

SPRING NUMBER

DIALOGUE
ON DIVERSITY

DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

MA. CRISTINA CABALLERO

Preparations are in full swing for Dialogue on Diversity's initial venture into the world of Southern California. Our twelfth Information Technology/Entrepreneurship Conference, held last year in New York, moves for its 2006 edition to sunny Los Angeles. We have discovered a wealth of skilled and fascinating experts for the conference speakers' roster, and we are encountering a similarly hospitable circle of women's business organizations to aid with the outreach in this ~ for us- new and uncultivated field. The Conference site is the Microsoft Corporation's newly occupied offices in the midst of the civic and commercial core of the city, on the 33rd Floor of the Wells Fargo Center, next to the U.S. Bank Tower skyscraper (known as the Library Tower, from the 1926 Pharaonic-motif Central Library across the street), and blocks from the Municipal and Court complexes and the grandiose new Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels (Nuestra Señora de los Angeles). We invite not only interested Angelenos but also our friends from elsewhere in the West and around the country as well to make the trek to the vast L.A. metropolis for this novel and interesting conference. And I must surely thank our Board Member Mary Barrientos, who has been a resourceful guide and mentor in my several trips to the site. For detailed information on the Conference agenda, parking, and other logistics matters see www.dialogueondiversity.org. To register online go to www.regonline.com/93917. During one of the logistics meetings, held May 1st at the 33rd floor Microsoft offices in downtown Los Angeles, we had the moving experience of viewing from far above the marching of many thousands of people that afternoon, a many colored mass, moving as ineluctably and deliberately as a glacier, converging on the municipal buildings in the city center to make known the never to be quenched desire to be part of the society

With this Spring edition of the Dialogue's Newsletter we are launching the 2006 Awards season, opening the field for nominations in the Entrepreneurial Excellence awards categories ~ this year presenting four distinct honors classes. First is the corporate Excellence Award, followed by both the Mentorship Award and the special Technology Mentorship Award, and finally, the all important Entrepreneurial Achievement Award. The nomination form is enclosed in this bulletin, and it can be readily downloaded as required for mul-



Ma. Cristina Caballero, Rebecca Vigil Giron, Ruben Barrales

tiple nominations at www.dialogueondiversity.org, the Dialogue's internet site. The nominations form contains a description of each award and its special standards, along with instructions for submitting supporting papers, etc. Please look over the form and begin planning your submissions. The nominations deadline this year is August 1st.

This year, through the sponsorship of Freddie Mac, a prime guardian of the financial underpinnings of the country's housing stock, a special award is to be conferred, honoring an entrepreneur of the New Orleans/Gulf Coast area for creative leadership and skilled effort much beyond the ordinary in advancing the reconstruction of the devastated housing stock and infrastructure harmed in last Fall's hurricanes. Freddie Mac, from its on-site operatives to its highest management echelons, has responded swiftly to facilitate the array of novel financing arrangements that the extraordinary conditions call for. Many of the company's executives have gone to the scene in person, not only to map out the financial stratagems to be employed but to take an active hand in the work, face to face with those who have suffered, moved by the demands of a common humanity. See the report on Freddie Mac Vice President Susan W. Gates's experiences as part of a church delegation from the Washington area laboring for some days in the rubble and muck of the afflicted city.

REP. NAPOLITANO OPENS 2006 FORUM



Dialogue on Diversity's 12th annual Public Policy Forum, presented this year at the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill, led off with an overview by California's Rep. Grace Napolitano of the 2006 policy landscape. Rep. Napolitano recounted her recent journey, with a few other Members, to view at close quarters the ruins of a city and the cultural microcosm that had been new Orleans, and to bring back the human sense of the devastation, voicing the response that

conscience, not to mention sound public policy, enforces on each of us. It is on the psyche that an event of this magnitude impresses the most lasting scars, and in the hurry to put together the beams and stones of the city's structures and to lay out and re-pave its streets, there must be due thought of the invisible but ultimately costly wounds to the psyche that can be cured, if they are to be cured at all, only by costly and persistent treatment with the best of the armamentarium of a society's skilled interventions.

SUSAN W. GATES



As Vice President for Public Policy at Freddie Mac, Susan W. Gates is the point person for exploring policy alternatives, measuring them against the dual constraints of a genuine public concern and the inescapable press of business necessities. It is her special skill to develop policy positions that are financially viable and at once consistent with Freddie Mac's special position as an entity affected with a public interest.

Among Ms. Gates's other tasks in the corporate management, she has taken the lead in exploring the part Freddie Mac, as the source of a substantial portion of housing backup financing in the country, must play in the rebuilding of the New Orleans/Gulf Coast area. In this work Ms. Gates unites a skilled business understanding with the on-the-scene observations of a reporter and the compassionate response of one coming face to face with an immense human calamity. She outlines her notions of the directions reconstruction may take in New Orleans and in the Gulf coast towns east and west of it, and of the manner in which such institutions as Freddie Mac may have a role in restoring some measure of security and comfort to the persons -- and their communities -- whose economic and social orientations were turned upside down in the events of last Fall. Ms. Gates holds a Ph.D. degree in public administration. Before her fifteen years with Freddie Mac she put in a stint at the Office of Management and Budget in the Executive Office of the President. Among her other posts at Freddie Mac is her early editorship of *Secondary Mortgage Markets*, the company's economic research journal. She is a Director of Homestretch, a major source of transitional

housing for otherwise homeless families in the Virginia parts of the Washington metro area.

Ms. Gates recounted her own experience in visiting the Gulf Coast and the city of New Orleans itself. She had gone as a representative of Freddie Mac to explore the post-hurricane state of affairs and to develop a picture of the magnitude and the contours of the vast task that Freddie Mac expected to become engaged with as the reconstruction of these miles of devastation began and the needs for financial support to back up these undertakings would necessarily come on line. At the same time Ms. Gates was one of a party of persons from a church in the Washington area, devoted to engaging one on one, in the immediate scenes of destruction, with the persons and families that had come through the disaster, property for the most part lost, body and soul intact but far from unscathed. They were destined to bear the impress of the terrors and grief in their mental make-up for years to come. Yet Ms. Gates and her companions were not without a certain power to reignite a renewed hopefulness. She recounted the story of a household whose home was standing but severely damaged. An elderly lady and her grandson had lived there, the grandson, a painter by trade, despondent and unable to get out of his bed in a filthy room on the second floor of the house. Ms. Gates and her party set about clearing rubble from the structure, and at length began painting. After a while they saw, much to their surprise, that the grandson had for the first time stood up, and in a moment he too joined the party, taking in hand the wonted paint brush and getting down to the common task.

DWIGHT P. ROBINSON

Freddie Mac's Senior Vice President for Corporate Relations and Housing Outreach, Dwight P. Robinson, has held this post since 1999, shortly after he joined the company. Before coming to Freddie Mac he served as Deputy Secretary at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), where his duties were those of Chief Operating Officer. Still earlier he had led the government-owned GNMA (Ginnie Mae) and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. Mr. Robinson has been in the forefront of the long-term movement of the financial and housing industries to automate, rationalize practices, innovate in the range of proffered financial products, and otherwise act to make homeownership a practical possibility for a greatly broadened segment of the American population. It is in residential real property, the classical form of asset ownership, that the typical household gains its principal wealth. And a heightened degree of financial savvy -- not solely in isolated experts but in ordinary members of the country's population -- is expedient, not to say purely necessary, in order to manage the acquisition of such properties and to husband that property as a prime source of the household's security and financial stability. Mr. Robinson brings to the work of solving of these problems a career's experience in working with housing consumers, the leadership of the country's financial institutions, and the governmental authorities whose policy decisions influence the industry's course

Financial literacy is knowing how to participate in a sophisticated economic and commercial system, and how, in particular, to use credit. These things, however, are not part of the learning of "everyman"; they are not part of the basic

curriculum of schools along with reading and writing, let alone arithmetic. But for their importance in the successful management of one's important affairs they are equally a matter of necessity. Yet it is of only so much use to sit in the ivory tower of Freddie Mac and dictate the way things ought to be. One has to get down into the communities and look at what makes them tick one by one. Language, traditions, and culture, all impart their special slant when it comes to imparting the basic lore of "credit smarts". One technique is the "train a trainer" movement. One person is trained by our professionals in the basics of financial literacy, and that person in turn passes along the word to others. Instruct them well so that they can make it from there on under their own steam.



Edward Moses,
Santa
Barbara
County

Dwight P.
Robinson,
Freddie
Mac

EDWARD MOSES

Lending his very considerable expertise on housing issues in their nexus with social policy at both the federal and local government levels, Ed Moses, chief of the Santa Barbara County, California Housing and Community Development division, led the Forum's housing issues discussion.

Mr. Moses recounted the often troubled state of housing at local levels in city after city around the country. Of all the locales in the country it is in Santa Barbara, where he is Director of the Housing and Community Development Authority, that housing is the least affordable. Among many results of this fact, the city itself is finding it hard to retain its own public service workers, in particular such essential workers as the police and firefighting crews. They cannot afford life in the city itself and have to live at a far remove and commute - an expedient costly in both time and money. In Santa Barbara County, under Mr. Moses's resourceful leadership, the city is attacking the problem of housing costs directly. With ingenuity ways and means can be designed to bring these costs down from the stratosphere. Funding from government furnished community development block grants is a promising source, as are cities' buying down the indebtedness, or again, payments can be forgiven for the first several years of a loan. But all the efforts so far mustered have gotten housing costs down - and by significant amounts - only for a number far less than the number who ideally would live within the city limits.



REP. XAVIER BECERRA

Rep. Becerra reviewed the general outlook for policy in the Congress, with a not unexpected emphasis on the immigration bills vying for support in a legislature whose members are of many minds on the subject, fairly reflecting the views of a country of correspondingly many minds. The key, in Rep. Becerra's view, was to couple with any attempt to tighten controls on entry, a humane and economically rational plan for bringing order to the economic and civic existence of the millions of persons, mostly migrants from south of the border, whose lives become a said mix of fear and contention with the institutions of government, while they are at once in the thick of the economic boom fueled in large part by their own toil. Turning to other parts of the domestic agenda, Rep. Becerra draw attention to the lamentable state of health care in the country and contrasted the urgency for action on this front with the sluggishness of a Congress and Administration content to devise tax favors redounding to the richer strata and simultaneously draining the public revenues of the wherewithal to meet the critical state of health care and other human needs.

REP. MIKE HONDA



Rep. Mike Honda, whose district lies largely within the famed San Jose-Silicon Valley region in California, offered a disquisition on a cluster of topics, seasoned with his patented wry wit, centering on the essential human preoccupations of a concerned and reasoning society. Among these were the problematic war being waged in the Middle East, and the paradoxes, cruelties, and perversities of an immigration policy crying out for change. Rep. Honda, heading the Asian American Caucus in the House, has pioneered collaborative projects with the Black Caucus and the Hispanic Caucus. (It is of interest to note that Rep. Honda, in the course of a stint as a Peace Corps worker in Central America, schooled himself to a high level of efficiency in the Spanish language.) The Tri-Caucus project has begun to have its effect in the moments of opinion on Capitol Hill. On the language questions that often inflame excitement on many fronts, both in the Congress and the larger community, Rep. Honda remarked that there is no single language for the U.S., never was, and, so long as the U.S. retains its vitality as the destination for the economically and socially motivated around the world, never will be. Above all, it is the task of the Congress to fashion a revamping of immigration law that will past muster as "logical, orderly, and comprehensive".

IT/TELECOMMUNICATIONS:

EMILIO GONZALEZ

Verizon stands in the public eye as not only one of the top telecommunications firms, but also the entity at the forefront of this season's policy battles over the government's role in regulating the burgeoning cosmos of IT and communications modalities – a commercial and industrial complex that changes its contours and colors from moment to moment with the impetus, on the one hand, imparted by the country's prolific technological elite, and also under the spur of dazzlingly swift competitive initiatives in the participating industries. Emilio Gonzales, as Verizon's Executive Director for Public Policy and Strategic Alliances, stands among a cluster of Verizon executives concerned as corporate leaders with this facet of public policy, figures who have taken on an unaccustomed role as advocates in the current debates. The only sure thing seems to be that the telecommunications industry will be off on new departures in unpredictable directions, morphing into unexpected configurations in the face of the best laid plans of the earnest legislators attempting to channel it.

DAVID HONIG

An academic toiler, a lawyer (holding a degree from Georgetown University, and the moving genius in the non-profit Minority Media and Telecommunications Council, David Honig is driven by a consuming concern for the fashioning, out of the raw material of the telecommunications and media industries, a well-honed instrument for bringing information and a broad palette of responsible opinion to communities, especially those of minority populations, around the country. It has for long been Mr. Honig's settled purpose to foster the growth of minority ownership, management, and employments in broadcast media. The MMTC, under Mr. Honig's leadership, represents dozens of civil rights and religious organizations in specific proceedings before the Federal Communications Commission, and offers the services of the country's only medical and telecom brokerage owned within the minority community. He has pioneered the litigation before the FCC of causes whose cutting edge is civil rights concerns

HEALTH CARE

LINDA SINGER



Among a plethora of academic distinctions and organizational leadership tasks, is Linda Singer's work as head of the Appleseed Foundation, an organization she has been part of since its beginnings over ten years ago. Appleseed operates a network of some eighteen centers around the country furnishing legal assistance to large numbers of persons suffering poverty, medical afflictions, and varied

injustices but lacking in the know-how and funding to engage powerful legal expertise from their own resources.

Health care, as a policy matter, Ms. Singer remarked, is all about money. The techniques of health care are advancing and are in ever greater demand, but the system of providing the funding is rickety, unsure, and is perhaps coming apart before our eyes in this decade. At this point in the story the very rich are well fixed, through their own resources, while the elderly and the very poor are taken care of in large part by governmental systems. The fortunate among the employed are insured through their jobs, although this source of insurance is shrinking rapidly as premiums, shooting upward year by year, come to be too high relatively to cash wages for employers to sustain. The existence and adequacy of employer-provided health insurance is fast disappearing in small firms – even in those that previously had managed to provide it. Thus there is a sharp divide between the groups that are more or less sheltered by some form of insurance or by governmental provisions, and on the other hand the large and growing army of the uninsured and unprovided for. This is the radical divide in society that is deeper and more devastating yet than the much noised “digital divide” To keep the health care system going as levels of demand, and correspondingly the levels of expense, move steadily upward there is no “silver bullet”. One step might be to permit small businesses to place their employees into the Medicaid system, in which administrative costs, gauged by past experience, have remained relatively modest.

IMMIGRATION

RUBEN BARRALES

Mr. Barrales, as Director for Intergovernmental Affairs for the White House, has the task of mediating the Administration's intentions and proposals to the mayors of the country's cities and to the governors of the several states, and to take account of the plans and ideas of these local authorities for relay to the decision-makers within the Executive Branch. His post is that of a veritable ambassador, with all the requisite diplomatic sensibilities, between these vital strata of government, which can easily come to be out of sync if not attended to with smart and sympathetic care. “It is a great year,” he began, “when one is invited to Dialogue on Diversity.” His task in the Administration is to deal with the leading figures at all levels of government, on both sides of the aisle, and with Tribal Chiefs and authorities in the Territories. A window of opportunity is open, lasting no longer than six to eight weeks, for crafting an immigration bill. The proper work is to design one that deals comprehensively with the questions implicated by contemporary migrations. Enforcement against employers, enforcement at the border, citizenship – all are parts of a plan, but none solely, and no combination of fewer than all elements will suffice. The Bill lately approved by the House of Representatives is conspicuously not comprehensive, in that it has to do only with enforcement and not with the fact that the migrants, documented or not, are embedded fast in the economic and social operation of the society, so that any form of simple removal is not practicable. But if not removed, then one must devise a more orderly and humane scheme for dealing with them as a presence. Without both elements a Bill will not get through the process of becoming law. There is good in a rule that permits persons to go back and forth easily. Now, because of the difficulties imposed, there is a sticky net holding persons on one side of the border.

ERIC GUTIERREZ:

As Legislative Staff Attorney for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational fund (better known as simply MALDEF) Eric Gutierrez has exercised his expertise in the complexities of the immigration laws and regulations, and at once has honed a sense for what the shape and contours of a more economically and legally rational system of immigration, and one more nearly humane as well, might be. He first looks at the large ideological context in which the immigration discussions are proceeding. These basic positions, reflected indeed in the present legislative encounters, rest on corresponding notions of the fundamental meaning of the migrants among us. One notion is that of a nation built of infusions of immigrants bearing their special cultures and manners and their own forms of work and accomplishment. The other view is that of the guardians of the values of an existing culture, with its virtues and civilization, while the stability of that world is menaced by influxes of aliens that beset it. In the encounter of these ideological moieties within the community, the concerns in play focus on three features of social life. One is the benefits that a new economic resource confers on consumers and on the newly arrived bearers of that resource (a reference, that is, to the human capital represented by the entrants). The second focus is the discomfort and hardship experienced by the persons displaced or disadvantaged by the changes, even upheavals, that the advent of the new resource occasions in the country's economic arrangements. The other side in the legislative encounter desires a "comprehensive" reform of the immigration system, that is, a new statute that makes its bow in the direction of rational and effective enforcement of entry restrictions, but at the same time regularizes the massive presence of the migrant resource in the economy and society and proposes to effect its integration, sooner or later, into the larger social and civic structures (legal frameworks for permanency, incl., ultimately, citizenship).

REBECCA VIGIL-GIRON

New Mexico's Secretary of State, Hon. Rebecca Vigil-Giron, has served two full terms in that office and is standing for election to a third. Her native place is Taos, New Mexico, and she is distinguished by a genealogy displaying a train of ancestors reaching back eleven generations on the territory that is now New Mexico, land that formed a part of Mexico proper until some 150 years ago. The duties of her office include supervision of the State's electoral system, registration of trademarks, security interests, and corporate records, and overseeing the State's Notaries. The latter seems a recondite and prosaic matter, but attention was paid when Ms. Vigil-Giron conducted a supplemental training for Notaries as a prime bulwark against the flood of identity theft and other species of high-tech fraud. Perhaps her most signal achievement has been the massive task of bringing an entire State's system of voter registration and elections into modern times - New Mexico's is regarded now as a model of efficiency and fairness. Her reputation in this is such that she has been called in as a consultant on electoral processes in such distant locales as Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, and Angola. She has also served as Executive Director of New Mexico's Commission on the Status of Women.

Ms. Vigil-Giron is one more of those persons remembered as an active supporter and friend of Dialogue on Diversity in the early 90s, during the period just after its founding, when she was often in Washington. We are delighted to welcome her back.

ZAINAB AL-SUWAJ

The peregrinations of Zainab al-Suwaj began with her sharply conceived sense of the peaceful genius of the message of Islam as announced by the Prophet -- a sense that was sometimes at variance with the cultural and political strivings throughout her native Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East that, as she believed, enlisted the words and loyalties of Islam for the baser interests of politics and hegemony. A compelling sense of decency led her to join efforts with those forces seeking to depose the singularly cruel government of Iraq in the aftermath of the Gulf War in the early 1990s, and in consequence she was hurried into an exile, which she turned to an opportunity to speak, think, write, and organize, not for simply a political end, but in order to build institutions of tolerance and amity with societies around the world, in particular bridging the gulfs of belief and practice that have for too many centuries separated the Peoples of the Book, the Jews and Christians, whose literatures shared to a striking degree the history and insights of Islam. Ms. al-Suwaj is Director of the American Islamic Congress, which maintains offices in Washington, New York, and Iraq itself, and her voice is known well to American audiences in its concern for the position of women in societies that often constrain their rights, and for advancing the cause of what one might call a rapprochement among the venerable systems of historic religious practice that had their origins in the severe landscapes of the Middle East. Ms. al-Suwaj outlined for the Forum her concerns and her carefully articulated views of the state of human rights, the lights of faith, and the chances of peace in a notoriously perilous world.

KENNETH CLARK

A long time supplier diversity executive with Verizon, or, rather, its predecessor Bell Atlantic, Kenneth Clark has now assumed top leadership of the very productive Maryland/D.C. Minority Supplier Development Council, headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland, just outside Washington. Mr. Clark's remarks, a highlight of the Forum's midday session, described the scope and depth of the Council's work. Nationally some 3500 corporations are part of the MSDC networks, while in the Washington area the minority firms in the MSCD lineup number some 400. The Council aids in certifying these, in facilitating the formation of joint ventures in appropriate cases, and in otherwise fitting them for taking their honored places in supply chains nationwide.

CONGRESSMAN LUIS FORTUNO OF PUERTO RICO

Again this year the Forum was honored by the appearance of Puerto Rico's voice in the Congress, Hon. Luis Fortuno, who discussed, among other facets of policy, a matter of particular concern to the islanders - the status of their Commonwealth in its relationship to the US.. Should it continue in its present status, move toward independence, or seek Statehood? It was



Alma Morales Riojas, Zainab al-Suwajj, Ma. Cristina Caballero, Hon. Luis Fortuno argued that the condition of a territory was intended constitutionally to be a temporary condition, an essentially transitional status, from which in the natural order of things there would be a procession to Statehood – this was clearly the case with the territories in the west of the continent in the nineteenth century. While the geographical frontier of the West has come to its term, and the century long movement of settlement of the continent concluded, there yet remain territories, now in quite different historical and sociological circumstances. But logically, it is maintained, the same rule should govern now, a century on, lest the affected lands of the latter day territories be consigned to a persisting “limbo”. It is contemplated that a two-step referendum might soon test the temper of the population on these questions on the island’s future.

THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS QUESTIONS

It is evident that the questions surrounding diffusion of information technology, its availability to broad swaths of the U.S. population, and its often transforming effects in the business and personal affairs of population communities, are a matter of lively public concern, and that the government’s role in encouraging, channeling, or indeed impeding the diffusion of these technologies is a current topic for consideration by the Congress. The primary consideration must surely be to design any scheme of regulation in such a manner as to accommodate the greatest variety of novel technologies in both an engineering/scientific and a commercial sense. The speed of innovation on both counts has been nothing short of dazzling over the last two decades. The regulatory efforts of the government ought not to be situated unnecessarily in a position of fighting the regulatory wars of a past era, so that the regulating authority finds itself perpetually “behind the curve”.

The plan of regulation, further, should steer clear, insofar as possible, of furthering one particular technology or one industry or one firm within an industry vis a vis others – any attempt to “pick winners” will damp the market’s dynamic election of the most efficient and will indeed come a cropper when the market, as it generally will, finally forces the hand of resistant regulators. This is especially a pertinent consideration in a technical and commercial environment in which the direction and speed of development are hard to forecast, and indeed essentially depend on more or less unpredictable innovation.

It is further apparent that the flexibility and nimble responsiveness that will make an industry such as the IT/telecommunications maximally efficient will be more or less seriously hampered by a regulatory approach restricting modes of operation, territories, quantities, or the like. Typically the social goals that such restrictions are aimed at furthering can more efficiently be attained by some form of subsidies to users, who are left to bid freely on competing services and rival commercial and technical features in firms vying for their patronage. The problem of extending access to otherwise underserved geographical and social pockets within the country, and of overcoming any threatened “digital divide”, again raises the question whether relief should be attempted by directly prescribing territories or service requirements rather than employing subsidies or tax incentives of general application for producing a specified kind of result. The direct imposition of service requirements has the curious, and perverse, effect of forcing suppliers to levy what amounts to an internal tax on service to profitable areas in order to subsidize internally the less profitable ones. Thus the damping of access produced in the “desirable” market areas substantially militates against the goal of advancing broadband access. It seems likely that any subsidy would best come out of a society’s general funding capacity rather than as a “tax” on the very service one is setting out to advance.

HOW NEW IS THE NEW NEW ORLEANS

The battle of New Orleans is known to 150 years of school children as one of the justly celebrated victories of the new American republic. A second battle of N.O. has been taking shape since the devastation worked by the hurricanes of last Fall – one not nailing down U.S. independence against the envies and encroachments of the old world, but the struggle between classes and ethnicities on the ground, between modern and traditional concepts of city design, between the grassroots powers of residents and the theories of the always benevolent outside experts, between ambitious locals and steely-eyed bankers and insurance powers in distant financial centers, not to mention the unruly horde of helpers from Washington. One of the fronts in the contention is the character of the architecture of the nascent new metropolis. Newspapers have recently displayed a range of the design proposals for the city, which, to say the least, will solidify the position of N.O. in the vanguard of a national culture, and will dazzle the eyes of visitors from far and wide. These, if they ever come to be built, will mix N.O.’s image as a time-independent miniature of 18th century French to 19th and early 20th century African American awakening, with visions of what must seem a late 21st century future. See the Washington Post archive for the drawings. The upshot of all the brewing of diverse ideas will doubtless be an ingenious combine of all, welded into a fascinating unity by the city’s fundamental tolerance and an indomitable delight in adventure.

BANDERAS, LUZ DE LA AURORA, Y NUEVAS CANCIONES

A flurry of concern for the integrity of the Republic has roiled the placid surface of life in Washington during the last couple of weeks over the discovery of a Spanish language translation of the national hymn, the Star Spangled Banner. The weight of

opinion, if one may judge from the letters to the editors columns, is that the translation is in fact a sign of willed adherence, among a new wave of migrants, to the symbols of the country, a sign they have fashioned with the best tools at hand - their own culture and language.

The remarkably fecund history of American politics and letters has thrown up a variety of icons, so to speak, for the chief values in the civic life of the Republic. Among the more meaningful surely are the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Second Inaugural Address of Lincoln; of lesser rank but still meaningful to large numbers of citizens are such symbols as flags, seals, the official national anthem and the honored repertory of other patriotic songs (America the Beautiful, Columbia the Gem of the Ocean, and others). The essence of the American experiment is a certain universality - one not abstract and ideological, but grounded in the concreteness of coexisting cultures rubbing shoulders day by day - a shared brio and openness of spirit which has made the country a magnet for persons of a large and growing number of nationalities, unrelated to one another and generally unrelated to any of the existing inhabitants of the country. It may seem something of a blasphemy, therefore, to argue that any of the fundamental symbols of the country are bound to a particular ethnic population or to a fixed ethnic tradition or culture.

A Washington Post article this week has collected versions of the Star Spangled Banner, most made a century ago or more, all in the form of translations into such tongues as the German, Polish, Samoan(!), Yiddish, and French, to name a few. Each version in its day was sung with due gusto; each evinced a distinct pride in the newly adopted polity, and the Republic has survived the experience more or less intact. It has been a salute by the ancestral cultures of the world to the new song of the new world.

The society has a certain interest, as do the several individuals within it, in the inculcation of a knowledge of English, but only for reasons of a facility in commercial transactions. The state may fairly invest in enhancing the "human capital" of the society for this purpose, an undertaking very like the ways in which the government in the 19th century put funding behind "internal improvements", this being one of the contemporary versions of a like economic phenomenon. Alongside the language instruction that would be involved, logically would go instruction in reading, in computer use, etc. Very much the program of education that has been maintained from time immemorial. But beyond the ambit of this very pragmatic and circumscribed interest, the state's authority finds itself on less solid ground if it proposes seeking to enforce the usage of a particular language for literature, domestic conversation, entertainment, and the like.

For the persevering aficionados of the English language, there will always be the classics to console oneself with. Perhaps even the high officials of the government might, as an example, take up the study of English themselves.



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