

Students to describe war zone

Regina Brown
Oregon Daily Emerald

A group of seven University students experienced what life is like in a war zone when they traveled to Guatemala over spring break to meet with human rights organizations.

The group will be speaking about the trip on Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Saturday Market.

The delegation met with representatives from Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISAGUA), a national human rights organization. The group from Eugene was organized by the Committee in Solidarity with the Central American People (CISCAP).

While in Guatemala, the delegation met with 12 Guatemalan human rights organizations and labor unions.

The members of the group will base their speech on what they learned about the current political situation, said Trim Bissell, a CISCAP volunteer and regional coordinator for NISAGUA. They plan to focus attention on how U.S. policy toward Guatemala has affected Guatemalan politics,

he said.

The U.S. government has played an active role in Guatemalan politics since 1954, Bissell said. The recent media reports of covert CIA operations in Guatemala are nothing new to him.

"While the revelations about CIA involvement are new for the press here, they're not new for the people of Guatemala," he said.

The current political climate in Guatemala is racked with violence despite peace negotiations between the government and the rebels, delegation member Alysia Ogden said.

The delegation's meetings with human rights groups allowed them to see firsthand the degree of U.S. presence in Guatemala, Bissell said. The delegation plans to share with its audience what it believes to be viable solutions, he said.

CISCAP members will be at the Saturday Market from 10:00 to 4:00 p.m. with post cards for people to sign detailing the demands. They will be sent to President Clinton, Sen. Mark Hatfield, and Rep. Peter Defazio to encourage them to make

changes in U.S. policy. CISCAP will also provide information for people who want to write letters to their representatives.

The delegation will also give a talk about its meeting with representatives of Eugene's Guatemala Sister City, San Carlos. This project represents one of the first times a U.S. community has formed a sister city relationship with a Guatemalan community, Bissell said.

The connection creates a student to student base for combined work for Guatemalan human rights issues, Bissell said.

Bissell explained that the trip allowed the delegates to experience the fear Guatemalans live under every day of their lives. The delegation met with family members of people who disappeared, were killed or were tortured, Bissell said. They also met with union members who received death threats because of their efforts to improve their working conditions.

A Guatemalan was kidnapped, tortured, killed and dumped on the road side while the delegation was in Guatemala, Bissell said.

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Students who were potentially exposed to Hepatitis B at a local restaurant last week have an opportunity to receive a globulin shot in two shot clinics today at the Student Health Center. The clinics run from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. The health center recently received a new shipment of globulin, the immunization, which has been in severe shortage in Lane County. Students may have contracted the disease from a worker at Red Robin Restaurant last week.

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