

Latino

A Bilingual Publication



Times

in the Central Valley

How Clinton Won Texas: Hispanic Media Weigh In

NAM - Hillary Clinton won the Texas primary, and she has Latino voters to thank. The reasons, according to Spanish-language media, have more to do with politics and name recognition than racial prejudices.

Clinton proved that she still commands an overwhelming lead over Barack Obama among Latino voters, who made up nearly one third of Texas voters in Tuesday's record-breaking turnout. According to CNN exit polling on March 4, Latino voters in the Texas primary supported Clinton over Obama by a two-to-one margin.

To understand the candidate's continued popularity among Latinos in Texas, one need only read the Hispanic press, which has been following Clinton's campaign closely.

In his article, "Mexican Tastes Do

Not Include Obama," Raoul Lowery Contreras writes in Spanish-language newsweekly HispanicVista.com that the Latino vote is no monolith.

Obama may have done well with the Virginia "Hispanic vote," Contreras writes, but that was no indicator for Texas.

"Virginia Hispanics are mostly Salvadorans," he notes. "With few exceptions, Salvadorans came here to escape the civil war that Salvadoran leftists lost to right-of-center conservative forces. They carry with them leftist souls that have no embodiment in American politics other than in Obama, the most liberal senator in the Senate."

Contreras predicted that most Mexican Americans in Texas, like the Mexicans in California and Arizona, would

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Clinton Gana en Texas con la ayuda de los medios Hispanos

Hillary Clinton ganó las primarias en el estado de Texas y a quien tiene que agradecerse es a los electores hispanos. Las razones, según los medios de comunicación en español, esto sucedió porque tuvo que ver más con política y el reconocimiento del nombre que con prejuicios raciales. Con esto, Clinton comprobó que entre los electores latinos le sigue llevando una gran ventaja a Barack Obama, estos es decir los latinos conformaron casi un tercio del total de los votos rom-

piendo al mismo tiempo marcas establecidas anteriormente. De acuerdo a una encuesta realizada por CNN a la salida de las casillas electorales los electores latinos apoyaron a Clinton con un margen de dos a uno.

Para entender la popularidad continua del candidato entre los Latinos de Texas, solo se necesita leer la prensa hispana, que ha seguido muy de cerca la campaña de Clinton. Raoul Lowery Contreras en su artículo publicado en HispanicVista.

com "Sabores Mexicanos no incluyen a Obama" menciona que el voto hispano no es un monolito. Obama pudo haber hecho muy bien en Virginia con el "voto hispano" menciona Contreras pero eso no fue un indicador para Texas. Los hispanos de Virginia son una mayoría de El Salvador, anota. "Con algunas excepciones los Salvadoreños vinieron aquí para escapar de la guerra civil que los Salvadoreños de izquierda perdieron ante las fuerzas conservadoras de centro derecha. La

ideología muy dentro de sus almas es de izquierda y no tienen preferencias en la política de los Estados Unidos, salvo la del senador Obama, el más liberal en el senado."

Contreras predijo que la mayoría de mexico-americanos en Texas, como los de California y Arizona, no votarían por Obama. A pesar de algunas diferencias en las poblaciones hispanas de California y Texas —la mayoría de hispanos texanos han nacido

Clinton Gana continúa en pág. 9

John McCain Seals Republican Nomination, Celebrates In Dallas

As Hillary Rodham Clinton gleaned a little hope for her own improbable comeback, John McCain clinched the Republican presidential nomination Tuesday night, marveling to a delighted Dallas crowd on a remarkable turnaround "that once seemed to more than a few doubters unlikely."

Impossible, even.

Just two months ago, Mr. McCain's campaign was nearly bankrupt and it seemed that GOP rivals Mitt Romney, Rudy Guiliani, Fred Thompson and even Mike



Huckabee would easily eclipse the Arizona senator whom many conservatives considered too moderate, too maverick.

But there Mr. McCain stood amid confetti and streamers on a stage at the Fairmont Hotel, having outlasted all of

his opponents. Mr. Huckabee was the last to concede. His potential Democratic rivals, Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton, also offered their congratulations.

Tuesday's decisive primary wins in Texas, Ohio, Vermont and Rhode Island propelled Mr. McCain past the magic mark of 1,191 — the number of convention delegates needed to secure the nomination. He appeared only too glad to veer from the tortured trail that got him here.

"Now, we begin the most important part of our campaign: to make a respectful, determined and convincing case to the American people that our campaign and my election as president, given the alternatives presented by our friends in

the other party, are in the best interests of the country we love," Mr. McCain said.

Beyond the victory itself, the spoils of Mr. McCain's triumph are a pair of precious political commodities: money and time.

And he desperately needs both.

Having said Monday he intends to vigorously compete in left-leaning states such as California and New Jersey, Mr. McCain must raise considerable amounts of cash to fuel expensive media buys and campaign operations.

And if time indeed heals all wounds, Mr. McCain will take all he can get.

He has earned strong support from independents and moderate Republicans, many who are further to the right have only reluctantly embraced the inevitability of Mr. McCain's nomination. Others, such as popular radio talkers Rush Limbaugh, have openly derided him as a false conservative unwisely wed-

ded to policy positions such as campaign finance reform and embryonic stem-cell research.

While Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton continue their battle for the Democratic nomination, Mr. McCain is fighting to unite his own political kin.

That Mr. McCain chose Dallas to bask in victory is all the more poignant given his decidedly lackluster Lone Star State support.

Gov. Rick Perry, for example, first endorsed Rudy Giuliani before that campaign imploded. Mr. Perry, along with U.S. senators Kay Bailey Hutchison and John Cornyn and other top Texas Republicans, endorsed Mr. McCain only after his GOP nomination appeared all but done. "I sort of liken it to a grieving process. You come to acceptance," Mr. Cornyn said Saturday to a Republican gathering in Dallas. Mr. McCain, he added, is still preferable to Mr. Obama or Ms. Clinton.

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Publisher's Notes

What an incredible and historic Election year! The candidates have generated such tremendous excitement that minorities and the youth in this country are turning out in record numbers at the polls. Throughout the country election fever is spreading and everyone is anxiously awaiting the results.

I have been in this community my entire life and I have never heard so many people express the desire to vote and speak so passionately about an election. I recently spoke with a young lady who can't wait until she turns 18 this month so that she can register to vote and participate in the election process.

I feel very fortunate to be part of a generation where we are actually witnessing history in the making. For first time in our nation's history, Democrats will have the opportunity to cast their vote for a woman or a black man for President of the United States. The campaign between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama is not only historic but truly one of the most electrifying campaigns of our time.

The Republican Party is betting that John McCain will be the next Commander-in-Chief and hoping his years of experience will win out over either

Democratic opponent. Whoever is pitted against the Republican contender in November, whether it is Clinton or Obama, it definitely promises to be an intense race to the finish.

And throughout this historic election year and in the coming years, Latino Times will continue to deliver to you news and current events of the day relative to the Latino community along with our commitment in striving for excellence in service to our readership and our advertisers.

It is in this spirit of excellence in service that Latino Times is proud to announce the launch of our newly created website. The redesigned website will feature Banner Ads and also allow our clients and readers to learn more about Latino Times and our staff. Our goal throughout the year is to drive people to visit our site because we realize this is the wave of the future. I encourage you to log onto our website at www.LatinoTimes.org for the most current news and events.

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County's first latino Sheriff makes huge strides in first year in office

By Rhashad Pittman

(Stockton, CA) - San Joaquin County's first Latino sheriff Steve Moore has made major strides during his first year in office. Since he was elected in January of last year, the department has hired dozens of deputies, promoted minorities to top management positions, and reestablished a community-oriented policing program.

Yet, even with these accomplishments, the veteran of more than 30 years in law enforcement also recognizes that many challenges lie ahead for the county, from drug use – particularly methamphetamine – to gang violence.

Even still, Moore, 52, has an ambitious agenda that includes expanding the county jail, hiring more deputies and building relationships in local schools and neighborhoods.

"I definitely have some things I want to accomplish," Moore said in a recent interview.

One of those things is hiring more deputies. Since he started, the department has added 64 new deputies, though most of them have up to one year of training before they can begin working. He would like to increase his staff of 70 working deputies to 100 by June, he said.

Moore, who has been with the department for 25 years, said part of the department's hiring efforts include adding more minorities to the staff. Members of local minority communities have expressed the same interest, he said.

"We want representation from all

sectors of the county," Moore said. "Law enforcement should reflect as much as possible the people that it serves."

In addition to hiring minorities, Moore has also promoted a few. Earlier this year, Moore promoted Lt. Eric Holman to captain, making him the first black to hold that rank in the Sheriff's Office, though in previous years, another African American, Clifford Weaver, had reached a similar ranking as commander. Moore has also promoted Danelle Hohe, an Asian American woman, to captain and Joe Herrera, a Latino, to lieutenant.

To combat crimes stemming from gangs and drugs, Moore said he plans to increase the number of deputies assigned to high crime neighborhoods to develop relationships with local schools and residents.

Another major issue facing the department is its overcrowded jail in French Camp. The facility currently holds 1,411 beds and yet as many as 1,800 people are booked in the jail at one time. Usually those who've committed non-violent felony crimes are released to make room for others.

The department is applying for up to \$80 million in state funds to help pay for an expansion of the jail, which would take three years to complete. The county will know in May how much funding it will receive. In the meantime, the department is looking at alternative facilities as a temporary fix.

"There's always room for improvement and there's always things we're working on," Moore said.



Sheriff Moore welcomes new recruit

Primer sheriff Latino tiene un buen año

(Stockton CA) – El primer sheriff de origen latino Steve Moore ha impactado durante su primer año dirigiendo el departamento. Desde que fue elegido en enero del año pasado, el departamento ha contratado docenas de nuevos oficiales, promovido la contratación de minorías en posiciones de administración y restableciendo una política de programas orientados hacia la comunidad.

Aún así, con el éxito obtenido hasta este momento este veterano con más de 30 años de servicio en agencias policíacas reconoce los muchos retos que el condado enfrenta en el futuro, desde el problema de las drogas - particularmente la metanfetamina - hasta la violencia

generada por las pandillas. Moore de 52 años de edad tiene una agenda muy ambiciosa que incluye la expansión de la cárcel del condado, contratar más oficiales y establecer relaciones con las escuelas y los diferentes vecindarios. Definitivamente tengo algunas cosas que quiero cumplir, comenta Moore durante una entrevista reciente. Una de esas cosas es la contratación de más oficiales. Desde que el dirige la oficina el personal se incrementó con 64 nuevos oficiales, eso lleva un esfuerzo de más de un año de de trabajo por cada oficial, es decir desde que se les contrata hasta que inician su servicio en las calles.

Sheriff continúa en pág. 7

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Don't overlook these itemized deductions

by Kay Bell

Smarter taxpayers develop their deductions strategy early, getting the most out of the tax breaks and avoiding filing-deadline panic.

Figuring out which deductions can help you is important because they aren't dollar-for-dollar tax-reduction tools. They can only cut your taxes on a limited basis by reducing your taxable income. Less income equals less tax.

That means every bit that reduces your taxable income is critical to cutting your final payment to Uncle Sam -- or getting a bigger refund. If you're going to add up your deductible expenses, add them all up on your Schedule A, especially since many deductions require you to reach a certain level before you can use them.

Tax-savvy filers know that some useful deductions get overlooked in the last-minute rush to find ways to cut a tax bill. So now, with plenty of time to spare, here are some itemized deductions you may have forgotten about.

Many medical costs to consider There is never anything good about being sick, but don't add to your ailments by overlooking medical costs that you can deduct.

Since total medical expenditures must be at least 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income, many taxpayers don't even bother with this one. But there are ways the Internal Revenue Service says you can get this deduction up to that ceiling.

Count travel expenses to and from medical treatments. The IRS's Web site posts current mileage rates.

If you made insurance payments from already-taxed income, add it in here. This includes the cost of long-term care insurance, up to certain limits based on your age.

What about things your insurance didn't cover, but you needed anyway? This is where you can recoup some of their costs. This includes an extra pair of eyeglasses or set of contact lenses, false teeth, hearing aids and artificial limbs. The doctor told you to get that humidifier to help relieve your chronic breathing problems. That means the device -- and additional electricity costs to operate it -- could be at least partially deductible. The IRS also has deemed that costs for programs to help you kick the smoking habit are medically deductible, as are weight-loss programs undertaken at a physician's direction to treat an existing ailment such as heart disease.

Special medical needs Do you have special needs? The medical-deductions section of your tax form is also where you account for the cost of a wheelchair, crutches and equipment that enables a deaf person to use the telephone or that provides television closed-captioning.

If you purchase a hearing or Seeing Eye guide dog, Fido's cost is deductible, too.

Even some home remodeling might be just the prescription for a tax break, as long as you follow your doctor's orders and the IRS's rules. If you need, for example, to add a chair lift to get up and down the stairs, this generally is considered a legitimate expense. Other deductible projects that make a house more accessible for a handicapped resident or individual with chronic medical

problems are:

- Adding ramps
- Widening doors and hallways
- Lowering counters and cabinets
- Adjusting electrical outlets and fixtures
- Installing railings, support bars and other bathroom modifications
- Changing hardware on doors
- Grading exterior landscape to ease access to the house

A word of warning, however: Elevators generally aren't deductible. The IRS considers this a structural change that could increase the value of your house and therefore doesn't allow it as a medical deduction.

Yes, there are some good taxes Some taxes really do come in handy.

If you live in a state with an income tax, you already know the value of deducting those taxes from your federal ones. But don't limit yourself here.

You also can deduct personal property taxes, intangible taxes on investments, real estate taxes, and in some cases the disability taxes you pay.

Go a bit further down the governmental tax chain, too. Did you pay city or county income or property taxes? Then throw them in here.

This means those taxes you paid directly, not just the ones withheld from your paycheck and that show up on your W-2.

For 2005 returns, taxpayers who itemize still get the chance to deduct state and local sales taxes they paid. If you live in a state that collects both sales and income taxes, you'll have to choose which tax amount you want to deduct on your Schedule A.

Residents of states that don't collect income tax but do levy sales taxes will find this is a great break. But it's worth checking out even if you do pay state income taxes. If your income tax is low, and you made a lot of expensive purchases during the year, the sales tax deduction might cut your IRS bill more than your income tax write-off.

An interest(ing) deduction Every homeowner makes sure he gets

that statement from the mortgage holder so that chunk of loan interest can be deducted.

But don't forget that second home or a vacation place with a mortgage. If it meets IRS guidelines for personal use during the tax year, then be sure to include interest paid on that property's loan on your Schedule A, too.

If it's a new loan, make sure you add in here any points -- money you paid the lender to get the loan. Even if the seller paid the points, you, the buyer, can write them off on your return. If you don't get a statement from your bank with information on points you paid, pull out your closing paperwork and you'll find it listed there.

Investments can help you out here, too. Did you borrow money to buy that hot stock? Interest on that loan is deductible.

Countless charitable contributions You got the receipt from the Red Cross for your cash donation. You have that one from the Salvation Army for that extra couch you got tired of seeing in the garage.

You're done here, right? Wrong.

There are many noncash contributions that taxpayers forget to add up.

The IRS allows you to deduct the miles you drove your personal car to the soup kitchen where you volunteer each weekend. Again, check the agency's Web site for the current per-mile rate for travel done to help out a charitable organization.

Are you a scout leader? Then the cost of your uniform and its upkeep -- dry cleaning, tailoring, repair -- is deductible.

Letting the IRS share your losses Most taxpayers think they can deduct casualty losses only if they are victims of a catastrophic natural disaster.

But you don't have to suffer through a fire, flood, hurricane, tornado or earthquake to claim a casualty deduction. Losses from theft and vandalism are eligible losses, as are any damages from an automobile ac-

cident as long as it wasn't the result of driver negligence.

The IRS does limit, however, just how much of these losses you can use to reduce your taxable income. Any amount here must be reduced by \$100, and then it must exceed 10 percent of your adjusted gross income.

Victims of hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma do get some leeway here this filing season, thanks to tax-law changes that temporarily remove these limits for affected taxpayers.

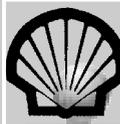
Myriad miscellaneous expenses This is a fun category, if you've got the patience -- and receipts -- to back up your spending. And you'll need the receipts because this category, like the medical one, is limited. The total of your miscellaneous deductions must be more than 2 percent of your adjusted gross income.

If you looked for a new job this year, be sure to count your job-hunting expenses here. Just remember that your job search has to be in the same field in which you're already employed. Any subscriptions to work-related publications also can be taken here, as can fees you paid for membership in a professional organization, as long as you weren't reimbursed by your employer.

Do you have a hobby that nets you a bit of extra spending money throughout the year? Any costs you had toward that hobby can be toted up as a miscellaneous expense. But you can't deduct more than you made on the hobby.

Maybe your hobby is a bit more glitzy -- trips to Las Vegas or Atlantic City, N.J., for a little recreational gaming. If it wasn't a good year at the roulette wheel, the IRS lets you deduct your losses. These losses aren't limited by the 2-percent cap, but you can't deduct in losses more than you won.

And finally, if this whole deduction process just got too taxing for you and you paid an accountant to figure it out for you, here's a final itemizing gift from the IRS. Fees paid to professional tax preparers are deductible, too.



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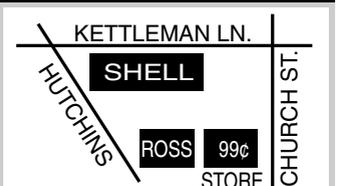
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Male Day Laborers Turn to Prostitution

NAM - LOS ANGELES – Their faces reflect how uncomfortable it is for them to talk about. On street corners where day laborers congregate, it's no longer as easy to find work – but there are plenty of offers of sex for money. There is also a high incidence of workers being drugged and raped, something suffered by many, and hidden by all out of shame.

“The situation is happening more frequently. It happens more on the unorganized corners than in day labor centers, but the problem itself is widespread. It's like a well-known secret that everyone knows and has experienced, but no one talks about,” explained Pablo Alvarado, national coordinator of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network.

In an investigation by La Opinión on various day labor corners in Long Beach, Rancho Cucamonga, Los Angeles and Moreno Valley, more than half of those interviewed admitted having received at least one offer of sex in exchange for money.

“Gringos see us as cheap brothels and not as day labor centers. Many enter into it (knowingly), but the majority of us are tricked into it. They tell us it's a job and later it turns out they want sex. I have co-workers who have even been drugged without realizing it,” said Ricardo Cenicerros, who is registered to find work at a day labor center in Rancho Cucamonga.

Mauricio Rodríguez, a day laborer at a center in Long Beach, was hired to paint the bedrooms of an apartment. “We're going to pay you well,” two men, one white and the other Latino, told him when he opened the door of their green Honda Civic.

According to Rodríguez, when they arrived at the apartment he was supposed to paint, a middle-class apartment in the heart of the Southern California city of Signal Hill, the shouts and insults began.

“We don't want you to talk, pendejo. Take off your clothes and move over there,” the Latino man ordered.

“They shouted insults at me. You could tell they liked humiliating me. They had knives on the table and it really scared me, especially the white guy who pointed a syringe at me (supposedly) filled with drugs. I don't know how I did it -- I didn't stop talking and, when I could, I got closer to the door until I could open it and run away,” said Rodríguez.

With the memory of his experience still fresh, Rodríguez brought La Opinión to the place where, according to him, he had been attacked days before.

The word “Welcome,” painted with the colors of the American flag, hung from the door marked number six. From behind the door, rock songs in English could be heard. However, no one answered the repeated knocks at the door.

“They bring men to this apartment one after another and it always sounds like things are being knocked around,” said a neighbor who preferred not to give her name.

Mauricio is sure that he is not the

only one who has been taken to this apartment.

The first car appeared a little before noon. As if out of habit, dozens of day laborers rushed toward the red Toyota truck that pulled up on the corner of Grove and Arrow streets in Rancho Cucamonga.

A mix of sweat and alcohol emanated from the small circle of men that formed next to the vehicle. In a matter of seconds, the group dissolved. Only four workers remained to negotiate.

“They play for the other team [they are gay]. They keep coming here in different cars but we know their faces and it's best not to get too close,” said Francisco Tapia, who is known to come to this corner to look for work on the weekends.

Of the group that continued negotiating, only the youngest got in the truck.

“What's your motive for hiring day laborers?” La Opinión asked the two

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Prostituyen a jornaleros

LOS ANGELES -- Los rostros reflejan que les incomoda hablar del tema. En las esquinas de los jornaleros ya no es tan fácil encontrar trabajo, pero abundan las propuestas de sexo por dinero, las drogas y las violaciones que muchos sufren y que todos ocultan por vergüenza.

“La situación se está repitiendo con mayor frecuencia. Sucede más en las esquinas no organizadas que en los centros de

jornaleros pero, en sí, el problema es general. Es como un secreto a voces que todos saben y conocen pero, nadie denuncia”, explicó Pablo Alvarado coordinador nacional de la Red Nacional de Jornaleros.

Durante una investigación de La Opinión en varias esquinas de trabajo en Long Beach, Rancho Cucamonga, Los Ángeles y Moreno Valley, más de la mitad de los entrevistados reconocieron que han

recibido al menos una propuesta de sexo a cambio de dinero.

“Los gringos nos están viendo como centros de prostíbulos baratos y no de mano de obra. Muchos le entran [aceptan] pero, a la mayoría nos llevan con engaños. Nos dicen que es para un trabajo y después resulta que quieren sexo. Tengo compañeros que hasta los drogan sin que se den cuenta”, comentó Ricardo Cenicerros, que se registra para pedir trabajo en el centro de jornaleros de Rancho Cucamonga.

Mauricio Rodríguez, jornalero del

centro de Long Beach, fue contratado para pintar las recámaras de una vivienda. “Te vamos a pagar bien”, comentó que le dijeron cuando abrió la puerta de un vehículo Honda Civic color verde en cuyo interior dos hombres, un anglosajón y otro latino, esperaban por él.

Según Rodríguez, al llegar al apartamento que debía pintar, una vivienda de clase media en el corazón de la ciudad de Signal Hill, comenzaron los gritos y los insultos.

Prostituyen continúa en pág. 21



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International Exhibit - Bodies Revealed in Sacramento for limited time

By Mary Ann Gomez

Have you ever wondered how our bodies really work? How our muscles, bones and major organs look and work together? Well, then you need to check out Bodies Revealed, a groundbreaking exhibition featuring real human bodies.

It will only be in Sacramento through the end of March so don't miss the opportunity for you and your family to learn about the human body. This world-famous anatomical exhibition features real, whole and partial body specimens that have been meticulously

dissected and preserved through an innovative process, giving visitors the opportunity to view the complexity of their own organs and systems like never before. Visitors walk through nine galleries to see up-close inside the skeletal, muscular, reproductive, respiratory, circulatory and other systems of the human body.

Bilingual staff is available to help you with any questions you may have as you go from one area of the exhibit to the next. Bodies Revealed is at 2040 Alta Arden Way, Sacramento and is open from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. everyday. Go to www.bodiesrevealed.com for more details.

Sheriff

continúa en pág. 4

Tiene también la meta de incrementar hasta con 100 nuevos oficiales su planta de trabajo para el mes de junio.

Moore ha estado con el departamento un poco más de 25 años y le gustaría añadir más personal de minorías étnicas a su planta de personal. Miembros de las minorías han expresado el mismo interés, menciona. "Queremos que todos los sectores del condado estén bien representados" "La policía debe de reflejar tanto como sea posible a la gente que le sirve y protege"

A principios de este año Moore promovió al teniente Eric Holman al grado de capitán convirtiéndose en el primer afroamericano en la historia del departamento del sheriff en alcanzar esa posición. Antes de que el departamento tuviera capitanes otro afroamericano Clifford Weaver había alcanzado el puesto de comandante. Moore también promovió a Danelle Hohe, mujer asiático-americana a grado de capitán y Joe Herrera, un latino al grado de teniente.

Para combatir crímenes que van desde las pandillas hasta las drogas, Moore planea incrementar el número de oficiales asignándolos en los barrios o vecindarios con alto índice de criminalidad y al mismo tiempo construyendo una relación con las escuelas locales y los residentes del área. Estos esfuer-

zos son parte del acercamiento orientado hacia la comunidad y requiere que los oficiales vayan de puerta en puerta, hablar con los niños durante y después de la escuela, visitar los negocios y vecindarios para conocer a los residentes.

Otro de los asuntos que enfrenta el departamento es la sobrepoblación de la cárcel del condado en French Camp. Las instalaciones actualmente cuentan con 1,411 camas pero hay 1,800 personas detenidas. Normalmente las personas que han cometido delitos que no son violentos se les deja libres haciendo lugar para otros presos que enfrentan cargos más serios.

El departamento está solicitando hasta 80 millones dólares en fondos del estado para el programa de expansión de la cárcel que tardará tres años en completarse. El condado tendrá una respuesta en el mes de mayo sobre cuánto dinero recibirá. Mientras tanto el departamento con instalaciones alternativas trabaja para solucionar este problema

Aunque hemos progresado en alcanzar algunas de las metas del departamento todavía queda mucho por hacer, comenta Moore.

"Siempre hay algo en lo que estamos trabajando" siempre hay forma de mejorar todo"

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Latino becomes first Chair of Stockton's Planning Commission appointed by Mayor

by Rhashad Pittman

Mark Martinez has become the first Latino chair of the Stockton Planning Commission to be appointed by a mayor and one of only a handful of Hispanic members ever to lead the governing body.

The Planning Commission grants business permits, approves housing developments and maps out the city to meet the needs of future growth. The commission's decisions can be overturned by the Stockton City Council but usually are not. Martinez will oversee the commission's meetings, consult with the city's planning staff and set

commission's meeting agendas during his one-year term as chair.

Martinez said it was an honor to be selected for the position.

"The Planning Commission is the second most influential governing body in the city," he said. "There's a lot of responsibility for the decisions you make."

Having been the vice chair of the commission, Martinez made its leader with a 6-0 vote by the governing body earlier in the month. Martinez, who is also the chief executive officer of the San Joaquin County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, presided over his first

Planning Commission meeting as chair on Feb. 28.

As an At-Large member selected by Mayor Ed Chavez in 2004, Martinez represents the entire city instead of a district like the other commission members, who are appointed by council members. Martinez said he hopes his appointment to the commission paves the way for other Latinos in local government. More Latino representatives are crucial as the local Hispanic community continues to grow.

"Hopefully this will open doors for others to serve on such an important and influential board that makes deci-

sions that are so important to this city and community," he said.

When asked if he had any future political ambitions, Martinez would not rule out a run for the Stockton City Council. He said he has received a lot of support in the community to pursue a seat on the council. But he has not yet decided if he will run for office once his term on the Planning Commission is complete at the end of the year.

"I'm pretty flattered that I have that kind of support" to run for office, he said. "It's something I'm going to take into consideration in the very near future."

Latino dirige la Comisión de Planeación de Stockton

(Stockton, CA) – Mark Martinez se ha convertido en el primer latino en dirigir la Comisión de Planeación de la ciudad de Stockton. Mark fue nombrado inicialmente a la comisión por el alcalde y es uno de los pocos hispanos que han tenido el honor de dirigir ese cuerpo de gobierno.

La Comisión de Planeación otorga permisos para negocios, aprueba la construcción de nuevos desarrollos de vivienda y establece programas que determinan el futuro crecimiento de la ciudad. Las decisiones de la comisión deben de ser aprobadas por el consejo de la ciudad. Martinez estará encargado de

coordinar las reuniones de la comisión, consultar con el personal de la comisión de planeación y establecer la agenda de trabajo de la comisión. El periodo de servicio es de un año.



Martinez

Martinez dice que fue un honor el ser elegido para esa posición. "La Comisión de Planeación es el segundo cuerpo de gobierno con más influencia en la ciudad," dice. "Hay mucha responsabilidad en las decisiones que tomas" Habiendo sido el vicepresidente de la comisión, Martinez logró convertirse en su

líder con una votación unánime de 6-0 a principio de este mes. Martinez, quien también es el director ejecutivo de la Cámara de Comercio Hispana del Condado de San Joaquin presidió su primera reunión en carácter de presidente el pasado 28 de febrero.

Martinez representa a la ciudad en su totalidad ya que fue nominado a la comisión por el alcalde Ed Chavez en 2004. Esto difiere de los otros miembros de la comisión quienes son nombrados por los consejeros de la ciudad y representan distritos. Martinez dice que espera que su nombramiento en la comisión pavimente el camino para otros latinos en el gobierno local. Los representantes latinos son cruciales ya que la comunidad hispana sigue creciendo.

"Esperemos que esto abra las puertas

para que mas latinos tengan la oportunidad de servir en este importante e influyente comisión cuyas decisiones son mucho muy importantes para esta ciudad y la comunidad," menciona.

Cuando se le pregunta si tiene en mente seguir en la política, Martinez no descarta lanzar su candidatura para ocupar un puesto en el consejo de la ciudad. Menciona que ha recibido mucho apoyo de la comunidad para buscar un lugar en el consejo. Pero aun no ha decidido si lo va a hacer una vez que termine su periodo al frente de la comisión.

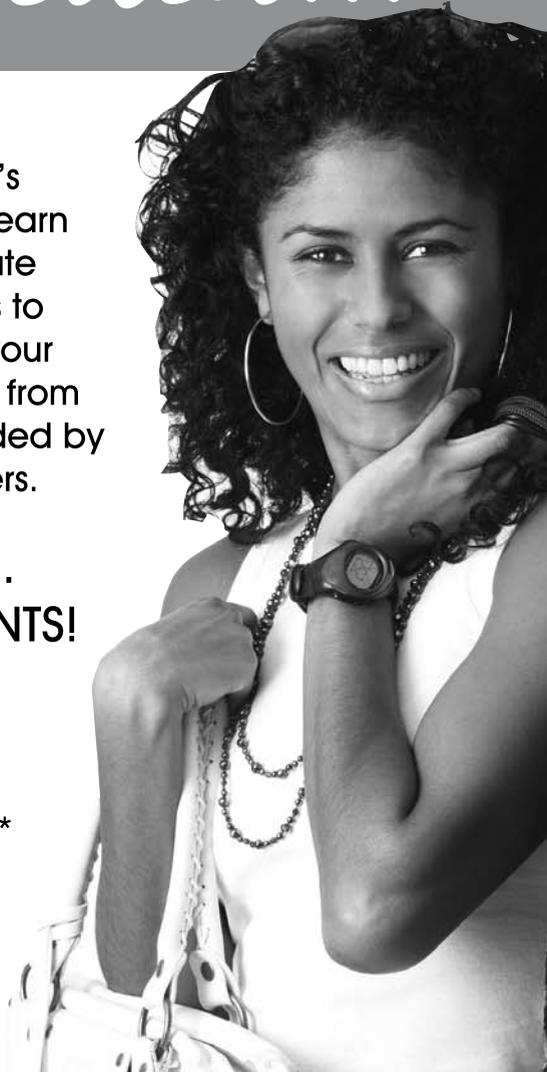
"Me siento muy halagado de tener esa clase de apoyo" si decidiera lanzar mi candidatura, menciona "Es algo que voy a tomar en consideración en un futuro muy cercano."

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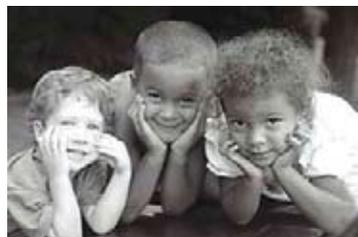
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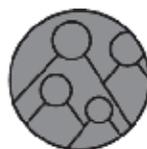


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www.frrcsj.org

Clinton

continued from Front Page

not vote for Obama.

Despite differences in the Hispanic populations of California and Texas – the Texans are largely Mexican-Americans born in the state, who speak English well, in addition to Spanish – both groups solidly backed Hillary.

Hispanic voters gave Clinton the win in California, according to a Feb. 29 article in Spanish-language *La Opinión*, a Los Angeles daily newspaper.

“Latinos have kept alive Hillary’s campaign,” said Andy Hernández, a Houston, Texas Democratic activist and Clinton supporter, in *La Opinión*. If Obama wins 40 percent of the Latino vote in Texas, he said, he will have gained much ground on his opponent.

CNN exit polls gave him 32 percent.

The 36-percent-Latino population of Texas brought the Hispanic vote into the spotlight before the state’s primary. Along with it came a story of tension between African Americans and Latinos.

“It is a reality that we cannot hide: You see it on the streets, in schools, and in prisons,” wrote syndicated columnist Jorge Ramos in his Feb. 29 column,

“New Rule: Latinos Decide.”

The friction comes from economic and political competition between two groups looking for “the same thing: a better way of life and more representation.” Ramos insists, though, that Hispanics would vote for African-American candidates, citing previous Latino support for New York’s black Mayor David Dinkins, Dallas’ Ron Kirk, and for Obama in Virginia and Arizona.

“Reality” supports the idea that Mexican voters look beyond race, wrote Gustavo Arellano in his comedic “¡Ask a Mexican!” syndicated column.

“Mexicans largely ignored the presidential run of New Mexico governor Bill Richardson and have supported black politicians,” Arellano said, “from the days of Vicente Guerrero (the mulatto Mexican president who outlawed slavery in 1829) to big-city mayors like Tom Bradley and Harold Washington.”

As for Obama, Arellano says, name recognition and policies have more to do with the issue than skin color.

When asked by a reader, “Why won’t Mexicans vote for a black man?” Arellano

responds sarcastically: “Heaven forbid Mexicans support a nationally known personality with whom they’re more familiar instead of a first-term senator from a flyover state. And anyone ever think Mexicans are more inclined to vote for Clinton because they like her centrist policies more than Obama’s liberal promises?”

But as Democratic candidates campaigned in Texas, the larger story in the Latino media was the candidates’ unprecedented bid for Hispanic votes.

Columnist Jorge Ramos heralded the arrival of these politically powerful Latinos who will form one-third of the United States population by 2050.

“Have you noticed that no one talks about the Hispanic vote as a sleeping giant anymore?” asked Ramos in the Dallas-Fort Worth Spanish-language newspaper *Diario La Estrella*. “We are more awake than ever. We are many and we will be even more.”

The Democratic candidates’ Feb. 21 debate in Austin, Texas, broadcast in English and Spanish – which Ramos moderated – proved the relevance of the Latino vote, Ramos said.

San Antonio’s Spanish-language *Rumbo* newspaper, which was recently bought by *ImpreMedia*, deployed reporters

throughout the state before the election. Last week, it published two exclusives: an interview with Clinton and a commentary by Obama.

A host of lighter stories also filled Latino newspapers, including a look at the music campaigners used to attract votes.

“The Democratic candidates now want to get to Latinos’ hearts through their music,” wrote Liliana Vargas-Lemons in *Al Día*, a Spanish-language publication of the Dallas Morning News Co.

The group *Amigos de Obama*, or *Friends of Obama*, contracted a mariachi band and produced “¡Viva Obama 2008!” The commercial and music video praises Obama’s humble roots, activism in Chicago and dedication to service.

In response, Vargas-Lemons said, Hillary Clinton rolled out a new campaign commercial with the song, “Hillary, Hillary Clinton” sung by Walter Suhr & The Mango Punch, with a presentation by Tejano or Tex-Mex musician Johnny Canales.

Political activist Renny Rosas of Fort Worth doubted the value of the songs in getting Latino votes. The most politicized Latinos are well integrated into American culture and speak English, she told *Al Día*.

However, as a marketing tool, she said, songs in any language are a good strategy.

Clinton Gana

continúa en pág. 1

en el estado hablan bien inglés, en adición al español –ambos grupos respaldaron sólidamente a Hillary. Los electores hispanos le dieron la victoria a Clinton, de acuerdo a un artículo de febrero 29 aparecido en *La Opinión* el periódico de Los Ángeles.

“Los Latinos han conservado viva la campaña de Hillary,” dice Andy Hernandez, un activista demócrata de Houston, Texas y quien apoya a Clinton, mencionó a *La Opinión*. Si Obama hubiera ganado el 40% del voto Latino en Texas, menciona, hubiera ganado mucho más espacio que su oponente. La encuesta de CNN le dio a él (Obama) un 32 por ciento.

La población Latina de Texas es un 36 por ciento y trajo al frente el voto latino mucho antes de las elecciones primarias. Junto con eso se produjo tensión entre las comunidades afroamericanas y latinas. “Es una realidad que no podemos ocultar: se puede ver en las calles, escuelas y hasta en las prisiones,” escribió en su columna de publicación nacional Jorge Ramos el 29 de febrero, con el título “Nueva Regla: Los Latinos Deciden.” La fricción viene de la competencia política y económica entre los

dos grupo que miran hacia “las mismas cosas”: una mejor forma de vida y más representación. “Ramos insiste, se cree que Hispanos votarían por candidatos afroamericanos, citando previos apoyos para el alcalde de Nueva York David Dinkins, el de Dallas Ron Kirk y para Obama en Virginia y Arizona.

“La realidad” es que los electores mexicanos ven mas allá de la raza, escribió Gustavo Arellano en su columna de tipo cómico “¡Pregúntele a un Mexicano! “Los mexicanos han ignorado grandemente la carrera presidencial del gobernador de Nuevo México Bill Richardson y han apoyado a políticos afroamericanos,” comenta Arellano, “desde los días de Vicente Guerrero (el presidente mexicano de origen mulato que abolió la esclavitud en 1829) hasta los alcaldes de grandes ciudades como Tom Bradley y Harold Washington.” Por lo que se refiere a Obama, comenta Arellano, el reconocimiento del nombre y sus políticas tienen que ver más que con el asunto del color de la piel.

Cuando un lector le pregunto, “¿Porque los mexicanos no votarían por un presidente de color? Arellano respondió sarcásticamente: El cielo

prohíbe a los mexicanos apoyar un senador principiante de un estado que no tiene mucha presencia en lugar de una personalidad conocida nacionalmente con quien están más familiarizados. Cualquiera puede pensar que los mexicanos están más inclinados a votar por Clinton porque les gustan sus políticas de centro más que las promesas liberales de Obama.

Pero mientras los candidatos demócratas hacían campaña en Texas, los artículos de los medios latinos revelan la importancia que se le dio al voto hispano. El columnista Jorge Ramos, encabezó esta fuerza política de latina que conformará un tercio de la población de los Estados Unidos para el 2050. ¿Han notado que nadie habla más acerca del gigante dormido? Preguntó Ramos en el periódico *La Estrella* en Dallas-Forth Worth. Estamos más despiertos que nunca, aseguró.

Los candidatos demócratas debatieron el 21 de febrero el debate fue transmitido por televisión en inglés y español y Ramos fue el moderador –esto comprobó la relevancia del voto Latino, menciona Ramos. El periódico de San Antonio “*Rumbo*” que recientemente fuera comprado por *ImpreMedia*, envió corresponsales por todo el estado antes de la elección. La

semana pasada publicó dos entrevistas exclusivas: una con Clinton y un comentario de Obama. Adicionalmente los periódicos latinos publicaron continuamente artículos entre otros el uso de la música para atraer electores. “Los candidatos demócratas usaron la música para llegar al corazón de los latinos,” escribió Liliana Vargas-Lemons en *El Día*, periódico en español de los Dallas Morning News Co. El grupo amigos de Obama contrato un grupo de mariachi y produjo “Viva Obama 2008” el comercial y el video musical mostraba los orígenes humildes de Obama, su activismo en Chicago y su dedicación al servicio.

En respuesta, Hillary Clinton introdujo en su campaña un nuevo comercial con la canción, “Hillary, Hillary Clinton” cantada por Walter Suhr & The Mango Punch, con una presentación del músico Texano Johnny Canales. La activista política Renny Rosas de Dallas FortWorth duda del valor de las canciones para obtener votos latinos. Los latinos más politizados están bien integrados en la cultura americana y hablan inglés declaró *Al Día*.

Sin embargo, como herramienta de mercadeo las canciones en cualquier lenguaje son una buena estrategia, añadió.

BECOME A SENATE, ASSEMBLY, EXECUTIVE OR JUDICIAL FELLOW

(STOCKTON, CA) – Today, Senator Michael Machado (D-Linden) announced that applications for the 2008-2009 California Senate, Assembly, Executive and Judicial Fellowship programs are available.

The programs provide college graduates with an opportunity to become full-time staff members in Sacramento for 11 months beginning in October 2008. Fellowships are jointly operated by the three branches of state government and the Center for California Studies at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS).

Fellows are paid a stipend of \$1,972 per month plus health, vision, and dental benefits. They also earn 12 units of graduate credit from CSUS for the academic portion of the program.

Speaking about the Fellows programs, Senator Machado said, “Being a Fellow provides individuals with an excellent opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge about how California’s state government operates. Whether your career goals are in the public or private sector, the Fellowship programs provide a valuable view into the democratic process.”

A five-week orientation at the begin-

ning of the program provides program participants background on state government, the legislative process, and major policy issues. Former Fellows include current members of Congress, the California Legislature, judges, and numerous other elected officials and community leaders.

Anyone who will be at least 20 years of age and a graduate of a four-year college or university by September 1, 2008 is eligible to apply. There is no preferred major. Individuals with advanced degrees and those in mid-career are encouraged to apply.

Prospective applicants can obtain informational brochures from the CSUS Center for California Studies, at www.csus.edu/calst/programs or by calling the Center’s office at (916) 278-6906. Brochures may also be requested from Senator Machado’s Stockton District Office by calling (209) 948-7930. Applications for the Fellowships are only available online at www.csus.edu/calst/programs.

The deadline for submitting applications is February 27, 2008. Fellows will be selected in May after an initial screening of applications and a subsequent panel interview of the finalists.

Community, Region Should Support Crows Landing

As perhaps no time in our history, our community has the opportunity – perhaps some might even suggest an obligation – to assume a leadership role in reaching our full economic potential. This is perhaps not a groundbreaking observation, but it is curiously going unmentioned in the region's current debate. The reasons for this are complex and directly related to the fact that our economy is in trouble, and people are increasingly worried.

To do this, we have to do more than merely want to expand economic opportunities, create new jobs, attract new investment and make more out of our existing regional facilities. We have to resolve to clearly focus on our shared priorities and bring an end to the economic wars that always threaten to tear us apart.

An excellent example of this is what is happening in the Central Valley.

A recent newspaper article put it well:

The 240-mile-long valley from Bakersfield to Stockton produces a quarter of the nation's food and prefers the kinder appellation of 'America's Breadbasket.' But it has some of the worst smog, poverty and school dropout rates in the country.

So the natural ingredients are not enough. And while three of the State Legislature's highest-ranking leaders hail from the Central Valley, this is no guarantee that increased state dollars will flow freely enough to carry the region out of its economic doldrums.

So what is to be done?

An excellent place to start is one of the toughest issues in the region: The proposed development that is a short-haul rail project that would link the Crows Landing facility (a former military resource owned by Stanislaus County) with the Port of Oakland. This is designed (by a developer named West Park) to create an inland port

at Crows Landing. Hardly the stuff of serious political fights, don't you think?

Currently, the Crows Landing military facility is yielding no value to anyone, and yet people are trying to stop it. The plan is essentially guaranteed to take truck traffic off congested freeways (a major source of air pollution), and yet some environmentalists say it will be worsen traffic. The proposal is intended to secure bond funding for the area (which the Central Valley has consistently lost out on for years) and yet some local interests are risking letting funds go elsewhere.

Have opponents addressed the fact that

the project will also deliver \$22 million in school funding? At a time when the number of students dropping out of school continues to skyrocket?

Small businesses have a real stake in projects like West Park's, but our needs go far beyond what this will deliver. It is an ingredient in a larger strategy to create new jobs and extend job training to a workforce in desperate need.

It's time to choose: Are we going to invest in ideas that will invest in our people? Or are we going to reject real opportunity that stands to benefit our community as never before? Let's get serious about our economic future.

8TH ANNUAL EL CONCILIO'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE: DISCOVERING THE LATINO SPIRIT

STOCKTON CA, MARCH 28, 2008: El Concilio- Council for the Spanish Speaking will be hosting its 8th annual Leadership Conference: Discovering the Latino Spirit being held on March 28, 2008 at the Cesar Chavez High School located at 2929 Windflower Lane Stockton, CA 95212. The conference will take place between the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The speakers include Jerry Tello National Director of Latino Fatherhood & Family Institute, Honorable Rasul

Mohammad; Nation of Islam, and Ruben Navarrette Jr.; National syndicated columnist.

For those individuals interested in attending the conference, please R.S.V.P. by March 14, 2008 for a charge of \$35.00 per person. Any R.S.V.P.'s after the deadline or tickets bought at the door will be charged \$40.00 per person. Student pricing with valid student id. For more information or to R.S.V.P. for this conference, please call (209) 639-2679 Angel Jimenez.

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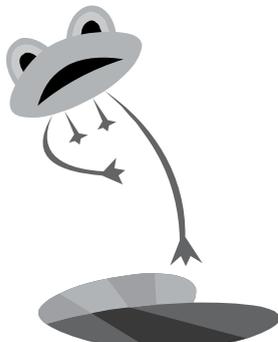
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Keynote Speakers:



Jerry Tello



Honorable Rasul Muhammad



Ruben Navarrette

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Cutting The Legal Losses: Another Year of Anna Nicole Smith

by Horace Cooper

February marked the 1st anniversary of the death of Anna Nicole Smith, and as the litigation against the estate of her former husband goes on without them both, the absurdity of the case is growing clearer. Even the team of lawyers supporting Smith's lawsuit – who stretched and distorted the legal system to suit their needs – are looking for a way to cut the losses of the tabloid titillation turned legal travesty.

After more than a decade of legal machinations and courtroom schemes chasing the estate of her deceased husband, billionaire J. Howard Marshall, II, Smith's lawyers have little to show for their efforts. And in the wake of her death, their seemingly unified front has begun to crumble. One by one, her attorneys are scrambling to cut deals to give themselves an advantage – and an out.

For the lawyers pushing this case, it truly has been a roller coaster ride. Here's a quick refresher: The case started in a probate court in Texas within weeks of J. Howard Marshall, II's death in 1995. Anna Nicole Smith (a/k/a Vickie Lynn Marshall) initially joined Marshall's eldest son J. Howard Marshall, III claiming that even though they'd been left out of Marshall's written will and estate plan, they each had been promised orally a portion of his estate. After a trial lasting nearly six months, the jury ultimately ruled against Anna Nicole Smith and Marshall's eldest son.

But Smith's legal team proved itself tenacious, and willing to subvert the system. Just before the Texas verdict was issued, they leapfrogged to a federal bankruptcy court in California. There they were able to get their biggest win – nearly half a billion dollars – by convincing the bankruptcy judge to ignore the course of events and legal arguments covering probate matters in Texas. It's been mostly downhill since then: the first appeal to the federal district court in California reduced the award by nearly three quarters.

Next the case went to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. Here Anna Nicole would lose on every count. The court ruled as a matter of law that the entire dispute could be heard only by Texas. On appeal to the Supreme Court, the legal team would gain a narrow victory which kept the case on life support. In the 2006 opinion, the Supreme Court ruled that the 9th Circuit had been overly broad in assuming that this dispute could only be heard in Texas and they sent it back for further review in California, where it remains. Even after all this, most lawyers agree that the prospects for an actual win are meager at best.

What do these lawyers have to show for themselves after all this time? Very little. Perhaps this explains the infighting. Legal svengali and Anna Nicole's companion, Howard K. Stern, the shrewdest of the bunch, reputedly cut a deal with Larry Birkhead in order to gain the exclusive rights to represent Anna Nicole Smith's estate. In October, Stern rushed to file a motion guarantee-

ing that he'll collect six percent of any judgment ultimately won from the estate litigation.

Less than a month later, Houston, Texas based Cunningham Darlow LLP – the firm that actually has handled the estate litigation – slapped the estate with a creditor's claim, alleging that the firm has not received payment for its work in the litigation, despite written agreements covering Smith's obligations to pay.

And Cunningham Darlow's in-house situation isn't much better. Earlier this summer, one of the

lead attorneys on the Anna Nicole Smith case, attorney Richard Zook, cut his own deal abruptly leaving the firm to join a competing law firm, which he said "had so many things that were great for me."

Make no mistake the legal shenanigans of these lawyers isn't cost free. Win or lose the reckless and selfish actions of a few bad eggs cost the rest of



us. Frivolous lawsuits, clog our courts and prevent legal disputes with merit from being heard in a timely manner. In fact according to a recent study litigation costs add up to nearly \$809 per year for every person in America today.

With the prospects for the case dimming and lawyers rapidly breaking

ranks, marking a year of arguing a case without a plaintiff may be just the right time for all parties involved to resolve to take a new look at this entire legal fiasco, and perhaps to drop the suit and cut their losses before it's too late.

Horace Cooper is a senior fellow with the American Civil Rights Union



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¿Quién puede participar en el programa?

El Healthy Families Program cubre a niños:

- Desde el nacimiento hasta cumplir los 19 años.
- Que son residentes de California, ciudadanos estadounidenses, ciudadanos por nacionalización o inmigrantes que califican.
- En familias cuyos ingresos caen dentro de ciertos límites.
- No cumple con los requisitos, ni está inscrito en Medi-Cal sin costo.
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- Beneficios dentales, incluyendo servicios preventivos y de diagnóstico (suministrado por el plan dental participante)
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- No hay deducibles.
- No hay copagos para consultas para el niño sano y vacunas.
- Lo máximo que una familia tiene que pagar en copagos al año es \$250.

¿Cómo solicito y escojo Blue Cross?

- Llame a Blue Cross of California al **1-209-558-2762** para obtener una solicitud para el Healthy Families Program. También puede llamar al Healthy Families Program al **1-800-880-5305**.
- En la solicitud, escoja a Blue Cross of California como su plan de salud.

* Las primas mensuales varían según el tamaño de la familia, los ingresos familiares, opción del plan y el condado en el que resida su hijo.

Para más información sobre Blue Cross of California, llame al 1-209-558-2762. Los miembros con dificultades para oír o hablar, pueden llamar a la línea TTY al 1-888-757-6034.

Blue Cross of California is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Association. The Blue Cross names and symbols are registered marks of the Blue Cross Association. Healthy Families is a service mark of the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board.

Community Bank of San Joaquin focuses on growth

STOCKTON, CA – February 12, 2008 – Community Bank of San Joaquin, supporting its commitment to local business growth, has appointed Ryan Moll as Vice President and Business Development Officer.

Most recently Moll served in a similar capacity at another local financial institution. He has been working in the financial industry for over 10 years with experience in



Moll

Education includes training from Morgan Stanley and San Joaquin Delta

major investment firms and community bank settings. Additional past responsibilities include Financial Investment Officer and acting compliance principal.

Utilizing a client-focused approach to financial services, Moll has achieved top quartile of his peers nationwide.

College.

A lifelong resident of Stockton, Moll serves on the United Way Stockton Community Council and is a prior member of Rotary International and the Tracy Chamber of Commerce.

About Community Bank of San Joaquin

Community Bank of San Joaquin, with headquarters at 22 West Yokuts Avenue, Stockton, California, opened in 1999. Its second branch serves the East Stockton area and is located at

4426 East Waterloo Road. Locally owned and locally managed, Community Bank of San Joaquin is truly a “full service bank” – specializing in banking for small businesses. It offers a variety of business and personal banking services, including commercial lending, cash management, and trust and investment services. Rudy Croce, Chairman of the Board, and Jane Butterfield, Chief Executive Officer, lead the Bank. For more information please call (209) 956-7000 or visit www.cbsjbank.com.

“Crazy” Latino comics to come to Stockton to make you laugh

By Rhashad Pittman
(Stockton, CA) – Two well-known Latino comics are coming to Stockton to make you laugh – if you’re crazy enough to join them.

Joey “Coco” Diaz and Felipe Esparza will perform at Stockton’s Empire Theatre on Friday, March 28 along with comedian Adam Hunter. Both Diaz and Esparza are known for their “edgier” stand-up routines and have had a number of television appearances.

Diaz has an array of both film and television roles on his resume, including the movies “The Longest Yard,” “Spider Man 2” and “Analyze That” and the television shows “My Name is Earl,” “Law & Order SVU,” and “Cedric the Entertainer.” Esparza has performed on BET’s “Comic View,” “Good Morning America” and on the “Best of Latino Laugh Festival,” which aired on Showtime.

Speaking by phone from Los Angeles, Diaz described both himself and Esparza as “crazy” Latino comics who do not hold anything back on stage. Hunter is hilarious too, he added. He invited Stocktonians to come see for themselves.

“We’re the edgier Latino comics, the crazy ones,” Diaz said. “So if you’re . . . crazy and out of your mind, come on down to the show.”

Diaz promised a show with authenticity that cannot be found on your TV sets.

“These are guys who come from the heart,” he said. “It’s not none of that Comedy Central (nonsense).”

As many Stockton residents face financial hardships due to the home foreclosure crisis and rising unemployment in the area, a good laugh from someone who can relate might help ease the pain, he said.

“Stockton’s in hard shape and we

talk about hard times,” Diaz said.

Born in Havana Cuba and raised in North Bergen, New Jersey, the 45-year-old use to dance and sing in his mother’s bar for tips as a child. He developed a taste for comedy after hearing a Richard Pryor album.

“I still remember everything about that album,” he recalled. “Richard Pryor took it to another level.”

He said he would sneak Richard Pryor albums in his room and listen to

them with his friends.

“If your mom came in the room, there was already someone near the record player to drop an album over it,” he said. “So she wouldn’t hear Richard Pryor cursing.”

Now Diaz makes his living cursing and telling hilarious stories.

“I didn’t know how good I’d be at it, but I had to try it,” he said.

For ticket information, contact Empire Theatre at (209) 943-7469.

Cómicos Latinos vienen a Stockton para hacernos reír

(Stockton, CA) – Dos bien conocidos cómicos latinos vienen a Stockton para hacernos reír – si se está lo suficientemente loco para asistir.

Joey “Coco” Diaz y Felipe Esparza se presentarán en el Stockton Empire Theater localizado en el 1825 Pacific Avenue, el viernes 29 de marzo junto con el comediante Adam Hunter. El show “Los Locos Comedy Slam” empezará a las 8 p.m... Los boletos tendrán un costo de \$20 y \$30. Los dos, tanto Diaz como Esparza son bien conocidos por mantener a los asistentes en la orilla de sus asientos por sus excelentes rutinas y han tenido un gran número de apariciones en televisión. En entrevista telefónica desde Los Ángeles, Diaz se describe el mismo al igual que esparza como “cómicos latinos locos” que no se miden cuando están en el escenario. Hunter es divertido también, añade. Invita a los residentes de Stockton para que vengan y lo vean por ellos mismos.

“Nosotros somos los cómicos locos que mantenemos a la gente en las orillas de los asientos” menciona Diaz. “Así que si estas. . . loco de remate ven al show” Diaz ha participado en algunas películas y shows de televisión, incluyendo las películas “The longest Yard” “Spider Man 2” y “Analyze That” y los programas de televisión “My name is Earl” “Law and Order SVU” y “Cedric the Entertainer” Esparza ha aparecido en el programa de la cadena BET “Comic View” “Good Morning America” y en lo

mejor del festival Latino de la Risa” que se transmitió en Showtime.

Diaz promete un show con autenticidad que no puede encontrarse en su televisión. “Estos cómicos actúan de corazón, dice “Esto no es como los shows de Comedy Central que no hacen sentido.” El show ayudara a muchos de los residentes que enfrenta tiempos difíciles, dice debido a que mucha gente está perdiendo su casa y muchos otros están desempleados. Stockton esta en tiempos difíciles y nosotros hablamos sobre eso” menciona Diaz.

Nacido en la Habana Cuba creció en North Bergen, New Jersey, ahora de 45 años de edad acostumbraba a bailar y cantar en el bar de su madre por propinas cuando era niño. Su sentido de comicidad lo desarrollo después de escuchar un álbum de Richard Pryor. Ya en la adolescencia junto con su amigos escuchaba los albanes de Pryor en su cuarto junto con sus amigos.

“Si tu mama venia al cuarto, había alguien cerca del toca discos para cubrirlo, menciona. Así no escucharía a Richard Pryor maldiciendo. En la actualidad Diaz vive de maldecir y contar historias chistosas como un comediante, siguiendo los pasos de su ídolo. “No sabía que tan bueno iba hacer pero tenía que intentarlo” menciona

Para información sobre boletos llame al Stockton Empire Theater al (209) 943-7469 o en el internet al www.stocktonempiretheater.com/events



YMCA
We build strong kids,
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When the YMCA of San Joaquin County was asked to open and operate a pre-school in Linden, it had an important choice to make. First 5 of San Joaquin County was providing the funds for 15 children to attend the program, but did not offer any guidelines about how to select those 15 children. The YMCA, in partnership and consultation with the Linden Unified School District, decided that the 15 spaces should go to children who could benefit the most; so local children with limited English skills were enrolled in the pre-school.

After meeting all the state requirements for licensed childcare, including a rigorous review and series of site visits, the YMCA Lions’ Pride Pre-School opened on November 27, 2006. Today nearly 30 children participate in the program that focuses on socialization and preparing children to be ready to enter kindergarten once they graduate from pre-school.

Both English and Spanish are used in the classroom, with an emphasis on preparing the limited English speakers with higher level skills. A Spanish speaking instructional aide communicates with non-English speaking parents about any special circumstances and needs of their children.

According to Sue Camissa, the pre-school’s director, “The YMCA and Linden Unified School District made the right choice in targeting limited English speaking children for this program. Everyday we see incredible progress in these delightful children, and we’re proud that we can assist them to become prepared to enter kindergarten ready to go!”

The pre-school is located adjacent to the campus of Linden High School. High school students volunteer in the classroom, and the students in the Agricultural class helped to prepare and then pour concrete for an all-weather outside activity area.

The pre-school offers a morning session five days a week, as well as all day care (7 am to 5:30 pm) five days a week. For more information about the YMCA Lions’ Pride Pre-School, please call the YMCA at 472-9622.

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Keeping Cholesterol in Check

By Dr. Osvaldo Rodriguez

Cholesterol is a type of fat called a lipid that your body uses to build new cells. Our bodies get cholesterol from the food we eat, as well as from our livers. It's an important building tool for the body.

But too much cholesterol, or too much of the wrong kind of cholesterol, can hurt your body. This process occurs over decades, so it's critical to talk with your doctor about your cholesterol level before it becomes a problem.

What doctors refer to as "good" and "bad" cholesterol are the substances that carry cholesterol to cells, like a truck carrying cargo down the road.

Low Density Lipoprotein (called LDL cholesterol), known as "bad" cholesterol, is a molecule that drops cho-

lesterol into the wall of the artery, like a truck dumping trash on your street. When this trash builds up along the artery walls as plaque, it narrows arteries and decreases blood flow.

High Density Lipoprotein (called HDL cholesterol), known as "good" cholesterol, returns cholesterol from the tissue to the liver, like a street cleaner.

The process of plaque build-up, called atherosclerosis, reduces the amount of nutrients delivered to our body tissues, and damages cells. For example, damage to cells in the heart's muscle tissue leads to heart disease - the number one cause of death in the United States. That's right, high cholesterol can lead to a heart attack.

The cholesterol plaque that causes a heart attack for a 50-year-old woman

was probably building up in her arteries her whole life. The lesson here is to ask your doctor to check your cholesterol level before you're at risk for developing heart disease.

If your doctor reports that you have high cholesterol, it doesn't mean something bad will happen right away. It does mean you should take steps now to prevent a heart attack in 30 years.

Lowering "bad cholesterol" can actually save your life - and raising your "good cholesterol" can help also.

So what should you do?

Get your cholesterol checked when you are young - and regularly thereafter.

Exercise, exercise, exercise - you should do vigorous exercise for 40 consecutive minutes (that means without

stopping) at least four days each week.

Eat right. Eat foods low in cholesterol and fat. But the main rule to follow is avoid eating more food than you need. Make healthy snacks, and eat more fruits and vegetables.

Take your medicine regularly, if your doctor has prescribed it. News reports debate the benefits of cholesterol medicine, but scientific studies show that lowering cholesterol with medicine can save lives.

High cholesterol can be developed because of diet, or it could be just an inherited genetic condition. In either case, lowering your cholesterol will save your life. You and your loved ones will appreciate that!

Find out more at www.kp.org, or email Dr. Rodriguez at doctors-word@kp.org

Dr. Osvaldo Rodriguez practices internal medicine at Kaiser Permanente.

Mantenga el Colesterol a Raya

Por el Dr. Osvaldo Rodríguez

El colesterol es un tipo de grasa llamada lípido que el cuerpo usa para construir nuevas células. Nuestros cuerpos obtienen colesterol de la comida que comemos, así como de nuestro hígado. Es una importante herramienta de construcción para el cuerpo.

Pero demasiado colesterol, o demasiado colesterol del tipo incorrecto, puede hacer daño al cuerpo. Este proceso ocurre durante décadas, por lo que es esencial hablar con su médico sobre el nivel de colesterol antes de que se convierta en un problema.

Lo que los doctores definen como colesterol "bueno" y "malo" son sustancias que llevan colesterol a las células, como un camión que lleva mercancía por la carretera.

La Lipoproteína de Baja Densidad (llamada colesterol LDL), conocida como colesterol "malo", es una molécula que descarga colesterol en la pared de la arteria, como un camión descargando basura en la calle. Cuando esta basura se acumula a lo largo de las paredes de las arterias en forma de placa, estrecha las arterias y disminuye el flujo de sangre.

La Lipoproteína de Alta Densidad (llamada colesterol HDL), conocida como

colesterol "bueno", devuelve el colesterol del tejido al hígado, como un camión limpiador de calles.

El proceso de acumulación de placa, llamado aterosclerosis, reduce la cantidad de nutrientes repartidas a los tejidos del cuerpo, y daña las células. Por ejemplo, el daño de las células del tejido del músculo del corazón produce enfermedad coronaria - la causa de muerte número uno en Estados Unidos. Eso es, el colesterol alto puede llevar a sufrir un ataque al corazón.

La placa de colesterol que produce un ataque al corazón a una mujer de 50 años probablemente llevaba acumulándose en

las arterias toda su vida. La lección aquí es preguntar a su médico que controle el nivel de colesterol antes de que corra el riesgo de desarrollar una enfermedad coronaria.

Si su médico le informa de que tiene el colesterol alto, no significa que le va a ocurrir algo malo enseguida. Significa que debería tomar los pasos para prevenir un ataque al corazón en 30 años.

Disminuir el "colesterol malo" puede realmente salvar su vida - y elevar su "colesterol bueno" puede ayudar también.

Por tanto, ¿qué debería hacer?

Controle su colesterol cuando sea joven - y de forma regular después.

Ejercicio, ejercicio, ejercicio - debería

Colesterol continúa en pág. 19

Reduce Your Stress Level



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Professional massage therapy is an ancient form of massage that is being used for today's world to fight stress with out any harmful side effects to the human body. Many documents have been written on the art of massage therapy and its positive effects.

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(Our own bodies)

Stress has been given a nickname, the silent killer.

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Mexican Tastes Do Not Include Obama

NAM - With all due respect to the editorial writers of the Los Angeles Times, the Feb. 17 editorial "Hola Obama" indicates that the person who wrote it is living on some other planet.

Obama was rejected by California, Arizona and New Mexico "Hispanics" for many reasons. The primary one, however, was because these Mexican Americans didn't buy into his leftist "hope" message, for they know life in this world is not ephemeral and soaring, it is gritty and real.

The editorial takes note that Obama did well with the Virginia "Hispanic" vote without dissecting that vote ethnically. Virginia Hispanics are mostly Salvadorans and Salvadorans are not Mexicans.

With few exceptions, Salvadorans came here to escape the civil war that Salvadoran leftists lost to right-of-center conservative forces. They carry with them leftist souls that have no embodiment in American politics other than in Obama, the most liberal Senator in the Senate.

The closest parallel to the Salvadoran exodus when the left lost its war in Salvador was the Spanish leftists who fled Spain when they lost the Civil War to General Francisco Franco and his right-of-center-conservative and fascist forces.

While most Spanish "Loyalist" refugees fled to France, many came to Mexico where they were welcomed by the leftist government of Mexico in 1939 that itself entered a new paradigm rightward in 1940 that it has followed since.

The refugees continued their leftist

ways and thinking as well as their traditional Spanish distaste for Mexicans of mixed blood that happen, of course, to be a majority of Mexicans and Mexican Americans.

The editorial makes no ethnic or



philosophical differentiation between a "Hispanic" in Virginia and "Hispanics" in Chicago, Los Angeles or the Southwest and Texas.

Obama did not do well on Tuesday with Hispanics in New Jersey (mostly Cuban and Puerto Rican), nor in the Mexican American Southwest and only split the "Hispanic" (mostly Mexican American with a smattering of Puerto Ricans) vote in his home state.

The Hispanic vote is almost invisible in Ohio, a critical state primary on March 4 so we won't look to it for any direction. Texas, however, which votes on the same day is a different story.

There, the Hispanic is Mexican and comprises more than a quarter of the expected Democrat vote.

So far Obama hasn't convinced Mexicans to vote for him anywhere except in Illinois where the Mexican vote was

slightly against Obama.

So are Tex-Mex voters like Virginia Salvadorans or like California, Arizona and New Mexico voters?

The Rio Grande and El Paso Mexicans are mostly poor and live in a social environment poisoned by centuries of a plantation-like boot-on-the-throat dominance. However, their urban cousins in San Antonio, Houston and Dallas are better educated and far more sophisticated than the rural Valley Mexican.

Nonetheless, when Republican U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson won a special election for the U.S. Senate, she garnered as much as 80 percent of the

Valley Mexican vote, showing that they aren't always a Democratic lock and they will vote for a woman.

Will the Valley Mexicans vote for Obama? Will the urban Mexican in Texas vote for Obama?

No. They aren't that much different than California and Arizona Mexicans.

The California, Arizona and New Mexico Mexican voters uniformly rejected Obama even as leftist Virginia Salvadorans rejoiced in voting for a philosophical kinsman. Obama cannot count on Mexican votes for the simple reason that such voters do not share leftist roots with Salvadorans or Obama.

The Texas Mexican American, for example, idolizes fellow Texan war heroes, Medal of Honor awardees -- Cleto Rodriguez, David Barckley, Lucien Adams, Macario Garcia, Jose Lopez, Silvestre Herrera, Benito Martinez, Alfredo Gonzalez, Roy Benevides and Miguel Keith.

Accepting community organizing in Chicago as service to the country is difficult to accept for a state and its people that for the 160 years Mexican Americans have been Americans have contributed so much on Asian, Middle East and European battlefields.

Vote totals in California, Arizona and New Mexico on February 5th prove beyond doubt that Mexican Americans are more centrist than Obama and his followers. They also disprove the Times editorial writer who glosses over those facts by regaling so-called "Hispanic" political tastes elsewhere as a "monolithic" demonstration of the "Hispanic" vote.

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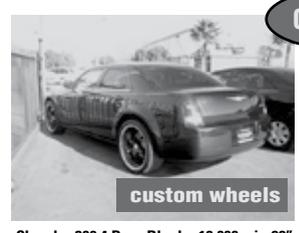
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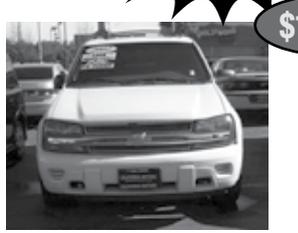
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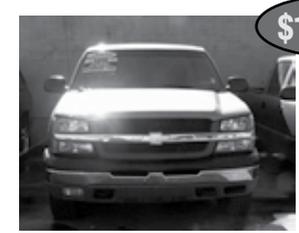
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“It’s Really the Year of Education Cuts”

by Diann Rogers,

Some “Year of Education” this is going to be. After promises of making our children the focus of elected officials’ attention in 2008, the state’s budgetary woes are ensuring that a more appropriate moniker would be the “Year of Education Cuts.”

Ask administrators, teachers and parents if there is enough funding to accomplish educating our children even before the upcoming cuts they likely face. Most would probably say no. Parents scratch their heads when asked to purchase books for the classroom or send their children out in the neighborhood as professional fundraisers – things our parents did not have to do. We wonder why our kids aren’t getting the music, art and physical education we received as kids. Teachers are buying materials for their classrooms with their own money and seek outside funding for their innovative ideas by becoming quasi-professional grant writers.

Funding for everything from high school sports, security guards, translation programs, custodians and administrative positions have been cut or scaled back. Other evidence of budgetary woes includes

increased class sizes and hiring freezes.

Cutbacks in these areas are often obvious, but there are other dollars our schools are forced to expend, often without any warning: litigation costs.

Each year, California’s school districts are the subject of countless lawsuits. A recent report by California Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse (CALA) titled “The Fourth ‘R’ of California’s School Districts: Ripped Off By Litigation,” found that three of California’s largest school districts (Los Angeles, San Diego and Elk Grove Unified) spent nearly \$33 million on outside counsel, verdicts and settlements in just one fiscal year. This money would have provided more than 250,000 lockers, more than 22 million notebooks or paid the salaries of more 566 teachers.

And that’s only three districts out of more than 1,000 throughout California! Imagine what our schools are spending statewide to pay for lawsuits. The cost to our children’s education goes further than the financial impact as well. Studies have shown our teachers are afraid to teach, and our administrators are afraid to do their jobs, because of the threat of litigation.

Certainly, some plaintiffs have legitimate grievances that deserve their day in court. However, personal injury lawyers who line their pockets with every verdict and settlement drive many lawsuits. These lawyers view school districts and other government entities as deep pockets from which to get rich quick without regard for the impact it has on our children’s education. When schools are compelled to defend themselves against lawsuits for enforcing dress codes, cutting a student from an athletic team or punishing a student who was caught cheating, it is no wonder why parents, teachers, administrators and the taxpayers who ultimately foot the bill get frustrated.

Some school districts are taking proactive steps to combat excessive litigation. In Orange County, for example, Santa Ana Unified has put a risk management system in place. In Sacramento, Elk Grove Unified pays liability insurance to reduce the risk of an individual settlement breaking the bank. These are excellent steps to help protect our school districts from frivolous lawsuits while preparing to deal with those that have merit.

But these steps are just the beginning. First and foremost, we owe it our children and our fellow taxpayers to take responsibility for our actions. We’re teaching kids

a poor lesson when our initial reaction to any perceived wrong is to file a lawsuit, especially one for which our children will ultimately pay the price. We can also encourage our schools to be open about the litigation they face and the process used to decide how to respond to lawsuits. Certainly, they do not enjoy having their attention diverted to these suits. By providing transparency, district leaders can garner support among taxpayers and parents who have an interest in how these lawsuits are handled.

Our children already bear the brunt of funding cuts their schools face. Let’s not make matters worse by adding attorneys’ fees and cash payouts to the budgets of the districts that are charged with educating them. Let’s do all we can to make sure that the education dollars we do have find their way to the classroom, not the courtroom.

Diann Rogers is the president of Central California Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse (CCCALA). CCCALA is a nonprofit, grassroots public education organization dedicated to serving as a watchdog over the legal system and those who would seek to abuse it for undeserved gain. Central California CALA currently has over 3,000 supporters throughout the Sacramento region and Central Valley. For more information, visit www.StopBadLawsuits.com

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Colesterol

continúa en pág. 17

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Dr. Osvaldo Rodriguez practices internal medicine at Kaiser Permanente.

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3. **Don't let your lawyer pick your doctor.** You may be setting yourself up to be diagnosed for an injury the lawyer thinks is most profitable to his case. This may be profitable for the lawyer, but it could be dangerous to your health.
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Jackson Rancheria opens RV Park

Jackson Rancheria Casino & Hotel has opened a luxurious new RV Park featuring 100 sites including 30 pull-through sites.

Grand Opening ceremonies for the park will be held on Wednesday, March 5, at 1 p.m. and will include a Native American blessing, ribbon cutting, and refreshments.

Located in a beautiful, secluded forest setting, the RV Park is only a short ride on the free 24-hour shuttle from the fast-paced action of the Casino. The location also makes the RV Park the perfect home base for exploring the scenic and historic Motherlode area.

The Park, located on Dalton Road (the access road to the Casino and Hotel), features a full service clubhouse with kitchen, fireplace, and large screen TV, heated pool and two spas, cable TV, 24-

hour surveillance, Wi-Fi internet, BBQ area, restrooms with showers, 24-hour laundry room, water and sewer hookups, dump station, plus a dog walk and walking trail.

The Jackson Rancheria RV Park has a Trailer Life Directory rating of 9.5/10/10 and offers AAA and AARP discounts. Call 800-822-WINN for reservations.

In addition to the RV Park's amenities, those staying there are eligible to enjoy the pool, salon, fitness center, arcade and other luxuries of the Hotel.

A nearby general store and gas station, scheduled to open in March, will include both a car and RV wash.

Jackson Rancheria Casino features over 1,500 slot machines, more than 48 gaming tables, a 24-hour Poker Room, and restaurants ranging from fast food to the best in casual dining.



Conference building at Jackson's new RV Park.

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CITY OF STOCKTON CHARITY CAR WASH PROGRAM OFFERS "GREEN" BENEFITS IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

(Stockton, CA) - The City of Stockton's Stormwater Program is launching a "Green" Car Wash Program. The "Green" Car Wash Program seeks to link local fundraising organizers with participating professional car wash operators in an effort to encourage a more environmentally-friendly car wash. Traditional parking-lot car wash fundraisers often allow soap, dirt, grime and automotive fluids to flow down the streets to drains that dump directly into rivers and streams. When these materials settle into waters where fish, wildlife and plants live, they poison them. "Green" carwashes are a better alternative for the environment, because they encourage organizations to partner with professional car wash facilities that recycle water and do not dump dirty soap water down the storm drains to local waterways. In addition to protecting the environment, "Green" carwashes are safe, very profitable for both fundraisers and professional car washers, and appealing to those who are interested in supporting local organizations, because they get their car professionally washed! For more information on the program, contact Sharene Gonzales at (209) 937-8791 or sharene.gonzales@ci.stockton.ca.us.

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Prostitution

continued from page 6

older white men as the worker settled into the backseat of the truck.

“Who are you? What’s this for?” the driver asked defensively.

Inside the vehicle, the worker looked scared.

“We are doing an investigation about people who hire workers for sex acts. What do you think about that?” La Opinión asked.

“I don’t know anything,” the driver answered and accelerated, clearing a path through a group of curious onlookers who were approaching the car.

On the corner, aggressive jokes and insults with words like “fags” could be heard. Everything was a mockery, a game. Some simply went quiet. No one talked seriously about the issue. It was clear that it made them uncomfortable.

In addition to those who choose to

prostitute themselves voluntarily, experts say there is another population of temporary workers who have been drugged, sexually abused and tricked.

“I was offered a job on a ranch, together with three other (workers) from the corner. When we arrived there, they had us clean the stables and then they gave us lunch. A while later, I felt everything start spinning. Some of them started to grope us but I couldn’t even throw a punch. Everything was blurry. When I woke up, they had thrown me in a vacant lot and I didn’t know where I was. I think they ‘f...’ [raped] me. And what do I get out of suing them, if in this country the law always sides with what the boss says?” asked a 19-year-old worker who looks for work on the street corners of Moreno Valley in Riverside County.

Despite the high incidence of harassment and sex crimes, state reports show no records of such cases being brought by a day laborer.

“We’ve investigated the incidents and we have found a lot of cases but, because of fear and shame, the day laborer will not present the charges formally before a judge. There is not one case like this in the courts. These immigrants are afraid that they’ll be accused of being gay on their work corners or that they’ll be deported, and it’s very difficult to change that mentality. They can’t see that what happened to them is a crime,” said lawyer Anel Flores of the Los Angeles Legal Aid Foundation.

But not all are victims. There is also a growing number of men who go to the corners with the sole purpose of offering their bodies for money, according to researchers.

“We don’t know how much this situation has grown but we’re sure that the numbers of people who prostitute themselves are greater and the problem is

growing,” said Víctor Martínez, director of the organization Bienestar.

On the corner where Ángel Sánchez goes to look for work, between 15 and 20 vehicles arrive each month with the intention of picking up men for sexual favors, according to workers consulted by La Opinión.

“They charge \$100, \$120 a night. A lot accept it or name their price. Some employers already have their favorites and they come looking for them. Those of us who don’t do it know their cars and we don’t approach them. For us, the danger isn’t them; it’s the perverts who hire us and then trick us. When you open the car door you never know what risks await you,” he said.

Sánchez’s words are rough as they come out of his mouth. The streets have taught him that this isn’t something one should talk about. “Men are not meant to be prostitutes,” he says and his face reflects the pain of talking about the issue, even though it is, simply, reality.

Prostituyen

continúa en pág. 6

“No queremos que hables pendejo. Quitate la ropa y muévete para allá”, le ordenó el hombre latino.

“Me gritaron insultos. Se veía que les gustaba humillarme. Esos ‘batos’ tenían cuchillos sobre la mesa y me dio mucho miedo, sobre todo el gringo que me apuntaba con una jeringa [al parecer] llena de droga. No sé cómo le hice. No dejé de hablar y, como pude, me fui acercando a la puerta hasta que pude abrirla y salir corriendo”, relató Rodríguez.

Con los recuerdos de su experiencia aún frescos, Rodríguez llevó a La Opinión hasta el lugar donde, según él, lo habían atacado días atrás.

La palabra Welcome (Bienvenido) pintada con los colores de la bandera estadounidense colgaba de la puerta marcada con el número seis, tras la cual se escuchaban canciones de rock en inglés. Sin embargo, nadie atendió al reiterado llamado.

“En ese departamento seguido traen hombres y siempre se oye como que tumban cosas”, informó una vecina que prefirió no revelar su nombre.

Mauricio está seguro de que él no ha sido el único al que han llevado a ese departamento.

El primer carro apareció poco antes del mediodía. Como por inercia, decenas de jornaleros se abalanzaron sobre la camioneta Toyota roja que llegaba a la esquina de Grove y Arrow en Rancho Cucamonga.

Una mezcla de sudor y de alcohol que emanaba de los jornaleros sumergió el pequeño círculo que se formó junto al vehículo y que, en cuestión de segundos, se disolvió. Sólo cuatro trabajadores siguieron negociando.

“Ésos batean por el otro lado [son homosexuales]. Seguido vienen por aquí en diferentes carros pero, uno ya les conoce la cara y pos’ pa’ eso mejor ni arrimarse”, comentó Francisco Tapia, quien suele acudir a esa esquina a buscar trabajo los fines de semana.

Del grupo que siguió negociando, únicamente el más joven se subió al vehículo.

—¿Cuál es el motivo por el que contratan jornaleros? —les preguntó La Opinión a dos hombres anglosajones de edad madura, mientras el trabajador se acomodaba en el asiento trasero de la camioneta.

—¿Usted quién es? ¿Para qué es eso? —preguntó a la defensiva el conductor.

En el interior del vehículo el jornalero lucía asustado.

—Hacemos una investigación sobre personas que emplean trabajadores para actos sexuales. ¿Qué piensa al respecto? —preguntó La Opinión.

—“Yo no sé nada” —contestó el conductor y aceleró abriéndose paso con el automóvil sobre un grupo de curiosos que se acercaban a la escena.

En la esquina las bromas y los insultos con palabras como “maricones” se escucharon con insistencia. Todo era burla, juego. Algunos simplemente callaron. Nadie habló en serio sobre el tema, evidenciando que es algo que les incomoda.

Además de los que optan por prostituirse voluntariamente, existe otra población de trabajadores temporales que han sido drogados y abusados sexualmente con engaños, coinciden los expertos.

“Me ofrecieron trabajo en un rancho junto a otros tres [jornaleros] de la esquina. Cuando llegamos al lugar nos pusieron a limpiar unos establos y después nos dieron comida. Al rato sentía que todo me daba vueltas. Unos cab... comenzaron a manosearnos pero, yo no podía ni tirar un golpe. Todo estaba borroso. Cuando desperté me habían tirado en un lote baldío y no sabía ni dónde estaba. Yo creo que me ‘chin...’ [violaron] y qué gano con demandarlos si en este país la ley siempre es lo que diga el patrón”, narró un jornalero de 19 años que suele pedir trabajo en las esquinas de Moreno Valley en el condado de Riverside.

Pese a la alta incidencia de acoso y de delitos sexuales, reportes estatales demuestran que no existen referencias de demandas interpuestas por un jornalero sobre estos sucesos.

“Hemos investigado los hechos y tenemos detectados muchos casos pero, por miedo y vergüenza, el jornalero no acepta presentar formalmente los hechos ante un juez. No hay un solo caso de este tipo ante las cortes. Estos inmigrantes temen que los tachen de homosexuales en su esquina de trabajo o que los deporten y es muy difícil cambiar esta mentalidad. No pueden ver que lo que les han hecho se trata de delitos criminales”, comentó la abogada Anel Flores de la Fundación de Ayuda Jurídica de Los Ángeles.

Sin embargo, no todos son víctimas. También existe un creciente número de hombres que asisten a las esquinas con la intención exclusiva de ofrecer su cuerpo por dinero, coinciden los investigadores.

“No sabemos cuánto ha crecido esta situación pero, estamos seguros de que los índices de personas que se prostituyen son mayores y que el problema está aumentando”, aseguró Víctor Martínez, director de la organización Bienestar.

En la esquina donde Ángel Sánchez se reúne a buscar trabajo, entre 15 y 20 vehículos llegan durante el mes con la intención de recoger hombres para favores sexuales, aseguraron los trabajadores consultados por La Opinión.

“Cobran cien; 120 dólares por noche. Muchos aceptan o ponen su precio. Algunos patrones ya hasta tienen a sus favoritos y vienen buscándolos a ellos. Los que no le entramos a eso ya conocemos los carros y ni nos acercamos. Para nosotros el peligro no son ellos, son los pervertidos que nos contratan con engaños. Cuando abres la puerta de un carro nunca sabes qué riesgos te esperan”, dijo.

Las palabras salen con rudeza de la boca de Sánchez. Las calles le han enseñado que de eso no se debe hablar. “No es de hombres ser prostitutas”, dice y su rostro refleja que le molesta hablar del tema, aunque ese tema sea, simplemente, realidad.



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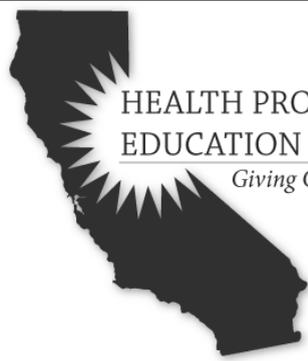
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For more information on the Foundation's scholarship and loan repayment programs or to download an application, please visit us on the web at www.healthprofessions.ca.gov or contact us at (800) 773-1669 or (916) 326-3640.

*The State Nurse Assumption Program of Loans for Education for Nursing Faculty (SNAPLE NF) program is administered by the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) and applications are due June 30, 2008. For more information please visit CSAC on the web at www.csac.ca.gov.



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