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# The Daily Tar Heel

92nd year of editorial freedom

## An evolving play on words

Today's front-page story on the teaching of evolution and creation in public schools portends that in North Carolina the issue will soon become more visible, the debate more vigorous. Understandably, when polls show that most North Carolinians believe in divine creation, the issue stirs emotions just as the school-prayer debate might. With that thought in mind, we stand surprised (and amused) by a recent turn of events in Asheboro, where Randolph County school officials decided Tuesday that they weren't about to tackle a controversy of this magnitude.

Apparently, the giddy officials heard through the grapevine that a children's play dealing with evolution was controversial elsewhere in the country. So, sight unseen, they dropped it. From what we can gather (neither the Asheboro officials nor us having seen it), the play, "Dandelions," is really quite harmless. As the theater group's business manager puts it, "It's a very innocent play." One skit deals with a murky pond overcrowded with fish. One fish swims onto land, struggles and becomes a frog. Another skit shows a family of primates that learn to walk upright.

Such heavy scenes might disturb youngsters, the school officials reckoned. As one put it, "The theory of evolution was too much to lay on our people at this time." She said she didn't want to present something that parents might object to. "Why do that when you can get a play that has no controversial overtones and it is as good a quality?"

But Mary Regan, executive director of the State Arts Council (which helps subsidize such performances in North Carolina), said her organizations had received no negative criticism about the play. Even Jerry Jones, the Randolph County school arts director, was disappointed by the cancellation. He said his children had seen the play, and that it's a "very fine play, and I think it should be shown."

Obviously, the school officials were not so much worried over the play's content as they were over the possibility of disturbing the status quo. Their strategy failed, however, as the poor school officials seem to have brought themselves more attention with the cancellation than if they'd just shown the play.

## Investing in nostalgia

Memories. It would be impossible to leave college without them. But how long do they stay with you? Is it really impossible to forget the opening of Davis Library? Or campus elections? Or the simpler things: rainy day walks to class without an umbrella, afternoons in the Pit? The *Yackety Yack* each year captures all this and more, so that years after a student has graduated, he can still relive the big events and the small moments.

The staff of this year's *Yack* has tried to develop the yearbook in accordance with suggestions and criticisms from both students and faculty. There is more written copy, as unusual yet welcome addition designed to make the *Yack* even more reflective of the unique Carolina experience. And, of course, there are the pictures, taken by a staff of some of the University's most talented student photographers, adhering to a long *Yack*

tradition of visual excellence.

Perhaps the individual student's picture will not appear in the book 17 times, as it did in his high school yearbook. Perhaps his friends will not clutter each page. University life is often less intimate, more anonymous than high school days were. It can be a life of hard work, of exams and papers, and speeches. There are undoubtedly times when each student feels that college is the worst place to be. But years later, these toils and triumphs will all be the stuff of nostalgia is made of. Students will want to look back at their college years. And the *Yack*, long recognized as one of the best college yearbooks in the country, will help them recapture the unique college experience.

Friday is the last day to purchase a *Yack*. Students should not let this opportunity go by. There will never be another 1983 at UNC. Why not buy a record of it?



## The Daily Tar Heel

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## A history of struggle

By CLAUDIA WERMAN

I had studied the history of Nicaragua in books, articles and Latin American history classes. I had learned that Augusto Sandino had, from 1927 to 1933, led the Nicaraguan people in a struggle to get the U.S. Marines out of their country and to establish a society of social justice, democracy and Christianity. Sandino's efforts were successful in forcing the Marines to leave, but not until they had trained a Nicaraguan National Guard under the leadership of Anastasio Somoza. On February 21, 1934, after meeting for negotiations, Somoza had Sandino executed. What followed was the longest, most corrupt dictatorship in Latin American history — continually supported and supplied by the United States. The Somoza dynasty ruled Nicaragua for some 45 years, practically transforming the country into a private estate.

In spite of ever-expanding control by the dictatorship, a rising pro-democratic spirit culminated, in 1961, in the founding of the Sandinista Front for National Liberation. The FSLN began as a mountain-based guerrilla movement, but by the mid-1960s it had formed an alliance with the traditional left, students, workers, Christians, cultural groups, intellectuals, women's groups and peasants. They learned that the repressive political apparatus of Somoza did not allow for change. By 1974, the FSLN was prepared to take the offensive in the struggle to fundamentally change the social, political and economic lives of the Nicaraguan people. The highly organized, broad-based armed struggle that ensued resulted in the overthrow of Somoza and triumph for the FSLN on July 19, 1979.

This is, in brief, the historical course of events. But what about the history being made today? I was aware of the U.S. media's inability to portray the Central American situation objectively. I wanted to see this new Nicaragua and its people for myself. I wanted to learn about their lives, about their revolution, and to see if, indeed, there was or was not popular support for the Sandinistas.

On June 19, 1983, I left for Managua with 11 other students from around North Carolina. We were going to Nicaragua for six weeks, to live and work side-by-side with Nicaraguans.

During our first week we all stayed in a Managua Seminary. We had the opportunity to visit Tomas Borge — the Minister of the Interior, the Ministry of Education, the University of Nicaragua and the Ecumenical Center among others. Everyone we met made a very clear distinction between the government of the United States and the people of the United States. We were thanked for visiting Nicaragua, and we were asked to be observant and tell other North Americans what we saw. During that week we also traveled outside Managua, from the rough, rocky Pacific coast to the misty moun-

## Revolution has helped

By WES HARE

I, my wife, Jane, and other Chapel Hill residents went to Nicaragua recently with a program called Witness for Peace. The N.C. delegation consisted of 23 persons, representing 16 cities and 11 religious denominations within the Judeo-Christian tradition. The group's primary purpose was the revolutionary process and the role of the church in it and to gauge the impact of current U.S. policy on Nicaraguan society. We also hoped to establish contact with the Nicaraguan people and promote the cause of peace in the region.

We visited with many Nicaraguans. We spoke with government officials. We conferred with Roman Catholic and Protestant church leaders and interviewed leaders of the opposition political parties, unions and the press. But, most of all, we talked with ordinary people where we found them, in the fields, the barrios, the churches, the refugee camps, the marketplaces and the homes around Managua, Leon, Masaya, Esteli and Ocotal.

We did not find the Sandanista revolution to be perfect. It is clear, however, that it is not a repressive totalitarian regime. Upcoming elections will likely confirm that the Nicaraguan government enjoys the support of the majority of the people.

I was struck by the nature of the revolutionary process, which actively incorporates and empowers groups — the poor, women, young people — that had previously been forced to the margins of society and oppressed under the dictatorship. Nicaragua is at a point in time similar to the 1960s in the United States if, during the civil rights movement, black people had taken over the state of Mississippi. That analogy carries with it the full recognition of not only the excitement and the opportunities for people to form a government responsive to their needs, but also the possibility of perhaps the FBI or another military force surrounding the state with the intent of overthrowing its government by terrorist attacks and economic sanctions.

# Nicaragua

tains of Matagalpa coffee country.

At the end of the first week, we found out our family and field placements. I lived about 30 kilometers south of Managua in Masaya, a town of approximately 40,000 people, one half of whom are artisans. Masaya is a town of narrow streets, one-story stucco buildings covered with graffiti, posters and murals. And as in any Nicaraguan town, there are children everywhere.

I lived with a woman named Nubia and her family of 12 in a three-bedroom house in barrio San Jeronimo. They opened their home to me and took me into their lives. I slept on a canvas cot in a small bedroom shared by four of the daughters. Behind their house was a small, fenced-in courtyard where they had a pit latrine, a shower, a clothesline and a sink, where we washed our clothes with a small piece of rationed soap. We ate rice and beans three meals a day; sometimes, at dinner, we might have an egg, or a piece of avocado, cheese, chicken or ox meat.

Every morning Nubia's mother would go to the market. As part of the fourth anniversary of the Revolution, a new market had been built with cement sidewalks, individual vending stalls and metal roofs. There are many projects, such as this new market, which physically rehabilitate the country. I visited several new pre-schools, a cotton cooperative, free and accessible health care facilities, and a ditch-digging project to get potable water into the countryside. I worked on a government subsidized housing construction project in barrio Fatima of Masaya. The housing project was to provide families with small one-room houses. The tools and the tasks were simple. The people working on the project, mostly women and children, were going to move into one of the houses. The energy and initiative for the project were unlimited and inspiring.

I became close friends with Zeida, a nineteen-year-old woman who worked on the housing project. Zeida and I worked together every morning — sharing the stories of our pasts and our hopes for the future. We talked about her three-year-old daughter and her newborn baby and the new Nicaragua in which they will grow up. She once asked me why my country has so much more than Nicaragua and why the U.S. government hates her people.

After the housing project was finished, I would, sometimes in the evening, visit Zeida and her daughters in their new home. Zeida would breastfeed her baby and we would talk for hours about justice, the Sandinistas, the upcoming fiesta, men and her children. I felt she was more worldly

than I, though she had never left Masaya.

"Other evenings I would stay home with Nubia's family, go to a movie or for a beer, or go to a meeting of the Sandinista Youth Organization or a local Sandinista Defense Committee (CDS). At one CDS meeting I met Sophia, with whom I became friends. At 15, she embodied a sense of personal dedication and commitment to the goals of the Revolution.

We talked many times for many hours. Sophia talked to me about Nicaragua under Somoza. And how, since the triumph of 1979, her family and her people have been able to embark on a road of reconstruction for their country. In the neighborhood CDS meetings that I attended, there was discussion, debate and decision, none of which was possible under Somoza. For the first time, the Nicaraguan people are taking their lives into their own hands. For the first time they have the freedom to make decisions and to participate in projects that benefit the majority of their people.

I lived in and learned about Zeida and Sophia's society. I saw the foundations of a society of and for the people, a society not blindly accepting the model of another country, but creating socialism based on very real needs and the reality of Nicaragua. Some of the programs of the revolution have been stalled because the entire nation is focusing time, energy and any available funds on the war with the U.S.-backed contras on the Honduran border, as well as escalated aggression from the western, eastern and southern borders. The fact is that Nicaragua's independent model of socialism poses a threat to the security of the United States government's interests throughout Central America, the threat of a good example. President Reagan underestimates the strength and dedication of the Nicaraguan people. They are willing to lay down their lives to protect the freedom, the democracy and the right to self-determination for which so many have already died.

I am afraid for what Nicaragua is having to face. It is the responsibility of those of us who have been there to do everything we can to oppose U.S. policies that are determined to destroy Nicaragua.

In Nicaragua, I observed a passionate spirit of perseverance and an insurmountable individual and communal strength. I observed people like Masaya and Sophia and Felipe, a shopkeeper, revolutionary and mother of four. I observed the power of true participatory democracy.

This is the history that is being made today.

Claudia Werman is a senior history major from Chapel Hill.



Nicaraguans gather at a marketplace near Managua.

The following excerpts were lifted from the report which was produced by our groups and edited by Gil Joseph, assistant professor of history at UNC.

- The local communities are very well organized. They organize for human service and local support purposes as well as in response to their current military crisis. Organization occurs through a Sandinista Defense Committee (CDS), a basic unit within each local barrio and community. The local CDS identifies people involved in such areas as human service, social service, housing and popular education, and carries out the necessary mobilization of volunteers for immunization drives against malaria, childhood diseases food shortages.

- The press has ample opportunity to criticize. There are two areas in which censorship is imposed: troop movements and acts of war, and information on shortages of food to prevent hoarding. There are also funds for all parties in the political process.

- The role of the church is complex because of its variety of manifestations. Tensions exist between the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the Nicaraguan government, as well as between the hierarchical church and the basic Christian community. Nicaragua is 85 percent Roman Catholic. The Christian faith of the people is intense and fundamental to their life and existence in a way that is not typically evident in the United States. An active lay ministry takes the form of Christian-based communities initiated in Brazil and now extending throughout Latin America. While many leaders in the Roman Catholic hierarchy have been an-

tagonistic toward the Sandanista revolution, we saw no evidence to support their fears that the Sandanistas are becoming totalitarian regime. We are confident that religious freedom exists in Nicaragua today.

The United States is supporting attacks by "contra" guerrillas on the Nicaraguan economy. As a result, Nicaragua has recently established a military draft. But, much of the defense of the frontier remains in the hands of neighborhood and territorial militias. Family bunkers and communal trenches punctuate not only the landscape at Ocotal but also in the capital city of Managua, following the fear of an invasion that gripped Nicaragua after the U.S. occupation of Grenada.

One question puzzling the Nicaraguan people is this: "What are we doing to make the United States government so angry at us?" We lacked an adequate reply.

The Kissinger Commission Report on Central America calls for increased economic aid to promote desperately needed social reforms such as land distribution, improvements in health care, food support and education. Ironically, the one nation, Nicaragua, that has effectively redistributed land and won international commendations for its programs in health care, education, and nutrition over the past four years, is singled out by the Kissinger Commission for condemnation. We believe that, in many ways, Nicaragua should stand as an example for Central America, not as an outcast.

Wes Hare is a Chapel Hill resident.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### There's plenty left to say

To the editor:

The 1983-84 basketball season is over. After hearing the coverage of UNC's final game against Indiana, what more can be said about the Tar

Heels? Plenty. Talent, courage, sensitivity, spirit and sportsmanship are just a few qualities that describe the character of Dean Smith's team.

### Eye spy

To the editor:

Allen Howard's argument in his letter to the editor ("Doctoring the deficit," *DTH*, March 23), already weak due to its sarcastic tone, falls down completely because he misunderstood what Professor Arthur Benavie was saying in his column on March 20, "Looking beyond the deficit."

The common-sense message of Benavie, easily discerned in his column, and well explained to me in a

lengthy conversation, is that inflation and other economic woes are caused by a complicated combination of factors, and that each of us should look beyond the Reagan administration's meaningless slogans (and, I would add, outright lies), and carefully study the situation with an eye toward fair and effective solutions.

Marc Eisdorfer  
Carrboro

Throughout the season, the Tarheels played to win, and while they played, they won 28 of 31 games. But more importantly, they won the admiration and respect of Carolina fans and basketball enthusiasts across the country.

Very few basketball teams have demonstrated unity, comradeship and pride the way these players have.

Julia Harrelson  
Chapel Hill

### Letters?

The *Daily Tar Heel* welcomes letters to the editor and contributions of columns for the editorial page.

Such contributions should be typed, triple-spaced, on a 60-space

line, and are subject to editing.

Column writers should include their majors and hometowns; each letter should include the writer's name, address and telephone number.