

TRUE STORIES, REAL PEOPLE WEIGH IN ON IMMIGRATION DEBATE

By Jose de la Isla

Last winter, the Border Angels set out from the California border town of San Ysidro to reach 40 U.S. cities in 40 days. Enrique Morones, heading the group, wanted to encourage local leaders to join a national demonstration against the draconian House of Representatives-approved bill that would criminalize up to 12 million migrants in this nation.

The caravan traveled across the Southwest, then the Southeast, along the way planting 4,000 crosses to honor those who lost their lives crossing the international divide as they tried to enter the United States.

On a snowy Feb. 18, they were in Washington, D.C. joined by about 30 union representatives, students from Georgetown University and other activists who held up signs near the Capitol building.

Before they proceeded up the walkway leading to the Capitol steps, they huddled for a prayer and a homily. Morones, outwardly a quiet man and seemingly detached, is inner-driven by a faith in the truth of his mission.

When they reached the top

of the Capitol steps, they stood with their handmade signs pointed in the direction of the Washington Monument; then after five minutes turned to face the Capitol dome.

What I saw as a reporter that day was a deep respect for our national institutions. It was moving. They were reverential. Here's something cynics cannot understand because it has to do with a devotion to the ideal Congress

stands for. It is about a faith in the search for justice at the inner core of United States decision-making.

By the time they walked back down the steps, the group had grown to 40. A child asked her mother if they were plainly day tourists or what were the people doing. They were there because

somebody is putting up a wall between us, her mom said.

In the following days, the caravan moved on to Philadel-

phia, New York, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Chicago, Salt Lake City, and Denver and back to the West Coast.

Soon thereafter the spring protests of 2006 began. They brought out five million people. No, the Border Angels alone did not ignite the largest demonstrations in U.S. history. But they were one of the important sparks.

Approaching a year later, President Bush has reaffirmed

his commitment to immigration reform and the new Democratic majority in Congress has, too.

Morones believes it is time for the next spark. His group set out Feb. 2 on its second migrant march. It will travel the 2,000-mile stretch along the U.S.-Mexico border, visiting 20 towns in 20 days. The sojourners will place 4,400 crosses along their route.

They will collect letters,

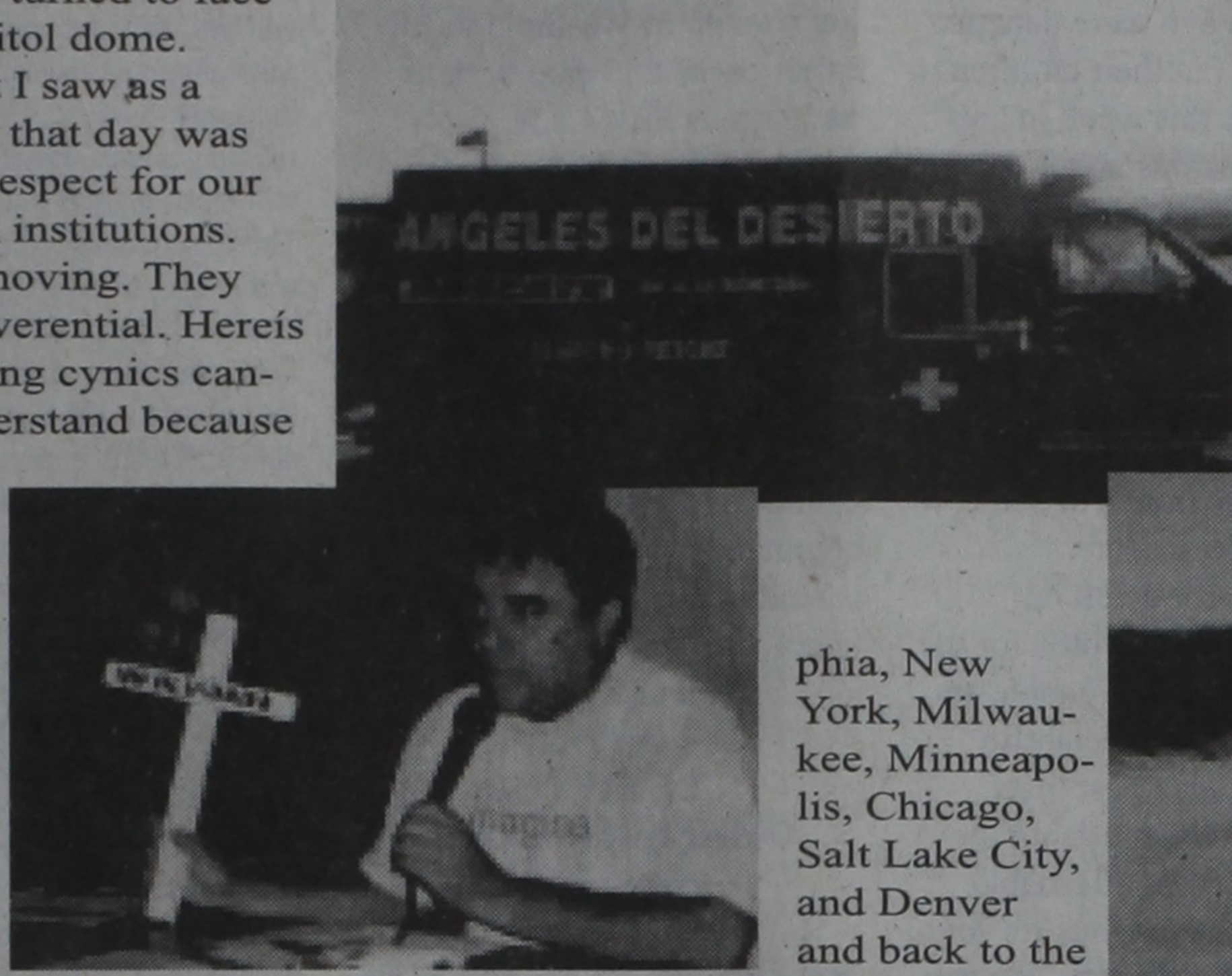
forthcoming political debate. For them, immigration is a humanitarian matter.

Morones says he wants life accounts like the one he heard from a five-year-old boy whose father left home and died in the desert. The boy relates his personal loss. There's a ten-year-old girl whose mom never came back from work because she was deported to Guatemala. By personalizing the issue we might touch the hearts of people who have not made up their minds, Morones says.

He expects to consult Congressman Xavier Becerra, the Democratic advisor to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, after the last All Peoples Immigration hearing is held in San Diego. There the Border Angels will prepare the testimonies to deliver to Congress.

When an accounting is taken about this period of immigration reform, among the mountains of think-tank reports, statistics and economic what-ifs there will be true stories collected as evidence by the Border Angels from children, parents, grandparents, spouses and others.

This time, Congress may be in a better mood to accept true stories from real people.



Experts Warn of Texas High School Dropout Crisis

At least half of all high school students in the state's urban school districts are dropping out of school, creating a crisis that state leaders are not doing enough to address, some education experts say.

Statewide, each graduating class has at least 120,000 fewer students than started high school, with more than 2.5 million students dropping out during the past 20 years, according to the San Antonio-based Intercultural Development Research Center.

"We really need to raise the alarm on dropouts. The general public thinks that, maybe, there's about a 5 percent dropout rate in Texas — maybe a 20 percent dropout rate in the worst urban schools," said Robert Sanborn, president and chief executive of Houston-based Children At Risk, a research and advocacy group for youths.

Researchers generally agree that Texas' statewide dropout rate hovers around 33 percent, which is about 20 points higher than official statistics compiled by the Texas Education Agency.

The dropout rate is highest for blacks, Hispanics and low-income students — currently about 60 percent, said Eileen Coppola, a researcher at Rice University's Center for Education. "In our major urban districts, we can safely say that it's 50 percent."

"If you live in a city like Dallas or Houston, and half of your kids are not finishing high school, it's a social crisis, because we know that those kids will likely live

in poverty, be much more likely to go to jail, and they will have more health problems," Coppola said.

State leaders and lawmakers for years have acknowledged the dropout problem, but critics complain that few resources have been invested to fix it.

"Today is like Groundhog Day. Here we are again. We're going to beat this dead horse one more time, redefine the problem — and then what?"

"I'm not really sure," Rep. Rick Noriega, D-Houston, said during a legislative briefing on the issue last week.

State leaders are aware of the high numbers but focus most of their attention on property tax cuts and other issues, Noriega and others said.

"A consistent dropout rate of 30 to 40 percent becomes, in effect, the state's de facto public policy," Noriega said.

"If our graduation rates in the state are 60 percent, that's our public policy as a state," he said. "We as Texans accept that graduation rate, apparently. That's what we do because that's what it is."

"Public policy is not what we say it is. It's not what is written. It's what's actual," he said.

Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst strongly disagrees with assertions that state leaders aren't doing enough to reduce dropout rates.

But he agrees dropout rates in some urban and border school districts run as high as 60 percent.

"We have a huge problem," he said.

Prevention initiatives

That's why he and Sen. Florence Shapiro, R-Plano, insisted last year on giving all school districts \$275 per high school student for dropout-prevention and college-readiness programs.

But the so-called High School Allotment Program is "not targeted for communities with the greatest need," said Albert Cortez, a director at the Intercultural Development and Research Association.

Dewhurst said he agrees that a more targeted effort is needed.

"I want to focus on programs at your high-risk schools," he said. "How do we keep those at-risk kids in school? We'll be looking at that this session. This is a priority of mine."

Frances Deviney, director for Texas Kids Count — an effort to track the status of children — ticked off myriad ways people with high school diplomas fare better in life than those without.

While it would cost at least \$1.7 billion to keep those dropouts in four years of school, she said, the long-term costs for society are much more staggering.

"The 2.5 million students, twice the population of San Antonio, who have dropped out of school in the past 20 years represent \$730 billion in lost revenue and costs for the state of Texas," she said, citing an Intercultural Development Research Association report.

Sanborn from Children At Risk said, "There's no defense — period — in terms of how we are allowing these many kids to drop out of school."

If the current trend line is not altered, average household incomes in Texas will decline, according to State Demographer Steve Murdock.

photos, stories, anecdotes and documentary material at public gatherings about why individual human beings want immigration reform.

The marchers are seeking real-people stories so that arcane billion-dollar theories or xenophobic rhetoric and screwball scenarios don't dominate the

Senators crack down on voter suppression

A top union leader says it's time for Democratic presidential candidates to get up close and personal with union members.

In 2004, Democratic presidential hopefuls seeking the endorsement of the nation's fastest growing labor union faced the "hang test" — before delivering their stump speeches, they had to hang out with 25 union members for an hour to show how well they could connect with real people.

As the 2008 race gets under way, the Service Employees International Union is going a step further by asking candidates to visit the homes of its members and spend time with them on the job.

"It's the hang test with some depth," said SEIU president Andy Stern. "Instead of just having sort of impressions, you're going to actually go to hear from people just like you talk about what it was like to have dinner with someone or have someone come to work with them."

The SEIU said Wednesday that John Edwards would be the first candidate to spend a day on the job and at the home of a union member.

To promote the "Walk a Day in My Shoes" initiative, Stern spent several hours working at an Iowa school and planned to join a department of transportation worker along a New Hampshire highway Wednesday afternoon. He said he hopes the effort "will give a level of depth to what up to now has been an important but not necessarily substantive evaluation" of the candidates.

"This is a pretty important election for most people who go to work everyday, but reading the press so far, it's almost like a sport or betting contest instead of a contest about some pretty important things," he said in an interview Tuesday night in Concord after having dinner at the home of a local union leader.

Stern's trip to the early voting states followed a weekend during which the union's 60-member executive board interviewed eight of the Democratic presidential hopefuls.

Isolated incidents of voter suppression angered Democrats in the 2006 elections, and a few with an eye on 2008 want to toughen the penalties for the next time.

White House hopeful Sen. Barack Obama (news, bio, voting record), D-Ill., and Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., the chairman of the Senate campaign committee, introduced legislation Wednesday that would impose penalties of up to five years in prison or a \$100,000 fine on people who spread misinformation to keep voters away from the polls.

"There's no room for people who want to gain a partisan advantage from discouraging people from going to the polls," Obama said at a news conference.

During the 2006 midterm elections, some voters in predominantly black areas of Maryland received fliers implying the Republican candidates for governor and U.S. senator were actually Democrats. Voters in Virginia claimed they received threatening phone calls and Hispanics in Arizona complained an armed man questioned them outside a precinct.

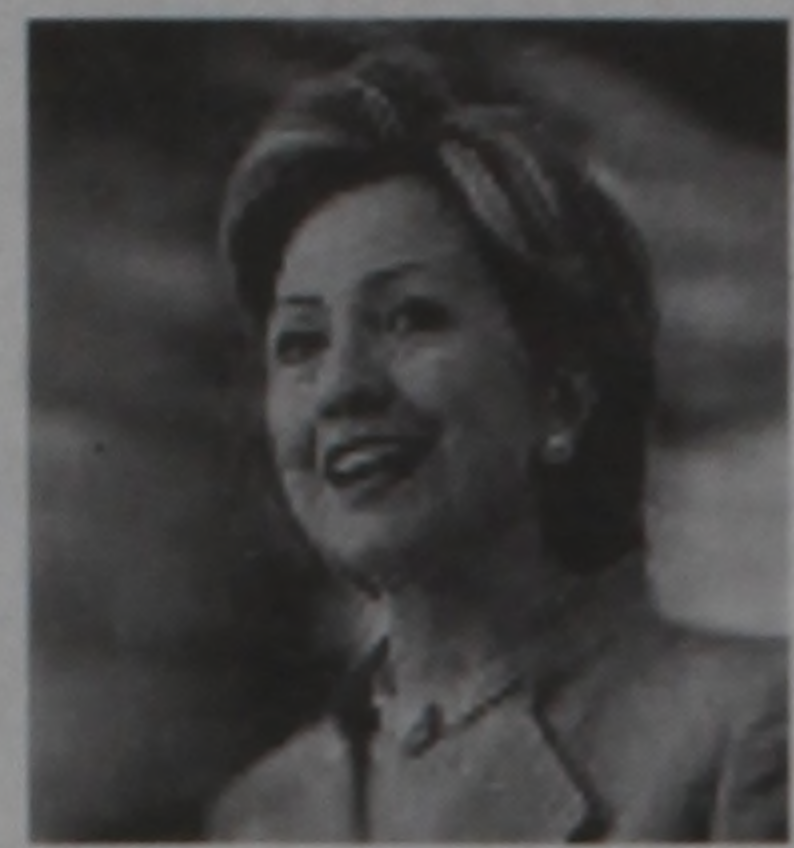
"We've seen these problems year after year, election after election," Obama said.

The bill would also increase the maximum penalty for voter intimidation from one year to five, and voters who feel victimized by false information would be able to sue the organizations responsible.

Democratic Presidential Hopefuls

WITH HILLARY IN THE RACE, LATINAS MUST MAKE A CHOICE

By Marisa Treviño
A documented characteristic of Hispanic voters is that no one political party can really claim us as all its own. For Latinas,



it's never totally been about the elephant and the donkey, as it has been about the man.

Now, it is also about the mujer.

With Hillary Rodham Clinton joining the ranks of presidential wannabes, the race didn't just get interesting for Democratic voters - it got hard for Latina Democratic voters.

For the first time, Latina Democrats are being asked to weigh their party's major candidate and choose between a woman and a Latino, New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson.

If ever there's a time when Hispanics may seriously be

considered the swing vote, it's in an election that pits gender against ethnic pride - especially since women now comprise the majority of Hispanic voters.

According to the Hispanic-Tellus (R) research report, "2004 U.S. Hispanic Electorate Profile, Issues and Projections," women between the ages of 25 and 44 comprise the largest segment of Hispanic voters, at 23.21 percent.

This makes for an interesting scenario: With the candidates' qualifications roughly equal, do Latinas support someone who shares in the experiences of childbirth, balancing career and family and patronizing discrimination or do Latinas support someone who shares in the experiences of living a bi-cultural life, having a common ancestry and on the receiving end of ethnic prejudices?

Either choice would prove historic. George Bush's win in the 2004 election is attributed to his increased popularity among both females and Hispanic voters.

If the Democratic primary were held today, polls tell us that Hillary would be the one to face off against the Republican nominee. In fact, anecdotal accounts from across the country and throughout the blogosphere

are showing that Hillary's participation is exciting women of all ages and from all walks of life.

Emily's List, a Democratic fund-raising organization that helps women candidates get elected, is marking the 2008 election as the first time in its 20-year history it will endorse a candidate for the White House.

Lisa Stone, a founder of the women's network BlogHer, noticed among her roster of women that the discussion surrounding Hillary's run for president has extended beyond the usual field of political bloggers.

Mommybloggers, who a week or two ago were debating how long to put their children in time-out, are this week in animated discussions about what having a woman in the Oval Office could mean.

In fact, the idea of Hillary running for the presidency is almost eclipsing her stand on the issues, or at the least, allowing her, in the minds of some, to start with a fresh slate.

Talk doesn't dwell on whether or not she voted on the war in Iraq. Instead, people are talking about her electability.

Drawing on a past that involved her championing the rights of children, affordable health care and tax cuts for mid-

dle-class families, she emerges as the kind of woman most of us can relate to - someone who puts others before herself.

It doesn't hurt her chances either that when she was nursing a broken heart over her husband's Oval Office indiscretions, she set a very public example of grace and dignity, and came out of the ordeal a stronger, more determined woman.

Her tenure as a U.S. senator replacing the state of New York placed her on various historically male-dominated congressional committees, such as the Senate Armed Services Committee. This balances out her resumé of Washington life experiences that date back to her days as First Lady.

In 2008 Latinas and other women will be key in helping this country decide whether it is ready for a female president.

If we're lucky, the decision that will have to be made won't be just about whether the country is ready for a woman commander-in-chief, but if it is ready for a woman/Hispanic ticket.

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Tomorrow Seems Like Yesterday

By: Ysidro Gutierrez

Americans want what is good for our country. We want our nation to prosper. We want to live in peace. We want to be safe. We want our children to get a quality education. We want quality medical care. We want to enjoy a long healthy life.

Americans should not count on the Federal Government to provide any of these.

The President began the 2007 State of the Union address on a positive note. But, in short order it became agonizingly apparent that we are a Nation divided with Republican on one side and independents, conservatives, and Democrats on the other. There is good cause for Americans to believe that tomorrow will be like yesterday.

After the speech Republicans lavished accolades on the President for style and delivery. Across the aisle people spoke of the President's lack of enthusiasm, energy and conviction.

For those interested in substance not style, but the causal observer with a critical eye and an analytical mind will at once note the discrepancies in the President's speech. The President was weak in two major areas,

1) **The War:** The President devoted about half the speech to the war in Iraq. This was proper since the war is the single most important issue of our time. He spoke eloquently about the dangers posed by the terrorist enemy, and of the need to defeat terrorism but remained stubborn in tactics and strategy which are opposed by all but the staunchest Republicans. History will probably note that this was a Republican War. The President remained adamant about the surge of 21,500 troops and asked America to allow time for the surge to work. This sounds reasonable, except that the plan is opposed by retired generals, the Iraqi people, and most Americans who believe the surge will make matters worse. On its surface the surge has little chance of success. There have already been 4 surges of troops. None have worked. Democrats were quick to express the belief that the strategy is reckless and will not work. There is little cause to hope in a strategy that does not work.

Another facet of the war was its cost. The \$400 billion dollars spent in Iraq to date is off-the-books. This means it is not counted against the budget deficit. This is important because the President spoke of a Balanced Budget as a major goal. But until he is honest with the American people about this creative accounting of war expenses, the American people will have little cause to trust him or to hope in it.

Absent from the President's speech were America's allies or a coalition of nations committed help the President's latest surge succeed in Iraq. Long ago American military leaders learned the hard lesson which should be applied to the war - that America should not go at it alone. The President has forgotten this lesson. If America tries to be policeman to the world, it will be costly and has no chance of success. This is why the President is alone on his plan in Iraq. There is little reason to hope in its success.

2) **The Budget:** The most memorable words in the speech may be the meaningless rhetoric selected to propose a balanced budget without raising taxes. Taken at face value it too, like the war is reckless. The "\$9 Trillion Dollar National Debt." will be a burden on our children long into the future. China and Japan are America's biggest creditors. Some day they will demand payment on the loan. If we can't make it, they will do more than repossess the car. It is hard to Balance the Budget when you have such high interest payments.

The President also proposed ending earmark spending, but only some of it. If he was serious, he would end all earmarks. There is little cause to trust in the President's commitment to end earmarks.

Also casting doubt on a Balanced Budget was the President proposed new federal spending. Higher spending is not the conventional way to Balance the Budget. Either the President is out-of-touch or he slept during arithmetic in high school.

Some facets of the speech were quite appealing. It is good to spend American dollars to fight AIDS and Malaria in Africa. Health Care insurance and comprehensive immigration reform should be top priority issues for the domestic agenda. Energy independence would make Americans safer.

The President showed great skill in how he ended the speech by highlighting four American Heroes: 1) The New York hero who saved a stranger's life. 2) The basketball star who built a hospital for his hometown. 3) The Woman entrepreneur who built a multi-million dollar business in an America of limitless opportunity. 4) The soldier wounded using his body to shield his men from enemy fire.

He got that one right.

Texas Tech University

1. The Hispanic student population is 11.49% of the total student population. In the Fall 06 semester, there were 3217 Hispanic students enrolled, an increase of 4.69% from Fall 2005. There has been an increase in Hispanic student enrollment at Texas Tech every year since 1999. Additionally, the number of Hispanic students that are retained has improved steadily over the last few years as has the number of Hispanic faculty. In fact, Hispanic faculty hold Chair positions in Academic Departments, Associate Deans positions, and are represented in the President and Provost offices. Chancellor Hance, and Texas Tech, is committed to creating and maintaining an environment where Hispanic students, indeed all students, can be successful. There are several ongoing initiatives to further increase the number of Hispanic students at Tech, including a recent program to attach Hispanic faculty to participate in high school recruitment teams that will be visiting area schools that often have significant Hispanic student populations.

2. The Office of Enrollment Management is working on an aggressive student recruiting plan that emphasizes minority recruitment. Dr. Juan S. Munoz, special assistant to the president for institutional diversity and associate vice provost is the director of the Cross-Cultural Academic Advancement Center which offers a variety of substantive programs, internships, conferences, scholarships, and leadership training opportunities to assist in the recruitment and retention of Hispanic students. Moreover, he oversees the largest Hispanic students' retention program, Mentor Tech, which is instrumental to the success of Hispanic students at Tech. To talk with you further about these issues, he can be reached him at 806-742-2121.

3. Most recently, the Chancellor met with local Hispanic community leaders when he attended The Lubbock with local Hispanic of Commerce Installation of Officers Luncheon on January 11, 2007. The Chancellor is enthusiastic about working with the Hispanic community to address issues important to them. In particular, the Chancellor wants to work with local leaders to find ways to increase Hispanic enrollment at Texas Tech. To that end, The Chancellor's Office is working with Dr. Munoz to coordinate a meeting on campus of Hispanic leaders to strategize about the development of more effective and efficient scholarship programs for Hispanic students at Tech. The group will consist of established Hispanic organizations around Lubbock that currently offer scholarships, and seek ways to leverage and potentially match funds to increase the total available resources for Hispanic students who pursue their education at Texas Tech. Other initiatives are being developed between the Chancellor and President Offices to make Texas Tech the University of Choice for Hispanic, and all, students in Texas.

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'PRESIDENT' OBAMA: HOPE, HYPE OR HYPOCRISY?

By Esther J. Cepeda
Barack Obama, our great brown hope, where will you lead us?

Now that the freshman U.S. senator from my home state of Illinois has thrown his hat into the ring for the 2008 presidential race by forming an exploratory committee, many of the black, Hispanic and Asian voters throughout the country who've actually heard of him are titillated by the possibility that a new shade of president might actually take the Oval Office.

Topping a list of previous presidential contenders populated by the likes of Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, Obama, with his Hawaiian,

African-American, and Caucasian roots, has a certain appeal to Hispanic voters looking for a candidate who'll take up our unique causes. Chief among them is fair and reasonable immigration law reform.

While our new national "rock star" Obama had a decent voting record in the Illinois Senate on several issues important to the estimated 1.5 million Hispanics residing here, that sensitivity hasn't translated to his choices in the U.S. Senate where 44 million Hispanics nationwide need his under-

standing.

Obama famously voted in favor of last October's mostly symbolic but costly Secure Fence Act, walling us off from our good neighbor Mexico but doing little to address our international terrorism concerns.

Remember the Senate's bipartisan immigration reform bill that included a path to legal residency for the law-abiding, long-established portion of undocumented U.S. residents who are now an integral part of our society and work force?

Like nearly all Democrats, Obama supported it. But soon afterwards, he backed legislation by Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) to force every one of those needed and productive long-term U.S. residents to leave the country for three years before becoming eligible to apply for re-entry.

He backed another bill that could have, among other regressive actions, turned religious group members into feeding or providing shelter to abused undocumented women and their children.

Then in a pandering move to appease nativists, our senator gave his "yea" to an amendment that disparaged Spanish-speakers by establishing English as our "national unifying language," something,

of course, that it has been since pre-Revolutionary days.

Not exactly the type of record that inspires confidence in the guy who is promising "real change" that "a different kind of politics" can deliver.

On Chicago's streets, there is buzz because not a single one of Obama's well-publicized inner-circle of confidants and advisors is Hispanic.

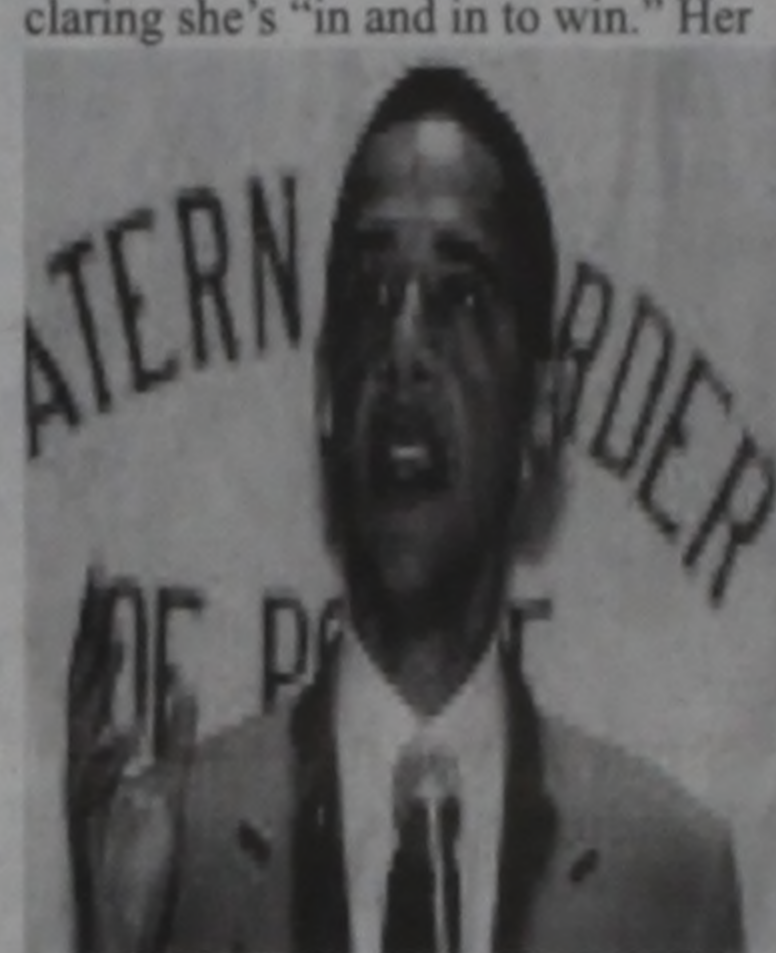
Additionally, there's some indignation over the fact that his original rubber-stamp support of undocumented constituent Elvira Arellano dried up the minute she took sanctuary from immigration authorities in a barrio church with her seven-year-old, U.S.-born son Saul. The Mexico native, a single mother who has always worked and never drawn welfare, has proclaimed herself the nation's face of immigration reform.

So far, among Chicago's Latino activists, only Juan Andrade, leadership of the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute, has dared to challenge the senator publicly on his lack of commitment to Hispanic interests.

It's possible that some are waiting for Obama to clarify the issues he'll run on for the presidency. Others are asking, what's the alternative?

Four days after Obama made his

move, Hillary Clinton, whom the polls show as his main competitor in the Democratic primaries, officially entered the presidential contest, declaring she's "in and in to win." Her



voting record on the Senate's 2006 immigration legislation proposals, as well as the English-language amendment, is identical to that of Obama.

U.S. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez, a Chicago Democrat and leader in pressing for comprehensive reform, says he knows what's going on behind the scenes.

"I've had many conversations with Barack and I think he heard loudly and clearly from many in the community about the position he took on the border fence," Gutiérrez expanded to me. "He's arrogantly dialogue, he hasn't had gently walked away from the conversation, and he is taking steps to address it."

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IS BILL RICHARDSON AL GORE II?

By José de la Isla
Toward the end of the movie "An Inconvenient Truth," former vice president Al Gore lists six measures for reversing global warming. When they are applied, he claims climate change can be brought back to 1970 levels.

"We have everything we need, save perhaps political will." And he adds, "But, you know what, American political will is a renewable resource."

Gore, a long-standing advocate for reducing greenhouse gases and the Kyoto Protocols, lost the 2000 presidential election in the electoral college tally, where state counts rule, to George W. Bush by 537 critical votes in Florida's controversial ballot counting. Nationally, Gore won the popular vote by half a million ballots. He has disclaimed having any further presidential ambitions or that he might enter the 2008 campaign.

Yet, if principal outweighs personality in these matters, something important is taking place in New Mexico along these lines. In his Jan. 16 state of the state address, Gov. Bill Richardson outlined a model

on how to respond to energy consumption, and it serves him as the basis for his presidential campaign.

The popular governor, who won in November with 69 percent of the vote, proposed measures to his legislature that go to the heart of the matter.



the Kyoto Protocols - among major nations, only the United States and Australia have not signed it - Richardson proposed measures that sound like goals for the rest of this country to follow.

He said New Mexico should become the first in the nation to have its state buildings powered 100 percent by renewable energy. Schools should be transformed into green buildings and tax credits provided for green offices and homes. The state should set emission standards to cut carbon by 30 percent and set more technological control over coal-fired power plants.

He further proposed a fund

promoting innovations and an annual one-month tax holiday on purchases of energy-efficient appliances.

On Jan. 21, Richardson announced he is forming a presidential exploratory committee. His official candidacy is expected in the spring.

Richardson appears to be the most experienced among the current list of contenders for the Democratic Party nomination. Former First Lady and U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton of New York, along with Illinois' U.S. Senator Barack Obama, are the most often mentioned "frontrunners" a year before the Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire and South Carolina caucuses and primaries lead off the selection by elimination.

However, so far, none match Richardson's resumé as congressman, UN ambassador, U.S. energy secretary and state governor. Perhaps as important have been his roles as a Democratic Party insider.

Terrorism, health insurance, sustainable development and education will become major issues in the campaigns. All are extremely important. And the thread through those needles is energy consumption. Or as George Stephanopoulos stated

**EL EDITOR NEWSPAPER
The Best In Around**

Analysis: Medicare Vs. The Race Gap

The Medicare program should do more to combat racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare, experts said Monday, it is just not clear how to go about it.

Medicare is the largest purchaser of healthcare and has a tremendous influence on all aspects of healthcare in this country, Renee Landers, a health law professor at Suffolk University Law School, told congressional staffers at a briefing sponsored by the Alliance for Health Reform. It has the obligation to ensure that all beneficiaries receive appropriate care on a fair and non-discriminatory basis.

Some healthcare equity advocates argue the best way to reduce racial healthcare disparities is to target them directly through programs designed to narrow gaps in access and quality. Medicare, they argue can have a pivotal role in doing this, both for seniors and the healthcare system as a whole.

But others point to evidence that all healthcare consumers -- regardless of race -- receive poor quality care. The best way to improve care for everyone, they say, is to focus on quality overall so that a rising tide can raise all ships, even if it means that the healthcare gap stays the same, or actually widens.

Numerous studies have found that members of racial and ethnic minorities have less access to care, receive less and poorer quality treatment, and experience worse health outcomes than the non-minority population.

A report released earlier this month by the Agency for Healthcare Research

and Quality found that African American patients received worse care than white patients across 73 percent of the 22 quality criteria included in the study. Hispanic patients received poorer care in 77 percent of the areas examined.

In practice, that means that patients in African American, Hispanic or other minority groups are receiving less recommended care like preventive services for heart disease and cancer, and chronic disease management. Minority patients were also significantly less likely to be able to obtain care for illness of injury in a timely manner.

Some of the variation is due to a lack of health insurance, since African Americans are twice as likely as whites to be uninsured, and Hispanics are three times more likely to be without health coverage.

But other studies have found that even when differences in income and health insurance coverage are taken into account, minority populations still receive inferior care.

The Medicare program has been used to leverage social change before. When it was launched in 1965, at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, it required participating hospitals to desegregate, leading to a rapid transformation of the healthcare system.

A growing chorus of scholars and advocates say it is time for again time for Medicare to take the helm.

There is more work for the program to do and that means making disparities a priority, Landers said at the briefing. Effort is needed to raise the profile of the issue because out of sight is out of mind -- if it's everyone's

responsibility it tends to be no one's responsibility.

Two things that the program can begin doing right away are educating beneficiaries' families about how to navigate the healthcare system and requiring the collection of good data on the relationship between treatment and race, she said.

A long-term commitment is also called for, she said, because the healthcare system must swim against the tide of a racially divided culture where many patients have lived in inferior conditions all their lives.

Problems of race and ethnicity are problems our entire culture has been unable to solve, she said. One would think 50 years after the Civil Rights Movement, these cultural issues wouldn't remain. We're going to have to adopt a sense of urgency.

As well as educating patients' families, directly involving communities could also help narrow the healthcare gap, Carolyn Clancy, director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, told United Press International.

A good model would be the effort that went into enrolling seniors in the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit, she said. Outreach for Part D built really useful infrastructure. People across the country sat down at churches and community centers to explain the program. More engaged patients get better healthcare.

Some advocates say Medicare should go even further to address inequalities.

The Department of Health and Human Services, the agency that operates Medicare, should use civil rights laws to require healthcare providers to collect data to show they are not discriminating, and then punish those providing unequal treatment, Bob Griss, executive director of the Institute of Social Medicine and Community Health, told UPI.

Now discrimination is not just segregation, it's in the different quality of care, he said. Medicare is not fulfilling their responsibility to address this form of discrimination. They have so much clout, but they're not using it.

But some scholars argue that focusing on differences in care ignores the larger reality that no group of patients gets very good care.

A recent study by the RAND Corporation found that patients receive about half of recommended care, no matter what racial or ethnic category they are in.

In that light, focusing on racial differences is like trying to get a better ticket for a bad movie, said Peter Bach, a health researcher and physician at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

What we need is a better movie.

The stubborn challenges that poverty poses extend far beyond the brick walls of healthcare institutions, he said. There must be reasonable expectations for what Medicare can do.

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A New School of Bloggers: Teachers Are Expressing Their Views

After long days of grading papers and disciplining rowdy children, a growing number of tech-savvy teachers are creating online journals to vent about the stresses of the profession.

Educators who have already embraced the technology -- called blogs (short for web logs) -- find themselves walking a fine, virtual line of conduct. They strive to entertain and inform, but can't violate their school districts' ethics policies or federal laws designed to protect students' confidentiality.

Most teachers who blog have opted to do so underground -- refusing to cite their names, workplaces or other identifying details -- to avoid potential professional pitfalls.

"School administrators tend to be pretty vindictive and they don't like people with different ideas from them. People who speak out are not regarded very highly," said Mike in Texas, an elementary school science teacher from East Texas, who started an online diary two years ago as a way of defending public education.

Though he often waxes about the value of the system, Mike in Texas has been known to rant about the "Mother of All Idiot Parents" or his boss, the "Clueless Principal."

"Some days I think I would like to have her job because I know how I would do things, and some days I wouldn't want that job for anything," he wrote in a recent entry. "Or as we say, some days you're the pigeon, some days you're the statue."

Teachers, initially slow to try out the medium, are publishing blogs at rapidly increasing rates -- partly because they see the online journals as a way to have their opinions heard, experts say.

"Teachers' public voices have less and less currency in the education market with respect to deciding what benefits

children," said Michele Knobel, an education professor at Montclair State University in New Jersey. "Blogs can become a forum for voicing frustration with the ongoing de-professionalization of teaching and the sidelining of teacher wisdom and experience."

The number of blogs about "teaching" or "teachers" tracked by Technorati.com has jumped 10 percent in less than six months to nearly 950. LiveJournal, one of the most popular blogging sites, lists about 415 chat communities interested in teaching.

A delicate balance Libby Nicole Ingrassia, a teacher-turned-teacher, admits that most of her coworkers are far behind the blogging curve. The first-year KIPP Houston High School teacher has been blogging since 2000.

"Most teachers here might be aware of blogging, but only on the peripheral," said Ingrassia, who keeps a blog called Notesgirl.

Still, she said she expects to see a rise in both the number of teachers who keep personal blogs and the number who use blogs to communicate with students about assignments.

Though Ingrassia is open about her blog, most teachers aren't willing to reveal their identities. They say they're afraid of getting fired, upsetting their coworkers or violating federal laws that protect their students' confidentiality.

In the Cyber world, these chatty, often frustrated, teachers pour their thoughts out under screen names like "Bud the Teacher," "Hip Teacher" and "Cool Cat Teacher."

Some teacher-bloggers predict that their districts may soon draft rules outlining what employees can and can't say online.

"It's free therapy," she said. "It's turned out to be really useful for venting and thinking through stuff."

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Super Bowl QBs: All-time greatest disparities under center

Some people will tell you that Peyton Manning vs. Rex Grossman is a worse match than K-Fed and Britney. Yeah, well, maybe. But I can think of at least three other instances where Super Bowl

quarterbacks were as different as George and Reggie Bush. OK, I can think of four. Make that five. In fact, I'll name them for you right now -- with Peyton and Rex excused from class.

But before I get started, one word of caution: You'll find no mention of Trent Dilfer vs. Kerry Collins in Super Bowl XXXV because it's not the quality of the two quarterbacks I'm interested in; it's the disparities between them.

Got it? Good. Now, on to the show: Joe Theismann vs. David Woodley, Super Bowl XVII

David Woodley was the worst quarterback to start a Super Bowl, with 15 more interceptions than touchdowns in his brief career. Still, nothing is ever as bad as it seems, and Woodley was no exception. If he'd been better, the Dolphins might not have drafted Dan Marino in 1983 -- and think about that for a minute before you start to shred David Woodley. Then take a look at Woodley's play in Super Bowl XVII and start shredding.

It was all downhill for David Woodley in XVII after he'd say 'hike.'

It's not that he lost the game; it's that he didn't do anything to win it. He was 4 of 14, including a 76-yard TD pass to Jimmy Cefalo, but failed to complete a pass in the second half before he was replaced by Don Strock. Hey, what did you expect? Woodley ranked last in the league in passing efficiency and was no match for Theismann. The proof was this game.

The NFL's top-rated passer, Theismann was cool and efficient -- completing 15 of 23 passes for 143 yards with two touchdowns as the Redskins amassed a Super Bowl-record 276 yards rushing. He was no ordinary Joe, and he would return to

the Super Bowl the next season while Woodley returned to the bench.

once that had Ferragamo listed as the league's 10th best quarterback ... of all time. Huh? Maybe in Orange County. Ferragamo had some decent seasons in the NFL (once throwing for 509 yards in a game), but 1979 wasn't one of them. His passer rating of 48.8 is the proof, though it was a marked improvement on his 1978 figure of 15.4.

Anyway, he took over as a starter because Pat Haden was hurt, and Ferragamo played well enough to help steer the Rams to wins in six of seven games leading up to Super Bowl XIV. That was good.

So was Ferragamo's performance for the first three quarters of the Super Bowl as the Rams -- at 9-7, the worst team to reach a Super Bowl -- held a 19-17 lead. But that evaporated when Bradshaw connected with John Stallworth for a 73-yard touchdown, and the Steelers went on to a 31-19 victory -- Pittsburgh's fourth NFL championship in six years.

Bradshaw was named the game's MVP and went on to the Hall of Fame; Ferragamo retired and went on to run a successful real-estate business in southern California. That figures. He always was about yards, anyway. Jim McMahon vs. Tony Eason, Super Bowl XX

OK, so McMahon wasn't McAccurate. In 15 seasons, he had 10 more touchdowns than interceptions, a 58 percent completion rate and one Pro-Bowl season. But this was that season, with McMahon the "punk QB" who would lead the Bears to a 12-0 start and their first Super Bowl ever. McMahon was as bold and arrogant as he was effective -- mooning a helicopter that circled Chicago's practice fields the week before the Super Bowl.

Eason was another story. Tony Eason found himself painfully overmatched in XX.

The Pats' first-round draft choice in 1983, he never lived up to expectations -- with six more

interceptions than touchdowns in 1985. Sure, he looked like a keeper in '84 when he had nearly three times as many TDs (23) as

interceptions (eight), but he tailed off the following season and was such wreck in the Super Bowl that the Fridge was better on offense.

Eason failed to complete his first six passes, fumbled once and was sacked three times before he was sent to the bench. He and the Patriots had an improbable and exhilarating playoff run, winning three times on the road, but they blew a tire before reaching the finish line. Maybe you forgot about Eason, but I couldn't: He's the only starting quarterback to start a Super Bowl and not complete a pass.

Roger Staubach vs. Craig

Turner gets interview as likely final Cowboys candidate

IRVING, Texas -- Norv Turner got the best out of Troy Aikman, Emmitt Smith and Michael Irvin when he was the Dallas Cowboys' offensive coordinator. He thinks he can do the same with Tony Romo, Terrell Owens and the rest of the club as their next head coach.

Turner interviewed for the job Sunday, becoming the seventh -- and likely final -- candidate being considered by owner Jerry Jones.

"I was excited to get a chance to visit and talk about things that are important to me," said Turner, San Francisco's offensive coordinator. "In this league, it's all about timing and circumstance. ... I've got a lot of confidence in the things I can do. I think there are a lot of people in this league that look at it in that manner."

Turner was the offensive coordinator in Dallas from 1991-93. He called the plays that catapulted the Cowboys to Super Bowl titles his final two seasons. Along the way, he became so close with Aikman that Turner introduced the quarterback when he was

Morton, Super Bowl XII. The more I remember this game, the less I want to remember Morton.

There was a time I thought the guy was going to be decent. Then I watched him self-destruct against Baltimore in Super Bowl V. He never really did put up big numbers in his career and sometimes did just what he had to do to be successful -- which is what happened in 1977, his first season with Denver.

The Broncos were all about defense that year; not about Craig Morton. Heck, they never scored more than 27 points in a game. But that didn't matter.

Morton didn't make big mistakes that year ... until Super Bowl XII.

Staubach didn't make big mistakes, either, but the

difference is that he knew how to produce big plays. He was poised, too, never rattling when it mattered. And this game mattered. Staubach was on from the beginning, hitting 17 of 25 passes -- including one for a touchdown -- but it was

Harvey Martin and Randy White who were named co-MVPs. And for good reason: They were part of a defense that shook down Morton. The Cowboys intercepted him four times and recovered four fumbles in a 27-10 rout.

Morton never made it to the finish, benched after completing as many passes to Dallas (4) as to his teammates.

But that's not all: He achieved a Super Bowl rarity with a zero-point-zero passer rating.

Troy Aikman vs. Neil O'Donnell, Super Bowl XXX

This was worse than it should have been. Aikman won three Super Bowls in four years and was named to the Hall of Fame. O'Donnell won a conference championship game in a season where he threw 17 touchdown

passes and seven interceptions. To appreciate that performance check out the numbers of three others who tried passing for Pittsburgh that season: They produced four TDs and 14 interceptions. O'Donnell always was smart with the ball, and he had one of the best touchdown-to-interception ratios in NFL history (120 TDs to 68 interceptions). But that doesn't mean he was a great quarterback because he wasn't. Aikman was. And the difference between the two was apparent in Super Bowl XXX when O'Donnell made Dallas cornerback Larry Brown the game's MVP by hitting him with two perfectly thrown passes -- one of which he returned to the Pittsburgh 6.

O'Donnell also threw an interception on the game's final play. Brown would move on to Oakland, where he faded away, and O'Donnell to the New York Jets where he was 0-6 in his first season as a starter. And Aikman? You can catch him any day of the week in Canton, Ohio.

something about how I feel about Jason," Turner said. Jones also interviewed three of Parcells' assistant, including

inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame last summer.

Although Turner went 59-83-1 over nine years as a coach

secondary coach Todd Bowles, who is black, thus fulfilling the league rule requiring a minority candidate.

The 54-year-old Turner has had his greatest success as an offensive coordinator.

Turner gets interview as likely final Cowboys candidate

His skill was evident again last season, when the 49ers averaged 80 yards per game more than the previous year when he was coaching the Raiders. Turner got Alex Smith to show why he'd been a No. 1 overall pick and he helped turn Frank Gore into the third-leading rusher in the NFL.

Dallas' offense was fine last season, scoring the second-most touchdowns and averaging the fourth-most points and fifth-most yards in the league. It was a collapse by the defense that had more to do with the Cowboys losing four of their last five games, including the final three.

Still, if Turner gets the job, a priority would be continuing the development of Romo, who went from undrafted, unused backup to Pro Bowl pick in only a half-season.

"My exposure to Tony is just from watching games on TV," Turner said. "Certainly he's an exciting player capable of making plays and really that's a big part of what this game is about, what this league is about. There's not a lot of guys

with Washington and Oakland, he's considered the front-runner to replace Bill Parcells because of his long relationship with Jones and the success they had together.

Turner had not been inside team headquarters since he was hired by the Redskins in February 1994. Being back triggered many memories.

"It's just a very, very unique place," he said. "When you're away from it some time you don't realize it. But it certainly hit me at Troy's Hall of Fame induction ceremony -- the Cowboys fans, all the people wearing Troy's jersey, just the excitement and energy that's always there with this organization."

Parcells retired Monday after going 34-32 the last four years. He went 0-2 in the playoffs, extending a postseason drought that dates to 1996.

Others being considered to replace him include defensive coordinators Wade Phillips of San Diego and Gary Gibbs of New Orleans, and Jason Garrett, Aikman's longtime backup who already has been hired for an undetermined job -- maybe head coach, probably offensive coordinator. Turner said he'd have no problem having Garrett on his staff. In fact, Turner tried getting Garrett on his staff in Oakland.

"That tells you a little

that have that natural, great playmaking ability."

There's plenty of other talent on offense: Owens, who led the league in receiving touchdowns; Marion Barber, who led the NFC in rushing touchdowns; Julius Jones, who became the team's first 1,000-yard rusher since Smith; tight end Jason Witten, headed to his third straight Pro Bowl; and receiver Terry Glenn.

Owens, who is due a \$3 million roster bonus in June, is as flamboyant as they come. Turner is used to that, having dealt with Irvin and, more recently, with Randy Moss in Oakland.

"I want to coach good players," Turner said. "Being with a new team, there's an evaluation process, and there's a lot of things that go into it. I like the players that are here and T.O. is one of them."

Texas State Regional Golden Gloves Boxing Championships

This year's Golden Gloves Tournament will feature some of the best boxing talent in West Texas. This year's National Golden Gloves Champions will qualify for the Olympic Trials.

Locally the Lubbock Warriors boxing Team will have state and nationally ranked boxers.

Among the Lubbock Warriors Team entries will be: Gabriel Surita Middleweight Champion; Kayla Combs Bantamweight Champion; Nicolas Rendon Light Heavyweight; Joey Andrist Welterweight.

The public is asked to support the Texas State Regional Golden Gloves Boxing Championship which will be held on Fri., Feb. 9th starting at 7:30 pm and Sat., Feb. 10th at 7:30 pm. The event will be held at the Lubbock Memorial Civic Center.

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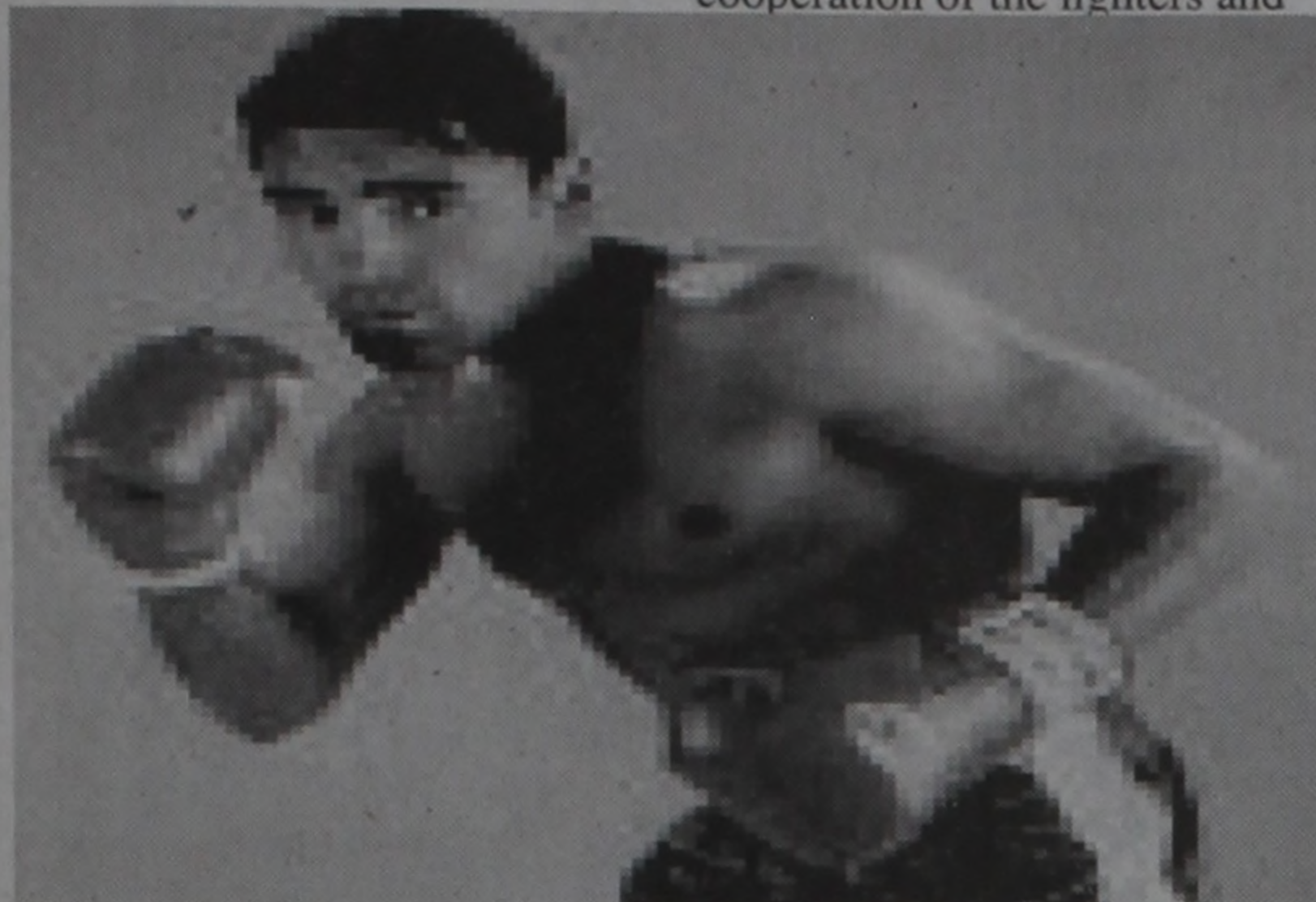
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Famers Oscar De La Hoya (38-4, 30 KOs) and Floyd Mayweather (37-0, 24 KOs) -- set for Saturday, May 5 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, and carried live on HBO Pay-Per-View -- HBO Sports will present an exclusive four-episode prime time countdown series over the final weeks leading up to the intriguing blockbuster boxing showdown..

The first three half-hour episodes of "DE LA HOYA/MAYWEATHER 24/7" will premiere in primetime on Sundays (April 15, 22, 29 at 10:30 pm ET/PT), with the fourth and final 30-minute episode airing Thursday, May 3, at 9:30 pm ET/PT, just two days before the mega-fight. The Sunday night premieres of episodes one thru three of "DE LA HOYA/MAYWEATHER 24/7" will follow original episodes of "The Sopranos" (9:00 p.m. ET/PT) and "Entourage" (10:00 p.m. ET/PT) on the HBO Sunday programming schedule.

HBO Sports President Ross Greenburg said: "In 35 years of televising boxing this is a first for HBO. De La Hoya vs. Mayweather will be the most highly anticipated fight of the year and we are going to provide our subscribers with an all-access series that is sure to be provocative and compelling television.

"The producers will be living at the fighters' camps 24/7 and the programs we present will appeal far beyond the hard-core boxing fan," said Greenburg. "Our approach will

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HBO Sports will provide exclusive, behind-the-scenes access along with in-depth and insightful interviews as De La Hoya, 33, a native of East Los Angeles, and Mayweather, 29, who hails from Grand Rapids, MI, prepare for their historic showdown. Seen as the most highly anticipated match-up in recent memory, Oscar De La Hoya is looking to defend his junior middleweight crown against the sport's reigning pound-for-pound king. Mayweather, who will fight at 154 pounds for the first time, brings a perfect 37-0 record into a match that sets up as a career-defining battle for him.

Known as "The Golden Boy," De La Hoya has appeared 29 times on HBO since turning pro after his gold medal winning performance at the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games. "Pretty Boy Floyd" has fought 20 times on HBO since turning pro after the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games where he won bronze. The executive producers of "DE LA HOYA/MAYWEATHER 24/7" are Ross Greenburg and Rick Bernstein. Coordinating producer is Dave Harmon. Producers, Jason Hehir and Scott Boggins. Liev Schreiber will narrate.

On Saturday, May 5 at 9:00 p.m. ET/ 6:00 p.m. PT, HBO Pay-Per-View will present the junior middleweight championship match -- De La Hoya vs. Mayweather -- live from the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

Football Fans Living a Lifelong Dream

They'll stay in four-star hotels, eat at fancy restaurants, take limousine rides and shop at high-end malls.

The official estimate is that the Feb. 4 game and the surrounding festivities will give the region a \$400 million boost. But some economists who study the game's monetary impact say that's a pie-in-the-sky estimate, that the actual amount is one-tenth of that.

"If you move that \$400 million estimate and you move the decimal point one place to the left you're much closer to what it is that it actually provides," said Robert Baade, an economics professor at Lake

Forest College in Chicago who has looked at the financial impact of Super Bowls, Olympics and World Series.

South Florida already is an international tourist destination, with enough hotel rooms, convention halls, concert venues and arenas to accommodate almost any marquee event. Despite the glamorous image, Miami also is one of the poorest cities in the country, facing big-city issues such as a lack of affordable housing, homelessness and bad schools.

Politicians and civic leaders team up to lure big events, a key to making Miami a tourist hotspot and a place where corporations would like to do business or hold conventions, said Rodney Barreto, chairman of the Super Bowl Host Committee. The game and the surrounding festivities also raise millions for charity.

"The Super Bowl, in my opinion, shows corporate America at its best," Barreto said.

Miami-Dade County which will provide roughly \$1 million in fire and police services, shuttles and other services and the committee offer the \$400 million estimate. That includes not only direct purchases by visitors, but also indirect spending by suppliers and vendors, such as a party promoter paying a local limousine company to ferry guests.

PriceWaterhouseCoopers estimates direct spending will be about \$195 million in South Florida, which includes Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach.

But Baade discounts the \$400 million estimate because he says it only captures increases in taxable sales and does not consider other important economic factors.

For instance, Baade said the estimate does not consider that fans coming to Miami for the

game will be replacing other visitors who would have come if the game was not happening. He also says the county does not consider that local residents will cut back on their spending because of higher prices, crowds and other factors.

"A lot of people who might frequent, let's say, hotel areas where they know Super Bowl fans are going to be staying are going to avoid the chaos, the congestion, the peak utilization of sidewalks and roads," Baade said.

Third, Baade suggests there usually is a significant "leakage" of money out of the community, meaning that profits made by restaurant and hotel chains, for example, will go to the companies' headquarters in another state rather than being re-spent locally.

Baade cites the 1999 Super Bowl in Miami, which was credited with bringing a \$670 million increase in taxable sales. In a December 2005 study he completed with Victor Matheson and Robert Baumann of the College of Holy Cross, they concluded the game actually generated \$36.9 million for the area, when also considering other factors such as population growth and inflation. Baade contends that the NFL uses these large estimates to lure local governments into building new stadiums that could be potential Super Bowl sites. Politicians can use a successful Super Bowl to gain favor with voters, he said. However, his research does have critics. Kathleen Davis, executive director of the Sport Management Research Institute, said the Super Bowl stimulates economic activity to the point that the \$400 million estimate is more realistic than Baade's research suggests. Davis' company has studied the impact Super Bowls have before, during and after the game. "I guarantee you that 99 percent of these economists

have never been to a Super Bowl and never collected data on the ground," said Davis, who was hired by the host committee to study Super Bowl XLI's economic impact. "They're not capturing the local spending habits and they focus on whatever factors will justify their arguments." Carlos Sarmiento, general manager of the 91-room Hotel Victor on South Beach, disputes the assertion that Super Bowl profits will not be re-spent locally. (The hotel is owned by Zom Inc. of Orlando and is operated by Hyatt Hotels & Resorts, based in Chicago.) "That's very short-sighted," Sarmiento said. "It affects everybody in some way. Some of the money we generate will be put right back into our operations."

In the long term, the free exposure Miami will get in television programs and newspaper articles leading up to the event, and in cutaway shots during the actual game, can reinforce Miami's image, experts said.

"That's the equivalent of a 30-second spot, and during the Super Bowl, those cost what, \$1 million, \$2 million?" said Don Grimes, senior research analyst with the University of Michigan.

Regardless if the impact is in the tens or hundreds of millions of dollars, it's generally accepted that South Florida stands to gain from a successful Super Bowl. For example, the NFL already has earmarked more than \$14 million for 400 minority-owned companies that will provide vending services, Barreto said.

Peter Roby, director of the Center for the Study of Sport in Society in Boston, said the estimates are probably somewhat inflated "because people are trying to justify why they want to bring that particular event to the city."

Our Lady of the Lake offering Hispanic marketing major

By: Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO -- Our Lady of the Lake University will soon start training students to market specifically to Hispanics -- one of a handful of schools nationwide to do so.

The Catholic university plans to start offering a bachelor's degree in Hispanic marketing in the fall.

Census Bureau figures show Hispanics have an estimated population of more than 40 million. They have more spending money than any other minority group.

DePaul University in Chicago recently announced a Hispanic marketing major. Southern Methodist University in Dallas offers training on marketing to Hispanics. Florida State University in Tallahassee has an undergraduate minor and a graduate certificate program in Hispanic marketing communication.

Our Lady of the Lake has an advantage since it's located in San Antonio, one of Texas' most Hispanic cities and home to some of the country's best-known Latino marketing firms. Members of SAVision, the Hispanic marketing division of the American Marketing Association, worked with the university on the Hispanic marketing degree.



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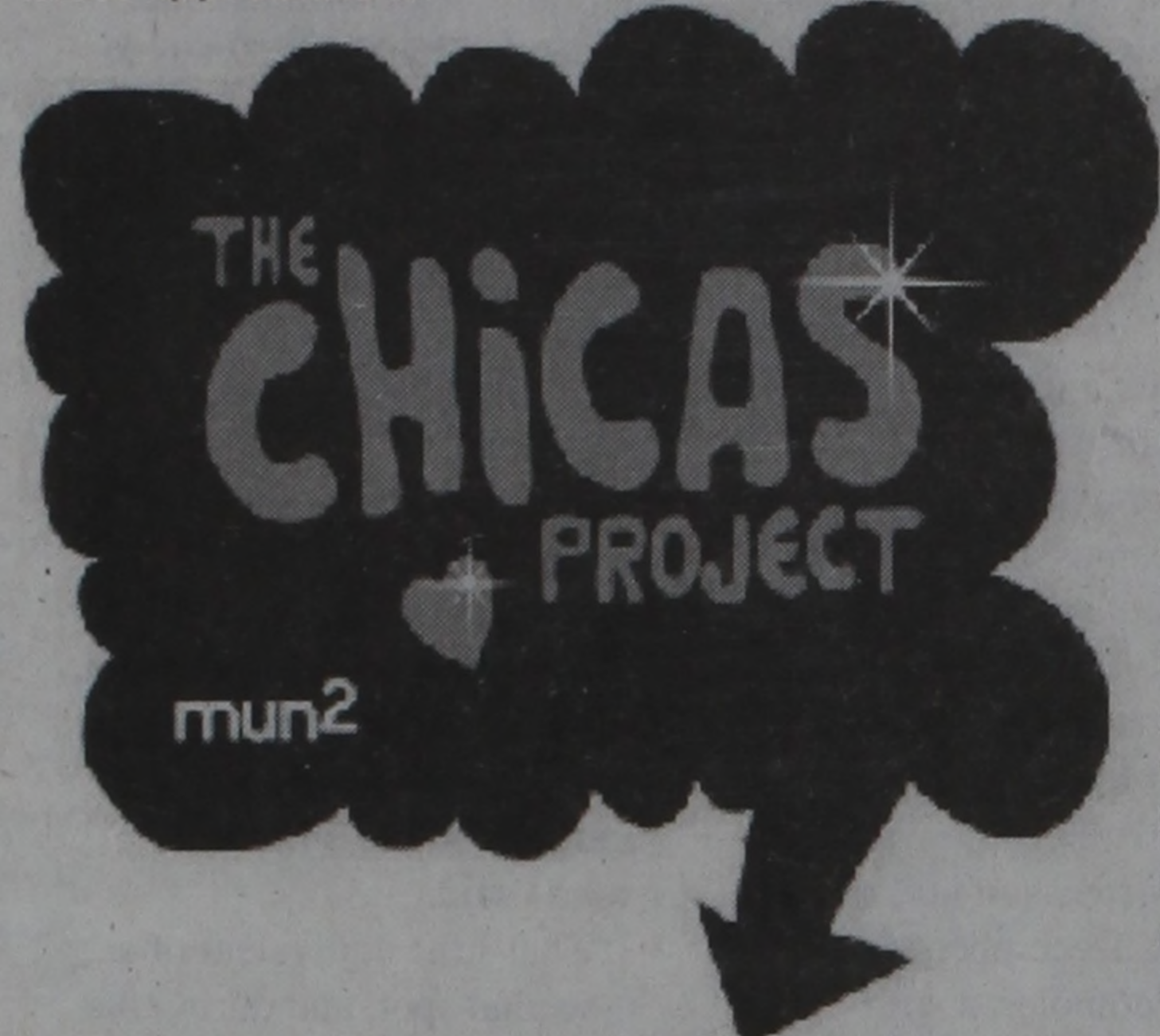




The Chicas Project" And "Have You Cine?" Premiere on mun2

mun2, the preeminent voice for Latino youth, kicks off the New Year with the debut of two originally-created and brand-new programs The Chicas Project and Have You Cine?, as well as a special mun2-customized broadcast of Madonna's worldwide sold-out 25-city Confessio

"We're really excited to launch these new shows in January and are sure they're going to be a hit with our audience," said Flavio Morales, VP of programming for mun2. "The Chicas Project gives young Latinas a chance to see themselves in starring roles on TV in a way that accurately reflects them, and Have You Cine showcases Latin cinema to the viewers who can most appreciate it."



Surprise artist guest Tony Danza.

Also premiering on January 27th, at 10PM EST, is Have You Cine?, a monthly movie showcase that highlights the coolest Latino films and filmmakers. The program will crash the couches, kitchens, and backyard BBQ's of actors, directors, musicians and other artists related to the film. These celebrity guests will watch the movie along with the viewer at home, pointing out little-known secrets and the inside stories that only they can offer. Every month, mun2 will screen a new film that defines the essence of Latin culture including Amores Perros, Nicotina, Mi Vida Loca, El Mariachi, Men With Guns, Devil's Backbone, Girl Fight and Ladies' Night. Have You Cine? is hosted by mun2's Renato Lopez and will kick off in January with the premiere of Motorcycle Diaries, starring Gael Garcia Bernal, and based on the journals of Che Guevara.

Penelope Cruz wins "Spanish Oscar" for Volver

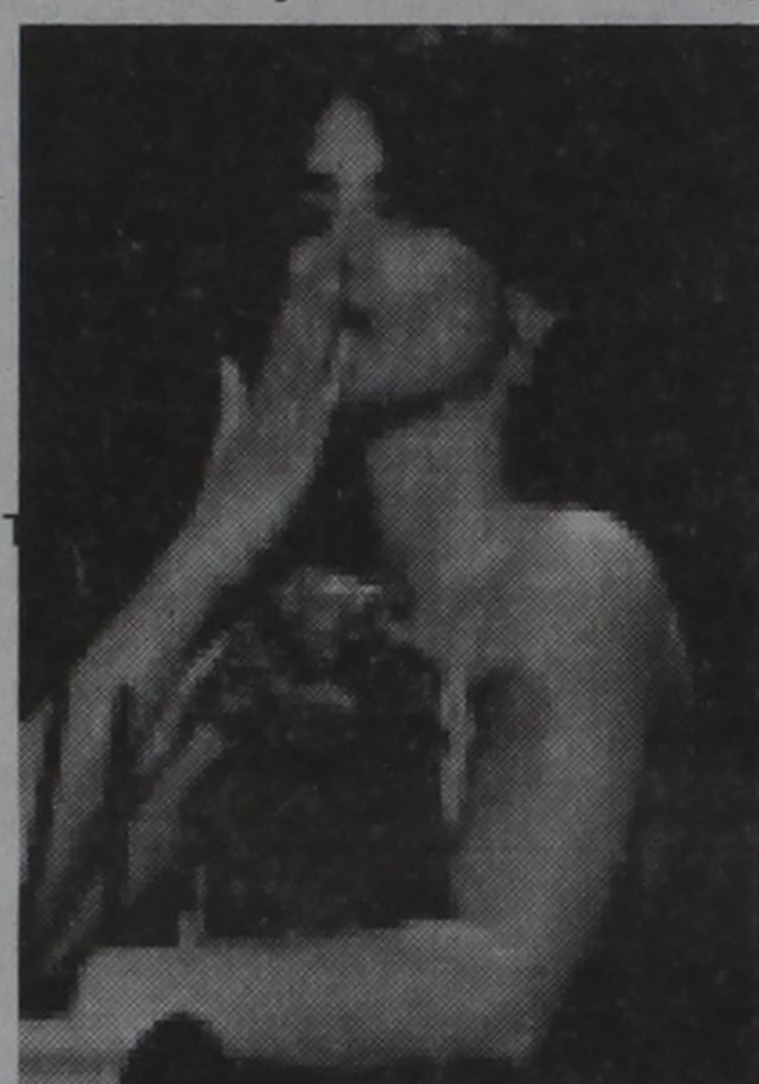
Spanish actress Penelope Cruz won the Goya Prize, Spain's equivalent of an Oscar, for her performance in Pedro Almodovar's movie Volver at an overnight gala in Madrid, news reports said Monday.

The comic and melodramatic tale of three generations of women, which is also an Oscar candidate for best actress, won five Goyas, including best movie, best actress for Cruz, best director for Almodovar, best supporting actress for Carmen Maura and best music.

Almodovar did not attend the gala, but followed it on television at home "like football, with beer, potatoes

Agustin said.

An emotional Cruz said she owed her award to "Pedro, for your confidence,



generosity and all you have taught me."

Volver has helped her

seemed "impossible" for someone from her "environment and social class," says the 32-year-old actress born in a Madrid suburb to the family of a retailer father and a hairdresser mother.

Cruz said she now had many possible projects, including an urban and futurist new film with Almodovar and a Hollywood production in which she will co-star with Ben Kingsley.

The second big winner was Mexican director Guillermo del Toro's Pan's Labyrinth, which won seven Goyas: best original script, best newcomer actress -- 12-year-old Ivana Baquero,

ing, best special effects, best make-up and hair-dressing.

Del Toro expressed his "respect" and "profound admiration" for the Spanish film industry.

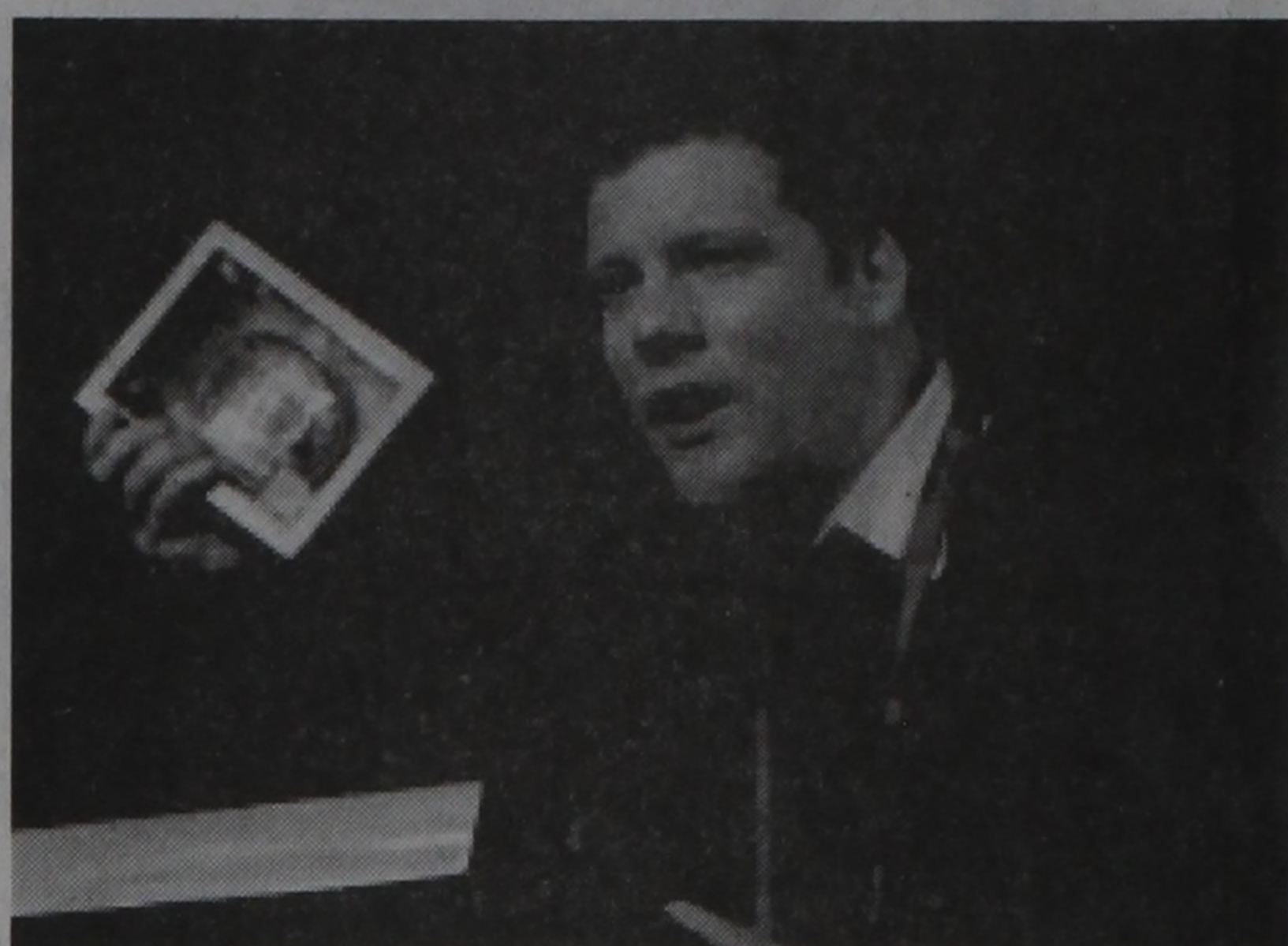
"It is here that they believed in a crazy project like this," said the director of the fantasy movie on a girl's adventure during the Spanish Civil War, a Spanish-Mexican copro-

'Padre,' Cusack Film Tops at Sundance

The searing immigrant saga "Padre Nuestro," about a Mexican teen's heartbreaking search for his father in America, won the grand-jury prize for best U.S. drama Saturday at the Sundance Film Festival. "Manda Bala (Send a Bullet)," another Latin American story recounting government corruption and kidnapping in Brazil, earned the grand-jury award in the U.S. documentary competition at the festival,

of her aging, deaf parents as they undergo risky surgery that could allow them to hear.

Writer-director Christopher Zalla's debut film "Padre Nuestro" is the story of a Mexican youth (Jorge Adrian Espindola) who sneaks into the United States to find the father (Jesus Ochoa) he never met, only to have his identity usurped by a conniving fellow illegal immigrant (Armando Her-



the nation's top showcase for independent film.

"Grace Is Gone," a tear-jerker starring John Cusack as a father who takes his young daughters on a road trip to postpone breaking the news that their Army sergeant mother has been killed in Iraq, won the audience award for favorite U.S. drama as chosen by balloting among Sundance movie-goers.

Writer-director James C. Strouse won the Waldo Salt screenwriting award for "Grace Is Gone."

The U.S. audience award for documentaries went to Irene Taylor Brodsky's "Hear and Now," a portrait

nandez) he meets along the way.

"Padre Nuestro" followed last year's "Quinceanera" as the second-straight Mexican-immigrant tale to win top dramatic honors at Sundance.

Jason Kohn's "Manda Bala" connects such disparate elements as a frog farm used as a front for money-laundering and a plastic surgeon who works on mutilated kidnap victims to capture the violence pervading life in Brazil.

"Manda Bala" also won the documentary cinematography prize for Heloisa

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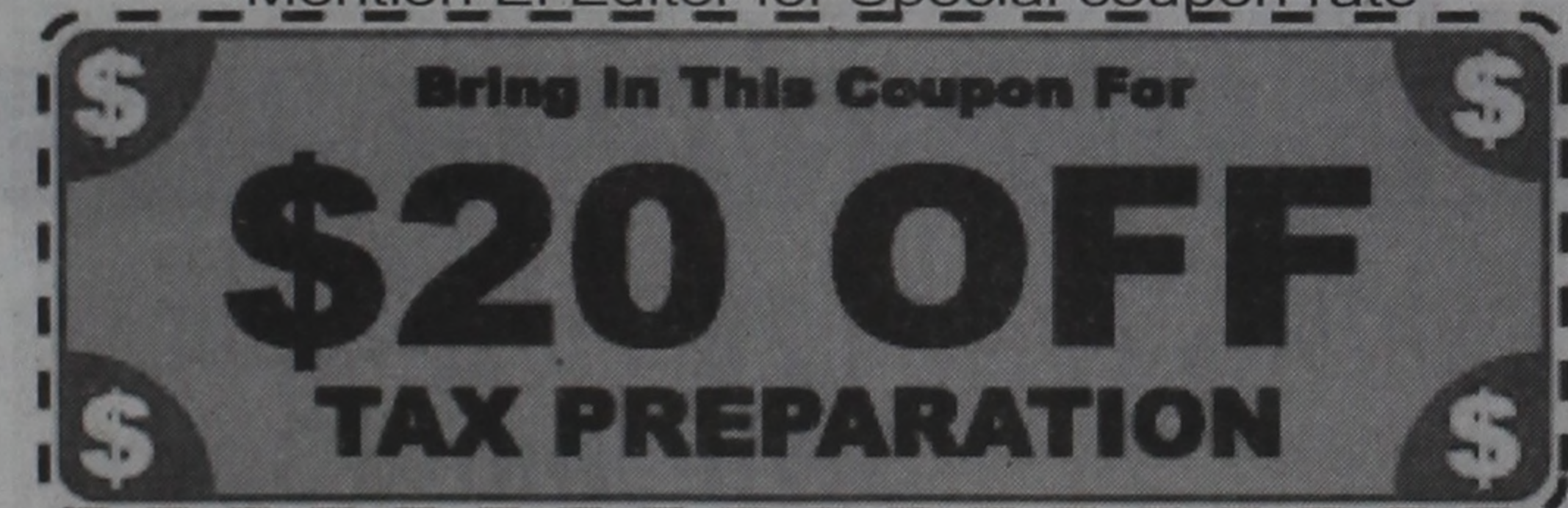
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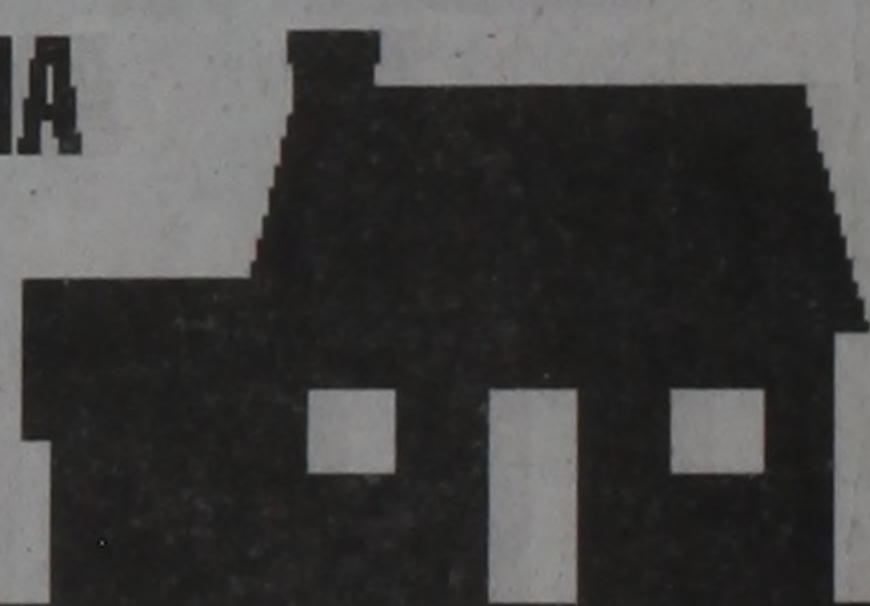


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