

Hispanic leader promotes justice

by Robert Lothian

In 1970, Jose Angel Gutierrez led a nationally-recognized civil rights movement that changed the direction of a small Texas town, Crystal City.

The Mexican community there, which had been left out of decision making by the white establishment, gained control of the school board, the city council and the county commission of Zavala County. Profound changes were made to benefit the local Mexican population.

Dr. Gutierrez has been an Oregon resident for five years. He teaches political science at Western Oregon State College in Monmouth, and he is director of Hispanic services for United Way in Portland.

Still active in efforts to open up opportunities for Hispanic people, Dr. Gutierrez has brought together Hispanic leaders and representatives from agencies that serve Hispanics for a path-breaking conference — "The Next Half: Hispanic Strategy for 1985-1990."

The conference will continue over three Saturdays. Participants will assess the needs of Hispanic people in Oregon and define a better life in terms of suggesting improvements in social services, the media, government and many other areas.

The first Saturday session at the Northwest Service Center on March 9th focused on human services and the media. A wealth of statistics was provided, and it was suggested that hospitals and clinics increase bi-lingual staff and cross-cultural education.

Enrique Escobar, of the Hispanic



Dr. Jose Gutierrez.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Media Project in Portland, revealed that although Hispanics are more than 6 percent of the U.S. population, only about 1.3 percent of journalists are Hispanic. He suggested that the major media should sponsor scholarships and internships for Hispanics, that the Oregonian should have a bilingual Sunday Hispanic column, and that more entry level jobs and training for Hispanics in the media are needed.

Government, labor and business will be discussed at the next conference session March 23rd at the Northwest Service Center, 1819 N.W. Everett. The third session April 13th at the

United Way offices, 718 W. Burnside, is aimed at setting up a Hispanic advisory council.

The advisory council is important, said Gutierrez, because no such body exists in Oregon now to look after the interests of Hispanics. Spanish-speaking Americans continue to be overlooked by the media, human services and government agencies including the Census Bureau, he said. In addition, continued Gutierrez, Chicano farmworkers in Oregon live in conditions similar to those in the Third World.

He reported that a Commission on

Hispanic Affairs which toured the state recently found migrant farmworkers living in conditions he described as slavery. In Merrill, near Klamath Falls, for instance, he said, the commission found debt peonage — Farmworkers work 10 hours a day, 365 days a year to pay off debts which the farmers say they owe. "The growers insist that they (the workers) owe them money, and that's why they can't leave," said Gutierrez.

The commission found also that near Hood River, farmworkers must pay up to \$50 to get a job and then about \$30 a month to keep it.

It is possible that the conditions uncovered by the commission will be corrected in "the next half" — inclusion of the Hispanic community in the social fabric of the Northwest is one of the most important issues for the next five years, said Gutierrez.

Coincidental with the conference, he said, two Chicano leaders, Cesar Chavez and Henry Cisneros, are scheduled to appear in Oregon soon. Chavez, head of the United Farmworkers Association, has called for a new grape boycott, Gutierrez announced at a recent meeting of the Hispanic Student Union at PSU. Cisneros, mayor of Austin, Texas, led that city in starting innovative programs to benefit the Hispanic community. He was considered a vice-presidential running mate by Walter Mondale.

Appearances by these leaders, and the conference, portend a period of increased focus on Hispanic issues in Oregon, said Gutierrez.

Pro-choice activists face tough battles ahead

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W.—In recent months pro-choice activists have become increasingly concerned with the success of right-to-life advocates who turned the focus of the abortion issue away from the woman. They feel the concern now is concentrated on the fetus while the woman and her right to make a choice is ignored.

To balance this trend the Oregon's affiliate of the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) is planning a "Speak Out" this is a letter-writing campaign where individuals share personal stories about abortion.

Mary Rohlffs, a NARAL representative, said the days are over for women to be hush-hush with their

abortion experiences. "Women's attitudes are changing. Now, the right to have an abortion is threatened. The purpose of the "Speak Out" is to create an awareness that abortion is a reality," she added.

Rohlffs said letters should be addressed to President Reagan and mailed to: Oregon NARAL, P.O. Box 40472, Portland, OR 97240.

According to Oregon's Vital Statistics, the number of induced abortions in Oregon in 1983 was 12,064. Two-thirds of the total number of abortions performed in Oregon were in Multnomah County. "Women in other parts of the state do not have access to abortion," Rohlffs added. Non-white women comprise 7.7 percent of the total which is up from 4.8 percent in 1980. Rohlff said that covert

and overt legislation is threatening the right to have an abortion. In 1986 a ballot measure will appear asking voters to prohibit state funding for abortion. Since 1978, when federal funding was stopped, Oregon was among 14 states that paid for abortions out of state monies.

"We are facing our toughest battle," Rohlffs added. "People may be pro-choice, but paying for it is a different matter."

Politically, North and Northeast Portland are represented by an anti-abortionist in the Senate, Sen. Bill McCoy, and pro-choice in the House, Rep. Margaret Carter.

"I don't want to support any legislation that tells women what to do with their bodies. No one has that right," Carter said. Senator McCoy

refused to return phone calls to record his stand on this issue.

Rohlffs said the majority of right-to-lifers project a conservative, religious view. "Because of their inability to get a constitutional amendment prohibiting abortion, they are attacking many vulnerable aspects of abortion, such as minor rights, funding and individual confrontations with women at abortion clinics," she added.

Shirley Chisolm, who first led the fight for abortion on the national level, wrote in 1971, "Is abortion right? My beliefs and experience have led me to conclude that the wisest public policy is to place the responsibility for that decision on the individual."

Atiyeh declares March social work month

Gov. Vic Atiyeh has proclaimed March as "Professional Social Work Month." By doing this the first time in Oregon, Atiyeh follows a precedent set by President Ronald Reagan who proclaimed National Social Work Month, March 22, 1984.

"Social workers perform a vital service helping people and their families cope with and overcome debilitating problems," Gov. Atiyeh said in issuing the proclamation.

Martha Lemke, president of the Oregon Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, announced the association's campaign to educate the community about the many problems workers face daily and how these problems affect the family. The campaign "Work is a Family Affair" is being carried out by the 900 member Oregon Chapter in conjunction with nearly 100,000 other NASW members nationwide.

Lemke noted many workers have personal problems that interfere with their work and others suffer from job

stress causing problems at home. According to statistics, fifty percent of production problems are caused by workers confronting difficulties such as day care or marital problems. And there is strong evidence job stress contributes to health problems such as heart disease. "That stress robs employers of productive workers and creates new problems at home," Lemke said.

Lemke also introduced John Milnes of Salem, Michael Stoops of Portland and Esther Kelly Watson of Portland, recipients of awards from the Oregon Chapter NASW. All were on hand for the Governor's ceremony.

John B. Milnes, a Salem registered clinical social worker, was selected "Social Worker of the Year" for his role in legislation that gives insurance reimbursement to social workers. The law, passed in 1981, gave employees the option to use their health insurance benefits to cover mental health treatment by qualified social workers. Milnes was formerly a unit

director of the Oregon State Hospital Alcohol and Drug treatment program. He now treats workers and their families in his private practice in southeast Salem.

Michael A. Stoops was made "Citizen of the Year" in recognition of his work with the poor on Portland's Skid Road. Stoops has gained statewide acclaim as advocate for the homeless. He is chairman of the board of Burnside Community Council and directs Baloney Joe's, a drop-in center on Burnside that serves meals donated by area churches.

City Council to vote on sister city measure

by Robert Lothian

The Portland-Corinto sister city project raised \$300 for school supplies for children in Corinto, Nicaragua, at a dinner Feb. 27.

An additional two large boxes with about \$100 worth of paper, pencils, pens, crayons and other supplies were also gathered at the event.

Spokesperson David Lindor, a pathologist at Oregon Health Sciences University, said the supplies will be sent down with Portlanders visiting Corinto this spring.

Lindor said the dinner was a kick-off for a campaign to raise awareness of Corinto and to convince the city council to approve Nicaragua's major port as Portland's next sister city. A week of activities will culminate in a city council vote April 10th.

City council member Mike Lindberg, who is heading the sister city campaign, said adopting Corinto is a way to support Nicaraguans in their efforts to end the war with CIA-backed contras. "Getting the city council to pass the sister city resolution is one of the main things we can do to help our

brothers and sisters," he said. Diane Hess, Central America director for the American Friends Service Committee in Portland, said schools in Corinto are operating with three shifts and students are short such basic supplies as pencils. Also, there are no maps, "an absurd situation for people in a country so much in the center of world events," she said.

Lindor said the Corinto project has approached the Portland Association of Teachers and high school teachers in hopes of generating satellite school supply drives.

"From what we gather, they are sports enthusiasts of the most exuberant kind and we want to get some athletic supplies down there, too," he said. Lindor said future goals include bringing teachers and students from Corinto to Portland.

"By April 10, we want to go to the city council and say, 'We don't want a handout, we want help with what we are already doing,'" Lindor said.

Local businesses have already helped by donating food for the kick-off dinner, he said.

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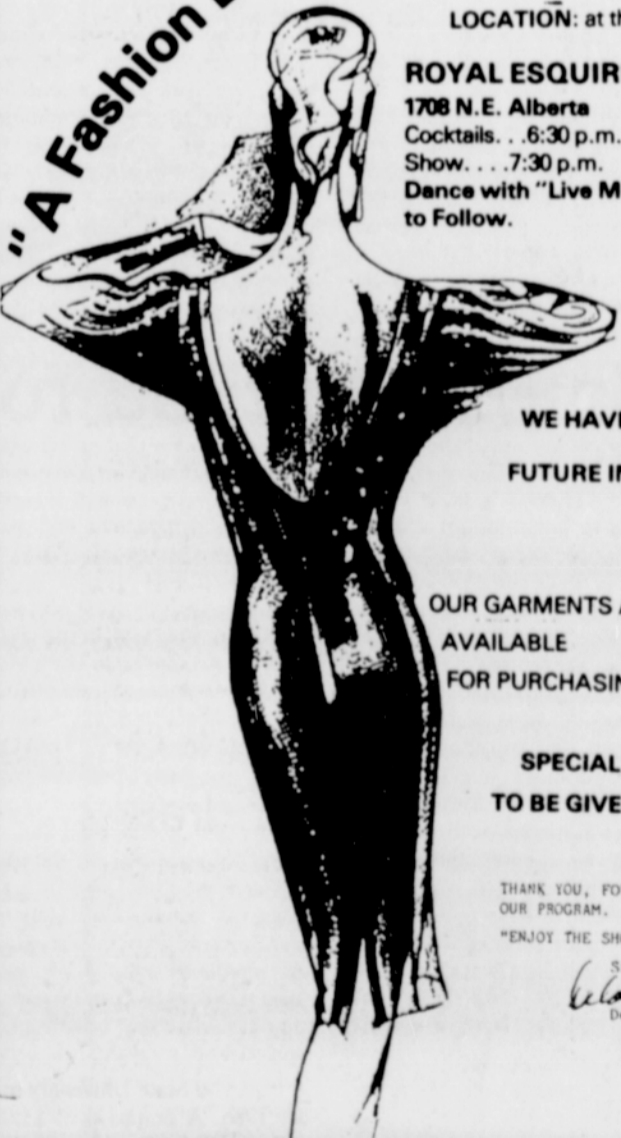
Citizens Utility Board campaigner, Eric Stachon (left), poses with some of the interim CUB board members appointed by the governor. (L-r) Gale Corson, Nita Bruggeman, Mike Roach and George Starr read telegrams from the Wisconsin and Illinois CUBs congratulating them on their victory. Dressed in the CUB suit is Bob Jenks.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

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