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KSOW-LP FM is a volunteer operated community radio station in Cottage Grove, Oregon. We have a station hall on Main Street with events, meetings and classes. We offer community education in broadcasting arts and sciences. We are currently looking for an individual to supply techni-

cal, research, and advisory services. Ideally they would see the value in community radio and would donate some of the time they invest in these projects. We are looking for a long term arrangement that would be a good fit for station engineers or others looking for practical experience in broadcasting and motivated to support public community radio. Suitable individuals will have enough experience to offer valid research supporting cutting edge technical support to enhance KSOW-LP FM transmission capabilities. We hope to complete these projects in 2008. We are a start-up non-profit with limited funding. That said, we do have funds and recognize the value of these services. We would be interested in a mutually beneficial arrangement. Contact us at (541)942-1067, or www.ksow.org, or mail: 517 Main St., Cottage Grove, OR 97424.

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¡ASK A MEXICAN!

BY GUSTAVO ARELLANO

SPECIAL SPANISH EDICIÓN

Dear Mexican: Why do you suppose Mexico has such a hard time getting its act together? It has vast natural resources, good climate, natural ports, super-generous and good-looking neighbors and plenty of laborers who seem to be willing to do all sorts of crappy jobs. But instead of having a thriving economy and an embarrassment of abundance like us whiteys, Mexicans have rampant poverty, pervasive sexism and prejudice, grotesque corruption and drug wars. Mexico forces so many of its residents to drag their butts up here and take all the



good jobs, like selling oranges and flowers on street corners. Is it because Mexicans blew their dominant wad early with the Mayans and Aztecs? Or is there some cultural value that says you can only work hard north of the Rio Grande? Or maybe it's the filthy, filthy Spanish blood? ¿¿¿Por qué, México, por que???
— Señor Whitey Gets it Done

Dear *Gabacho*: Your last point nails it. But before I explain how, refry this, America: when you get down to *tachuelas de latón*, Mexico really isn't that bad of a country. A

2006 World Bank study found it boasts the world's 14th-highest gross domestic product rating, ahead of countries such as Australia, Norway and Argentina (Guatemala, on the other hand, is *número 69* — ¡toma, chapines!). The United Nation's Human Development Index for 2007 report lists Mexico as 52nd amongst nations for standard-of-living — not the best slot, but good enough to rank as "High" on the HDI. And have you ever visited the Aztec pyramids? So inspiring!

I'm giving you an apologist answer, Señor Whitey, but only to make a point about perspective. Why are there problems in Mexico? Same reason there are problems anywhere: a host of *razones* ranging from economics to geopolitics to religion and the penis size of males. Yet *gabachos* toss aside any consideration of such salient factors when focusing on Mexico — because of a visceral reaction to the Reconquista, sure, but I'd also argue due to the Black Legend, the train of Western thought dating back to the Age of Discovery that views anything the Spaniards touched as cruel, ungodly and forever a failure. So no matter how much Mexico improves, no matter how many wabs learn English and attend college stateside, many *gabachos* will continue to dismiss Mexicans with the same vitriol their European ancestors flung against Imperial Spain — and if you don't think centuries-old historical events influence the present, go ask a Southerner about Sherman.

You recently called the Portuguese language a "bastard" language. I'm currently studying Portuguese (I already took Spanish classes), and the similarities are greater than the differences. So, senhor ("señor" in Portuguese), can you tell us why the two languages developed differently? There doesn't seem to be any apparent reason as to why the two countries separated — they both make beautiful tiles, were invaded by the Moors, make beautiful music, etc. — Senhora Marilena

Dear Wannabe Portagee: No apparent reason? *Puxa, menina* (Spanish translation: ¡Dios mio, muchacha!; English translation: Are you that dumb, woman?! Spanish and Portuguese, though sharing the common roots of Vulgar Latin and Mozarabic, began separating long before the languages we now call Spanish and Portuguese even existed. The land now occupied by Portugal was the last sliver of the Iberian Peninsula conquered by the Roman Empire, which called the territory Lusitania. The region developed differently from the rest of Rome's Iberian territories, and subsequent invasions by Germanic tribes and Moors culturally and linguistically influenced those proto-Portuguese in ways not felt by the provinces that eventually became Spain. More crucially, they consolidated under one king in 1139, centuries before Spanish nobles booted out the Moors for *bueno* and the previously obscure dialect called Castilian lisped its way to become the language known as *ethpañol*.

Got a spicy question about Mexicans? Ask the Mexican at themexican@askmexican.net Letters will be edited for clarity, cabrones. And include a hilarious pseudonym, por favor, or we'll make one up for you!

Gustavo Arellano is an investigative reporter on staff at the OC Weekly in Orange County, California. His "¡Ask a Mexican!" column began in 2004 and today is syndicated in 32 publications nationwide. He is also the author of a book by the same name. An extensive interview with Arellano can be found in the EW archives online for Nov. 29, 2007.

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