12-31-2003

December 31st 2003

Hispanic News

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Dr. Elsa Valdez was recently elected president of the Board of Education, San Bernardino School District. Dr. Valdez, a two term trustee, is the first Hispanic woman elected to the Board.

She is cognizant of the importance of education in American society, a strong advocate for equity in education for all students, dedicated her life to teaching, a second term trustee on the San Bernardino Board of Education since 1997, and on December 16, was unanimously elected president of the board!

Dr. Elsa Valdez is the first Hispanic woman to hold the position of president of the board of education in the history of the school district.

"I am aware of the responsibility that my fellow trustees have placed on me," Valdez stated. "Education is currently threatened by the financial crisis in California and consequently, many critical programs aiding our special students have been deleted. Other essential programs for at-risk students will, unfortunately, be eliminated. We are entering a critical period in education and a drawback for past advancements," she said.

Valdez is a role model for many students in Southern California, especially Hispanic students. As undocumented immigrants, her family came to the United States from Mexico for a better economic life and greater opportunities. The family, including Valdez and her four siblings, worked the harvests in Coachella Valley, Central and Northern California.

"Our family was at the lower rung of the economic level in the United States. We worked in sub-normal conditions, without the familiar health benefits and running water and toilet facilities. The family was also abused by employers, who took advantage of our illegal status and short-changed our wages. These were the growing up years for my brothers, sisters and I," she said.

Valdez married after high school and had three children, Arnold, 28, a college student and fitness instructor, Veronica, a B.A. graduate and studying for her teaching credentials and Jon, who has been accepted into the Navy. However, the marriage failed and she worked in various jobs to support her children. She also became a United States citizen. Enrolling at a community college, Valdez was encouraged by an Hispanic counselor to continue her education at UCR. After graduation from the college, Valdez enrolled at UCR with the assistance of scholarships and loans. She graduated with a B.A. in Sociology in 1987 and an M.A. in Sociology in 1989, both from UCR.

ONTOARIO/OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE SPONSOR LAS POSADAS

Young students from the Lutheran Christian School observe the scene of the birth of Jesus Christ at the Second Annual Las Posadas in Ontario.
KIWANIS CLUB SPONSORS BIG TOY GIVEAWAY

Kiwanis Club of Greater San Bernardino sponsored its 12th toy giveaway at Placita Park, San Bernardino, to 1,400 plus children ages 1 to 12. Toys were contributed by service club members, Juan Pollo Restaurants and refreshments by KDIF Radio Station.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the generosity and goodwill expressed by the Inland Empire community following the devastating fires in San Bernardino.

It was heartwarming to know that our neighbors throughout the inland Empire were thinking of San Bernardino during this difficult time. The collection and distribution of household items, clothing, toys, backpacks, and quilts were greatly appreciated. Many families in our School District were personally affected by the fires. Additionally, teachers, administrators, and members of our District staff also suffered personal losses. The items that were donated and distributed have changed many lives and put smiles on the faces of people both young and old.

The students in the San Bernardino City Unified School District have benefited from the generosity of others and have learned a valuable lesson on the importance of community service. The support and compassion community members have shown towards each other has demonstrated that, without a doubt, the San Bernardino City Unified School District is located in the finest community in the state.

On behalf of our 58,000 students and our 5,900 employees, I want to thank you again for your generosity and wish you a joyful holiday season. Sincerely,

Arturo Delgado
Superintendent, San Bernardino City Unified School District

IMPORTANT NEWS FOR AGRICULTURAL OPERATORS OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY!

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San Bernardino, CA 92415-0799
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Fax: (909) 382-5413

Used Oil and Filters are 100% Recyclable!
The City of Ontario and Our Lady of Guadalupe Church sponsored the Second Annual Las Posadas on Euclid Avenue with over 150 parishioners participating at the various stations that represented the travels of Joseph and Mary in the City of Bethlehem. Las Posadas is a traditional event in Mexico and other Latin American countries. Photo by IEHN

Many youth were involved in Los Posadas in Ontario. Hispanic youth are being taught the culture and traditions of Mexico and Latin American countries. Many parishes in the Inland Empire also celebrate Las Posadas during the Christmas season. Photo by IEHN

A mariachi group and singer participated in the 2nd Annual Las Posadas celebration on Euclid Street in Ontario. The annual event is becoming a tradition sponsored by the City of Ontario and Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. Photo by IEHN

Family members, including children, are part of the traditional Las Posadas celebration during the Christmas holidays. Photo by IEHN

Photo by IEHN

RIVERSIDE'S LA NET GROUP CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

LeNet's 4th Annual Christmas breakfast attracted many community members to the 4th Annual Christmas breakfast, including Riverside Mayor Ron Loveridge, standing, left and recent city retiree Javier Rosales, standing, right. Photo by IEHN

AIDS IS EVERY LATINO'S BATTLE

By Sam Martinez, M.D.

While surveys show that Latinos regard AIDS as the nation’s number one health concern, actual statistics about the disease tell us that we may not be worried enough.

HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, disproportionately impacts Latinos. Even though we make up 14 percent of the U.S. population, Latinos account for nearly 19 percent of new HIV diagnoses in areas with HIV reporting in 2001. More than 20 years after the epidemic began, AIDS is one of the leading causes of death among Latinos ages 25 to 54.

The first-ever National Latino AIDS Awareness Day, held this year on October 15, demands that we look at the reasons behind these tragic numbers and work to change them.

One reason AIDS is ravaging Latino communities is our limited access to quality medical care. During the mid-1990’s, advances in the treatment of HIV resulted in a dramatic decline in AIDS deaths overall, but barriers to receiving health care and information meant that improved survival among Latinos lagged far behind that of non-Hispanic whites.

Even today, Latinos are more likely to be tested for HIV later in their illness than both non-Hispanic whites and African Americans. Too many Latinos are diagnosed with full-blown AIDS at the time of their first test or within one year of taking it. Worse still, after receiving an HIV diagnosis, we are more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to put off seeking medical care.

Another HIV prevention challenge is the long period of anxiety people experienced with previous HIV testing methods. CDC is working with local groups and healthcare providers across the country to provide services to help Latinos—those infected with HIV, those not infected and those who are unsure of their status—to better understand ways of fighting HIV in their communities.

For information about HIV testing or to learn more about HIV/AIDS, contact National AIDS Hotline at 1-800-344-SIDA (English) or 1-800-344-SIDA (Spanish), or on the Internet at www.hivtest.org. For treatment information, call the National Institutes of Health’s AIDS Treatment Information Line at 1-800-448-0440.

Dr. Martinez is a Health Scientist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
Teresa Parra was elected vice president of the Board of Education, San Bernardino School District. Parra is a strong advocate for education and student involvement.

Encouraged by Dr. Flora Ortiz of UCR to pursue a career in teaching, Valdez became a teaching assistant and enrolled in a doctoral program at UCR. She received her Ph.D. in Sociology in 1991. From 1991 to 1993, she was assistant professor in the Department of Chicano Studies Sociology at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

Valdez was appointed assistant professor at the Department of Sociology at Cal State San Bernardino in 1993 and became chair of the department in 1999.

Valdez stated that the school board represents all the students in the district and its goal is to continue to improve the academic achievements of students, and the added input from certificated and classified staff.

Teresa Parra, school board member, said board members were supportive of the leadership skills that Elsa Valdez has displayed during her board tenure. "Elsa will be able to coalesce the board members' strong talents and experiences toward the betterment of students' education. My strong feeling is that she is very passionate toward education for all students," she said.

We are in a difficult period in education and it will require the total participation of the community, parents and educational resources to continue the successful achievement level of our students. My goal is to lead in this endeavor," Valdez said.

Teresa Parra was elected vice president of the Board of Education. San Bernardino School District. Parra is a strong advocate for education and student involvement. Photo by IEHN

Danny Tillman, right, is sworn as trustee of the San Bernardino Board of Education. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Arthur Delgado administers the oath. Photo by IEHN

Marvin Brown, right, is sworn as trustee of the San Bernardino Board of Education. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Arthur Delgado administers the oath. Photo by IEHN

Newly elected trustee Judy Perrman is sworn into the San Bernardino Board of Education by Superintendent Dr. Arthur Delgado. Photo by IEHN

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Just across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas, hundreds of women have been raped and murdered over the past decade. Some of the women worked for U.S. subsidiaries. And yet neither the Mexican government or our government is doing much about these assaults.

In a report released this summer, Amnesty International, the London-based human-rights organization, condemned Mexican authorities for mishandling the investigations of murdered women in Ciudad Juarez.

Over the past decade, more than 370 young, mostly poor women have been murdered. Mexican non-governmental organizations have reported that more than 400 women are still missing.

Many of the murdered women worked in U.S. and other foreign-owned maquiladora plants, where thousands of women are subjected to low wages and often sexual harassment.

The 71-page Amnesty International report, "Intolerable Killings," released Aug. 11, characterizes the murders and disappearances as "blatant." According to the group, authorities have unjustifiably delayed their investigations, failed to follow up with witnesses, provided incorrect information to families, falsified evidence and allegedly used torture to obtain confessions.

In the first years, authorities publicly blamed the murder victims, accusing them of dressing provocatively or being out late at night. — More recently, authorities have begun to blame the families of the victims, criticizing them for their efforts to find out what happened to their daughters and sisters.

Some of the families of the missing murdered women have been harassed and threatened. One advocacy organization, Amigos de las Mujeres de Juarez (Friends of the Women of Juarez), reports that "actions against victims' families have reached such an obscene level that family members are being investigated, tortured and forced to claim guilt for these crimes.

This summer, Amnesty International met with families of the murdered women. Following the release of their report, Amnesty also met with Mexico's President Vicente Fox to urge his government more closely supervise investigations.

The group recently sent hundreds of federal officers to Juarez to assist the local police in patrolling the streets. And according to the El Paso Times, the Mexican national security adviser, Alejandro Gertz Manero, says that the federal police will continue working with local and state police "to make Juarez a safer place for women."

Making Juarez a "safer place" for women is not simply a concern for the Mexican government, however. It should also be a prime concern of U.S. companies that operate there. And it should be on the agenda of the U.S. officials when they meet with their Mexican counterparts.

The impunity with which the women have been killed reflects something larger — a fundamental disregard for young, mostly poor women worldwide.

Human Rights Watch, an international human-rights organization, reports that violence against women is rampant. The situation in Juarez mirrors the deplorable plight of women across the globe. The organization cites lack of police concern, hostile or unsympathetic police and biased prosecutors who fail to gather evidence among the difficulties faced by female victims of violence. These are not extreme cases, but represented in many countries.

We must demand justice for the murdered women of Juarez, as well as victims of violence in our nation and across the globe.

It is intolerable that women continue to be disposable, and that Ciudad Juarez's murders remain unsolved. We must continue to demand that women be treated as full human beings, everywhere.

We must insist on the humanity of the murdered women of Juarez.

Yolanda Chávez Leyva is a historian at the University of Texas at El Paso, where she specializes in border and Mexican American history. She can be reached at progresive.org.

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Wednesday, December 31, 2003

ELSA VALDEZ ELECTED SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT

DEATHS OF MEXICAN WOMEN REFLECT LARGER GLOBAL CRISIS

By Yolanda Chávez Leyva
Ballet Folklórico de México Huge Success

The Ballet Folklórico de México de Amelia Hernandez, sponsored by the Sinfonia Mexicana, attracted a full audience at the California Theatre in San Bernardino. The dance group enchanted the audience with its colorful costumes and dances representing different regions of Mexico. The dance group was rewarded for its dance and music presentations with two standing ovations.

Photos by IEHN

State Thanks Californians for Spreading the Word About Life-Saving Legislation

37 Babies Now Saved Due to Safely Surrendered Baby Law

Sacramento – As Californians pause to give thanks during the holidays, the California Department of Social Services praised the many citizens who have worked to promote California’s Safely Surrendered Baby (SSB) Law. The SSB law is designed to save the lives of precious newborns at risk of abandonment.

Since the SSB law was enacted in 2001, 37 babies have been saved. More importantly, the most dramatic increase in the number of newborns surrendered came after the launch of statewide, county and community public awareness efforts. In just the past six months, 17 babies have been delivered into safe hands.

It is important to thank the many Californians who have worked to ensure the success of the State’s Safely Surrendered Baby Law,” said Rita Saenz, Director, California Department of Social Services. “Newborns who otherwise would be abandoned or left to die have been safely surrendered, have been adopted and are living with loving grateful families. It is also an appropriate time to thank nurses and firefighters – the emergency personnel – who have welcomed babies into their arms, giving many newborns the precious gift of life.”

Under the SSB law, authored by State Senator Jim Brulte (R-Rancho Cucamonga) and passed with bipartisan support, a parent or person with lawful custody can safely surrender their newborn infant within the first 72 hours after birth to any California hospital emergency room or other designated Safe Haven location, such as designated fire stations, without the threat of prosecution for child abandonment.

The law provides a No Shame, No Blame, No Names framework for desperate mothers seeking to surrender their babies, but who may fear imprisonment for relinquishing their babies, even into safe hands.

There is no profile of women likely to abandon their infants making it critically important for Californians of all walks of life to get the word out through schools, churches, community groups, entertainment venues and retail outlets so that more women of childbearing age are aware about the law and its benefits.

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Have a safe Holiday

Winter is here and SOUPS are ON!

Soups, an easy way to serve your family “5 a day”

Add frozen, canned or in season fresh vegetables to your soup recipes

San Bernardino County
Department of Public Health, Nutrition Program
ECONOMY STILL IN THE DOLDRUMS

By Julianne Malveaux

Don’t believe the happy talk about the economy—unless you’re on Wall Street. New home sales are up, business revenues are rising and any broker worth her salt is able to put a positive spin on the way things are. The Dow Jones Industrial Average has been ticking upwards and the NASDAQ has revived itself from the mid-2002 doldrums. But millions of folks are dizzy from the economy’s failure.

One in eight of all Americans lives below the poverty line. Poverty rose by 1.7 million in 2002 from a rate of 11.7 percent to a rate of 12.1 percent, according to the Census Bureau. There were 34.6 million poor people in the United States last year, and the number is likely to be rising. Median income dropped, too, from $42,900 to $42,409. The reduction seems small until you break it down.

Overall income dropped by 3 percent for African-Americans, down to $29,026. The poverty rate for African-Americans rose to 24.1 percent, which means that nearly one in four African-Americans lived in poverty in 2002. Like black income, Hispanic income fell by 3 percent (to $33,100). The poverty rate among Hispanics was 21.8 percent.

Analysts are talking about the upswing in the economy, suggesting job numbers are “lagging” indicators that are likely to recover when stock markets do. Tell that to the people who are trying to live through recovery.

Nationally, President Bush’s request for $87 billion for Iraq crowds out money for social spending, for unemployment and for education here at home.

At the state level, cuts in block grants from the federal government mean cuts in state services. Tuition costs for state schools are rising in the double digits, and state legislators are cutting services for the poor, the elderly and the disabled.

At the local level, there is little more than trickle down, and the trickle comes drop by drop. Most cities struggle with hunger and homelessness and now know that there are scant federal funds to apply to these needs, and many counties are having to cut back even on police and fire departments.

The income and poverty data are just the tip of the iceberg.

Equally disturbing are data on the increasing number of Americans who lack health insurance. A year ago, 14.6 percent of the population lacked health insurance. Now, this is up to 15.2 percent—or 43.6 million people—who lack health insurance. Many lack health insurance because they have temporary or part-time jobs. Meanwhile, many health-related stocks are up.

The analysts are speaking of recovery, and poverty rates are rising. Wall Street is fiddling while Main Street burns.

Julianne Malveaux, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology-trained economist, is author of several books, including “Wall Street, Mean Street and the Side Street: A Mad Economist Takes a Stroll” (Independent Publishers Group, 1999). She can be reached at pmprog@progressive.org.
DOLORES HUERTA
APPOINTED
REGENT OF
UC SYSTEM

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The League of United Latin American Citizens is outraged by the Department of Justice's approval today of the blatantly retrogressive and discriminatory Texas redistricting plan.

"The Voting Rights Act has been hijacked by political ideologues," stated LULAC National President Hector M. Flores. "A clearly retrogressive and discriminatory redistricting plan has been approved in order to further the political agenda of the administration regardless of its impact on minority voters."

LULAC will continue to fight the redistricting plan in court and we fully expect that our independent judiciary will not allow political considerations to deter them from upholding the law. The trampling of minority voting rights in the name of partisan politics must never again become the law of the land.

"The Bush Justice Department has proven once again that it cannot be trusted to uphold the rights of minority Americans," stated Luis Vera, LULAC General Counsel. "We intend to make sure that this decision is planted firmly in the minds of Latinos over the coming year... the Republican party must learn that it cannot reach out to Latino voters with one hand and simultaneously undermine their votes with the other."

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is the oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization in the United States. LULAC advances the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, health, and civil rights of Hispanic Americans through community-based programs operating at more than 700 LULAC councils nationwide.

Governor Gray Davis recently appointed Dolores Huerta as a member of the Regents of The University of California. The 73-year-old Huerta will serve the six months remaining in the term of Norman J. Pattiz, after his nomination for a new, 12-year term on the 26-member board.

"I'll bring the perspective of working people, working poor, women and people of color to the board," Huerta said. "It may be a perspective that hasn't been widely represented."

Ms. Huerta, 73, served as the Secretary-Treasurer of the United Farm Workers (UFW) and is co-founder and First Vice President Emeritus of the United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO. She is currently organizing the Dolores Huerta Foundation which will aid in the development of grassroots community organizations.

In 1984, the California State Senate bestowed upon Ms. Huerta the Outstanding Labor Leader Award. In 1993, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. That same year, Ms. Huerta received the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Roger Baldwin Medal of Liberty Award, the Eugene V. Debs Foundation Outstanding American Award, and the Ellis Island Medal of Freedom Award. In 1999, she received the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights award from President Clinton. She serves on the Board of the Feminist Majority.

Happy Holidays
From Josie Gonzales
Fontana City Councilmember and Small Business Owner

Josie Gonzales for Supervisor
9087 Sierra Ave.
Fontana CA 92335
E-mail: jgonzales1@uia.net

Candidate for San Bernardino County Supervisor
District 5

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Inland Empire Hispanic News
Wednesday, December 31, 2003

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automatically fixed monthly donation

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