PLACIDO VALDIVIA, FIRST HISPANIC ELECTED TO BEAUMONT CITY COUNCIL IN 30 YEARS

Placido Valdivia, second from right, was recently elected councilman in the City of Beaumont after an effective campaign on an issue of paint fumes pollution in the barrio. Pictured above with Valdivia is Art Garcia, at left, and Leslie Rios, at right, campaign co-workers who were successful in returning a Hispanic to the city council after a 30-year hiatus. In 1970, Valdivia’s brother, Salvador and Flor Ochoa were elected to the city council. Gertrude Valdivia, center, Valdivia’s wife, was supportive of her husband and worked on the campaign. Photo by IEHN

Candidates for office usually have a crusade or cause and in the case of Placido Valdivia, the single cause for running as a candidate for councilperson was the bad fumes being expelled by the Wholesale Shutter Company in the barrio of Beaumont for a long period of time. The fumes were affecting the long-time residents, causing headaches and leaving a film on windows. The most affected were the children due to some having allergies.

“Leslie Rios, Art Garcia and myself had been trying to have the bad smell eliminated by the shutter factory. We contacted the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the county, the city and wherever we thought could help us and nothing happened! We were advised that the only way things change is to run for the city council. Guess what, they pointed to me,” Valdivia said in an interview with IEHN. The rest is history.

The campaign committee consisted of Valdivia, Rios and Garcia! They made (very crude) signs, designed flyers, visited residents in the barrio and continued on Page 5

FRIENDS HOLD BIRTHDAY FUNDRAISER FOR CONGRESSMAN JOE BACA

Ray Quinto, above, is a candidate for the 66th Assembly District in a special primary election to be held on February 6th. A retired Navy captain and previously a director of medical research at the Veterans Hospital in Loma Linda, Quinto is recognized as an outstanding volunteer in the area. His emphasis is education, economic development, improve health services, transportation and veterans services, among others. Quinto encourages voters to participate in the election process on election day.

The greater Riverside Hispanic Chamber of Commerce installed its new 2001 Board of Directors January 19 at Riverside Convention Center. Pictured, (back row, left to right), are John Garcia, John Garcia Bail Bonds; Javier Rosales, City of Riverside; Paul Pierii, KCAL/KSZZ Spanish Radio; Rich Ramirez, Riverside Community College; Mike Stull, Inland Empire Small Business Development Center; Kviklian Lim, Kaiser Permanente; and Juan Santos, Inland Empire National Bank. In the middle row are: Luis Lopez, Attorney at Law; Mary Figueroa, Riverside Community College Board of Trustees; Damon Castillo, Riverside County Office of Education; Bernie Gutierrez, The Gas Company; and Jaime Hurtado, UCR Community Digital Initiative. In the front row are: Alfredo Figueroa, UCR Chicano Student Programs; Stella Valdivia Yeager, Riverside County Office of Education; Pete Esquivel, City of Riverside Police Department; Montz Womarka, Riverside County’s Credit Union. Not pictured: Susie Leivas, Leivas, Knouse and Associates.

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NEW YOUNG DEMOCRAT CLUB IN FULL SWING

See article on page 6

Brenda Salas was recently elected to the Banning City Council in an eight candidate race, receiving 12.4% percent of the vote. Salas, 23, is the youngest candidate in the city’s history to be elected to the city council and according to records, one of the youngest councilpersons in the State of California. Photo by IEHN
THE EDUCATION OFFICE OF THE EMBASSY OF SPAIN IS OFFERING SCHOLARSHIPS TO AMERICAN TEACHERS

Ever since 1988, an increasing number of scholarships have been offered to American teachers to take part in the Summer Seminars for Teachers of Spanish and Teachers in Bilingual Programs. These seminars take place in sixteen fully accredited Spanish Universities and are granted graduate credits from several American Universities. They provide an exceptional opportunity to totally immerse themselves in a different culture, to be exposed to the expertise of Spanish professionals in the acquisition of a second language and to take part in effective practices in teaching Spanish as a foreign language.

The 2001 Summer seminars offer three to four week long courses geared toward American teachers of Spanish as a foreign language, teachers in bilingual and immersion programs, teachers of Spanish to native speakers and Community College teachers.

The Education Office of the Consulate General of Spain in Los Angeles plans to enhance the participation of California educators in the 2001 Summer Seminars. For this purpose, the Education Office will reserve a number of scholarships in order to ensure that the interested teachers from California will have preference access to the scholarships. For further information and full details on the contents of each course you can visit the web site of the Education Office of the Embassy of Spain, www.spainemb.gov.

Teachers interested in obtaining one of the scholarships should contact the Education Office of the Consulate General of Spain in Los Angeles at 323 852-6997 before February 15th.

STUDENTS INVITED TO FREE JOURNALISM WORKSHOP ON FEB. 17

Tips on pursuing journalism careers and sessions to improve students' writing and photography will be offered at the Journalism Opportunities Workshop on Saturday, Feb. 17, 2001.

The 11th annual event is sponsored by the California Chicano News Media Association's Inland Chapter. The event is open to high school, community college and university students in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Participants of all ethnic backgrounds are welcome.

Because of limited space, the chapter can only accept the first 200 applicants for writing/reporting and only the first 40 photography students. The chapter urges only students with a serious interest in the media to apply.

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BI-NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP CONTINUES TO GROW THROUGH PARENT INVOLVEMENT TRAINING WORKSHOPS

The San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools hosted a two-day "Training the Trainer" Workshop focused on the area of family involvement. The workshop included invited guests consisting of teachers and psychologists from the San Bernardino County, California, SBCSS and staff planned a reception for the invited guests and local community partners at a backdrop at the Riverside Economic Development Agency. At center is Maria Huizar, Parent Program Coordinator for San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools. Photo by lEHN

In another example of a healthy partnership with the community, the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools (SBCSS) recently sponsored a two-day training workshop that focused on "training the trainer" in the area of family involvement.

One of several trainings offered throughout the county, this session brought together administrators, teachers and parents to explore factors that promote and foster family involvement in schools. Participants are provided current research and discuss practices necessary to foster positive relationships with family, school and community.

Attendees also develop a family involvement plan customized to their school site needs. Special guest participants at this training session included a team of teachers and psychologists from schools in Baja California, Mexico. Parent involvement training is another component of the County Schools' partnership with educational leaders and teachers in Baja California as a result of a Bi-National Educational Partnership committee established between the two countries in July of 2000.

"Establishing these types of bridges and partnerships will help us to meet the needs of our diverse student population," said County Superintendent of Schools Herbert Fischer.

"This is an example of that commitment." Like the rest of the state, San Bernardino County's student population is characterized by a shift of increasing Hispanic enrollment. There were slightly less than 94,000 Hispanic students in the county during the 1990/91 school year. That number leaped to over 171,000 in 1999/2000 and current projections are for a total Hispanic student count in excess of 183,000 for the 2000/2001 school year. This represents a 200 percent growth in the last 10 years.

The Bi-National Committee is dedicated to building partnerships that bridge gaps for Latino speaking families and students. The committee has developed strong ties between sister schools and communities in the two countries through collaborative educational and cultural program exchanges. Also in the works are partnership efforts between the County Schools office and the Mexican consulate to work jointly on parent education programs to reach out to non-English speaking elements of San Bernardino County students.

For further information, contact Maria Huizar, SBCSS parent program specialist, at (909) 387-4802.

In a recent California Department of Health Services study, Californians were asked what they believed was the most significant health problem facing California. Eighty percent of California adults were asked what they believed was the worst health problem facing California. Almost 60 percent cited AIDS, and about 15 percent listed cancer, when in fact neither one poses the biggest threat to Californians' health. The biggest threat to healthy living for Californians is heart disease, which will account for about 85,000 deaths in California this year. Heart disease is also a significant contributor to physical disability in the lives of many survivors, according to the California Department of Health Services. To mark February as National Heart Month, PacifiCare of California's Risk Charge of Your Heart Health Program is offering the following information on the dangers of heart disease.

Although heart disease has several risk factors that can indicate a high chance for heart attack or stroke, the most dangerous one may be the lack of knowledge most Californians have about it. It is often thought of as a man's disease, yet it kills more women than men across the state, and women are more likely to die from a first heart attack.

Hispanic Women At Risk

While heart disease appears in all groups, some minority communities and women are hit disproportionately. Hispanics, especially Hispanic women, and African Americans exhibit a greater risk for heart disease than others groups due to cultural and economic factors such as dietary, tobacco consumption and access to health care. More so, Hispanic women tend to suffer in high numbers because of obesity, inactivity and diabetes. Since 1984, there has been a 75-80 percent increase in obesity among this group, and 42 percent overall are considered obese according to a study conducted in 1996 by the Centers for Disease Control Shows Cardiovascular Disease Outreach, Resources and Epidemiology Program (CORE). A high rate of obesity among Hispanic men consistently shows they have a higher chance of a heart attack. However, only one in ten Hispanic women at risk knows about heart disease, California's lack of knowledge about heart disease may be catching up with them, especially when it comes to planning a healthy diet in today's fast-paced world. The American Heart Association reports that although the rate of consistent decline in deaths from cardiovascular disease since the 1960s, recently the trend is slowing down. Part of this slowdown is being attributed to the upswing in obesity in America, one of the biggest risk factors for heart disease. A report by the Centers for Disease Control Shows that 61 percent of adult Americans are now considered overweight, and one in four Americans are now considered obese. Lifestyle Changes and Education Save Lives

Fortunately, studies show that heart disease can be prevented with lifestyle changes. The American Heart Association estimates that life expectancy in the United States would rise by nearly seven years if all forms of heart disease were eliminated. "The first thing that people can do is educate themselves about heart disease," said Kathy Cartelli, director of health management at PacifiCare of California. "At PacifiCare, we have a program, Risk Charge of Your Heart Health, which can teach people about the signs and risk factors for heart disease. The program also includes information on:"

- How to prepare "heart healthy" meals avoiding food high in fat and salt, which can lead to high blood pressure
- Ways to fit an appropriate exercise routine into a busy lifestyle to avoid obesity
- A calendar to remind patients to monitor their health by tracking important tests and check-ups
- "Changing lifestyle habits can seem daunting and even unpleasant, but it doesn't have to be either," said Cartelli.
- "We have some proven methods of making easy adjustments that fit into a busy lifestyle." Improved exercise, diet and knowledge of heart disease all add up to better health. During National Heart Month, people should look for ways to improve in each area. "Incremental improvements work best."

"One step at a time, everyday activities can make a difference." For more information, please visit www.pacifiicare.com.

STUDENTS INVITED TO FREE JOURNALISM WORKSHOP ON FEB. 17

Continued from Page 2

strong interest in journalism or photography to register.

The workshop runs from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Bradshaw Student Center at Riverside Community College's Riverside campus. Admission, continental breakfast and lunch are free.

The workshop brings professional journalists to lead sessions on writing and reporting. Students will enjoy activities such as a panel discussion and a writing exercise. Photography participants will learn the basics of photojournalism and go on a photo shoot.

Sponsors are: The Arrowhead Credit Union, The Press-Enterprise, the San Bernardino County Sun and RCC's Multicultural Advisory Committee.

CCNMA is a nonprofit group with six chapters across the state. Its goals is improving journalism education, encouraging minorities to pursue journalism careers and diversifying media newsrooms. The Inland Chapter serves Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Workshop registration forms must be postmarked by Friday, Feb. 9, as space is available only to the first 50 registrants. To get a form, call Mark Acosta, Inland Chapter president, at (909) 288-3933. Or check CCNMA's web site under "Chapters" to see if there is a form available.
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SPRING CLASSES BEGIN JANUARY 16TH
PLACIDO VALDIVIA, FIRST HISPANIC ELECTED TO BEAUMONT CITY COUNCIL IN 30 YEARS

Continued from Page 1

North Beaumont, talked at candidate forums and studied the issues confronting the city. His campaign also had a fundraiser at Rangel Park, with the barrio raising about 400 dollars.

"Another issue was that the people in the barrio had necessary needs and the city council should be aware and resolve them. I spoke strongly about this. We worked very hard," Valdivia said.

Valdivia and candidate Jeffrey Fox supported each other in the race. His other strong asset was that his family had been Beaumont since 1915 and had a network of brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces, (including several generations).

On the evening of the election, Valdivia went to bed early as usual and the next day, he and his wife, Gertrude took a planned trip to Laughlin. "I got called to announce that I had been elected to the city council. What a surprise! Never in the world had I thought of winning," Valdivia said with a smile. He came in second with 966 (24.5%) of the vote.

On December 5, 2000, Valdivia was sworn into the city council.

Since then, it has been a merry-go-round his words as a councilperson. He has learned the 'responsibilities and power that a councilman has. "These two months have been a learning situation with me. However, I was able to resolve the paint fumes situation in the barrio and addressing other needs not only in our barrio, but in the entire city," he said.

Valdivia's family settled in El Casio in 1915 and in 2002, a reunion is planned in Beaumont! His brother, Salvador and his wife and sisters. He went through the school system, was drafted in 1942 and served in the Army in 1943.

Discharged in 1946, he had several jobs, eventually became an inspector on NASA projects, moving with his family to different sites. In 1984, he retired and returned to Beaumont to live in the house his father built in 1922.

Valdivia and his wife, Gertrude are the parents of six boys and three girls, one of the girls died at an early age.

His extended family, according to Valdivia, numbers approximately 2,000 scattered throughout the Southwestern United States. Seven family reunions have been held and in 2002, a reunion is planned in Beaumont! His brother, Salvador and Fidel Ochoa were elected to the city council in 1970. "I know that my relatives in Beaumont were the ones that pulled me to the top," he said.

Meanwhile, Valdivia has worked diligently on the city's budget committee and county transportation commission.

"I have an open door and listen to all my constituents, but I still have my campaign committee, Leslie Rios and Art Garcia as my support group."

Next Issue

Inland Empire Hispanic News
Wednesday, February 14th 2001

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San Bernardino County Department of Public Health

AMERICA LOSES A VISIONARY LEADER

By Yolanda Chavez Leyva

America recently lost a courageous visionary.

Henry B. Gonzalez, 84 died on Nov. 28 in a San Antonio Hospital.

Henry B., as he affectionately known, was a fierce fighter for the poor. Throughout almost a century of public service, he dedicated himself to civil rights and social justice.

Gonzalez, who served 37 years in the House of Representatives before retiring in 1999, was the first Mexican American from Texas elected to that position. Although he stated that his politics were not shaped by his ethnicity, his championships of issues such as voting rights and economic opportunity made him a hero to many Mexican Americans.

His career helped open the door to other Mexican American politicians. According to political scientist Rodolfo Rosales, Gonzalez' election was "a cornerstone" in the creation of a middle-class Mexican American leadership.

Gonzalez was known for his controversial stands. He was willing to take on Republicans and members of his own Democratic Party to defend his principles. He advocated the impeachment of Presidents Reagan and Bush for 1983 invasion of Grenada and the Iran-Contra scandal, respectively. He also investigated their friendly dealings with Iraq and Saddam Hussein prior to the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

During his tenure on the powerful House Banking Committee, he led the investigation into the savings and loan scandals of 1980s, which implicated five Democratic senators.

In 1993, he was one of two Mexican American representatives who voted against NAFTA. The other one was Rep. Matthew Martinez, D-Calif.

Over the years, Henry B. survived many challenges to his political leadership. His political astuteness was unquestioned, his charisma obvious.

As significant as his individual achievements were, however, it is important to understand the community from which Henry B. emerged. Gonzalez was as much a product of the Mexican-American community's dream of justice as a champion of its cause.

Henry B. was born in 1916 to immigrant Mexican parents. He graduated from St. Mary's Law School in 1943. After working as a police officer and deputy director of the Bexar County Housing Authority, he was elected to the San Antonio City Council in 1953 as a result of a grassroots campaign.

Henry B. was a Heffie Brown Aguirre of age in a Texas that regarded Mexican Americans as second-class citizens. Texas Rangers and other law-enforcement agencies kept Mexican Americans lined up through intimidation and violence. The Southern legacy of segregation was still thriving, although both African Americans and Mexican Americans continually challenged the status quo.

The poll tax worked to keep the poor from participating in the political process. Education was but a dream to many. In 1950, only one in 10 Mexican Americans graduated from high school in Texas. Less than one in 100 finished college, according to historian Rodolfo Acuña. Poverty and racism had closed the school door to the majority of Mexican-American children.

In San Antonio, where Henry B. grew up the streets of the barrios remained unpaved. Health care for the poor was negligible. Tuberculosis and other diseases were rampant.

Despite the poverty and second-class citizenship, a dream of justice lived.

In the 1930s and 1950s, Mexican Americans used the Texas courts to demand equality. In the 1948 Delgado vs. Bastrop Independent School District case, the court ruled that segregation of Mexican Americans could not be excluded from curriculums.

Gonzalez built on these victories. Following election to the state Senate in 1956, he opposed efforts by other Texas legislators to maintain segregated schools. When legislators introduced bills to withhold funds from integrated schools following the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education decision, Gonzalez responded with a now famous filibuster.

Henry B. was often called "a man of the people," and his defense of the common folk is well known. He was, however, also a man who emerged from a people with a dream: a dream of social justice and equality.

Yolanda Chavez Leyva is a historian. She lives in Texas. She can be reached at pmprog@progressive.org
BRENDA SALAS, 23, YOUNGEST COUNCIL PERSON ELECTED IN BANNING

Brenda Salas, 23, ran for the Banning City Council on the basis that she could give more to the community in which she lived in.

"My campaign was a grassroots effort, consisting of family, friends and student involvement. Speaking to the students at Banning High, I was able to recruit 40 volunteers. My strongest helpers were Adam Wood, Rita Mijarzo and Robert Rasa," she said.

Her most memorable moment during the campaign was standing on Ramsey and Eighth Street, waving a neon sign. "I did it for the voters to know who is running and are poised to vote for. Also, a couple of young passersby screamed and told me, Brenda, we love you. Then I knew the decision to run was a positive experience regardless of the outcome," she said.

In a vigorous campaign with help from many sectors in the community, Salas won third place with a vote of 2,388 (12.4%) in a field of eight candidates. In addition, the records indicate that Salas is the youngest councilperson in the Banning history and one of the youngest in the State of California!

Salas feels that being on the city council is a great honor and to represent the hopes, dreams and ideas of every individual is something to live for. She also said that the council is like having another family working together for the betterment of the city.

Salas has been appointed as vice chair of the community development agency. "I feel that there are items that we need to focus on in the near future to enhance Banning in being a place for both our visitors and residents." She said.

Salas is the oldest in a family of five brothers and sisters. Enrolled at Cal-Poly, San Luis Obispo, she is transferring to the University of Redlands to work on a BA in Government and Political Science.

Being an active person, Salas has served as a planning commissioner, poll inspector, worked in the offices of Senator Barbara Boxer and State Superintendent of Schools Delaine Eastin, employed by the municipal court and assisted in the AVID and ESL Programs at Vista Unified School District and the Banning School District.

"My primary interest is in the education of our youth. They are the future voters and the future of our nation. To me, being a positive role model is very important."
State, San Bernardino's role as an effective source for students and the ethos, Juan Delgado, is now coordinating the area. And his new duties will be reflected in Colton and Rialto. He knows residential post three years ago. "Juan was the university with excellent opportunities to both meet needs and celebrate communities we serve."

His own poetry has earned him several critical thinking skills," Delgado says. Educational needs and cultural differences of underrepresented students in the Inland Empire Hispanic News. A professor at Cal State since 1987, Charged with helping to broaden Cal State, San Bernardino's role as an effective source for students and the ethos, Juan Delgado, is now coordinating the area. And his new duties will be reflected in Colton and Rialto. He knows residential post three years ago. "Juan was the university with excellent opportunities to both meet needs and celebrate communities we serve."

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