

Symposium will commemorate life, work of Ben Linder

■ **FORUM:** The Oregon native worked to provide electricity in small Nicaraguan villages until his death in the Contra-Sandinista war

By Laura Baker
Student Activities Reporter

Ten years ago, Ben Linder was one of thousands of U.S. internationalists working in Nicaragua. But on April 28, 1987, when Linder and two others were shot and killed by U.S. government-funded Contra rebels, he became a symbol for people opposed to U.S. involvement.

University Spanish instructor Bryan Moore, an acquaintance of Linder, said he was the first U.S. citizen killed in the Contra-Sandinista war of Nicaragua. "It exposed the atrocities that [the Contras] did all the time," Moore said. "Ben's death brought it to the forefront of public opinion. People began to really recognize what we are doing with U.S. money and U.S. support."

The Cultural Forum is sponsoring a symposium today and tomorrow in commemoration of Linder, an Oregon native, and the work he did while in Nicaragua.

After graduating from the University of Washington, Linder moved to Nicaragua in 1983 to use his engineering degree to help



Courtesy photo

Ben Linder in Nicaragua.

the people of the country. Unlike many of the internationalists, he lived among the people in the small villages.

"What's unique about Ben's work is that he directly worked and got involved in the community," Moore said. "Ben's goal was to protest and change U.S. military policy. But his effort was to do something constructive that really made an impact."

"He really felt the way that change could be made was if individual lives were improved," he said. Ben's way of improving the lives of Nicaraguans was by providing them with electricity. In fact, he was in the process of planning a mini-hydroelectric dam at San Jose Bocay when he was killed.

"In those particular areas was extreme poverty and conflict," Moore said. "He just felt by raising the standard of living, by bringing electricity to these areas, he could change that."

After Ben's death, his family did not let his dream die. They began the Ben Linder Memorial Fund, which raised money to complete the dam and help maintain it. Moore said the Linder family has raised more than \$700,000 over the years for the project.

On May 21, 1994, the Linder family went to San Jose Bocay to watch the opening of the Mini Central Benjamin Linder, the hydroelectric plant Linder had dreamed of. "He had such a passion for helping communities through appropriate technology," Moore said.

The Linder family wrote in its Winter 1994-95 newsletter, "The plant is beautiful! ... It is a product of the Nicaraguan revolution, offering hope at a time when many of the revolution's gains have been reversed. It is Ben's dream come true, a revolutionary dream of empowerment for the rural poor realized seven years after his death."

Moore said the plant is one of the most efficient, cleanest hydroelectric dams in all of Central America. "He had such a dream of creating a dam that kept the environment intact," Moore said. "Now people don't have that desperate necessity to destroy the

environment because they have power now.

"Ben was a special individual. He was very talented," he continued. "But we want to show that we all are Ben Linder. All of us have the capabilities to do something like that."

This is why the symposium is more than a commemoration of Linder's life. Moore said he wants to be able to provide opportunities for students to "get plugged in and active in doing things."

Barbara Kingsolver, author of *Animal Dreams*, and the Linder family will speak today at 4:30 p.m. in the Agate Auditorium. Kingsolver will speak about social responsibility and the process of recognizing our history. The Linder family will be speaking about their fund raising and work on the hydroelectric dam.

On Friday, Margaret Randall, author of more than 50 books, and Magda Enriquez, a representative from the leftist party currently in power in Nicaragua, will speak at 4:30 p.m. in the Agate Auditorium on "evaluating and criticizing our history, and reconnecting the U.S. solidarity movement with Nicaragua and Latin America," Moore said.

Following the talks on Friday, the band Caliente will perform at 8 p.m. in the EMU dining room. All events are free and open to the community.

Injunction: Unger worries action will justify cutting incidental fees

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the greek houses this past Monday to remind people to vote," said Jenna Wasson, EMU Board Seat 4 candidate. "And how much money did the Footnotes ad cost? They'll have to run that ad again, and that's not cheap."

"All of the cost ... it's just so inefficient," Johnson said. "It would probably have been cheaper just to have the election today and then just have the special election whenever you needed it."

"This makes the whole system look bad, and my real fear is that we're going to lose [House Bill 3644, which calls for the removal of the incidental fee] in Salem because of these people's attacks," said Ben Unger, the ASUO vice president-elect and defendant in the petition.

"Salem sees a debacle like this and thinks, 'They don't know what they're doing down there.' The incidental fee is the greatest thing at this University, and if we lose it, I don't know what will happen. For people to take this kind of stance and attack the incidental fee, in general, it frightens me what their priorities are," Unger said.

"We have not been found in violation of any rules," Unger said. "As a campus, there are more important things that we need to be concentrating on."

Besides the petition filed by Eckenberg, Farrah Bostic and Chris Kantrowitz, both of the *Oregon Commentator*, filed another petition Wednesday afternoon.

One of the main differences between the two petitions, according to Kantrowitz, is the depth to which his petition reaches.

"What we've done is shown a pattern of negligence on behalf of the Elections Board and some of the candidates," Kantrowitz said. "We don't see one specific problem, but an across-the-board negligence in regards to the rules and the process in which elections are run. So many things have happened this year that it makes this election suspect," he said.

"I think the mere fact that someone would justify an illegal act with, 'Hey, we weren't caught,' should worry everyone. I think it sends a message to students about the people running for office," Kantrowitz said.

Recreation cuts remain in question

■ **FORUM:** Eugene officials will reconvene tomorrow to finalize decisions on budget cuts for Measure 47

By Eric Collins
Community Reporter

The majority of the 85 citizens who went to Wednesday's public forum on Measure 47 cuts spoke out against proposed reductions in recreation services, the Hult Center and community centers. They just might have made more of an impact than they believed possible.

Although many of them had already left, in the last comment of the evening, City Council Vice President Pat Farr asked for information to be presented at Thursday night's meeting on the feasibility of obtaining \$1 million from a non-dedicated fund, such as the storm water fund, in order to partially refund cuts in recreation services.

Throughout the night, members of the Council Committee on Ballot Measure 47 heard testimony from people of all ages regarding the committee's tentative recommendation to preserve public safety services at the expense of cultural and recreational programs.

Entering the forum flanked by about 40 sign-waving local arts

supporters, Eugene officials heard many speakers refer to cultural services as a proactive approach to raising children in Eugene.

Eugene resident Fred Piper said he believed the elimination of cultural services will have a tremendous impact on teenagers. "Think about what it costs to incarcerate one single teenager in three to four years," Piper said. "\$30,000 buys a lot of crayons; buys a lot of paint."

The committee's decision to cut into recreation programs, including senior and community centers as well as aquatics programs, were also found by residents like Tracye May to be unacceptable. "The council pretends that it doesn't have a choice, pretends that there is nothing else to do but cut, and of course, feels awful about doing it," May said. "The councilors do have other choices."

Through March's Town Hall meetings, May said she had heard citizens propose alternative funding methods for recreation, such as imposing an income tax or corporate tax, closing down urban renewal districts or cutting off subsidies to Hyundai, but said she felt as if the committee had ignored these alternatives.

The city's proposed alternative to budget cuts is Measure 20-83, a three-year \$32.7 million property-

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— Tracye May
Eugene Resident

tax serial levy that would fund back all but \$2 million in city general funds. However, the May 20 measure was staunchly opposed by several speakers, including both Kevin Hornbuckle and Arthur Shapiro, members of the Committee in Opposition to Ballot Measure 20-83. Hornbuckle said he believed the measure was an attempt by the city to blackmail voters, forcing them to beg for their services. He thinks the city should seek alternative funding, such as an income tax.

With Farr's last-minute suggestion on the minds of committee members, the group will reconvene tomorrow at 5:30 p.m. to finalize their budget-cutting recommendation and further discuss the public's suggestions.

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