

AUTUMN NUMBER

DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

MA. CRISTINA CABALLERO

Once more Dialogue on Diversity welcomes the season of early winter festivities with its Holiday Fair on the second Saturday of December. This year's celebration is again being held in Washington at the Wardman Park Marriott Hotel, December 9th. As always we encourage the Dialogue's friends in their cities around the country to organize their own holiday Fairs for the collection of gifts for children in each locality whose families cannot bring them, however they wish they might, the pleasure and educational boost represented by well chosen toys. These toys, brought together by our members and sponsors for distribution by community organizations, are a modest but real and, we believe, meaningful contribution to the well being of many children in the Washington metropolitan area.

In early November I was in attendance, by invitation of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women of the United Nations, at meetings at the U.N.'s New York headquarters. NGO Committees form useful adjuncts to several agencies of the U.N., of which we may mention the Status of Women body and the Economic and Social Council. The ring of NGO committees for the several agencies constitute as a whole a consultative resource to the U.N.'s agencies, the effective work day by day that does not often emerge into the papers along with the occasional reports of crises that from time to time occupy the security council. During the year ahead the Dialogue proposes to undertake renewed initiatives to play a due part in the NGO consultative committees, in particular that attached to the Economic and Social Council. To this agency, the attending circle of NGOs has been a resource of some significance, bringing together civil society representatives from parts of the world whose thinkers and leaders we do not encounter in our quotidian rounds even in the national capital - a productive of sound and creative thought for the ESC and, of course, for the civil society organizations themselves engaged in the dialogue.

I was delighted to attend the reception for Swanee Hunt, former Ambassador to Austria and a recipient in 2004 of the Dialogue's International Award, on the publication of part one of her autobiography, *Half-Life of a Zealot* - a story of an exceptional career, now in mid course, of an exceptional figure in contemporary America.



Dr. Cristina V. Beato, FDA, and Sonia E. Mora, LHI; Health Care Symposium

Hispanic Link, a prominent Washington-based newsletter, recently posed to notables in their community the following question: Leaders in the newly elected Congress have listed their idea of the top six issues on the legislative agenda. What do you rank as the six chief issues? Here are the top six as seen from here. We believe these rankings would be shared by many in our Dialogue.

1. Immigration: the enactment of a realistic program for legalizing migrants, facilitating their employment, and opening the way for a longer-term status, ultimately citizenship, for those desiring it. Divert funding from building a border fence or maintaining other Draconian border control activities to subsidizing higher education for economically disadvantaged (among them Latino) persons. Provision for accepting potential streams of refugees from Iraq and elsewhere in Middle East in the event of withdrawal of a U.S. shield.
2. Extension of prescription drug benefits to broader reaches of the population, perhaps through such a program as the present Medicaid system, in which the needy receive the principal quantity of aid.
3. Putting Social Security and Medicare on a long-term sound fiscal basis, through extending full percentage FICA tax collections to higher income levels, and through reasonable adjustments to retirement age and other benefit features (to be effective after several decades) for persons entering the system now.



Entrepreneurship and International Award Recipients, Hall of the Americas, October 2, 2006, Washington: Sonia Marie De Leon de Vega, Jeanette Prenger Hernandez, Vivian Shimoyama, Myra Magee, Ma. Cristina Caballero of Dialogue on Diversity, Zainab al-Suwaij, Rynthia Rost, Keith Wright, and Roberto Barragan

4. Revising domestic intelligence statutes ("Patriot Act" etc.) to shore up civil liberties safeguards.
5. Economically effective greenhouse gas emission limits (probably through sale of tightly limited pollution rights). Also ratification of proposed international environmental agreements.
6. Minimum Wage, with re-training for persons displaced by foreign trade development or domestic unemployment, and expansion of earned income credit for more substantial aid to working (and unemployed) poor.

COST OF A POUND OF CURE? QUERIES DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY IN ANNUAL HEALTH CARE SYMPOSIUM

Dialogue on Diversity presented its sixth annual Health Care Symposium August 23rd at the National Education Association headquarters in Washington. The Symposium title, *Cost of a Pound of Cure: Reorientations in Policy and Practice*, reflects one of the twin themes that resonated in this year's program: the present and future role of *preventive strategies* in the design of health care practice. The second focus in the 2006 Symposium is the imperative for "culture competence", a supple tailoring of health-care approaches, treatment schemes, and follow-up practice to the specific ethnic and cultural contours of each community, and to the poor, the elderly, and the geographically marginalized in the larger society. The very able Symposium MC was Syddia Chee-Lee. Much credit for the symposium must go as well to Rita Jaramillo of NEA, whose indispensable work facilitated logistics and ensured clockwork smooth operation in the day's proceedings.

The roster of distinguished panelists at this year's Symposium included Dr. Dennis Hunt of the Center for Multicultural Human Services, who presented an overview of mental health concerns in a multicultural setting, and Katherine Culliton, an outspoken immigration lawyer and advocate for Spanish-

speaking youth assailed by pointedly targeted tobacco and alcohol advertising. Ms. Culliton reviewed the continuing concerns over substance abuse, its roots and remedies, in America's ethnic communities, exploring whether the torrent of advertising with an ethnic focus constitutes in some sense a civil rights violation. Laura Feldman, Medicare and health economics expert from the Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, explicated the latest twists and turns in the ongoing national discourse on who pays and how much in medical care delivery. Natalie Graves-Tucker of AARP marked out a set of guide posts through the dense forest of prescription drug economics and regulation. On the key question of prevention strategies as a vital dimension in the structure of any sound health care system, Dr. Cristina V. Beato of the Commissioner's office at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, stressed the simple, prosaic, low-tech stratum of preventive strategy - exercise and sensible diet, especially for the children each adult has under management! Use a pressure cooker every week-end, urged Dr. Beato, to speed cook a week's worth of well designed lunches and suppers to be frozen for the days ahead - a low-cost way to keep a family on the dietary straight and narrow. Check-ups and screening for persons subject to cognizable risks are the high-tech end of the prevention strategy package. Mori Taheripour, newly appointed Vice President for Corporate Diversity at the American Red Cross, brought her own expert insights to the evaluation of present efforts in preventive medicine, and outlining recommendations for needed direction to guide future policy action. Dr. Miguel Lopez, head of The Life Project, located in Miami, Florida, outlined his institute's comprehensive array of programs for social service and health care designed for older Americans in the South Florida area.

A "culture competence" roundtable organized by Sonia E. Mora, chief of the pioneering programs initiated by the Montgomery County Latino Health Initiative, brought together a trio of expert panelists - Olivia Pokras-Carter, Elisa Jaramillo, and Anna Maria Izquierdo-Porrera, on the techniques for

fashioning that essential cultural specificity that can effectively leverage the health care resources allotted to often hard-pressed ethnic communities.

In conjunction with the 2006 Symposium the American Kidney Fund, for the second consecutive year, offered screening tests at no cost for interested attendees, checking for hypertension, diabetes, and kidney function.

HOUSING ISSUES COLLOQUIUM

NEW DEPARTURES IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

Dialogue on Diversity's 2006 Housing Issues Colloquium went forward in morning and midday Saturday sessions at the Wardman Park Marriott Hotel in Washington September 30th. The housing program, as in earlier years, was presented in tandem with the Entrepreneurial Excellence and International Awards, held Monday evening, October 2nd at the Organization of American States.

The morning segment of the Colloquium featured an extended exposition of the newly developing system of voucher supported housing for economically disadvantaged housing users. Edward L. Moses, a member of the Dialogue's Advisory Committee, presided. Mr. Moses, a broadly experienced housing expert with experience as an HUD official in Washington and as director of several major housing authorities around the country, has now turned his hand to the special problems of medium sized cities, among them Santa Barbara County and, in his present post as Housing Authority CEO, Ventura, California. Mr. Moses and Melinda Comeau of the Ventura Housing Authority, presented a comprehensive tutorial on the structure and evolving practice of the newly instituted federal-local initiative-based voucher system, in which home ownership assistance is offered to subsidized rental clients, in order to move them into ownership status with the concomitant financial, maintenance, and taxpaying responsibilities. The voucher system, in a nutshell, is a shifting of funding from rental subsidies to powerful ownership aids, with a schedule of loan payment assistance subsidies, down payment assistance, and intensive counseling pre- and post-purchase. The program clearly constitutes a new departure in that it loosens the hold of a potentially rigid and stifling bureaucratic harness, at the same time seeking to replace the passive ethos of renting with the challenging, active, and indeed educating ethos of ownership.

The morning segment opened with an overview by the Deputy HUD Assistant Secretary for Public Housing and Vouchers, Milan Ozdinec, a key figure in this field, who has been brought into the Department to promote the concept of home ownership through the voucher mechanism and to aid in the program design process that can make it a desirable alternative in housing authority offices around the country.

Among speakers at the midday session Roundtable that followed, Audrey Figueroa of the National Community Reinvestment Council, offered insights on concerns over use of "exotic" loans (for example, lower payments but high risks for borrowers) which are generally taken by higher income buyers, thus posing less overall danger to the poor than might initially

be supposed. Lourdes Tinajero of the Cuban American National Council reviewed that organization's efforts in the Miami area as it sets about organizing housing opportunities for a target clientele, primarily Cuban American residents in that metropolitan area - a program that is being extended to other Florida locales and to some cities as well in the northern states having significant Cuban American communities.

The elegant Wardman Park Marriott Hotel, this year's Colloquium site, is a valued member of Dialogue on Diversity's corporate family. Marriott has been generous in facilitating both the Dialogue's Housing Issues Colloquium and the Holiday Fair-Children's Gift Collection, which has been hosted at the Marriott Wardman Park on the second Saturday of December for the last two years.

DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY AWARDS CONTOURS OF EXCELLENCE: THE STAMP OF A NEW CENTURY



Myra Magee, Pride and Hope Ministry, Susan Gates of Freddie Mac

Dialogue on Diversity, in its twelfth annual presentation ceremonies, conferred the 2006 series of Entrepreneurial Excellence and International Awards October 2nd at the Organization of American States, Washington, D.C. The roster of laureates, along with an illustrious lineup of award presenters, many of them past award recipients themselves, moved front and center for the presentations before an audience of Washington's and the country's distinguished proponents of our national diversity. Hon. Albert R. Ramdin, the newly elected Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States, greeted the gala audience assembled at the Hall of the Americas for the ceremonies, stressing the role of diversity as perhaps the dominant factor in the present development of societies throughout the Americas, and highlighting the necessity for such groups as the Dialogue to render that diversity a creative force for amity among the peoples of the American hemisphere.

A high point in this year's Awards was the special Freddie Mac Katrina Award, conferred on "hurricane heroine" Myra Magee, leader of Pride and Hope Ministry in Washington Parish, Louisiana, a wise and skilled leader whose resourceful response

and extraordinary efforts swiftly and effectively put arriving funding and resources into urgently needed housing, food, and the other necessities of existence for hundreds – especially the children, the elderly, and the disabled – suddenly made homeless in last Fall's hurricanes in the Gulf Coast.

In introductory remarks at Monday's ceremonies Ronald Langston, National Director of the Minority Business Development Agency of the Department of Commerce, singled out Ms. Magee as a figure in our national life most finely epitomizing the excellence to be found in our troubled but resilient society. The resourcefulness she exhibited was deemed our greatest national asset.

The award was presented to Ms. Magee by Susan W. Gates, Freddie Mac's Vice President for Public Policy. Ms. Gates, herself an on-the-scene participant in reconstruction efforts just after the storms, noted the aggressive role Freddie Mac has taken on in the massive work of financing the new housing that must come on stream to replace the swath of devastated dwellings across the Gulf states.

Ms. Magee, in accepting the Award, which carried a \$10,000 grant from Freddie Mac for her Pride and Hope Ministry, recounted the harrowing hours of the storm, and the reassurances she and her staff never stopped giving the children huddled in the cafeteria, the stretching of resources in the aftermath, as they searched out the old and helpless in their wrecked dwellings over the surrounding country, and at last the arrival of aid from outside, resources that they knew instantly how to deploy for the maximum effect among the suffering population of their own and the neighboring towns. Among the benefactors she recognized were Freddie Mac itself and a cluster of foundations around the country whose dynamic responses were swift and generous. "I don't know what we would have done without Freddie Mac and the many people who helped us," she remarked. "Thank you, thank you" she said in the moving conclusion to her remarks.

Within the Entrepreneurial Excellence category, Citibank was chosen for the Corporate Award, accepted for the Bank by its Vice President for Community Relations, Keith Wright. Citibank is widely rated as one of the top large U.S. companies on a range of criteria from workforce diversity to community involvement, advertising message, and supplier diversity. Keith Wright has assumed the role as chief of community relations at Washington's Citibank, where he superintends a variety of functions related to the bank's interface with the multicultural Washington metro community.

The 2006 Mentorship honors were conferred on Rynthia Rost, Vice President for Public Affairs at GEICO, the Washington-based insurance giant. Ms. Rost, a skilled lawyer, began her career with EEOC as counsel for employees striving after economic equality. As a GEICO executive she continues the never ending quest for equality and the decent life for the young people of America's diverse communities. Ms. Rost serves as an active board member for countless Washington charities and community organizations. Mentorship honors, presented by Roland L. Jones, Supplier Diversity Director at sponsoring Sprint Nextel, also went to the Women's Business Center, Van Nuys, California, as co-laureate. The WBC, part



of the SBA network of such centers around the country, works as part of the Valley Economic Development Center, a small business counseling dynamo in the north east exurban regions near Los Angeles, working under the skilled direction of Roberto Barragan, who was on hand at the Hall of the Americas to accept the WBC's Award from Mr. Jones. The final Mentorship award, presented by Dialogue on Diversity stalwart Gregory L. Rohde, honored Jeanette Hernandez Prenger of Kansas City, Missouri as 2006 Technology Mentor. Ms. Prenger has appeared regularly at high school and college seminars targeted to women students, bringing the persuasive message that, with concentrated effort, they can indeed excel in the technologies that are rocketing women's business enterprises to the top in the American economy. In IT installations designed by her own company, ECCO Select, she imparts hands-on coaching in the cutting edge techniques of business-related technology to scores of women business owners as they adopt the latest in technical resources.

The all-important Entrepreneurial Achievement Award for 2006 gave due recognition to the stellar managerial as well as musical successes of the dynamic Sonia Marie De Leon de Vega, Music Director and Conductor of the Santa Cecilia Orchestra of Los Angeles, a proper honor, Ms. De Leon de



Vega remarked in acceptance, in recognition of Social Entrepreneurship alongside the traditional Business Entrepreneurship. The Santa Cecilia Orchestra, which she founded more than a decade ago, takes its name from the Patron Saint of Music, St. Cecilia, and varies in size from a small group of less than

thirty for chamber pieces, to a full orchestra of over seventy for the densely scored symphonies of the traditional repertoire. The orchestra's repertory includes the classics of European music, for example, the symphonies of Beethoven, but also a vibrant infusion of the work of the best of Latin American composers, all too little known in the U.S. – those in whose hands that classical tradition has taken on new and arresting forms. The orchestra's season brings concert performances in four locales in the Los Angeles metro area. When asked how

she coaxed the best from her cohort of players, and whether she subscribed to the supposed dictum of the celebrated Georg Szell, the legendary conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra: the Symphony Orchestra is not a Democratic Institution, Maestra De Leon de Vega replied, "No. not at all ~ the only way I can get my musicians, professionals all, to play their best is to treat them with the respect they deserve."

"The growth and vitality of women's entrepreneurship," remarked Ma. Cristina Caballero, head of Dialogue on Diversity, "is one of the historic success stories of the last 75 years. In these Awards we seek each year to put the spotlight on the outstanding contributors to this movement, which is a multi-faceted phenomenon ~ the diverse supply chains of corporate America, the many selfless mentors to women aspiring for economic liberation, and the ingenious and tireless women business owners who are the real dynamo of the modern American economy."

A special Diversity Award was conferred on Vivian Shimoyama, a famously versatile California entrepreneur whose career has woven together artistic creativity, business savvy, work on the National Women's Business Council and a myriad of other public commissions, together with untiring mentorship in the cause of the women of America's diversity. A characteristic activity, witnessing the artistic flair and the unflagging quest for equality that have been Ms. Shimoyama's career hallmarks, is her atelier turning out a series of imaginative brooches and other jewelry, featuring designs of glass pieces symbolizing the fragments of the many shattered glass ceilings Ms. Shimoyama has left in her wake!

Finally, the Liberty Award, giving honor to the courage and intelligence of women whose arduous work has furthered the



cause of human rights in parts of the world where these are imperiled, was given to Ms. Zainab Al-Suwaij, head of the American Islamic Congress. Ms. Al-Suwaij's public career many be said to have its origin as she took her place in the ranks of the internal Iraqi resistance following the 1991

Gulf conflict. In the sequel to its ferocious suppression she fled into exile and continued work, while based in the U.S., for the cause of Iraq's women and also for the cause of a carefully schooled appreciation on the part of Muslims, on the one hand, and of Christians and Jews on the other, of the common themes of their religions, which have been propelled into conflict largely through aggressive and frighteningly insistent misunderstanding all around. The American Islamic Congress that she serves as Executive Director stands in the forefront of the massive work of building the structures of understanding and amity that can make for a peaceful and constructive

interface between the several cultures ~ which, surely, are the variant colorations of the common Abrahamic inspiration.

Corporate Hosts for the 2006 Awards were Freddie Mac, Sprint Nextel, Computer Sciences Corporation, Verizon, GEICO, and American Express. The awards program MC again this year was Ms. Bettie Baca, long time leader in the Washington Latino communities and a Director of Dialogue on Diversity. For additional detail on the Awards and for updates and background on the Dialogue's other programs, as well as the Calendar for 2007, visitors are invited to consult the Dialogue's Web-site, www.dialogueondiversity.org.

ROSIE THE RIVETER REDUX IT/ENTREPRENEURSHIP CONFERENCE AT MICROSOFT, LOS ANGELES

DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY presented its 2006 Conference on IT and Entrepreneurship May 25 at the Microsoft Corporation conference suite in downtown Los Angeles. The program title, highlighting the spectacular advances in women's entrepreneurship over the last half century, was: *Rosie the Riveter, The Executive Suite, and Beyond*.

Featured speaker at the Conference's midday session was Ronald N. Langston, National Director of the Commerce Department's Minority Business Development Agency. Mr. Langston stressed the significance of present day ethnic and racial minorities in forging a new dominant productive force in the economy over the next score of years, at once asserting the agency's commitment to fostering successful growth of the minority enterprise movement as it evolves to become a new majority force.

Alberto Alvarado, the long-time SBA District Director for the Los Angeles region, presided at the Entrepreneurial Basics instruction session that concluded the morning portion of the conference program ~ a workshop also featuring the entrepreneurial savvy of Mabel Katz, accounting expert and L.A. media figure, and the business finance expertise of Citibank's Lan Nguyen.

Conference registrants attended specialized workshops on business plans, on the beckoning world of franchising as a growingly popular business model, and on the transformative effect information technology is producing in the growing waves of small-business launches that have so far characterized the 21st century economy. A workshop of its own, distilling the logic of effective business plans, laid out the key steps every viable enterprise must take in bridging the way from an eye-catching idea to the actual launch of a vital, functioning business.

Attending entrepreneurs sat down with key supplier diversity executives from Microsoft, Computer Sciences Corporation, and Los Angeles City agencies for up to the minute how-to advice on gaining slots in the supply chains of large public and private sector entities. Mirinda Jackson, with over thirty years' experience both as a GSA executive and as a private government contracting consultant, moderated the panel. Among the themes stressed by the panelists: small ethnic-



John Arena and Veronica Soto, L.A., May 25, 2006

owned firms are being sought out by shrewd companies, first as hotbeds of innovating approaches and products, again for their turn-on-a-dime flexibility, and finally as insurance against the risk of catastrophic failure of a single giant supply partner. Tim McBride, procurement chief for the Microsoft Corporation, John Arena of the Los Angeles Metropolitan Water District, Veronica Soto of the L.A. Unified School District, and David Mora of Mayor Villaraigosa's Minority Business Opportunity Commission, along with Joe Andreu and Jill Mode of CSC – all entities with massive procurement needs and budgets to match – were on hand for this key interactive session.

Warren Cooley of the Valley Enterprise Development Council, a non-profit business counseling group based in the L.A. exurbs, laid out the basics for putting together a business plan – in writing for any financing application, but a fundamental necessity, written or not, for successful design and operation of every business enterprise. Your own business idea is a sufficient account of the “vision thing”. Your main task, he stressed, is instead to analyze your market, your competitors, and your demand, and to assemble the hard numbers that will measure the effect of your operations.

In a short, intensive course for a room full of entrepreneurs, Neil McMillan of FranNet laid out the logic of the franchising business model, the core techniques of evaluating a franchise deal, and the essential caveats the prospective franchise operator must be armed with in deciding to make a commitment. The franchise search is a matter of assessing a broad range of available business packages, in each of which the idea and the production and marketing model is designed and tested before the entrepreneur takes over. The key lies in finding an optimum fit between a franchisor and the franchisee entrepreneur, a meshing of interests and skills that is both exciting and profitable.

Lan Nguyen of Citibank outlined the basics of business financing for small enterprise, and in a special afternoon session met with qualifying entrepreneurs for one-to-one analyses of each firm's critical financing conditions.

A program highlight was the Diversity Roundtable, in which women successful in business and the professions explored the avenues to profitable and fulfilling careers in the setting of a diverse society and in the highly competitive economy that



Tim McBride, Microsoft, Ramesh Swami, Metro Minority Business Enterprise Center, Joe Andreu, Computer Sciences Corporation, at IT/Entrepreneurship Conference

powers it. Helen Han, head of the L.A. NAWBO chapter, the largest of this nationwide network of women entrepreneurs, and Vivian Shimoyama, an entrepreneur herself and mentor, trainer, and advocate par excellence for women entrepreneurs, were joined by the familiar media personality Dr. Ana Nogales, a professional clinical psychologist whose books and counsel have sharpened the sensibilities and eased the way for countless listeners and readers in and beyond America's Latino communities.

In the IT program segment David Jones of Microsoft and John Walsh of Computer Sciences Corporation outlined the strides being made this year and in prospect for the next in the swift onward march of software and hardware innovation, the key to effective enterprise operation in a competitive economic milieu. The panel concluded with a magisterial presentation by Prof. Catherine Sandoval of the Law School at Santa Clara University on the complex of effects the proliferation of information technology has had in the American population, by ethnicity, age, economic class, and region. The larger population falls into roughly four classes with respect to internet use – the unconnected, the tenuously connected, the moderately connected, and, finally, the well connected. The markers of age, education levels, and economic class are telling indicators of where communities and groups stand on this scale. The less educated are less linked to the internet and its wealth of information. Indeed the language of typical Web pages is pitched to a higher literacy level than that of large swaths of the country's population. Again, accessibility of internet information in languages other than English, particularly in Spanish, is meager, so that non-English-proficient pockets of the population are effectively shut off from the main stream of common information exchange. This has several implications for women and ethnic entrepreneurs. One

is that special efforts have to be made by our communities to get effectively connected to the vital sources of communication and information offered by IT, and the other is that the very tasks of facilitating such access presents a myriad of beckoning opportunities for resourceful and creative entrepreneurs. Prof. Sandoval is an expert in communications law and the regulatory and antitrust aspects of the information industry.



Ivelisse Estrada, Ma. Cristina C. Caballero, and Edward L. Moses

A high point of the conference was the presentation to Ms. Ivelisse Estrada of Univision of a Diversity Award for her signal services to the cause of America's cultural communities through her work in the media. The Award was presented by Ed Moses, now Housing Authority Director for Ventura, California.

The duties of MC were in the very able hands of Ms Cecilia Bogran, the well known entertainment anchor of Univision's flagship broadcast station in Los Angeles.

Sponsors participating in the 2006 IT/Entrepreneurship program were Microsoft, the conference host, Computer Sciences Corporation, Citibank, and the Minority Business Development Agency.

WORKS AND DAYS

HON. PAULA J. DOBRIANSKY, Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, and a much valued friend of the Dialogue, has the formidable task of advancing forces for social and political decency around the world - clearly a delicate work at all points, requiring subtlety, energy, and persistence in a carefully modulated mix. Under Secretary Dobriansky and her staff have arranged a conference in Washington for early December bringing together Afghan Women leaders and counterparts from the American pole of the relationship, those who have supported the development of civil society institutions in that country, for which the U.S. has come to be charged with a deep moral responsibility.

ZAINAB ALSUWAIJ, our 2006 Liberty Award honoree, communicates to us through the America Islamic Congress Web-site [aic.org] on her arduous efforts in Iraq, where she has traveled to work with civil society groups in the southern part of the country: imparting needed encouragement and counsel in what is clearly a terrifying time and place. She writes of hearing the blasts of rockets hitting a few meters off. Intelligence powered by courage has for long been the name of the game in Ms. Al-Suwaij's career. The courage of the women

on the land in Iraq, who continue to labor and plan for a decent society in the face of the widespread ruin surrounding them, is a marvel of our time.

RITA DIMARTINO, chief U.S. Delegate to the Inter-American Commission of Women [CIM] of the Organization of American States - and a 1998 recipient of the Dialogue's Trailblazer Award - has served as a member of the O.A.S. election observer team in three recent elections in Latin America. Among these were the recent elections in Nicaragua and in Ecuador. While the results of each of these have given some sense of disquiet to the American establishment, the electoral process itself appears to have exhibited a great measure of integrity. The persistence of legality in the elections themselves builds cumulatively a sense of regularity under a structure of laws in societies where arbitrary and unstable governments have reigned in the past, so that in time to come failing, inefficient, or abusive governments can be more readily turned out of power by a no longer patient populace - one for whom the notion of "consent of the governed" is thus rendered more than a curious phrase out of ancient intellectual history.

CHARLOTTE PONTICELLI was the recipient of the Sisterhood Award, along with co-honoree Sonia Nassery Cole, in ceremonies December 4th at the Cannon Building on Capitol Hill. The award was granted by Ariana Outreach, a vibrant movement of young Afghan women in America, in recognition of Ms. Ponticelli's work, chiefly in her State Department post as Director of the Office for International Women's Issues, in advancing the cause - to which she has given her efforts with passionate dedication over the last four years - of a resurgent women's moiety of the Afghan nation. This is a population organically united to a remarkably intelligent and vigorous women's diaspora, members of which were out in force for the gala, against a backdrop of solemnity in contemplation of the horrors the population has so recently suffered and the perils that remain imminent. The Dialogue is proud to note that Ms. Ponticelli (known to her friends as Charlie) has been an active and much valued collaborator in our international programs.

Our Board of Directors welcomes BARBARA BENNETT, of Washington, D.C., as its newest member. Ms. Bennett is a corporate development executive with Hispanic Communications Network. With an MBA degree in finance, she has worked for over a score of years in the financial industry, with concentration on commerce with Latin America. She has proved a fruitful fount of ideas and pointers for the Dialogue, affording a much valued leverage to our endeavors in the world of Washington elites in the arts, ideas, and business.

AMERICAN DIVERSITY AND THE ROLE OF DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

MA. CRISTINA C. CABALLERO

This article relays the text of a discussion by Ma. Cristina C. Caballero, President of Dialogue on Diversity, on October 11th, 2006, as part of a program at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The seminar was arranged by Mr. Jose Pardo-Kronemann, a lawyer at the HUD, for employees of that department.

I hope I can at the outset review the topics, as defined for our discussions today -- which will be interrupted for the lunch and will continue to roughly 2:00 p.m.

Some of our topics over the next hour are going to be workforce diversity, which involves the behavior of large business organizations, "corporations" if you will. Another is supplier diversity, another function of the large corporation. Again, what is diversity? And how are diverse groups powered and funded? How do they fare in the lottery of foundation and corporation funding? By *diverse groups*, in the first place, I mean the communities themselves, each holding fast to a common heritage and finding itself viewed as a distinct collection of people and institutions within a larger society, alongside communities of other specific traditions and cultural heritage. There is a difference, I would like to suggest, in the chances for support and funding for *diverse* groups, or communities, on the one hand, and *diversity* organizations, on the other hand -- a distinction that has to be noted. The notion of a *diversity* organization -- as I want to use that expression this morning -- denotes an artificial association of persons, themselves drawn from many of the diverse communities, which is concerned with the relationships of these diverse communities, how they work together to lend a sharpness of spirit and energy to a mobile and growing society. More of that as we go along.

Diversity is everywhere about. In the mythical worlds of Currier and Ives a century and a half ago -- the celebrated lithographers of rural American scenes -- and of Norman Rockwell in the last century, the families displayed to us on every hand in their images, along with the shops and the towns and the countryside that nurtured them, all were of uniform color and manners and habits. The inhabitants were at home with one another and shared expectations, skills, outlook, and speech. Of course there was never such a world. Certainly there was never such an America. From the earliest days American life, with its burgeoning culture, was the recipient of blow after blow of immigrants bringing new cultural strains, warring manners, and jarringly novel languages, dress, and religious practice. The society survived, a train of successive "centers" held, and, more, that ever evolving society repeatedly found itself made new -- a society incorporating much of what the newcomers had brought, while the newcomers themselves, after only a generation or two, came to stand among the elites running the society, while still new waves of immigrants arrived, each horde with their own bill of changes to be made. Each

time the established population (themselves the newcomers a little while before), groused and complained that standards were being eroded and the soul of the republic corrupted. There were attempts at exclusion, even riots, and discriminations by the carload, while the newcomers grew up fast in this school of hard knocks. The case of the African Americans is unique, and more complicated and vastly more painful than that of the other communities. But something of this history, with modifications and nuances, is to be found everywhere on the face of the earth. It is the hotbed of conflicts and violence, as well as the crucible in which new values are refined and new methods of production generated. That is what diversity is like. Stressful, exciting, and ultimately productive -- if we survive. In some parts of the world that is a real question. We manage diversity relatively well in America. In spite of the shame that it has taken a couple of hundred years to dismantle the caste system that had held down the African Americans after slavery itself was gone -- and notoriously the job is not yet finished -- and in spite of the experience of the Native Americans, who are reduced and confined, partly assimilated, and conveniently forgotten. And we ought to cherish our historical performance, at least the tolerable parts of it, in that respect.

Let us turn, then, to the first arena in which diversity and its pains are the focus of action. The economic world, the life of businesses, large and small, and of the employees struggling to make their way as parts of a dynamic workforce.

Businesses have to do with the larger question of diversity in at least two ways. First, they have to determine the make up of their own workforce. Second, they have to determine the composition of their supply chains, the network of other, usually much smaller, business organizations that supply them with raw materials, equipment, maintenance, consulting, and other services. Another way of putting this is that firms confront the demands of diversity both inside -- that is, what they produce themselves with their own workforce -- and outside -- that is, what they don't produce themselves but what they buy from outside producers/vendors. Both the workforce inside and the supplies and services bought from outside can be either straight down the line *uniform*, made up of people and firms that are ethnically, gender-wise, racially, age-wise, graded by politics or religion, and in other ways homogeneous; or again the workforce and vendor chain can be *diverse* in ethnicity, gender, race, age, culture, and all the rest. The bad part about *uniformity* is that the corporations have to shove aside every prospective employee and every prospective vendor firm that does not square with its rigid, narrowly drawn profile by culture, ethnicity, age, and the like. Too bad for those excluded -- the people we usually think of as the unfortunate targets of discrimination -- but worse yet for the firm that is systematically, blindly hobbling its own operations. The bad part about *diversity*, on the other hand, from the point of view of the corporation, is that it may be trying to impose diversity on a workforce that is strongly prejudiced against strangers with the "wrong" color, culture, or religion.

Now: in trying to see what is good about *diversity in workforces* and in *supply chains* of corporations, we need to consider how the management of companies can [1] turn the differences in ethnicity, culture, manners, language, age, and religion into a productive engine for lending a stimulus to their operations *internally*. Again, [2] the corporate managers need to ask how this same variety of qualities can yield special advantages in picking the best from the possible range of small firms that can supply their needs *from the outside*.

One advantage is a fairly obvious one. If you arbitrarily rule out half or three quarters of possible suppliers or employees, you are crippling your procurement operations and your human resources function. You are arbitrarily turning away the geniuses, the strong, the smart, the hard working who may be in that half or three quarters of the population that you are ruling out from the beginning. *The second potential advantage* is a little less obvious but perhaps even more important. It is this: there may be a positive advantage in mixing the special insights and styles and skills of several very disparate types of individuals when you put them together in a workforce. Their distinct angles of vision and their distinct styles of working may reinforce one another. They may find each other a bit jarring in their personalities, but their work may have about it a bright new character of innovation. With the *supply chain*, on the other side, this diversity has its use in making available to the large corporation as it buys its supplies, seeks out its materials, and recruits its services, the innovative production methods of a very diverse crew of managers and designers. Still another advantage in assembling a supply chain of many small companies – and this is not really a matter of diversity ~ is that not all of them will fail at once. There may be strikes, bankruptcies, departure of essential management personnel, or other disasters to cripple a vendor, but only one small link in the chain is affected. If you had instead been relying on a single very large firm for the entire supply and that firm were similarly knocked out of operation, you would be in the soup big time!

And we have to keep in mind that with the expanding range of *labor mobility*, and with *trade conducted over larger and larger ranges of the planet*, these potential advantages of working with a *diverse production crew* and *diverse supply chains*, are sharply expanding and that there is a new dimension of productive possibility opening. This is what is now being called the new Flat Earth theory – there is no place on the terrestrial globe that is out of sight and no place that remains out of range. Therefore what was at first a way of organizing production with a diverse workforce in one town has become the opportunity to gain production advantages through reaching out over the Americas, from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, and now extending that reach around the world. Notice that what we are talking about exactly is a *migration of persons* from one country to another to join the workforce, as an element of a perpetually stimulating diversity. This is therefore our *theory of immigration*, with all its policy implications. And at the same time it is a *theory of international trade*, with all the implications that must necessarily have for free-trade pacts among nations. Just as the U.S. has grown to be an economic powerhouse because we do not put bars up *internally* against migration of our labor force from the South to the North and from the North back to the

South and West, and because we do not put up tariff barriers between the Northeast and California, or between the South and the North, so this country, spanning the entire continent, is a historic model for the new “Flat Earth” that is struggling to come into being globally. Diversity is the engine for this kind of progress. Our Dialogue insistently promotes this view of the genesis and the shape of our social and economic progress.

Next, though, we should turn to the more expansive role of diversity in American life, the role that is broader than just matters of business – the matters we have been discussing, the questions of employment and vendor supply chains. Beyond those, we need to talk about the social and political life of the society we live in the midst of. A society that is made up of a striking ethnic, racial, religious and linguistic mix. This is disconcerting in the extreme to many in the political world, who are reflecting the nervousness of their constituents in not a few far corners of the country. This response, at all events, is close to universal in the history of the country, and is not a sign of our running definitely on the rocks of civil dissolution. It is one of the things that one gets over, with a better day to follow, as in Mr. Reagan's mantra: You Ain't Seen Nothin Yet.

[The conclusion of Ms. Caballero's remarks may be found in the internet version of the newsletter, available at the Dialogue's Web-site: www.dialogueondiversity.org, along with *Immigration: the Economics, The Triad of authority, and A National Language*.]

A NEW POLITICS: RE-EMERGENCE OF THE ETERNAL FEMININE

A recent Financial Times op-ed article draws attention to the ever more plainly observable phenomenon that it terms the Feminization of Politics. From an age when the pioneering women political figures, when they rose to leadership at all, did so by out-machoing the men politicians of the opposition, the women more recently making their way, quietly but inexorably, into the ante rooms of public affairs, have presented a more “feminine” face in the political arena, one that has its own powerful appeal. Exhibit one, the writer argues, is the remarkable Ségolène Royal, who has outmaneuvered and outpaced her men rivals for the nomination of the French Socialist party as its candidate for Presidency of the Republic. She has crafted an image as the mother of four children – impressive indeed if not quite up to the Speaker Designate of the American House of Representatives, with her five, and voice to match – and brings the prospect of a correspondingly nurturing, perhaps kinder and gentler, and vastly more sensitive state. The electorate is believed to be in the throes of a classic Malaise and to be ready to seize upon any prospect for change. In Ségolène an exciting but reassuring change is offered. Her probable rival, the brilliant and contentious Nicolas Sarkozy, is perhaps too exciting, even for a jaded populace. To soften his image, while he too trumpets change, he insists that it is to be, for all that, a “rupture tranquille”. In Ségolène's faceoff next Spring with the Mercurial M. Sarkozy, the French electoral season promises Gallic pyrotechnics of a rare splendor. More to follow.