



Now that winter's
finally over....

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Nicaraguan assemblyman defends 'fruits of freedom'

By Scott McFetridge
Of the Emerald

For the first time in Nicaragua's history, the people are tasting the "fruits of freedom," but the Central American country will be turned into a graveyard if the United States tries to take that freedom away, a Nicaragua national assemblyman said Tuesday night.

"The people of Nicaragua shall never cry 'uncle' because we've begun to walk along freedom's highway," Ray Hooker said. "Once you've begun to walk freedom's highway, there is no other road you can travel."

Hooker, a native of the sparsely populated east coast of Nicaragua, was kidnapped last September by anti-Sandinista "contra" rebels and held for nearly two months. His release was obtained through a prisoner exchange between the Nicaraguan government and the contras.

Hooker's speech was sponsored by the Council for Human Rights in Latin America and is part of a nationwide speaking tour of more than a dozen American universities. He spoke to about 200 people in 167 EMU.

The Reagan administration has disregarded Nicaragua's attempt to build a better way of life for its people, Hooker said. The current administration has consistently discredited such programs as free health care and free education, which were instituted after the revolution in 1979, he said.

"Because we teach these people to read and write, we are accused of extinguishing

democracy by this country (the United States)," Hooker said.

Schools in Nicaragua operate 24 hours a day, and since the revolution, the illiteracy rate has dropped from 50 percent to 12 percent, Hooker said. More than one million people have been taught to read in the last five years, he said.

There are problems in Nicaragua, but many are caused because the new government is attempting to implement so many changes, he said. The American Revolution lasted 18 years, and experienced tremendous turmoil before becoming a stable country, he said.

"You've done things step by

country, Hooker said. There are a number of different races in Nicaragua, and they should be able to govern themselves, he said.

"Instead of cultural annihilation, you have to strive for cultural preservation," Hooker said.

Although President Ronald Reagan has labeled the Nicaraguan government socialist, private ownership of land is higher than ever before, Hooker said. Before the revolution, 2 percent of the people owned 90 percent of the land, he said.

The current administration has ignored these facts and continues to supply money and arms to the contras, Hooker said. Reagan believes the contras are glorious fighters, and has even compared them to Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and Patrick Henry, he said.

"Your forefathers were not mercenaries hired to do the dirty work of a foreign power," Hooker said. "They were not rapists, paid a salary to ravage the women of an impoverished country."

Since the fighting began between government forces and the U.S.-backed contras, more than \$700 million in Nicaraguan property has been destroyed, Hooker said. That is a huge sum considering Nicaragua's total exports amount to only about \$400 million a year, he said.

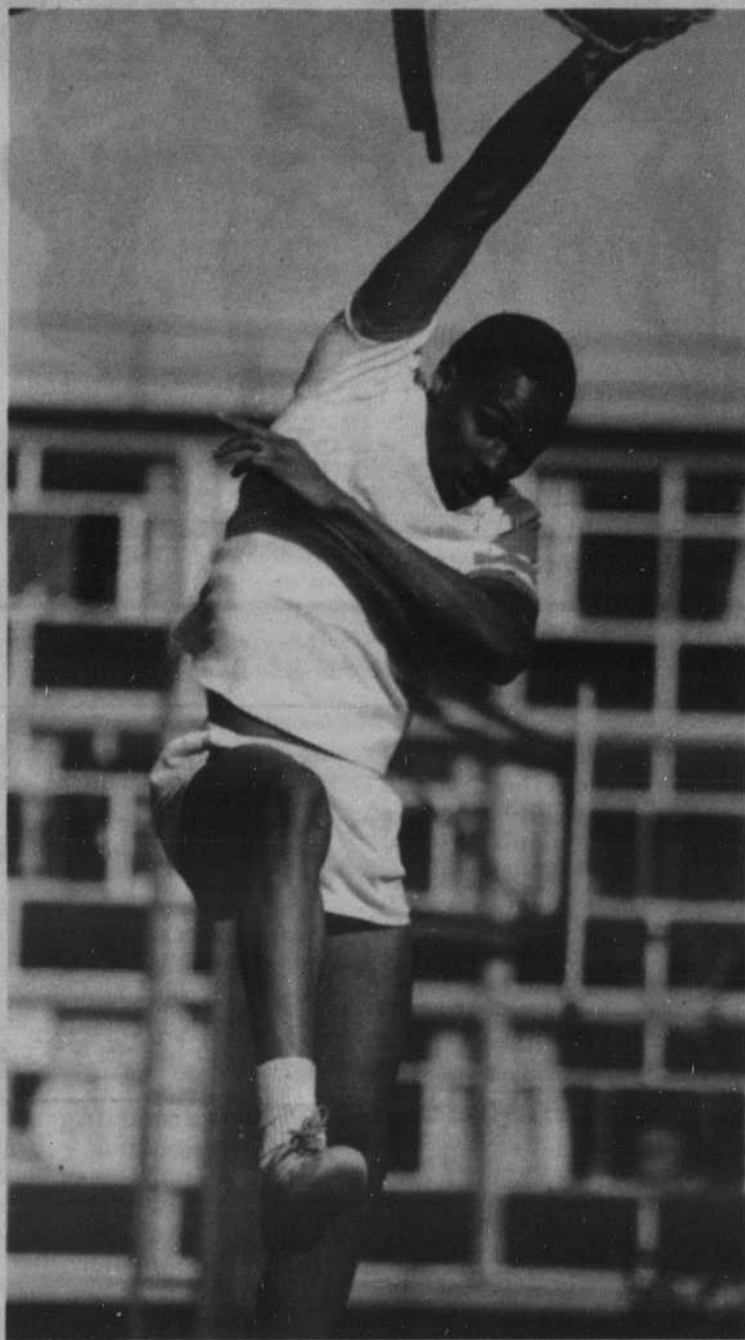
Freedom is costly, and if Nicaragua is called upon to pay the total cost for freedom, it will respond, Hooker said.



Ray Hooker

step over a 200 year history," Hooker said. "We've tried to do everything at once. Maybe we're crazy."

One of the Nicaraguan government's most ambitious plans is to create several autonomous states within the



Dunkin' in the sun

Uchenna Agu looks for a landing spot after slam-dunking a pass from teammate Stan Sykes. Agu and Sykes dominated a three-on-three basketball game under sunny skies Tuesday afternoon.

Photo by Michael Clapp

Rust fears dioxin in gypsy moth spray

By Cynthia Whitfield
Of the Emerald

County Commissioner Jerry Rust has sent a formal letter to the Oregon Department of Agriculture requesting that the department revise a Lane County gypsy moth management program that includes the use of the bacterial insecticide B.t. and the chemical insecticides Dimilin and Orthene.

Rust said he learned Friday that the federal Environmental Protection Agency has included Dimilin on a list of 76 chemicals that are possibly contaminated with dioxin.

"I'm for the bacterial insecticide B.t. because it is target specific," Rust said. "It does not kill other aquatic species or insects, does not poison the water, and does not persist in the environment like chemical insecticides do. Moreover, it has been shown to be extremely effective."

Rust's statements came after a recently released public opinion survey revealed that 85 percent of those surveyed believe the gypsy moth is a serious problem facing the county. The survey also showed that 90 percent believe something should be done to eradicate the moths.

The survey was authorized by the Eugene-based organization Help Eradicate Lane's Pest (HELP), a group of small woodland owners, Christmas tree growers, small-lumber people, and other citizens con-

cerned about the threat of the gypsy moth, said Jim Mischkot, HELP chair.

Mischkot, who is employed by a pesticide application company, said it would "surprise" him very much if Dimilin contained Dioxin.

"Oregon State University has been reviewing the chemical and have almost completed their analysis. If dioxin was there, I think they would have found it," Mischkot said.

Mischkot said HELP did the survey to find out what the people think.

"We wanted to be sure the public knew the facts, and we've done a lot to encourage people to attend the gypsy moth public hearings," Mischkot said. "We are prepared to defend the chemicals and support the ODA's recommendations."

The survey was based on 500 telephone interviews with Lane County residents conducted by Survey Research Institute between Feb. 8 and 16. The institute is owned and operated by the Kennedy Research Group, an independent public opinion research organization.

According to ODA's management plan, the entire 237,000 acres recommended for spraying will be sprayed with B.t. In addition, 5,000 acres in Pleasant Hill will be sprayed with Dimilin; 30 acres in Eugene's Hawkins Heights area will be sprayed with Orthene; and another 10 acres near Cheshire with Orthene.

There has been almost no objection to spraying B.t. because it is considered a relatively safe insecticide. But many people believe the plan to spray the chemical insecticides Orthene and Dimilin is a mistake, saying that the ODA does not have enough information about the effects of the two chemicals.

Unlike most chemical insecticides, B.t. will not kill honey bees or affect the bird population, said Mary O'Brien, a botanist working with the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides. She says some studies have linked Orthene to cancer-causing disorders. In addition, exposure to the chemical may cause a skin rash, she said.

Orthene has been sprayed on only five of the 40,000 acres sprayed nationwide because it "doesn't work and because the health effects aren't known," O'Brien said.

However, the survey shows that 50 percent of Lane County residents favor the eradication program proposed by ODA, 26 percent are opposed and 24 percent are undecided. Of those undecided, 85 percent say they lean toward favoring ODA's plan.

In addition, if no county-wide program to eradicate the moths is implemented, 83 percent of the respondents say they will either spray their own property or seek a cooperative spraying program with their neighbors.