million in November.

The lost-job total for December probably understated the reality since some companies probably held off on layoffs around the holidays, economists said. Moreover, the government collects the payroll information around mid-month. So the full extent of the layoffs probably wasn't captured, making it even more likely there will be big reductions in January and that December's cuts will be revised upward.

It's real, indeed, for 38-year-old Rachel Davis of St. Louis.

"If you get laid off right now, God help your soul," she said. "You better hope you've got savings or someone backing you." In fact, she was laid off three months ago after working as a dental technician for 20 years. While Congress and the new president struggle to find answers, she says, "I have no faith in this system" and plans to move out of the country in hopes of finding better luck.

The severe recession, which just entered its second year, is already the longest in a quarter-century and is likely to stretch well into this year. The fact that the country is battling a housing collapse, a lockup in lending and the worst financial crisis since the 1930s makes the downturn especially dangerous.

If those part-time employees, discouraged workers and others are factored in, the unemployment rate would have been much higher — 13.5 percent in December. That was the highest for that broader category in records going back to 1994.

Worried about the sinking financial fortunes, companies are trimming payrolls as a way to cut costs. Government revisions showed losses in both October and November to be much deeper than previously reported.

"Clearly, the situation is dire, it is deteriorating, and it demands urgent action," Obama said Friday. "For the sake of our economy and our people, this is the moment to act, and to act without delay."

Obama, who takes over Jan. 20, is promoting a huge package of tax cuts and government spending that could total nearly \$800 billion

Workers with jobs saw modest wage gains. Average hourly earnings rose to \$18.36 in December, a 3.7 percent increase over the year. But high prices for energy and food through much of 2008 made people feel that their paychecks weren't stretching that far.

Corporate layoffs continue to pile up. Earlier this week, drugstore operator Walgreen Co., managed care provider Cigna Corp., aluminum producer Alcoa Inc., data-storage company EMC Corp., Intermec Inc., which makes electronic devices for tracking inventory, and computer products maker Logitech International announced major layoffs to cope with the recession.

Hillary expone plan para mejorar la imagen del país



Hillary Clinton, designada secretaria de Estado por el presidente electo de EE.UU., Barack Obama, defenderá hoy ante el exterior un nuevo curso en política exterior que permita mejorar la imagen del país con una "combinación inteligente" de diplomacia y defensa.

Así lo asegura el texto del testimonio filtrado a la prensa que presentará en la audiencia de confirmación que arrancó a las 09.30 hora local (14.30 GMT) en el Comité de Relaciones Exteriores del Senado, que podría someter a votación el nombramiento de Hillary este mismo jueves.

De recibir el esperado visto bueno del citado comité, Clinton podría ser confirmada en breve por el pleno de la cámara alta.

La que se prevé se convierta en próxima jefa de la diplomacia estadounidense está decidida a crear nuevas alianzas en todo el mundo

porque, según su testimonio, el país no puede resolver las cosas solo, pero "el mundo no las puede resolver sin EE.UU. lo que se ha denominado como poder inteligente, la amplia gama de herramientas a nuestra disposición. Con un poder inteligente, la diplomacia estará en la vanguardia de nuestra política exterior", señala el texto del testimonio de Clinton.

La todavía senadora demócrata por Nueva York afrontará, de ser confirmada en el cargo, serios desafíos diplomáticos, como el que presenta la reciente crisis en la Franja de Gaza o las tensiones entre India y Pakistán.

Al igual que Obama, Clinton ha insistido en que redoblar los esfuerzos para la estabilización de Afganistán y presionará a Pakistán para que elimine los refugios que el grupo terrorista Al Qaeda

ha encontrado en su territorio. Ambos respaldan también el cierre de la prisión de Guantánamo, en Cuba, y la expansión del ejército de Tierra y la Marina.

Los dos comparten, además, la opinión de que el Gobierno del actual presidente George W. Bush infravaloró la diplomacia internacional.

El texto de su testimonio parece incluir de hecho una crítica al Gobierno de Bush, a quien ella ha culpado de centrarse demasiado en la ideología.

"La política exterior debe basarse en un matrimonio de principios y pragmatismo, no en una rígida ideología", afirmó Clinton, quien solicitará también hoy un mayor presupuesto para el Departamento de Estado y la Agencia Estadounidense para el Desarrollo Internacional.

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Adelgaza Machado para Aventurera

Alicia Machado podría ser la nueva Aventurera y con tal de mostrar su mejor figura al público se ha entregado por completo al ejercicio, luego de haber dado a luz a Dinorah Valentina en junio pasado.

"Subí como 12 kilos, pero ahí la llevo, porque ya perdí como 9; entonces, todavía me falta un poquito. Mi peso ideal es de 59 kilos y estoy en 61, pero bien, yo no me fijo mucho en esas cosas, nomás que me vea bien en cámara y ya", confesó la venezolana.

Desde hace varios años, dijo, ha



estado en pláticas con Carmen Salinas para entrar a la obra; sin embargo, parece que será hasta ahora que su sueño se haga realidad.

"Ojalá que se haga, estamos en conversaciones, el señor Antonio Bellón que es mi representante, ya ha hablado con ella y todo, y yo por mi lado me estoy preparando como el boyscout: siempre listo para cuando me digan.

"Pero sí me encantaría, creo que cualquier actriz en su momento desearía hacerla, es una obra muy completa, donde debes ser una artista muy integral", dijo.

Entre los ejercicios que practica para dar vida a Elena Tejero se encuentran los de tipo cardiovascular y de resistencia,

pues a su consideración debe tener mucha condición para cantar, bailar y actuar al mismo tiempo.

Además mencionó que estaría muy contenta de alternar funciones con Sabine Moussier, quien actualmente protagoniza Aventurera.

"Ya tuve la oportunidad de trabajar con Sabine en Amor sin Maquillaje, me llevé muy bien con ella. Es una chava muy talentosa y le tengo mucho cariño y mucho respeto, y con tal de que me den el chance de estar ahí, yo feliz de la vida".

Como su nena ya tiene siete meses, Machado comentó que no tiene preocupación de dejarla en casa, pues su familia se hace cargo de ella, como durante la locación de Los Simuladores.

"Hoy (ayer) es el primer día que salgo sin ella, bueno, a trabajar, porque había ido a algunos eventos

y cositas, pero actoralmente es el primer trabajo que hago.

"He llamado como 500 veces a mi casa, pero está bien y tengo una persona que la cuida, está con la familia, con la abuelita; entonces, está muy bien mi hija".

Agregó que la pequeña se porta muy bien y que ya duerme ocho horas corridas, por lo que para ella la maternidad ha sido una bendición.

Calla sobre Nuestra Belleza Sinaloa

Al cuestionarle sobre la problemática que atraviesa Laura Zúñiga, Nuestra Belleza Sinaloa 2008, quien fue detenida junto a varios narcotraficantes, la ex Miss Universo declinó dar su opinión al respecto.

'Slumdog Millionaire' Wins Best Drama Film Golden Globe



"Slumdog Millionaire" took the best drama film award at the Golden Globes ceremony in Beverly Hills, Calif., Sunday night.

The movie -- about a young man's journey to become the unlikely winner of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" in India -- also picked up prizes for best screenplay, best original score and best director.

"Thanks ever so much," Danny Boyle said as he collected his directing prize. "Your mad, pulsating affection for our film is much appreciated; really, deeply appreciated."

Also nominated for the best drama film Globe were "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," "Frost/Nixon," "The Reader" and "Revolutionary Road."

"Vicky Cristina Barcelona" won the award for best comedy

or musical film, beating out "Burn After Reading," "Happy-Go-Lucky," "In Bruges" and "Mamma Mia!" for the honor.

Sally Hawkins won the award for best actress in a comedy film for her work in "Happy-Go-Lucky" and Colin Farrell

picked up the equivalent award for his performance in "In Bruges."

"Thank you. Cheers. Thanks a million," Farrell said.

Admitting he was in "absolute shock," he joked, "They must have done the (ballot) counting in Florida."

Mickey Rourke, who has admitted his own past bad behavior cost him acting jobs for years, won the Globe for best actor in a drama film for his performance in "The Wrestler."

"This has been a very long road back for me," Rourke said as he accepted his award.

Kate Winslet won for best actress in a drama for "Revolutionary Road." She also won the supporting actress prize for "The Reader." The late Heath Ledger won the supporting actor prize for "The Dark Knight."

Jake T. Austin's 'powers' beyond TV

Jake T. Austin is extending his powers beyond TV

The 14-year-old New Yorker is already the voice of Nickelodeon's kids sensation "Go, Diego, Go!" and the youngest of three wizards in the Disney Channel hit series "Wizards of Waverly Place."

Next Friday, Austin makes his film debut in the adaptation of Lois Duncan's book "Hotel for Dogs," the tale of two kids with a scheme to create a high-tech animal shelter.

"Working with a hundred dogs was like having a hundred co-stars," Austin says over the phone from Los Angeles. "They were all interesting and brought something to the table in their own unique way."

The pair (Austin and Emma Roberts) transform an abandoned hotel into the ultimate home for their own pooch and a diverse menagerie of friends.

Austin is already known to young audiences for his role as

sorcerer Max Russo in "Wizards of Waverly Place," which debuted in the fall of 2007.

"We're near our 50th episode, and time really flew by," he says.

Co-starring David Henrie and Selena Gómez, the comedy is about a part-Latino family in New York and their three magician children.

"The Russo family is sort of like my family in real life," says Austin. "The mother is Spanish like my mom, and the father is not Spanish -- like my dad. I can relate to that."

Austin's mother is Argentinean and Puerto Rican and his dad of Polish and Irish descent.

He describes his Max as a gullible kid who is a "little oblivious" and, at times, "totally clueless" -- which, he says, could't be further from the truth.

"I'm very witty," he says -- modestly aside. "And I know

what's going on."

Although "Wizards" tries to capture the essence of the city, Austin, who was raised in Queens, says it doesn't quite succeed.

"In New York, there are a lot of horns honking, loud noise and combustion," he says. "The show is a little different."

Austin's face is likely unknown to the world of preschoolers who live by the adventures of "Go, Diego, Go!" but his voice would



be easily recognized as that of the bilingual boy Diego.

"I booked that when I was 9 and I'm still doing it," says Austin. "It was my first role, and I'm so happy it was a Latino role."

Austin is also in "The Perfect Game," the true story of a group of boys from Mexico who become the first non-U.S. team to win the Little League World Series in 1957.

The movie is scheduled to be released later this year.

Angelou deseosa de ver juramentación de Obama

Maya Angelou, quien recitó uno de sus poemas en la primera juramentación del presidente Bill Clinton, no estará presente cuando Barack Obama asuma el poder de la nación. Sin embargo, la poeta asegura que no se perderá ni un minuto.

Angelou, de 80 años, dijo que estará en su casa en Winston-Salem, Carolina del Norte, el próximo martes viendo la ceremonia por televisión.

"Disfrutaré y no me perderé ni un destello de la cámara. Ni un parpadeo", dijo al periódico Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. "Estaré en algún lugar entre llorando y rezando y agradecida y riendo cuando vea rostros conocidos".

Durante la investidura de Clinton en 1993, Angelou leyó una obra que escribió especialmente para la ocasión, "On the Pulse

of Morning" (Sobre el pulso de la mañana). Ningún poeta había leído en una juramentación desde 1961, cuando Robert Frost lo hizo para John F. Kennedy.

Angelou, quien creció en Arkansas, expresó que no esperaba que la volvieran a llamar en esta ocasión y que estaba deseosa de escuchar a su colega Elizabeth Alexander, a quien Obama seleccionó como parte de su ceremonia. "Eso le da a otra persona la oportunidad de pararse bajo el reflector, de tener ese tipo de exposición, y ella es una buena poeta", dijo Angelou. "Sé que será maravilloso". Frost tenía 86 años cuando participó en la ceremonia de Kennedy. El poeta James Dickey leyó en la gala de juramentación de Jimmy Carter. El poeta Miller Williams leyó "Of Hope and History" en la segunda juramentación de Clinton.

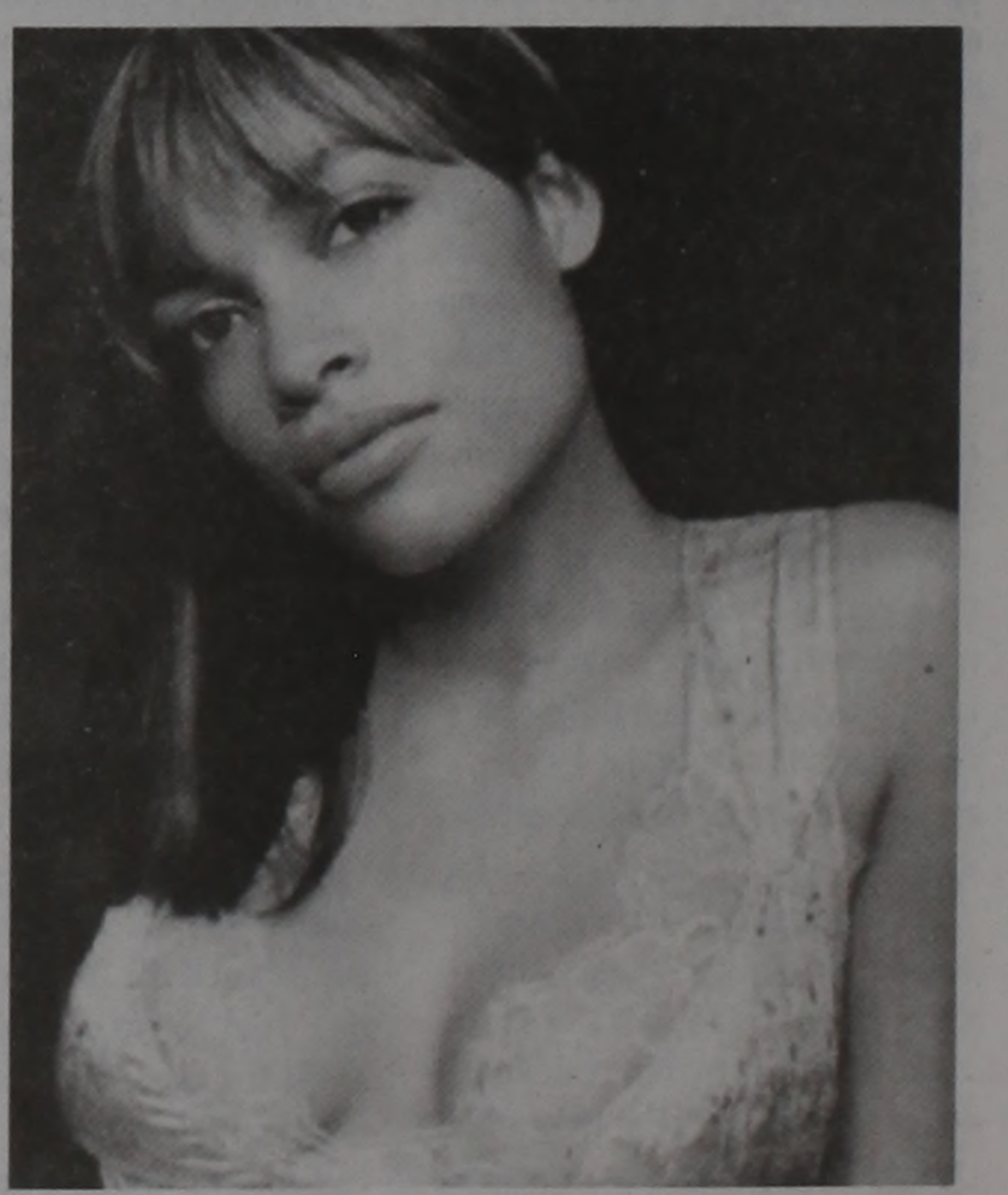
Gregory Nava's El Norte Releases on DVD



Filmmaker Gregory Nava's acclaimed debut, El Norte (1983) about the harrowing journey of two Guatemalan immigrants, will be released on DVD by the Criterion Collection on January 20, 2009. The film has been rarely seen since its release and celebrates its 25th Anniversary and its enduring importance at a critical time when illegal immigration remains one of the most difficult political issues facing our nation. "El Norte tells their story with astonishing visual beauty, with unashamed melodrama, with anger leavened by hope. It is a Grapes of Wrath for our time." -- Roger Ebert

Known as Nava's masterpiece, El Norte was one of the first films to put a human face on the issue of illegal immigration and in 1996 the film was named an "American Classic" and designated for special preservation by the Library of Congress. El Norte is the story of Enrique and Rosa Xuncax, brother and sister, who choose to flee their mountain village in Guatemala rather than face military persecution. They embark upon a heartbreaking journey to a fabled land of plush houses, electric lights, and flush toilets. The land is America: The North. Together, Enrique and Rosa acquire a small piece of the American dream, though their native Mayan identities are slowly being stripped away. When temptation threatens to destroy

Rosario Dawson Guests on Saturday Night Live January 17



Saturday Night Live launches into 2009 with its second show of the month, featuring one of today's hottest film actresses, Rosario Dawson, along with musical guest Fleet Foxes, making their SNL debuts on NBC January 17 at 11:30 p.m. ET.

Dawson has garnered praise for her numerous roles as an actress, making her one of Hollywood's most sought after leading ladies. Dawson can currently be seen in the drama Seven Pounds, in which she stars with Will Smith. Her moving performance in the film has gained her acclaim and praise from critics and fans alike, including a recent nomination for a NAACP Image Award.

Dawson gained recognition in 2005 when she received a Satellite Award for her performance as

"Mimi Marquez" in the film Rent. She was honored again in 2007 at the esteemed ShoWest where she received the award for "Supporting Actress of the Year." Dawson was recently awarded the "Half-Life" Award at the 2008 Cine Vegas International Film Festival alongside Don Cheadle, Viggo Mortensen and Sam Rockwell. Making her film debut in the highly acclaimed and controversial hit Kids, Dawson has appeared in numerous feature films, including Quentin Tarantino's horror project Grindhouse; the acclaimed Spike Lee film, The 25th Hour, opposite Edward Norton, Philip Seymour

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Want to be a boxing expert? Take up boxing



ive speaker, your own insecurity will probably undo you quicker than your accent does.

Remedy this in 2009. Join a boxing gym. You'll learn more about your favorite sport in an hour with the double-end bag than a week with ESPN Classic. Chances are

good there's a gym closer than you think.

If you've got the money, sign up for classes or find a personal trainer. If you're like the rest of us, pick up a book -- Joe Frazier's Box Like the Pros is good as any -- buy some gloves and wraps and set to work with a heavy bag and mirror. If you've got any natural aptitude for punching, some knowledgeable person will approach you eventually. And if you've no natural aptitude, some good Samaritan will come even quicker.

Learn how to punch correctly. Learn balance. Use the speed bag. There are videos galore about it on YouTube. Know that no matter how well-coordinated you are, it's going to take about 25 rounds to figure it out. And no matter how uncoordinated you are it won't require more than 30.

Then spar. Wear a mouthpiece. Go light. Climb between the ropes with a purpose. Tell your partner what you want to work on. Learn other men's vulnerabilities. Learn a lot about your own. And embrace when you're through. It's a great way to make friends.

More than anything else, learn about fatigue. Boxing induces it in a reflexive way. The more you tire, the more you worry. The more you worry, the more you tire. There's just no way to replicate the feeling -- something like drowning -- you get the first time your shoulders burn too much to raise your hands while another man tries to strike you in the face. No video can give you expertise like that. It will likely exorcise words like "tomato can" and "heartless" from your vocabulary.

Sparring will also give you insights about prizefighters' unique form of courage. You'll find that being hit in the face is unpleasant, but not as bad as you thought. You'll see that in less than a minute you're not so afraid of being hit. The real nervousness comes when you get tired.

Exhaustion brings resignation. You find yourself relying on another man's mercy. And you'll find even decent men aren't as merciful as you thought.

Make it a point to attend prizefights in 2009. Your first trip to the fights needn't be at MGM Grand or Madison Square Garden. Make it a local card. Ringside seats aren't cheap, but the rest of a venue often is. At a smaller show the difference between \$100 seats and \$20 seats is generally about 10 feet.

There's always much more boxing happening off television than on. Go to BoxRec.com and search your state. You might be surprised.

For seven days beginning Jan. 11 -- not exactly sweeps week -- there will be fight cards in Florida, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Mississippi and Virginia. There will be a card in Spain and Tanzania, two cards each in Japan, Philippines, Mexico, Germany and the U.K., and three

cards in France.

Not bad for a dying sport. Follow boxing, not just one fighter. The hardest part of this job is corresponding with loud people who care more about one guy than the sport's health. You can tell by their language that many are in their first jobs and still live at home with their parents. Yet there's this bizarre emphasis placed on business -- something they know nothing about. Perhaps it's the residual effect of a champion calling himself "Money." But more of it, I think, has to do with innocence.

When your knowledge of a craft derives from promotional caricatures of its masters, you overemphasize biography. Or hagiography. A remedy? Learn how to box. After a month at the gym, your avatar will start blitzy message boards with stylistic insights -- instead of "if it makez dollar\$ it makes sense PERIOD."

And cut your time on the message boards. Advertisers are about to realize: Whatever traffic is generated by a teenager making 35 posts an hour, he's not a likely consumer of any product his parents don't buy for him. He might look like 35 adult readers, but he doesn't have their buying power. Once advertisers act on this, message boards will shrink. Be prepared.

Besides, sparring with avatars on a message board is a false high, an illusion of accomplishment. It's a dream from which you'll someday awake and find in Shakespeare an apt depiction: "Methought I was enamored of an ass."

Instead, here's a good New Year's resolution: "In 2009, I will spend as much boxing time with my fingers in my gloves as on my keyboard." It will make you a better fan.

Texas Tech WR Crabtree headed to NFL

Michael Crabtree says he's headed to the NFL.

Crabtree was honored as the nation's top receiver each of his two seasons at Texas Tech. He announced his decision at a news conference Tuesday. It was no surprise considering he's expected to be a top-10 draft pick.

Although he played only two seasons, Crabtree redshirted prior to his freshman year. That makes him three years removed from high school and eligible for the draft.

Crabtree caught 231 passes for 3,127 yards and 41 touchdowns over his two seasons, setting all sorts of school and national records. He received the Biletnikoff Award as the nation's top receiver as a freshman and a sophomore and was named All-American

both years.



He was fifth in voting for the Heisman Trophy this past season.

Jennifer Hudson to sing anthem at Super Bowl



Jennifer Hudson will make her first public appearance since the killings of her mother, brother and nephew during sports' grandest event -- the Super Bowl. NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy confirmed Wednesday that Hudson will sing the national anthem at the Super Bowl in Tampa, Fla., on Feb. 1. E! News first reported Tuesday that Hudson would perform.

Hudson hasn't made a public appearance since her 57-year-old mother, Darnell Hudson Donerson; 29-year-old brother Jason Hudson; and 7-year-old nephew Julian King were slain in Chicago in October. Her estranged brother-in-law has been charged in the killings.

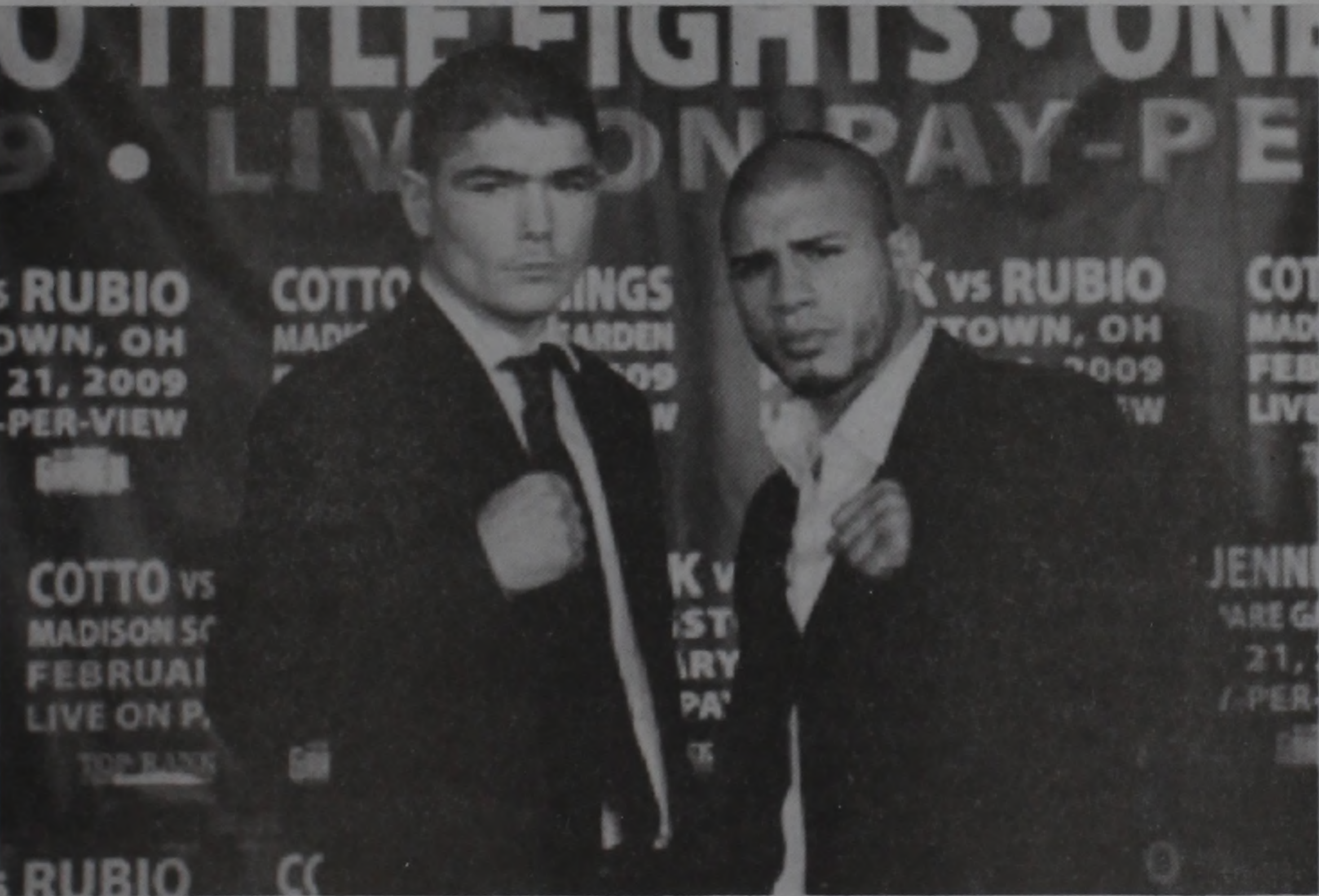
Hudson, who had released her

self-titled debut album shortly before the killings, is also scheduled to sing at the Grammys' MusiCares event in Los Angeles a few days later. She is nominated for four awards at the Feb. 8 Grammy Awards.

The 27-year-old Hudson already has an Oscar to her credit, a best supporting actress win for her role in Dreamgirls. The former American Idol contestant's career was continuing its skyrocketing rise, with featured roles in movies like Sex and the City and The Secret Life of Bees, as well as her album release, when the slayings occurred.

The Super Bowl is one of the most viewed spectacles on television. Bruce Springsteen is scheduled to sing during halftime.

Cotto regresa con la ambición de volver a la cúspide



Se dice que los grandes boxeadores demuestran lo que valen tras los descalabros.

Ahora es el turno de Miguel Cotto para dejar claro que puede levantarse tras sufrir la primera derrota de su carrera.

Medio año después de sucumbir noqueado en el undécimo asalto ante Antonio Margarito, Cotto volverá a un entarimado el 21 de febrero cuando se mida con Michael Jennings por el cetro vacante welter de la Organización Mundial de Boxeo.

"Tengo la clase y la habilidad para volver", dijo el puertorriqueño Cotto en una rueda de prensa en el Madison Square de Garden. "Sé que puedo regresar a ser el mismo de antes. Aún me sigo sintiendo como campeón".

"Quiero demostrarle a la gente que todavía tengo mucho boxeo. Miguel Cotto quiere volver a ser el que era en junio".

Cotto todavía tiene atravesada la espina de su revés ante Margarito, el pasado 26 de julio en

Las Vegas, en un combate en el que arrancó dominando y acabó desbordado por la potencia del mexicano.

Por eso las secuelas de ese combate acapararon las interrogantes: "¿Te costó mucho olvidarte de la derrota?". "Casi nada, no vale la pena lamentarse tanto".

"¿Volviste a ver el vídeo?". "Para qué. Yo estuve ahí".

"¿Qué aprendiste?". "Lo que busco es ser más inteligente arriba del ring. Por lo demás quiero seguir siendo el mismo boxeador que sale a ganar cada asalto".

"¿Quieres la revancha?". "Eso es lo que espero, pero no depende de mí. Me va a tocar esperar".

Cotto añadió que se propone disputar tres peleas este año, y en lo posible con los grandes nombres de la división welter.

Una posibilidad es vérselas con Manny Pacquiao, el filipino que en diciembre pasado venció por nocaut técnico a Oscar De La Hoya en las 147 libras.

"Estoy dispuesto a pelear con

los mejores y lo mejor sería que Pacquiao se quede en las 147", afirmó.

Tampoco se mostró inquieto por el periodo de inactividad más prolongado en su trayectoria profesional: "Eso no me preocupa en lo absoluto, vengo preparándome con la misma seriedad de siempre".

Lo que sí reconoció es que no se puede dar el lujo de subestimar con su oponente inglés, con todo y que éste por primera vez peleará fuera de su país y por un cetro mundial.

Su promotor Bob Arum recordó que los británicos hace tiempo que dejaron de ser "pan comido", y mencionó los nombres de Joe Calzaghe y Ricky Hatton como ejemplos.

"No lo conozco, pero no me voy a descuidar", señaló Cotto (32-1 y 26 nocauts). "Me dicen que es un peleador completo y que se sabe mover".

Jennings (34-1, 16 nocauts) se expresó entusiasmado con sus

posibilidades.

"Yo no vengo de vacaciones o darne un paseo", avisó.

"Margarito demostró que Miguel Cotto no es invencible y se lo haré recordar". El combate en el Garden es por el título que Paul Williams dejó vacante al subir de división.

La meca neoyorquina

del boxeo es un escenario habitual para Cotto, ya que ha peleado ahí por lo menos un combate al año entre 2005-07.

"Pelear aquí es como pelear en Puerto Rico. Estoy como en casa con tanta gente boricua y latina", afirmó.

Su combate formará parte de una inusual doble velada simultánea de Top Rank en sitios diferentes. Cotto y Jennings pelearán en Nueva York, mientras que Kelly Pavlik defenderá los títulos medianos del OMB y CMB ante el mexicano y primer retador Marco Antonio Rubio.

La pelea Pavlik-Rubio se disputará en Youngstown, Ohio, la ciudad natal del estadounidense. Pavlik también viene de perder su último combate, en este caso por decisión ante Bernard Hopkins.

"El boxeo debe buscar diversas formas de promoverse. Esta velada va a marcar una nueva era en el deporte", dijo Arum.

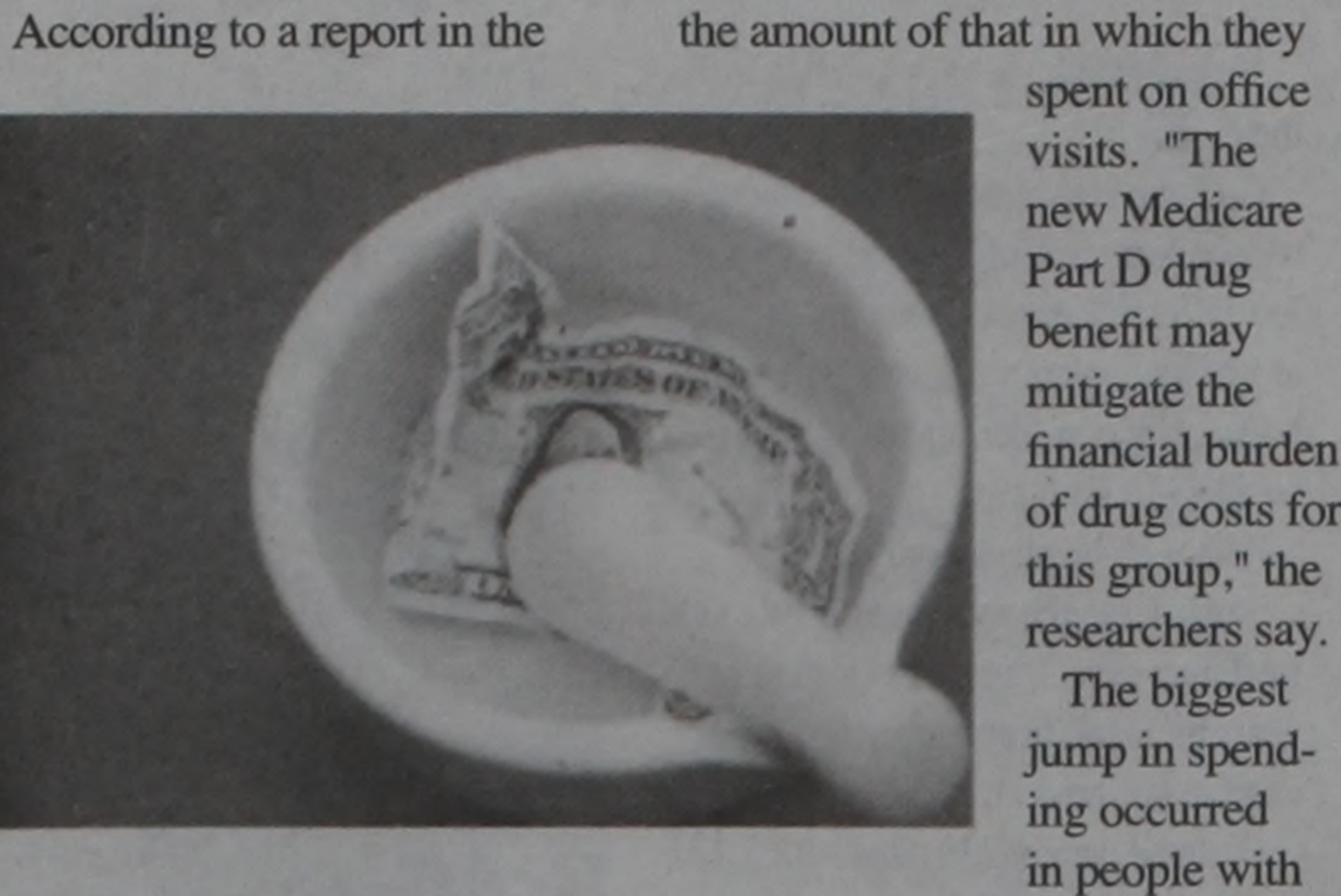


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Report Shows Healthcare Spending On The Rise



According to a report in the latest issue of the health policy journal Health Affairs, an increase in chronic conditions, especially diabetes and high blood pressure, has caused about a 40 percent increase in healthcare expense over the past decade.

"Chronic conditions are more than just a health issue for the elderly. They are a household economics issue for every American," lead co-author Kathryn Paez said in a statement. "Taking the time and making the effort to prevent diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes will save Americans money and increase their quality of life."

Paez, a research scientist at the Silver Spring, Maryland-based Center for Health Policy and Research, Social and Scientific Systems, added.

Using data from the national Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, Paez and colleagues compared 1996 and 2005 out-of-pocket healthcare costs, which represents 292 million Americans.

The average annual out-of-pocket spending on healthcare rose from \$427 in 1996 to \$741 in 2005. This shows a 39.4 percent inflation-adjusted increase in healthcare spending by the consumer for insurance co-payments, deductibles, and other related medical items not covered by health insurance.

Americans over age 65 with multiple chronic diseases spent an average of \$1,292 per year on prescription drugs in 2005, according to Paez and colleagues. This is more than five times

the amount of that in which they spent on office visits. "The new Medicare Part D drug benefit may mitigate the financial burden of drug costs for this group," the researchers say. The biggest jump in spending occurred in people with multiple chronic conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes. Reports of multiple chronic disease is at 9.7 percent among Americans between 45 and 64 years of age.

The results show that whites reported having more chronic conditions than any other race, and women were more likely than men to report having at least one chronic medical condition.

People with low-income who did not receive Medicaid spent double what Medicaid recipients spent for care. Paez and colleagues say that finding this highlights the need to expand coverage to non-elderly adults who are unable to obtain insurance through employers or other means. They note that this group is "increasingly developing chronic conditions while becoming more likely to be uninsured."

Paez and colleagues conclude that health insurance benefits and healthcare reform should include incentives for people to adopt lifestyle practices that reduce the risk of conditions and improve health, because many chronic ailments stem from poor lifestyle habits and get better as lifestyle habits improve.

"Employers are increasingly recognizing the value of wellness programs and making them available to employees. However, more dramatic and systematic efforts are needed to induce a societal shift where primary and secondary prevention is considered a basic benefit and healthy lifestyles are the cultural norm," they wrote.

Controle el asma infantil

Los padres pueden ayudar a proteger a sus pequeños de



problemas con el asma. Para más de nueve millones de niños con asma crónica en los Estados Unidos, los desencadenantes, como los microbios, los virus, el aire frío y la caspa de las mascotas pueden exacerbar los síntomas del asma, lo que puede producir un ataque y requerir el uso de medicina de alivio rápido. Una visita a la sala de emergencias del hospital debido a síntomas de asma es una prueba evidente de un asma fuera de control y es algo que se debe hablar con el doctor del niño de inmediato.

La caspa de las mascotas y los virus respiratorios son apenas dos de los desencadenantes

que convierten los espacios interiores en lugares incómodos para los niños con asma. Estos desencadenantes pueden provocar evidentes síntomas de asma, tales como tos y sibilancias. Pero hay otros síntomas que son más silenciosos y difíciles de reconocer.

Hay medicinas de uso diario que te pueden ayudar a prevenir los síntomas del asma. A diferencia de las medicinas de alivio rápido, las medicinas de control del asma se usan diariamente (aun durante los periodos en que no hay síntomas) porque tratan la inflamación y la parte más silenciosa del asma, esa que no se puede oír, ver ni sentir.

Se puede tener acceso en AsthmaKidCare.com a un plan de ese tipo, que los padres deben completar con el doctor del niño.

Para obtener más información acerca de Pulmicort Respules, los padres deben hablar con el doctor de su niño y visitar www.asthmakidcare.com. Pulmicort Respules es un producto de AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals LP.

El cáncer del seno no es sólo hereditario

Según un estudio reciente, mujeres jóvenes con alguna enfermedad mamaria benigna están en mayor riesgo de desarrollar cáncer de seno en el futuro. La hiperplasia atípica (HA) ocurre cuando aparecen células anormales y numerosas que podrían desarrollar cáncer de seno en algún momento de sus vidas —aunque la paciente no tenga un historial médico de cáncer en la familia.

Los hallazgos del estudio revelaron que entre las mujeres que participaron en la investigación, aquellas que tenían la enfermedad benigna tenían seis veces más posibilidades de tener un cáncer que aquellas que no. El estudio fue dado a conocer en el simposio sobre Cáncer del Seno de la Asociación Americana para la Investigación del Cáncer.

"El cáncer de mama es la causa principal de muerte por cáncer entre las mujeres de 25 a 49 años; además, la supervivencia general en estas pacientes jóvenes es peor, y el riesgo de que reaparezca el cáncer es mayor que en

mujeres de más edad. Por ello, es importante entender cómo se desarrolla el cáncer y las medidas que servirían para evitarlo", dijo la doctora Karthik Ghosh, líder de la investigación.

En el estudio se analizaron 4,460 mujeres con enfermedad benigna; de éstas, 326 desarrollaron cáncer del seno después de unos años. El promedio de edad de las mujeres participantes en el estudio fue de 39 años. Otro hallazgo importante fue que el riesgo aumentó en las mujeres diagnosticadas con HA cuando las glándulas productoras de leche o lobulillos dejaron de funcionar.

Según Ghosh, existen muchas células que controlan el conducto lácteo en el seno y, aunque no son cancerígenas, son influenciadas por los antecedentes familiares.

Artery Disease Patients Show Improvement With Walking Therapy

U.S. researchers said on Tuesday that people with a painful condition known as peripheral artery disease can improve their walking endurance by spending time on a treadmill.

PAD suffers often experience crippling pain and cramps even during mild exercise. But doctors believe the lack of exercise may actually be making things worse.

For the study, researchers wanted to find out whether PAD patients walking with a personal trainer could help improve the condition, which affects 8 million people in the United States.

Dr. Mary McDermott of Northwestern University, whose study appears in the Journal of the American Medical Association,

said it is an important new finding for patients with PAD.

"People said it was much easier for them to walk."

The pain from artery disease often escalates with exercise because it increases the demand for blood flow to the muscles. If a blockage cuts blood flow, muscles do not get enough blood, causing pain known as "intermittent claudication" that comes and goes.

Previous studies found that patients with this classic symptom benefited from exercise, but many peripheral artery disease patients do not have the pain and it has not been clear whether they would benefit from exercise.

The 156 patients involved in the study were divided into three

groups: a supervised treadmill group that eventually walked 40 minutes three times a week, a group that did leg strengthening exercises three times a week and a control group that did neither.

Patients in the walking group were able to walk an extra 69 feet in a six-minute treadmill test after only six months compared with when they started. They also showed improvements in cardiovascular health, as measured by blood flow through an artery in the arm.

Those who didn't exercise showed a decline, decreasing the distance they could walk on a treadmill by 49 steps. People in the leg exercise group were

also able to climb stairs better and showed better walking performance.

McDermott said her team found that leg strengthening does have some benefit and seemingly improves quality of life.

The findings suggest that doctors should encourage patients with peripheral artery disease to exercise regularly, preferably with a personal coach standing by for guidance.

"It's particularly hard to motivate them to exercise because they get symptoms in their legs with walking," she said. "Having a trainer stand there to offer encouragement was key." But even with no trainer, she thinks walking could help.

"Based on what I know I would say some exercise is better than no exercise," she said.

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