

Hispanic Link weekly report

Vol. 26 No. 41 Oct. 20, 2008
Your News Source for 26 Years

MAKING THE NEWS THIS WEEK

A Wisconsin judge dismisses a lawsuit to require verification of voters' identities...A federal appeals court overturns a decision by U.S. District Judge **Ricardo Urbina's** decision of Oct. 7 releasing 17 Uighurs, Chinese Muslims, held at Guantanamo Bay, and orders oral arguments for Nov. 24...**Francisco Fregoso**, a once-prominent Corpus Christi, Texas, DJ and among first Mexican-American broadcasters in the nation, is hit by a car and dies at age 81 in his home city... U.S. Rep. **Joe Baca** (D-Calif.), chairman of

the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, makes Esquire magazine's "10 Worst Members of Congress" list, labeling him "corrupt and venal." The magazine cites **Baca's** use of CHC funds for state political races of his two sons and for reportedly calling colleague **Loretta Sánchez** a "whore" when she challenged him on it...Puerto Rico's Elections Commissioner **Ramón Gómez** says more than 4,000 blind islanders will be able to vote by telephone for the first time in the November territorial elections...

THE LATINO PRESIDENTIAL VOTE

Hispanic Link writers report on differing measures of its impact

Their findings and conclusions may jar readers — and a few other experts

ALONSO YANEZ

Political scientist Rodolfo de la Garza calls Hispanic vote completely irrelevant

Aside from passionate political discussions, populist promises and negative campaigns that flirt with libel, presidential elections also have the peculiarity of re-discovering forgotten groups of voters every four years.

Since the number of Hispanics began to increase rapidly in the 1980s, politicians as well as the news media started to speculate about the importance of the Latino vote, paying more attention to that electorate.



YÁÑEZ

The myth that the Latino vote is decisive in presidential elections was born.

"(The Latino vote) is completely irrelevant," says Rodolfo de la Garza, a political science professor at Co-

lumbia University and vice president-research with the Los Angeles-based Tomás Rivera Policy Institute.

"The myth was created by Latino leaders who wanted to convince politicians nationally about how important Latinos were, believing that would make themselves and the Latino more important," he adds. "It was well-intentioned. It was also self-aggrandizing."

Although the Hispanic population has increased from 14 million in 1980 to more than 45 million in 2008 and has gained more political representation at the local and state

(continued on page 2)

JOSE DE LA ISLA

Policy analyst de la Isla says Hispanics were key in past and will be in '08

The fact is Latinos have already made a difference in presidential elections. You might think it silly to have to prove that but some people never get the news.

In fact, it is easy to argue that Latinos experienced presidential election success before they were even called "Latinos."

In 1960, John Kennedy got 85 percent of the national Hispanic vote in his razor thin victory over Richard Nixon. He won Texas, with 91 percent of the Mexican-American vote and a state plurality of only 50,000 votes. More to the point: Kennedy became president because he won Texas and Illinois.

Even without Illinois, Kennedy would still have had enough Electoral College votes to win the presidency because of Texas.

So, for those who fret and worry and base their beliefs on big-picture scenarios, I suggest they simply look at history.

It tells us what an extraordinary victory it was, especially because of the Viva Kennedy! organizations which sparked a movement to combine politics into a much sought-after civic identity.

For the ideologues who don't get it, they could think about it this way: before there was Aztlán, there was Camelot.

The following years form one of the most

(continued on page 3)



DE LA ISLA

STEPHEN RINTOUL

Expert Andy Hernández says press may end up crediting women, blacks

Despite talk of the critical Latino "swing" vote in the run-up to the Nov. 4 presidential election, national expert Andy Hernández raises the possibility that when the dust settles on Nov. 5, nobody will be talking about Latinos.

Hernández, of Austin, Texas, formerly headed the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project and later, the Latino vote program for the Democratic National Com-



RINTOUL

mittee. Here he provides Hispanic Link News Service with his scenario as to how English-language media will report the presidential election results:

"If Barack Obama wins in Ohio or Virginia or if he is victorious in North Carolina, or even Florida," Hernández explains, "you're not going to be able to claim the Latino vote won it for him. By the time we get to our states that are still competitive, like Nevada and Colorado, and to some extent New Mexico, he's already

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The Inside Stories

PAGE 2: Ex-Reagan aide Luis Aclé asks, 'Who do you trust?'

PAGE 7: Special feature: 'Races That Hispanics Should Be Watching.'

Political Poop

by Patricia Guadalupe



Chasing Hispanic Votes

Presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain are in their final campaign pushes with the Nov. 4 presidential election right around the corner.

Along with their vice presidential picks and campaign surrogates, they are crisscrossing the nation to capture independents, the undecided and the growing Hispanic vote, which is considered pivotal in several key states, including Florida, Colorado, New Mexico and Nevada.

New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson is campaigning for Obama, and the campaign has identified nearly one million black and Hispanic voters in Florida alone who did

not vote in 2004 and are newly registered for this presidential election. Obama is leading McCain in the polls, but the race is still considered very close.

Uribe Has Message for Obama

Colombia president Alvaro Uribe Oct. 21 said during a debate with union leaders in the capital city of Bogotá that he believes Sen. Barack Obama will be the next president of the United States. Uribe said he will tell Obama that unions in Colombia face fewer restrictions than the current U.S. senator thinks exist.

Obama has cited violence against union members as a reason to oppose a free trade agreement between the United States and Colombia. Republican presidential nominee Sen. John McCain backs the initiative, which was signed by both countries and ratified by the Colombian legislature. It is currently stalled in the U.S. Congress.

U.S. Forgives Peru Debt

The United States and Peru Oct. 21 signed an accord forgiving \$25 million of Peru's debt to the United States and directing those funds to a tropical forest conservation program. The United States had already forgiven \$10 million of Peru's debt and set up a program that would help protect ecosystems in Peru and other tropical countries.

The U.S. Tropical Forest Conservation Act was enacted in 1998 to re-direct foreign aid debt to conservation efforts aimed at stopping deforestation.

The recent accord with Peru is the 14th "debt-for-conservation" exchange between the United States and a foreign government since the program was implemented.

A total of \$188 million in foreign debt has been "forgiven" from countries in the tropics.

ALONSO YÁÑEZ: De la Garza calls Latino 'swing vote' a myth born in the '80s

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levels, the Latino vote is still far from being decisive at the national level.

For de la Garza, a low voter turnout and the concentration of Latinos in states that are not competitive, such as California, Illinois, New York or Texas, cause the Latino vote to be less crucial than expected. While 58% of the nation's Latinos live in those four states, the Hispanic voter turnout stayed at 47% in 2000 and 2004, according to the Census Bureau.

Louis DeSipio, a political science professor at the University of California, Irvine, considers the Latino vote irrelevant because it does not determine victory in any major state or in the Electoral College.

"It reflects ignorance on the part of the media, because it lets them make a story where there isn't one," says DeSipio. "And it's reinforced by campaigns that very tactically want to tell the story about doing well with Latinos here and there."

Both de la Garza and DeSipio remember they began to see stories in the 1980s about

how crucial the Latino vote would be. They think that the process of mythification was produced and reinforced by different sectors: the news media, the two dominant political parties and some Latino leaders.

Some in academia, however, don't think it's a myth to say the Latino vote is decisive in presidential elections. Matt Barreto, political science professor at the University of Washington, acknowledges that the Latino electorate in states such as California, Texas or New York will not be decisive because the political inclination is already defined there, but points out that the white or black vote will also be irrelevant in the majority of states.

"The states that do matter – Florida, New Mexico, Colorado and Nevada – are on almost every list of battleground states, of the states that will cause the election to swing

one way or the other, and they all have a very significant Latino population," says Barreto.

While the Latino population's increase has been significant in recent decades, they're not sufficiently involved politically because the majority of them are young, less educated and have a smaller income, according to de la Garza. He thinks, however, that there is another way of thinking about importance — not in actual numbers but in setting the tone of the elections.

"Latinos have changed the tone of American elections," de la Garza says. "Latinos have created a more sophisticated electorate because they're perceived to be culturally and politically distinct, even if they're not. So it's deliberate and desirable for candidates to speak another language, for a candidate to be cognisant of another language.

"We change the context of the election, but not necessarily influence the outcome of the election," he concludes."

(Alonso Yáñez is a contributing columnist with *Hispanic Link News Service*. E-mail him at: alonsoyanez420@gmail.com)



DE LA GARZA

Braceros Reach Settlement with Mexico over World War II Back Pay

By José de la Isla

A settlement was reached Oct. 14 affecting thousands of Mexican farm and railroad laborers, termed *braceros*, who worked in the United States during World War II. In contention were funds withheld from their paychecks for work performed.

Preliminary approval was given Oct 10 by a federal court in San Francisco.

In a class action suit, the *braceros* and their families claimed the Mexican government deprived them of 10% of their wages. The amount was set aside by international agreement to provide savings for the workers, but was never paid out.

Lawyers representing the workers report the settlement will provide payments to the *braceros* or their surviving family members who reside in the United States and who provide original documents showing they or a deceased parent or spouse worked as a *bracero* during the period Jan. 1, 1942-Dec. 31, 1946.

Claims must be presented in person at a Mexican Consulate office or the Mexican Embassy in Washington, D.C. by Dec. 23, 2008.

For information or aid in filling out and turning in application claim forms:

Call toll-free *Caso Bracero* Hotline at 1-877-436-9359

Click the *Caso Bracero* web site at www.casobracero.com

Or send a letter to *Caso Bracero*, P.O. Box 641610, Chicago, Illinois 60664-1610

All interested persons are urged to act quickly.

CORRECTION

The author of the profile on NALEO executive director Arturo Vargas was incorrectly identified last week. It was Patrick Palafox.

JOSÉ DE LA ISLA: Credit Kennedy's Texas, Bush's Florida victories to Hispanics

(continued from page 1)

amazing chapters in United States history. The civic movement to bring about community improvements got legs after engaging in politics and running candidates at the local, state and Congressional levels. Expectations always ran ahead of results. And why not? From the start the Kennedy win was a victory at the top while there was hardly any political building from the bottom up. The intervening 1970s and '80s were largely about that.

Those difficult years account for an extraordinary transformation. Some people may not want to hear about how hostile and negligent government had been to Hispanics. But it was and that is a transformation not nearly complete but that needs to be looked at in the context of advances in democracy. The Hispanic contribution has been unyielding in building a more responsive government through increased representation. It is about forming the political infrastructure. Today there are about 6,000 Latino election officials, 27 of them are in the U.S. House and

three are U.S. Senators.

That representation goes hand-in-hand with the Latino participation in presidential campaigns. In 1972, about 2.1 million Latinos participated. That number has grown steadily over the past nine presidential elections. Nearly 7.5 million Latinos



ELIÁN THEN



ELIÁN NOW

voted in 2004. This year the number is expected to exceed 9 million.

If any evidence is needed to mark the Hispanic difference in presidential elections, you need only turn to the 2000 Florida vote count. That dispute was settled after the U.S. Supreme Court decided the mat-

ter. But a measly 537 votes made the difference and George W. Bush became president.

Let's look at Florida a bit closer. On election day, Cuban Americans cast a *voto castigo*, against the Democratic Clinton administration, with Al Gore as its vice president, for actions in the Elián González repatriation and reuniting with the boy's father in Cuba. They cast 50,000 more votes for Bush than they had for Bob Dole in the previous presidential election. During the exit polling, the Voter News Service interviewed 2% of Cuban American voters, who formed 8% of the electorate, casting ballots four-to-one for Bush. Other Hispanic groups voted 2-to-1 for Gore.

The undercount of Cubans was a contributor to the election night confusion, whose voters were significant to Bush's razor teeny-weeny win.

And just like Kennedy's victory in Texas, Bush's in Florida can be assigned to the Hispanic vote. Now tell me again — is somebody disputing whether Hispanics have played decisive roles in electing presidents?

STEPHEN RINTOUL: Andy's 'Latino narrative' requires sun to rise in the West

(continued from page 1)

won the election for all practical purposes.

"When the polls close in Colorado, Obama could already be projected the winner. If that happens, nobody cares about the Latino vote. The story becomes white women and working-class whites, and to some extent blacks."

Geography and time zones, Hernández maintains, will play a critical role in how the U.S. press tells the story.

On election night, as media pundits and television viewers watch the returns roll in from across the country, starting with the eastern states, a narrative will develop around the results of demographics and exit polls from each state as correspondents check in.

Because Latinos are concentrated heavily in the Southwest, where the winter sun sets before 5 p.m. and polls close later, the Hispanic impact isn't even hinted at until after results from the big eastern states have been dragged across the screen a hundred times and analyzed to death.

By that time, Hernández says, Obama may

well have buttoned up the election, with little or no press mention of the decisive Latino electorates in Southwest battleground states.

"The only scenario that we have a shot at," Hernández reasons, "is if John McCain is able to win Ohio and Florida, hold on to Virginia, and Obama picks up New Hampshire and Iowa. Then it's a Latino narrative because you have to wait all the way till you come to New Mexico, Colorado and Nevada to put him over the top. Then Latinos are the ones that put Obama in the presidency.

"That doesn't look like it's going to happen," Hernández adds, laughing. "In a way, the best Latino hope for recognition is that McCain carries Ohio and Florida."

Hernández explains with clarity how the



HERNANDEZ

election will be perceived by the talking heads and the couch potatoes who absorb the tube's analyses as gospel.

So will Latinos really be important?

One way to measure it would be just to use raw numbers. A successful campaign cannot ignore such data. If a high percentage of the nation's 10 million Latino registered voters cast their votes the same way, with other factors remaining the same, the election will go to the candidate who carries the Latino vote.

But pursuing Hernández's hypothesis, imagine the poll-closings occurring from west to east. Reporting by political correspondents and pundits would start out with narratives about Latino voters in California and quickly touch on such battleground states as Nevada, New Mexico and Colorado, each with very large Hispanic populations creating margins that will determine victory or defeat. Then we would see, as Hernández calls it, "a Latino narrative."

That, of course, can't happen until the sun rises over San Francisco Bay.

Supreme Court to Review Immigrant's ID Theft Conviction

By Carsten Buesing

The United States Supreme Court agreed Oct. 20 to hear a case concerning the identity-theft conviction of a Mexican national.

It centers on an appeal by Illinois steelworker Ignacio Carlos Flores-Figueroa, who had provided his employer a false Social Security card and alien registration card. He was arrested and convicted of "aggravated identify theft."

Flores-Figueroa claims he did not know

the two counterfeit IDs had been assigned to someone else. He was given a 75-month prison term, 24 of which were an "enhancement," attributable to his motive. The conviction was upheld by the Eighth Circuit Court based in St. Louis.

The Supreme Court will examine the burden of proof federal prosecutors must provide in such cases. The 2004 Identity Theft Penalty Enhancement Act makes such convictions subject to increased punishment.

QUOTING . . .

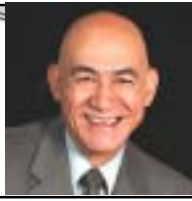
"That's not culturally insensitive, is it? To eat it like a taco?"

— U.S. Rep. Iliana Ros-Lehtinen, campaigning in her Florida district for re-election, after visiting a Jewish nursing home, reiterating her commitment to legislation benefitting Holocaust survivors, and picking up a cheese blintz for the road.

What Republicans Must Do to Earn Hispanic Vote

Guest Columnist

Luis Acle



sure responsible for the bulk of illegal immigration from Mexico. One such plan involves no amnesty and no deportations, and provides rather, incentives for people to abide voluntarily by fair, orderly and legal rules.

It also protects the legitimate interests of both their country and ours. It will deal with this issue with dignity and respect, reflecting a good neighbor policy characteristic of the majority of the people living on both sides of our common border.

For decades, the United States has made the mistake of acting as though we can end our immigration problem unilaterally. We can't. Even if we could, the solution does not lend itself to 535 architects in the Congress and countless executive branch officials.

The right approach is a negotiated treaty where the two presidents bring to the table their legitimate national interests with an honest give-and-take. Both senates have a constitutional chance to ratify and, with the lower chambers, enact implementing legislation.

SO WHO DO YOU TRUST?

Such a treaty will recognize this is more of an economic issue than a political one. Mexico has an abundance of labor and a shortage of capital. The United States has an abundance of capital and increasing shortages of labor (e.g., nurses).

With more capital, Mexico would have more jobs for workers who otherwise migrate north. Yet private U.S. investors are precluded from capitalizing Mexicans, just as immigrants without work permits are precluded from working here.

There are many items of interest to both countries that can be put on the table. Mexico would appreciate help preventing the importation of weapons into its territory and we would welcome more help blocking illegal drug traffic and terrorism.

Who do you trust to protect the U.S. interests, McCain or Obama?

(Luis Acle, who emigrated from Mexico at age 12, graduated from Stanford with an MBA and served on the White House staff of Ronald Reagan, is a member of the Board of Education in San Diego, Calif. Email him at Luis.Acle@cox.net or check his Web site www.sandi.net.)

Republicans will win in November only if they bring forth a credible proposal to deal with the undocumented immigration situation. This Congress and President Bush have given lip service to this "priority" and gotten nowhere. Congressional Republican efforts to control our southern border have had only mixed reviews.

These efforts have failed in part because partisan leaders won't follow public sentiment. Democrats Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid allowed only proposals that included amnesty. But an important number of Democrats won't vote for them because their constituents don't support amnesty.

And any proposal blessed by the Speaker or Majority Senate Leader will most likely be opposed — on substance and general principle — by the vast majority of Republicans who refused to be swayed by President Bush. Bush was unable to convince his congressional base.

WHERE'S THE SOLID PROPOSAL?

Still, immigration is a subject for Republicans to solve. Democrat John Kennedy successfully carried out the U.S. blockade of Cuba because Republicans favored intervention and Democrats supported him as their party leader.

In the same vein, Republican Richard Nixon was able to reach out to China with natural support of global Democrats and party support from Republican loyalists. With amnesty, a President Obama would lose half his Democrats on principle and most Republicans on party lines and substance. With a solid proposal, President McCain will lose very few Republicans and gain many Democrats.

So where is the solid proposal?

It is in the making. McCain has initiatives that address the pres-

ACLU Challenges Homeland Security's 'Border' Checkpoints 100 Miles Inland

By Max Torney

Charging that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is exceeding its Constitutional authority by searching U.S. citizens without cause, particularly along the southern border, the American Civil Liberties Union has launched an effort to curtail the department's powers.

At an Oct. 22 news conference in Washington, D.C., the ACLU charged in a statement that DHS's Customs and Border Protection division is using its "extraordinary powers... to invade the privacy of individuals at the U.S. border (by) spreading inland and creating what amounts to a 'Constitution-free Zone.'"

After 9/11, Congress gave the DHS the right

to use some of its border-protection powers "deeper within the country." The ACLU pointed out that the 100-mile "border region" set by DHS includes nine of the nation's 10 largest metro areas and two-thirds of the U.S. population.

"The CBP should not have unchecked authority well within the U.S.," Tim Sarapani, its senior legislative counsel, told Weekly Report.

He said that his organization will press for passage of four pieces of stalled legislation curtailing DHS's search powers, which he anticipates will be re-introduced in Congress early next year. These bills would prohibit unconstitutional searches

and seizures, specifically of electronic devices such as laptops, cellular phones and digital cameras.

Rep. Loretta Sánchez (D-Calif.) is the author of one of these bills which would require the DHS to specify the limits of its agents' authority.

Sarapani also stated that ACLU would lobby for a series of public hearings around the issues in the next Congress.

"The spread of border-search powers inland is part of a broad expansion of border powers with the potential to affect the lives of ordinary Americans who have never left their own country," ACLU said in a statement.

Sin pelos en la lengua

Kay Bárbaro

civilians say: 63%-27% for McCain.

Did you know there's a city in Japan named Obama but none in Ireland called O'Bama? Or, according to Reuters, a vendor in Colombia is printing Barack's smiling countenance on lottery tickets to "celebrate" its large Afro-Colombian population?

Meanwhile back home, *ImpreMedia* produced and distributed widely an excellent 16-page tabloid election supplement introducing Spanish-language newspaper readers to the issues, the candidates and the voting process.

QUICKIES: A poll by the Army Times reveals that all military personnel except for blacks (12%-79% for Barack Obama) back John McCain for president by a 2-1 or better margin. The Marines like John the most, 75%-18%. Latinos? Directly opposite what Raza

Ronald Blackburn-Moreno

Fifth in a series on leaders of national Hispanic organizations

Sketchbox

The Aspira Association, taking its name from *aspirar*, "to aspire," has provided Latino youth education and leadership development programs since 1961.

It now has offices in Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. With an annual \$68 million budget, it is the largest Latino national organization, having more than 1,200 staff members, and serves more than 50,000 youths and their families each

year.

Aspira's alumni include Anthony Romero, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union; American Golden Globe and Emmy award-winning actor Jimmy Smits; Lehrer NewsHour senior correspondent Ray Suárez, and former Bronx Borough president Fernando Ferrer.

While 40% of Hispanic students don't finish school, 95% of 'aspirantes' do. Ronald Blackburn-Moreno has been at the organization's helm as president and CEO for the last 15 years.



Blackburn-Moreno, 57, was born in New Jersey and grew up in Puerto Rico. He studied in 1974 at the Inter-American University, then attended New York University and Princeton, where he completed his doctorate. He worked for three Puerto Rican uni-

By Alonso Yáñez

versities before returning to the mainland to team with education organizations here. He assumed charge of Aspira in 1993.

His formal training in political science, gives Blackburn-Moreno a bent toward defining the issue and determining the constraints that need addressing.

"How can we have future generations, the ones who are going to lead us," he says, "without a good education? What prepares them for jobs and economic development in the 21st century?"

Blackburn-Moreno combines his duties at Aspira with pioneering coalition initiatives of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

and the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility. He enumerates three attributes of effective leaders. "The first one," he says, "is their own education. A person who leads an organization needs to have a good education. The second is commitment — compassion and a passion for what one does. And the third concerns what he or she wants to do through the organization and how that person wants to move an organization or community toward that vision."

Although immigration isn't an "issue" for Puerto Ricans, who have U.S. citizenship, Blackburn-Moreno attended the May Day marches more than two years ago to push for migratory reform legislation. He argues that Latinos don't have a single prominent leader heading the movement because it's not necessary.

"We don't work that way. We don't work in terms of those big leaders that suddenly appear," he says. "A good comparison is the African-American community, which has many prominent leaders, such as Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson or Barack Obama. We Hispanics operate through our organizations."

The biggest Latino achievements in decades, according to Blackburn-Moreno, are seen in the number of Hispanics who have obtained an education and triumphed. The increase in political power and civic participation is clearly evident but so is forward movement in the neighborhoods. Problems often overshadow significant successes.

"Not everyone seizes those opportunities. I think achieving the American dream varies from person to person. But with a good education, at least you have the economic, social and political opportunity to be part of this diverse entity," he adds.

"The most important thing is having pride in our cultural heritage because that's what identifies us," he says. "We're North American. We have adopted many values that are typically North American and we retain our values. That identity is crucial."

"The second thing is community service: No one is going to organize us, no one is going to help us. We have to organize ourselves."

That leads to what cannot be taught and that is experience.

He thinks young Latinos should work temporarily in a community organization like Aspira in order to become familiar with the challenges the Hispanic community faces in diverse issues, such as health care, housing, education, labor and economic development.

There's one important realization a young person comes to. "No one changes something because they want to but because they're forced to do it."

A Special Influence

Blackburn-Moreno is loyal to the ideas, or is it ideals, stemming from persons and mentors who have influenced him. He mentions Raúl Yzaguirre, former president of the National Council of *La Raza* and former Clinton Cabinet member Henry Cisneros who have guided him.

Blackburn-Moreno externalizes what that means and forms a point of view, instead of turning it into an inward contemplation. "My formal preparation is not in education," he says. "But I have worked my whole life in education. I have a commitment, especially to Puerto Ricans, because that's where I lived."

"That's what motivates any organization's leader. I know almost all of them. They could've all taken another path professionally and gone into the private sector to earn a lot of money."

"But it's just like teachers: they're teachers not because they're going to make a lot of money but because of their social commitment. Absolutely, that's what motivates me."

Soapbox

"Majority group members have separated from their cultural identity or isolate themselves because they're pressured to do so.

"That's especially true among young people. So a kid named José is now Joe and his parents would tell him, 'Don't speak Spanish,' because of the fear of racism and the interest they have in integrating as soon as possible.

"We found that by taking away one's cultural identity, especially among youngsters, you're also taking away their personal identity. Joe is not American, he doesn't look American, and he knows he's not American.

"On the other hand, he's being told that he can't be Mexican, Puerto Rican or Colombian, and that creates a terrible identity crisis"

Collecting

BORDER STUDENTS SUCCESS: *Excelencia en Educación* has released "Accelerating Latino Student Success at Texas Border Institutions: Possibilities and Challenges," a report detailing Latino student achievement at four public universities and four community colleges, showing strategies and programs that help. Read the complete report at www.edexcelencia.org.

DOWNTURN'S HISPANIC IMPACT: "Examination and Comparison of Hispanic and White Unemployment Rates," a study by Texas Tech University Rawls College of Business, predicts the U.S. economic downturn will hurt Hispanics most. Hispanic workers have contended with less job security and greater unemployment rates than others, trends since 1976 show. Even during prosperity Hispanic workers face job insecurity. For a copy of the study, contact Mark Annick at mark@androvett.com or call 1-800-559-4534.

HISPANICS IN HIGHER ED: The American Council on Education has released "Minorities in Higher Education 2008 Twenty-third Status Report." It states in 2006, 18% of the older Hispanic population had obtained an associates degree whereas only 16% of the younger Hispanic population has. The report shows that Hispanics receiving bachelor's degrees over the past decade nearly doubled to more than 105,000. For further information contact Kellee Edmonds or Tim McDonough at (202) 939-9365.

News Brief

First 'Hispanic Marriage Day' Staged

By Ariana Ceballos

Cleveland staged its first — and perhaps the nation's first — Hispanic Marriage Day Oct. 12.

Speakers included Luis Vázquez, Cuyahoga County inter-agency affairs manager for health and human services and his wife Edith, who addressed concerns over increased births to unwed couples.

With national census figures showing Hispanics non-marital births increasing from 38% in 1990 to 45% in 2004, the couple emphasized parents need to work through conflicts, embrace marriage and stay together for their children's sake.

Rev. José Reyes, founder of *Iglesia Nueva Vida* on Cleveland's west side, noted a younger generation is growing up without fathers, increasing chances that young Hispanics will drop out of school and turn to drugs.

Connecting

Compiled by Jamie Lazaro

GE's Hispanic Leaders Met in Atlanta

General Electric Co. held its eighth annual Hispanic Forum Leadership Summit in Atlanta Oct. 20-23. The event, with its theme "Developing Contemporary Leaders," brought 650 Hispanic employees from GE Energy's unit in Fairfield, Conn. which is headquartered in Atlanta.

Atlanta's importance as a regional center has grown both with GE and Latinos nationally due to the dynamic Hispanic growth in that city and throughout Georgia. GE Energy has been involved for a long time with the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and board membership with the Latin America Association. The confab recognizes top Hispanic talent from throughout the company.

Past summits were held in New York and Los Angeles.

More Children Have Food Allergies

Approximately 3 million children under 18 were reported to have had a food or digestive allergy in the previous 12 months, compared to slightly more than 2.3 million children (3.3%) in 1997. Evidently, the number of U.S. children with food allergies has skyrocketed by 18% in the past decade. Estimates put affected children and teens at 4%, says a new report by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Hispanic children had lower rates of reported food allergy (3.1%) than non-Hispanic white (4.1 percent) or non-Hispanic black children (4.0%).

These and other findings are contained in "Food Allergy Among U.S. Children: Trends in Prevalence and Hospitalizations," from the National Health Interview Survey and the National Hospital Discharge Survey, by the Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics.

Most Latino Families Visit Libraries

The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, Online Computer Library Center and WebJunction prepared the report "Latinos and Public Library Perceptions." It details correlations between the Latino community and the frequency of public library visits, finding that 54% of Latino community members visited a library within the past year. Other findings revealed that greater fluency in English increases the likelihood of Latino library visits.

The full report can be accessed at http://www.trpi.org/PDFs/Latinos_&_Public_Library_Perceptions_Final.pdf.

Calendar

There is no charge for listings. Address items to: Calendar Editor, Hispanic Link Weekly Report, 1420 N St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. (202) 234-0280. Fax: (202) 234-4090. E-mail: carlosee@hispaniclink.org.

In the Link 20 Years Ago

Linda Chávez resigns as president of U.S. English in reaction to comments by the group's chairman, John Tanton, that "displayed a bias against both Catholics and Hispanics."

NSHP JOB FAIR

Dallas, Oct 23
The National Society for Hispanic Professionals holds a job fair.
Information: <http://www.nshp.org/jobfair>
Phone: (954) 678-1807

EXPO COMIDA LATINA

Los Angeles, Oct. 28, 29
Diversified Business Communication conducts its annual *Comida Latina* Expo and All Asian Food exposition.

Information: <http://www.expo-comida-latina.com/portal/index.asp>
Phone: (207) 842-5500

NSHP JOB FAIR

San Jose, Nov. 6
National Society for Hispanic Professionals holds a job fair.

Information: <http://www.nshp.org/jobfair>

HWVA CONFERENCE

Washington, D.C. Nov. 11
The Hispanic War Veterans of America holds its annual special recognition event, commemoration and conference.

Information: www.hwva.org

Phone: (202) 439-8028

EXPO COMIDA LATINA

New York City, Nov. 11, 12
Diversified Business Communication conducts its annual *Comida Latina* Expo.

Information: <http://www.expo-comida-latina.com/portal/index.asp>

Phone: (207) 842-5500

SHPE CONFERENCE

Phoenix, Nov. 12-16

The Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers holds its annual conference.

Information: <http://oneshpe.shpe.org/wps/portal/national>

Phone: (817) 914-0861

NHCSL NATIONAL SUMMIT

Washington D.C. Nov. 13-16
National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators holds its annual summit.

Information: <http://www.nhcsl.org/index.php>

Phone: (202) 434-8070

NHLI Awards

Orlando, Nov. 13, 14
The National Hispana Leadership Institute hosts its annual *Mujer Awards* gala.

Information: <http://www.nhli.org/calendar.htm>

Phone: (703) 527-6007

Races to Watch — Florida

Guest Columnist

Stephen Rintoul



All eyes are on the upcoming presidential election Nov. 4, but other campaigns are important for what they mean to the overall political picture. This week and next, Weekly Report will review some of them. They telescope in on the national transition as increasing numbers of Latinos become engaged in various races.

These range from local and district to statewide offices, helping form the nation's new directions to reflect all of its populations.

This week we turn our attention to Florida. Nearly a quarter of its population is Hispanic. The state was the epicenter of the 2000 election, which took a U.S. Supreme Court decision to break the deadlocked count that ultimately declared George W. Bush the next president. State voters have been split right down the middle between presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama.

Although Cubans make up the largest single group of Florida's Latinos, with a population of 1.1 million, the 725,000 Puerto Ricans come in a close second, with almost 600,000 Mexicans a not too distant third place.

The Cuban community traditionally votes Republican and the other Latino communities Democratic. As the non-Cuban Hispanic population continues to surge, its overall Hispanic voting patterns are changing.

Four Cuban Americans, all Republicans, are part of Florida's 27-member delegation in the U.S. Congress. Senator Mel Martínez is not up for reelection this year. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Miami leads Colombia-born Annette Taddeo in a late poll, 52%-27%. The Díaz-Balart brothers, also of Miami, face strong, well-financed opponents.

25TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Mario Díaz-Balart faces his toughest challenge since winning this seat in 2002. Joe García, former chairman of the Miami-Dade Democratic Party, is his opponent.



M. DÍAZ-BALART

García has raised slightly more campaign money through Sept. 30 than Díaz-Balart.

In TV advertisements, García calls Díaz-Balart a "one-trick pony," saying although he rightly sup-



JOE GARCÍA

ports a tough foreign policy toward Cuba, he has made little progress on other issues of importance such as health care and the economy. Díaz-Balart fires back that he can be tough on Cuba and simultaneously work on domestic policy.

"As the saying goes," he told a group of Venezuelan Americans, "I can walk and chew gum at the same time." He points to millions of dollars in federal projects going to the district during his term.

Recent polling gives Díaz-Balart a four-point edge, 45%-41%. The Miami Herald endorsed him, citing "his overall record of engagement on policy issues" and the resources he brought home to his district.

21ST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Lincoln Díaz-Balart, Mario's older brother, is running for his ninth House term. He could lose his seat under a tough challenge from fellow Cuban-American Raúl Martínez, the former Democratic mayor of Hialeah. Martínez has political liabilities, though, including a 1991 extortion conviction that

was later overturned.

Both candidates have circulated campaign ads alleging corruption by the other. Lincoln says Martínez's sons were given jobs to court favor with their father. Martínez says Lincoln accepted a suit-



L. DÍAZ-BALART

A recent *Telemundo* poll shows a tight race with Lincoln ahead, 48%-43%.

Challenger Martínez, however, has won the endorsement of the Miami Herald, which says he has "a penchant for devising practical solutions to political problems."

STATE SENATE, DISTRICT 19: Republican Belinda Ortiz was born in Torrejón, Spain. The Engelwood resident is running against African-American incumbent Gary Siplin of Orlando. Ortiz landed the endorsement of the West Orlando News, which said "Siplin is a



BELINDA ORTIZ

failure" and called his accomplishments "laughable." The paper covers many predominantly black neighborhoods. Ortiz has not previously held office but ran in 2000 for Orlando City Commission. She handled government affairs for an Orlando regional hotel trade association, then formed a public relations and business development firm.

Democrat Siplin has been a member of the state Senate since 2003, and a state House member from 2000-2002. In 2006, he was convicted of third-degree felony grand theft of \$5,000 or more and a misdemeanor statutory violation for using an employee's services for his candidacy. He is the first convicted felon to serve in the Florida legislature. He sponsored legislation that would restore his voting rights and those of other convicted felons. While Siplin is allowed to vote in the Senate, he is ineligible to vote for himself in general election.

ORANGE-OCEOLA STATE ATTORNEY: Incumbent Democrat Lawson Lamar, 66, is being challenged by Republican attorney Mercedes León, 45. Lamar has held the post since 1988. Before then he served as Orange County sheriff for eight years.



LAWSON LAMAR

León worked as an assistant Orange-Osceola public defender for three years before going into private practice the past seven years. She grew up in Cuba, came to the United States in 1980, graduating from Valencia Community College, the University of Tampa and the Stetson College of Law.

León claims Lamar is "out of touch with everyday citizens." She accuses him of "bogus political prosecutions of innocent people" and no decrease in "public corruption." Lamar rebuffs her, pointing out that León "admits" she lacks experience in law enforcement or as a prosecutor.

case of cash from an indicted Puerto Rican official. Political analyst David Wasserman told the Miami Herald the battle has become "easily one of the nastiest races in the country."



RAÚL MARTÍNEZ



GARY SIPLIN



MERCEDES LEÓN

Let's Change Our Stacked Political System

Guest Columnist

By Stephen Rintoul



Peter Camejo's death in September came as the presidential election entered its final stages. A member of the Green Party, Camejo was Ralph Nader's running mate during the 2004 election. Before then, he ran for governor of California three times. Given Camejo's years of work in minor party politics, it's worth examining the voting process in this country.

We count votes by the plurality method. Each voter casts a single vote and the candidate with the most votes wins. It's the simplest way to elect our officials.

However, there are alternatives. The most popular, supported by Camejo, is instant-runoff voting, (IRV). Voters rank their choices in order of preference. If no candidate wins a majority of first-choice votes, the last-place candidate's votes are redistributed according to voter preference. This continues until one candidate has a majority. IRV is currently used in Australia, Ireland and certain elections across the United States. To combat the tradition of low voter turnout in runoff elections, Matt González, Nader's 2008 running mate, once introduced a ballot proposition in San Francisco to implement IRV.



CAMEJO

IS VOTING FOR LONG-SHOT 'A WASTE'?

Plurality voting for a long-shot candidate is considered a waste. As an example, Nader voters in the 2000 Florida election, allowed President Bush's narrow victory by taking those first-round votes away from Gore, even though, according to exit polls, they would have preferred Al Gore as their second choice.

IRV's instant runoff would provide a clearer picture of the true electorate preferences.

A national push for IRV arose since the 2000 election. About half a dozen use it currently and another five have approved it as an "advisory or option measure. Arkansas, Louisiana and South Carolina have adopted it for certain absentee voters. In the future, we can

expect the IRV movement to gradually replace the plurality method.

Plurality voting actually reinforces and strengthens the Democratic and the Republican major party status. Camejo claimed in an appearance on Pacifica Network's *Democracy Now!* that "Where you don't have IRV, people are forced into trying to calculate their 'lesser-evil' choice and throw their support in that direction."

RAZA UNIDA NEVER WON STATEWIDE

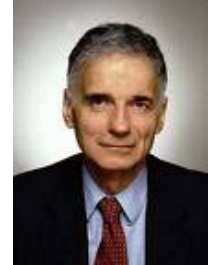
The establishment of minor parties almost requires an IRV-type remedy. In 1970, José Angel Gutiérrez established the *Raza Unida* party in Crystal City, Texas, as a Hispanic alternative to the traditional system. Still active today, the party has never come close to winning a statewide race. Like most minor parties, the success *Raza Unida* has had comes from threatening to lure voters from the major parties, forcing the big guys to make small policy concessions to Hispanics to retain their votes.

While Democrats and Republicans dominate in U.S. elective offices, their philosophies change over time to keep constituents relatively satisfied. So long as voters accept enough of a major party's overall direction, they may be unwilling to risk big party defeat by voting for a more compatible minor party.

Although you wouldn't know it from media coverage, there are 14 candidates running for president this fall, 12 carrying minor party banners. They span the political spectrum from Chuck Baldwin of the Constitution Party on the extreme right to Roger Calero of the Socialist Workers Party on the far left. Under IRV, voters would rank some or all 14 candidates by order of preference. Minor-party candidates couldn't "steal votes" from other candidates in a close election, if voters listed their second choice preference.

Under IRV, minor parties would receive more votes reflecting people's preferences. Hispanics, for example, would not feel compelled to choose only between Democratic and Republican candidates. They could flex their political biceps better, through *Raza Unida* or another party, without fear of inadvertently helping an undesired candidate. This alteration to the current system would encourage new voices to engage in the process, pressuring politicians to become more responsive to public concerns.

(Stephen Rintoul is a reporter with *Hispanic Link News Service* in Washington, D.C. E-mail him at srintoul@gmail.com.)



NADER

LULAC Charges GOP 'Chihuahua' Circular in Ohio Demeans Hispanics

By José de la Isla

The League of United Latin American Citizens in Washington is asking the Republican Party and the McCain campaign to denounce a mailer sponsored by the Republican State Leadership Committee in Ohio's 28th state house district race.

The circular depicts a Chihuahua dog wearing a folkloric mariachi *sombrero*, saying "¡Ay Caramba!" with a caption, "CAN YOU SPEAK SPANISH?" The inside flap responds, "YOU MAY HAVE TO."

The mailer asserts that state government business has to be printed in Spanish unless protective legislation is passed. Republican Jim Raussen, the incumbent in the race, sponsored a state bill requiring the English-only. He is opposed by Democrat Connie Pillich.

Pillich told *Weekly Report* this is the fifth direct mail piece with a similar message. She opposes HB 477 as "a waste of time and money." She said she does not know why RSLC has singled her out.

The Ohio district encompasses Hamilton County, where the Hispanic population has increased 145% since 1990, but is still only 1.5%, or 12,800 of the total population as of 2006.

Jason Rivera, LULAC Ohio state director, said his group is "not going to stand for" the brochure's Chihuahua depiction, intended to "demean the Latino community," he said. RSLC is a registered "527" tax-exempt organization. Under the U.S. tax code, the category is reserved for groups seeking to influence the nomination, election, appointment or defeat of candidates. A "527"

is generally not regulated by the Federal Election Commission or by a state elections commission.

Campaignmoney.com reports RSLC has received nearly \$39 million from corporate and individual sponsors. LULAC executive director Brent Wilkes says the mail-out opens up a sensitive matter concerning RSLC's corporate contributors, some of whom stand to benefit from the federal rescue programs responding to the current economic crisis.

Wilkes notes some contributors sought Latino support during the crucial rescue-plan vote in Congress. Now some of them are supporting demeaning characterizations that misrepresent Latinos, he said.

Wilkes adds he was giving Republican party leaders a chance to apologize "before we bring the hammer down."

PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

STATE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

Paterson Public Schools, located in Paterson, New Jersey, seeks an individual with visionary leadership and strong administrative skills to lead a district of 30,000 students.

Salary commensurate with experience, plus an excellent comprehensive benefits package.

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Cedar Rapids, IA 52402-3221

Telephone: 319/393-3115

Fax: 319/393-4931

E-mail: glr@rayassoc.com

or Apply online at www.rayassoc.com

Application Deadline:

December 31, 2008

Do not contact the State Department or District directly.

Photographer

KOKH-TV Fox 25 in Oklahoma City is looking for a News Photographer.

Photographer's responsibilities include shooting and editing news stories, newsgathering, attending news events as a "one-man-band" where questions must be asked and information gathered, operating our live truck and editing in the live truck, shooting packages to be delivered by anchors and collaborating with reporters on stories.

This job requires working flexible hours that may include weekends. Minimum one to two years experience required with a clean driving record. We're looking for someone with sharp news judgment, excellent technical skills and the ability to work well with others. We shoot on DVC-Pro digital videotape. We edit on state-of-the-art desktop Avid NewsCutter XP editing technology.

To apply for this position, visit our website www.okcfox.com and include your salary requirements while completing our on-line application. Please, no phone calls accepted. Candidates must apply on-line to be considered!

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New Reads

Explore the latest books
on Latino subjects

by Max Torney &
Meghan Sweeney

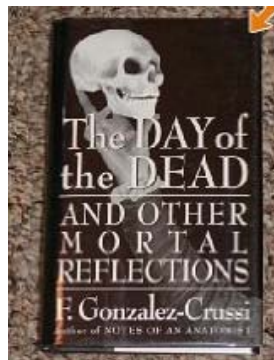
The Day of the Dead and Other Mortal Reflections by *F. González-Crussi*. With the big day fast approaching, people like me want to read something interesting about the Mexican festival. One book that punches you in the face with information about Mexican culture and an understanding of death is Frank González-Crussi's *The Day of the Dead and Other Mortal Reflections*. In the chapter titled "The Grin of the *Calavera*" González recounts traveling to Mexico for the observance and celebrations.

The celebration has its roots in Aztec ritual while connected to the Christian observance of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. It is often wrongly associated with Halloween.

Traveling in Mexico, González-Crussi visits Xochimilco, a suburb of Mexico City, where he observes many stores selling Halloween goods imported from the U.S. and children running around in monster costumes, imitating werewolves and vampires. He's bothered that *El Día de Los Muertos* is becoming "an imitation, in third-world gear, of the North American Halloween."

The real Day of the Dead traces back to an ancient Aztec festival dedicated to the goddess *Mictecacihuatl* (Lady of the Dead). The modern holiday is observed Nov. 1 and 2. On these days, skulls (*calaveras*) made of sugar, chocolate or amaranth seed are exchanged between friends and family, along with other gifts.

Ofrendas, elaborately constructed altars, are made to honor the deceased who return and commune with the living. Floral displays decorate each grave and tombstone to welcome the departed back, for feasting and remembrance. Even though individual graves are different in size and material because of wealth and status differences, on the Day of the Dead, "class distinctions seem blurred by the all-pervading gaiety of the



flowers." After all, we are all equal in death.

González-Crussi wants you to know that during the Day of the Dead, "life flows joyous, uninhibited and noisy."

A professor emeritus of pathology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, he is the author of *A Short History of Medicine*; a *New York Times* Notable Book, *Suspended Animation: Six Essays on the Preservation of Bodily Parts*; *The Five Senses*, which was a *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize finalist; and *Notes of an Anatomist*, winner of the nonfiction first prize of the Society for Midland Authors. He lives in Chicago.

(Harcourt Brace & Company; paperback; \$8.95; 179 pages)

Making Jack Falcone by *Joaquín "Jack" García* is an autobiographical tale that draws from García's life. He spent 26 years as an FBI special agent, much of it undercover. The novel, drawing from his life experiences, is action-packed. García incorporates his Latino upbringing into the story and uses it to elaborate on what motivated him to choose a challenging FBI career.

García occasionally uses a Spanish word within the novel because sometimes English words lack the descriptive vivaciousness, the dazzle, the it to describe a scene. Spanish within the novel reflects the author's Latino upbringing and more importantly makes for authentic description.

García's contribution to taking down a mafia family has brought him many recognitions, including the FBI Director's Award for Investigative Excellence and the Federal Law Enforcement Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award. He is now retired from work and from tracking wiseguys.

(A Touchstone Book; hardback; \$24.95; 263 pp.)

If you have a recently released book or CD you would like included in New Reads or New Sounds, send a copy to Editor, Hispanic Link, 1420 N St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. (202) 234-0280. E-mail: editor@hispaniclink.org

Arts & Entertainment

By Antonio Mejías-Rentas



'MUSIC' DELAYED: The premiere of a four-part public television series on U.S. Latino musical history has been moved to October 2009 from the original January airdate.

Latin Music USA will now premiere on **PBS** as part of the network's Hispanic Heritage Month programming next year. Produced by Boston's **WGBH** and the **BBC**, the series will also air "fully translated and narrated" in Spanish on V-me, which is now a partner in the project.

Partnering with the Spanish-language cable and satellite service will help producers reach a wider audience, according to series executive producer Elizabeth Deane.

TRAVELING MUSIC EXHIBIT COMING

"Our multi-media strategy for the project is to invite all audiences into the vibrant musical conversation between Latinos and non-Latinos that has helped shape the history of popular music in the U.S.," the **WGBH** executive says in the announcement.



JUANES & HISTONGUE

Other **Latin Music USA** partners include *People en español* magazine and the Smithsonian Latino Center. Leading up to the show's premiere, producers plan major events in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and New York, collaborating with **PBS** stations to develop local Latino heritage events.

In a related item, a traveling exhibition on U.S. Latino music organized by the Smithsonian Institution

opens this week in Miami as part of a larger event that also examines the science of music.

Presented as **Music Música**, the traveling show **American Sabor**:

Latinos in U.S. Popular Music is paired with *Music: Access All Areas* which analyzes the physics and technology of music. Both shows open Oct. 22 at the Miami Science Museum.

In celebration of the openings, **BMI** is hosting a series of musical showcases this week in Miami, featuring local Latino artists. A private preview Oct. 22 will include performances by Nestor Torres and Ed Calle; *Albita* and Pitbull will perform at the museum's celebrity premiere on Oct. 23 and a free, street festival and concert on Oct. 25 will include performances by Enrique Hidalgo y Botija, Alih Jey and Tatiana Klaus, among others.

IN OTHER MUSIC NEWS

■ Boston's prestigious Berklee College of Music is opening a campus in Spain's autonomous region of Valencia that will focus on global, contemporary music education. Groundbreaking took place last week at the school, a partnership with Spain's *Sociedad General de Autores y Editores* (SGAE), a publishing rights organization, to be housed in a 27-story, state-of-the-art building in the city of Valencia. The new college, Berklee Valencia, will be part of the city's *ARTería*, a cultural complex that includes performance and education spaces.

The school will open in 2011 with a projected enrollment of 1,000 students. Recruitment will emphasize potential scholars from Spain and other European countries, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East.

■ Mexican singer Julieta Venegas will be among artists performing Dec. 11 at the concert for the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize winner in Oslo. Singing before Nobel laureate Martti Ahtisaari will also be Diana Ross, Feist and Seun Kuti.

■ Colombian singer Juanes picked up four *Lenguas* at the seventh annual **MTV Awards Latinoamerica**, held Oct. 16 in Guadalajara. Other winners were Belanovea, Ximena Sariñana, Kudai and Tokio Hotel.

■ *Café Tacvba*, Kany García, Alejandra Guzmán, Gilberto Santa Rosa, Olga Tañón and Julieta Venegas are the first performers announced for the 9th annual Latin Grammy Awards, Nov. 13 in Houston.

■ Julio Iglesias, Wisin & Yandel and Juanes are this year's nominees in the sole Latino category for the American Music Awards, to be held Nov. 23 in Los Angeles.

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Media Report

By Aaron Sheperd



CHARLOTTE LAUNCH: The Charlotte edition of *Viva Carolina* was launched in Charlotte, N.C., Oct. 4. The monthly bilingual magazine covers local news, events, healthcare and education. It is distributed in more than 200 locations. Executive editor is Juan Pablo Giometti.

STATIONS COULD LOSE AUDIENCE: The **Coalition for Local Television** and the **Community Broadcasters Association** expressed disappointment over the last-minute cancellation of their Oct. 15 meeting in Nashville with the **Federal Communications Commission**. The summit was to have included dialogue on whether low-power Class A television stations could convert to

full-power status. **Una Vez Más** and **ZGS Communications**, along with other Spanish-language broadcasters, hoped the conference would result in a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, a move that would accelerate the stations' ability to upgrade and ensure their "must-carry" status on local cable systems.

Its cancellation pushed Class A stations further behind in converting their signals from analog to digital. Class A stations are not included in the February 2009 mandatory DTV transition, and many are in danger of losing their audiences.

PANEL FOR YOUNG ADULTS: Latino research panel **SusOpiniones** has partnered with English-language Latino media company **Sí TV** to develop its English-dominant Hispanic panel. Viewers will be invited to join the panel, based around a Web 2.0 community geared towards repeated, live interaction. Hispanic 18 years and older can log in at www.susopiniones.com to express opinions through daily polls and blogs.