



EL OBSERVADOR

Let's Close the Hispanic Educational Divide

By **LYSHA LANSING WASSER FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER**

I work as a Youth and Family Advocate for the Oregon Council for Hispanic Advancement at Binnsmead Middle School in southeast Portland. The students at Binnsmead affectionately know me as the "Spanish guy" and Latino parents know me as *maestro*, or teacher in English.

In my profession, it is easy to see there is a great divide here in the City of Roses. There are people who have access to success here in Portland, and there are people who are given public institutions who cannot serve

them, and public servants who cannot speak their language.

If we as Portlanders really want to create a just and democratic city, we need to assess its current failures. For those of us who do not speak a second language, this assessment may be hard to develop. I hope this anecdote provides for a richer understanding of why our society sets up Latinos for failure instead of success.

Recently, a young man of 14 stepped into my office. He didn't inquire about college counseling or help on homework. Instead, he asked me if he knew where he could start working. He told me his older sister, who used to attend Marshall

High School, dropped out. She left school to start working two jobs to pay the rent and put food on the table. He also told me that his mother and father both work full time jobs. Everyone in the family makes minimum wage and the threat of bankruptcy is always present.

He told me he wants to stay in school, but he cannot afford to.

This is the reality that so many of our Latino brothers and sisters face. Latinos work the toughest jobs and get paid the least. Their inability to speak English inhibits them from filing tax returns and receiving health care. In many instances, they pay double the taxes

and receive little or no social services. Without a good education and an ability to speak English, they are confined to this destructive "circle." To keep off the streets, many have no time for getting educated.

Education is not a luxury but an inherent right. We must change the laws of Portland to ensure that right exists. A living wage of \$10.00 an hour would allow parents to pay

bills, participate in their children's education, and spend more time with their families. New jobs for bilingual adults in public education and health care would ensure accessibility to our public institutions and decrease unemployment.

In short, this goes beyond a Latino issue; it describes the tactics of divide and conquer warfare. If our neighbors are treated

without justice and we do not speak up, then we invite the same injustice upon ourselves at a later date. As long as we articulate the us/them mentality, politicians will continue to divide the multicultural majority whose interests are the same, and give welfare to the very rich.

If you are interested in giving a greater voice to the Latino population of Portland, give me a call at 503/248-7909.

Los Lobos Performing at Waterfront Blues Festival



The Waterfront Blues Festival's closing headliner on Sunday, July 8 will be Los Lobos. The popular band has earned its status as one of pop's most uncompromising innovators throughout its 25-year history with a unique sound encompassing punk rock, blues, traditional rhythms, straight-ahead rock and roll and R&B grooves.

Father Says 11-year-old Son Can Live with Stepfather in United States

HAVANA (AP) — Yusniel Hernandez, 11, appears calm despite all that is happening: his mother died last weekend, he has moved in with his birth father, and the stepfather he lived with for nearly a decade wants him to live with him in the United States. Yusniel's stepfather, Dr. Leonel Cordova, made a dramatic defection to the United States last year after abandoning a Cuban medical mission in Zimbabwe, and now lives in Miami.

Cordova had been working on getting U.S. visas for Yusniel, Yusniel's mother Rosalba Gonzalez, and a 4-year-old daughter the couple had later.

But Gonzalez died in a motorcycle accident in Havana Sunday and Yusniel went to live with his birth father, Lazaro Hernandez, whom Gonzalez divorced nine years ago.

Hernandez, a 33-year-old gardener, said that he had given his ex-wife legal authorization to take the boy with her in the United States before she died and that he would let the boy live with Cordova in Miami if Cuba grants Yusniel permission to leave

the country.

The boy had lived almost all his life with Cordova, and would miss his half sister Giselle if the 4-year-old goes to the United States without him, Hernandez said.

But Yusniel's trip to Miami is far from certain.

The communist government has not commented on the case since Gonzalez's death and there has been no indication whether authorities will grant the authorization needed for Giselle and Yusniel to leave Cuba.

If Havana denies an exit visa to Yusniel, he will stay in Cuba with his birth father. Although Yusniel knows his mother died, he is excited by the possibility of living with his stepfather in Miami, Hernandez said.

Giselle, meanwhile, lives with her aunt in a community west of Havana. The girl does not know that her mother is dead and speaks with her father in Miami several times a week, said Tania Cordova, who is Cordova's sister.

Looking for an **excellent** part time **JOB?**

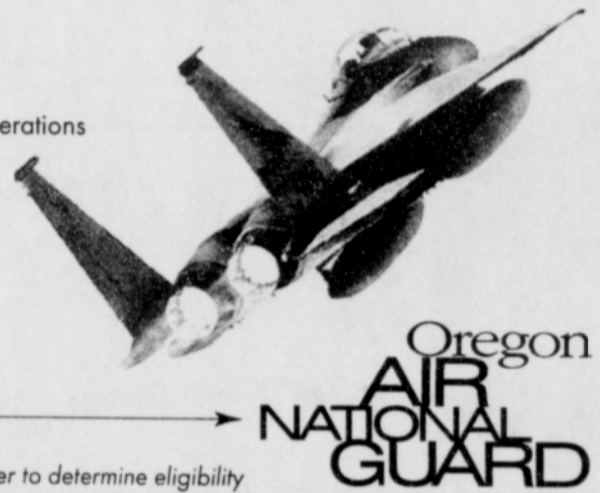
What Part-time job will pay you up to **\$700.00 per month** for only two days worth of work?

Excellent Educational Assistance Program:

- Student Loan Repayment Program (up to \$20,000)
- Montgomery GI Bill (up to \$263.00 per month)
- Ask about our \$350.00 per month (tax free) Incentive Kicker
- Ask about our \$8,000.00 enlistment bonus

Openings Now Available in the Following Fields:

- Aircraft maintenance & avionics
- General purpose mechanic & vehicle operations
- Computer maintenance & switching
- Information & inventory management



Contact your local Air National Guard Recruiter to determine eligibility

Fuel Your Future

Air National Guard

503.335.4040 800.392.1801

www.orport.ang.af.mil



Piense: Su hijo es inteligente, saludable y encabeza la lista para ir a la universidad. Le encanta la trayectoria que su carrera ha tomado. Está haciendo muchas de las cosas que planeó y hasta otras que no había planeado. Vivir la vida en plenitud es fácil cuando tiene una familia que lo respalda. American Family Mutual Insurance. Llame ahora mismo y platique con nuestros agentes amables.

Usted tiene una familia que lo respalda

Comprobará por qué constantemente nos mantenemos en el rango A+ (Superior) según A.M. Best, la autoridad en la puntuación de agencias de seguros. Después, vaya...sueñe...planee. Usted decida lo que haga enseguida; nosotros estaremos aquí para ayudarle.

Legalcare You Can Afford

Been Overcharged For A Repair, Moving Traffic Tickets, Tried To Return A Defective Product, No Will

Discover Real Savings

- Free Will
- Document Review
- Traffic Tickets
- IRS Audit
- Unlimited Phone Calls
- Letters Written For You
- Preventative Legal Service
- And More

Retain your own attorney for \$26/mo or less!

For more information

Kareem Or Sanja (503) 285-1531
Sanjafaye@aol.com

Toda La Protección Bajo Un Mismo Techo



La póliza que usted adquiere sólo está disponible en idioma inglés. American Family Mutual Insurance Company and its Subsidiaries, Madison, WI 53783-0001 www.amfam.com