

HOLIDAY WISHES

DIALOGUE
ON DIVERSITY

DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY
NEWSLETTER

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

MA. CRISTINA CABALLERO

The Fall of 2005 has been a season of signal events in the unfolding history of the Dialogue. The Health Care and Housing Issues Symposia have continued in their upward arcs as experts ever more incisively lay out the problems and chart the paths to modest improvements in the states of affairs American society may expect to encounter in time to come. The Awards program in early October brought together an illustrious cluster of honorees, among these the retiring Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States, the Deputy Mayor for Legal Affairs of New York City, and the Assistant Secretary for Health in the Department of Health and Human Services. And . . . as chilly weather first makes its way to the Capital, the very notions of Dialogue and of Diversity find themselves in the midst of a peppery controversy in the pages of the most respected journals – on which more later.

I was delighted to join with a learned audience at the New America Foundation in uptown Washington for a very creative and finely detailed account of the options facing the country in managing the public finance, what with the budget's deficit yawning before us, and the gap threatening to widen as time goes by. For organizing these and like sessions we are much indebted to our friend Maya Maguineas, Head of the Foundation's Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, who was a speaker at our 2005 Public Policy Forum on the Social Security crunch. The New America colloquia stand at the apex of their class in policy discussion.

Ceremonies celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Latino Health Initiative of Montgomery County, Maryland, were held at the resurrected art deco shopping district in the center of Silver Spring, the growingly sophisticated eastern urban anchor of this populous and affluent county in the Washington suburban ring. The LHI (ILS) in its genesis was a small office advancing bravely onto a vast and all too little worked field. But it went forth under the direction of the remarkable Sonia E. Mora, who had come to the U.S. from Colombia and who operated with a powerful administrative knack and awesome public health knowledge, together with a ready appreciation of both mainstream and the several Latino cultures that were her subject. Five years later, with a staff of a dozen and a hardy



Ambassador Luigi Einaudi, Under Secretary Paula J. Dobriansky

community volunteer crew of twice that number, she has made of the ILS a force bringing about real differences in the health of the County's very numerous Latino population. The anniversary ceremonies were attended by both the now and future Presidents of the County's governing Council, who, along with other speakers, expressed satisfaction with the direction of the county's policies as expounded by the ILS, summed up as a "right to health": that each person, without regard to ethnicity, origin, or economic class, enjoys – now and actively – a stable entitlement to medical care provision, which cannot be permitted to languish and cannot be removed. The policies and practice of the State and Federal authorities are patently inadequate to the obligation, and the local community – where, as it is said, the root of all politics lies – must pull the weight. A dent has been made in an immense complex of human anxiety and need, and much further careful, and often arduous, work is in prospect, the direction, fortunately, being in the very able and success-prone hands of Ms. Mora.

These are surely somber times, but at once hopeful ones, in which, as at few other junctures of history, the invitation is out for fresh conceptions and renewed energies in reconstructing tired and effete institutions. Wars, natural calamities on every

continent and an aggressive warming trend in our shores, and perhaps scarcely less menacing demographic trends, fiscal disarray in the country's public accounts and, for many, in private accounts as well -- all summon us to attend with a renewed discernment to what were once called the better angels of our nature.

Friends from the house of Islam have just observed that season of sober reflection prescribed for the month of Ramadan, the conclusion of whose fast is celebrated in the 'Aid al-Fitr; as had the Jewish community in their holy week culminating in the Yom Kippor a month earlier. Finally, the third of the communions counted among the People of the Book, the Christian, have begun their minor penitential season of Advent, whose solemn tones are resolved in the joyful celebration of the incarnation. In all is a deeply set concern for the solidarity of the human community as a whole, and the sense of a universal bond of solicitude across lines of ethnicity, gender, and economic class. It is in something of this spirit that the Dialogue, in each of the last eight years, has combined the annual Holiday Fair for its members and friends with the Children's Gift Collection. This year's celebration is again to be held at the Wardman Park Marriott in Washington, through the sponsorship of Marriott International, and through the special generosity of the employees of Citibank in the Washington metropolitan area, whose Christmas party once more this year is the occasion for gathering gifts for the children to benefit by the Dialogue's collection. Gift collections, we have noticed, are proliferating in this holiday time all around the capital city. We hope these are similarly coming to be duly frequent in other cities in the republic, and we dare to think that the Dialogue's example has influenced their coming.

DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY INTRODUCES 2005 HONOREES

In ceremonies the even of October 5 at the Organization of American States in Washington, Dialogue on Diversity presented its eleventh annual Entrepreneurial Excellence and International Awards, this year with the title: *Links of Excellence in the Americas: Promise in a Challenged World*. The awards Gala again this year was attended by a cross section of O.A.S. diplomatic representatives, friends and members of the Dialogue, representatives of the Dialogue's corporate family, and the lineup of award laureates from all corners of the U.S. A VIP lunch had begun the day's festivities, bringing together the 2005 honorees, members of the Awards Committee, and an array of distinguished guests at Washington's stellar Taberna del Alabardero restaurant.

The Technology Mentor Award, newly instituted for 2005 in collaboration with the La Familia project of Career Communications Group, was conferred on Nina Vaca, head of Pinnacle Technologies, Dallas, Texas. Herself a notably successful entrepreneur in the IT industry, she is dedicated as well to broader concerns for the Latino community and for her fellow entrepreneurs. Ms. Vaca counts it a part of her duties to impart counsel and aid on the world of contemporary technology and on entrepreneurial best practices to a new



Carol Robles Roman

cohort of women business owners from the Latino cultural community and other segments of the ethnic mosaic. G. Winston Smith, Microsoft's Director for Supplier Diversity, presented Ms. Vaca's award. La Familia, whose ambit of programs have inspired a healthy attention to the cause of cultural diversity, is one of many projects of the Baltimore-based educational entity Career Communications Group, whose chief mission, which is of nationwide scope, is to foster technology training and science education for minority students and for the country's growing corps of pioneering entrepreneurs making their way in a diverse and highly competitive societal setting.

The classic Entrepreneurial Achievement Award, in its 2005 edition, recognized two outstanding achievers. The first of the co-honorees was Anu Shukla, head of RubiconSoft, who arrived in the U.S. from India with an undergraduate degree an institution in the home country. Ms. Shukla moved swiftly, once launched on the U.S. entrepreneurial whirl, to assume direction of a series of firms in the IT industry, where she has



Anu Shukla and Bettie Baca

held sway as a continually successful presence ever since in the Silicon Valley tech corridor -- during years when many of the firms populating the valley had fallen on hard times. Co-honoree Sylvia Medina, an environmental entrepreneur, located her business, North Wind, Inc., in the small town of Idaho Falls, Idaho and set out to make her mark in the industry. Now with branches around the country, she has built the firm's annual revenues to near \$30 million, largely by dazzlingly fast and accurate performance on contracts with a string of federal agencies. The Award was presented to Ms. Medina by Theresa Alviljar-Speake, head of the Office of



Ma. Cristina Caballero, Sylvia Medina, Theresa Alvillar-Speake

Economic Impact and Diversity at the U.S. Department of Energy, and herself a former Trailblazer Laureate.

The 2005 pair of Trailblazer Awards, honoring career-long achievement by women in private and public-sector work as well, went this year, first, to Dr. Cristina Beato, Assistant Secretary for Health at the Department of Health and Human Services, for her innovative and tireless work for public health, preventive practice, and delivery of health care services to underserved communities. Carmen Delgado Votaw, again a former Trailblazer Award recipient, presented the Award. Trailblazer honors were granted as well to the remarkable Carol Robles-Roman, Deputy Mayor of New York City for Legal Affairs, whose meteoric career has drawn attention both within the Big Apple and nationwide. Rita DiMartino, still another Trailblazer Laureate, from '1998, and a resident of both Washington and New York, was summoned to do the honors in the citation recognizing Ms. Robles-Roman's achievement.

The evening's highlight came among the International Awards, with the presentation of a Lifetime Achievement Award to Ambassador Luigi Einaudi, whose distinguished diplomatic career has been capped by his tenure as Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States, a post from which he has very recently retired. Ambassador Einaudi was a leading figure in the negotiation of the arrangements for restoration of the canal properties to Panama, and has been the timely source of diplomatic expertise in many inter-country quarrels that have threatened the peace in the Americas. The award was presented by Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs Paula J. Dobriansky, whose introduction contained a precis of the Ambassador's very illustrious diplomatic career.

The Global Diversity Award grants recognition to an executive from within the private sector whose career has advanced the cause of diversity in the supply chains of the country's industry and commerce. This year's Global Diversity honors went to Mr. Gus Siekierka of Computer Sciences Corporation.

The Liberty Award, instituted in 2002, is conferred on women whose courage and intelligence have advanced the cause of human rights in places of the world where these are threatened.

This year co-honorees were recognized. Two of these are the women serving as the chief cabinet officials concerned with women's status in countries where the state of women's interests and opportunities are precariously held in the balance, Hon. Massoud Jalal, Minister of Women's Affairs of Afghanistan, and Hon. Azhar al-Shakli, Minister for Women's Affairs of Iraq. A third Liberty Award was presented to the Women's Alliance for Democracy in Iraq, a domestic organization of Iraqi women of the diaspora whose efforts and concerns have effectively supported the drive, both within Iraq and around the world, aimed at assertion of the rightful opportunities and entitlements due to the women of Iraq. This award was accepted for the Alliance by its President, Ms. Basma Fakri, who was accompanied by several of the WAFDI leadership lineup. It was presented by Mr. L. Ronald Scheman, Director General Emeritus of the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development and a foremost exponent of the conception of a hemisphere-wide civic and economic community of the Americas.



Dr. Cristina Bewato and Carmen Delgado Votaw

The Alliance, Ms. Fakri said, maintains an ever broadening communication with the women's groups in the home country, affording them encouragement and support; among the modes of mutual participation across boundaries is the U.S. correspondents' hosting visiting women members of the governing bodies and of the array of civic organizations that day by day are taking shape in the country, and making accessible to a broader public audience the views of these women in the acutely demanding political roles they take on as they strive to fashion a proper place for women and their interests in the uneasy balance of political forces in contemporary Iraq. Later in October Ms. Fakri delivered an address to the U.N. Security Council on behalf of Ms. Hanaa Edwar, who could not travel to the U.S. for the occasion. Ms. Edwar is head of al-'Amal [Hope], an Iraqi organization conducting a broad range of educational and training activities throughout the country. In these remarks, delivered at a closed session in which four other speakers joined her as presenters, she relayed the commentary, at some points quiet critical, on the political developments now in train. The so-called Personal Status Law, by now in force for some forty five years, dealing with, among other points, what we



Basma Fakri and L. Ronald Scheman

call domestic relations, or family law questions, was relatively modern in its approach on gender matters; in the free-wheeling political ethos that has taken hold throughout the provinces since the upheavals of 2003, however, the law is plainly in peril -- in late 2003, in fact, the Governing Council had repealed it and only by the swift and deft parliamentary maneuver of one of the women members of the Council was the repeal rescinded, under apparent pressure from Mr. Bremer, the American governor at the time. Whether the women's leadership, who have very laudably gained some 30% of the seats in the provisional parliament, may block its repeal at this juncture --specifically in the parliament to be imminently elected -- is a touch and go proposition. The address to the Security Council constitutes an urgent plea to the U.N. and its various organs to monitor, to urge, and to mobilize international support for serious recognition in Iraqi law of the provisions on women's legal status to be found in the Security Council Resolution 1325, to which reference is repeatedly made. This resolution, dealing with the special concerns of women in wars and post-war reconstruction situations, was approved unanimously in 2000, and stands as the first formal statement of the Security Council on these questions. While the Security Council can do little more in these circumstances than to "urge" and "encourage", the document does operate as a significant moral and intellectual block on which to build in the policy discourse in progress around the world.

HEALTH CARE SYMPOSIUM

Dialogue on Diversity, in collaboration with AARP, and with the assistance of the such groups as the an National Cancer Institute, the National Diabetes Association and the Kidney Fund, presented its fifth annual health care symposium on August 24th, 2005 at the AARP's national offices in Washington, D.C. This year's theme, *Science, Economics, Policy: the Benign Conundrum*, as the title suggests, is an assessment of the broad social challenge of health care provision. We are confronted with marvels issuing almost daily from the medical science establishment. Again, American society is the richest on the planet, and, in addition, it is

possessed of sophisticated political institutions. The puzzle is how to get these three excellent resources working together to provide a suitable degree of access to high-quality health care for all the persons living in that society.

Three aspects of health care were brought under the microscope at the 2005 Health Care Symposium. In the first of these segments experts on the financing of health care delivery and on the legal/regulatory framework that intimately regulates it, review alternative schemes for organizing the daunting tasks of producing, allocating, and paying for increasingly refined and ever more insistently demanded services, medications, and hardware.

The second of the morning's panels dealt with a variety of special concerns -- mental health, and how mental disorders in many ethnic cultures are sometimes impermeable to effective recognition and treatment (and how, on the other hand, many apparent mental disorders have cultural rather than deep-clinical aetiologies). Another topic was the provision of health care services for migrant populations, from itinerant agricultural families to newcomers packed into dense urban enclaves. Finally, the panel turned to the urgent matter of making medications -- a dominant means of treatment in contemporary medicine -- accessible for the large swaths of uninsured among vulnerable classes of the larger population.

A third panel took up questions of central concern to women executives and business owners as they seek to guard themselves against downtime from sickness in their stressful working lives. Exports explored the complex of questions surrounding several major disease categories, most notably diabetes and cancer. Emphasis here, as elsewhere in the symposium, was laid on preventive steps and early recognition of tell-tale symptoms. The policy aspect of this question lies in legislative and regulatory decisions whether there is a true cost advantage in covering systematic prevention measures as part of the range of services covered by Medicare and similar programs.

Speakers at the midday session update the Symposium on the range of problems encountered in many aspects of minority health care provision, and on the accessibility of medical insurance for entrepreneurs, the self-employed, migrants, and the poor, all persons for whom some of the normal channels for coverage are not readily available. Mr. Garth Graham was principal speaker, outlining the aggressive programs of the Minority Health division which he heads at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The program continued with a Roundtable dealing with "culture competence" in health care design and delivery, and with a cluster of topics related first of all to social diversity as a factor in health care, but also to essential economic concerns, and to the imperatives of care for the elderly, the isolated, and others with special needs.

Henry Acosta, heading the New Jersey Mental Health Association pointedly outlined the acute disparities in access to



Technology Mentor Awards Nina Vaca and G. Winston Smith

health services for racial and ethnic minority groups, with an overview of recent reports documenting these disparities, which exacerbate the massive impact of mental illness on personal lives and on our the national economy.

Michael Wenger, of the Health Policy Institute at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, outlined the comprehensive labors of research and advocacy carried on at the Joint Center, which had its genesis in 1970 to provide training and resources to African American elected officials and has now broadened its agenda to become a think tank focused on the gamut of concerns within American minority communities generally. The prime goal now is to ignite a “Fair Health” movement to design policies and institutions affording people of color what will amount to an inalienable right to equal opportunity for healthy lives. More than abating health disparities, its concern asserts a right, in the sense of a stable entitlement that cannot be left to wither on the vine and cannot be undercut by the vagaries of public policy, to enjoy quality care, and it’s about generating public support, not to cut programs for less advantaged people, like Medicaid, but to find ways to improve care for everyone. Today, 51 years after the seminal decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, and 50 years after Rosa Parks struck the blow that precipitated the dismantling of the odious scheme of overt racial disabilities, many public policies still operate to confine people of color to back-of-the-bus health care. The dismal numbers are well enough known: more than forty million people are without health insurance, health-care providers are rarities in too many communities of color. Public policies on the environment and on the allocation of resources, with their reflexes on health and health-care provision, disproportionately affect people of color. Fewer health care providers of color are trained -- a fact producing frequent discrimination in health care or, equally lamentable, a want of cultural competence and a plethora of knotty language issues in the interface with patients. The predictable results are a disproportionate incidence in minority communities of diabetes, stroke, heart disease, and cancer, higher rates of infant mortality, and lower life expectancy. With reference to implicated policy questions, the grim figures show a dismally heavy incidence of unemployment,

incarceration, and other ills among minority populations. Funding for Medicare and -- especially -- Medicaid, the Health Policy Institute has maintained, ought not to be determined by a budget target set without weighing the global effects of the funding level, specifically in the erosion of national health, particularly the health conditions of the minority communities, on the economy and on the frayed social comity prevailing in the society.

Elaine Taylor-Gordon, publisher of *WomensBiz.US*, a magazine featuring women’s enterprise success stories and pointed tips for efficient business operation, turned her attention to the question of aging and health. The aging are not a population with whom we will never have to deal -- they are our own parents and, ultimately or perhaps imminently, we ourselves. The fundamental difficulty among older residents of this affluent and welcoming society seems to be, alongside the all too frequent paucity of resources, an invincible unwillingness to admit the flagging of one’s faculties and capacities, and, correspondingly, an unwillingness to disclose frankly to medical professionals all the symptoms. The old often resolutely reply that all is fine when the physician or nurse probes for their symptoms – the consequences are dire as untreated but fully treatable conditions are left to advance to the stage of costly, painful, and deadly afflictions. This, therefore, is another field for the exercise of an especially supple and sensitive culture competence. The *Dialogue* is pleased to welcome Ms. Taylor Gordon among its roster of creative advisors. Her offices are in midtown Manhattan, where she pursues her many- faceted interests as publisher of a business magazine and writer on a range of public interest subjects. It is there that she had made a distinguished career, over better than a score of years, in the world of advertising and public relations, working in purely commercial promotion to the intricate tasks of image fashioning for such clients as the Helmsley hotels and their notorious doyenne.

Among speakers making the long trek from the balmy airs of California to torrid Washington on an August day was Dr. Angela Arango, presiding over a busy medical practice in the Los Angeles area, who described the imaginative innovations through which standard medical office practices have given way to a regime of culture adaptation with the largely Latino body of patients among who she works, the goal being to produce for this community a complex of medical care facilities and a combine of providers second to none of those flourishing in the affluent mainstream districts of the vast Southern California metro area. The personable Dr. Arango is the epitome of sensitive empathy, shrewd cultural perception, and medical skill. Among others crossing the continent for the day’s symposium was Mr. Carl Dickerson, an employee benefits consultant of forty years’ experience and head of his own management firm, speaking on the techniques of medical service provision from an economic point of view, laying out the sobering constraints that shape the costs and the policies of the massive medical insurance industry. The costs of medical care to patients and their families are accelerating and threaten to zoom out of sight and out of range of any reasonable cash flow capacities of all but the very rich. Where along the chain

of functionaries in the process of care provision is blame to be placed? Mr. Dickerson locates much of the responsibility in a system of medical office management sluggish in adapting to technology and to efficient use of the faculties of both office personnel and of patients. Patients could go far in compiling their own medical histories, in developing narratives of their conditions, and the like, all before arriving at the office or in sessions with interviewers at the office before the nurse practitioners or physicians enter the scene. Numerous such devices, both high- and low-tech, could, Mr. Dickerson pointed out, speed and render more accurate the processes that now are sometimes clogging huge and costly bureaucracies. The savings, aggregated across a national economy, would significantly moderate the fast elevating expenses in medical treatment.

HOUSING SYMPOSIUM

Dialogue on Diversity's 2005 Housing Issues Symposium tackled the number one problem in the realm of housing policy and practice: affordability, in sessions held October 4th at the National Press Club in Washington. The housing program again this year was presented in tandem with the Dialogue's annual Awards Presentations, which followed on the evening of October 5th at the Organization of American States.

Development of the Symposium agenda was the work of private housing consultant Philip Miller, who guided discussion among the roster of experts. Among panelists were executives from the Santa Barbara County, California Housing and Community Development Authority – an agency maintaining a continuing collaborative relationship with the Dialogue on housing issues. Susan W. Gates, Vice President for Public Policy at Freddie Mac, one of the giant complexes backing up housing finance with banking institutions throughout the economy, discussed the problems of “predatory lending” practices that threaten the integrity of housing finance markets. Keith Wright, Vice President and Director for Community Relations at Citicorp, along with Tony Cato of CitiMortgage, described in detail the work of Citibank in tailoring the loan process for enhanced effectiveness among minority communities where the affordability issue has its most painful incidence. Alejandro Becerra and Ron Jauregui, research fellows and housing experts attached to the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, aided the discussions at many points. Gloria Causar, an immensely knowledgeable figure in the affordable housing field, now with Jovian Systems at Reston, Virginia, near Washington, and formerly a Federal official managing the celebrated Section 8 housing assistance program, discussed that and similar programs and reviewed the salient issues in the affordability picture today. Theresa Alfaro Daytner, a resourceful and successful entrepreneur, operating her own construction company, expounded the case for home-based businesses, which can manage to combine under one rental or housing payment both residence, child care locale, and business office.

The Symposium's opening seminar, aimed at the affordability problem, reviewed the proliferation of financial products designed to facilitate homeownership among lower and middle income households. This perennial stumbling block to

homeownership is, if anything, intensifying with the current “housing bubble”, which has sent real estate prices and rentals to stratospheric levels in cities around the country. Provision of housing thus becomes an acutely painful task for all but the most affluent strata of the country's population. One reflex of this phenomenon is the relocation of employees to lower-cost sites lying beyond easy commuting distance to their workplaces -- a development seen in a particularly acute form in Santa Barbara County. The resultant pressure on the highway system devours both time and gas -- commodities in all too short supply in the modern world.

Home based entrepreneurs and housing experts explored the prospects for home-based businesses, an increasingly widespread means for working around occupancy prices, child care expense, and other pressures. These businesses, imaginatively confronting the pressures facing individuals and families of modest income levels, are of especial import for minority households and, perhaps most of all, for single parent households, where the potential for child care expenses, commuting, and other costs alternative to home-based business are especially daunting.

One aspect of the affordability problem is the difficulty minority populations experience in procuring even the manageable housing financing arrangements they might be within reach of. Weaknesses in commercially available credit reports, or, what is equally frequent, the absence of traces of dealings that would go into such a report, effectively shut them out of the financial sources at the outset. It was suggested in the interchange among panelists, that some very low-tech devices could abate some of the fears newcomers and minority persons experience in the face of the daunting face of financing institutions. A “stepped approach” might involve payment of utility and other trade bills with a money order instead of cash; or, don't walk to the telephone company, but utilize a financial intermediary, say a Citibank branch that takes utilities payments. All simple acts that operate to build trust in the financial complex.

Susan W. Gates, Vice President for Public Policy at Freddie Mac, discussed the destructive phenomenon of predatory lending. The practices in question are the inducing of less financially capable and less sophisticated buyers to commit themselves to obligations that while exhibiting a glitzy initial appeal, subject the persons who have entered on the obligations to unexpected perils in meeting them – an interest only loan, for example, will catch the unwary obligor with the duty to produce a large quantity of cash when the inevitable balloon come due. Hiding large amount in interest and other costs under the mysterious device of “points”, and the list goes on. HUD and other regulatory sources are concerned. And again the problem presents itself as a matter of policy issues. The states began enacting anti-predatory law, and Federal guidelines are in prospect for the whole country. HCL [high cost loan] financing could nevertheless remain legal if certain extra protection, by way of thorough disclosure and otherwise, is afforded for the borrower. It is not recommended that high cost loans be banned outright since with appropriate borrowers they may be a useful – and only – source of liquidity. The

search is on for a reasonable definition. The offending deals are cloaked with a patina of legality; they stand just short of fraud. There are, again, questions of placing false information on the documents. Predatory loans are subtly contrived. It is finagling. We see these things on the ground. Freddie Mac must confront the question of its own policies so that it can effectively block the more unconscionable of these financing devices, without at once barring economically expedient deals within a legitimate high-cost market (one operating with sophisticated, experienced business persons as customers), or again a loan of modest size to persons, possessed of moderate sophistication, seeking to get back in the game after catastrophic financial reverses.

The symposium heard representatives from Santa Barbara's Housing Authority, Patricia Gabel and Jim Claybaugh, sent by the authority's director, Edward Moses, who himself had been the lead speaker at the housing workshop in the Dialogue's March Public Policy Forum. Faced with housing strains far beyond the ordinary, the city engaged Mr. Moses, a figure clearly in the first rank nationally among the experts on affordable housing techniques, to deal with -- if dealing with were in the cards at all -- the worsening state of affairs.

Santa Barbara, lying at the Pacific seacoast, the population and economic node of Santa Barbara County, California presents demographic contrasts and the strains of economic class disparities, with the focus on housing. On the one hand Santa Barbara and its environs have become the favored locale for a growing population of the very rich, all demanding luxury housing and services to match, as they come to be more and more numerous in their migrations from farther south, from the more affluent precincts of Los Angeles. The newly sprung up apparatus of luxury services has swiftly come to be fabled as nearly equaling those of Beverly Hills and Palm Beach. At the same time the less economically robust population, many of whom have for long called Santa Barbara their home, are finding real property prices borne aloft at a dizzying rate. The upshot is that the prices of housing are rising to levels unmanageable for the bulk of the population, many of whom are of necessity removing to more distant places. If they are to be employed in Santa Barbara, then they are faced with a long and onerous commute. This has become a particularly acute difficulty for the city's municipal services, whose police and fire forces are caught in the housing vise. The solution for many of the population, however, is to make housing do double duty, serving as both a residence and a workshop or office. That is to say: home for the family and at once commercial space -- in short, the quintessential rationale for home-based business, the high price of occupancy being manageable if in fact the payment represents the rental on one's home and the rental on one's commercial premises at once. Mr. Jim Claybaugh, from the Santa Barbara city government, narrates the story of thousands of tiny business offices, ateliers, and studios, for a burgeoning variety of artists, advertising consultants, craftsmen manufacturing computer components, and others, a beehive of activity behind the façades of houses on a quiet street, and linked by internet with the necessary correspondents around the world, and the district's zoning rules viewed with an extensive liberality.

Among the expedients being considered by the Housing Authority are some modes of using the land within Santa Barbara County that now is reserved for national forest, along with County-owned land. The latter would be subject to use, through a single asset corporation, for leasing to homeowners -- housing on land leased, while one's home is owned, further legal incidents to be elaborated. Again, partnering with Fannie Mae is the avenue to creating such financing products as the 40-year mortgage. Funding for other affordable housing, with subsidized public elements, could come by way of shrewdly designed bond financing for low income families, and of course through facilitating arrangements under the existing market processes. Still another contribution to the larger affordable housing solution is telecommuting, a workplace-substitution device which public policy may be able to encourage.

NOTE FROM PROF. MERCEDES LYNN DE URIARTE

Professor Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte of the University of Texas, situated at the State's capital of Austin, offers her thoughts on some recent developments in the State's political arena, in matters striking close to the core human concerns of a large portion of the population. Prof. de Uriarte is a skilled practitioner in journalism and, as an academic, a thoughtful and trenchant critic of its theory and practice. She is a 2004 Dialogue on Diversity Trailblazer Award Laureate.

The Texas House [Legislature] failed once again, she writes, to pass a school finance bill, throwing the second special session this year into doubt. Only a few days are left before Legislators head home for a year before reconvening. In a state with a long history of combat over investing in the education of its future, Legislators could not agree either during the regular session or the first special session on school funding. This time both Republicans and Democrats joined to vote down 124-8 the latest measure supported by their leaders, including Gov. Rick Perry. These would have lowered property taxes for business and home owners, but raised consumer tax on some items. The state has no income tax.

For more than 30 years, Texas evaded rulings by both Texas and the U.S. Supreme Courts to reform school finances to assure K-12 equity across class lines. Not until Gov. Anne Richards were steps taken to do so. Texas schools, now 60% minority, rank 33 in the nation according to the Morgan-Quinto national rankings (based on 21 factors including student test scores) and experience some of the highest minority drop out rates in the nation. Along with California, Texas is a minority majority state. It has the largest number of minority elected officials, but equity across race and class lines remains unattainable. Based on employment rates, earnings and health, Texas minorities suffer a low quality of life. Latinos have the highest number of individuals in their child bearing years; the state also has the highest number of uninsured children.

DIVERSITY: THE WORD EMBATTLED

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization, has followed up its earlier Declarations on Human Rights, on Economic and Social Rights, and other matters, with a new document, the Declaration on Cultural Diversity. While the organization has no power to coerce compliance with its notions, and its pronouncements are replete with the verbs “urge” and “encourage”, it has worked to inspire some and to annoy others. The present paper, ringing the changes on the word diversity, and contemplating that in a diverse world a useful balm is found in dialogue, has given rise to the usual responses. Among the ranks of the annoyed, as it has lately appeared in the columns of the Washington Post, is the writer George Will, a prolific and profoundly instructive fount of ideas on public policy, baseball, culture, philosophy, baseball, political machinations, and civilized manners. It is scarcely surprising to find that the word diversity, if not the notion itself, enters the scene as an annoyance. If the annoyance given by the word Diversity itself were not sufficient, Mr. Will pointedly notes that it is indeed accompanied – and not once only -- by the word “dialogue”. Over and over both words are hurled into the breach by the compilers of the Declaration.

It may be of interest, first, to look over the document in question with a discerning eye, and then to pick apart the notion of diversity itself, for its better and its worse. If our Dialogue has hit upon Diversity for its theme -- an impulse dating to 1990 -- is this an effete conceit, a played out motif in the latter days? Has the word, and indeed the notion itself, been co-opted by devious social actors and turned to idle uses?

The indictment runs as follows: The trumpeting of Diversity, however it may be cried up as a tolerable or even productive state in societies, seems a soft way to sidestep the inevitable, the adversity of interest, grounded in deep conviction on morals and dogma, that drives most human affairs, so that opposed forces are destined to clash, and in the presence of force something has got to give. Again it is a cloak for opposition to the morals of a society, the offending parties advancing under the pretense that their malefactions are only the diverse features about a supposed culture. Next, the claimed sanctity of diversity is thought to shelter such practices as honor killings from any critique launched by the moralists of contrary cultures. As for the term “Dialogue”, the indictment has it that dialogue is a mere palaver, a shrinking from the rigors of action. Dialogue plays with the images of adversity, but without force, and accomplishes little but to divert needed effort from both rigorous moral analysis and timely action in protection of interest.

Each of the counts recited above doubtless has its ray of truth, but clearly the proper role for a rigorous moral analysis is as the tool that gauges the appropriate deployment of dialogue relatively to force, and judges with due subtlety when the practices of a culture are not only strange and at best an acquired taste, but when instead they are radically subversive of any viable social order.

Professor Amartya Sen, a Nobel Laureate for Economics, 1998, now at Harvard, writing in a recent op-ed piece in the Financial Times, argues that the diversity of cultures within a country will yield a productive, pacific multicultural condition if persons from within each of the constituent communities reasonably discern the multifarious patterns of association among the members of that array of communities, so that there comes to be an intricate web of associations and commonalities in tastes, faculties, and manners, an exquisitely adjusted social texture that is both fostered and acknowledged. This condition is contrasted with the all too prevalent tendency to stamp all the members of each community with a single, indelible mark of identity, one locking each person in to his subgroup, which is thought to bear no community of concerns with any of the others. This single-character stamping is characteristically done in the dimension of religion. The disquieting result is not a multicultural state, but a collection of multiple “monocultures”, separate, sterile, and generally hostile.

Upon reviewing the UNESCO document itself one first notices, perhaps a matter of small significance, special variants of the text as it appears in the several languages -- English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, and Arabic -- in which the paper has been published. One curious trope of the Russian version, for example, is the rendering of “pluralism” by the identical English word transliterated: “Plyuralizm” -- perhaps part of the Russians’ penchant over the last years for importing Americanisms into the popular speech, perhaps the betrayal of a want of precision in any expressions to be drawn from the matrix of the native idiom (the less likely possibility, given the remarkable opulence of sense and coloration within the Russian language). More interesting, the phrasing of the several versions, while each manages to rope in the whole set of ideas set out in every other, does so with a differing thrust and a varied set of nuances.

Alongside the above-mentioned less praiseworthy sides of “diversity” and of the factions parading under its banner, still another set of doubts, once again picturing “diversity” as deeply suspect among the conditions to be welcomed in societies, is the argument from political practice, which focuses specifically on the perverse uses of the conception of diversity allegedly invited by the UNESCO Declaration. The chief complaint launched against the UNESCO enterprise issuing in the present Declaration is clearly the suspicion that in recommending an autonomy of diverse cultural traditions, the Declaration may well give license to a country whose governing majority (or its ruling elite) bears a cultural tradition of its own, to glory, quite properly, in that native tradition, alongside those like cultural apparatus of neighboring places, but at once to enforce a uniformity of cultural observance within its own borders, thereby effectively steamrolling its own minorities. That such practices have engendered abuses, up to and including massacres of the most ferocious kind, is a notorious and sad fact of the contemporary experience.

While it may be plausibly argued, as above noted, that ill-intentioned rulers may seize some moral advantage for their oppressive projects from the licensing under this Declaration of a national style and manner for each of their own

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principalities, to the exclusion of other, lesser cultures contending on the same ground, it must be conceded that the Declaration by its own language appears to place obstacles in the way of this abuse. In the section entitled From Cultural Diversity to Cultural Pluralism (containing Paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of the Declaration), the first of the Paragraphs is at pains to link diversity to human progress quite generally, but that link may be asserted precisely because of an interplay among the distinct cultural moments within the larger society. Thus it is implicit that the several sub-communities bearing diverse cultural elements have got to stand side by side, moving in the same living space, if their magic is to work. The flavor of the exposition is given in the following: "Culture assumes diverse forms across place and time, and this diversity benefits from both the authentic roots and the plurality of distinct characteristics in the societies and groups of which humanity is composed. Cultural diversity, in its essence, is the source of mutual interchange, of innovation, and of creativity; it is a necessity of human existence just as biological diversity is a necessity for the realm of living entities as a whole. And in this sense cultural diversity is the shared spiritual patrimony of humanity; it behooves us to respect it and to affirm it as in the interest of generations present and future." The essence of the

doctrine on diversity is that the good flows from an interaction, thus from the coexistence of cultures in a single place and time.

Perhaps the key sentence, appearing in Paragraph 2 of the Declaration, is: "Cultural Pluralism is the answer given by Policy to the fact of Cultural Diversity" followed by "and it is not possible to separate it [pluralism] from the existence of a democratic framework . . . since its project is the mutual interchange of cultures and the flowering of the creative capabilities that nourish the common life." And, in Paragraph 3, (Cultural Diversity characterized as the engine of progress) "Indeed cultural diversity broadens the opportunities open to each individual; it is one of the causes of advancing development, not in the sense of economic growth solely, but only as it also means a way to attainment of a satisfying intellectual, emotional, creative, and spiritual life."

In the minds of the stolid of the world there is perhaps an access of elemental horror in the suspicion that a certain fluidity has invaded the foundations, the bedrock of the social comity. Indeed, cultures fade, languages, however fine instruments they have been made, change and pass from the scene, and heroes are put down as laughing stock only a century down the road. But for all this, centers do hold, and new schemes of order find themselves put in place.



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