

PORTLAND OBSERVADOR

Straight Shooting from Forest Grove, photo by Alexandra Lopez



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Enough! Ya Basta! Portland students march in D.C.



Latino & Immigrant Rights marchers in Washington, D.C. Portland youth offer eyewitness reports in *The Observador*

BY CECILIA GIRON

For the first time in the history of the United States, a Latino Immigrants Rights March, took place in Washington D.C. on October 12, 1996. Over one thousand organizations and 1/2 million people were present in the march to protest for equal rights and justice for all. Three hundred people from Oregon were present.

I had the opportunity, along with five other representatives sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee, to represent the

Hispanic community in Washington County Oregon, with a message. The message was "Ya Basta". We have been here for years, and we are going to stay. We are not going anywhere.

We were directly through public demonstrations speaking for equal rights. No more discrimination. No more abuse. We are humans and we all have the right to an education, health, housing, equal opportunities and constitutional rights. Thanks to the Coordinadora '96, and all the Hispanic Orga-

nizations that worked together this march was a historic event.

I am very proud to be an Hispanic woman. When I came to this country, one of my dreams was to go to Washington D.C. My dream came true. I feel very fortunate to have been able to participate in this march because I not only went for pleasure, but for a mission.

(Cecilia Giron is a 1st generation immigrant from Oaxaca, Mexico. She is a 19-year old student at Portland Community College.)

Immigrants are the pillars of the nation

BY JONATHAN FRIOLO

On October 12th, thousands of people marched on the streets of Washington D.C. protesting a bill that would effect immigrants, i'legal and legal. What turned out though, was not a march of protest, but a march of unity.

I was there. A young 18 year old male, and an immigrant. I really have never given a thought to my official status in America. I've lived in America almost all my life. In fact I feel just as American as football or apple pie. Except that because of my Filipino background, I eat rice and chicken adobo instead of steak and potatoes before eating that apple pie.

I was outraged to find out that such a bill was created. It was as if all the hard work that immigrants have given to this country meant nothing to those in power. Because of blindness and fear they are scared to see what America is really evolving into.

Throughout history, it has always been the weak and ignorant who have been fearful of something new, something different. What American has become is not a country with one language, one voice, but a country that echoes with many voices in many tongues throughout the nation. Cannot those in au-



thority see the larger picture which is right in front of them?

If it is true that we are the people, that we are created equal, and that this is the greatest nation on earth, should we not continue this great tradition by helping those who are the foundation of this country?

It is the sweat, and hard work of immigrants throughout history, that has kept the gears of this society moving. Could it be though, and I hope it isn't, that America is nothing but a facade where power and control have replaced human decency and justice. Is the moral fiber of this country giving way to the greed and gluttony of those too scared to see what greater future may lie ahead? Is

America damned in its unknowingness to rise from the shadow of oppressive ignorance?

There is hope. Many of those who marched are of a new generation of young, free-minded individuals who see the injustice in front of them. It will be these same young people who will carry America into the 21st century and beyond. I can only hope that there is still justice in this nation and the struggles that many have endured will not be forgotten. The unity and strength of today will be the pillars of this nation tomorrow.

(Jonathon Friolo is a second generation Filipino immigrant. He is an 18-year old student at Portland Northwest College of the Arts.)

The march made a difference inside of me

BY LENG BOUASYKEO

As I stepped off the plane and set foot in Washington D.C., I knew this trip was going to be one I'd never forget. The smell of the crisp, cold air struck my nose like a pile of rocks. I finally realized that I was actually in Washington D.C., the nations capitol, the place where dreams come true.

But the purpose of our trip was to fight for the freedom and basic rights of all immigrants, "legal or illegal".

The new immigration reform bill hit hard. All the proposals were really scary and at the same time ridiculous. They word it as "all the illegal immigrants are putting a 'strain' on the economy and its time to do something and do it now!"

Am I wrong when I ask, who has the right to tell someone that they are "legal" or "illegal"? I always thought that "America" was derived from different cultures and people. But I guess I was wrong because now there are people running the government that have,

or rather want to, categorize the people of America and say that one group, the citizens, are eligible for all the resources and aid from the government and the other group, immigrants, must qualify and have certain standards they might have to pass to attain those valuable resources and help. All along I had the impression that people come to America to get away from these types of controlled societies.

But the immigration march that was to take place was to change all of that. It was supposed to be the time when immigrants, including myself, should have spoken up to tell them, the people in the government, that we didn't want to be taken advantage of any longer, we want equal rights and justice, and were not going to let anyone step all over us anymore.

And it was what happened. That Saturday of October 12, 1996, something happened. Something that should have been done a long time ago. Someone did speak up. In fact, over twenty five thousand people did speak up. It

was our time to tell them, enough! enough!

We are here and we're not going anywhere. We helped build and shape America into the beautiful country it is today and no one can tell us that we have to go through certain measures and steps to qualify to live and become citizens of this country.

Marching down all the streets of D.C. I felt proud, proud to hold my head up high and say, "I belong here just like everyone and I deserve the same kind of treatment of justice just like everyone else." That day was a day I am never going to be able to forget. Because that day was the day I became a part of history. I made the first step of many steps to fight off all the hate, the dirty looks and glares, the stereotypes and the ugly claws of racism. I made a difference for everyone, and most importantly there was a difference inside of me.

(Leng Bouasykeo is a 1st generation Laotian immigrant. She is a 19-year old student at Portland State University.)

Noviembre 20th es El día de la Revolución



El General (Emiliano) Zapata, by Diego Rivera. Palacio de Cortes, Cuernavaca

OCHA Conference promotes solutions

BY SEAN CRUZ

The Oregon Council on Hispanic Advancement's (OCHA) 12th annual conference brought more than 1,000 people together to discuss trends, methodologies and solutions to a variety of issues affecting our communities and our nation.

While the conference was in keeping with OCHA's stated mission "To provide leadership and support for educational opportunity, economic development and social justice for Hispanics in Oregon and SW Washington," the scope of the workshops and the speakers' themes were much broader and more inclusive, offering important insights to people of all colors and ethnic backgrounds.

Solutions must be multi-ethnic

Dr. Leo Estrada, an expert on racial and ethnic demographic trends and inner-city redevelopment, and an Associate Professor of Urban Planning at UCLA, emphasized the importance of finding solutions that take into account the multiple ethnicities that make up our population.

"What really isn't understood very well in our country is how diverse people in a community come together and resolve problems," Dr. Estrada stated. "Across the country, I am asked the same question, 'How do we come together?'"

"In a place like Oregon, nothing will happen unless it's multi-ethnic," he said, adding that the time has forever passed for the Northwest region to conduct its affairs as if no significant cultural differences existed.

Erroneous perceptions of Latinos

"There is an erroneous perception that people crossing the border are here to take rather than to give," said presenter Elida Chavez, president of an advertising and public relations firm based in San Diego. Her clients include Nike, Coca-Cola and the United Farm Workers.

Ms Chavez' presentation focused on the U.S.-Mexico border economy. "One of the

first things that illegal immigrants do when they cross over is to contribute to the economy by buying bottled water or Coke," she said, "and they tend to pay premium prices, 50% to 100% more than the prices we are accustomed to seeing in stores away from the border."

Ms Chavez added that the immigrants tend to take the low-paying no-benefit jobs, while providing benefits free of charge to their employers, such as translation skills, and by teaching them about Latino culture and language, even how to market to other Hispanics.

The US-Mexico border economy

Ms Chavez described the economy that exists along the U.S.-Mexico border as a distinct entity in several ways. Border populations and languages are more diverse than elsewhere in the nation, with a much greater mixing of ethnicities.

The Tijuana-San Diego border market is the third largest Hispanic market in the nation, with a population that is 51.4% Hispanic. This border area itself is the world's busiest, with 70,000 crossings daily, both legal and illegal, and in both directions. The result is an annual expenditure of \$6.9 billion dollars in San Diego alone, irrefutable evidence that Hispanics offer substantial contributions to the economy.

Advertising biases

Anna Maria Arias, publisher of Latina Style magazine, spoke of the difficulty Hispanic publishers have in gaining recognition from advertisers, illustrating her points with examples from the cosmetic industry.

Although studies show that Latina women spend more money per capita on cosmetics than any other group, the ads tend to go to general-circulation magazines like Vogue instead of to periodicals published by and for Hispanics. Latina Style is a nationally distributed glossy magazine targeting bilingual, English-dominant Hispanic women.

Ms Arias also noted that People magazine

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