

# EL OBSERVADOR

## Adulation for Sotomayor

(AP) -- Apparently, no one told Sonia Sotomayor that Supreme Court justices are supposed to be circumspect, emerging from their marble palace mainly to dispense legal wisdom to law schools, judges' conferences and lawyers' meetings.

Since becoming the first Hispanic justice, Sotomayor has mambled with movie stars, exchanged smooches with musicians at the White House and thrown out the first pitch for her beloved New York Yankees. A famous jazz composer even wrote a song about her: "Wise Latina Woman."

In short, Sotomayor has become a celebrity — all without having made a single major decision at the nation's highest court.

Autograph seekers, picture takers and well-wishers hound her wherever she goes, months after her confirmation hearing.



Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, a lifelong Yankees fan, shakes hands with Yankees' catcher Jose Molina (left) and Jorge Posada (right) after throwing out the ceremonial first pitch during a Sept. 26 playoff game.

swearing-in and first appearance in the courtroom.

Recently, the new justice was swarmed by people with cameras the minute she appeared in the Grand Foyer of the White House during a celebration of Latino music.

The throng around her didn't

part until the hundreds of concert guests were ushered to their seats in a giant tent on the South Lawn, and it quickly regrouped once the concert ended. Some of those lucky enough to get photos with the justice squealed and proudly displayed their happy-snaps

## Celebrity grows for first Hispanic justice



Latina magazine shows Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor on the cover of its December-January double issue.

for others in the crowd.

At that event, only Sotomayor got a standing ovation when President Barack Obama read a list of famous Hispanics from government, music and acting who were present, including George Lopez, Jimmy Smits, Los Lobos, Sheila E. and

Eva Longoria Parker. Hollywood and the world of music are also paying attention to her. One of the most popular YouTube clips of Sotomayor is her confidently mamboing — in heels! — with "La Bamba" ac-

tor Esai Morales at a National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts just weeks after she was confirmed.

The song Sotomayor and Morales were dancing to? Bobby Sanabria's "Sotomayor Mambo."

## Latino Theatre Earns Support

### Roof fix coming thanks to PDC

Miracle Theatre Group has been awarded a \$30,000 grant from the Portland Development Commission to fund major repairs to the roof of its Latino arts and culture performance center in southeast Portland.

"PDC has a strong commitment to neighborhood vitality and local business success," says Becki Marsh of the Portland Development Commission. "We welcome the opportunity to work with community assets like the Miracle Theatre."

El Centro Milagro, a facility that encompasses both the nonprofit organization's offices at 425 SE Sixth Ave. and its performing arts facility at 525 SE Stark St., has been the home of the 25-year-old Miracle Theatre Group. The roof has leaked for many years, and a reputable roofing contractor has recommended a major repair.

The grant helps PDC achieve its goals of contributing to a diverse, sustainable community while supporting several objectives of the Central Eastside



The Miracle Theatre Group has won a \$30,000 grant from the Portland Development Commission to repair the roof of its performing arts center and offices in southeast Portland.

Urban Renewal Area.

The governmental support complements significant recent improvements made by Miracle, which were supported by \$56,000 in grants, donations and

in-kind contributions. During that time, the façade was painted and crowned with a custom-made, bilingual marquee. In the interior, the lobby and adjacent café areas received updated

amenities and accessibility enhancements, while the basement studio was transformed with new flooring, paint, lighting and soundproofing in order to expand its use for both theatre rehearsals and community events.

"Even more than the ability to address our concerns for the safety and comfort of our artists and patrons, the PDC grant reinforces our belief in the power of community and recognizes that what we are creating here at El Centro Milagro is a cultural institution that is integral to the vitality of our neighborhood and the region," says Miracle Theatre Group's Executive Director José E. González.

## Latino Song and Dance Fundraiser

Miracle Theatre Group invites the public to its holiday open house and fundraiser from 2-4 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 5 at 525 S.E. Stark St.

The event will feature the talents of some of Miracle's favorite Latino musicians and dancers, spirited beverages, eggnog, and the opportunity to receive some lovely holiday

gifts when guests make a tax-deductible donation to the nonprofit group. An assortment of gift certificates, FlexPasses and stocking stuffers will be available for purchase.

Teatro Milagro Artistic Director Dañel Malan will get the afternoon started with some Christmas standards on her ukulele. She will be joined by

Joaquín López, sharing some of the songs he has composed for the upcoming world premiere of American Sueño. Caguama, a local Tex-Mex band, will get things cooking along with salsa dance lessons by Gabriela Portuguese. Even Santa will slip in at some point — guests should plan to bring their cameras!

## High Schools Overhaul

continued from Front

being a system conversation," explained Smith.

For instance, Grant High School, as one of the most populated schools, would have to shed some of its students after the redesign, as well as the funding attached to them.

Smith stressed that she has heard from people who value not only robust neighborhood schools, but also some degree of choice, which is why three to

six smaller schools with specific focuses will also be offered.

"I get that smaller environments work for [some] kids," said Smith, who has a background in alternative education. "They go ferret out what's right for [them] and where they're going to thrive."

But despite the district's ambitions, it still faces other difficulties.

Students entering the high school system either come out of a large K-8 school or a smaller

middle school. Because of the disparity in size, students have often had a very different experience before entering high school. Critics have complained this arrangement puts schools on unequal footing.

"You don't get to look at part of it and not all of it," said Smith. However, she also added that there are still some benchmarks all students entering high school have to meet.

Smith also mentioned that PPS' budget have been ravaged by the economy. The school district's budget lost \$30 million

last year, and is expected to take another \$14 million hit in the next biennium.

When asked how PPS will monitor equity after the implementation of the redesign, Smith pointed out that the district already has a number of mechanisms in place to monitor the progress of students, which they will continue using.

But she noted that it will take some time for the redesign to fully take hold.

"This kind of change takes years to build up a new school culture," she said.

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