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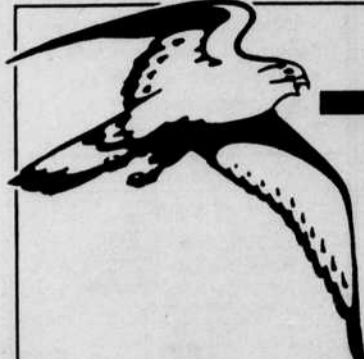
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■ PUBLIC INTEREST

Witness for Peace sends delegation to Nicaragua

by Linda Kintz

The North Pacific delegation of Witness for Peace will leave for Nicaragua on August 24, with a send-off at 5 pm at the Federal Building in Eugene. (See the *What's Happening* Calendar for details.)

Twenty-one people from Oregon, Washington and Idaho will spend two weeks in Nicaragua. They will first meet with local women's and civilians' groups, opposition leaders, farmers, union members, church people, and forestry workers. The delegation will then spend a week and a half in the countryside in the province of Nueva Segovia, the northern province of Nicaragua which borders on Honduras. There delegates will stay with Nicaraguan families and participate in work projects to help rebuild after contra attacks in the area.

Many towns in Nueva Segovia such as Panali and Quilali, have been attacked frequently by the contras, local cooperatives damaged, and civilians killed. Trucks and boats bringing food and medical supplies are frequent targets, as are other economic sites. The strategy of "low-intensity conflict" focuses on economically important sites, such as cooperative farms and transportation routes. In this kind of warfare, civilians are most severely affected.

Witness for Peace, a nonpartisan, nonaffiliated group, is a nationwide organization, begun by people concerned about the consequences of contra funding on civilians in Nicaragua. It is made up of a wide diversity of people, some of whom are affiliated with churches, some of whom are not. Witness for Peace is aided in Nicaragua by CEPAD (a group supported by more than 40 Protestant churches), the Maryknoll Sisters, and the Antonio Valdevieso Cultural Center, which is also funded by Protestants in the U.S. The Northwest regional coordinator of Witness for Peace is Pam Fitzpatrick of Eugene.

The North Pacific delegation will take to Nicaragua 30 bags of material aid donated by people in the Northwest; other supplies will be shipped down by container via Seattle. Providence Hospital in Portland has donated \$14,000 worth of medical supplies; people of the First Presbyterian Church in Sandpoint, Idaho, have donated baseball equipment. The Peace Club at South Eugene High School has raised money for school supplies; the most frequent request made of visitors by children in the streets of Nicaragua is a request for pencils. People of the First Presbyterian Church in Corvallis have sewn



This photograph was taken at Estele, Nicaragua, near the area the Witness for Peace Delegation will visit.

21 duffle bags for supplies being taken down.

Thirteen Oregonians, nine of them from the Eugene-Springfield area, will participate in the delegation. Hal Sheller, a minister for the Church of the Brethren in Springfield, is being helped by members of his congregation in funding his trip. The youngest member of the delegation is Greg Barnheisel, president of the Corvallis High School Peace Club; another Corvallis resident, Erwin Barron, associate pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Corvallis, will participate. Two physicians, Ben Kenagy from Eugene and John Miller of Rogue River, who formerly worked with the medical ship, the SS Hope, will accompany the delegation, as will three University of Oregon faculty members, Dan Goldrich, Alan Wolfe, and myself. Among the other delegates are a legislative aide to the Oregon Senate, Bonnie Souza, and Marcella Becker, a graduate student and West German citizen who was a former participant in the West German anti-nuclear movement. Woody Hesselbarth, a forest ranger from Idaho, will talk with Nicaraguan officials and timber workers about reforestation projects undertaken in parts of Nicaragua decimated by over-cutting during the Somoza years. Three former members of the U.S. Navy, one a mechanical engineer, another a navigator and Vietnam veteran, will also join the group.

The delegation will bring back information about the lives of civilians in Nicaragua. The public is encouraged to contact the delegation with questions before and after the trip at Witness for Peace, 485-1755, 372 W. 10th, Eugene. Those interested are also invited to join the delegation for a send-off on August 24.

Sacred Heart opens Prenatal Clinic

The new Sacred Heart General Hospital Prenatal Clinic opened on Monday, August 17, to serve pregnant women who would not have access to prenatal care otherwise. The clinic is a joint effort of the Lane County Health Department, local physicians and Sacred Heart.

An estimated 400 women in Lane County received inadequate prenatal care last year, according to the Health Department. And last spring the Oregon Medical Association named Lane County as one of six counties that had a critical lack of prenatal care for low-income women.

The clinic is a response to this need, according to Sister Monica Heeran, Sacred Heart General Hospital administrator. "As responsible health care providers, we felt we needed to find a way to give women the proper care they require," she said.

The clinic will be staffed by Nurse Manager Wendy Lang, Certified Nurse Midwives Carolyn Nelson and Cindy Weck, and Office Coordinator Gloria Vaupel. Physicians will be on call if complications arise. Initially, physicians from Women's Medical Services will be working with the clinic.

Women who are pregnant and are unable to gain access to prenatal care themselves should call the Health Department at 687-4013. Following a financial screening and need assessment, the Health Department first will refer eligible women to local physicians who accept Medicaid patients. When all the appointment times available for new patients are filled or if patients don't meet financial requirements, the Health Department will refer them to the Prenatal Clinic.

These patients may include women who are among the "working poor," often uninsured and unable to pay for care; and women who are not qualified for Medicaid but fall below Federal poverty guidelines.

Fees will be assessed on a sliding scale according to ability to pay, and no one will be denied care because she cannot pay.

The clinic should serve to reduce the incidence of low birth weight in newborns, which contributes to the majority of infant deaths in Lane County.