Paper fights junta Opposes Sandinista censorship

By Debbie Howlett

Emerald editor Debbie Howlett recently returned from an 11-day trip to Nicaragua. This is the final story in a series of five.

For all of the support the Sandinistas are able to show visitors, opposition to the government is easy to find in most areas, and especially from one newspaper.

In an effort to prove the Sandinista government is a repressive regime, people point most often — and most noticeably — to censorship of the media, especially the opposition newspaper, La Prensa.

La Prensa was, during the Somoza regime, the Sandinista's biggest voice of support. Just prior to the revolution, Somoza had Pedro Chamorro, then editor of La Prensa, gunned down in the street. The killing, which outraged the Nicaraguan people, also left the door open for Chamorro's family to take over publication of La Prensa. But the family became divided, and three members of the family could not agree on the editorial stance the paper should take. So they started their own paper.

JOINT JOURNALISM

Chamorro's brother Xavier edits El Nuevo Diario. Chamarro's two sons, Pedro Jr. and Carlos, run La Prensa and Barricada.

After the Sandinistas took control, La Prensa drifted away from its support of the revolutionaries and is now the only Nicaraguan newspaper to oppose the government.

But just how much opposition actually comes out through the newspaper is a subject for debate. Roberto Cardenal, assistant editor of La Prensa, says up to 20 percent of the news is censored. He holds a manila file folder, about three inches thick, full of Xerox copies of censored articles.

we GET DISCOURAGED

"We get discouraged," Cardenal says. "I used to write editorials. Now I don't. They get censored."

But editorials are not the only things cen-

sored by the government.

Several reporters from Oregon watched as the communiques from the Communications Ministry came back to the editorial offices. An editorial column, written by Tom Wicker for the New York Times News Service, received minimal changes. The words anti-Sandinistas and insurgents were ordered changed to contra-revolutionaries.

Three photos and captions were banned altogether from publication. Two of the photos were of busses — one of which showed too old a bus, the other, too crowded a bus.

Cardenal says the Sandinistas are definitely "interested in keeping (La Prensa) alive" so that the government can point to the paper as an example of their tolerance for opposition. But Cardenal says the paper always has the option to run a different news story.

"If the meaning of the article is changed we will scrap the whole piece," Cardenal

SANDINISTA CONTROL

And Cardenal has, like most editors, strong political opinions about the government.

He believes there is a tremendous power struggle going on in the Sandinista junta, the official body of Nicaragua.

"I'd pay to be in a meeting where they are close together and making a decision," Cardenal says.

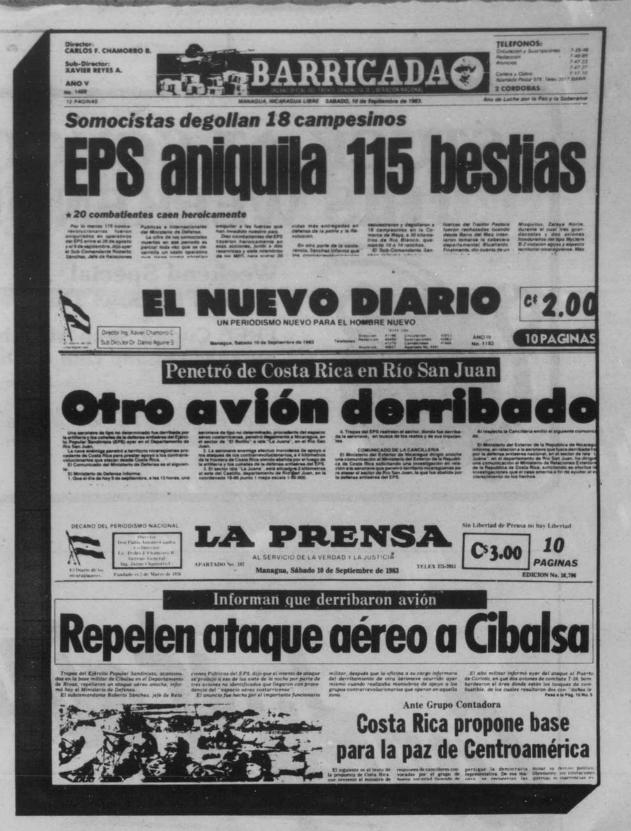
Cardenal is also concerned about the veracity of the elections.

The Sandinistas own and control both television stations operating in Nicaragua. The government also provides a large amount of financial backing for both the Barricada and El Nuevo Diario.

"What kind of election can you have when the media is in the hands of the FSLN?" Cardenal asks.

PRIVATE CONCERNS

If freedom of the press is not allowed, freedom of speech is guaranteed, accor-Continued on Page 8



La Prensa is the only newspaper in Nicaragua that openly opposes the government.

Erb Memorial Union Open House

Celeboralians Friday September 30

Robert Cray Band!

Ballroom 9:00-11:30 p.m. Experience the Robert Cray Band. Dance to the West Coast's premiere "rhythm and blues" band. A Cultural Forum event. \$1.00 at the door.

Recreation Center 6:00-11:30 p.m. Half price billiards and bowling, free shoes rental. FREE Refreshments. And our Feature Event: Video Game Tournament.

Craft Center 7:00-9:00 p.m. We'll have demonstrations in studio areas of the center, the main lobby and the Main Desk area. Sign up for drawings on prizes that include ceramic mugs, two memberships and a workshop. Entry forms available all day.

Club Sports 8:00-10 p.m. Watch sports demonstrations and visit with hosts from 20 competitive clubs. 167 EMU.

Outdoor Programs 8:00-10:00 p.m. Come see an exciting multi-media slide show followed by a discussion of outdoor recreation available through the program. Outdoor Program Room, basement of EMU.

Main Lobby 8:00-10:00 p.m. Refreshments, EMU Food Service. Our EMU slide show will run continuously.

Main Desk 8:00-11:30 p.m. Free Check Cashing! Free Popcorn! Free coupons good for 10% discount from sales area. And buy a Monster Cookie for only 25° while they last.

ASUO Suite 4 7 - 9 p.m. Student Government Free Reception.