

# American Indian in Nicaragua

By Alan Riddle

American Indian leader Vernon Bellecourt spoke to a small audience in the Humanities Lecture Hall on Sept. 24. Sponsored by the Carolina Interfaith Task Force on Central America, he presented color slides and lectured on the international activities of America's indigenous people.

Bellecourt targeted North American Christians for their apathy concerning human suffering at the hands of military and para military forces. He also criticized the "Pro-Life" and "Moral Majority" groupings which support antisocial regimes in such places as Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti.

Congressman Steve Rose suggests that the attitude reflected by most Americans is unintentional. Bellecourt quotes Congressman Rose as saying, the "Central Intelligence Agency was inserting false reports" in media communiqués "that would tend to bolster and support Reagan's Central American policies of confrontation and subversion."

Bellecourt recently visited Nicaragua for a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] conference on the status of the 185 million indigenous people of the Western Hemisphere.

The United States is presently sending \$85 million in military supplies to Honduras which borders on Nicaragua. Approximately 300 thousand Miskitos Indians live along the borders of the two countries. Many of those in Honduras are crowded together in refugee camps. The CIA recruits commandos from these refugee camps to make raids into Nicaragua.

CIA recruits commandos to make raids into Nicaragua. This is the result of a policy of subversion of nations which, in view of North

American foreign affairs experts and business economists, "make unwise decisions with regard to their own economic development."

Freed in 1979 from the dictatorial rule of Anastasio Somoza, the Miskitos, native people of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, have had trouble with their Spanish-speaking Roman Catholic neighbors and the Sandinistan government. Latin America is the United States' principal trading partner in many resources, second only to Western Europe in others. Such trading partnerships are especially important to bankers, stockbrokers, and United States fiscal infrastructures. Yet, Reagan and staff are not working as equal partners toward the economic well-being of all.

Once suspicious of Sandinistan motives in its massive literacy campaigns, in which 12,500 people of the Miskito sub-nation have learned to read and write their own language, the Moravian Bishop [Miskitos are of this Baptist-like sect] has leaned toward support of his governments's security measures. This is surely a response to joint Honduran/Miskito raids on Miskito villages.

The spiritual component of Native power is evident in the almost-magical unity of indigenous people of the Western Hemisphere: Brazil, Canada, Chile, Bolivia, Guatemala, Hawaii, Samoa, and the United States, as well as Nicaragua. Bellecourt said, "Everywhere we go we carry our drum, chant and pray. Invariably the South American Indians were drawn to the drum and the pipe of peace."

Those interested in further information can contact the Carolina Interfaith Task Force on Central America, 1105 Sapling Place, Raleigh, N.C., 27609, or in Asheville call 658-2347.



American Indian, Vernon Bellecourt, pictured, spoke on the UNCA campus on Sept. 24 regarding the Miskito Indians of the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua. Photo courtesy of Asheville Citizen-Times

## Where are work study wages?

By Marty Cherrix

Students employed under federal work study money may find their jobs at UNCA in jeopardy. According to Carolyn McElrath, director of financial aid, the final authorization letter from the Office of Education has not yet been received. McElrath says that student jobs are safe at the present time.

McElrath attributes the slow arrival of the official letter to several factors:

- federal regulations which were slow to be finalized
- federal budget cuts
- House and Senate overriding Reagan's veto of Supplemental Appropriations Bill

Work study is a type of financial assistance designed to provide on or off campus jobs for undergraduate or graduate students. Currently, 59 students are employed under the work study program at UNCA.

William H. Pott, Vice Chancellor of Finance, says, "Students employed the first month of school under federal work study money were paid by work study funds left over from the 81/82 school year."

Pott says a surplus of \$6800 was in the work study fund from last year. This money was left over because students employed under work study funds did not work all of the hours allotted to them.

According to Pott, the university has already been allocated \$34,036. These funds represent half of the money necessary to maintain the work study program for the 82/83 school year. The University hopes

to receive a letter of credit for the remaining amount of approximately \$28,000.

Pott says, "The work study positions were assigned based on the assumption that we would receive \$63,000 for the school year." Pott said he expects to receive the official letter of credit within the next 30 days.

What is the student reaction to the current situation? Brenda Duckett, a senior commuting student, says, "I'm glad that I'm graduating in December or I would probably be forced to quit school if I didn't receive any more money through the work study program." Another student, Rosalind Clinton, says, "Since I live on campus, my job in the library is very convenient for me as far as transportation is concerned." Both students said they were not aware of the situation with the work study funds.

McElrath stresses the fact that this situation applies to colleges and universities across the United States. She says, "Some universities did not allow their students to go ahead and enroll in work study programs pending the arrival of the official confirmation letter." Fortunately, UNCA had the necessary funds to allow students to begin participating in the program.

Work study students should not panic. McElrath expresses confidence that the letter will be arriving within the next few days. UNCA does not have enough money to keep the work study program afloat through this semester.



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