



Some of the participants in the Miss Oregon USA contest were (left to right) Maeve Amber Cassidy, Renee Bagley, Joelle Rankin, and Robin Marks. The pageant was held at the Thunderbird at Jantzen Beach this past weekend. 33 participants vied for the title of Miss Oregon USA. Kim Stubblefield of Lake

Oswego won the title, Bagley and Marks were Second Runner-ups and Marks was picked by the other participants as Miss Amity.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

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Letters to the Editor

Guatemalan elections

To the Editor:
On Nov. 3, the government of Guatemala held presidential elections, in hopes that a civilian president will make it easier for Reagan to push military aid to Guatemala through the U.S. Congress.

The same weekend, 200 members of the Mutual Support Group (GAM), an organization of relatives of the disappeared, occupied the Central Cathedral for three days and then occupied the driveway of the Camino Real Hotel, where most of the foreign

press was staying. The occupiers, mostly women and children and mostly Indian, hoped to draw international attention to disappearances in Guatemala, which far exceed those of any other country in the hemisphere. (One-third of Latin America's disappeared are Guatemalans.) GAM, the only func-

tioning human rights group in Guatemala, has been labeled "subversive" by Guatemala's president, General Humberto Mejia Victores, and GAM has suffered the assassination of many of its members.

The elections, which were initiated by the Army, appear to have been relatively free of fraud. Since no candidate won a majority of the votes, a run-off election will be held in December. The Army can live with the victory of any of the candidates. None asks for investigation into the disappearances. None has proposed economic, social, political, or agrarian reforms that would threaten the position of the tiny wealthy land-holder class or the power of the military.

In fact, Army control of local, provincial, and national governmental institutions is formalized in the new constitution through the new "Inter-Institutional Coordination System." Also written into the constitution are the tools of the counter-insurgency program, including the "model villages" and the civil patrols.

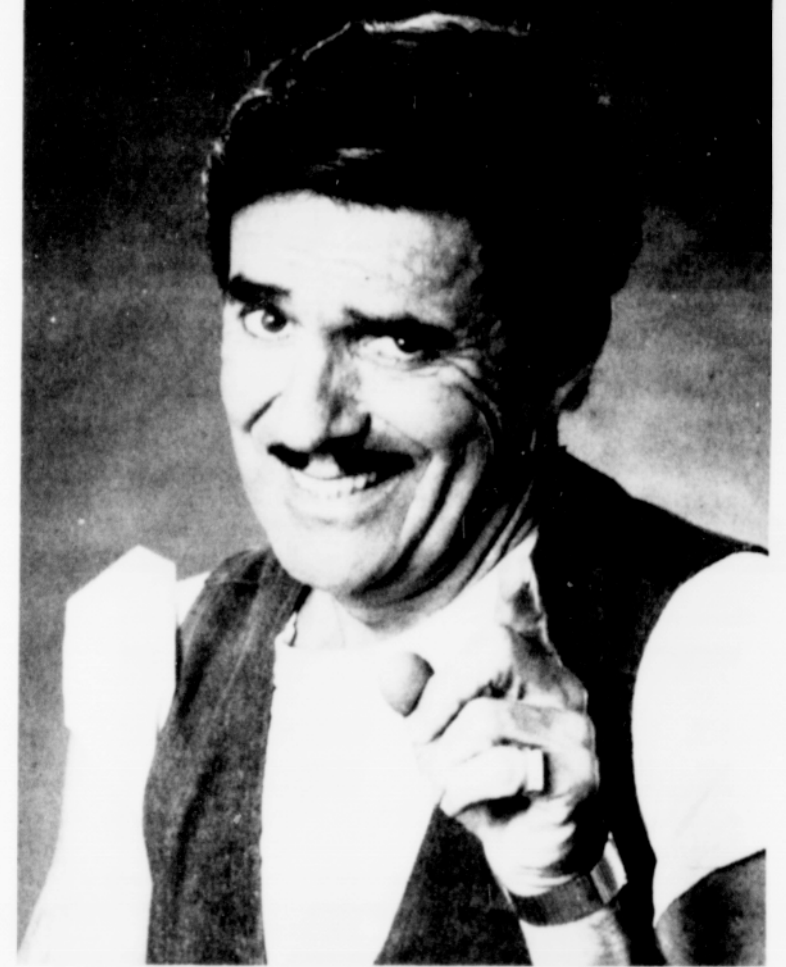
The "model villages" are designed after the "strategic hamlets" that the United States used in Vietnam. Virtually every surviving Indian village in highland Guatemala has been turned into a concentration camp, with movements and food supply strictly controlled by the military, and native cultural and religious expression suppressed. Forced to serve in "civil patrols," villagers must sometimes participate in the murders of "subversive" relatives and neighbors to prove their loyalty.

During the period 1982-83, when the "model village" program was being put into place, an average of five Indian villages per week were wiped off the map. Several hundred thousand Guatemalans escaped to Mexico, and an estimated one million people are still hiding in Guatemala's mountains, constantly fleeing bombings, napalm, chemical/bacteriological warfare, and set forest fires.

With the entire highlands region now militarized and village massacres thus slowing down, the Guatemalan government hopes to be able to point to "improvements in human rights" and a new civilian president to make itself eligible for more bombs, guns, and helicopters from the United States. Front-running candidate Vinicio Cerezo of the Christian Democratic Party is promising to change Guatemala's image.

Lucia Del Bosque

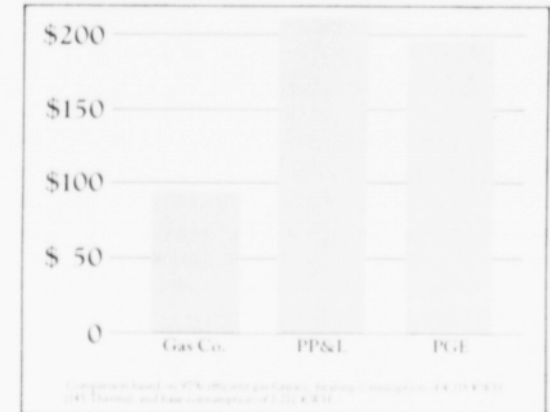
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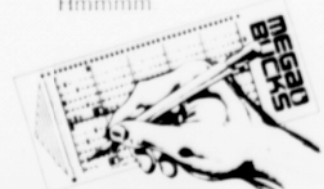
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