



MEMBER M. L. S.

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Dr. Hector P. Garcia
1315 Bright
Corpus Christi, Texas

Dear Dr. Garcia:

Just wish to thank you for the great service that you once again are doing to help our people. Enclosed is a small copy of fine comments regarding your outstanding presentation in Washington.

Should I be of any help regarding this particular Naval Air Station situation or any other matter, please feel free to call me anytime.

Your friend,

Roland Garcia

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Enclosure

"For All Your Real Estate Needs"

Dr. Garcia laid it on line for NAS

If the Naval Air Station is salvaged for Corpus Christi, it will be because of Dr. Hector Garcia.

That simple statement is not entirely true, as the doctor would be the first to point out. Engaged in the effort are many other persons, here and in Austin and in Washington.

But their activities would be futile if Hector Garcia were not part of the team. It is he alone who has been able to get the *political* attention of the incoming administration. In a fight like this, if you don't have their attention, the merits of your arguments are irrelevant.

When the Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce's ad hoc committee on the Naval Air Station went to Washington last week to present their case to the Carter transition team, Dr. Garcia carried the ball.

Others of us spoke, of course. Our words got a patient, perfunctory, and polite hearing. When Dr. Garcia came on, he got

**Edward H.
Harte**



their undivided attention. I don't think they had ever seen a presentation quite like his before.

The doctor laid it all on the line — his 30 years of leadership among the Mexican-Americans of South Texas, his efforts in behalf of Adlai Stevenson, Jack Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, and George McGovern, and finally his phenomenal job in getting out the vote for Jimmy Carter.

Sitting across a large table from the three Carter men, he both looked and sounded like the sure ethnic chieftain he is. Gone is the overseas cap that symbolized

his tempestuous past when he was welding his American G. I. Forum into a political power in the Southwest.

Gone also is his youthful oratorical style, with its crescendos, tough statements, and flashes of angry denunciation at what he considered injustice.

Now, in the fullness of years, he speaks swiftly but softly, given more to understatement than otherwise. But the authority of real leadership is in every word, and in Washington they listen.

It is important, I think, that this community understand that Dr. Garcia in effect laid all his prestige and his credit with the new administration on the line for this one project.

When he recites his service to the Democratic party and the performance of the ethnic voting bloc which he put together (97 per cent for Carter!), he doesn't then produce a long shopping list of Mexican-American desires and demands. He dwells on only one

thing: the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station.

I don't think I have ever before seen a major political figure put all his chips on one square on the roulette table quite this way.

Garcia has put everything he's got — which is considerable — at the service of this community.

But unless lots of attitudes have changed lately, he's more likely to deserve the praise of his fellow citizens than to hear it.