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FBI agent: Criminals targeting Hispanics

BY NOEL E. OMAN

Criminals increasingly see newly arrived Hispanic immigrants as targets for easy money, a top FBI agent said Saturday at a conference on issues facing the Hispanic community.

Steven F. Burroughs, a supervisory special agent and the agency's civil coordinator in Arkansas, said the "rash of assaults and home invasions" against Hispanics stem from criminals realizing that Hispanics are, to use the street term, "walking ATMs," meaning they tend to keep large sums of money on their person or in their homes because they distrust banks and other financial institutions.

"It's becoming more and more widespread knowledge among the criminal element," he said.

Many Hispanics are fearful of reporting the crimes to authorities either because they are in the United States illegally or they distrust law enforcement agencies based on their experiences in the countries where they were born and raised, Burroughs said.

Burroughs spoke at the 2009 state convention of the League of United Latin American Citizens, held Friday and Saturday in Little Rock.

In answer to a question about "black on brown" crime, Burroughs said he doubted the crimes stemmed from racial animosity but rather targets of opportunity.

Burroughs spoke to about 50 conference attendees at the J.A. Gilbreath Conference Center at Baptist Health Medical Center.

The conference also covered topics such as domestic violence, disparity in health care, the status of Hispanic students in Arkansas and challenges to

Burroughs said it will always be difficult for some Hispanics to work with law enforcement because of fears about their immigration status. The FBI has

opened trust with Hispanics who now go to the FBI with information.

"We weren't getting calls about human trafficking," he said. "But



ward changes in immigration policies.

Such issues underscore the lack of leadership in the Hispanic community, said Michel Leidermann, the league's communications director. "We're trying to push for representation. We don't have any representation in the [Arkansas] Legislature or other agencies.

"That needs to be changed. The community is growing so we need to be represented accordingly. Other people are fighting our [political] fights. We want to fight our fights if possible."

too many other responsibilities to focus on immigration violations, but Burroughs said his agency cannot guarantee a crime victim won't be deported if he is here illegally because agents are sworn to uphold the law.

But a three-year-old ad hoc committee of law enforcement officers and members of the different groups involved in civil rights has helped the FBI to develop leads to prosecute cases involving human trafficking, Burroughs said.

Through the Arkansas Civil Rights Working Group, Burroughs said his office has devel-

oped trust with Hispanics who now go to the FBI with information.

"We're still just knocking off the tip of the iceberg."

No one involved in the cases have yet to be deported, he said. Some could eventually remain in the United States, but Burroughs said again that he couldn't guarantee it.

Adaptability of Drug Traffickers Makes Demand Reduction the Obvious Solution

Over the last couple of decades, drug trafficking organizations have shown themselves to be clever businessmen capable of adapting to market conditions. When the heat gets too great in one area, they shift their activities to a different area.

When there was too much Drug Enforcement Agency attention on cocaine coming through South Florida, the Columbian manufacturers hired Mexican drug-trafficking organizations (DTOs) to smuggle their wares across the border into the States. It is assumed that they estimated the cost of having Mexican DTOs get a cut of the profits was less than their cost evading interdiction efforts.

When border security tightened after September 11, 2001, drug traffickers began to dig tunnels under the Mexico-U.S. border. One of the largest ones detected was seven-tenths of a mile long and held two tons of baled marijuana.

When law enforcement got too heavy in Philadelphia, local drug lords moved their stash houses to the suburbs. And in Washington State, indoor grows of marijuana escalated as a solution to increased destruction of marijuana crops in national forests. And in the last month, federal drug authorities have described Atlanta as the new gateway for the movement of drugs to eastern U.S. regions.

"The 'balloon theory' is used to explain situations like this," stated Derry Hallmark, Director of Admissions and Certified Chemical Dependency Counselor at Narconon Arrowhead. Narconon Arrowhead is one of the country's leading drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers, located in Canadian, Oklahoma. "When you pinch a balloon in one area, the air in the balloon simply moves to a different part of the balloon. If you increase drug enforcement in one area, the drugs will flow through a different area. Thus the solution to drug problems in this country must include effective means of reducing demand. And that means rehabilitation that offers a lasting solution plus drug education for the young."

Narconon Arrowhead has been part of the solution for more than forty years. At more than 100 centers around the world, seven out of ten Narconon graduates have gone on to live drug-free lives. And in the last year, Narconon Arrowhead's drug education staff reached more than 65,000 young people in four states with their proven drug education curriculum.

"We are dedicated to a drug-free future for America," added Mr. Hallmark. "Decriminalizing drugs is only an option when demand has been greatly reduced first. What message do we want to send to our young people? They should understand that life is better when one is drug-free. Let's send that message first."

To find immediate help for someone who is having a problem with any kind of drug or alcohol, contact Narconon's free addiction consultation and referral helpline at 1-800-468-6933 or visit their website at www.stopaddiction.com. The Narconon program was founded in 1966 by William Benitez in Arizona State prison, and is based on the humanitarian works of L. Ron Hubbard. In more than 80 centers around the world, Narconon programs restore drug and alcohol abusers and addicts to a clean and sober lifestyle.

School of Music hosts 10th Annual La Feria del Mariachi

SAN MARCOS - The 10th annual "La Feria del Mariachi Concert" will be held April 25 from 7:00-9:30 p.m. in Strahan Coliseum at Texas State University-San Marcos.

This year's concert will be hosted by master of ceremonies Alberto

held in his honor each year.

More than 150 middle and high school student participants will be in the coliseum beginning at 10 a.m. for a competition and instructional seminars focusing on various aspects of the mariachi musical art



Alegre and presents the Mariachi Los Arrieros del Valle, Texas State's own mariachi ensembles, Nueva Generación and Mariachi Infantil, as well as the winners from the Mariachi competition held earlier in the day.

A lifetime achievement award, "La Voz De Oro," will also be presented to Pedro Fernandez for his achievements and contributions to Mariachi music in the United States and Mexico. Fernandez will also present the trophies to the winners of the mariachi competition, which is

form. Participants for the competition portion of the event travel from high schools, middle schools and colleges throughout Texas.

Texas State students may purchase tickets at the door for \$5 with a university ID the day of the event. Tickets (\$15 for preferred seating, \$10 regular seating and \$5 for children ages 13 and under) for all others may be purchased at the door or the main office in the School of Music.

For more information please visit the Texas State Multi-Cultural

News Briefs

Ragin' Cajun, an Annual Fundraiser

The tastes and sounds of Louisiana are coming to Lubbock. Ragin' Cajun, an annual fundraiser for Special Olympics Texas, will be held on Saturday, April 25 from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the Lubbock City Bank Coliseum.

Bring your appetites because this Cajun party is all about great food, including crawfish, crab legs, shrimp, sausage and more. During the event, listen to live music from several local bands, including Jazz Alley, Andy Eppler, The Clandestine Amigos, Southern Conviction and Dustin Garrett and the Texas Cruisers. Below is a press release with more information about the event and ticket prices.

Cinco de Mayo luncheon

LUBBOCK, TX - The Lubbock Chamber of Commerce's Hispanic Business Division, along with Telemundo Lubbock and Magic 93.7, will host the Cinco de Mayo Luncheon on Friday, May 1 at 11:30 a.m. at the South Plains Fairgrounds. The luncheon will feature the following speakers: the Most Reverend Bishop Placido Rodriguez, CMF; Eddie "The Dog" Moreno; and Jennifer "Chismosa" Martinez.

Lunch will be catered by Montelongo's Mexican Restaurant and tickets are just \$15 or \$10 for Chamber members. Tables of eight and sponsorships are available. Tickets can be purchased at the Chamber at 1301 Broadway, Suite 101, online at www.lubbockchamber.com, or at Montelongo's at 3021 Clovis Road.

The Luncheon will celebrate the kickoff of the weekend's Cinco de Mayo festivities. For more information, please contact the Chamber at 761.7000 or www.lubbockchamber.com.

NCLR TO TESTIFY BEFORE CONGRESS ON PROTECTING AMERICANS FROM PREDATORY LENDING

Washington, DC—Janet Murguía will testify before the U.S. House Committee on Financial Services on Thursday to urge lawmakers to take bold steps toward fixing the nation's broken mortgage system, which will leave 400,000 Latinos without a home this year.

The hearing will look at consumer protection in the financial services sector as it relates to predatory lending. Murguía's testimony will call for stronger provisions to deter mortgage lenders from steering borrowers into risky, unaffordable mortgage products and provide protections for Latinos and other underserved communities. The hearing will be presided over by Committee Chair Barney Frank (D-MA) and will take place at 1:00 p.m. in Room 2128 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

Latino homeowners are twice as likely as Whites to end up with a subprime loan, which results in higher fees and greater susceptibility to foreclosure. NCLR will speak to the predatory tactics targeting Latino mortgage borrowers, which threatens the significant gains in homeownership that the Latino community has made over the last decade.

Journalists Who Revealed Sheriff Arpaio's Activities Win Pulitzer Prize Series Reveals Negative Impact of Local Police Taking On Immigration Enforcement

Pulitzer Prize Awarded

Washington, D.C. - Today, reporters Ryan Gabrielson and Paul Giblin of the East Valley Tribune in Mesa, Arizona (Giblin is now with the Arizona Guardian) were awarded a Pulitzer Prize for their local reporting on Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Over the past several years, "Sheriff Joe" has transformed his police department into an immigration-enforcement agency -- running up costs, conducting large-scale neighborhood sweeps, and neglecting other crime-fighting activities. The award-winning series revealed the Sheriff's "focus on immigration enforcement and how it endangered investigation of violent crime and other aspects of public safety," says the Pulitzer website.

Hispanic Honor Society

Hispanic Honor Society Hosts First-Ever Peace and Security Forum The Chapter Alpha Phi of Sigma Delta Pi, the National Hispanic Honor Society, is hosting the first-ever Annual Peace and Security Forum

The event will be at 5:30 - 7 p.m., Tuesday (April 21) in the Auditorium of the International Cultural Center, 601 Indiana Ave.

Panelists Gary Bell will be representing the Middle East, Glen Biglaiser representing Latin America, Lynne Fallwell representing Europe and Dennis Patterson representing Asia will discuss the current economic crisis and global security. Ambassador Tibor Nagy will moderate the conversation. Ambassador Nagy moderates panelists' discussion.

CONTACT: Comfort Pratt, adviser, Sigma Delta Pi, College of Education, Texas Tech University, (806) 742-1997 ext. 237, or c.pratt@ttu.edu.

NCLR TO TESTIFY BEFORE CONGRESS ON PROTECTING AMERICANS FROM PREDATORY LENDING

Washington, DC—Janet Murguía, President and CEO of NCLR (the National Council of La Raza), the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, will testify before the U.S. House Committee on Financial Services on Thursday to urge lawmakers to take bold steps toward fixing the nation's broken mortgage system, which will leave 400,000 Latinos without a home this year.

The hearing will look at consumer protection in the financial services sector as it relates to predatory lending. Murguía's testimony will call for stronger provisions to deter mortgage lenders from steering borrowers into risky, unaffordable mortgage products and provide protections for Latinos and other underserved communities. The hearing will be presided over by Committee Chair Barney Frank (D-MA) and will take place at 1:00 p.m. in Room 2128 of the Rayburn House Office Building.

NCLR commends Congress for its efforts to protect Americans from predatory lending, but these hard economic times rooted in a crippling foreclosure crisis demand bolder action. The lack of strong regulations and enforcement has devastated Latino and other minority communities. It is disappointing that it took the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression to motivate Congress and regulators to seriously address predatory and abusive lending. We cannot afford to let the situation worsen before we take a strong stand.

Latino homeowners are twice as likely as Whites to end up with a subprime loan, which results in higher fees and greater susceptibility to foreclosure. NCLR will speak to the predatory tactics targeting Latino mortgage borrowers, which threatens the significant gains in homeownership that the Latino community has made over the last decade.

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Editorial

Guest Commentary

HUGO CHÁVEZ'S PEACE OFFERING

By José de la Isla
I met Fanny Riva Palacio, an editor with Mexico City's El Heraldo at the time (now she's a university professor), during that country's 1994 presidential election. We were paired to interview María Elena Cruz Varela, a writer who had just been released from prison in Cuba. One day she was isolated from the world; the next, literally, she was observing a democratic election. Varela told us about how she was tortured and "not here" with us. At first, her words seemed like a poet's hyperbole. "What do you mean you are not here?" "My heart is in Cuba," she told me. "I died in Havana." At that instant I experienced the thin membrane separating my reality and another's.

Fanny and I recalled that interview each time we met on my trips to Mexico City in the years that followed. She seemed amused I was trying to get a handle on the Latin American experience. There was a kind of reality at her finger tips that I lacked the capacity to understand, she claimed. I was screwed on too tight to see from the other angle. She recommended a book I should read.

On April 17, at the start of the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago, while heads of government chatted waiting to be announced before entering the Great Hall, President Obama saw Hugo Chávez across the room. He went over and said, "Cómo estás." They smiled, Chávez replied something. They shook hands and Obama went back to his position in line.

A senior administration official described the session that followed in the hall as "lively." Chávez is believed to have been warmed by his colleagues to tone down the anti-U.S. outbursts he is known for.

In the warming of personal relations, Obama and Chávez were photographed shaking hands a second time and Chávez presented Obama with a copy of Eduardo Galeano's book, "The Open Veins of Latin America." This is the same book Fanny had recommended to me a dozen years ago. It is still the best journalistic and literary work of its kind. The book is different from terse histories that lack an ability to transcend the thin membrane between one reality and another.

We tend to take it as severe criticism or disguised antipathy or an ideological split when Latin Americans claim we lack insight into their experience. Yet, their populist criticisms are often meant as expressions of a deep hurt and disappointment from a friend who longs to be understood on his terms.

In the forward of the edition I read, Isabel Allende, the best-selling writer, says she discovered the book in Chile "when I was young and still believed that the world could be shaped according to our best intentions and hopes." She imagined from the book "America was a woman and she was telling in my ear her secrets, the acts of love and violations that had created her."

She called Galeano "one of the most interesting authors to ever come out of Latin America." When she went into exile after the military coup, she took some clothes, family pictures, a bag of dirt from her garden, a volume of Pablo Neruda poems and her copy of Open Veins. The 1971 book is an economic criticism, ethnography, history, ecology, journalism and a minor literary masterpiece.

It was a good peace offering by Hugo Chávez, but one easily misunderstood because far too many in the United States still don't realize truth can come with several versions; others should be entitled to their own reality.

[José de la Isla's latest book, Day Night Life Death Hope, is distributed by The Ford Foundation. He writes a weekly commentary for Hispanic Link News Service and is author of The Rise of Hispanic Political Power (2003). E-mail him at joseisla3@yahoo.com.]

OFRENDA DE PAZ DE HUGO CHÁVEZ

José de la Isla
HOUSTON, Texas — Conocí a Fanny Riva Palacio, entonces editora con El Heraldo de la Ciudad de México (ahora profesora universitaria), durante los comicios presidenciales de México en 1994. Nos juntaron para entrevistar a María Elena Cruz Varela, escritora recientemente liberada de la cárcel en Cuba. Un día estaba aislada del mundo; al día siguiente, literalmente, observaba una elección democrática.

Varela nos contó cómo la habían torturado y que "no estaba aquí" con nosotros. Al comienzo, parecían palabras de hipérbole de una poeta. "¿Qué quieres decir con que no estás aquí?"

"Mi corazón está en Cuba", me dijo. "Yo me morí en La Habana." En aquel instante sentí la frágil membrana que separa mi realidad de la de otra persona.

Recordamos, Fanny y yo, esa entrevista cada vez que nos reuníamos durante mis viajes a México en los años que siguieron. Ella parecía estar divertida con mi deseo de comprender la experiencia latinoamericana. Decía que ella tenía al alcance de las yemas de los dedos una realidad que yo no era capaz de entender; que tenía los pernos demasiado ajustados como para poder ver desde otro ángulo.

Me recomendó leer un libro. El 17 de abril, al iniciarse la Cumbre de las Américas en Trinidad y Tobago, mientras que charlaban los dirigentes de gobierno esperando ser anunciados antes de ingresar al Gran Salón, el presidente Obama vio al otro lado del recinto a Hugo Chávez. Se le acercó y dijo, "¿Cómo estás?" Sonrieron, y Chávez algo respondió. Se dieron la mano y Obama volvió a su posición en la fila.

Un funcionario principal de la administración describió la sesión que siguió en el salón como "animada". Se cree que los colegas le advirtieron a Chávez que bajara el tono de los exabruptos contra los Estados Unidos por lo que se le conoce.

Al entablar relaciones más cálidas, a Obama y a Chávez los fotografiaron dándose la mano por segunda vez y Chávez le presentó a Obama un ejemplar del libro, "Las venas abiertas de América Latina", de Eduardo Galeano.

Es el mismo libro que me recomendara a mí Fanny hace una docena de años. Sigue siendo la mejor obra periodística y literaria de su índole. El libro es diferente de esas tersas historias incapaces de trascender la frágil membrana entre una realidad y otra.

Nuestra tendencia es de tomar como severa crítica u oculta antipatía o disensión ideológica cuando los latinoamericanos sostienen que no contamos con la perspectiva para comprender su experiencia. No obstante, su crítica populista con frecuencia es una indicación del dolor profundo y de la decepción que siente un amigo que añora ser comprendido de acuerdo a sus propios términos.

En el prólogo de la edición que yo leí, autora Isabel Allende dice que ella descubrió el libro en Chile, "cuando era joven y todavía creía que el mundo se podía conformar de acuerdo a nuestras mejores intenciones y esperanzas". Ella imaginó del libro que "América era una mujer y ella me susurraba al oído sus secretos, los actos de amor y de violación que le habían creado".

Dijo que Galeano era "uno de los autores más interesantes de salir nunca de América Latina". Cuando se exiló ella después del golpe militar en Chile, se llevó algo de ropa, fotos de la familia, un saco de tierra de su jardín, un tomo de poesía de Pablo Neruda y su ejemplar de Venas abiertas.

I'm Here for the Beer

By: Ysidro Gutierrez

And so it came to pass that in those dreary days of September last the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce morphed into the "Let Lubbock Vote PAC" and hired "Texas Petition Strategies" that successfully garnered 33,000 signatures to usher in a new era in Lubbock History: Or perhaps this is not so new an era. Many have made the effort in days long gone to do as the May 9, 2009 election promises to do - all failed.

Since this latest round began, each side in it to win it have drawn battle lines "For" and "Against" and squared off in the arena of public opinion. The arguments from both sides are wholly predictable.

The debate was started by City Councilman Todd Klein. He was the first to propose a "Zoning Plan" for off premise beer sales just in case the issue ever came up for a vote. Linda Deleon and Floyd Price voted against the idea of Planning for future contingencies. Strange since both Deleon and Price had put up trial balloons some months earlier about the same issue. For these two, it is never really about what is right for the community - it's always about themselves.

Following Todd Klein's lead the Chamber of Commerce jumped headlong into the fray on the "For" side. "It's about protecting every citizen's constitutional right to vote" they argued, "We don't care one way or the other if it passes or fails" they said. "Oh, by the way - would you contribute \$100,000 to pay the Petition gath'ers?"

By the first Monday in October it was widely held that the voters would vote to expand alcohol sales in Lubbock County. Most Radio talk shows conceded as much. The momentum favored the "For" side.

The "Against" side made a valiant effort to win the hearts and minds of voters, but they conceded that this time Lubbock may see the "Strip" stripped. Once the corner store shelves are lined with the finest vodkas, whiskies, and wines, who would so much as think about cracking up the Hummer for a quick trip to the Strip? El Editor readers certainly wouldn't.

I can't help but admire the "Against" group. They're the underdogs this time out. They are not only fighting the "For" crowd money and organization, which are the two essentials for winning" they are up against history itself. Recent years have seen incremental encroachment of beer and wine and cocktails throughout Lubbock. Lubbockites can partake of these beverages but they can't tak'em home. The "For" crowd is quick to drive home this point.

Then there is the issue of our nearest neighbors. Voters in most of the surrounding counties have already approved the sale of alcohol for off premise consumption thereby soothing the doubts of die easy types on the "Against" side. Voters seem accepting of the argument that it is time for Lubbock to do as our neighbors have done; This is one of the "For" group's strongest assertions.

The "For" group has another singular advantage - TTU students. A group called "Make Lubbock Wet" conducted a month long voter registration drive solely for the purpose of getting "For" voters for both Propositions on the May 9th ballot.

All these things considered, I must pause to ponder what will become of the Bulegas (For the English only reader: a Bulega is the TexMex pronunciation of Bootlegger). The best friend of the Bulega was the Lubbock Strip - 10 miles is a distant galaxy for those who frequent the last vestige of American prohibition. After the May 9th Election I'm certain the Lubbock Strip will disappear. West Texas prairie grass will pock mark the pavement in short order. However I'm not sure the Bulegas will disappear. The Bulegas niche is late evening and early morning when the corner store is closed. When a stranger knocks on the door of a Bulega - they don't even have to say, "I'm here for the beer" - the Bulega takes the cash and hands over "un cuarto de Falstaff."

Early voting starts Monday April 27 and runs until May 5th. Election day is May 9, 2009. Don't forget to vote "For" or "Against" Propositions 1 for County wide off-premises alcohol sale and for Proposition 2 for sale of mixed beverages in restaurants. "Don't Drink and Drive" but it's Okay to "Drive to Vote"

OBAMA'S 'HEMISPHERIC WARMING' IS A GOOD HARBINGER

By José de la Isla

With forays to Mexico and the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago, Barack Obama has succeeded in conveying a new U.S. attitude — and policy direction — for relations with Latin America.

The trips were preceded by policy actions.

His one-day stay-over and meeting with President Felipe Calderón in Mexico City on April 16, intended to show solidarity in that country's fight against drug-trafficking cartels.

In the month preceding Obama's arrival in Mexico City, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had acknowledged that the United States shared responsibility stemming from the uncontrolled U.S. demand for illicit drugs and gunrunning supplying the cartels.

In mid-March Homeland Secretary Janet Napolitano announced an initiative to mobilize more border-enforcement teams by multiplying the number of intelligence analysts working on the border and stepped up searches of vehicles going into Mexico.

Just prior to Obama's departure for Mexico, Alan Bersin was named

"border czar." The former U.S. Attorney in San Diego and later its school superintendent was in charge in the mid-1990s of implementing "Operation Gatekeeper," which fortified the area's border gateway. The measure effectively shifted illegal immigration to dangerous desert crossings to the East.

Fluent in Spanish, Bersin becomes the "go-to" person in the administration on illegal immigration and drug violence issues along the border.

Calling it a protocol visit, The-News.com of Mexico City quoted governing National Action Party deputy Cristián Castañón as saying, "All the signals that we've received from President Obama is that he wants to establish a new relationship."

After a meeting with Mexico President Felipe Calderón, Obama announced he planned to support an inter-American weapons treaty meant to fight the drug trade. The treaty, adopted by the Organization of American States, was signed in 1997 by former President Bill Clinton but was never ratified by the

U.S. Senate.

While Obama was in Mexico before departing for the summit, Raúl Castro reacted to the thaw in relations coming from the White House announcement that the Administration was withdrawing restrictions on U.S. citizens traveling to visit family members and on remittances to the island. While attending meetings in Venezuela, Castro said, "[W]e are prepared, wherever they want, to discuss everything — human rights, freedom of the press, political prisoners — everything, everything, everything that they want to discuss."

The Cuban president was attending a rump meeting of leftist Latin American presidents, hosted by Venezuela's antagonistic President Hugo Chávez.

The U.S. announcement and Castro's response diffused tension expected at the Summit over inviting Cuba to rejoin the OAS. Cuba was expelled in 1962.

Reintegration to the OAS can only be considered if the Cuban government or a group of OAS member-countries requests it.

In 1998, Mexico had led an initiative to form a "group of friends" to reintegrate Cuba. Canadian ambassador Lloyd Axworthy had called the proposal a good idea. The United States has been increasingly alone on maintaining the half-century-old exclusion of Cuba from the community of American nations.

At the summit, Obama told leaders at the opening ceremonies, "The United States seeks a new beginning with Cuba." White House press secretary Robert Gibbs made clear the United States was not abandoning the demand that Cuba make concrete moves toward democracy and human rights. OAS president José Miguel Insulza said he would ask the 34 member-nations to annul the 1962 resolution in May and invite Cuba back into the fold.

At the conclusion of the meetings, Obama spoke of "launching a new era of partnerships." He said he could see "potential positive signs" of better relations with Cuba and Venezuela.

He added, "the test for all of us is not simply words but deeds".

(José de la Isla write a weekly commentary for Hispanic Link News Service. Reach him by email at Jdelaisla@yahoo.com) ©2009

"Freedom of Expression"

An Open Forum Where Readers Express their Views and Opinions

Do Texas Dems hold winning hand?

By: Martin Frost

Texas Democrats are in the process of trying to draw an inside straight. If successful, they will elect the first Democratic governor since Ann Richards, who was defeated by George W. Bush in 1994. This is not as crazy as you might think.

In poker, a player will try to draw one card that will complete a straight (five cards in a row). If the player holds a six, a seven, a nine and a 10, he will try to draw an eight, which would give him a straight (which beats three of a kind). The odds of drawing that particular card are not high, but it could happen.

In the gubernatorial race, incumbent Rick Perry will square off against Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison in the 2010 Republican primary. Perry, who won with less than 40 percent in a four-way general election field in 2006, is not popular with the general voting public in Texas. He is, however, the darling of the far-right wing that dominates the Republican primary electorate. Chances are that he may defeat Hutchison in a mean, ugly, down-and-dirty primary next March. If he does, his victory could rip apart the Republican Party and open the door for a moderate Democrat to achieve a clean win in November.

Perry enhanced his appeal with the far-right base last week with his bizarre comments that he could understand why some people in Texas might want to secede from the union. These comments also made the candidacy of a credible Democrat even more appealing.

Democrats may have just that type of candidate: Tom Schieffer, the younger brother of CBS newsmen Bob Schieffer. The younger Schieffer grew up in Fort Worth, which he represented in the Texas Legislature as a Democratic state House member in the 1970s. Later, Schieffer was the person who actually ran the Texas Rangers baseball team while Bush served as the figurehead.

Following Bush's election as president, Schieffer served eight years as the United States ambassador to Australia and then Japan. He had supported the candidacy of his friend George W. Bush for president, but during that time he remained a Democrat and voted consistently in Democratic primaries. He also contributed to a number of Democratic candidacies for Congress.

Now he's back in Texas and campaigning for the Democratic nomination for governor as a moderate, business-friendly, pro-economic-growth candidate with a history of supporting a woman's right to choose and civil rights for minorities.

The biggest obstacles facing Schieffer are that he has been out of Texas politics for a number of years and that some Democrats may not be willing to forgive his service in the Bush administration. On the other hand, some independents and some Republicans who don't like Perry may find that reassuring.

Democrats in the Lone Star State are clearly on the rebound. After losing control of the Legislature in 2002, Democrats, because of a strong organizing campaign, made substantial gains in the 2006 and 2008 elections and now find themselves within a single vote of controlling the state House (with 74 D's and 76 R's). Additionally, Democrats won all contested countywide races in Dallas County (the second largest county) in 2006 and won most of the contested countywide races in Houston's Harris County in 2008.

Clearly, Texas Democratic heavyweights are convinced that statewide races are winnable. Two major candidates — Houston Mayor Bill White and former State Comptroller John Sharp — have already announced for Hutchison's Senate seat whenever she relinquishes it. (She may resign early to make the governor's race, though she is not required to do so, and her seat would become vacant if she were elected governor.)

Schieffer must still defeat liberal gadfly Kinky Friedman in the Democratic primary. A victory by Friedman in the Democratic primary could make even Perry look good to Texas voters.

What's happening politically in Texas has been largely ignored by the national media. Some things never change. I remember reading a national magazine piece in the 1960s that observed that the national press covers Texas as if it were a foreign country. A case in point is last week's coverage of Perry's comments about seceding from the union.

This time, however, there is a hell of political poker game going on along the Rio Grande, and sooner or later, people will start writing about it.

Martin Frost represented the Dallas-Fort Worth area in Congress from 1979 to 2005. He rose to caucus chairman and head of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. He is now an attorney with Polsinelli Shalton Flanigan Suelthaus in Washington.

El Editor

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El Editor

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Quieren aulas para indocumentados

El Congreso de Estados Unidos debe corregir cuanto antes la

Entre mayo y junio próximos, más de 65 mil estudiantes indocumentados que llevan al menos cinco años en Estados Unidos se graduarán de secundaria, y mientras la

cente el continuar negando a los indocumentados la oportunidad para alcanzar su máximo potencial. "Si no educamos a estos estudiantes... estamos desperdiciando su talento e imponiéndoles graves costos económicos y emocionales, tanto a los estudiantes indocumentados como a la sociedad estadounidense en general", destacó el informe. Así, el College Board se suma a decenas de líderes del Congreso y organizaciones pro inmigrantes que apoyan el Dream Act.



crisis "humanitaria y de derechos civiles" que afrontan los estudiantes indocumentados en este país, según pidió ayer un grupo que representa a más de cinco mil universidades.

"A medida que Estados Unidos busca suplir la necesidad de una fuerza laboral con educación universitaria, no debe dar la espalda a jóvenes que pueden fortalecer el bienestar económico y social de nuestro país", argumenta el College Board, que representa, en efecto, a más de cinco mil universidades y centros de enseñanza superior en el país.

Se trata de la primera vez que el College Board se manifiesta públicamente a favor del proyecto de ley Dream Act, que estudia el Congreso y que, de ser aprobado, permitiría la legalización de buena parte de los estudiantes indocumentados en Estados Unidos.

El informe de 32 páginas ha sido divulgado en momentos en que varios estados de la nación bloquean o intentan poner trabas a cualquier esfuerzo que beneficie a los estudiantes indocumentados.

Por ejemplo, Georgia, Oklahoma, Colorado y Arizona prohíben que los estudiantes indocumentados paguen las matrículas que corresponden a quienes viven en esos estados, por lo que aumenta sustancialmente el costo final de sus cursos.

de los estadounidenses graduados hace planes para la universidad, aquellos afrontan un verdadero "callejón sin salida", recordó College Board.

En el informe titulado Vidas jóvenes en espera: los sueños universitarios de estudiantes indocumentados, Roberto G. Gonzales, un catedrático de la Universidad de Washington en Seattle, argumenta que, aparte de las trabas académicas, "la insostenible situación de estos estudiantes constituye un problema humanitario y de derechos civiles".

Además, el informe "desacredita los mitos de que los estudiantes indocumentados puedan limitar las oportunidades de los demás".

De acuerdo con un dictamen judicial de 1982, los indocumentados tienen derecho a la educación pública en la primaria y la secundaria, y la ley federal en sí no prohíbe que éstos puedan asistir a la universidad.

En la práctica, sin embargo, estos estudiantes afrontan numerosos obstáculos, incluyendo los requisitos de admisión, restricciones para acceder a la matrícula estatal y la falta de ayuda financiera.

El grupo, conocido por los exámenes SAT que usan las universidades para evaluar las solicitudes de nuevos estudiantes, consideró contraproductivo

Según el grupo, este proyecto educativo daría a al menos 360 mil indocumentados graduados de secundaria "los medios para trabajar legalmente y acceder a recursos para ir a la universidad".

Además, daría incentivo a otros 715 mil jóvenes entre 5 y 17 años de edad para que terminen sus estudios secundarios y eventualmente opten por la enseñanza superior.

No es la primera vez que el Congreso estudia alguna versión del Dream Act, pero, desde 2001, los esfuerzos han fracasado gracias a grupos que se oponen a la reforma migratoria.

Para Katherine Vargas, del Foro Nacional de Inmigración (NIF), el apoyo del College Board al Dream Act es "un reconocimiento a las valiosas contribuciones de los estudiantes inmigrantes y lo útil que pueden ser para la recuperación de nuestra economía".

Varios líderes del Congreso apoyan la idea de que el Dream Act sea parte de una reforma migratoria que permita la legalización de la población indocumentada. Sin embargo, sus detractores aseguran que una reforma migratoria, en plena crisis económica, sólo reduciría las ya mermadas oportunidades de educación y de trabajo para el resto de los estadounidenses.

Should Be Eligible for More Financial Assistance

U.S. colleges are breaking their silence on immigration, urging Congress to allow students who are illegal immigrants to apply for financial aid and qualify for in-state tuition, the Associated Press reports.

In a report released Tuesday, the U.S. College Board, which is best known for heading up the SAT program but also consists of 5,000 colleges, is also asking that Congress provide illegal immigrants a path to citizenship.

The report marks the first time the College Board has officially weighed in on the thorny issue, and came in response to how some states are taking steps to bar illegal immigrants from paying in-state tuition.

Illegal immigrants are entitled to attend American public K-12 schools. But in many states, those who go on to achieve high marks

do not qualify for paying in-state tuition, even if they are class presidents and valedictorians.

Since 2006, four states -- Georgia, Oklahoma, Colorado and Arizona -- have made illegal immigrants ineligible for in-state tuition, according to the Christian Science Monitor. South Carolina went one step further, barring illegal immigrants from enrolling in its public colleges altogether. North Carolina has done the same at its community colleges.

However, at least 10 states this decade have passed legislation making illegal immigrants eligible for in-state tuition. One of the states, California, is currently considering a bill that would also



make them eligible for financial aid.

The House and Senate are considering bills that would grant illegal immigrants who came to this country when they were 15 or younger and have lived here at least five years the ability to obtain conditional legal status after graduating high school, according to A.P. Called the Dream Act, this would make them eligible for in-state college tuition rates and federal financial aid.

Regulacion

La semana pasada, el gobierno de Estados Unidos anunció otro componente del método proactivo que está aplicando para superar la recesión, la cual se ha convertido en una recesión mundial. Durante las últimas seis semanas, el gobierno ha desplegado un activismo extraordinario. A la par del gasto público para aumentar el empleo y de medidas para frenar las ejecuciones hipotecarias y estabilizar el mercado de vivienda, el gobierno ha llevado a cabo evaluaciones de los niveles de capital de los principales bancos. También ha aprobado programas para apoyar el crédito para consumidores y pequeñas empresas, así como para lidiar con los que ahora se llaman "activos relegados." Simultáneamente, la Reserva Federal ha mantenido la tasa de interés cercana a cero y ha continuado inyectando liquidez, incluso comprando bonos del Tesoro de largo plazo.

Sin embargo, como lo reconoció el Secretario del Tesoro Timothy Geithner, no se habían anunciado medidas para evitar crisis financieras

en el futuro. Para ello, el Secretario Geithner propuso, en sus propios términos, "una reforma completa . . . en vez de reparaciones modestas marginales, nuevas reglas del juego"

para reestructurar la regulación de la industria financiera. La reforma consta de dos componentes principales. A corto plazo, el gobierno quiere tener autoridad para intervenir empresas que puedan causar daño sistémico, la cual no tenía para rescatar a la gran compañía aseguradora AIG. El segundo componente persigue apretar la regulación de aquellos segmentos de la industria de servicios financieros que apenas estaban regulados, tales como las transacciones de derivados, los fondos de cobertura, las compañías de seguros y los fondos de inversión del mercado monetario. No fueron revelados muchos detalles sobre la propuesta. El Representante Barney Frank, quien preside el Comité de Servicios Financieros de la Cámara, dijo que la legislación sobre el primer componente sería aprobada pronto, mientras que la reforma completa podría estar lista al fin del verano.

Freddie Mac's Acting CFO Found Dead

David Kellermann, acting chief financial officer at the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp. (NYSE:FRE) was found dead Wednesday morning in his Virginia home, police said. Kellermann, 41, who was appointed to his latest position in September 2008, apparently committed suicide, CBS News reported. Fairfax County Police said they dispatched a crime unit to Kellermann's home after his wife called to alert them of his death. The police department said they found no evidence of foul play. Kellermann's promotion to acting chief financial officer came as the government seized control of Freddie Mac, leading to the resignation of Anthony Pizel. Kellermann had worked at the mortgage broker for 16 years. He previously served as vice president, corporate controller and principal accounting officer.

As the acting chief financial officer, Kellermann was in charge of the company's financial controls, financial reporting and capital oversight, his biography on Freddie Mac's Web site said.



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Baylor LT Jason Smith in high demand



Jason Smith simply did as he was told.

He took a redshirt his first year at Baylor. The next year, he was a backup tight end. Then coaches asked him to move to tackle, a switch that required bulking up and learning the intricacies of blocking schemes.

Two impressive seasons later, Smith looked into going pro. When the evaluation pointed out all sorts of flaws, Smith returned to school and used it as a checklist of things to do better.

Consider them all checked. Smith was headed Wednesday to New York for the NFL draft, widely expected to become a top-five pick.

"I came here and didn't do anything I wasn't supposed to do and everything I was asked to do," Smith said during a conference call from Waco, Texas. "When you come to Baylor, you get what you want if you work hard."

Smith's school spirit is admirable, but it brings up another interesting part of his dramatic rise:

Baylor? Yes, the private Baptist school that last had a winning season during the days of the Southwest Conference, and that last produced a top-three pick in 1950, just churned out perhaps the most sought offensive lineman in the

land. "Baylor," Smith added, "is a force to be reckoned with."

So is Smith. Pass blocking is his specialty, but Smith - who is 6-foot-5 and 305 pounds, with a frame that can handle a couple dozen more pounds - is obviously good enough at opening running lanes to be projected as the anchor for Detroit's hoped-for turnaround or as St. Louis' replacement for Orlando Pace.

Part of the appeal is his character. As already mentioned, he's loyal, has a solid work ethic and respects authority. He answers to "Smooth" and is popular for his outgoing personality. He's also a serious student, having made the honor roll and graduated in four years.

Best of all for a team about to invest a healthy chunk of its salary cap in Smith, his rap sheet is crystal clear. The "very, very tight circle" of folks he's invited to New York include a high school coach and three coaches from Baylor: the head coach, offensive line coach and his strength coach.

"You don't need 100 people to get one job done," Smith said.

Smith grew up in Dallas and knew the long odds of making it to the NFL. Heck, he was only ranked as the 95th best player coming out of the area in 2004.

He made his presence felt on Baylor's scout team, earning top offensive honors that fall. As a redshirt freshman, he caught six passes for 70 yards and a touchdown, which came in a double-overtime loss at Oklahoma.

"Y 22 Spartan," he said. "I ran a corner route."

Guy Morriss, a former NFL offensive lineman, was Baylor's coach at the time, and in the spring of 2006 he suggested that Smith change positions.

"It's what my team needed," Smith said. "I never thought

twice about it."

He was solid as a sophomore and better as a junior, until an injury cut the season short. He looked into the draft anyway, then came back ready to answer any questions about his skills.

His play this past season - under first-year coach Art Briles and in front of dazzling freshman quarterback Robert Griffin - started sending him up the draft boards. His intangibles likely have helped keep him climbing through the combines, pro day and other evaluations.

"Since my pro day, it's been about staying ready for camp," said Smith, who worked with Baylor during its spring drills. "I'm not out in Honolulu or somewhere thinking about the draft. I'm here in Waco focusing on football."

Lines like that make Smith sound analytic to the point of being dispassionate. Then again, that's exactly how Bill Parcells and other football types like their players, especially the rookies. In a half-hour conference call Tuesday, Smith offered plenty more.

-On football becoming his business: "I'm a product now. I'm not somebody's son or friend. I'll be paid to do a job. If they don't think I can do the job, they'll find somebody else."

And then there's his take on the importance of being picked No. 1 overall.

"I'm not going to be disappointed or happy," Smith said. "I'm going to New York, so somebody likes me. I'll have a job. I don't focus on the things I can't control. I focus on things I can control, like how I'm going to look when I'm in New York, how my suit fits my body. I can focus on the shoes I wear on stage. I have no thought process as to what team is going to take me."

What's left to say about De La Hoya?

"But I've never met De La Hoya. Never had dinner with him. I wasn't at the Barcelona Olympics. I was in finals my freshman year at ASU when he made his Phoenix debut. We're not close, then. But I did craft a pretty good review of his book."

It's a Sunday morning, and he's 800 words into his weekly column when he types that. He needs 300 more. Then he can print the first draft and meet a friend for coffee. When he gets home he'll take a black marker and make it less than 1,000 words then send it in.

He wants to write something he hasn't before written about Oscar De La Hoya to commemorate the "Golden Boy's" retirement last Tuesday. If he can manage that, he'd also like to write something nobody else has written: The sort of project veteran writers work on when they have spare time, like knowing they'll have to pen the champ's obit someday.

This is life in the online world. No more worries about conserving inches or ink. No restrictions but self-imposed ones. A shame to waste such freedom by merely transcribing conference calls or composing verse/chorus/verse.

But more of a shame to honor every impulse with 100 words in a style made for Twitter.

A reader recently told him of a game he plays: Find the one sentence in the boxing column that's actually about boxing. That probably needs remedying.

He's tired of the first-person. He goes to what's proven.

"Who that loves boxing and good manners didn't feel jubilation when De La Hoya knocked Fernando Vargas across the ring? And HBO analyst George Foreman questioned for what part of that left hook trainer Floyd Mayweather Sr. deserved credit. Or when the Golden Boy made an ungracious Julio Cesar Chavez quit on his stool, knowing the repercussions he'd suffer with Mexican fans."

Mexican. The very word puts him in a gym in the pleasant part of town where the members are committed to jiu jitsu, MMA, kickboxing and boxing -- in that order. But a few weeks back local trainer Andy Soto brought what Nathan Detroit might have called the "longest running floating gym in Arizona" to LA Boxing Ahwatukee.

What a difference. The timer went from two-minute rounds/one-minute rests to three-minute rounds/30-second rests. The skin was taut over the kids' faces, serious black eyebrows pinched on their lowered foreheads. Future professionals, not hobbyists.

Soto insisted every one of his kids wear headgear when sparring. Part of an interesting debate: Does headgear do more harm than good?

It prevents cutting, sure, but not the concussive event of a brain colliding with its skull. And make no mistake: People feel free to hit you harder when you wear headgear. Good for the professional, yes, but not the hobbyist.

He knows De La Hoya began sparring at a young enough age that a debate about headgear would be meaningless to him. Thinking about it is meaningless to the column.

He goes for a counterpoint instead.

"But one can't make a celebratory review of De La Hoya's career without concessions. There was the way he finished with Felix Trinidad. The way he behaved after his second loss to Shane Mosley. The way he looked against Felix Sturm. And finally the disproportionate ferocity De La Hoya showed the blue mat after Bernard Hopkins felled him."

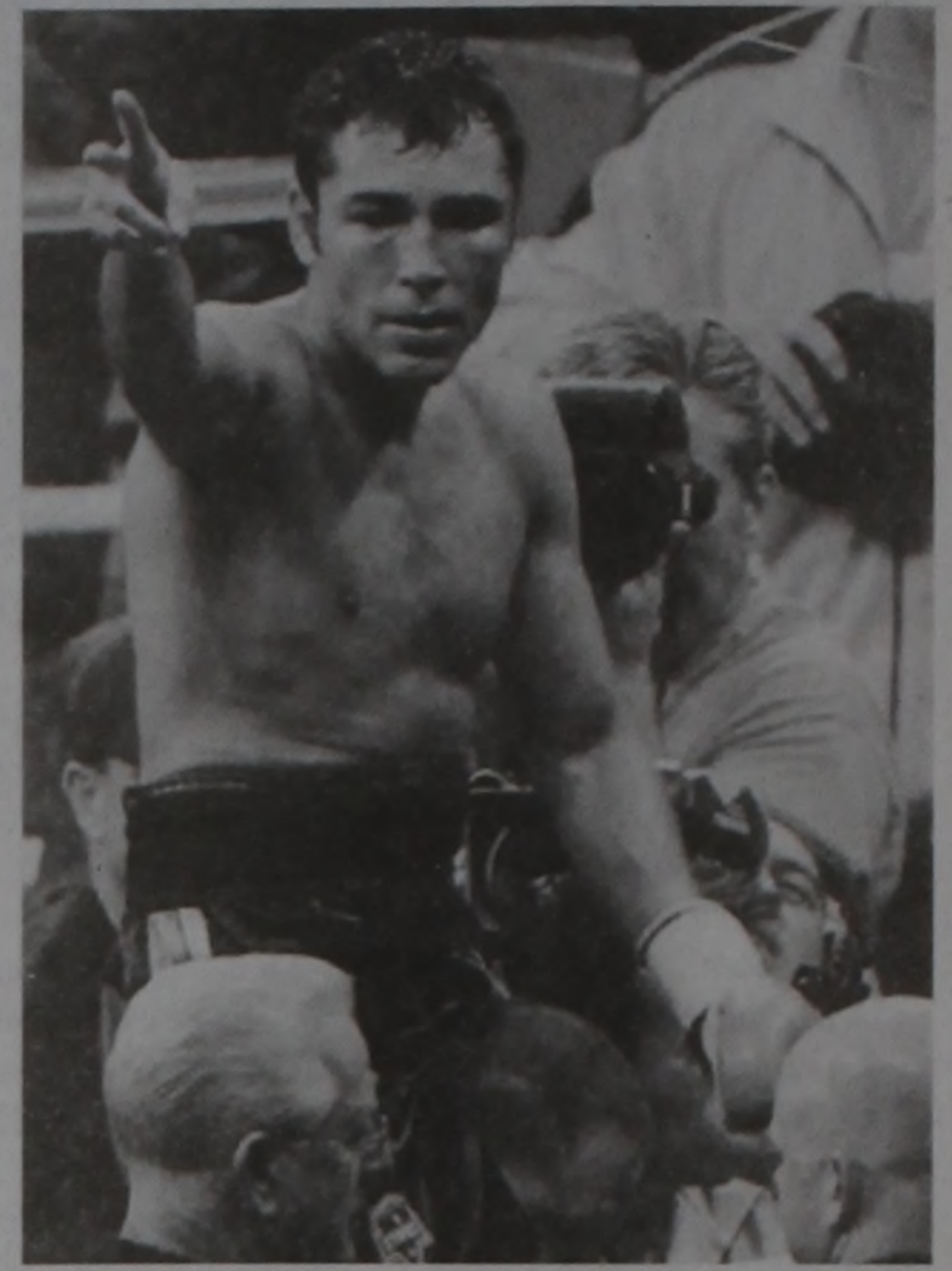
That Hopkins fight was the last time De La Hoya was promoted by Bob Arum. He worries about the damage the old promoter now does to his legacy by continuing to attack the California State Athletic Commission's suspension of Antonio Margarito.

A couple of weeks ago he had an idea for a spoof that would have portrayed Arum reading the lab results -- where calcium and sulfur were found on Margarito's hand wraps -- and saying, "But where's the oxygen? You can't make plaster of Paris without oxygen!"

That was a cartoon, though, not a column. Besides, last week there was footage of Arum attributing the lab results to hand cream. Parody that.

Still, Arum is boxing's last innovator, and also the guy who promotes the guy who forced De La Hoya's hand.

"Then came what Manny Pacquiao did in December. It's one thing to bet against Americans'



attention spans. Promoters do that all the time. It's another thing entirely to have heard the reception De La Hoya got in Los Angeles' Staples Center and Houston's Toyota Center and think: 'Let's try a farewell tour!'"

He was initially offered a chance to talk to De La Hoya in Tucson the Friday before the big announcement. But what was there to say? When Desert Diamond Casino's PR specialist asked if he'd give up his seat to a local newspaper guy, it wasn't a hard choice. After all, if three professional reporters couldn't get a confession out of the Golden Boy -- later scrutinizing the tape just in case they had -- who could?

"And so it ends for De La Hoya. Not with a glorious win for the fighter, typically enough, but maybe with a win for boxing. That is, De La Hoya, unlike so many before him, finishes as a net gain for our sport. He's sound of mind and rich. His nemesis' son, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., is unlikely ever to accomplish enough to make a comeback worthwhile.

"Stay retired, Oscar. And give us our happy ending."

As he prints his column he feels relief tempered by disappointment. There was no original insight in the column. Not one. There was one more fan's sentimentality seasoned with a little skepticism and wrapped in style. It was, in other words, only good to someone who agreed with it.

But it was another column completed. Another job done. It was at least a bridge to the joy of some future insight. And so it goes.

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Conteo regresivo a los Premios Billboard



España tiene en el cantante Enrique Iglesias y el grupo La 5ta Estación su representación para la entrega de los Premios Billboard de la Música Latina, a celebrarse este jueves, en el Bank United Center de la Universidad de Miami.

Iglesias es uno de los artistas más nominados con diez candidaturas, solamente superado por el panameño Flex con trece, quien obtuvo la popularidad internacional con su primer sencillo, "Te quiero", en el 2008, que se mantuvo como número uno por 20 semanas en la lista Hot Latin Tracks de la revista.

A Iglesias le siguen en nominaciones el grupo Maná con ocho y los mexicanos Vicente Fernández y Jenni Rivera con siete cada uno. El intérprete de "Dímelo" expresó recientemente a Efe estar impresionado por figurar en tantas categorías como Canción del año, Top álbum latino del año, Artista del año, Álbum pop latino del año y Álbum de los grandes éxitos latinos del año, entre otras.

"Al fin y al cabo Billboard es

la biblia de la música porque se basa en números y en la realidad de lo que está sucediendo con la radio, las ventas y el público", comentó.

Su disco "95/08" debutó en el lugar número 18 de la lista de ventas del Billboard 200, sitio muy importante para un disco completamente en castellano, y en el primer lugar en ventas de la lista del Billboard Latino, donde estuvo durante varias semanas.

Esta producción compite en la categoría "Álbum Latino del Año" frente a "Kings of Bachata" del grupo Aventura, "Te quiero" de Flex y "Arde el cielo" de la banda mexicana de rock Maná.

Mientras que el tema "Dónde estás corazón" se convirtió en su decimonoveno éxito en llegar al primer lugar de las listas de Billboard Hot Latin Tracks, un récord para un artista hispano.

Con este corte, Iglesias se enfrenta en la categoría de Canción del año hot latina a Flex con "Te quiero", el boricua Luis Fonsi con "No me doy por vencido" y Maná con "Si no te hubieras ido".

El cantante español también cantará durante la ceremonia de entrega, al igual que sus compatriotas de La 5ta Estación.

Formado por el dúo de Natalia Jiménez y Ángel Reyes, el grupo radicado en México interpretará temas de su nuevo

álbum "Sin frenos", por el que han recibido dos discos de oro.

Reconvertidos en dúo tras la marcha del guitarrista Pablo Domínguez, la 5ta Estación ha conseguido calar hondo entre el público latino gracias a una peculiar mezcla de diferentes estilos musicales, desde el pop y el rock hasta melodías folclóricas mexicanas, muestra de ello son los temas que componen su último trabajo.

También actuarán Aventura, Rubén Blades, La Banda El Recodo, Cristian Castro, Don Omar, Paulina Rubio, Wisin y Yandel, Reik y Flex, entre otros.

Los Premios Billboard de la Música Latina 2009, son organizados por la revista Billboard, publicación líder de la industria de la música, que en su undécima edición, incluyó trece nuevas categorías.

Durante la ceremonia se otorgarán los premios especiales "Trayectoria Artística" y "Espíritu de Esperanza" al guitarrista mexicano Carlos Santana y el reguetonero boricua Daddy Yankee, respectivamente.

El espectáculo contará nuevamente con la conducción de la actriz cubana Aylin Mujica y el presentador mexicano Alan Tacher y será transmitido en vivo por la cadena Telemundo a partir de las 7:00 PM, hora del este.

Flex-ing his urban muscles

Panamanian singer Flex is proof that Latin urban music does not have to be rough to hit strong.

He has a record-setting 13 nominations going into tomorrow's Billboard Latin Music Awards in Miami for the platinum-selling album "Te Quiero."

The nods follow up closely on last month's win for Best Urban Song in the Premios Lo Nuestro for the hit single "Te Quiero," a bouncy, squeaky-clean mid-tempo reggae tune that has been all over radio and nightclub play in the past year.

"Success has come fast; fans have really taken up the song quickly," said Flex, 28, on the phone from Miami. "But I've been doing this for 11 years, and it's been tough to arrive to this point."

And for most of those years, he wasn't even known as Flex but as Nigga, a racially-loaded name that would have thwarted his U.S. prospects.

To avoid problems with distribution of "Te Quiero" through the retailer Wal-Mart, Flex's label EMI/Televisa changed his name to Flex, a nickname from his given name Felix Danilo Gómez.

"In Latin America, it was not so much of a controversy," said the singer. "When an emcee introduces me as Flex at a show, the crowd still shouts out my other name."

Flex's music may be classified as "urban," but don't call it reg-

gaetón

The singer describes it as "reggae romántico," and his newly released record "La Evolución Romantic Style" skips around the Caribbean for its sounds, adding bachata and soca to a reggae base.

The driving beat of the more up-tempo songs is not the now-clichéd reggaetón dem bow — as the repetitive beat that characterizes traditional reggaetón is known — but the folkier Panamanian plena, a close cousin of the Colombian vallenato.

The mixture of sounds in Flex's music is not a calculated move to cross over into various Latin markets, but comes from musical influences that have long converged in Panama, away from the centers of the Latin music industry.

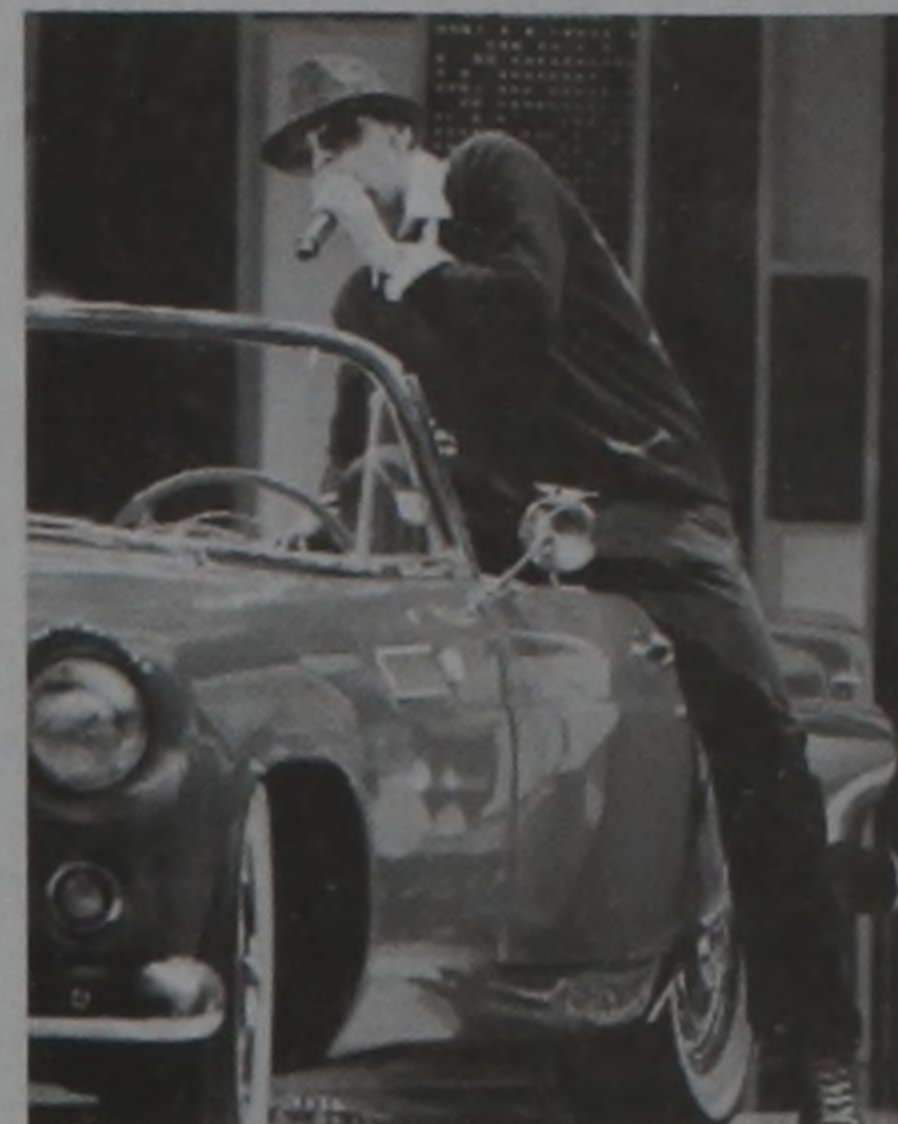
"Jamaica has long had a big cultural influence in Panama," said Flex, citing local reggae en español acts like El General and Nando Boom.

"We know a lot about different Caribbean music styles. We listen to a lot of Haitian music, soca, merengue, it's what you hear when you go to a disco."

He said that because Panama's music industry has historically served mostly a local market, artists naturally mix these influences in their own work.

But to promote his work, Flex

has gone one step further, version-



ing his songs to appeal to local markets in Mexico, the U.S. and other parts of the Caribbean.

"Te Quiero" has been remixed into a reggaetón version with Puerto Rican rapper Arcángel, an acoustic pop version with Mexican pop singer Belinda, and a "Mexican regional" version.

Overall, Flex's image is clean-cut and sweet, as was showcased in a 1950s bubblegum-retro performance at last year's Latin Grammys.

"I think it's good to have a different kind of music to romance your girl at the club, music that appeals to the heart," he said.

"If I can give urban music a more positive image," he adds, "I think that's good, because so many young people have bad influences."

Santana to receive Lifetime Achievement Award



Carlos Santana, the original crossover star who ignited rock'n'roll with Latin music,

was honored with the Billboard Century Award in 1996.

Now, he will receive the Billboard Lifetime Achievement Award Thursday during the Billboard Latin Music Awards. This

honor recognizes his invaluable contributions to the expansion and recognition of Latin music around the world and to a life committed not just to musical excellence and innovation but also social concerns.

With a career that includes more than 90 million albums sold and performances for 100 million-plus people globally, according to his Web site, Santana epitomizes the power of Latin sounds on a global scale.

Born and raised in the Mexican village of Autlan, Santana discovered music first from his

father, a mariachi violinist. Santana's trajectory, from interpreter of traditional Mexican music to rock'n'roll, from Mexican immigrant to international superstar, has become a symbol of what a Latin immigrant can accomplish in music.

Beyond the fame, however, Santana has dedicated substantial time to social concerns and hands-on philanthropy, most directly through his Milagro Foundation, which he created with his family in 1998. Dedicated to helping underprivileged children in the areas of health,

education and the arts, Milagro receives its funding from Santana himself and through proceeds from his concert tickets and licensing sales, among other sources.

Milagro then channels funds through dozens of organizations each year. In the first two months of 2009, Milagro has given more than \$100,000 to groups that support its goals, the charity reports.

Such altruism is an intrinsic part of a man who feels his duty and calling lies in making a difference in the world.

The Agüero Family would like to wish Marisol Agüero



We love you and are very proud of you!



The City of Lubbock Parks and Recreation Department held a ribbon cutting ceremony of the new Lubbock Youth Sports Complex which is located on FM 1585 & Milwaukee Avenue on Saturday morning. The complex consist of a total of 16 ball fields for softball.

This ceremony marks another step forward in the realization and continue achievement of excellence in recreation for the youth of Lubbock.

In photo are some city officials and some Park & Recreation board members; JR Morales, Christy Martinez-Garcia, Robert Narvaiz, Olga Riojas-Aguero, Alex McAdoo, Mayor Tom Martin and councilman Paul Beane, and not in photo councilman Todd Klein.



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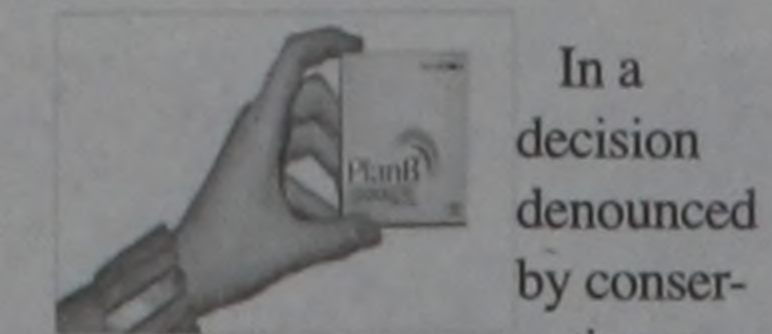
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FDA To Allow Morning After Pill For 17-Year-Olds



In a decision denounced by conservatives as an affront to parental rights, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said Wednesday it would accept, not appeal, a federal judge's order to lift restrictions put in place under former president George W. Bush that permitted over-the-counter sales of the "morning after" pill only to women 18 and older.

Women's groups praised the FDA's decision, which would allow seventeen-year-olds to purchase the "Plan B" pills over-the-counter.

"Plan B" is emergency contraception containing a high dose of birth control drugs that prevent ovulation or fertilization. If taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex, the pill can reduce a woman's chances of pregnancy by up to 89 percent.

In a ruling last month in response to a lawsuit filed in New York, U.S. District Judge Edward Korman said that President George W. Bush's appointees let politics, rather than science, dictate their decision to limit over-the-counter access to the pills.

Supporters of expanded access to Plan B called the FDA's decision long overdue, particularly since the agency's own medical reviewers had originally recommended the contraceptive be made available without any age restrictions.

Korman ordered the agency to permit 17-year-olds get the birth control pills, and directed it to analyze clinical data to assess whether all age restrictions should be lifted.

However, the FDA's latest move does not mean that Plan B will be immediately available to 17-year-olds, since the pills' manufacturer must first submit a formal request. "It's a good indication that the agency will move expeditiously to ensure its policy on Plan B is based solely on science," Nancy Northup, president of the Center for Reproductive Rights, which filed the New York lawsuit, told the Associated Press.

Conservative groups said the FDA's action was driven by politics.

"Parents should be furious at the FDA's complete disregard of parental rights and the safety of minors," an AP report quoted Wendy Wright, president of Concerned Women for America, as saying.

Plan B critics say the pills are the equivalent of an abortion because they can prevent a fertilized egg from attaching to the uterus. In medical terms, pregnancy begins when a fertilized egg attaches itself to the uterine wall.

However, research suggests that while that is possible, it is not likely.

The battle over access to Plan

B has continued for nearly 10 years through the terms of three FDA commissioners.

The controversy has come to symbolize the decline of science among many in the medical community and at the FDA because top managers refused to side with recommendations of scientific staff and outside advisers who recommended the drug be made available without age restrictions.

"The FDA got caught up in a saga, it got caught up in a drama," Susan Wood, who served as the FDA's top women's health official, told the AP.

Wood resigned in 2005 over delays in issuing a decision.

"This issue served as a clear example of the agency being taken off track, and it highlighted the problems FDA was facing in many other areas."

The Plan B treatment, which consists of two pills made by a subsidiary of Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, sells for \$35 to \$60. Currently, women seeking to purchase Plan B must ask for it at the pharmacy counter and show proper identification that includes their date of birth.

The drug does not prevent sexually transmitted diseases.

Supporters of broader access have claimed the pills are safe and effective in preventing unwanted pregnancies, and could help reduce the number of abortions.

However, opponents argue that it would encourage promiscuity and could ultimately be used by criminals running prostitution rings and sexual predators.

Scores of organizations petitioned the FDA early in the Bush administration to allow sales of Plan B without a prescription. But court documents show the issue became quickly politicized.

In 2003, a panel of independent advisers voted 23-4 in favor of recommending over-the-counter sales without age restrictions.

But FDA officials nevertheless told their subordinates that no approval could be issued, and that a decision would be made at a higher level within the government - something considered unusual since the agency typically has the last word on drug decisions.

Korman said that members of the FDA staff were told the White House was involved in the decision on Plan B.

But according to court papers, the government said politics played no role.

The Center for Reproductive Rights and other organizations sued in federal court in 2005 to force an FDA decision. The agency decided the following year to allow Plan B to be sold without a prescription to adults only. But the debate continued over access for teens.

Obama: Serious Challenges Posed By Climate Change

President Obama said Wednesday that climate change presents a solemn challenge for the world,



and that Americans can have a significant impact on the problem by making small changes in their everyday lives.

The President pledged that under his administration the U.S. would lead the world in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Obama made his remarks on Earth Day ahead of a tour in Iowa of a plant that makes towers for wind turbines.

"Climate change presents a serious test for humankind, but it also provides an opportunity for great innovation and adaptation," said Obama in a written presidential proclamation.

"The United States has risen to such challenges before, and Earth Day inspires us to transcend differences among nations so we may lead the world in protecting our planet from this global threat."

The president has vowed to pursue alternative energies and enact legislation for a market-based cap and trade system as part of a wider initiative to reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by up to 80 percent by 2050.

In addition to these steps, Americans could do more to lessen damage to their environment, Obama said.

"Individuals and organizations can plant trees, use energy efficient lightbulbs, drive fuel efficient cars, hold clean-up drives, and teach young people about environmental preservation," he said.

"Small changes in our daily

lives can have a big impact on our environment. Individuals can walk, bike, and use public transportation; buy products with less packaging; and recycle and reuse paper, plastic, glass, and aluminum more often."

"American families can also save money by choosing energy efficient products, turning lights off, unplugging appliances, and cutting back on heating and air conditioning."

More than a billion people worldwide were expected to participate in the 40th anniversary Earth Day events. The events were intended to underscore ways an educated population can preserve and protect the environment.

Earth Day was the brainchild of the late U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson. The events, which first began in 1969, have since spread to 174 nations.

Obama's trip to Iowa brought him back to his political "home away from home". Indeed, Iowa was the state that set the stage for Obama's historic White House run after his victory in January 2008 in Iowa's nominating caucuses.

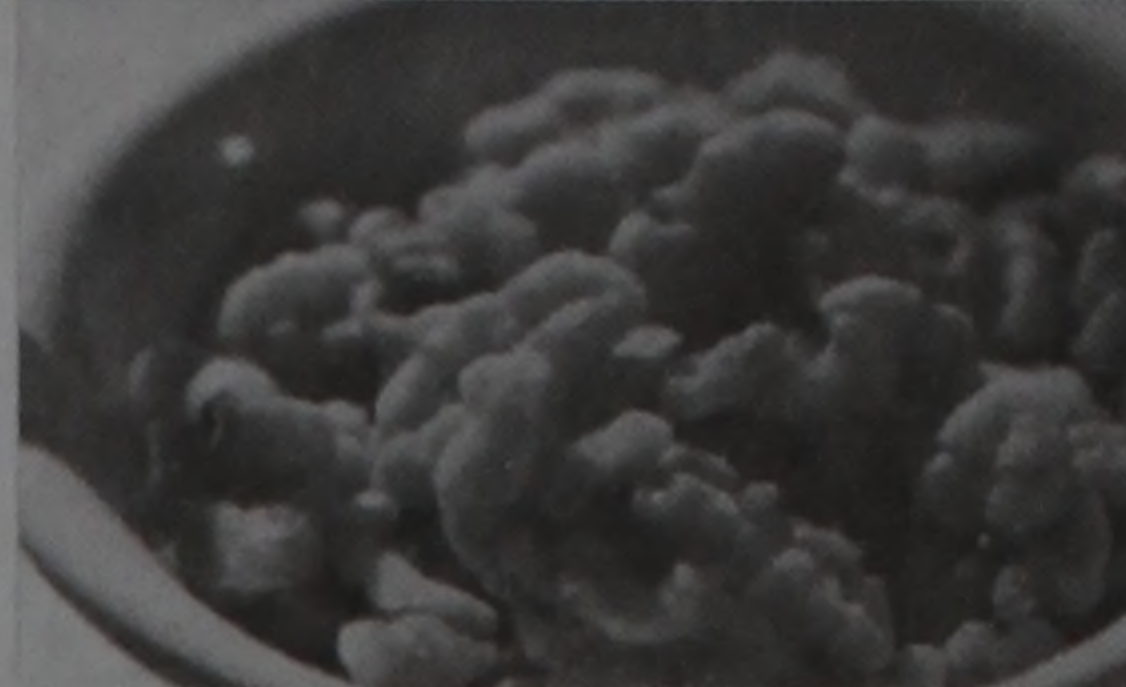
The president was set to highlight his initiatives to advance clean energy technologies intended to end the nation's dependence on foreign oil. The White House said he would also emphasize his plans to develop alternative energies that would create millions of jobs.

Obama's 2009 budget includes billions of dollars devoted to alternative energy projects. The President has also pledged to make the United States a leader in the sector, and to strengthen the lagging role Washington has had on fighting global climate change.

Obama's Iowa trip coincided with testimonies from several top administration officials who were attending hearings on Capitol Hill about environmen-

Walnuts: A New Super-Food For Battling Breast Cancer?

A new study suggests that eating a handful of walnuts a day could significantly reduce a woman's risk of developing breast cancer.



In lab tests performed on mice that had been bred to develop breast cancer, scientists at Marshall University School of Medicine in Huntington, West Virginia observed that animals fed the equivalent of a handful of walnuts a day were at a significantly lower risk of developing the disease.

"Walnuts are better than cookies, French fries or potato chips when you need a snack," said Elaine Hardman, associate professor of medicine at the university and one of the researchers working in the study. "We know that a healthy diet overall prevents all manner of chronic diseases."

Although this particular study was performed on mice, Hardman believes it highly likely that a similar effect could be observed in humans subjects.

"Walnuts contain multiple ingredients that, individually, have been shown to slow cancer growth, including omega-3-fatty acids, antioxidants and phytochemicals," the team wrote in a summary of their findings presented at the American Association for Cancer Research's 100th annual meeting in Denver, Colorado.

The cancer-prone mice used in the research project almost always develop breast cancer. For

the study, the mice were divided into two groups; one that was fed a daily regimen of two ounces walnuts and a control group that received a normal diet.

Among the mice that had been fed walnuts, there was a considerably lower incidence of breast tumors compared to those receiving the normal diet. For the walnut-eaters that did develop tumors, the tumor masses were on average smaller than those found in the control group and they tended to develop later.

"These laboratory mice typically have 100 percent tumor incidence at five months," explained Hardman. "Walnut consumption delayed those tumors by at least three weeks."

"It is clear that walnuts contribute to a healthy diet that can reduce breast cancer," she added.

The study corroborates mounting evidence of the health benefits of omega-3 fatty acids that has been pouring out of research labs around the world in recent years.

Most recently, researchers have been seeking to determine whether plant-derived omega-3 fatty acids, such as those in nuts and leafy greens, carry the same health benefits as those found in fish oils.

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El conferenciante internacional Lorenzo Rodríguez, es un practicante de la Ciencia Cristiana y es miembro del Cuerpo de Conferenciantes de la Ciencia Cristiana.

Sabado, 18 de Abril a las 3:30 p.m.
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