

Mediation via Movie

WHEN CARLOS SANDOVAL '74 first presented *Farmingville*, the 2004 Sundance Film Festival award-winning documentary he wrote and codirected, to Margaret Bianculli-Dyber, the film's leading lady, her reaction was predictable. "She talked back at everything," remembers Sandoval. "Whenever anyone she didn't like came on [screen], there was name-calling. At one point, midway through the film, she got up and walked out."

As Bianculli-Dyber, a feisty activist for immigration reform, huffed at her on-screen enemies, Sandoval mediated, coaxing her back to the television and urging her to keep an open mind. It was a role familiar to the first-time-filmmaker. Sandoval, a former lawyer, retired for health reasons, is keenly attuned to matters of communication and interpretation—how people listen to arguments, what they internalize, and what they simply ignore.

It was to communicate, or help others communicate, that Sandoval went to Bianculli-Dyber's hometown. On the eastern end of Long Island, Farmingville is a small, lower-middle-class suburb where aluminum-sided white houses unassumingly center congruent chain-linked lots. But it is also a community divided, where class and ethnic tensions, provoked by an influx of immigrant job-seekers in the 1990s, spiraled downward, as discourse degenerated, into hate-crime.

Farmingville's problems hit Sandoval close to home, figuratively and literally. He was at his boyfriend's house in nearby Amagansett, New York, in September 2000, when he came across a newspaper account of the beatings of two teenaged Mexican day-laborers in Farmingville. Sandoval, whose father is of Mexican descent, and who himself mowed lawns as a teenager in southern California, was horrified. "I had hoped that there was this new model [on Long Island] that would be more welcoming than what I had experienced growing up," he says. "When I saw the headline that they wanted to 'get some



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF POV AND PBS



Filmmaker Carlos Sandoval (above) and (at left) Margaret Bianculli-Dyber in a still from *Farmingville*.

Mexicans,' that just tore me apart. I felt something needed to be done."

But in a community where everyone seemed to have an agenda, carving out a constructive role proved a challenge. Townspeople assumed he was "predictably pro-immigrant," recalls Sandoval, and the laborers were generally distrustful of Americans, even those of Mexican lineage.

Film documentary afforded Sandoval a medium in which he could distance himself from the specifics of Farmingville's debate in order to transcend political pettiness and get at the basic human roots of the town's problems. "Part of our hope for the film," he explains, "was that, by going right down the middle, we could get more at the rational and reasonable concerns, the basic commonality."

He enlisted veteran filmmaker and Long Island resident Catherine Tambini to codirect and they moved to Farmingville, immersing themselves socially to develop friendships and facilitate discourse. (That is how Sandoval got to know the "complicated but fascinating" Bianculli-Dyber.) Often, this simply meant keeping quiet where others might interrupt. "You have to make people feel they are listened to," Sandoval says.

As part of an ongoing outreach campaign, he plans to return to Farmingville with his film (which also premieres on the PBS series *POV* on June 22 at 10 P.M.). He hopes to encourage communication and cultural exchange, especially among young people. Will anyone listen? There hasn't been much cause for optimism. Just months before *Farmingville's* release last July, the house of five Farmingville Latinos was firebombed. The accused: five teenagers (two of whom have since pleaded guilty and agreed to testify against the other three). But Sandoval remains positive. "You're not going to convince people on either extreme," he says. "But ultimately we're trying to get those people who may be somewhat more receptive to listening—well, to listen."
~LEE HUDSON TESLIK

1984 REUNION

Secretary: **Rein Cruz**, 9417 Valley Rd., Charlotte, N.C. 28270; rein@post.harvard.edu. Class website: www.hri984.com.

Born: to **John Farrell** and Carmen Bozic Farrell (McGill '86), a daughter, Deirdre, on July 25, 2003. "She's already a big girl, with hair even more blonde (and red) than that of her older sister, Ingrid. Her birth, after a frighteningly brief labor, followed 10 minutes after a hairy drive down Chestnut Hill Avenue and Route 9 to the door of Brigham and Women's Hospital. The traffic lights were pretty much with us all the way..."

Married: **Shayne Kukulowicz** and Elizabeth R. Gill '85. See class of 1985.

1985

Secretary: **Mary K. Warren**, 235 East 57th St., Apt. PH18J, New York City 10022.

Faulkner Fox has written a book of creative nonfiction, *Dispatches from a Not-So-Perfect Life, Or How I Learned to Love the House, the Man, the Child* (Harmony Books/Random House). In it, she deals with work, ambition, and motherhood, and discusses the legacy of attending Harvard.

Married: **Elizabeth R. Gill** and Shayne Kukulowicz '84 on May 24, 2003, by Rev. Mark D. W. Eding-

ton at Memorial Church at Harvard. "We began our relationship saga as Harvard College sweethearts, reconnected 18 years later, and finally decided to tie the knot." More than 50 alumni attended. The wedding party included father of the bride Thomas J. Gill III '53, M.D. '57, A.M. '57, Jf '62, mother of the bride Faith E. Gill, father of the groom Aggie Kukulowicz, Thomas J. Gill IV '86, M.D. '90, **Leslie Castanuela Barnes**, **Cassandra Coe**, Thomas Schuler '84, and James Kalustian '82. The couple live with Shayne's daughter, Halle ("class of 2020"), in Toronto.

Suzanne Tanner Meisel and her husband, Gary Meisel '74, J.D. '77, celebrated their tenth anniversary last year. They met while working together at