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Diversity Street

A popular role model for children reflects on her many years with one of television's enduring programs

by WENDY OWEN
SERIES STAFF WRITER

Sonia Manzano, known to millions around the world as Maria on PBS's "Sesame Street," was the keynote speaker for this year's Hispanic Heritage Month festivities at USF St. Petersburg.

Sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Innovative Multicultural Activities and New Initiatives Council, Manzano delivered an hour-long speech in front of a crowd of nearly 150 in the Campus Activities Center on Friday.

Kicking off her speech was a montage of some of Manzano's favorite Latin-themed clips from "Sesame Street," including one where Maria dances with Luis to a Ginger Rogers/Fred Astaire-inspired number.

Once she took the podium, Manzano highlighted the ways that "Sesame Street" contributes to bringing diversity to children through television and also shared her experiences as a Latino actress.

"Being Maria on "Sesame Street" is a great job, especially if you love television," said Manzano.

"It was "Sesame Street" that was the first to show diversity on TV and it was a kids show!"

The popular actress' speech also touched on her life as a first-generation American of Latino descent. Manzano spent most of her life in the South Bronx in a neighborhood very similar to

SEE SESAME STREET PAGE 6
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I don’t subscribe to the magic bullet theory that claims TV audiences are simply the passive dopes of whatever content the media decide to broadcast. But it’s obvious there are a lot of genuinely unimaginative individuals in Hollywood pulling the strings on television entertainment. While I doubt they’re trying to keep us as dumb and sedated as possible, they sure don’t have a lot of respect for us, either.

Take, for instance, the Bravo channel. I can remember a time when Bravo was a reliable harbor for the arts. It ran documentaries, independent films, and was a breath of fresh air amid the tired network and cable offerings. Was it a bit pretentious? Sure. But it was different and what it offered was valuable enough to keep around.

Then, NBC took over the channel a few years ago. Ever since that time, Bravo has turned into the pastel-colored dumping ground for the Peacock Network’s reruns (“The West Wing”) and reality series (“The Restaurant”). Gone are the short, artsy films. Instead we have “Celebrity Poker Showdown.” The only remnant from the Bravo I used to know is “Inside the Actor’s Studio.” Does Bravo have its occasion- al pleasures? Sure. I couldn’t wait for each new episode of “Blow Out,” which, for all of its obvious American Express product placement, was genuinely entertaining.

The folks at Bravo have also brought us “Queen Eye for the Straight Guy,” which has been on for the past three years or so. I liked “Queen Eye” when it first came on and will still tune in once in a blue moon while I’m being a typical male and flipping through channels. But seriously, how many times can you watch food maven Ted turn some guy on to the nuances of sushi and wine?

The success of that show has spawned other Bravo series that are unmentionable in respectable conversation. “Being Bobby Brown,” “Showdogs Moms and Dads,” and a new program called “It’s Great Being” (three recent episodes testifying to how great it is to be queen, blond and fat. Yes, those are the literal topics). The format of travesties such as “It’s Great Being” are patterned on the formula perfected by VH-1, in which D-list comedians you’ve probably never heard of offer their unfunny put-downs of pop culture figures, fads and events. VH-1 is littered with programs that follow this abominable design. Watch just a few segments of “Best Week Ever” and you’ll see what I mean. On the VH-1 Web site, the show claims to “skewer the week in pop culture.” Well, if cutting to some wanna-be opine “Man, what were they thinking?” or giving pseudo-straight faced commentary for cheap ironic effect qualifies for social commentary, then VH-1’s needs to update its definition of skewer—“to be very, very lame.”

Besides not being funny, shows like these—including “40 Most Awesomely Bad Love Songs” and “I Love the 80s”— are also mean-spirited. By making a position of postmodern distance, they attempt to ridicule all facets of pop culture while being unapologetically obsessed with it. The most disturbing aspect of these programs is that they try to function as surrogates for our own reactions to what we see in the media. Why bother having an opinion when there’s one already prepackaged for you? Of course, this is predicated on the notion that we would bother expanding the energy to form an opinion the next time Tom Cruise jumps up and down on Oprah’s couch.

One might argue that shows like these create a communal experience, but what’s the value of a group experience predicated on non-stop sarcasm and snark? Don’t we get enough of this already from hipper-than-thou blogs and pop columnists and commentators? These jejers and snobs seem to emanate from a need to atone for one’s enjoyment of popular culture or at least justify one’s proximity to its space. As long as you make fun of celebrities, it’s okay to dwell on their every move and watch their programs. I enjoy popular entertainment. Not all of it. Probably not even most of it. But enough to get pissed off and defend it when those on its fringes take it upon themselves to become critics without a clue.

Anthony Salveggi is a graduate student in journalism. He can be reached at usfrowen@usf.edu.
BRIDGING FAITHS

by GENESSA POTH
assistant editor

Sabrina Awsha, 8, her sister, Dina, 6, and their brother, Samer Sarsour, 9, practice balancing pieces of paper on their heads outside of the Campus Activities Center. Their father, Hani Obeidat, beckons them to stop playing and pose for a picture with their mother, Edna Yaghi. Obeidat smiles with pride as he releases the shutter. This is a proud moment for him and his family, as they will soon take part in the celebration later that evening by providing music for fellow guests at dinner.

Obeidat's family was one of many that came to USF St. Petersburg on Oct. 13 to honor the sacred months of Ramadan and Tishrei and the holiest day in the Jewish religion, Yom Kippur. Members of the Islamic and Jewish faith groups met in the CAC at 7 p.m. to break their fast together and use the opportunity to highlight their similarities rather than their differences. Rarely do the Islamic month of Ramadan and the Jewish month of Tishrei coincide.

"This year, for the first time since the early 1970s, the two months are coming together," said Kate Fagan, the rabbinic chaplain for Bayfront Hospital. "It's a time to turn and really give back to God."

For the next two years, the two holidays will occur around the same time. And Serving The One, the interfaith group that organized the event, is determined to use that time to build bridges among people of all faiths.

"We're working for the reconciliation of all people," Bill Carpenter of Serving The One said.

The campus event, which had been more than a year in the making, lasted about two-and-a-half hours and drew around 150 to 200 people from Pinellas and Hillsborough counties.

Rev. Sue Sherwood opened the dinner with a universal prayer thanking God for bringing forgiveness, renewal and healing. She prayed for those in pain and poverty fasting involuntarily. Canned goods and other non-perishable food items were collected at the door to be donated to the St. Petersburg Free Clinic.

"For sure the presence of the spirit is in this place," Sherwood said. "Let it fill your mind, heart, every cell, your being."

Sherwood also called for unity and kinship among all people.

"Happy holiday and happy holy day," she said. "We gather around the tables to break bread and break down the walls that separate us. May every nation, may every people, may every color and may every faith find that single heartbeat."}

Amar Kassem, a freshman from USF Tampa, then sang the Adhan, the Muslim call to prayer.
later performed the sunset blessing together.

"We've invited people of all faiths," said Katherina Bedier, a Jewish resident of St. Petersburg. "We want to share our love of peace, our love people. Especially like this, when they all come together in one accord." Photo by Genessa Path.

1. St. Petersburg resident Martha Ilalah Williams prays during the sunset prayer. Photo by Paul Nguyen.

2. Eight-year-old Timothy Gaffney from Tampa cups white grape juice out of a communion cup. Photo by Genessa Path.

3. Every table was set with bread and grape juice, the traditional food and drink of holidays and dates, the traditional food of Ramadan. Photo by Genessa Path.

4. St. Petersburg resident Abdul Rahman multy waits in line to get food. Photo by Genessa Path.

5. Fourteen-month-old Sana Hadi rests on her mother, St. Pete resident Asha Hadi's shoulder during the sunset prayer. Photo by Genessa Path.


8. A third-grade class from the American Youth Academy in Tampa sing "Rhythm of Rammaz." From left to right, Salena Arant, 8, her sister, Diva, 6, and their mother, Tampa resident Oshia Yaghi, who teaches at the school with her husband, Hani Obeidat. Photo by Genessa Path.

9. Kabra resident Arsenty Naoum and St. Petersburg resident Della Abdulrah serve food to fellow guests. Photo by Genessa Path.

10. Fawdigh Ahmed, 7, from Kabra stands with her friends and family during the sunset prayer. Photo by Genessa Path.

American-Islamic Relations, also spoke at the dinner. "It's wonderful to see such a diverse crowd of Muslims, Jews, Christians and people of all faiths," Bedier said. "We should get to know one another and study each other's religions and customs." Bedier said it was unfortunate that some people do evil things in the name of religion, when in truth it's for its own selfish political gain. "We see a lot of bad things happen today in the name of Islam and those are just bad people who do not represent Islam," Bedier said. "Religion should be a tool to bring people together, not divide them." Bedier was optimistic that one day America would know more about the true beliefs and holidays of Islam.

"As minorities in this country, we don't get to see lights in the streets, but in the future we will," Bedier said. "Eventually, you will be sending me a Ramadan card from Hallmark." Diane McKinstry, director of the Academic Success Center, said that she came to learn more about the two religions. "I'm not that familiar with the Muslim faith or the Jewish faith and I thought this would be a good way to broaden my understanding," McKinstry said. Mers was a sentiment that seemed to capture the spirit of the event. "We want peace," Fagan said. "We want shalom."
Sailor seeks the GOLD

by TAMMY BARTHLETT  staff writer

Freshman sailor Paige Railey has career's worth of victories and records that any of her competitors would envy. But those achievements are just a prelude for her next challenge: representing the United States at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

Railey, 18, specializes in the Laser Radial class, in which the boats are controlled by only one sailor.

"You have to work very hard to make the boat go fast," she said.

Railey has done an excellent job of making her boat the fastest. She is ranked the number one Laser Radial sailor on the 2005 U.S. Sailing Team. U.S. Sailing, the governing body for the sport, will send only one representative from each sailing class to the 2008 Olympic Games.

In January, Railey won the Laser Radial class at the 16th annual Miami Federation of ISAF, her first Olympic-ranking regatta. The International Sailing Federation (ISAF) has since named her number one in the world in Laser Radial. She recently increased her point lead in the world rankings by winning the ISAF Grade C1 Laser Radial European Championship in Split, Croatia this August.

Railey's prolific achievements started 10 years ago when she entered in a summer sailing program at the Clearwater Yacht Club. By the time she was 14, in just her first year of sailing in the radial class, she was ranked number one in the North American Laser Radial Grand Prix, becoming the youngest female participant ever to earn that distinction.

This summer, Railey secured her place in the record books when she won the gold medal at the Volvo Youth Sailing ISAF World Championships in Busan, Korea. With the win, she became the first sailor to win two Singlehanded Girls Youth World Championship titles. She also won the event in 2003, and earned a bronze in 2002.

While Railey has been extremely successful in her sport, her victories and dedication haven't come without a price.

"I had to decide to live a regular teen's life or to take up sailing, and I chose sailing," Railey said.

Railey believes she made the right decision because she gets to do something most people will never experience. With traveling all over the world and meeting new people, she said the hard work is worth it.

Railey said she's now "One-hundred percent motivated," about making the Olympic team.

"While her near term goal is the gold medal, Railey wants more than just one accolade. She wants her name to go down in history as one of the best sailors to ever compete in the sport. And with the determination she has shown so far, that may come true one day.

"That will take time, but I am willing to put in the effort," Railey said.

Achievements in Paige Railey's sailing career:

2001 US Sailing's Junior Women's Singlehanded Champion
2002 Named Female Athlete of the Year by the Olympic Sailing Committee of U.S. Sailing
2003 Won the gold medal at the International Sailing Federation Youth Sailing World Championships
2004 Won her third U.S. Junior Women's Singlehanded Championship
2005 Won Princess Sofia Trophy Regatta in Spain, defeating 15 other boats from 15 countries

Pai ge Railey's Records:

Youngest female to be awarded US Sailing Female Athlete of the Year
Only person to qualify for the U.S. Youth Sailing Team four straight years
First American to win the Women's European Radial Championships
First U.S. sailor to win the Swedish National Trophy two straight years

SOURCE: www.paigerailey.com

SAILING TEAM QUALIFIES FOR THREE NATIONALS

by TAMMY BARTHLETT  staff writer

The USF sailing team was spread out across the east coast Oct. 8 and 9. The women's squad competed in Annapolis, Md., some sailors competed in Charleston, S.C. and others sailed at Eckerd College.

Charleston played host to the South Atlantic Intercollegiate Sailing Association Sloop Championships, where teammates Kevin Reali, Phil Tanner and Jesse Combs won against the other six schools competing. With the win, they qualified for the Sloop Nationals on Oct. 29-30 in Ann Arbor, Mich.

The women's team finished sixth at the Naval Academy in Annapolis. Nicole Burchfield finished third overall in the Laser Radial "C" division. Abby Ethridge and Alexi Warnick finished fourth in the "B" division, while Kristen Herman and Jee Lee placed 7th in the "A" division. The team also qualified for the Women's Atlantic Coast Championship and the Women's Singlehanded Nationals.

Other team members finished second overall at South Points 5, just one point behind host Eckerd College. Varsity sailors Kristin Britt and Katie Davis won the "B" division, while Kim Witkowski and Kristen Murray finished second in the "A" division of the district regatta. The junior varsity team finished third on the strength of Amy Lloyd, who placed third in the "A" division. Bill Jones took fifth in the "B" division. Alyson Daggy crewed for both divisions.

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USF falls to Pitt

by ANTHONY SALVEGGI  editor

The Bulls are on streak—the wrong kind, though. Since upsetting the heavily-favored Louisville Cardinals at Raymond James Stadium Sept. 24, the Bulls have dropped consecutive games to Miami and Pittsburgh. On Saturday, they fell to the Pitt Panthers 31-17.

A 16-0 lead became a 21-10 deficit after two USF penalties led to Pittsburgh touchdowns. The Bulls then pulled to within four points in the second quarter on a 76-yard pass play from quarterback Pat Julmist to Andre Hall.

But that's as close as they would get. Another fumble, this one by backup QB Courtney Deason, led to Pitt's final touchdown late in the third quarter, sealing the Panthers' victory.

USF will try to get its record above .500 when the Bulls host West Virginia for homecoming this Saturday.

The game will be broadcast on ABC-38.

SEASAME STREET

(FROM PAGE 1)

the set used on "Sesame Street."

She's been an actress, a writer and a designer for her licensing company, "Three Amigas." She has also won a number of awards, including fourteen Emmys and a Peabody for her writing on Nickelodeon's "Little Bill." But it's been through her work as Martha since the 1970s that Manzano has been a role model and teacher to countless children throughout the world.

Though Manzano has been told by many that "Sesame Street" gave them their first exposure to the Spanish language, she doesn't consider herself a teacher.

"I didn't teach people Spanish—I simply showed it to them," Manzano said.

Manzano stressed the importance of showing children role models they can recognize through diversity.

"No one starts out deciding to be a role model," Manzano said.

"You can't just tell kids that if they work hard they will succeed. They have to have a role model."

For many children, "Sesame Street" was the first program on television to provide minority children with positive role models with whom they could identify.

Manzano said that for too many children, television is a teaching tool and that shows like "Sesame Street" give underprivileged children the same advantages as everyone else.
Get ready for your close-up... "Sunset Boulevard" is a masterpiece that makes a mockery of old Hollywood

by WENDY OWEN
senior staff writer

In all of cinema's history, there has never been nor will there ever be another movie like "Sunset Boulevard." The quintessential film-noir drama, this movie not only pokes fun at old Hollywood but also breaks new ground with techniques never used before in film.

A sad tale of deception, greed, lust and jealousy, the movie begins and ends with a dead man floating in the pool of a crumbling old mansion. The dead man, we find out, is down-on-his-luck Joe Gillis, a Hollywood scriptwriter and the narrator of the movie's tale. Gillis takes us on a journey of bad creditors, a car chase, a dead monkey and a dead man floating in the pool of a crumbling old mansion.

The dead man, we find out, is down-on-his-luck Joe Gillis, a Hollywood scriptwriter and the narrator of the movie's tale. Gillis takes us on a journey of bad creditors, a car chase, a dead monkey and a very well-timed landing at the home of Norma Desmond.

Desmond is the most mesmerizing character in the film. A faded silent-screen star, she has locked herself up in her seceded mansion. She lives in a world of delusion where her fans still remember her and where her old director, Cecil B. DeMille, will produce the wretched script that she is writing. Her eccentric behavior would only be matched by Michael Jackson today and her neurotic tendencies seem to know no limits. Nonetheless, Desmond maintains a creepy glamour within the dusty walls of her Hollywood fortress.

While this film is both entertaining and visually striking, it is the history behind it that is truly remarkable. Gloria Swanson portrays Norma Desmond, which is pure irony. Swanson was a silent screen star in her youth, and all of the silent footage used in the film is from Swanson's movies.

In a way, she was making fun of herself, though Swanson wasn't an eccentric like Norma Desmond. The movie also features a number of real-life Hollywood royalty such as director Cecil B. DeMille as himself and gossip columnist Hedda Hopper.

In addition to eerily poking fun at old Hollywood, "Sunset Boulevard" also provides some of the greatest cinematography and design of the 1950s. Set designers were instructed to blow dust into the air before filming so the crumbling mansion would have a gritty look on film. The opening scene in the pool is one of the best shots ever concocted, with the fish-eye view of the dead man floating in the water.

To create this effect, director Billy Wilder filmed it from above through the reflection of a mirror. Some of the best tricks in Hollywood are the most simple and this movie proves it.

If you've never seen "Sunset Boulevard," then you're in for a treat. There's a reason it won Best Art Direction, Best Music and Best Screenplay — find out for yourself. "Sunset Boulevard" is a reminder of how quickly beloved stars can fall and that even though they may be forgotten, they are still big. It's just the pictures that got small.

My Rating: 5 BULLS

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In keeping with tradition, the USF St. Pete Pet Walk Team will lend its support to the 15th Annual Paws on Parade Pet Walk, Saturday, Oct. 29.

The event, which will be held at North Shore Park in St. Petersburg from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., is sponsored by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of Tampa Bay. The 10-member Pet Walk Team, which has actively supported the event for the past 12 years, is encouraging everyone on campus to participate in the festivities and make a donation.

"A good way to educate is community service," said Sudsy Tschiderer, campus events coordinator.

The SPCA is a non-profit organization that relies on individual donations to ensure humane care for homeless pets. The one-mile Pet Walk has proven to be a successful fundraiser for those who cherish their pets and wish to help all animals in need of care. Last year's Pet Walk raised over $195,000 for homeless and abused animals.

The day will feature a variety of vendors, canine activities, contests, entertainment and adoptable SPCA pets. The Pet Walk is not exclusive to dogs and cats. Occasionally, people bring more exotic creatures such as miniature horses and pot belly pigs. All proceeds from the parade go directly toward helping provide food, medical supplies and services to animals in need.

To join the USF St. Pete Pet Walk Team or make a donation, contact Sudsy Tschiderer at 553-4842 or Barry McDowell at 553-6022.

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Waterfront Coordinator Jim Stull gave a presentation on his request for the Waterfront funding. He cited the cost of implementing new programs and class offerings, hiring more qualified staff members and increasing the hours for the swimming pool, waterfront and dock so that they can become 24/7 operations.

Stull said that because of the forthcoming residence hall, the hours should be increased for the students' benefit.

The newest Student Government representatives, Shawn Geihtart and Heather Small, were appointed to fill the available spots on the Parking Appeals Committee.

The Fall Fest will be held on the Waterfront Oct. 22 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It will include carnival games, prizes, food and a haunted house. Volunteers are still needed for the event, which is sponsored by the Harborview Activities Board.

The CRASH Course Leadership retreat was canceled because only two people had registered for the event.

Ella Shenhav's request for a guest speaker at the campus was conditionally approved. She requested funding for food and a small fee for the speaker, the founder and president of the Equal Rights Alliance of Florida, a non-profit, non-partisan group. Shenhav hoped the event would bring in 50 to 100 guests and that it would be held early November.

Candidates for Director of the Counseling and Career Center will be interviewed Monday, Oct. 17, Wednesday, Oct 19 and Monday, Oct 24, all at 2:30 p.m.

The parking coordinator fire and intramural, Marcus Berry, and a housing coordinator, Erin Mills, have been hired.

The SPC has a discussion to extend the library hours for finals week with food provided, as was done last semester, but no decision was made at the meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 26 in Davis 130 at 4:30 p.m.
Rhymes with Reasons

by ANGELA CHIN

Emotions run high, feelings
sink deep and words on paper
wait to be released

The musician licks her lips before
opening her eyes and gazing down
at her guitar. A waitress
named Bonnie distributes food and
beer while a couple of friendly dogs
sit alongside their masters. Such was
the atmosphere for another Open Mic
night at the Tavern.

Florida singer and songwriter
Shana Banana began the event in
1999 and her idea of bringing people
together in a friendly atmosphere
continues today. Students, working
professionals, artists and locals come
to the Tavern each Wednesday for a
place to share their words and rhythms — a place where people
come to express themselves and
listen to others.

The night typically starts at 8 p.m.

Open Mic Night at the TAVERN

WHERE: The Tavern at Bayboro
121 7th Avenue South
WHEN: Every Wednesday from 8 to
11 p.m.
WHO: Anyone Sign up when you
arrive and see the stage

OPEN MIC ARTISTS

(L) Dylan Cowles, head
singer and guitarist of Bleu
Gravy, took the stage alone
Wednesday night for Open Mic
at the Tavern.

(R) Brad Tilbe, musician, prepares his
guitar to take the stage.