

editorial

Questions remain concerning contras

In an attempt to rid Nicaragua of the Sandinistas, the administration of President Ronald Reagan has laid the ground work for increased political instability in Central America. In its rush to stop the spread of "communist aggression" in "America's backyard," the U.S. government nursed the development of a new army along the Nicaraguan-Honduran border. It is an army without a country, made up of approximately 8,000 to 15,000 men and known as the contras.

Created with U.S. government funding, trained by the CIA in counter-revolutionary warfare, and let loose along the border of two ideologically opposed countries, the contras are a force determined to survive. Yet questions remain. How have the contras been funded since Congress put a halt to official U.S. financial support last year? Are the contras there to intercept weapons en route to El Salvador? Are they carrying out a military campaign based on terrorist tactics?

In a few months, Congress will vote on whether to restore financial support to the contras. In light of this, U.S. citizens deserve to know much more about the contras than is publicly acknowledged by our government.

Reagan insists that the mission of the contras is to stop weapons from being smuggled to Salvadoran rebels and to put "pressure" on the Sandinistas for democratic reform. But Amnesty International, Americas Watch, and Catholic Relief Services, among others, claim that over 800 civilians, mostly women and children, have been murdered by contra forces during raids into Nicaragua. Also, according to Edgar Chamorro, a former official spokesman for the contras, "The Americans have promised on many different occasions that they were helping us to overthrow the Nicaraguan government."

Congressional analysts have made it known during the last six months that at least two nations which receive large amounts of U.S. aid, El Salvador and Honduras, are sending funds to the contras. Recent reports also indicate that a third U.S. aid recipient, Israel, is also financing the contras. Other reports state that Soviet arms found on Grenada after the U.S. invasion are now being sent to the contras.

Americans have been left largely in the dark by the Reagan administration on the continued funding and military operations of the contras. Perhaps it's because the government knows that many U.S. citizens would be disturbed to learn that this U.S.-backed military organization practices terrorism to achieve its objectives.

Students must continue struggle for safer campus

In recent weeks, Laura Romano, co-director of the Women's Resource and Referral Service, has become the target of repeated threats of violence by anonymous men who appear to be threatened by her outspoken views on lesbianism and women's rights. It started with obscene notes on the office door of WRRS and has now escalated into threats of rape over her home phone. Whether people agree with Romano's controversial opinions is not the issue. Romano has simply become the focal point of the kind of terrorism women still face on this campus. Although the police are investigating the threats, it is important for the University community to realize that the struggle against rape and violence towards women on this campus is far from over. Unless students stand together and support one another (regardless of our differing backgrounds and sexual beliefs), then rape on this campus will continue to find a place to prosper.



"OH, HENRY, I DO HOPE THE TALL, THIN YOUNG MAN IS OUR MUGGER — HE'S JUST SO CHARISMATIC!"

letters

Linguistics

I do not wish to comment on the contents of Earl Gosnell's letter (ODE, Jan. 21) as I did not read the letter to which he is replying. I would like to comment, however, on his misuse of the English language and his misunderstanding of Latin and Greek.

"Homo Sapiens" is a word derived from the Latin roots "Homo," which means "a man" and "Sapiens," which means "wisdom." Homosexual, however, comes from the Greek root, "Homo," which means "the same" and the Latin root, "sex" which means "sex." Homosexual has the same Greek root as homogeneous, homogenous, and other words like homagamy that have nothing to do with the Latin root "Homo," which means "a man."

Alexander Pope, I think, talking about Homo Sapiens once said, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing."

Sheila Juba
Eugene

Irrelevant?

As I read Dean Berdahl's promise and/or appeal that the study of humanities and Western Civilization be placed "at the heart of the college curriculum," I cannot help but remember that about a year ago a fellow historian was suggesting on the pages of the Emerald that the courses called "Western Civilization" be abolished.

I believe that since the 1960's, too many academics have too often declared as "irrelevant"

for modern Americans too many humanistic disciplines that had originated and developed in old Europe for them to be taken seriously by the students of the 1980's.

Jakov Basic
Adjunct Assistant Professor
Russian

High risk

Recently, a letter in defense of abortion appeared containing the claim that more women die as a result of childbirth than die from abortion. Actually, this isn't necessarily the case.

First of all, only one out of every ten thousand women die in the process of giving birth (1980 statistics). True, only a couple of dozen women died from abortion complications, but thousands suffered hemorrhages, infections and subsequent sterility.

By the way, childbirth actually has more blessings to the mother's health than dangers. Research shows that one of the biggest killers of women (breast cancer) is least likely (note: least likely) to strike women who have had children and breastfed them. Women who are at the highest risk to contract and die from this cancer are women who have never given birth.

Michael Cross
History/Political Science

Endangered

I read the article "Survival Center Makes Waves" (ODE, Jan. 29) with interest; however, the position of one of the "two Eugene-based groups" needs to be clarified.

The Survival Center's petition concerns the protection of rare, threatened and endangered wildlife species and their habitat on the Oregon

coast. The biological data unquestionably points to the fact that off-road vehicles severely impair wildlife survivability and should not be allowed on sensitive beaches, i.e., 55 miles proposed by the Survival Center, 34 (not 40) by Oregon National Resources Council.

The snowy plover (not falcon) which lives and nests on the beach has been extirpated from 9 of its 21 historical locations and faces a tough struggle for existence against ORV's. Some wildlife biologists estimate that only 100 of these birds remain in Oregon. In addition, the endangered bald eagle, peregrine falcon, Aleutian Canada goose, and California brown pelican are threatened.

The silvery phacelia also faces extirpation from Oregon. Only two plant communities of this species remain on the coast and would be protected by the petitions. Other rare beach plants include the pink sand-verbena, Green's reign orchid, and Wolf's evening primrose.

In response to local criticism, Oregon's public beaches are for everyone, not just territorial, local governments or those who wish to drive on them. Oregon's land-use laws and even Curry County's Land-Use Plan support protection of the sensitive beaches. Also, the Transportation Commission has jurisdiction over the beaches, not local land-use planning.

Brett Fisher
Survival Center

Takes two

Cheri Snell knows that it takes a man and a woman to create a fetus ("Letters to the editor," ODE, Jan. 28); she suggests that anti-abortionists give the man partial blame for "ripping the fetus" from the womb. Why does she not also suggest that pro-choicers give the man partial choice in deciding the fate of the fetus?

Should the man face his responsibility by feeling guilty for the "ripping" and quietly let it continue? Or will Snell allow the man to face his responsibility by sharing the decision whether to "rip..." or to allow the man and woman's creation to live?

Maybe Snell should instead paraphrase the speaker she never once heard: "I want my fetus and to abort it too."

Randall McGehee
Eugene

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