

# A photographer's journal of Nicaragua



Richard J. Brown, photographer for the Portland Observer, spent seven weeks in Nicaragua learning about and meeting its people. His photographs will appear here as a weekly feature.

During my stay at the cooperative Ernesto Acuna, for three days we were in a high state of alert because American-backed counter-revolutionary forces (Contras) were spotted only a few kilometers away. Women also defend the cooperative. The woman on the right is a *brigadista*, volunteer in Nicaragua's literacy campaign. She was among 1,600 young people who had given up their studies for two years to teach *campesinos* (peasants) to read and write. Called the second war of liberation, the literacy campaign brought the illiteracy rate down from over 50 percent in 1979 to about 12 percent in 1980 and the work is continuing. I was awed with the dedication and commitment of these young people when I learned that 600 *brigadistas* had been killed, kidnapped, or forced to leave by the Contras.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

## YOUR WATER: IS THERE MORE THERE THAN MEETS THE EYE?



**FACT:** Millions of private and public wells never have been tested for contamination. But when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) randomly checked 466 municipal wells in 1981, it found that 99 contained toxic chemicals.

**FACT:** Chlorine reacts with organic material in water to form Trihalomethanes (THMs). The EPA reports that THMs are not considered dangerous at the low levels found in most municipal water systems. But THMs are suspected cancer-causing agents.

**FACT:** In 1980, the U.S. Government's Council on Environmental Quality reported that chlorine added to water increased the risk of urinary tract and gastrointestinal cancer.

**FACT:** Bottled water isn't regularly monitored for some toxic chemicals, except in states like New York where monitoring is required. In 1982, the Suffolk County, New York health department tested bottled water sold in the county and found potentially hazardous chemicals in 46 of 110 brands.

**FACT:** The EPA has identified serious groundwater contamination in 34 states.

**FACT:** The United States Geological Survey pinpoints sources of contamination in every state.

Once a ground water supply is contaminated, it can take generations to clean it up. And though government, industry and municipalities are doing a better job, many of us want the best possible water now — not sometime off in the future.

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## Arbitrator hears testimony in Police T-shirt incident

by Jerry Garner

Last week an arbitrator heard testimony from the City of Portland and the Police Union regarding the firing of two policemen, Richard A. Montee, 46, and Paul A. Wickersham, 31, for selling the infamous "Don't Choke 'Em, Smoke 'Em" T-shirts. Montee and Wickersham were fired by Mayor Bud Clark on the recommendation of Police Chief Penny Harrington.

The T-shirts were sold by the two policemen in the Training Division at the Justice Center and at East Precinct on April 26, the day of Lloyd D. Stevenson's funeral. Stevenson, 31, was a Black man who was killed when police applied the carotid or "sleeper" hold on him. Although a Public Inquest Jury ruled that Stevenson's death was the result of negligence, several days later a Multnomah County Grand Jury failed to indict any of the officers involved in Stevenson's death.

During the four days of hearings, Arbitrator Paul Hanlon listened to testimony from Chief Penny Harrington, Mayor Bud Clark, Multnomah County District Attorney Michael Schrunk, former U.S. Attorney for Oregon Sidney Lezak, and Dwight Ford, a Black policeman, who all testified that the selling of the T-shirts was serious enough to justify the firing of Montee and Wickersham. The attorney for Montee and Wickersham tried to convince the arbitrator the selling of the T-shirts wasn't as serious as the opossum incident, therefore, the two officers should not have been fired. Several officers who bought the T-shirts also testified that they protest the ban on the sleeper hold.

Schrunk said his office received letters from the White community and many were outraged over the T-shirts episode. However, Herb Cawthorne, President of the Portland Urban League, testified that while the T-shirt incident was a blow to efforts to calm the community after Stevenson's death, it was not as serious as the opossum dumping by officers.

The arbitrator will rule sometime in October on the fate of the two officers.

## EDITORIAL/COMMENTARY

### Family planning essential

Title X is the mainstay of our nation's ongoing commitment to prevent unintended pregnancy and thus reduce the need for abortion. Yet Title X is being held hostage by some members of Congress who lead the anti-abortion movement in this country.

How can those opposed to abortion attempt to destroy a program that prevents abortion? What is their rationale? Where is their compassion? Clearly, their misguided morality has overcome their common sense.

The people of this state should be outraged by such callousness. Oregon receives \$1,459,697 of Title X funds, distributed among county health departments, Planned Parenthood and other community agencies, to deliver essential contraceptive services to 51,000 low and marginal income women and sexually active teenagers each year. If Title X is not renewed, we estimate that the loss of this money will directly result in 9,000 unwanted preg-

nancies and 4,800 abortions in the next year alone.

As bizarre as all this seems, we have witnessed a steady increase in anti-abortion activities. Despite public opinion polls documenting that 93 percent of the American people favor contraception, and despite the use of contraception by virtually all married couples of all religious persuasions, attacks on conception and funding for contraceptive programs continue.

Consider the pain and suffering that would be inflicted on Americans should couples be forced to give up practicing birth control as the far right-wing element demands. Their goal of no birth control and no abortion represents a doomsday plot for the American family.

Carrie Clark is the Coordinator of Family Planning Advocates of Oregon, a lobbying organization dedicated to public education, lobbying and support of Family Planning in Oregon.

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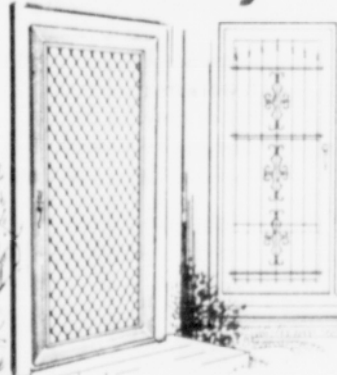


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