

throughout high school and college. For the past 28 years, she has been a package car driver for United Parcel Service. She has received many citations for safe driving—quite a feat since she delivers packages to all of the businesses on Broadway and Race Streets in Jim Thorpe. As her customers (and their dogs) will attest, Peggy Sue is the face of UPS in Jim Thorpe, and her friendly and outgoing personality makes her an outstanding ambassador for her employer and profession in town.

She is a member of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Jim Thorpe. She is a charter member of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Molly Maguire Division 1, Carbon County, and served as its president from 2008–2009. She has also held other volunteer positions in town and on the St. Patrick's Day Parade committee, including serving as an aide to 2013 Parade Grand Marshal John J. Mulligan.

Her "Fighting Irish spirit" has helped carry her through a courageous bout with cancer. Diagnosed in July 2012, she feels it has been the continuous prayers and support of friends and family that has been the best and most important medicine. Her illness has brought together a community in a positive way that no one could have imagined. She may have lost her voice, but she has never lost her radiant spirit.

Mr. Speaker, I send my highest congratulations to "Peggy Sue" O'Donnell on being named the Grand Marshal of this year's Carbon County St. Patrick's Day Parade, and my thoughts and prayers are with her on this day and always.

LAS VEGAS DANCE TROUPE TO  
PERFORM IN INAUGURAL PARADE

**HON. DINA TITUS**

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 4, 2013*

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, Las Vegans take pride in the different cultural heritages and traditions that have enriched our community, and contributed to our distinct identity.

Today, I stand to recognize a Las Vegas dance group that truly embodies this spirit, Comparza Morelense.

Rooted in their Mexican heritage, Comparza Morelense is well known throughout Southern Nevada, performing traditional dances and songs at numerous festivals and fairs for the last two years.

This January, Comparza Morelense's hard work and dedication were rewarded with an invitation to perform in the President's Inaugural Parade.

As the only Nevadan group invited to participate in the Parade, this was truly a prestigious honor.

On Inauguration Day, I proudly cheered them on as they represented not only Las Vegas and Nevada, but their rich cultural heritage as well.

Wolf Blitzer, newsman from CNN, also commented that the group with the beautiful costumes from the state of Morelos was the most colorful entry in the parade.

I submit the Las Vegas Sun article, "Las Vegas dance troupe to perform in Inaugural Parade," written by Tovin Lapan on January 10, 2013.

LAS VEGAS DANCE TROUPE TO PERFORM IN  
INAUGURAL PARADE

(By Tovin Lapan)

In the past two years, the Las Vegas dance troupe Comparza Morelense has quadrupled in size and gone from dancing at birthday parties and first communions to winning multiple parade trophies and performing in November at the Latin Grammys.

Despite the rapid rise in the group's popularity, no one expected the invite that arrived Dec. 20. In fact, some members of the group demanded to see proof the White House had indeed requested they participate in the parade at the 57th presidential inauguration.

"I submitted an application because (the parade organizers) asked us to. I think someone from the campaign saw us last year," said Stephanie Padilla, one of the group's members. "I got the email saying we were invited, and the first thing I did was tell my mom. She called the other dancers, and they didn't believe her. So, we had to show the letter to everyone."

Comparza Morelense started with 11 members in December 2010. The group now counts 40 members, ranging in age from 9 months to 65 years old, among its ranks. About 25 dancers will make the trip to Washington, D.C., to participate in the Jan. 21 Inaugural Parade.

Jesus Padilla and Maria Garcia, Stephanie's parents and co-founders of the group, started the dance troupe with other family members to help keep alive a tradition from their home, the Mexican state of Morelos.

"We started the group because we would dance after family dinners and parties, but we wanted a more formal way to share the tradition and our culture," Garcia said in Spanish. "We never thought it would lead to performing for the president. I think it reflects the president's interest in all of the races and cultures in the country, and how he seeks participation from all corners."

The Presidential Inaugural Committee is attempting to choose representatives from each state for the parade, and Comparza Morelense is the only invitee from Nevada so far, a committee spokeswoman said. In making its choices, the committee considers the type of performance, reviews videos and weighs how each potential participant would represent U.S. history, diversity and commitment to service.

The elation of inclusion for Comparza Morelense, however, was soon followed by the reality of funding and logistics. \* \* \* fundraiser, featuring food, games, a raffle and dance performance, from 4 p.m. to midnight Saturday at Elegante Banquet Hall, 3020 E. Bonanza Rd.

During a demonstration for media this week, the group's speakers cracked, popped and then conked out more than once. Garcia said Comparza Morelense typically would use a pickup truck and its own sound system during a parade, but for the Inaugural Parade the members would like to hire a DJ with professional equipment or, more traditionally, a live band.

No matter what, Comparza Morelense will make it all work, Garcia said, beaming with a wide smile at the thought of how far the group has come.

"When we started, we only set out to share this dance and piece of our culture with the community," Garcia said. "Now we get to perform for the president. It's amazing."

Pablo Soriano, a 12-year-old who joined the group just a few months ago and will travel to Washington, dances in a black velvet costume embroidered with images of the sun and Tigger, from Winnie the Pooh.

"I like everything about the dance," Pablo said. "I like the jumping. You get exercise.

You sweat. My mom and dad are from Morelos, and I feel like I'm carrying on the traditions. I also like how there are so many different cultures mixed together."

The dancers are called "Chinelos," and their origin dates to the Spanish conquest of Mexico. The indigenous people were persecuted and not allowed to openly practice their own religion. During Lent and Carnival, emboldened by the ability to wear masks in the festivities, some indigenous people wore costumes mocking the Europeans and danced through the streets. The Chinelos from Morelos, where in the colonial era there were large sugar plantations, are some of the first and most well known.

"The priests didn't let the indigenous people practice their customs, and they had no rights," Garcia said in Spanish. "When they had the chance (at Carnival preceding Lent), they put on costumes and made fun of them."

The costumes are elaborate and take between one and two months to make, Garcia said. The masks are typically light in color and feature a pointy upturned beard, a clear holdover from the dance's roots in imitating Europeans.

The costumes, made from velvet, are embroidered with elaborate designs that reflect the dancer's interests and often meld motifs from politics, religion and both European and Mexican culture. Some are images of indigenous Mexican mythology, many have depictions of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and others feature skulls, dragons, swords and even Disney characters.

The dance is called the "Brinco del Chinelo" (Jump of the Chinelo) and is left open to interpretation by the individual dancer. For the Inaugural Parade, however, Comparza Morelense is planning to do some extra choreography in an effort to present a more unified form for their moment in the national spotlight, Garcia said.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. DON YOUNG**

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 4, 2013*

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, on February 28, 2013, I was unable to vote because of medical reasons and missed rollcall vote No. 55, on passage of S. 47, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

I strongly support reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which was delayed for far too long. I am pleased that Congress was able to overcome the obstacles that blocked its final passage. VAWA's programs are a critical component of our Nation's effort to reduce violence and care for victims. Reauthorizing VAWA will help Alaska, and the rest of the country, combat the epidemic of abuse and rape that plagues our families and communities.

RECOGNIZING MINNETONKA GIRLS  
ALPINE SKI TEAM

**HON. ERIK PAULSEN**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, March 4, 2013*

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the Minnetonka High School Girls Alpine Ski Team.