



Ho, ho, ho... merry Santa Claus

Yes, Oregon, there is a Santa Claus. Actually, there are four of them, including Springfield resident Larry Rose, who is having his frosty-colored wig attached by Santa Trainer Susan Briggs while another trainer, Maxine Walton, looks on.

The four St. Nicks were chosen during Santa tryouts Thursday at Western Temporary Services, Inc., a national business which is the largest Santa employer in the nation.

Not just anyone can be a Santa, says Walton, an employee of Western's Eugene branch. Santa's needn't be fat or old, but they should be jolly and have a twinkle in their eyes. Their voices must be smooth and resonant.

Once the Santas are selected, they will be admitted to the University of Santa Claus, where they will learn the Santa "technique," which includes instructions on "Santa's Way with Children" and a refresher course on his nine reindeer's names.

The four Santas will begin their duties Nov. 25 — the day after Thanksgiving — at the Valley River Center Mall.

Photo by Ken Kromer

Central American crisis debated

By Paul Ertelt
Of the Emerald

Many Americans don't know who's who in Central America, but more than 500 people gathered in the EMU Ballroom Thursday night to learn more about the troubled region.

Members of a three-man panel differed in their views of the "Roots of the Crisis" in Central America, but all agreed Americans need to become better informed about conditions that have drawn the United States into an increasingly violent situation.

The panel included William Ratliff, of the Hoover Institute, Felix Kury, of El Salvador's Democratic Revolutionary Front, and Nick Allen of the Institute for Food and Development Policy.

University Prof. Jeffrey Needell introduced the discussion.

The panel was part of ASUO's conference on Central America held on campus through Saturday.

The crisis in Central America stems from long-standing social conditions of a powerful elite oppressing a poor majority, Needell said.

Besides "appalling" domestic

conditions, Ratliff said the situation is aggravated by American foreign policy and the intervention of Cuba and the Soviet Union in the region.

"The United States was never interested in Central America until there was a crisis," he said. U.S. concern may have alleviated some of the problems, he said.

Kury discounted the role of Cuba in El Salvador, but said the revolution is a popular movement against a repressive military junta. Government troops have killed more than 40,000 people, he said.

"Land is the main issue in Central America," Allen said. "Who eats depends on who owns the land."

But the number of people in Central America who own no land has increased. In Guatemala, 11 percent of the people owned no land in 1961; in 1975 that figure was 40 percent, he said.

Allen said the United States should get out of Central America, but Ratliff disagreed. The United States can do some good by forcing out rightists and supporting moderate regimes, he said.

But the U.S. policy of supporting moderate governments is a "myth," Allen said. "(U.S.) aid is going to death squads."

The United States should increase efforts to find a settlement in El Salvador acceptable to all parties, Ratliff said.

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