

# Hispanic Link

## weekly report

Vol. 27 No. 30 Sept. 14, 2009  
Your News Source for 26 Years

## MAKING THE NEWS THIS WEEK

**Sonia Sotomayor** is officially seated on the U.S. Supreme Court Sept. 8 — on the chief justice's far left — as one of two females on the nine-member body... *Migration & the Global Recession*, a report by the Migration Policy Institute commissioned by the British Broadcasting Corporation, reveals millions of immigrants worldwide are remaining in their adoptive countries...**Mel Martínez** (R-Fla.) resigns his U.S. Senate seat as **George LeMieux** is sworn in to replace him...Special Mas-

sachusetts primary election is set for Dec. 8 to fill the void left by Sen. **Edward Kennedy**...General election is Jan..19...Civil rights groups protest against CNN and **Lou Dobbs** as Dobbs joins the Federation for American Immigration Reform's anti-immigration rally in Washington, D.C., involving some 40 conservative talk show hosts ...The late "Father of Chicano Music" **Lalo Guerrero** and CNN talk show host **Soledad O'Brien** are awarded "Medallions of Excellence" at CHCI's heritage gala...

## New Data Show Recession Hurts Hispanics Most

By Michael Coleman

The U.S. economic recession is hitting Hispanic households harder in the pocketbook than it is affecting other ethnic or racial groups, according to a new U.S. Census analysis.

There were 39.8 million persons living in poverty in this country last year (13.2%) vs. 37.3 million the year before (12.5 %).

For Hispanics, the rate jumped 1.7%, up to 23.2%, more than double that percentage increase for any other group.

Overall, the plunge deeper into poverty revealed that for the first time in three years our national income didn't increase across the board.

Real medium household income fell 3.6%

### Income, Poverty Rate Define Community's Decline

PERCENTAGE CHANGE FROM YEAR 2007 TO YEAR 2008

	MEDIAN INCOME	POVERTY RATE	UNINSURED RATE
White	down 2.6% to \$55,530	up from 8.2% to 8.6%	up from 10.4% to 10.8%
Hispanic	down 5.6% to \$37,913	up from 21.5% to 23.2%	down from 32.1% to 30.7%
Black	down 2.8% to \$34,218	no change 24.7%	no change 19.1%
Asian	down 4.4% to \$65,637	up from 10.2% to 11.8%	up from 16.8% to 17.6%

for all groups — \$52,163 to \$50,303. Hispanics suffered the greatest decline at 5.6%, dropping to \$37,913. Their tumble was double that of whites as well as that of blacks.

Changes in health care statistics offered little more room for optimism. The number of persons without health insurance cover-

age rose from 45.7 million in 2007 to 46.3 million in 2008. The percentage of persons in the country without coverage — 15.4% — remained unchanged.

The percentage of uninsured Hispanics actually decreased. It dipped to 30.7% from 32.1% in 2007 to 30.7% last year. The total

(continued on page 3)

## Richardson Cleared, May Re-emerge with National Role

By Weekly Report Staff

The political horizon for New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, who withdrew as President Obama's choice for Secretary of Commerce in January because of a pending ethics problem over a state contract award, has brightened considerably.

The U.S. Justice Department announced Aug. 27 it would not prosecute the nation's lone Hispanic governor nor any of his top aides in the matter.

Last December, Richardson accepted the Obama appointment but withdrew a month later when it became clear that a legal inquiry into state contracting would not end anytime soon.



RICHARDSON

Now speculation is building that the exon-

eration could put Richardson back on track for a high-profile presidential appointment.

Richardson, whose second term as governor ends December 2010, is widely believed to still be interested in serving in Obama's administration.

He scored major points late in the 2008 Democratic presidential primary for endorsing the Illinois senator over Hillary Clinton.

The former United States ambassador to the United Nations and frequent diplomatic troubleshooter was traveling on a trade mission to Cuba last month when news of his legal clearance finally came down.

The governor's name has since been mentioned in national reports as a possible special envoy to the communist country, which has long been ostracized by the U.S. government.

On Aug. 28, U.S. Attorney Greg Fouratt sent defense attorneys in the case a letter informing them that the United States "will not seek to bring charges against your clients" arising out of the New Mexico Finance Authority's contract award with California-based CDR Financial Products.

However, the prosecutor did not give the

state administration a completely clean bill of ethical health.

In a letter obtained by the Albuquerque Journal, New Mexico's largest newspaper,

(continued on page 2)

## Hispanic Presence in U.S. Senate Is Cut to One as Martínez Quits

By Michael Coleman

Melciades "Mel" Martínez of Florida resigned from the U.S. Senate Sept. 9, 16 months before his 6-year term ends.

The Cuba native's resignation follows on the heels of former Sen. Ken Salazar's appointment as Interior Secretary earlier this year, leaving Robert Menéndez as the only Hispanic in the upper chamber of Congress.

In his final floor speech, he related, "Having lived through the onset of tyranny in

(continued on page 2)



MARTINEZ

### The Inside Stories

PAGE 4: José de la Isla on protocol at town hall meetings: guns and outbursts.

PAGE 6: Astronaut stirs storm with comment on undocumented immigrants.

# Political Poop

by Patricia Guadalupe



## Book Ban Stirs Island Furor

Several university professors in Puerto Rico are protesting a decision to ban five books from the curriculum at public high schools for what the island's Department of Education says is "coarse" language, comparing the ban to censorship by the Taliban.

"These kinds of things happened in Afghanistan under the Taliban," said Magali García Ramos, a communications professor at the University of Puerto Rico.

"This kind of mentality rejects everything that is art and only associates sexuality with inappropriateness," García Ramos added.

The books are part of the 11th-grade curriculum, and they include "El Entierro de Cortijo" by island author Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá, and "Aura," by Mexican author Carlos Fuentes.

Mexico's former interior minister unsuccessfully tried to have that book banned. Fuentes has said the attempt boasted

sales of the book.

The books were instant best sellers when they were published and are considered cultural classics.

Department of Education officials were not available for comment, but Puerto Rico Secretary of State Kenneth McClintock expressed support on his Facebook page, writing, "Glad that Secretary of Education Chardon is taking a hard look at the rough vocabulary in some assigned reading books!"

## Health Care Reform Hassle

Members of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee involved in negotiations for health care reform legislation are looking over the bill to "ensure" that undocumented immigrants are not included in a health plan.

"What we are trying to prevent is anyone who is here illegally from getting any federal benefit," said Sen. Kent Conrad (D-N.D.), who is a member of the so-called "Gang of Six," the group of three Democrats and three Republicans from the committee who are working on health care reform legislation.

The White House has said the president does not want undocumented immigrants to be able to buy insurance through the proposed "purchasing exchange," a type of co-op that would spread the costs of health care among several entities.

Spokesman Robert Gibbs says the administration will work with lawmakers on language to enforce that. Some Democratic versions, including in the Finance Committee, go along for undocumented immigrants to participate in the exchange.

"Illegal immigrants would not be allowed to access the exchange that is set up," Gibbs said during his Sept. 11 press availability. "Verification requirements are something we'd work out with Congress," he said.

Democrats in two House committees defeated amendments that would have required verification of legal status, contending such measures are detrimental to legal residents.

Medicaid added verification provisions several years ago, which critics contend have caused delays and even denial of care to eligible participants.

The Pew Hispanic Center calculates that 7 million undocumented immigrants lack health insurance.

The Finance committee is working on verification language. It is considering requiring valid Social Security numbers.

The negotiations also include possible requirements for legal residents. Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) is pushing for a five-year wait before legal immigrants would be eligible for coverage.

## Richardson Rumored as Candidate for Post as Envoy to Cuba

(continued from page 1)

Fouratt wrote that his inquiry revealed CDR and its officers made substantial contributions to Richardson's political organizations while the company was seeking the state contracts and that "...pressure from the governor's office resulted in corruption of the procurement process so that CDR would be awarded such work."

The federal investigation examined whether more than \$100,000 in political contributions made by CDR and its principals influenced the company's selection as

an adviser to the New Mexico Finance Authority for the GRIP bond program.

The inquiry focused on Richardson, his former chief of staff Dave Contarino, and University of New Mexico executive vice president David Harris, who headed the Finance Authority in 2004 when the bond program began.

The three-paragraph letter said the notification "shall not preclude the United States or the grand jury from reinstating such an investigation without notification if ... circumstances warrant ..."

Fouratt did not comment to the Journal.

Gilbert Gallegos, Richardson's deputy chief-of-staff, issued a statement immediately after the governor got word that no indictments would be forthcoming.

"Governor Richardson has known all along that neither he nor any staff members committed any transgressions during their successful fundraising back in 2004," Gallegos said. "The U.S. Attorney's thorough and lengthy investigation has apparently determined the same thing — that no indiscretions occurred."

## Departing Senate, Martínez Laments that Immigration Wasn't Fixed on His Watch

(continued from page 1)

one country and played a part in the proud democratic traditions of another, I leave here today with tremendous gratitude for the opportunity to give back to the nation I love."

The 62-year-old Republican cited his desire to spend more time with his family. George LeMieux, a former aide to Florida's Republican Gov. Charlie Crist, was selected by the governor to term.

During his resignation speech, Martínez affirmed his support for a free Cuba.

"It is my fervent hope that one day in the not-too-distant future, the people of Cuba will live in freedom with dignity and the hope for

a better tomorrow that is their God-given right.

"Even though I will no longer hold public office, my passion to work and devote myself to seeing a day when the people of Cuba can live in freedom will continue," he said.

Martínez came to the United States when he was a teenager as part of Operation Pedro Pan, in which some 14,000 children ages 6 to 17 were allowed by the Fidel Castro regime to leave the island without their parents.

Many parents, including Martínez's, found ways to rejoin their children within a few years.

Martínez told his Senate colleagues he regretted leaving office before the nation's immigration laws were overhauled.

"I hope Congress can one day reach consensus on the issue because fixing our broken immigration system remains a national imperative," he said.

A resident of Orlando, he also addressed Florida's large Cuban-American community.

"You embraced me and believed in me," he said in Spanish. "We shared pride in who we are and what we have accomplished. Your enthusiastic support has touched my heart for as long as I live, and I will treasure these things forever."

# Astronaut Lands with Mexican Flag, Pro-Immigrant Message

By Víctor Mancilla

The first Mexican-American astronaut of the 21st Century returned to earth Sept. 11 with a symbol of binational unity on his initial venture into space.

Flight Engineer José Hernández Moreno, 47, the U.S.-born son of Mexican laborers, landed with six other astronauts aboard the space shuttle Discovery at Edwards Air Force Base in Palmdale, Calif., following a 13-day mission to the International Space Station. Their landing, originally scheduled for its home port in Florida, was detoured to California's Mojave Desert because of bad weather conditions in the Sunshine State.

Although no mention of it was made in U.S. news accounts, Hernández carried with him a special symbol of the historical links between the United States and Mexico.

In contrast, all did report that the shuttle delivered an exercise treadmill named after comedian Stephen Colbert.

The special symbol was a replica of the Battle Flag of Fighter Squadron 201, the legendary unit of the Mexican Air Force which was the only Mexican force to serve in combat with United States forces in World War II.

The one-of-a-kind banner is similar to a regular Mexican flag but it bears the legend "Mexican Army Expeditionary Air Force."

It was made by special order of President



—Photos by Víctor Mancilla

**Joined by veterans of *Escuadrón 201*, Arturo Sarukhan, Mexico Ambassador to the United States, holds squadron's WWII battle flag.**

Manuel Avila Camacho in 1945 and carried to the Philippines where the squadron helped U.S. forces liberate that country. The original rests in a museum in Mexico City.

The Mexican Battle Flag replica was presented to Astronaut Hernández by the Mexican Association of Veterans of World War II, a charitable foundation that perpetuates the legacy of the famous unit and its role in fostering solidarity between Mexico and the United States.

Much to NASA officials' concern, Hernández received significant attention in the Mexican press for another gesture.

Landing back on planet Earth, Hernández responded to a question in a TV interview

with a Mexico correspondent that he hoped the United States would legalize all of its 12 million undocumented residents because of their importance to the economy.

The Los Angeles Times reported that NASA was quick to separate itself from the remarks. It quoted Hernández, "It all became a big scandal." Hernández, who who grew up "picking cucumbers" in central California and joined NASA just 5 years ago, but told Mexican video viewers the next day, "I work for the U.S. government, but as an individual I have the right to my own personal opinions."

**Editor's note:** This report was written by Víctor Mancillas, who produced the documentary "The Forgotten Eagle" about the 201st Squadron. It is currently touring the United States and will be screened next in Dallas and Chicago before traveling to Mexico to be exhibited there.

Footage of Hernández's historic flight and his return with the Mexican Battle Flag will be incorporated into Mancilla's finished version. "We are honored to partner with the Mexican Veterans' Association to preserve their story for future generations and show the pride that this Mexican-American astronaut has in his heritage in both countries," Mancilla told Weekly Report.

For more information visit [www.201prod.com](http://www.201prod.com)

## Census Reveals Hispanic Poverty Rate Increases, Drops in Income

(continued from page 1)

of uninsured Hispanics, at 14.6 million, however, was not statistically different in 2008 over the year before.

These and other findings were revealed Sept. 10 in a Census Bureau report titled "Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2008."

Whites lost ground in the health insurance indicator, with 21.3 million (10.8%) claiming no insurance in 2008, vs. 10.4% and 20.5 million (10.4%) the year before.

## More Evidence Points to Iglesias as Target of Bush-Cheney Administration

Evidence continues to emerge that David Iglesias, a former U.S. Attorney with New Mexico regional responsibilities, was the primary target of politically motivated efforts to purge nine U.S. Attorneys during the Bush-Cheney Administration. Emails and interview transcripts released in recent weeks by the House Judiciary Committee show that he was targeted by former Bush White House adviser Karl Rove and prominent New Mexico Republicans as far back as 2005.

Former Sen. Pete Domenici and other

The rate for uninsured blacks comparing the two years was not statistically different.

The report also showed that in 2008 the poverty rate among the foreign-born was 17.8% vs. 12.6% for the native-born.

For naturalized citizens, it was 10.2% while for those who were not U.S. citizens it was more than double that, 23.3%

For all children younger than 18 the figure was 19.0%.

Carmen Delgado Votaw, long-time children's advocate working both on Capitol

Hill and serving on national boards, expressed particular concern for Latino children, who make up a disproportionately high percentage of this group's population.

The voices of young people are seldom heard, she said. In many states, including New York, those under 21 cannot legally serve on corporate boards, even with organizations devoted to addressing children's needs, she pointed out.

The survey is subject to sampling and nonsampling errors.

Republican officials in the state contacted Rove and his deputies to complain that fellow Republican Iglesias was not moving aggressively enough to prosecute alleged voter fraud and public corruption.

Iglesias had been receiving strong job performance reviews at the time of the initial complaints. He has contended he was fired because he would not bring prosecutions that might help undermine New Mexico Democratic candidates in the 2006 elections.

"This confirms my worst nightmares,"

# Unfriendly Persuasion

Guest Columnist

José de la Isla



**HOUSTON** —The gun brandishing and outbursts at town hall meetings this summer were like a brain scan of the nation.

It was surprising, for instance, how off-point some parts of the national brain were. Protests leveled by individuals with weapons, even if porting them was legal, were out of place and inappropriate, but that seemed not to faze them at all.

Arms are instruments of threat and coercion. Town hall meetings are about information and reason. Guns are not friendly persuasion.

None of the vehement negative protests made sense until I realized how this was foreshadowed about three years ago at a seminar I attended. A small group of journalists, film-makers, academics and others were invited to share ideas about what was driving public opinion when it came to immigration. In 2006, numbers in the 70 percent range favored immigration reform, but legislation got stuck in Congress as if a consensus didn't exist.

In the mid-term congressional election that year and again in 2008, voters turned out many of those incumbents who favored either punitive approaches or who obstructed change.

## SILENT MAJORITY CAME APART

The losses contributed to dragging the Republican Party from a majority to a minority in Congress. It was the coming apart of the political tapestry Richard Nixon had begun as early as the turbulent 1970s when he appealed to a "silent majority" who felt alienated by the anti-war and civil right protests.

Republicans were in a similar pickle again in the 1980s when Ronald Reagan appealed to religious groups as a new constituency, and matters of conscience got into the platform. The "socialism" bugaboo was thrown about rather recklessly in the political rhetoric of the time.

Now, in the face of Republican contraction, the shrinking size inspires divisive rhetoric like a primal scream.

The 2006 seminar I attended had a lesson that applies today.

A survey showed that roughly a quarter of the public at large is just

opposed to any change most of the time, especially measures that involve public expenditures or that appear to give anybody any kind of social "advantage." This 25 percent mainly perceives itself as bearing the cost and don't calculate benefits to them or others.

## THEY IGNITED THE FEAR FACTOR

About 35 percent of the public is pro-reform. They know we can't continue like this without paying later unless something serious is done now.

The struggle is for the hearts and minds of the 40 percent in the middle. They don't have very well-formed opinions on hot-button issues. But they do have strong values. They are the folks who take cookies over when new neighbors move in and that you see mostly around in church or at the PTA meeting. They are also less susceptible to facile fear-mongering.

That's why the 25-percenters gin up the fear, run all the issues together, turn on the fear factor, and let the angst spill over. Their goal is to get 25 percent plus 1 of the 40-percenters.

Now here's the problem: the pro-reform 35-percenters need only 15 percent of the middle 40 percent, but liberals and progressives broadcast wonk and complexity, not lifestyle and living. They may be right but their discourse is like reading the fine print of an insurance policy. The message is lost in the details.

## NO CHANGE MEANS STAGNATION

That dynamic now stands a good chance of stalemating the kinds of changes needed in health care, education and immigration. While the reactionaries deserve to lose decisively, the liberals and progressives compromise too much and too soon to the 25 percent they will never persuade.

To put the national train back on track means refocusing on reform. That's done by talking to the middle 40 about the stewardship of the nation through health care, education and immigration to form a more competitive country in the global economy. No-Change means pushing the country into stagnation.

Most of all, tell them the No-Change side speaks for itself. They make as much sense as taking a gun to a town hall meeting or to the PTA.

*(José de la Isla's latest digital book, sponsored by The Ford Foundation, is available free at [www.DayNightLifeDeathHope.com](http://www.DayNightLifeDeathHope.com). He writes a weekly commentary for Hispanic Link News Service and is author of The Rise of Hispanic Political Power (2003). E-mail him at [joseisla3@yahoo.com](mailto:joseisla3@yahoo.com).)*

Sin pelos en la lengua

Kay Bárbaro

**FIESTA TIME:** The thought of living through another Hispanic Heritage Month makes me tired already. So as I traipse dutifully from gala to fancy reception to press briefing to more galas and wine-and-cheese parties, I'm scouting for someone to fill this week's space. And who's that at the head of the line?

It's the anonymous author of the Coconut Caucus blog, whose target isn't South Carolina Rep. **Joe Wilson**. "OBAMANATION THROWS IMMIGRANTS UNDER BUS," s/he writes. "The Democratic-controlled Senate Finance Committee, with the blessing of the Obama White House, unveils its nearly \$900 billion health care reform package that shows Democrats can be just as mean as white people who shout at a black president."

"The plan prohibits illegals from participating even if they had the money to do so and requires residency and citizenship verification

through Social Security and Department of Homeland Security databases...And what does the Congressional Hispanic Caucus think? OH Plueeze!

"Those Horse's A\*\*\*s (except for Congressman Gutiérrez) are of course too busy partying to give a damn!!!"

Why is Illinois Rep. **Luis Gutiérrez** spared? For one thing, he has promised to introduced a bill of his own that won't include the nasty Obama elements that prompted Coconut Caucus's rage.

Coincidentally, National Association of Hispanic Journalists executive director **Iván Román** produced this appeal to all who'll listen: **NAHJ Urges News Media to Stop Using the term 'Illegals' When Covering Immigration.**

Shame on you, Coconut Caucus. If you truly want to halt the vilification, scratch that ugly word "illegals" from paragraph 2 of your message. As Román says, using such pejorative terms "crosses the line by dehumanizing and criminalizing" human beings and can create a path that leads to hate crimes.



# WILL THE REAL HISPANIC HERITAGE WEEK PLEASE STAND UP?

**Editor's Note:** This column ran in September 1984, a quarter century ago. The U.S. Hispanic population then was approaching 17 million, about a third of its number today. Ronald Reagan won reelection in a landslide that fall and Jesse Jackson was among candidates competing in the Democratic primary.

By Carlos Morales

Was that Hispanic Heritage Week that just went by, or it is still ahead? In front of selected Hispanic leaders and photographers at the White House Sept. 10, President Reagan proclaimed Sept. 10-16 as National Hispanic Heritage Week.

He singled out a few individuals who made the nation "proud" — Desi Arnaz, Ricardo Montalban, Anthony Quinn, the "beautiful" Dolores del Rio, a clothes designer, an ophthalmologist and a legless Vietnam veteran/turned businessman.

## AMBASSADOR TOLD SEXIST JOKE

At the same moment at a cavernous federal auditorium half a mile away gathered 50 or so of his Hispanic appointees, their friends and subordinates, and a *marachi* to kick off the celebration with two hours of speeches and plaque presentations. The lowlight of the event was a talk by U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay Thomas Aranda Jr. on how Hispanics helped win the Revolutionary War, a history lesson he initiated with a sexist joke about the difference between diplomats and ladies.

The administration's salute was topped off Sept. 12 with a \$150-a-plate presidential dinner sponsored by the Republican National Hispanic Assembly.

Congress this year had different ideas. It decided to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Week Sept. 15-21. The centerpiece for its tribute, also at the bargain price of \$150 a meal: a Sept. 20 gala put on by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Inc.

And for those who find neither week convenient, the City of Miami is setting aside much of October to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.

The source of the confusion is a congressional resolution passed in September 1968 directing the president to proclaim a week each year that includes the dates Sept. 15 and 16 as "Hispanic Heritage Week."

## LBJ SIGNED FIRST PROCLAMATION

The 15th marks the independence day of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua; the 16th, Mexico's independence from Spain.

The problem this year is that the 15th falls on a Saturday, the 16th on a Sunday, the administration is Republican and the House of Representatives is Democratic.

Lyndon Johnson is the first president to sign a proclamation. He



**LYNDON JOHNSON** "It's time to do away with it," he says. "The consciousness of the Hispanic is already developed. We don't need to develop hostilities towards us, and these things tend to develop hostilities."

Tony Bonilla, the outspoken Corpus Christi, Texas, lawyer who was president of the League of United Latin American Citizens from 1981-83, agrees.

"It's a fraud," he says. "If it means anything, then the same government agencies that sponsor it should practice what they preach 365 days a year."

## 'MI CASA ES SU CASA'

"Vicente Ximenes, now enjoying retirement in Albuquerque, N.M., chaired the first Cabinet-level entity that dealt with Hispanics — the Cabinet Committee on Mexican American Affairs — under President Johnson. (The Committee was broadened when groups such as the National Puerto Rican Forum demanded some access and visibility, too.)

Ximenes sees the week as important still. "It needs to be done. People need to come together on a social basis and talk about education, employment, housing and other issues," he says.

Colorado State Senator Polly Baca, vice chair of the Democratic National Committee, agrees, calling it "a great opportunity to focus the attention on our concerns, to highlight us as a population."

It has another advantage, evident at the White House ceremony last week when President Reagan greeted his guests with "Buenas tardes" and told them, "Mi casa es su casa."

Through the eras of Johnson and Carter, too, such melodious salutations and *dichos* have rung out each September.

Hispanic Heritage Week offers our presidents a wonderful opportunity to practice their Spanish.

## Calendar

### In the Link 25 Years Ago

LULAC president Mario Obledo returns from leading a fact-finding mission to Cuba and recommends the United States start renewing relations with the island.

### PUBLIC POLICY CONFERENCE

Washington D.C. Sept. 14, 15  
The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute holds its public policy conference.  
Phone: (202) 543-1771

### REYES OF COMEDY

Washington, D.C. Sept. 15  
The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute stages its annual Reyes of Comedy night.  
Information: www.chci.org  
Phone: (202) 543-1771

## Coming Soon

### CHCIGALA

Washington D.C. Sept. 16  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute holds its annual gala.  
Information: <http://www.chci.org>  
Phone: (202) 543-1771

### MALDEF TEXAS AWARDS

San Antonio Sept. 18  
The Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund hosts its regional dinner.  
Information: (213) 629-2512. ext. 122

### USHCC CONFERENCE & BUSINESS EXPO

Denver Sept. 16-19  
The United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce hosts its 30th annual conference.  
Phone: 1-800-USHCC89

### LATINO LEADERS LUNCHEON SERIES

Washington, D.C. Sept. 22

The Latino Leaders Luncheon Series features Soledad O'Brien, anchor and special correspondent for CNN Worldwide.

Information: [www.latinoleadersnetwork.org](http://www.latinoleadersnetwork.org)

### AFI LATIN AMERICA FILM FESTIVAL

Maryland Sept. 23-Oct. 12  
AFI takes the 2009 Latin American Film Festival on the road through three cities. It will include films from Spain and Portugal.  
Information: [www.marylandfilm.org](http://www.marylandfilm.org)

### THIS WEEK IN LATINO HISTORY...

Puerto Rican baseball player **Orlando Cepeda** was born **Sept. 18, 1937**.

Cuban-American writer **Lydia Cabrera** died on **Sept. 19, 1991**.

Puerto Rican television and radio star **Gilda Miros** was born **Sept. 20, 1938**.

Cuban-American political leader **Jorge Más Canosa** was born **Sept. 21, 1939**.

**KCAU-TV**

625 Douglas Street  
Sioux City, IA 51101  
(712) 277-2345 ext. 278

Please be advised we have the following opening at this time:

KCAU TV is currently seeking an entry level person to serve as an Account Executive selling television time in the Sioux City market area.

The ideal candidate is an aggressive self-starter who is well organized and possesses good communication skills. Requirements include making outside sales calls to existing clients, prospecting customers, generating leads, closing business and developing strong customer relations.

A college degree and previous media sales experience is preferred.

Close date: 10/10/09.

Send resume and salary history to:

Business Manager  
KCAU TV  
625 Douglas Street  
Sioux City, Iowa 51101

Fax: 712-277-3733. Email: [humanresources@kcautv.com](mailto:humanresources@kcautv.com)

## Play Review

Explore the latest in  
Latino creative arts

by Emily Goulding

The Latino Theater Company's new play "Solitude" opened this past week at the Los Angeles Theater Center. Written by Evelina Fernández and directed by José Luis Valenzuela, "Solitude" is about the loneliness of the class divide.

Loosely based on Octavio Paz's "Labyrinth of Solitude," this Chicano existentialist piece explores what it means to "have" something and "be" somebody in 21st century Los Angeles.

The piece revolves around corporate lawyer Gabriel, who invites his childhood friends from "the neighborhood" to a funeral reception for his mother at his new, huge home in "the hills." His friends accuse him of abandoning them in search of power and prestige, but he justifies his decision as an attempt to escape poverty.

The one thing the middle-aged characters do share is an unshakable feeling that they are alone. Lasting romantic partnership has escaped all them all: Gabriel (Geoffrey Rivas) has fallen out of love with his trophy wife, Ramona (Evelina Fernández) lost her husband Chuy to diabetes-related complications, and Johnny (Sal López)'s wife's menopause has created complications in their formerly hot marriage.

An explanation for this is offered by the piece's narrator, a Mexican-born limo driver played by Robert Beltrán. As they drive around, he reminds his Mexican-American passengers that L.A. was once a Mexican city, and Mexico, as a country of mixed origins, is mired in ambivalence. Mexican identity, he postulates, is a solitary one rotating between two worlds in a non-directional orbit.

Johnny and Gabriel break their stasis towards the end of play. At the end of the night, Johnny serves Gabriel one last tequila, and the bald, cholo-esque "Chelo" character (solo cellist Semyon Kobiakka) stops his electro-ambient staccato and plays a full, deep-toned ranchera. Johnny sings Gabriel a song about love and loss as he weeps in catharsis in his big, empty home.

This ballad for the superego and id of Chicano America — the wealthy, unhappy Chicano with money but no family vs. the poor, happy Chicano with no money but six beautiful children — is the most brilliant moment in the play.

But the limo driver is quick to remind us that this reconciliation will be short-lived.

If mexicanos drink to confess, he says, and americanos drink to forget, then "Mexican-Americans drink to confess, and then they forget." Johnny and Gabriel will ultimately end up at different ends of the 10 freeway, in different worlds leading different lives.

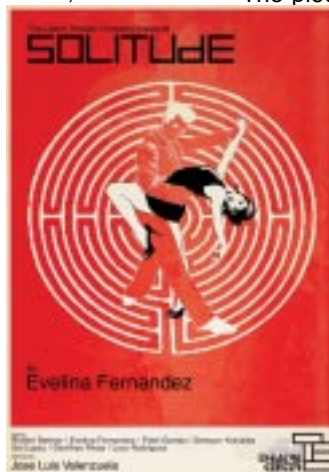
This is not the writer-director couple's first collaboration. They worked together on "Luminarias" and other projects. But it might be their least cohesive. Some of the stagings were less than intuitive, which detracted from the strengths of the work. The dance sequences — overly stylized mambo silhouettes reminiscent of some never-ending James Bond reel — were well-choreographed, but the actors weren't strong enough dancers to make it work.

The piece is also peppered with somewhat misplaced absurdity. It's unclear if the discord is meant to be postmodern or if certain elements just don't coordinate.

The show ends with Ramona's Stanford-educated son Angel (Fidel Gómez) striking out to join the May 1st, 2006, immigrant rights marches happening outside Gabriel's door. Angel abandons his literary malaise and solitude to be part of the collective movement.

While this is believable as a plot point, the show makes zero reference to whether or not this parallels his parents' participation (or lack of participation) in their generational movement: the Chicano movement.

"Solitude" is ultimately an important work. It is a sophisticated work that pushes the limits of Chicano theatre, adding new complexity to the Chicano experience.



# Arts & Entertainment

By Antonio Mejías-Rentas



**ON THE SO CAL STAGE:** Two Los Angeles-based theater groups are having important premieres this month.

The Latino Theater Company is staging a world-premiere production of Evelina Fernández's *Solitude* at its downtown base, while *Culture Clash* is performing its adaptation of the Greek classic comedy *Peace* at an outdoor amphitheater in Malibu.

Inspired by Octavio Paz's *El laberinto de la soledad*, Fernández's play is directed by José Luis Valenzuela and has original music by Semyon Kobialka. It is performed by film and TV actor Robert Beltrán and several members of the company, of which Fernández and Valenzuela's husband-and-wife team — are founding members.

*Solitude* plays Sept. 9 through Oct. 4 at the Los Angeles Theatre Center — a downtown venue with long-time ties to both the Latino

Theater Company and *Culture Clash*.

The comedy trio made up of writer/performers Richard Montoya, Ric Salinas and Herbert Sigüenza adapted Aristophane's *Peace* with author John Glore for a production commissioned by the Getty Museum. It is being presented at an outdoor theater at the institution's Getty Villa in Malibu.

The members of *Culture Clash* play most of the characters in the modern-day adaptation of the satirical look at society at war, but they are joined on stage by actors John Fleck and Amy Hill and by a singing trio led by *Mariachi Divas'* Suzanne García. It opened Sept. 10 and runs through Oct. 3.

**DOUBLE DUTY:** Latin Grammy nominations are announced in Los Angeles the same day the *Alma* Awards are given out.

Actors Jimmy Smits and Paul Rodríguez as well as performers Beto Cuevas, Luis Enrique and Luz Ríos will be on hand early on Sept. 17 to announce nominees in various recording categories. The latter three are likely to be on the list. Smits and Rodríguez have musical ties, nevertheless: they are partners at the Los Angeles club Conga Room where nominations will be announced. Latin Grammys will be handed out Nov. 5 in Las Vegas.

# Media Report

By Aaron Sheperd



**ADVICE TO CNN:** President of **Media Matters for America** (MMFA) Eric Burns issued an open letter, Aug. 29 to **CNN** President Jonathan Klein regarding prime-time anchor Lou Dobbs' scheduled appearance at the "*Hold Their Feet to the Fire*" legislative advocacy event and rally.

The event, taking place Sept. 15-16, is sponsored by the anti-immigration organization Federation for American Immigration Reform. FAIR has been sharply criticized for

its racially insensitive ads and designated as a "hate group" by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Burns states in the letter, "Mr. Dobbs represents an ongoing threat to CNN's credibility as a serious news organization, in no small part because of his polemical coverage of immigration issues and his continued use of his CNN show to lend prominence to groups such as FAIR. The attention and legitimacy he gave to the "birther" movement — and CNN's condoning of his actions — did real damage to that credibility. His participation in the upcoming FAIR rally would do further, serious damage. We urge you to finally acknowledge that Mr. Dobbs' actions in this and other contexts are inconsistent with the reputation that CNN strives to maintain."

CNN has not responded to the letter.

**TELEMUNDO: KEYE**, a **CBS** affiliate managed by Nexster in Austin, Texas, announced Sept. 1 it will air **Telemundo** programming on its Channel 42.2 on Oct. 1 along with its **CBS** programming and local newscasts.

**KEYE** executives explain the move is in response to the growth in Hispanic population the region has seen.

The station will air 125 hours of **Telemundo** programming weekly as well as produce two local newscasts in Spanish, airing weekdays at 5 and 10 pm.

**RECORD AMOUNT RAISED:** Memphis, Tenn., Spanish-language radio station **WGSF-AM 1030** raised \$214,000 in cash and pledges in its annual fundraiser for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Aug. 28.

This was a 58% increase over the \$135,000 the station raised last year, and elevated the station to donations last seen in 2006, when it raised \$213,000. The station, also known as **Radio Ambiente**, has raised money for the hospital for more than ten years.

**WGSF** is the leading Hispanic media outlet in the region and is one of 110 Spanish-language stations that raise money for St. Jude through a program called "*Promesa y Esperanza*" or "Promise and Hope."

# Hispanic Link weekly report

**Hispanic Link News Service**  
**1420 'N' Street NW**  
**Washington, D.C. 20005-2895**  
**Phone (202) 234-0280; Fax (202) 234-4090**  
**E-mail: carlose@hispaniclink.org**

*Publisher:* Carlos Ericksen-Mendoza  
*Editor:* José de la Isla  
*National Rep.:* Héctor Ericksen-Mendoza  
*Capitol Hill Editor:* Patricia Guadalupe  
*Reporting:* Michael Coleman, Erick Galindo, Antonio Mejías-Rentas, Verónica Quintero  
*Translation services:* Maribeth Bandas

**ELECTRONIC SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
**Annual (50 issues):**  
**Institutions \$140 Personal \$118**  
**Students \$59 Trial (13 issues) \$40**

**CLASSIFIEDS:** \$1.30 per word. Display ads \$45 per column inch. Placed by Wednesday, ad will run the following Monday.



Luis Gutiérrez



María Elena Salinas



Robert Menéndez

—Photos by Verónica Quintero

**CHCI BEGAN PUBLIC POLICY CONFERENCE SEPT. 14. Full report next week.**