



***“Es otra cosa
con guitarra.”***

The Greening of America

Hispanic Environmental Advocates Take the Lead

BY GRACIELA TISCAREÑO-SATO

For Edgar Mejia, it was a saying from his teacher in Guatemala: “*No arruines lo que tu mano no ha creado.*”

Rodrigo Prudencio says childhood family trips throughout Bolivia and Latin America planted the seeds for a lifetime of environmental advocacy that has manifested in different professional roles.

Carmen Rad tells of how growing up on an island (Puerto Rico) made her wonder at a young age, “Where does all the garbage go?” Her mother taught her about reducing waste and reusing everything and is “the greenest person I know.”

Whatever the inspiration for these Hispanic professionals, their passion to do right by the environment in their professional and personal lives is palpable when speaking to them. This

article will highlight the many different and innovative ways our community is greening America.

You’ll read about the innovations and initiatives being led today by Hispanic individuals and NSHMBA sponsors. Then we can follow their lead to create a powerful effect. That is how we’ll get our community, America’s fastest-growing demographic, on the path to sustainability.

This article may help you make future career decisions. Mitch Posada, NSHMBA member and Managing Director of Grupo Entrada, emphasized, “Whatever your career path, understand that environmental and sustainability issues will be impacting you in some way in the next five years. Stay ahead of the curve and understand this now.”

The people you're about to meet are holding the metaphorical guitar; they're not just talking green. They're holding real instruments of power to create real change in our effort to repower America, create massive job growth, reduce carbon emissions, reduce energy consumption and reduce waste. They're leading by example.

There's a *dicho* that was passed on to Rodrigo Prudencio, a partner in the San Francisco-based venture capital firm Nth Power LLC. Rodrigo would discuss policy and ways to change the world with his Bolivian-born father. "We would both acknowledge that talk is cheap. Action mattered more. In other words, talking about music is one thing; putting a guitar in your hand is another." *Es otra cosa con guitarra.*

NSHMBA SPONSORS ARE GREENING THE GLOBE

Several of our national sponsors have some of the best green credentials in the global business community. These include Cisco Systems, Dell and Microsoft.

REDUCING EMISSIONS, INCREASING FACE TIME

Imagine participating on a global policy team with members in New Delhi, Singapore, London, San Jose, Brussels and Washington, D.C. Imagine meeting face-to-face twice a year with this team.

Think of the emissions (and expenses) you could avoid for yourself, your team and your company. Colombian born Andres Maz, Head of Policy for Latin America at Cisco Systems, says, "We've saved 20 people traveling and emitting for two meetings so far this year." Cisco has saved \$400 million in travel avoidance in the last year.

A long-time supporter of NSHMBA's San Jose Chapter, Cisco Systems makes the hardware and software that make Internet-based communications possible

over a variety of media.

Andres avoids global travel by using Cisco's TelePresence, a high-definition video system. Andres uses it to meet with people in Latin America, most of whom are colleagues in very large cities who are home-based and don't want to commute.

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Andres states, "I meet with high-level policy officials and private sector leaders in the region. We do one-to-one sessions and multi-point connections for larger conferences. They go to our offices and we meet face-to-face via video. The quality of the video connection is so good, we feel like we're in the same room, and after 15 minutes, we forget we're not."

A benefit of avoiding a commute is more time to enjoy biking with his daughter. When asked why this matters, Andres responds, "I've been in the most wonderful places in our beautiful world. We're working at full speed to destroy it. Our kids have the right to enjoy the planet we have today."

LEADING THE WAY WITH CARBON NEUTRALITY

Dell is one of the first major IT companies to achieve carbon neutrality;

they've achieved a balance between carbon-producing activities (e.g., manufacturing hardware, shipping it, disposing of it) and carbon-reducing activities. Dell is widely recognized as one of the greenest companies in the IT sector.

Roberto Ayala, strategic marketing manager and NSHMBA member, says Dell actively encourages telecommuting, which saves him from driving 80 miles a week. On a centralized website, Dell tracks the number of days employees don't commute (thereby sparing the environment of emissions) and calculates the metric tons of carbon dioxide NOT being spewed into the air. They also coordinate ride shares and carpools.

In addition to this key initiative that touches many employees, Dell runs green buildings, builds green products, provides an on-campus e-waste drop-off station, and more. Dell has been modifying the type of electricity it consumes. In fact, 26 percent of the energy needed to run its Austin headquarters comes from wind power.

HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY WHILE GREENING OUR GOVERNMENT

Do you walk to the grocery store with your own shopping cart? Do you share a car with your spouse? Do you remember the 1970s public service announcement with the crying Native American Indian looking at the wasteland that America had become?

Miami-based Monica DeZulueta, Ph.D., a senior data platform technology specialist with Microsoft, does all of the above. She's on Microsoft's Federal Team, working to green our largest government agencies.

Raised by Spanish parents, she and her brother were raised with a strong service ethic and a green lifestyle. She states, "We want our kids to enjoy the world we have. I used to snorkel as a child, and I've been SCUBA diving for over two decades. Recently, I was able

to enjoy the same reef I enjoyed as a child. I want to protect it for my kids.”

Monica works from home 50 percent of the time, fully equipped with Microsoft technologies like Office Communicator System 2007 for instant and unified messaging, Windows 7 with power consumption monitoring, Live Meeting for web-based collaboration, and Round Table (a video conferencing system with a 360-degree view). Her tools connect her to her D.C.-based team, help her conduct product demonstrations and enable communication with customers.

She explains, “U.S. government customers know it’s impractical for me to get on a plane for a one-hour meeting. They understand the need to do meetings remotely using available collaboration technologies.”

Deploying these tools to their global work force saves Microsoft tremendous piles of money, provides Monica the opportunity to be near her children while serving customers, and reduces the global corporation’s carbon footprint.

SOCIAL JUSTICE MEETS GREEN BUILDING TECHNIQUES

Start with kids in East Los Angeles pushed out of traditional education. Next, add innovative thinkers versed in green building techniques, eager to fix up dilapidated homes for low-income families. The result? A unique non-profit organization recently featured in the Obama administration’s “United We Serve” campaign: La Causa, an acronym for “Los Angeles Communities Advocating for Unity and Social Action.”

Robert Zardeneta, Executive Director, puts it this way, “You’ve heard of the No Child Left Behind Act? Well, these are the kids who were left behind. We’re a non-profit youth lead-

ership organization with a mission to empower young people to become agents of change.”

The young people in La Causa’s vocational program use recyclable materials and green techniques to modernize the most decrepit, occupied homes in East Los Angeles, refurbish bikes and plant community gardens.

Construction and Sustainability Manager Miguel Rodriguez joined a year ago. Before that, Miguel worked

in the Mexican communities of Oaxaca and Chiapas installing solar-powered systems and potable water sources.

He explains, “In Mexico we didn’t do this because it’s ‘green’ but because there’s no electricity.” He led a fact-finding trip with La Causa’s leadership to see the methods being employed in Mexico, then deployed them in East Los Angeles.

Miguel reminds us, “Our ancestors have been practicing ‘green’ methods for thousands of years. This isn’t new. Through modernization we’ve forgotten that. My grandparents in Mexicali lived in an adobe house. You can’t beat that type of insulation.”

But La Causa doesn’t stop there. This summer, 16 La Causa students attended a UCLA summer residency program to learn about green careers and how to have an impact on public policy. They were assigned peer mentors to work with them so they can eventually attend college. It’s a mind-boggling opportunity for kids who were once deemed unteachable and pushed out of traditional high school—and it’s a result of the vision, action and leadership of people like Roberto and Miguel.

THE INNOVATORS AND ENTREPRENEURS

Edgar Mejia, Chief Creative Officer of social marketing company Conexion, once biked to work 26 miles each way for four years. He gave up eating beef and helped people to stop junk mail, explaining, “It’s not just what I do, it’s who I am.”

Conexion is “a socially proactive company that uses marketing as a means to drive social change—while still working to make a profit.” Conexion measures success in part by the number of causes it supports.

To eliminate emissions, employees

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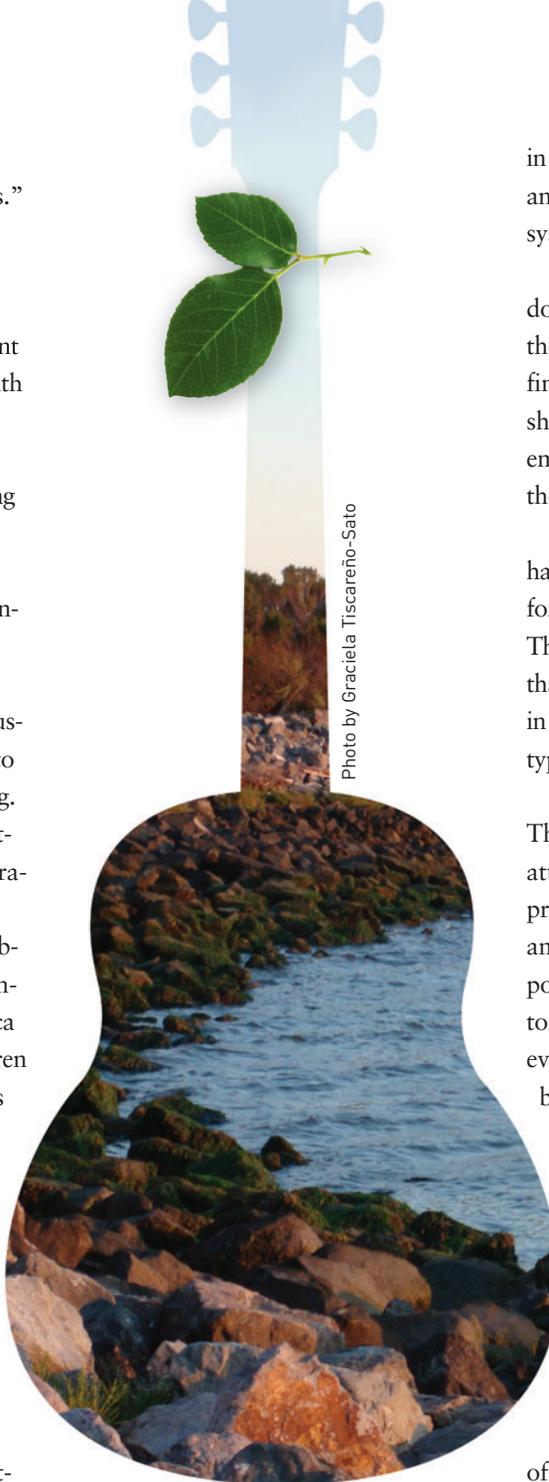


Photo by Graciela Tiscareño-Sato

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commute once weekly by carpool or public transit. “We have a very small footprint and are nearly paperless. I hope someone will see what we do and it will go from there.”

For its innovative work force approach, the company has been named a finalist in the prestigious Entrepreneur of the Year Award by two magazines: *Inc.* and *Hispanic Business*.

“DIME CON QUIÉN ANDAN Y TE DIRÉ QUIENES SERÁN.”

Frank Ramirez tells the Boy Scouts he works with that who they associate with will define them. If that’s true, we should all find people like Frank with whom to associate.

Frank, CEO of Ice Energy in Windsor, Colorado, provided me with an overview of our nation’s electrical grid infrastructure, then explained how Ice Energy proposes to solve a problem many still believe is impossible: the efficient storage of energy. Evening and early morning temperatures are lower. That’s when energy is produced more efficiently and costs less to produce. The grid can better transmit this energy when temperatures are lower. The ongoing problem has been to efficiently store off-peak energy for use during the hottest peak periods when demand is greatest and when most air conditioning (AC) systems are in use. Frank explains, “We’re leveraging the efficiencies that the planet provides every day through its rotation.”

To see how their Ice Bear product works, watch the June 30th video at www.ice-energy.com.

Frank states, “We’re working with traditional generating resources, improving the conversion of fuel to



File photo, Ice Energy

Left: Frank Ramirez, CEO Ice Energy.

questions so that our children have a healthy planet to raise their children. We can get there without sacrificing growth and comfort if we harness technology to achieve these efficiencies while reducing our footprint.”

Frank adds, “This green movement has the potential of creating wealth in ways

that many believe will be bigger than the Internet. There’s an opportunity to use technology for greater efficiency to not only preserve precious resources but also to create wealth by doing things in a more intelligent way. We can begin to minimize our dependence on oil while healing the planet.”

cooling and boosting efficiency by as much as 50 percent. It’s done by understanding and leveraging all the inefficiencies that exist across the system that often aren’t exploited because they’re not understood. I love what we’re doing not only because we can do well for our shareholders but also do well for our planet. We are providing superior air conditioned comfort while using much less fuel.”

Gartner named ICE Energy a “Cool Vendor” stating, “Ice Energy delivers a persistent new energy solution equivalent to hundreds of megawatts of clean peaking power for utilities.”

Frank believes, “I love being part of the movement that is asking the right

ARE YOU GETTING READY TO PRINT BANNERS FOR A CORPORATE EVENT SOON?

Have you considered how the materials and inks will be disposed of after your event ends? Carmen Rad wanted to eliminate the waste associated with commercial banners with short shelf lives that end up in landfills. She and



Photo by Leroy Hamilton at Photography by Hamilton

Carmen Rad, President, CR&A Custom.

her husband, a textile expert, developed a fully biodegradable material and then realized no machine existed to print on it. A year and a half ago, Hewlett-Packard created a printer for eco-friendly UV inks. Carmen was among the first to buy. "I purchased a million-dollar machine and took a big risk to set an example in my industry. I'm hoping others will follow," Carmen states.

Her commercial printing business, Los Angeles-based CR&A Custom, will print whatever is needed and leave no waste behind.

For their innovation and commitment to changing the commercial printing business, her business received the "Green Firm of the Year Award" from the L.A. Minority Business Opportunity Committee. Carmen was also recognized as "Manufacturer of the Year" by the National Latina Women Business Association, Los Angeles

Chapter. The little girl from Puerto Rico who once wondered where all the waste goes has grown up and is doing her part to produce less.

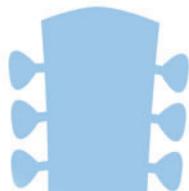
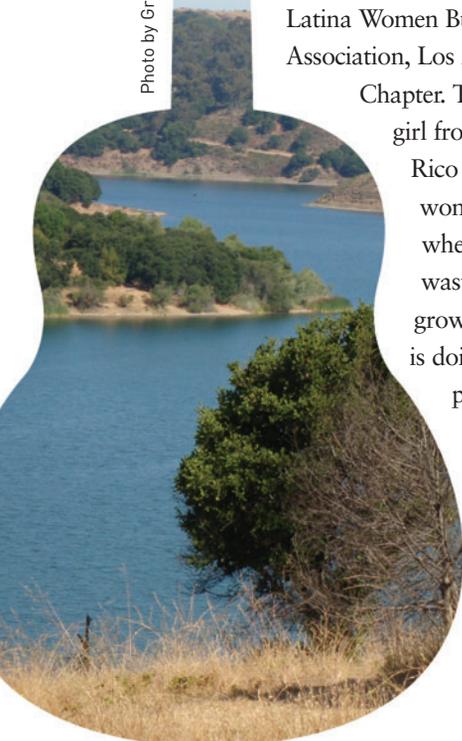


Photo by Graciela Tiscareño-Sato



"MAS VALE RE-USAR QUE DESCARTAR"

Steve Montoya and Humberto Rincon met as engineering students at U.C. Davis. Steve chose electrical; Humberto opted for mechanical. Both have enjoyed careers in high technology startups and Fortune 500 companies. Today they're focused on taking to market an invention that will replace the nation's inefficient industrial warehouse lighting.

They work at HID Labs in Menlo Park, California. HID stands for high intensity discharge, a type of lighting. Steve is the Vice President of Product Management and Engineering, while Humberto serves as Vice President of Operations and Manufacturing.

They want to alter the large bay lighting industry with a solution that has a digital signal processor inside, enabling two-way communication plus possible ties into wireless network infrastructure and control systems. Additionally, each light will be able to provide feedback on its status.

According to Steve, "The energy needed to power warehouse distribution centers accounts for 60 percent of a corporation's electricity bill. With our approach, lighting can become a managed resource."

Humberto adds, "Out of the box, our solution slashes 25 to 40 percent of the electricity needed over current HID lighting. Furthermore, we've designed it to accept our customers' current reflector technology, so replacement isn't necessary. It can be re-used."

When speaking of re-use, he adds, "I grew up poor in California's Imperial Valley, the son of farm worker. We re-used, recycled everything because we had no choice. To me, the



Steve Montoya and Humberto Rincon, HID Labs

environmental movement is a commercial one. Things that are true conservation are not really new. It's what I've done my whole life: gardening, re-using lumber, etc." Humberto has taken that key concept of re-use instilled in him by his family and applied it as he helps to reinvent lighting on a large scale.

LATINO GREEN LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Mitch Posada, Managing Director of Grupo Estrada, confesses, "I need to give a little credit to Al Gore for making me see that we don't have time to waste."

Mitch wants to make sure our community is involved in this movement and that we embark on the path of sustainability. He's planning a Latino Green Leadership Summit with the objective to gain an understanding of where the Hispanic community stands today as a whole on environmental sustainability. He'll bring together private, non-profit and public sector leaders, take our collective green pulse, and attract media attention to those already innovating in the green economy.

THE VENTURE CAPITALISTS

Now that his children are policing the family's recycling efforts, Eduardo

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Rallo feels he has set a good example regarding the environment. He's analyzing his home to improve efficiency. He takes these values to work as a Partner for Pacific Community Ventures Fund in San Francisco, a venture capital firm with a "double bottom line" focus.

Eduardo explains, "We invest in interesting business models with the capacity to grow and to create jobs. We ask, 'What are the areas that can provide that type of growth?' We understand green businesses are going to be a key part of this going forward."

Two investments so far are Bentek, a company creating components for solar panels, and New Leaf, a champion in the recyclable paper category.

Eduardo made an astute observation about American Hispanics as a group. He observes, "One challenge for our community is that many of us are just now having our first taste of consumption. It's very difficult to make sustainability a priority since we're just beginning to wield consumption power. The education of the different choices consumers have will be the key to getting more of our community on the path to sustainability."

POWER MATTERS

The *dicho* about the guitarra that inspired much of this article has driven Rodrigo Prudencio's career. It's a career path with environmental advocacy at the heart of everything, its roots sprouted while traveling as a child throughout Latin America with Bolivian-born parents. Now as a father, he's thinking about his legacy.

Rodrigo understands that to affect real change, you need to be in a position of power. Talking about it won't do it; policy work won't always do it. He did policy work at the State Department and the National Wildlife Federation,



Rodrigo Prudencio, Partner, Nth Power

then decided to get closer to the action.

He focused on energy markets during his MBA program at U.C. Berkeley. He joined a startup funded by Nth Power LLC, a San Francisco-based venture capital firm exclusively focused on energy technologies. Nth Power has invested in startups since 1997. The visionary founders believed there would be a convergence of deregulation of energy markets, resource constraints and improved technologies. How right they were.

Rodrigo soon became a partner at Nth Power. His focus is clear, "Everything I do here at Nth Power is to find companies that will lower the amount of energy that we use." (Two companies backed by Nth Power are featured in this article: HID Labs and Ice Energy.)

From his professional and personal experiences, Rodrigo emphasizes, "I refuse to believe that there's a tradeoff between a better standard of living and our ability to use resources wisely. Our job at Nth Power is to find the entrepreneurs who will make this possible."

Ernst & Young LLP reported the

amount of venture capital invested in alternative energy sources increased by 73 percent in the three months ending in July. When I asked about the innovation activity level he's seeing, Rodrigo answered very positively. "There are three to four times more entrepreneurs at work now in energy-related improvements than when I started. It's very encouraging."

YOUR OWN GUITARRA

My journey to provide a snapshot of Hispanic participation in the American green economy uncovered the deep cultural roots of conservation with which most of us have been raised. The wisdom of our ancestors has propelled many into positions of power to impact positive change in how we work, consume, live, run businesses, power our homes, cars and buildings.

It's up to each one of us to emulate, congratulate, support and reward business people so they can keep up the momentum. It's time for each of us to pick up la guitarra.

Graciela Tiscareño-Sato joined NSHMBAs San Francisco chapter after completing a decade of military service in the U.S. Air



Force flying aboard KC-135 refueling jets. She completed her international MBA while on active duty then enjoyed a career in global marketing in the communications industry. She is a member of the San Jose chapter, a passionate storyteller, a writer and a speaker.

You can reach Grace at grace@gracefullyglobal.com with your stories of how you are participating in the greening of America.