

opinion

Latin American refugees pouring into the U.S.

By Maxwell Glen and Cody Shearer

LOS ANGELES — As one reason for supporting his hard line on El Salvador, President Reagan has offered the prospect of refugees flooding this country to escape communism.

But if pre-empting uncontrolled immigration is his purpose, then the president's policies are a failure. Central Americans have fled to the U.S. in the hundreds of thousands, and a large number — possibly as many as 500,000 — have come from El Salvador, a nation of only 4.7 million people.

Here in Reagan's former hometown, some 200,000 Salvadorans are said to live with 50,000 of them squeezed into L.A.'s downtown Pico-Union district.

While on Pico Boulevard commercial symbols of El Salvador's growing U.S. presence stare openly at passersby, the sidewalks overflow with families who hide in Pico-Union's dilapidated apartment buildings, often in one room.

"The Salvadorans are a frightened refugee population," says Aurora Martinez, a retired nurse who coordinates health care efforts for Pico-Union's Oscar R. Romero clinic.

Origins only complicate the bleak employment picture. Says social worker Cynthia Anderson, referring to prop-

osed federal restrictions on employers who hire undocumented workers: "With the passage of the Simpson-Mazzoli bill in the House, no employer wants to hire an illegal alien and get fined."

Few Salvadoran refugees, however, seem prepared to return home just yet, or even if and when Central America's strife subsides. But, they say, serious peace negotiations to end El Salvador's civil war might encourage more potential refugees to stay home.

Donald Woods, a South African journalist once imprisoned for his anti-apartheid activities, has formed an organization to inform foreign journalists and government officials about developments in his home country. The new group, Lincoln Trust, will have its U.S. office in Washington.

John Tower's decision to step down from his Senate seat after nearly four terms has irked White House officials. Tower, a Texas Republican and chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, had already received substantial political assistance from the administration in anticipation of a tough re-election fight next year. As an extension of its interest in Tower's stand on immigration issues, the White House is said to have established its latest task force on border problems, the

Southwest Border States Working Group.

Philippine opposition leader Benigno Aquino's brutal assassination at the Manila airport last weekend should have fueled the imagination of anyone who remembers the Nicaraguan revolution. In 1978, a similarly charismatic opposition figure, La Prensa editor Pedro Chamorro, was gunned down on the streets of Managua. As is likely in Aquino's death, Chamorro's killers were never identified but were nonetheless linked to the nation's long-ruling dictator (in Nicaragua's case, Anastasio Somoza Debayle).

It's generally concluded, too, that Chamorro's death served most to unite all of Nicaragua against Somoza's rule. Time will tell whether history repeats itself in the land of Ferdinand Marcos.

British disarmament activists are apparently finding rock bands reluctant to play benefit concerts. One reason seems to be that some of the more outspoken groups — The Clash, The Specials and Peter Gabriel, for example — have recently disbanded. Another reason, however, is more telling about Britain: At two recent "rock the bomb" festivals, divisions among concert-goers led to mud-hurling and minor skirmishes.

Obnoxiousness is easy to spot

Obnoxious people can be defined in many ways: Howard Cosell, Joan Collins, Don Rickles, Jerry Lewis.

Everyone encounters at least one obnoxious person. I happen to have encountered several.

Most people will usually agree that a person who uses his index finger as a Kleenex is obnoxious. But obnoxiousness goes deeper than disgusting personal habits.

Personally, I find a person who skips his 8 a.m. statistics class when I have to get up and go to it, obnoxious.

I also find anyone who understands his 8 a.m. statistics class obnoxious. To tell the truth, I find statistics class obnoxious.

Any girl who says she is on a diet and then eats three desserts, or any girl who wears size 5 jeans and complains about being fat is obnoxious.

People who also can be classified as obnoxious include couples who, when parting before class, kiss each other so passionately that they could feasibly conceive a baby in the middle of the MSC.

Anyone who treats a student working as cafeteria and bookstore help as "two-bit minimum wage help" is not only obnoxious, but also rude. I would much prefer to say that I helped support myself in college by working or earning a scholarship than say, "Mummy and Daddy are paying for everything."

People who put you on hold, when



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you only want to find out how much pizza costs, can usually be classified as obnoxious.

Anyone who gets an average of 10 letters and one package a week or one who makes his bed within two days of getting out of it usually aren't in my book. Nor is anyone who complains about noise at 11:30 p.m. on a Friday night.

I find people who go to football games only because they get to kiss dates after touchdowns extremely obnoxious, as is a freshman who tells he or she is the hottest thing to hit.

Anyone who has the attitude that a professor is senile just because he is over 50 is obnoxious.

I guess all is fair though. There are probably some people who find obnoxious writers, who write about people who are obnoxious, obnoxious.

Banker renegotiates international loans

by Art Buchwald

I met a man the other day who has a very interesting job. He renegotiates loans for Third World countries.

We shall call the man Jean Valjean, and he works for the Credit Bearnaise. He told me, "A loan negotiator is the most important figure in the banking world today. Without him the monetary system would go under."

"How do you renegotiate a loan?" I inquired.

"You renegotiate a loan by not paying it. The service you perform is to come up with a legitimate reason why a country cannot repay a loan to a foreign bank."

"At the moment I just renegotiated a loan for the South American country of Santa Busta. Santa Busta is a Third World country that owes \$1 billion to a consortium of Western Banks."

"Why did the banks loan her that kind of money?"

"Because she was willing to pay two percent more for the loans than other countries. Besides, at the time, Santa Busta was getting \$4 a pound for mining raw Velcro, its only natural resource."

"What did Santa Busta do with the billion dollars?"

"Some of it went for roads, some of it for Mercedes Benzes, some of it for scotch, some of it went to pay for tear gas, and quite a bit of it wound up in numbered Swiss bank accounts belonging to Santa Busta politicians in power."

"Okay, so the money was well spent. Why can't they pay it back?"

"Last year the price of raw Velcro tumbled to 10 cents a pound and the country went bankrupt."

"So that's when you were called in to renegotiate the loan?"

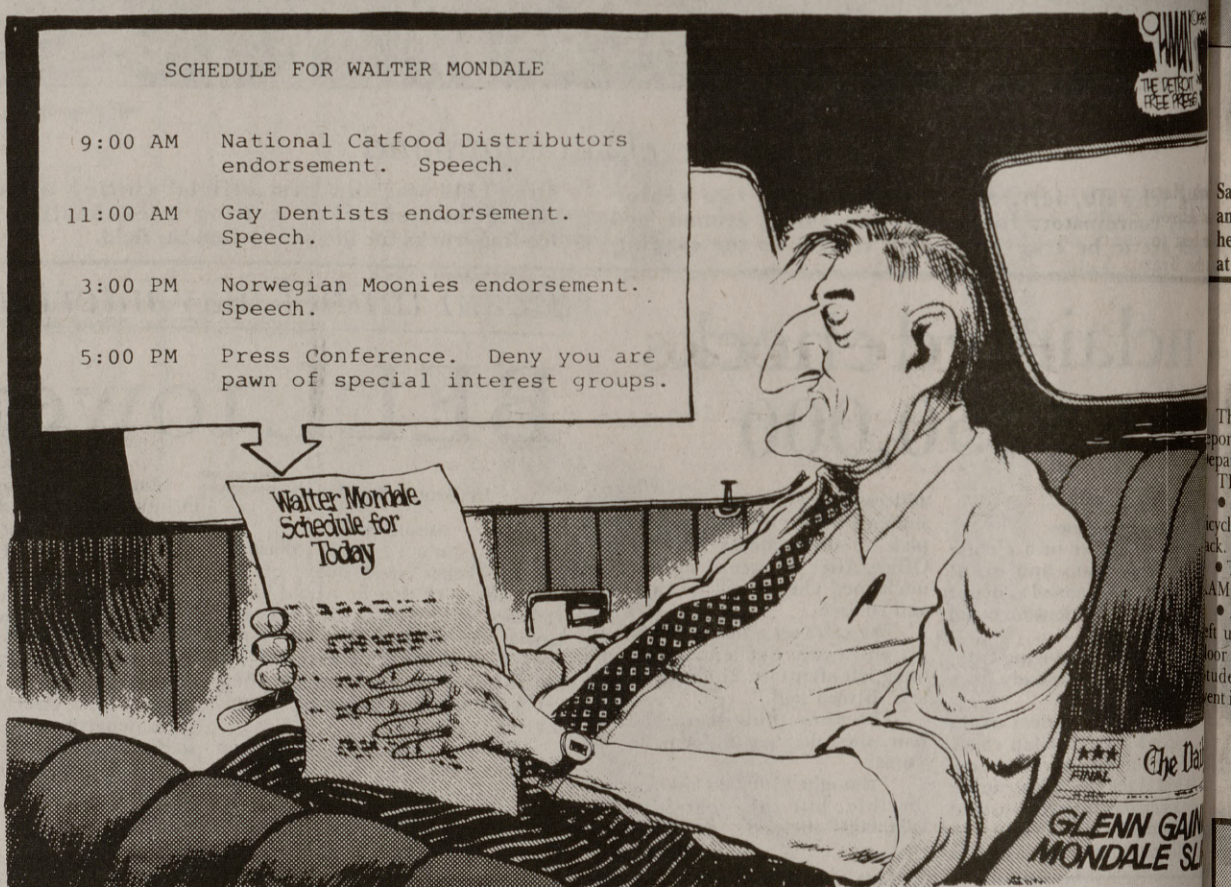
"Right. Both Santa Busta and the consortium of banks asked me to come up with a plan that could justify them not paying the loan back. I talked Santa Busta's leading families into announcing a tough austerity program, which they were more than happy to do, since most of them live in Florida. Then I went to the banks with the austerity program, and asked them to renegotiate the loan by not demanding principal for seven years. The banks accepted this providing Santa Busta pay interest on the loan."

"Where could Santa Busta get the money to pay the interest?"

"I persuaded the consortium to do it so they could keep the Santa Busta debt on their books as a viable loan. If Santa Busta couldn't pay the interest, the banks would have to tell their stockholders that a major loan client was in default, and then everyone would be in the soup. As far as the banks were concerned it was just an accounting transaction. They put the interest money they loaned to Santa Busta in one computer and transferred it to another computer in the same office."

"I can now see the value of what you do. What do you get paid for this sort of thing?"

"A nice percentage of the loan, which the banks are only too happy to pay anyone for getting them off the financial hook."



Gymnast advises young athletes

by Children's Express
United Press International

(Editor's note: Children's Express, a privately funded news service, is real world journalism reported entirely by children 13 years of age or under whose tape-recorded interviews, discussions, reports and commentary are edited by teenagers and adults.)

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — When the guest athletes were introduced at the opening ceremonies of the Sears National Junior Olympics, they all got big hands. But when Kurt Thomas was introduced, the audience went wild. All the girls and lots of people with cameras and autograph books came running.

Kurt Thomas started out in the Junior Olympics and now he's the Junior Olympics spokesperson. We were really looking forward to meeting him because he's an excellent gymnast and we've seen him in commercials and newspapers. Kurt Thomas is a success story. In the Pan American Games, he won gold medals and became quite famous. Now he has a gymnastic school, a camp, and a book called "Kurt Thomas on Gymnastics." He's also a sports commentator for ABC.

On TV, Thomas looks much younger. When we saw him, he looked young, but more mature. We went to dinner with Thomas and his wife, Leanne. He doesn't seem like some stars whose outside is different from their inside — he's really nice. We also went to an interview with him about competition and pressure on young athletes. He told us that he put pressure on himself. He really wanted to succeed in gymnastics. He said that pressure was good for him — it sort of gave him a kick. "In a non-pressure situation, I kind of slacked off," he explained. "But when I had to

score a certain score, or hit a certain routine, I did. That was good for me."

But Thomas also said that it's very bad for coaches and parents to put the win-at-all-costs attitude into their kids. If it's more like a dictatorship and a threat, it makes the kids feel scared.

At his gymnastics schools, sometimes the parents want their kids to do so well that they bribe them with money, the car keys, or something that the kids want. They get angry if they don't do good. Thomas says it's very selfish. "The parents put a lot of pressure on their kids to excel so that ultimately it'll come back to them," he said.

"A kid wants to be pushed to the extent that he knows the parents support him," he added, "but not to the point where they want him to do it for them instead of himself."

Thomas thinks that a child should feel like he can do it on his own, "that it should come from within."

He also told us that "a lot of the coaches push kids very far." So if someone in some sport feels that his coach is pushing him too hard, he should say, "Back off a little. Pretty soon this is not going to be fun for me. And if it's not fun, I'm not going to participate."

Thomas pointed out that he didn't want to win because his opponent fell down or slipped. He wanted to win when his opponent did his best.

The win-at-all-costs attitude can get kids away from sports. "You win, and then at the next meet you don't win. You feel like, 'The whole world's collapsing on me,'" Thomas said. "You've got to get to the point where you accept failure, although it can be one of the hardest things to do."

Thomas feels that the kind of encouragement young athletes need from their

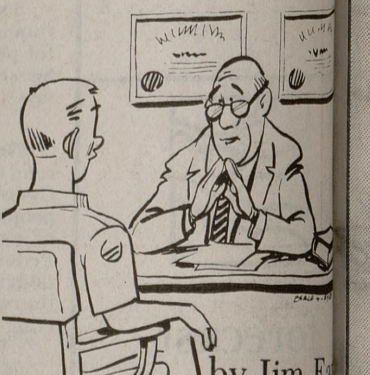
parents, coaches and friends is "not pushed to win, win, win, but to see towards winning."

"When I was in my first Junior Olympics," he told us, "I was 13th out of dead last. But that really motivated me to train harder. The next year I got fourth. I saw that if I could move from 13th to fourth, I could move from fourth to first. So I worked real hard and became first. The next year I slipped and placed third, but it was another experience."

Thomas was saying that you should have good sportsmanship, you should start yelling around, and you should think about your mistakes. After a mess up, try to make it work out so you won't mess up the next time.

"Accept failure," he said, "but let failure teach you something. Turn failure into success."

Slouch



by Jim E...
"Now mind you I don't mean say that classes on cutting logs the bonfire is bad"

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