

Be a medal lion

Grab the glue gun! There's still time to enter S.A. Life's Fiesta Medal contest.

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Coming Monday

One San Antonio school's touching approach in the fight against smoking.

SBC voice homegrown

Boerne resident is behind Spanish CallNotes.

By Lisa Brothers Gutierrez

You have received the voice mailbox of... Chances are you've heard this message a time or two and wondered about the person behind the voice.

Those may not be able to claim whoever voices the English version (even SBC Southwestern Bell officials can't give us her name) but if you've heard the Spanish version, "Usted ha llamado al buzón de voz de..." the voice is that of Boerne resident Eva Campbell Morales, owner of Paraíso Translations and Talent, a one-woman firm that specializes in helping businesses conduct their business in Spanish and English through au-

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WILLIAM LUTHER/STAFF

Eva Campbell Morales is the voice of the Spanish version of CallNotes.

The rude awakening on rudeness

79 percent of people say impoliteness is a serious problem in America.

By Marina Pisano

They are called common courtesies, but they are increasingly uncommon in American life.

Fact is, Americans are downright rude, according to a national study released last week. "Aggravating Circumstances: A Status Report on Rudeness in America," conducted by the nonprofit public opinion organization Public Agenda for the Pew Charitable Trusts.

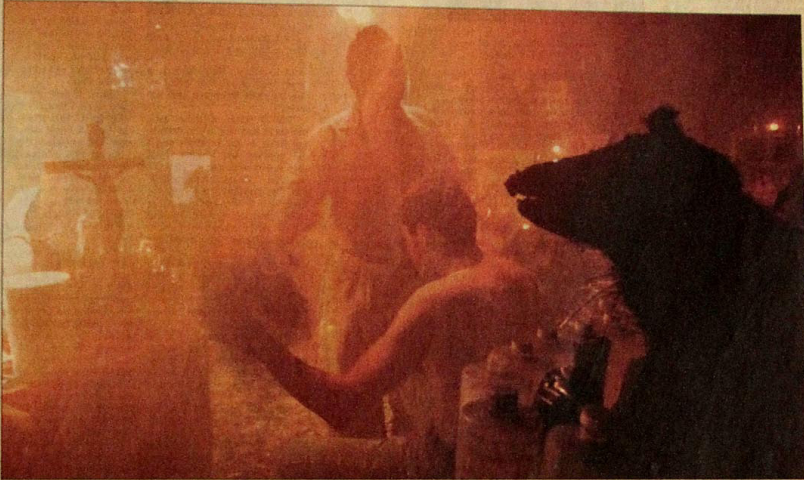
A resounding 79 percent of those surveyed said the dismal dearth of courtesy is a serious problem in society.

Of course, unless you spend all your time slipping tea and reading Emily Post, you already know that, but the report reveals just how bad the coarse behavior has gotten at youth soccer games, on highways and in workplaces, stores, restau-

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The spell of Catemaco

... lies not in its lush setting but in its many practitioners of magic, good and bad.



PHOTOS BY JANET SCHWARTZ/SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS-NEWS

ABOVE: Tito Guisepal Seba, a self-declared witch in Catemaco, Veracruz, shakes a medicinal bush branch on Enrique Lopez to cure him of eye trouble and an unsuccessful love life.

TOP: In his den, Seba shows a Voodoo doll with a photograph of a woman and pins stuck on it to cast evil spells against a client's enemy.

By Susana Hayward

EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

CATEMACO, Mexico — In this "capital of witches" — ringed by a blue lagoon bursting with birds and forests — wizards and shamans vie for souls, rousing God and Satan in ancient rituals replete with a garden of good and evil.

Located in the tropical Las Tuxtlas biosphere, enfolded by Lake Catemaco on the Gulf of Mexico in Veracruz state, Catemaco lures thousands of tourists. But they don't come for its colorful boardwalk or because it is one of Mexico's largest biospheres.

They come to seek cures from depression, unrequited love and illnesses. Many arrive to cast evil spells. At least a dozen, some say up to 100, warlocks, herbalists, shamans, psychics and fortunetellers are eager to help them.

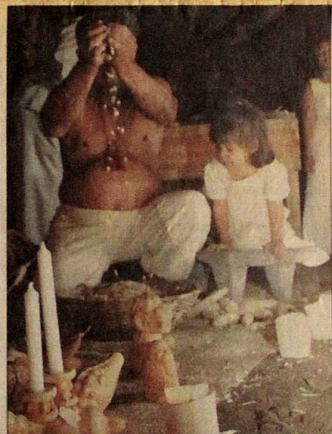
For three years now, Catemaco has staged its most famous witchcraft day, the Inter-Friday of March, a day considered to have the most positive energy. A cornucopia of ceremonies are held for 24 hours.

Promoted by the city's tourism office, the sorcery phenomenon nonetheless has many critics, who claim many rites are staged for the unworldly.



national Congress of Witches. It's held on the first Friday of March, a day considered to have the most positive energy. A cornucopia of ceremonies are held for 24 hours.

See WITCHCRAFT/5J



ABOVE: A shaman participates in the closing ceremony of the Third International Witches Convention.

LEFT: Women representing virgins offer incense to the spirits.

Priesthood celibacy has its place — like many centuries ago



MELISSA FLETCHER STOELTJE

The debate over priestly celibacy and the role it might play in pedophilia scandals rocking the Catholic Church has modern humans at war over an ancient concept. Each side has its own argument, which it (of course) bolsters with Scripture — always so handy in offering something for everyone.

The side promoting celibacy says it enables clergy to more fully devote their energy to God and flock, and that it mirrors Jesus' purity in renouncing worldly pleasures to follow the spirit.

America's "libertine" culture underlies us alone by priests, they assert, not celibacy. The other side argues celibacy reflects the Church's age-old aversion to sex, marriage, women and the flesh, which it regards as "unclean," inferior to and irrevocably split from

the spirit. Celibacy serves to attract sexually troubled men, they say.

In all the furor, no one has examined celibacy's historical roots. Here's what many people don't seem to know: For the first 1,200 years of Catholicism, priests, bishops and even popes not only married, but also had children. At early councils some tried to make celibacy the rule — following in the flesh-shedding traditions of monks and such — but failed. Then Pope Gregory VII came along in 1079 and banned marriage among clergy (in the West, at least). It has been policy ever since.

But why was Pope Gregory so hot to ban marriage? It boils down largely to one rather worldly concern: real estate. By the Middle

Ages, feudalism was all the rage, which means the only way to acquire wealth (read: land) was to inherit it. By then the Church was very wealthy but married clergy with kids tended to pass their land down to their progeny meaning it left church coffers. Clerical positions were often inherited as well, sometimes with disastrous results. "You would see a parish handed down to a son who might not be a very worthy person," says Lawrence Cunningham, theology professor at Notre Dame University.

The Rev. Lawrence Brennan, academic dean of a seminary in Shrewsbury, Mo., and a strong supporter of celibacy, downplays the land angle, saying the practice has always been more about the "availability" of clergy to parish-

ioners. But is that a valid premise? Does celibacy really make one a more giving, selfless cleric? The married Protestant pastor I've known (men and women) haven't seemed distracted from godly service by family obligations, rather, they've seemed enriched by them.

It's been estimated that 30 percent to 50 percent of Catholic priests today are homosexual; it seems plausible that men who reject their orientation might seek a haven in celibacy (whether they achieve it or not). But pedophiles? Could it be such narcissists are driven by the stamp of moral rectitude that goes with the collar, the unquestioned authority it conveys? Or maybe the premise (until recently anyway) that crimes might be cloaked in institutionally sanctioned secrecy?

Does the Catholic Church harbor more pedophiles than other groups? Does celibacy draw pedophiles? All we have right now are our own overheated opinions, what we need is cold, careful research — the sort of scrutiny the Church forbids. The biggest irony in all this is that a doctrine largely instituted to protect Church holdings now threatens to wipe them out, as dioceses pay out millions to settle sex abuse cases. A devout Catholic friend of mine recently said she thinks priests should be allowed to marry.

The times, they are a chanin'!

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