

Balancing act



JEFF PASLAY/EMERALD

Peter Rial finishes painting a house on 21st Avenue Tuesday. Yesterday's sunshine may turn to light rain today, with partial clearing this afternoon. Highs 55 - 60.

Guatemalan to talk about refugees

By Michael Cobb
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Evangelina Rodriguez Lopez will speak on the topic of Guatemalan refugees tonight at 7:30 in the EMU Fir Room. Rodriguez is a member of the Nueva Union refugee women's group in the Quetzal Edzna camp in the Mexican state of Campeche.

"I am here representing the Permanent Commissions of the Guatemalan Refugees in Mexico (CCPP)," Rodriguez said. "The purpose of CCPP is global as well as conducting the return of refugees to Guatemala. We also have a dialogue with the government so that when the people return back then there is security for them. So on Oct. 8, they celebrated a treaty that was completed with the president of Guatemala," she said.

This treaty covers a number of economic and human rights issues, including the right to land

and security conditions for the returning refugees. This dialogue was started by the former Guatemalan president, and there have been problems getting firm commitment from his successor.

"Unfortunately the current president hasn't done anything concerning the treaty, and human rights violations are still taking place," she said. "The problem with Guatemala is that the power is in the hands of the military and the government does what the military wants and what the military wants is controlled by what the rich want."

Land previously owned by the refugees is now inhabited by new settlers. According to Rodriguez, the military is pressuring the people now on the land to sell their land, which would leave no place for the refugees to return to. This is the reason why the refugees want to return quickly.

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