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Jose Preciado wants to represent you on the County Board of Education

By Daniel Muñoz

If you have ever gone to a political debate or forum in the South Bay then you already know who Jose Preciado is. For years now Jose has been the preferred choice as moderator. For those of you who have yet to meet Jose, he is someone you will not soon forget. He is an imposing man who displays a nimble mind, a soft sense of humor, and a dedication to education.

Jose Preciado has always been the facilitator of the political debates but never the focus, that is, until now. Today Jose is running hard to be the next Hispanic representative on the County Board of Education, District 2 to replace current member Nick Aguilar who has decided to step down.

District 2 is in the South Bay and includes the school boards and districts of National City, Chula Vista, Imperial Beach, Coronado, San Ysidro, and the Sweetwater Union High School District. The County Board has the responsibility of the Migrant Education program and Ju-

venile Court and Community schools, Regional Occupational Programs (ROP), and Special Education to name a few.

In the race for district 2, along with Jose, is Yuriy Pavlo Bilokonsky, a Libertarian who so far is running a stealth campaign, and Jerry R. Rindone, councilman for the City of Chula Vista who has been termed out and is now running for the County Board of Education.

For those who know Jose from all the community meetings it came as a bit of a surprise that he had decided to throw his hat into the ring for this seat. "I decided to run for this seat in December," stated Jose. "I did so because Nick (Aguilar) had made the decision not to run and I saw that as an opportunity to continue to have a voice that looks out for South County interest on the Board of Education. When I say South County interest, I mean the whole community of South County, but in particular those interest from low income backgrounds, from diverse backgrounds that would otherwise not be represented on the

board."

"The board is currently made up of five individuals and with the exception of Nick all four of them are white," continued Jose. "So I thought it was important for me to run for that seat and continue to provide that voice and representation."

Jose is in a unique position to bring his perspective to the County Board after growing up in the South Bay and experience the educational system of this district from top to bottom. Jose attended the local schools starting with Nestor Elementary, Southwest Jr High, Southwest High School, and he graduated from San Diego State University with a Bachelors Degree in Latin American Studies and Spanish for a single subject teaching credential.

He was able to overcome the persistent achievement gap that is found between the Hispanic community and all other ethnic groups and is an example of success that can be achieved through the Public School System.

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Jose Preciado, candidate for County Board of Education.

Divided Party Far Greater Peril to Obama and Clinton than McCain

By Earl Ofari Hutchinson
NEW AMERICA MEDIA

ANALYSTS

Clinton and Obama's divvying up of North Carolina and Indiana between them further deepens the two perils the Democrats face. One is that neither heavy hitter can deliver the knockout punch that the Democrats desperately need to get on with the business of mounting a united front against McCain. The other is the much talked and much worried about peril of a divided party and what that means.

There are two big reasons that pre-ordained that the Democrats would find themselves in this muddled, confused and frustrating danger. The Democrats' winner-not-take-all proportional delegate system and the system of super delegates that they dumped onto the primaries was a prescription for disaster. The idea behind this was to bring democracy with a small d to the vote process and snatch the decision about who gets the big prize out of deal making party bosses at the national convention. This supposedly would ensure a smooth oiled, happy-faced, party convention, and a coronation for the party's pick.

The result has been just the opposite. The fractious, contentious, and much too long drawn out battle between Clinton and Obama has ploughed open a split among the Democrats that goes beyond the standard cheering that voters give to their favorite candidate. This split has exposed fundamental class, race and even personality differences between the Democrats.

Blacks, young, college educated voters, and young women in near record numbers back Obama. Latinos, blue collar whites and older women heavily back Clinton. The Democrats can't win without these groups hitting the polls in big numbers. They also have to hit the polls with passion and zeal.

In every election back to Lyndon Baines Johnson's smash victory over
(see Peril, page 8)

The Devil's Breath profiles undocumented migrants who died in the Harris Fire



A simple memorial in the desert marks the place where the wildfires took Juan Carlos Bautista's life. Credit: Angeles Del Desierto/The Desert Angels

By Mariana Martínez

"Devil's breath" is what Native Americans call the Santa Ana winds, a condition that brings extremely dry, hot weather into heavy brush areas, causing massive wildfires that propagate quickly.

It was exactly the devil's breath that ravished thru San Diego County just last October, taking the lives of 14 people, most of them Mexican

immigrants who were trying to cross the border during the emergency and were devoured by the flames.

The stories of such men and women have yet to be told, until now, that a half-hour news special by UCSD-TV profiles four of the seven undocumented migrants who died in the Harris Fire, on October 21, 2007.

The program being premiered on May 19 at 8 p.m. on UCSD-TV,

brings the victims' stories to life through the voices of those who were with them when they died; their doctors, grieving family members, 911 phone calls and visits to the sites where they took their last breath in the hopes of getting to the United States.

Titled, "The Devils Breath," the documentary was produced by Laura Castañeda, an award-winning local journalist who has covered the border since 1990, says she has been deeply touched by this piece of work.

"I hope people of all races, ages, political affiliations, and on both sides of the immigration fence get to see this work, and see past the politics, into the faces on these victims and their families," said Castañeda.

Castañeda and her crew spend months gaining the families trust to tell the stories of their loved ones, because they feared being in the public spotlight, and have had bad experiences with reporters who lied to get access to the hospital and grieving family members.

The Devils Breath tells us about Juan Carlos Bautista, a construction

worker from Chiapas, bound to San Marcos, whose body was located ten days after the fire by The Desert Angels, a volunteer search and rescue group based in San Diego.

She also tells the story of Maria Guadalupe Beltran, a Vista resident and mother of four who had returned to Mexico to attend her father's funeral, when she and her brother were both critically injured.

The final victims profiled in The Devil's Breath are Areli Peralta and her husband Ruben Santos Ramirez, whose bodies were found in a scorched ravine, and remained unidentified in the morgue for months, until DNA results confirmed their identities.

"I have not experienced anything like the stories I'm profiling on this piece, but I have a one-year-old son at home, I'm a mother just like María Beltrán," said Castañeda, "I spend nights laying in bed thinking about this peoples final thoughts, their straight, their kids..."

The documentary also addresses issues that have emerged from this

(see Harris, page 3)

Steve Padilla All The Right Moves



Everyone concedes that youth and young adulthood are times of self-discovery. These years sometimes include the wild, crazy, and fun-loving adventures of our high school and college age years. We celebrate them, and they are cherished parts of American culture. They are supposed to grow our character and spirit at a time when our intellect is challenged and our skills are sharpened. These years are meant to be our "coming of age." But the line between healthy growing experiences and self-destruction can be crossed with sobering and deadly consequences. When it is, strong ac-

tion to correct it is appropriate and justified.

When anyone drinks or uses drugs to excess, injury or death and brings the resulting heartaches upon others it is heartbreaking. But when our college age youth - our future - contribute cynically to this chain of misery from within a place intended to grow the human spirit, it is nothing short of tragic. When the collegial atmosphere of academic exploration and discovery drifts from a place of "an open exchange of ideas" to one of an open exchange of deadly and illegal narcotics, and other substances, that line has been crossed.

The recent arrests of students involved in drug sales at SDSU are sad and stunning. The distinguished flagship of the CSU system here in San Diego has not merited this sad stain but has dealt with it with distinction. However, what disturbs me most are the statements by some, the second-guessing and criticism of the University, its law enforcement and administration for collaborating with federal authorities. Those who protest this are missing the mark.

The free exchange of ideas and the exploration of issues for personal and social growth are critical in an aca-

dem setting. But, they must occur in an environment appropriate and safe to do so. The center of academic adult learning should not be a center for the support of suffering, addiction, violence and even death. Such academic exchanges and exploration should not be confused with or construed to facilitate criminal conduct which leads to the exploitation and suffering of others for financial gain. The recent situation at SDSU was not simply "a college thing", a "phase" or something to chalk up to the indiscretion of college age youth. It was criminal. Period.

The head of the SDSU faculty union expressed "dismay" at the level of drug use and related activity on campus, but was worried that the presence of federal investigators within campus circles to penetrate a drug dealing enterprise might set "a bad precedent." What? A bad precedent would be to quietly sweep such a problem under the rug for worry of the university's reputation as some institutions may have chosen to do. Not to mention how such handling would display stunning disrespect for the students, parents and families whose hard work and sacrifice may have allowed a loved one

to become a university student in the first place. A bad precedent is the distribution of drugs to high school students by those in a university. Bad precedents are studies such as one cited from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University indicating the number of full-time college students who use or abuse drugs and alcohol on a monthly basis on the rise. Then there are the Harvard University School of Public Health studies which show steady increases in drug and alcohol abuse among college students and rises in alcohol and drug related unintended injuries and deaths.

President Weber and the SDSU administration made the right call. They dealt honestly and professionally with a painful situation and sought neither to exaggerate nor to minimize the extent of the problem. They collaborated professionally with the appropriate authorities and in doing so, helped to safeguard the mission of SDSU here in our community.

Padilla served as Chula Vista Mayor from 2002-06 and on the California Coastal Commission from 2005-07. He is President/CEO of Aquarius Group, Inc. and can be contacted at: spadilla@aquariushgroup.org.