

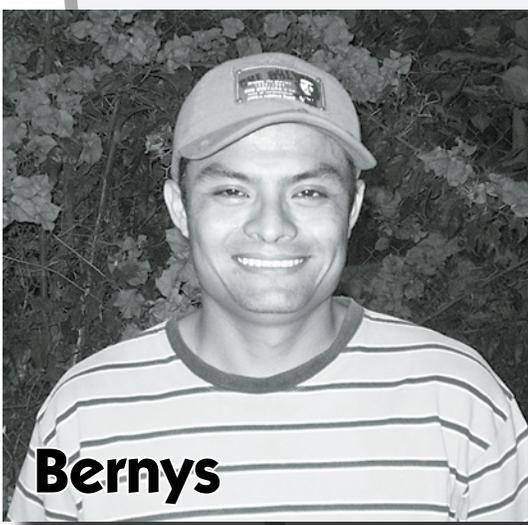


Olympia/Santo Tomás Quarterly

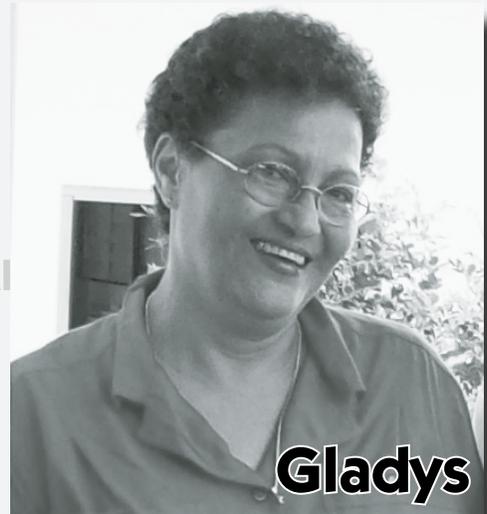
US/Nicaragua Solidarity—Since 1988

Spring 2008

Vol. 8, No. 1



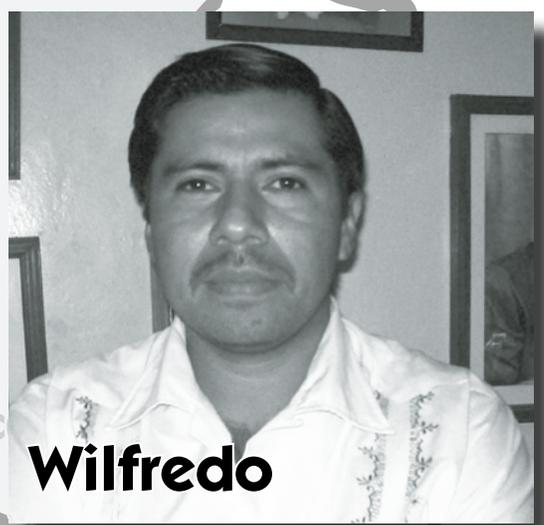
Bernys



Gladys



Griselda



Wilfredo

***Join us in welcoming
our 9th delegation
from Santo Tomás
April 23rd—May 13, 2008
Details inside!***

Santo Tomás

Editor's Note

This April the Thurston – Santo Tomás Sister County Association welcomes our ninth delegation to visit Olympia from Santo Tomás Nicaragua! In this edition of the quarterly you will get to know our four guests, Griselda Escobar, Gladys Prieto, Bernys Ramos and Wilfredo Espinoza.

We are entering our 20th year of a sister-city relationship that offers a unique opportunity for cultural exchange and community building. Over 100 people from Thurston County have visited Santo Tomás, and 24 visitors from Santo Tomás have visited Olympia since 1990. For the many individuals who cannot themselves travel to Santo Tomás, delegations from our Nicaraguan sister community bring Thurston County residents closer to the sister-city experience.

This issue of the TSTSCA Quarterly focuses primarily on the upcoming delegation as well as reflections from participants of



the Summer 2007 Community Delegation to Santo Tomás. We hope each article speaks to the challenges that exist in confronting poverty and honors those who are in the fight. Olympia is fortunate to learn from our four visitors as they share their experiences about the ways their community, families and they themselves are working for social justice and finding hope.

We hope you can join us to hear their stories, to strengthen the bonds of solidarity between Santo Tomás and Olympia, as well as to celebrate their presence in Thurston County! Be sure to check out the calendar of exciting events in this newsletter, and call for updates. We hope you can all join us in our efforts to commemorate and sustain this dynamic people-to-people exchange between Santo Tomás, Nicaragua and Thurston County, Washington.

This edition of the Quarterly is dedicated to the memory of our friend Edwin Bush Keyt III who died on the 3rd of December, 2007. On page 5 we have highlighted a few of Edwin's contributions to the struggle for global justice.

*Anna Shelton
Emily Calhoun*

*Calen Swift
Raissa Huntley-Fryer*



the
**THURSTON
SANTO TOMÁS**
sister-county
association

A nonprofit community organization founded in 1988

International justice and peace depend on the friendships of people across national, cultural, and ethnic boundaries. In the urgent desire to engender peace and heal the effects of past aggression and current economic oppression by the US on the people of Nicaragua and for the mutual benefit of Santo Tomás, Chontales, Nicaragua and Thurston County, Washington, USA, we intend:

- ▶ To foster sustained relationships and greater understanding between the peoples of Santo Tomás and Thurston County through the development of personal friendships, community ties, and people-to-people exchanges.
- ▶ To educate ourselves and our community about the impacts of US foreign policies that cause the dependency and economic deterioration of Central America.
- ▶ To promote peace and a just relationship while challenging the imbalance of power and supporting self-determination and self-sufficiency for the Nicaraguan people.
- ▶ To help sustain our sister community in its struggle for dignity and hope.

Intentamos:

- ▶ Promover relaciones sostenibles y un mejor entendimiento entre la gente de Santo Tomás y la gente del condado Thurston através del desarrollo de la amistad, los lazos comunitarios e intercambios de pueblo a pueblo.
- ▶ Aprender y educar a nuestra comunidad acerca de los consecuencias de las políticas internacionales del gobierno

del los Estados Unidos los cuales causan la dependencia y el deterioro económico en Centro América.

- ▶ Promover la paz y una relación justa al mismo tiempo disputar el desequilibrio del poder y apoyar determinación autónomo y autosustencia para la gente nicaragüense.
- ▶ Ayudar a sostener nuestra hermandad en la lucha por la dignidad y la esperanza.

TSTSCA Steering Committee meetings are usually held on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 pm. Call for location. Everyone is welcome! These meetings are preceded by a social potluck at 6:15 pm. To confirm date and location or for more information, call Jean Eberhardt at 360-943-8642.

Our newsletter is produced by TSTSCA members on a quarterly basis. Everyone is encouraged to submit articles, poems, photos, and letters to the newsletter. Opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Steering Committee, the membership at large, or our advertisers. Submissions and comments can be directed to:

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Cover photo by Tom.

Flooding, North and South

Emily Calhoun

Rattling down I-5 in my grandfather's truck my eyes were drawn to signs of debris. The closer I got to Highway 6, the effects of the flood were unmistakable – a lawn chair in the branches of a tree, pastures still submerged by water, fences matted and weighted down by the mud that the river pulled all over Lewis County. With increasing attention to climate change floods have become front page news over the past several years. But today it's my family.

Dieckman Road in Adna has about fifteen houses lining the street. When the Chehalis River rose, its path was diverted and the river found its way down Bunker Creek. Most of the year Bunker Creek is little more than a culvert, but on the day of the flood the river overwhelmed the banks and Dieckman Road became the river bed. The two homes closest to Bunker Creek were knocked off their foundations. Several doors down sits my sister's house. While the current ran in front of the house the mud and water rose from the basement and seeped between the floor boards.

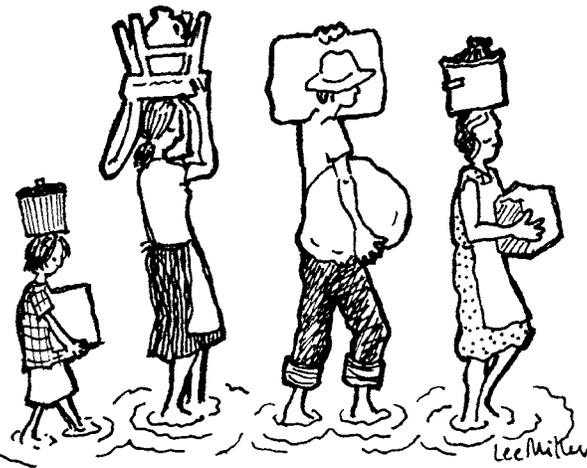
When I pulled up in the truck the Saturday after the flood, I found my sister and brother-in-law overwhelmed as crews of volunteers tackled their home and the homes of their neighbors. By the end of the day the house was gutted – the walls, the kitchen cabinets, the flooring, the couches – all were hauled away. While my sister waits for the birth of her third child, the house sits ready to be dried out and put back together. This is new to my sister Sara, and to me – needing the support of others as we pull our lives back together.

It is often difficult for me to accept the support of others. Late summer of 2005 I was in Santo Tomás. My boyfriend / travel companion kept himself updated on current events back home by way of the internet café. A hurricane was poised to hit the Mississippi Delta region. We waited. From the first report we gathered that Katrina hadn't caused the devastation that forecasters had predicted – the storm had lost much of its power before hitting land. I felt relief. Then the levees broke.

One Tomasino approached my boy-

friend and expressed his sympathy. "May your people recover," he said. Despite the man's sincerity I found it difficult to accept his condolences. I questioned whether the citizens of the U.S., a country which has brought devastation to the people of Nicaragua, have earned the sympathy of this Nicaraguan friend.

In addition to US aggressions - both military and economic - the people of Nicaragua have seen flooding as well. This past hurricane season Nicaraguans were among the international victims of flooding. When I speak to friends in Santo Tomás I am thankful to hear that their daily lives were largely unaffected by the hurricane. However, not far from Santo Tomás, on Nicaragua's Miskito coast homes were buried. My thoughts travel to Mexico, where in December, in the state of Tabasco eighty-four towns were flooded. Further north, residents of New Orleans still haven't returned to their homes. In a recent TSTSCA gathering one of our members discussed her work with Common Grounds, a New Orleans based organization which aims to provide affordable housing in that city. The city council voted to demolish public housing units while residents called for reentry to their homes. My friend told us



that for the past year and a half many of these residents have been waiting in shelters to return to their homes – prevented from entering even those buildings that suffered no damage from Katrina flooding. Citizens criticized the city council decision as a way to make room for development of a lower density. Police have responded to protesters with tear gas. Listening to this, I cried and changed the subject. I've never felt more vulnerable as a sister, as an aunt, as a global

citizen, or as an activist.

As an activist I come to the work from a place of hope and a desire to see change. At nineteen I started participating in TSTSCA. I anticipated a vacation and a Spanish lesson while participating in a community delegation to Santo Tomás. Instead, I found myself waking up from two decades of the most well intentioned entitlement. Nearly six years later I am ever more committed to the mission statement – despite the lack of answers I have in my head. Today TSTSCA is a small non-profit that aims to support the self determination and autonomy of the Tomasino people.

In the poem "What My Father Believed" John Guzlowski writes "My father believed we are here to lift logs that can't be lifted" but it is the responsibility of each of us to alleviate the suffering of another, "if but for a minute". It is something else to realize that I've been operating under a misconception that has led me to see myself as she who alleviates but does not experience suffering. Could it be that as an activist I'm more comfortable when suffering exists at a distance – and can therefore preserve my self image as a detached helper? But right now the distance between me and suffering has tightened. Today there is a sense of vulnerability under my skin, in the daily experience of my nieces and nephew. It has seeped through the floor boards of my sister's home.

In this moment in history we are each more vulnerable, we who live here on this earth. But vulnerability is different from weakness. The condolences, well wishes and demolition work that people have offered my family – just like the words of comfort our Nicaraguan friend offered us in Santo Tomás – are difficult for me to accept. But these expressions are honest and necessary.

In truth, often when I think about solidarity I think about the financial and material aid TSTSCA fundraises and gathers on behalf of our sister community, Santo Tomás. The money supports scholarships, salaries in community projects, or for the construction of new facilities. I rest my hope on the thought that I am involved in an organization that alleviates suffering in a small Nicaraguan town, if but for a minute. But my rest is disturbed by my current circumstance. I question my motives as an activist.

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Major Events in Nicaragua: 2006 – 2008

Compiled by Anna Shelton from the Nicaragua Network (www.nicanet.org)

Since the publication of our last newsletter two years ago, so much has happened. To prepare for the arrival of our four guests from Nicaragua – Bernys, Griselda, Gladys and Wilfredo—on April 23, we want to recap some major happenings in Nicaragua and to draw some important connections in our shared movement for social justice.

On November 7, 2006, Sandinista candidate Daniel Ortega won the presidential election in Nicaragua, ending 16 years of right-wing governments supported by the U.S. In the lead-up to the 2006 elections, high-ranking officials of the U.S. government made shameless threats toward Nicaraguan voters. One month prior to the election, U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutiérrez told Nicaraguan journalists in a press conference that if Ortega was to be elected, a total of US\$490 million of aid and U.S. private investment would be jeopardized. On the eve of the elections campaign cut-off, U.S. Rep. Dan Rohrabacher (R-CA) asked Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff to block money remittances from being sent to Nicaragua if the F.S.L.N. were elected; in 2007, remit-

tances sent from Nicaraguans working in the U.S. equaled about US\$500 million.

Despite these attempts at intervention, Ortega won by a landslide in a relatively hitchless election. One of the first actions of the new Sandinista government was to abolish fees for public primary education, returning to Nicaraguan children their constitutional right to a free education after 16 years of school privatization, mandated by the World Bank and the IMF. Since the Sandinistas reinstated public education funding, schools have been flooded with students whose families could not previously afford the fees required to send their children to school.

A major priority of the current Sandinista administration is to reduce illiteracy from 30% to 5% by 2009. Other anti-poverty programs initiated by the Ortega administration include expanding free public health care and access to common medications; the “Zero Hunger” program to deliver to 75,000 rural families livestock, poultry, and seeds to be able to cover their own basic needs; and planning for the creation of kitchen garden projects in 800 schools.

Like many other places, Nicaragua has suffered from recent natural disasters. In 2007, largely rural and indigenous com-

munities on the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua were severely impacted by a series of hurricanes and floods. Hurricane Felix affected 55% of Nicaraguan territory and close to 300,000 people, most notably on the Caribbean coast. Over 255,000 acres of vegetable crops were lost. The Nicaraguan government, NGOs, and foreign aid efforts have improved the situation, but are not sufficient relative to the magnitude of the disaster.

Nicaragua has signed onto ALBA, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, led by Evo Morales and Hugo Chávez. ALBA represents economic self-determination and stands in opposition to free trade agreements that promote U.S. economic domination and global capitalism. In January, ALBA members announced the creation of a regional development bank intended to strengthen their alliance and promote independence from U.S.-backed lenders. Each of the arriving delegates are closely involved with innovative projects in Santo Tomás that will inspire and inform us about the work for justice, dignity and peace in our communities and internationally. We look forward to hearing from them about their personal experiences and lives in Nicaragua, and invite you to join us! ♦

Written By/Escrito por Wilfredo Espinoza Lazo

Resurrección

*“Retoñas en la misma cicatriz”
(Enrique Banchs, de Árbol feliz)*

No se pueden mantener combativas
las ilusiones frente a estas murallas de la vida
tan grandes y políticas como las de Jericó.
Peor si faltara la chispa,
el impulso de la mano ancha,
el ancla del tiempo para la espera sincera
y bendiciones en cada grito de trompeta santa.
Peor si el enemigo es el de adentro de uno mismo
y del patio donde compartimos el lodo de la lucha.
Por eso, y para que fueran eternas y precisas,
bastó sembrar su fibra en el corazón del alma,
sí, de las ilusiones, oh sí mis ilusiones
y cuando perezco saco agua de su pozo
y bebo sus flores, el cogollo del bostezo
y resucito otra vez.

Resurrección

*“You sprout from the same scar”
(Enrique Banchs, de Árbol feliz)*

One cannot hold on to spirited
hope when faced with these barriers of life,
as tall and political as the walls of Jericho.
Worse if one lacked the spark,
the impulse of generosity,
the anchor of time for a patient wait
and the blessings in each shout of a holy trumpet.
Worse yet if the enemy is from within
and from the muddy ground of our shared struggle.
Therefore, to make my hope eternal and concise,
it was enough to sow it in the center of my soul,
yes, from hope, oh yes, my hope
and when I die, I draw water from its well,
and I drink its flowers, the heart of a breath
and I come back to life again.

Translation by Marita Herrera and her Spanish language students, Robert Thomas and Elsa Wulff. Additional input by David Phillips.

Edwin B. Keyt III

July 23, 1926–Dec. 3, 2007

Edwin was a beloved and active member of TSTSCA for many years. Excerpt below read by Jean Eberhardt at Edwin's memorial service:

On behalf of the Thurston-Santo Tomas Sister County Association, I am amongst so many here and elsewhere in the world who consider ourselves truly blessed to have shared in some part of Edwin's life. My connection with Edwin is through our work together focused on Nicaragua. I share the honor, with Barbara Keyt and Maureen Hill and Diane Dakin—all present today, of founding a sister community relationship between Thurston County and Santo Tomás, Nicaragua. We began to build a long-term commitment to this sister relationship founded on people-to-people exchanges and learning so much from each other... after Edwin had already left to volunteer in northern Nicaragua in 1988.

As I'm sure most of you are aware, Edwin spent almost five years of his life working in a very remote region of northern Nicaragua during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Edwin was one of many people across the world inspired by the revolutionary society being created in Nicaragua during the 1980s, which championed literacy, free national health care, land for the poor, women's rights and poetry. Edwin was also disgusted by the actions of the US government to crush a hopeful revolution by financing and training a military force known as the Contra. These US-trained forces killed a young engineer from the Northwest named Ben Linder, who worked side by side with Nicaraguans on small hydroelectric projects designed to provide light and electrical power to small towns off the national grid. Ben was in the process of preparing for a second plant in another remote town when he was assassinated. Less than one year later, while Nicaragua was still under siege, Edwin volunteered to continue that project. Edwin, as well as many others of us across the world, was moved to

travel to Nicaragua to contribute to the new society being created there. He offered his skills as a machinist and the project that he thought would take six months extended over the next five years.

Edwin's time in Nicaragua was transformative for him. He battled severe illness, risked his life during the Contra war along-

mountain roads between Managua and El Cuá, and he developed close friendships that continue today. Blanca's family is his Nicaraguan family with whom he shared very special years. After Edwin's first trip back to the US to get medical attention, he returned with Barbara in a VW Bug. The two of them, in their 60s, decided to travel over land through several countries and civil wars to take supplies and a vehicle to the project. Their stories from this trip are amazing, hilarious, scary and above all, inspiring!

Several years ago, I told Edwin that I wanted to travel to Nicaragua together. He was excited about the prospect of one last trip to the country with a people special to his heart. Our sister community of Santo Tomás is in south central Nicaragua while El Cuá is in northern Nicaragua where I have never been. Due to his declining health, Edwin was not able to take that last trip but we talked about where we would have gone together. He said the most beautiful place in Nicaragua is Haulover on the Caribbean coast. Edwin loved boats and had been an avid sailor in his earlier years. Haulover is a fishing community and there is a different pace of life there. I believe if Edwin could have cloned himself, he would have spent his last years in Shelton with the family he loved as well as in Nicaragua, perhaps chilling out in Haulover with the fishermen and their boats. I told him I would go there for him and I will.

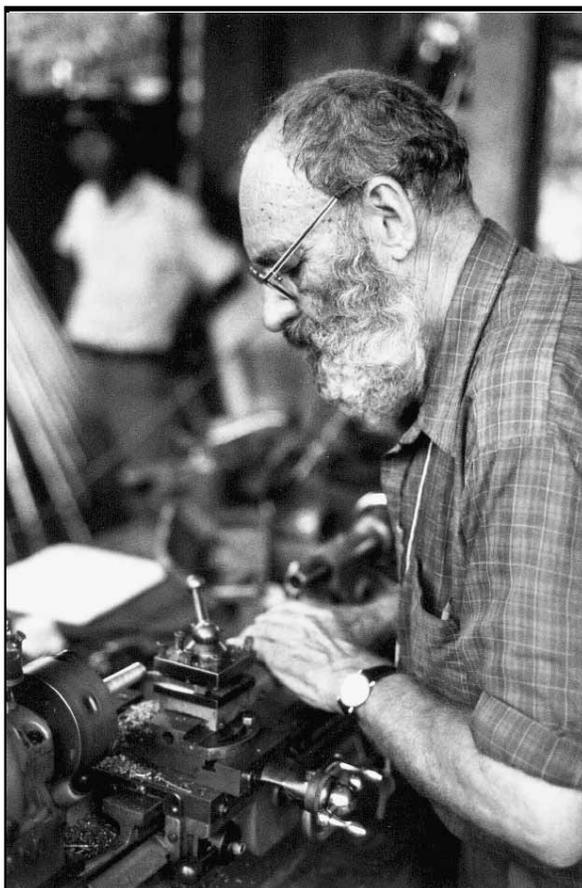
Many people across the world and throughout the United States were involved in Central American independence struggles and solidarity work at the time. After Edwin's return, both Barbara and Edwin continued to be anchors of the solidarity relationship that grounds the sister county association, which today—19 years after it was initiated—remains strong thanks in great part to Edwin's contributions.

Edwin is, as the Nicaraguan revolutionary saying goes, *uno de los muertos que nunca mueren*—one of the dead who never die. Edwin's biting critique of US imperialism and intervention has been a touchstone for us for these past two decades. My favorite

"I've never been a big fan of capitalism."

—Edwin Keyt

side Nicaraguan colleagues to transport needed supplies for the micro-hydroelectric plant along the winding and often mined



From Miriam Linder (sister of Ben Linder) in Portland, OR:

Dear Barbara, dear Jean, dear family, friends and colleagues of Edwin Keyt—Flood waters keep me from joining you today. Flood waters remind me of our humble place in this world.

I have here with me a photograph of Edwin, working in the machine shop in El Cuá, in northern Nicaragua. I see his hands on the lathe, his eyes on his hands and the steel that his hands guide. I see a moment of victory in the struggle to make manifest an enormous, life-long, and ever-expanding love. I send my love, appreciation, and admiration to you.

Miriam

Continued on next page

Facing Nicaragua's Water Crisis

By Paul Pickett

Portions of this article were originally printed in the South Sound Green Pages in the summer of 2006.

We take water for granted. We turn on the faucet and it's always there. We flush with it, water the lawn with it, wash our pet with it. But outside the United States people are not so lucky.

I've been a water professional for over 25 years, an engineer for the State for almost 20 years, and Thurston Public Utility District Commissioner since 2001. I began studying the problems of water in developing nations several years ago, and started looking for a real-life water problem to help with. It didn't take long to find one in our sister community of Santo Tomás.

In the summer of 2007, I visited Santo Tomás as part of a community delegation. During my visit, I saw firsthand the water crisis in Nicaragua and worked with the Alcalde (Mayor) and his engineers in Santo Tomás about their plans to meet those challenges in their community. I also got to meet Gladys Prieto, who is a member of the Water Commission in Santo Tomás. She will be visiting Olympia during the upcoming delegation in April and May, when she and I will be giving two community presentations regarding the water

crisis in Nicaragua.

Nicaragua has a population of over 6 million people. According to an article published last year by the Nicaraguan paper *El Nuevo Diario*, more than half of Nicaraguans do not have access to basic services for drinking water, including 70% of the rural population. Over 3 million Nicaraguans receive their water from contaminated ponds and rivers. Typical water use for a *tomasino* is 50 liters per day (about 12 gallons), compared to a typical Thurston household that uses over 1,000 liters per day (250 gallons).

Nicaragua is one of the poorest nations in the Americas. Workers and farmers struggle to overcome huge disparities in income and a legacy of misuse of the land. The mountainsides of northern Nicaragua have been denuded for cotton production, cattle rangeland, and firewood harvest. During the wet season (our northern summer) rainfall is no longer captured by the forest and, instead of feeding groundwater, runs off as high flows. During the dry season (our winter), reduced ground water causes extremely low stream flows and inadequate water supplies for local residents.

Like other areas in Nicaragua, Santo Tomás faces severe water shortages in the dry season. Community water supplies are strictly rationed, and the city sometimes

only provides water once a week or less. Water can be purchased for about \$1 a barrel, but buying the ten barrels a month needed for basic necessities is a major portion of a *tomasino* household's monthly income.

Santo Tomás' sister city in Belgium provided funding to bring water from the nearby Río Mico. Unfortunately, the Río Mico is so polluted from mining, tanning,

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Edwin

From previous page

quote of his is caught on film in the sister county documentary. He says, "I've never been a big fan of capitalism." This was an understatement from a man who made a 180-degree shift in his political view of the world over his lifetime. He will remain with us through his legacy of wisdom, humor, generosity and rebellious no-bullshit attitude. Edwin particularly inspired many of the young people from Evergreen who have traveled to Nicaragua through the solidarity relationship over the past ten years. Edwin, we will miss you dearly, and we will carry on the fight for peace and justice in your name. ♦

(written by Jean Eberhardt and Anna Shelton)

Rachel Corrie, ¡presente!

Some people fault Rachel Corrie for her idealism. Those individuals say that she "brought it on herself", but her death was not suicide, it was murder. Those who fault her lack understanding of the forces that shape this horrible time in our history.

In the late '80s and early '90s I knew a number of young men and women who were willing to work in the war zones of Nicaragua.

Some picked coffee with AK-47s slung over their backs. Fifty that I knew of rebuilt a destroyed small canal that had fed El Cuá's turbo-electric plant. They were within a day's walk of the Contra Terrorist camps in Honduras, working hard in the cold rain of the Central Highlands.

The cold-blooded murder of the

American engineer Benjamin Linder and his two Nicaraguan assistants was ordered in McLean, Virginia and carried out by those same Contra Terrorists. It was because of my disgust over that murder that I spent nearly five years working in El Cuá, building a turbine for the electric plant in San José de Bocay. The project was envisioned by Ben, who is considered a national hero in Nicaragua.

There are many young men and women all over the world who are willing to risk death but are not willing to die young in the struggle against Imperialism and Corporate piracy.

Rachel was one such person. I did not know her personally, so when I saw her picture in *The Olympian* I did not recognize her.

Later I saw a video about the Procession of the Species workshop and

someone pointed her out to me. Then I did recognize her. She was smiling and working in an animated way. "Oh my God! Please, not her," I thought. I am 80 years old and tears came to my eyes.

Most of my heroes are women. Some of them work or teach at the Evergreen State College, others are still in Nicaragua or involved in projects back East for poor people, and I am married to another.

I don't know if one is allowed to have favorite heroes, but if so Rachel Corrie is one of mine. We all lost so much when her intellect passed on.

Edwin Bush Keyt III

Published in the Shelton-Mason County Journal as a letter to the editor on 3/16/07.

Gladys Prieto Chavarría

My name is Gladys María Prieto Chavarría. I was born in the city of Rivas on March 28th, 1944. I am from a very poor but hard-working family. I was raised by three women: my mother, my grandmother and my aunt. Sadly, they have all died. My mother and my grandmother were almost illiterate and had hearts of gold. I always say that they were very wise, because they educated us almost entirely through their advice and never through punishment. I learned from them the concepts of solidarity and loving one's neighbor.

I also learned from them to remember that we who are poor are also human beings, and that no one is worth more than anyone else.

I attended high school on a scholarship and then I pursued a general nursing degree, also on scholarship; a profession I had desired to attain from the age of 12 (my mother worked in the hospital in Rivas for many years and is the person I most admire). Were I to be born again and asked what career I wanted, I would again

choose nursing. I studied nursing because I felt powerless in the face of human suffering. From the moment that I chose to become a nurse, I knew that my work was with the community.

I have been a professional nurse for 40 years, working in preventative health care (in health clinics) as well as in hospitals. I graduated with my RN degree in 1967 and in 1983 I obtained my nursing specialization in Maternity and Infant Care. I also worked for five years on the teaching faculty of the Technical College of Health. I have lived in Santo Tomás for 24 years; I worked in the public "Policlínico" until 1989 and then in the People's Clinic from



Gladys (R) with Griselda

Enfermera, Amiga, Administradora

Mi nombre es Gladys María Prieto Chavarría. Nací en la ciudad de Rivas, Nicaragua, el 28 de Marzo de 1944. Yo provengo de una familia muy pobre pero muy trabajadora. Practicamente fui criada por tres mujeres: mi madre, mi abuela y una tía. Tristamente, mis padres ya no existen. Mi madre y mi abuela eran casi analfabetas con un corazón de oro. Siempre digo que eran sábias, porque nos educaron casi a base de consejos y nunca por maltrato. Aprendí de mis viejas el concepto de la solidaridad y el amor al prójimo. Además aprendí recordar siempre que los pobres también somos seres humanos, y que nadie es más que nadie.

Estudí becada la secundaria y la carrera de Enfermería General, profesión que aprendí a querer desde la edad de 12 años (mi madre trabajó en el hospital de Rivas durante muchos años y es la persona que más admiro). Si volviera a nacer y me pusieran a escoger una carrera, sería enfermera nuevamente. Estudié enfermería porque me sentía impotente ante el dolor

humano. Desde el momento que elegí ser Enfermera, sabía que mi trabajo era de cara a la comunidad.

Soy Enfermera Profesional desde hace 40 años. Laboré tanto en salud preventiva (centros de salud) como en hospitales. Me gradué de Enfermera General en 1967 y

Desde el momento que elegí ser Enfermera, sabía que mi trabajo era de cara a la comunidad.

en el año 1983 saqué la licenciatura en Enfermería Materno Infantil. También trabajé como docente en El Politécnico de la Salud durante cinco años. Vivo en Santo Tomás desde hace 24 años; trabajé en el Policlínico hasta 1989 y luego en la Clínica Popular desde 1991 hasta el 2003, donde fui la administradora. Son innumerables las experiencias que tuve como Enfermera Profesional, incluso haber atendido dos partos en la sala de mi casa (en el piso), los cuales resultaron en mujeres satisfechas y niños sanos que terminaron de ser atendidos en

1991 to 2003, where I was the administrator. Among my many experiences working as a professional nurse, I attended two births on my dining room floor, which resulted in satisfied mothers and healthy babies who were cared for in the People's Clinic after delivery.

Working with the community is an integral part of carrying out the work of a nurse. Beyond my profession, I have been most connected with working with the community during the earthquake of 1972, which destroyed much of Managua and which I survived; during Hurricane Joan in 1988; during the war of liberation in the 1970s; and through the vaccination tours during the years following the revolution.

In 1980, I had the privilege of participating in one of the most beautiful projects carried out by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), the National Literacy Campaign. Participation in the campaign was manda-

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la Clínica Popular.

El trabajo con la comunidad es parte integral del desempeño en el trabajo de una enfermera; después de mi profesión cuando estuve más cerca del trabajo con la comunidad fue durante el terremoto de 1972 que sobreviví y que destruyó mucho de Managua, durante el huracán Juana de 1988, durante la guerra de liberación de los setenta, y las jornadas de vacunación durante los años de la revolución después.

En el año 1980, tuve el privilegio de participar en una de las acciones mas lindas realizadas por el FSLN; la Cruzada Nacional de Alfabetización. La participación era obligatoria para todos los estudiantes de tiempo completo, y también para los trabajadores en el sector salud; por esa razón me tocó hacer dos jornadas: una en el trabajo y otra como estudiante. Me tocó alfabetizar en una comarca del municipio de Dolores. Viajaba diario, a pie mas o menos 10 kilómetros después de las cinco de la tarde acompañada de mi hijo que entonces tenía 10 años. Mi actividad era enseñar a leer y escribir a doce personas

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Wilfredo Espinoza Lazo...

My name is Wilfredo Espinoza Lazo and my occupations are that of poet, historian and defender of nature. I was born on February 27, 1978, on a farm outside of Santo Tomás. I'll tell you a little about what happened: On a journey to town to look for work, my mother Bernarda Lazo had to overnight at a farm because of bad weather and that same night Wilfredo saw the light of an oil lamp. At present, I am writing an autobiography, relating all of the obstacles I have had to confront and overcome in order to arrive at what I enjoy, which is to write and help as a way to say to young people that they can reach whatever they want with effort and sacrifice. My mother, who couldn't take care of her three children because she had work as a domestic employee, had to give us up for adoption to three different families. I was raised by a poor family from the age of three. Meanwhile, I studied all

the way through high school while working in the countryside doing agricultural labor.

To be able to pursue studies at the university, I left at the age of 16 to seek work in Juigalpa (the department seat of Chontales). At 18, I began teaching fifth grade students at Rubén Darío in the mornings and in the afternoon shift at the school Rigoberto Cabezas. I discovered my calling to teach in those classrooms, sharing history with these young people and seeing their fascination; I think I was born to do this. That same year, I pursued my third year of Spanish Language and Literature in Juigalpa, and taught History, college prep, Spanish, and Civics at the high school in



Poeta, historiador, y defensor de la naturaleza...

Mi nombre es Wilfredo Espinoza Lazo y mis oficios son poeta, historiador, y defensor de la naturaleza. Nací un 27 de febrero de 1978, en una finca de Santo Tomás. Cuento un poco al respecto: por un viaje al pueblo por parte de Bernarda Lazo (mi madre) en busca de trabajo, tuvo que hospedarse, por el mal tiempo, en esta finca, y esa misma noche Wilfredo vió la luz del candil. Actualmente escribo una autobiografía, contando todos los obstáculos que tuve que enfrentar y superar para poder llegar a ser lo que me gusta, escribir y ayudar, como una manera de decirles a los jóvenes que todo se puede lograr con esfuerzo y sacrificio. Mi madre, como no podía cuidar a sus tres hijos por su trabajo de doméstica, tuvo que darnos en adopción a tres familias distintas. Me crió una familia muy pobre desde que tenía 3 años. Mientras estudiaba en la primaria y secundaria, trabajaba en el campo, en labores de agricultura.

Para estudiar en la universidad, me fuí a los 16 años de edad a Juigalpa (cabecera del departamento de Chontales) en busca de trabajo. A los 18 años empecé impartir clases a los alumnos del quinto grado de primaria, en la Escuela Rubén Darío y la Escuela Rigoberto Cabezas, turno matutino y vespertino. Mi vocación por la enseñanza, la

descubrí ya en el aula, compartiendo historias con los jóvenes, y al ver su fascinación, creí haber nacido para eso. Ese mismo año, estudiaba el tercer año de Licenciatura en Lengua y Literatura Hispana en Juigalpa, entré al Instituto Nacional Autónoma de Santo Tomás a impartir las asignaturas de Historia, Orientación Profesional y/o Formación Vocacional, Español, Cívica y otros. No encuentro otra satisfacción más plena que compartir mis conocimientos con los alumnos, ya que le añado humor a la clase y un enfoque distinto a la metodología tradicional. Enseñar es compartir. Desde ese año me integré a los trabajos comunitarios y ha sido fascinante. Aprobé la carrera en año 2000, y saqué un posgrado en Didáctica del Español. Recuerdo muy bien que mi vocación por la literatura, la descubrí cuando tenía 6 años de edad, entonces alumno de la profesora Facunda Zeledón, quien leía versos de José Martí a pulmón abierto. *(Nota de los editores: Ud. tal vez se acuerda a Facunda por sus dos visitas a Olympia, lo más reciente*

Santo Tomás. I find no greater satisfaction than from sharing my knowledge with students, adding a bit of humor and a focus different than traditional methodology. Teaching is sharing. From that year on, I have been involved in community work and it has been fascinating for me. I earned my college degree in 2000, and pursued post-baccalaureate studies in Didactics of Spanish.

I remember very well that I discovered my interest in literature at the age of six when Facunda Zeledón, my first grade teacher at Ruben Dario, would read lines from José Martí's work with zeal. *(Editors' note: you may remember Facunda from her two visits to Olympia, most recently in 2006).* From then on, poetry became my reason for living,

plunging into reading that was a bit complicated for the mind of a child, but it served to shape my education and heal the traumas of my childhood that caused me so much misery. I have six unpublished works, which include three of poetry, my autobiography, the second volume of the history of Santo Tomás and an anthology of poets who took their own lives in the Americas.

I have been making a living through work in the countryside for three years, with some earnings from teaching on weekends at Martin Luther University on Saturdays and the accelerated high school on Sundays. My contact with the country

helps me understand the campesino, the poorest families, to understand ourselves more.

I am also involved with a project called Ecological and Adventure Hikes, organized by the Movement for Culture and the Environment. The project springs from seeing the bad management of cultivated land, the fires (to clear fields), the deforestation to extend the agricultural frontiers, and the lack of consciousness for caring for our environment. We promote caring for the little flora and fauna that is left, through environmental education that also includes sports and adventures. We want our young people to discover for themselves the treasures of our native soil on which we walk, and value the importance of its conservation. ♦

I discovered my calling to teach in those classrooms, sharing history with these young people and seeing their fascination

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DJ Bernys José Ramos Sánchez

My name is Bernys José Ramos Sánchez; I was born in the city of Santo Tomás, Chontales, Nicaragua on October 31, 1978. I am from a poor family. For a long time, we lived in my grandmother Filomena's home in the neighborhood called Sandino. It was with her that I spent the majority of my time as a child since my father, José Ángel Ramos Sánchez, was in the Sandinista Army, and my mother, Ana María Sánchez López, worked all day as a housecleaner. I had the opportunity, with my four brothers and sisters, to go eat at the Children's Free Lunch Kitchen for many years. (*This program is supported by the CDC, our sister organization*).

In 1990 when the Sandinistas lost the elections, the army was reduced in size because the [Contra] war had ended. My father returned to civilian life and decided to start a small carpentry shop; I learned much about furniture-making. I liked that experience a lot.

At 16, I joined the ranks of the Sandinista Youth movement in Santo Tomás. The activities and opportunity to develop political understanding caught my atten-

tion. I graduated from the high school "Instituto Nacional Autónomo Santo Tomás" in 1997, the same year I decided to apply to join the Committee for Community Development (CDC). I was inspired by seeing the work and selfless service to society to which my mom and Doña Aurora dedicated themselves, daily giving a large part of their lives to working for children and women with even fewer resources than our families. They have been my inspiration to join the CDC and I have been involved for over 10 years now.

I began working with the Supreme Electoral Council as a technician in Santo Tomás, Chontales in the 2000 electoral season; it was a great experience for me and I enjoyed being inside the process, knowing the procedures during the elections as well as working with voter registration. Since then, I have participated in all of the elections in our country.

Currently, I am a student at the National Autonomous University pursuing an undergraduate degree in commercial accounting; I am in my 2nd

Hola Amigos de Olympia!

Mi nombre es Bernys José Ramos Sánchez; yo nací en la ciudad de Santo Tomás, del departamento de Chontales, Nicaragua el 31 de octubre de 1978. Soy de una familia muy pobre. Durante mucho tiempo vivimos en casa de mi abuela Filomena en el barrio Sandino, y fue con ella que pasé la mayoría de mi tiempo siendo un niño porque mi papá, José Ángel Ramos Sánchez, pertenecía al Ejército Popular Sandinista y mi mamá, Ana María Sánchez López, trabajaba todo el día de afanadora (limpieza). Tuve la oportunidad, con mis cuatro hermanos, de ir a comer aunque fuera una vez al día al Comedor Infantil durante muchos años.

En 1990 cuando el FSLN perdió las elecciones, el ejército se redujo porque la guerra había acabado. Mi padre se retiró y pasó a la vida civil y decidió empezar un pequeño taller de carpintería, yo aprendí mucho sobre muebles madera. Me gustó mucho esa experiencia.

A la edad de 16 años ingresé a las filas de la Juventud Sandinista del municipio de Santo Tomás. Me llamaba la atención

las actividades y el aprendizaje político. Me bachillé de la secundaria Instituto Nacional Autónomo Santo Tomás en 1997, el mismo año que decidí solicitar el ingreso al Comité para el Desarrollo Comunal (CDC). Fui inspirado de ver el trabajo y una abnegado servicio hacia la sociedad que en su momento

I was inspired by seeing the work and selfless service to society to which my mom and Doña Aurora dedicated themselves

realizaron mi mamá y Aurora que día a día dieron gran parte de su vida al trabajo por los niños y las mujeres de mucho más escasos recursos que nuestras familias, ellas fueron mi inspiración para ingresar a esta organización CDC y hoy tengo mas de diez años de pertenecer a ésta.

Ingresé a trabajar en el Consejo Supremo Electoral como técnico de asuntos electorales en Santo Tomás, Chontales en

year.

I work with the government on a new literacy program called "Yes I can!" which is being coordinated by the Ministry of Education. It's a project in the social arena that teaches reading and writing to people who were never able to go to school for a variety of socio-economic reasons. This is a very important project for the development of the people and our country and that's why I like this work so much. It would be great to meet people in Olympia who might be interested in supporting this project.

Also, as many from Olympia who have been to Santo Tomás already know, I am a DJ, I have a business and own my own equipment. This is a kind of work that I like a lot! I have always loved music even though I don't play an instrument. I do like to mix music/spin tunes no matter what kind. I would really like to connect with another DJ while in Olympia. (Bernys will DJ a big dance party on May 10, starting at 7:30 p.m. at 525 Cherry in the old K Records space!)

I have a daughter named Kelli Naomi and a son named Jefferson José; they are both 9 years old. ♦



el año 2000 durante el periodo electoral de esa época fue una experiencia muy buena para mi y me gustó mucho estar muy de cerca

en ese proceso electoral y conocer todo los procedimientos en materia electoral y de cedulación (identificación ciudadana), desde entonces he participado en todos los procesos electorales que han ocurridos en nuestro país.

Actualmente estoy estudiando en la Universidad Autónoma de Nicaragua (UNAN) la carrera de Licenciatura en Contabilidad Comercial, 2do año.

Trabajo en el gobierno en el proyecto de Alfabetización "Yo Si Puedo" que se está ejecutando desde el Ministerio de Educación (MINED), es un proyecto que tiene que ver mucho en el campo social ya que enseña a leer y escribir a aquellas personas que nunca pudieron ir a una escuela por diferentes razones como económicas sociales etc, es un proyecto muy importante

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Griselda Escobar. . .

My name is Griselda Escobar. I was born on October 1, 1970, in Santo Tomás, located in the department of Chontales. I am the eighth of nine children. My mother worked in the home and my father worked for other people taking care of their farms and doing carpentry and masonry. When I was three, one of my older sisters took on the responsibility of caring for me; my mother began to work outside of home. I began my studies at age seven at the only grade school in town, where I had beautiful experiences and some sad ones too. I remember one teacher who never yelled at us; she educated with love. A sad experience was being hit on the hand by another teacher who insisted I learn

Yo veía como éstas personas tenían como una sed de aprender, la cual cambiaría su vida

to write with my right hand, something I couldn't do. She flunked me and made me repeat the year for being left-handed, which I will never understand. Well, today I write and do many activities with my left hand. I also always strive for children to be educated with love and understanding.

When I was 15 -years-old, the Sandinista government established a national literacy program. I worked as a volunteer

and began teaching literacy to men and women who did not know how to read nor write. I am certain that this was the mo-



...Educadora y Campeón de Derechos para los Niños

Mi nombre es Griselda Escobar. Nací el primero de octubre de 1970, en Santo Tomás, ubicada en el departamento de Chontales. Soy la hija número 8 de 9 hijos. Mi mamá se dedicaba a los oficios de la casa, y mi padre trabajaba a personas que necesitaban, cuidándoles pequeñas fincas, y pequeños trabajos de carpintería y albañil. A la edad de 3 años unas de mis hermanas mayor se hizo cargo de cuidarme, ya que mamá comenzó a trabajar fuera de la casa. A los 7 años me pusieron a estudiar en la única escuela que había en el pueblo, donde recuerdo bonitas experiencias y algunas tristes también. Recuerdo una profesora quien nunca nos gritó; nos educaba con amor. La triste experiencia es por ser zurda, otra profesora me pegaba en la mano y me exigía aprender a escribir con la mano derecha, algo que nunca pude. No pasé el grado y me quedé a repetir por ser zurda, algo que nunca comprendí. Pues, ya escribo y todas mis actividades las desarrollo con la mano izquierda. También, siempre busco que los niños sean educados con amor y comprensión.

Cuando tenía 15 años, el gobierno Sandinista estableció un programa nacional de alfabetización. En esa época, de forma voluntaria, comencé alfabetizar a señores y señoras que no sabían ni leer ni escribir. Estoy casi segura que en ese momento se

despertó en mí algo muy bonito como ayudar y enseñar a los demás. Recuerdo a una señora de unos 70 años para entonces, su nombre era Victoria. Era humilde y alegre para conversar. Aprendió a dibujar las letras y se sentía muy feliz de poder expresar de forma escrita lo que sentía. Su esposo se llamaba Lolo, y todos los días pasaba toda la hora de clase escribiendo la misma oración que decía "*Lolo es mi amor*". Aprendió leer y escribir otras cosas también, pero esta oración es la que la motivaba para estudiar. Yo veía como éstas personas tenían como una sed de aprender, la cual cambiaría su vida; era algo especial para ellos. Sentirme parte de ese logro era emocionante.

En 1987, cuando tenía 17 años tuve mi primer hijo y inicié como maestra de primer grado en la Escuela Freddy López, nombrada en honor a un jovencito que murió en la guerra luchando por la libertad del país. La escuela tenía solo 4 aulas, y las familias eran muy pobrecitos, pero valoraban la educación para sus hijos. El siguiente año me trasladaron a la escuela que se llamaba Javier Guerra Báez, la escuela que ahora se llama Rubén Darío, que hoy tiene una escuela hermana en Olympia "Lincoln Elementary."

Me bachilleré de la secundaria en 1989.

ment that something beautiful was awakened inside me of how to help and teach others. I remember one woman named Victoria, who at the time was 70 years old. She was humble, and fun to talk with. She learned to write, and she felt very happy to be able to express her feelings in written form. Her husband's name was Lolo, and every day, she would spend the whole hour writing the same sentence, "*Lolo is my love*". She learned to read and write more than this one sentence, but it was this sentence that motivated her to study. I saw how these people had a sort of thirst for learning, which would change their lives; that this was very special for them. To be part of this transformation was thrilling for me.

In 1987, when I was 17 years old, I had my first child and began teaching first grade at a school called "Freddy Lopez", named in honor of a young man who died in the war of liberation for the country. The school had only four classrooms. The families were very poor, but they valued education for their children. The next

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En 1990, obtuve el título de Maestra de Educación Primaria, para entonces ya tenía 3 años de dar clases. En el mismo año, tuve mi segundo hijo. Permítame a presentar a mis tres lindos hijos: Jorge Luís de 20 años, actualmente va iniciar el segundo año de Medicina, estudia en una Universidad en Cuba, me le dieron una beca. Giovanni de 17 años va iniciar su primer año en Medicina Veterinaria. Elioth de 13 años va para tercer año de secundaria, él aún estudiará aquí en el municipio. Les tengo mucho orgullo.

Obtuve mi título de Licenciada en Contaduría Pública y Finanzas en 1998 en la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua (UNAN) ubicada en Juigalpa Chontales. También realicé algunos pequeños estudios de Computación, Gerencia Social, y preparación para Educación Superior (para dar clases en la Universidad). Tengo tres años de ser docente de la Universidad Martín Lútero.

En septiembre del 2006, tomé el cargo como directora de Rubén Darío. Pido a Dios cada día por guiarme mejorar la situación de los 420 estudiantes que asisten al centro. Todo lo que haga es para aquellos

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The Levine/Johnson Family Connects with the Segura Guerrero Family

By Audrey Levine

Audrey is a licensed midwife who traveled with her family on a community delegation to Santo Tomás in July 2007. She lives with her husband Nels and children, Harry and Silas, in Olympia.

My husband Nels and I had been aware of the connection between Olympia and Santo Tomás for several years because both of our kids had gone to Lincoln Elementary School, which has had a long-standing sister-school relationship with Ruben Dario. But it wasn't until we attended TSTSCA's 15th anniversary celebration in 2003, where we were deeply moved by Carol Burns's film *Know Our People/Conocer a Nuestra Gente*, that we began to consider seriously the idea of going to Nicaragua as part of a community delegation.

For a couple years, we remained on the periphery of the organization. Then, during the spring delegation of 2006, we were fortunate enough to host Facunda Zeledón, a second-grade teacher and former principal at Ruben Darío, in our home.

It was a delight having Facunda stay with us. She has a lovely, warm and engaging spirit, and despite the language barrier—or maybe because of it—we managed to laugh a lot during those three weeks.

We also got to spend a good deal of time with the other members of the delegation, Rosa Aura Segura and Dr. María Salvadora. The connections we formed with each of these three wonderful women were the seeds from which our trip to Santo Tomás in July 2007 grew.

From the moment we arrived at the home of the Segura-Guerrero family in Santo Tomás, we were immediately embraced, clearly the beneficiaries of all the affection that has accumulated between our two communities over the past 19 years. It was really just amazing. Within minutes, literally, our kids were playing cards with Efraín and Rosa's children and grandchildren.

Our transition into the Segura-Guerrero household was smoothed immeasurably by

the presence of Dr. Diane Dakin and her son, Joel, from Olympia who were visiting Santo Tomás for the third time. In the week they were there, they provided explanations of mealtime rituals, instructions for bathing, advice about culturally appropriate behavior—and Diane's Spanish skills came in very handy.

Because the electricity would go out for hours at a time in the evenings, we often sat together with Efraín and Rosita—in the



Harry and Silas of Olympia hanging out in Santo Tomás with Joel and Danner, grandchildren of the Segura-Guerreros.

beautiful wooden rocking chairs that Efraín had built himself—and told jokes in Spanish. These were some of our most satisfying and memorable exchanges. Laughter truly is the universal language. On many evenings members of the extended family, neighbors, and other Tomasinos dropped in, and chairs would line both walls of the main room and go right out the door, filled with people talking, getting acquainted, or reacquainted.

After a day or two of settling in, we began to visit the various projects that have been developed over the years with support from TSTSCA and Lincoln Elementary.

The morning we visited Ruben Darío it rained buckets. This made for a sloppy walk through the muddy streets, but it also meant we got to see the students enjoying the full benefit of the new roof over the play area that was built with support from Lincoln. We visited each classroom and introduced ourselves to the students, and had an opportunity to talk with the principal and teachers.

Later we wound up at the Nica-Mol where we met with the juvenes, a vibrant group of youth who are engaged in a variety of social service projects. We wound up there often—sometimes to meet with the rest of the delegation at the CDC office in the back or to attend a function with the juvenes, and frequently just to let Harry and Silas play games and hang out with the local kids. As with card playing, the kids seemed able to communicate quite well through the medium of pool and ping pong.

After settling in, Audrey started spending most of her day at the Clínica Popular. She hung out with the doctors, nurses and other care givers at the clinic, assisted with a few prenatal visits, watched a couple of minor surgical procedures, and waited for the births that she was assured would occur during our visit. Audrey shared stories and photos from her home birth midwifery practice. Amazingly, there was not one birth in Santo Tomás the whole time we were there. Nevertheless, she had a wonderful time exchanging information with the clinic staff.

After taking some great hikes and tours of the town with Harry and Silas and various members of the Segura-Guerrero family, Nels set up a series of informational meetings with local legal practitioners, to learn more about the differences between the U.S. and Nicaraguan legal systems. He spoke with a young attorney at the Mayor's office, a local judge, and others; and also with Mixi, Efraín and Rosita's granddaughter, who is currently studying law, and with her brother Kilyer about his ambition to attend law school like his sister.

Between trips to visit projects, clinic shifts and visits with legal practitioners, we spent a lot of time with Rosita and Efraín, their son Freddy, grandson Kilyer, his wife Ibane and their one year old daughter, Kilbana, and many others in the extended family. In addition to telling jokes, we had numerous substantive discussions, about the disparity in wealth between our countries, life in Nicaragua before and after the revolution, the problems with water and power provision in Nicaragua.

As time passed, our Spanish improved,

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Gladys

From page 7

tory for all full time students, and also for people working in the health care sector, so I participated in two tours: one through my work and another as a student. My job was to teach literacy in an area of the countryside outside of the town of Dolores. To get there, I traveled 10 kilometers daily by foot, around five in the evening, accompanied by my 10-year-old son. My job was to teach reading and writing to twelve adults and three children. This experience was unforgettable. It was so lovely at the end to hear one of my students reading a speech that he himself had written, when barely six months prior he had not even known what a spelling book was. Through all of these activities that I've been part of, I decided to become a member of the Committee for Community Development (CDC) 12 years ago.

Were I to be born again and asked what career I wanted, I would again choose nursing.

I am married to a dairy farmer and we have seven children (three are ours and we raised four others). Ever since I graduated and started working, helping my family has been my first calling; that's why I have so many kids. I've been retired for four years, but now I am coordinating the Economic Project, the Farm Project "Rebirth" and I am the secretary of the CDC. The Economic Project, or Microcredit project, is focused on small agricultural producers who are not given opportunities for credit because of their limited economic ability. I do all this to help the parts of the community with the most problems. As a Nicaraguan, the hope for the future of our people is for integrated development in cooperation with all citizens and that Nicaragua will someday be free, sovereign, independent; free of the disease that is annihilating her: *poverty*. I hope to see you soon! ♦

Enfermera

De la página 7

mayores y tres niños. Esta experiencia se hace inolvidable. Fue muy lindo al final, escuchar a uno de mis alumnos, leyendo un discurso escrito por él mismo, cuando hacía apenas seis meses ni sabía lo que era una cartilla. Por todas esas actividades que he realizado en mi vida es que decidí ser miembro del Comité para el Desarrollo Comunal (CDC) hace 12 años.

Estoy casada con un ganadero de Santo Tomás y tenemos siete hijos (tres nuestros y cuatro de crianza). Desde que me gradué y empecé a trabajar, ayudar a mi familia fue mi primer objetivo, por eso

tengo "tantos hijos". Actualmente soy jubilada desde hace 4 años. Ahora estoy coordinando el Proyecto Económico y el Proyecto Huerto Renacer, y soy la Secretaria del CDC (durante tres períodos). El Proyecto Económico o de Microcrédito, está enfocado hacia el pequeño productor, que por sus condiciones de limitación económica no es sujeto de crédito. Lo hago para ayudar a la comunidad con más problemas del municipio. Como nicaragüense, las esperanzas sobre el futuro del nuestro pueblo es que se desarrolle integralmente con el concurso de todos los habitantes y que Nicaragua sea algún día, libre, soberana, independiente; libre de esa enfermedad que la está aniquilando: *La pobreza*. Espero verles pronto!

Wilfredo

De la página 8

en el 2006). Desde entonces la poesía se convirtió en mi primera razón de vivir, zambulléndome en lecturas un poco complicadas para la mente de un niño, pero ello sirvió para desarrollar mi actual formación y sanar los traumas de infante y joven que hacían sangrar mi existencia. Actualmente poseo seis obras inéditas, entre poesías (tres poemarios), autobiografía, historia de Santo Tomás (segundo volumen) y una antología de poetas suicidas de América.

Tengo tres años de vivir del trabajo del campo, aunque con participación en las aulas educativas, especialmente en la Universidad Martín Lutero, todos los sábados y los domingos en un Instituto de secundaria acelerada. Mi contacto con el campo me ayuda a entender al campesino, a las familias más pobres, a entendernos a nosotros mismos. Este año vuelvo a los trabajos diarios de las aulas secundarias.

También trabajo con un proyecto llamado Caminatas Ecológicas y de Aventuras, organizado por el Movimiento Cultural y Medio Ambientalista. El proyecto nace de ver el mal manejo de la tierra para el cultivo, las quemadas, la deforestación para extender las fronteras agropecuarias, la inexistencia de una conciencia de cuidado por nuestro medio ambiente. Promovemos el cuidado de la poca flora y fauna aún viva, a través de una educación ambiental que también incluye juego deportivo y la aventura. Queremos que nuestros jóvenes descubran por ellos mismos los tesoros del terruño que pisamos, y valoren de esa manera la importancia de su conservación. ♦



defines this generation of politics and our work for human justice. Unlike the one-way directionality of material aid moving from North to South, and unlike the military and economic domination that placed Nicaragua under its thumb, the answer to our global predicament will not originate in the United States. Activists such as myself must accept our vulnerability. And accept the water when it is offered. ♦

Flooding

From page 3

Last summer, with a grant from the mayor's office, my host family in Santo Tomás was able to deepen, seal and place a pump on an old well. As is true for many parts of the world, the dry season in Santo

Tomás is, every year, stretching on longer and water is more scarce. This too is an effect of climate change. My host sister Normantina told me that her mother shares the water with the neighbors throughout the dry months. She believes that if the water isn't shared in times of need the well will go dry.

The more I think about it I come to the conclusion that it will be water, not oil that

Families

From page 11

and we were able to have better, more engaging conversations. Efraín made his signature pizza—which he and Kilyer sell in town and on the bus to the nearby larger city of Juigalpa—many nights for supper, as well as a lot of other good food. Audrey got a lesson in tortilla making, and Nels baked chocolate-chip cookies, using chopped-up candy bars, which everyone seemed to enjoy.

One of the strongest impressions we came away with was of the kindness and resilience of the Tomasinos. People were generous and welcoming, and seemed to genuinely want us to have a good time and get to know them, their town, and their country. People



were eager to share their stories and invite us into their homes and workplaces. We heard about the kind of struggles people went through under the Somoza regime, and during the Contra war. We saw how hard people work in their jobs and in their daily lives. We listened to the recollections of the older folks, and the aspirations of the juvenes and the younger members of the Segura-Guerrero family.

By the end, we felt an ease and connection with our family and many others in the town that made it feel really good to be there, and sad and difficult to leave. At the bus stop on the morning we left, we were pretty much all crying and hugging one another. It was clear by then that we would stay connected to our family and to Santo Tomás, and that we'll return. ♦

DJ Bernys

De la página 9

para el desarrollo de la población y el país y por eso me gusta mucho y sería bueno conocer a alguien en Olympia interesado en apoyar este tipo de proyecto.

También, como muchos de Olympia que han ido a Santo Tomás saben, tengo una Disco Móvil (DJ). Es un trabajo que me gusta mucho. Siempre la música me gustaba mucho, aunque no toco ningún instrumento, pero si me gusta mezclar música no importa cual sea me encanta, pero sí me gustaría aprender a tocar guitarra y si no fuera mucha molestia me gustaría conocer a alguien que sea DJ en Olympia. (Vengan a ver DJ Bernys durante un baile tremende el 10 de mayo a las 7:30 p.m. en 525 Cherry en el espacio antiguo de K Records).

Tengo una niña quien se llama Kelli Naomi y un niño quien se llama Jefferson José, de 9 años ambos. ♦

Water crisis

From page 6

cheese manufacturing, and cattle ranching upstream of Santo Tomás that the water is not safe to drink. The Nicaraguan government has environmental laws on the books, but doesn't have the resources to clean up the river. So for now the Alcalde and his staff are pursuing plans to expand existing reservoirs to extend the water supply through the dry season.

We have an extraordinary opportunity to hear directly from Gladys during her stay in Thurston County this April about the water crisis in Nicaragua. In addition, Wilfredo Espinoza, another of the delegates, is working on an environmental education



Back row: Paul, Audrey, Nels, Petrika, Grace, Karin, Rosaura, Kaytlyn, Fatima, unknown tomasino, Harry; front row: Delvin, unknown tomasina, Yesser, Emily, Kinderline.

project in and around Santo Tomás. Along with their personal stories I plan to share pictures from my visit showing some of the community's water challenges and natural areas that are part of Wilfredo's work.

The first presentation will be at The Evergreen State College Seminar II Building, Room E 1105 on Tuesday, April 29 from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. The second presentation will be on Wednesday, April 30 from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. at the Department of Ecology, 300 Desmond Drive in Lacey off Martin Way across from Top Foods. For details, please call Paul at (360) 943-5791 or email earthwater@gmail.com

The evergreen forests of Thurston County and the tropical savannah of Nicaragua: watersheds a world apart.

Whether it's called *agua* or water, restoration or *restauración*, this work is desperately needed and valued by both communities. ♦

Griselda...

From page 12

year, I was moved to a school named "Javier Guerra Báez", which is now called Rubén Darío and has a sister school in Olympia: Lincoln Elementary.

I graduated from high school in 1989. In 1990, I became a certified teacher; by that time, I had been teaching for three years. That same year, I had my second child. Allow me to introduce my three fine children: Jorge Luis is 20 and about to start his second year of medical school at the University of Cuba, on a scholarship. Giovanni is 17 years old and about to start her first year of veterinary medicine. Elioth is 13 and entering his third year of high school here in Santo Tomás. I am very proud of them all.

In 1998, I earned a degree in Public Accounting and Finances at the National Autonomous University in Juigalpa, Chontales. I also took courses in computer applications, management, and higher education theory for teaching the teachers. I

...Educadora y Campeón

De la página 12

que más me necesitan como son esos chiquitos que tienen esperanzas. Algunos, aún a su corta edad, la han perdido, pero hay que dárselas a cada momento.

Aunque el gobierno tiene proyectos para mejorar la vida de los pobres, es difícil que a corto plazo mejore la situación de los niños. Muchos de los gobiernos se proyectan tanto, pero me parece que no ve las miradas tristes de los niños, no se han acercado a hablar con aquellos que se acuestan en las noches sin comer y se levantan sin saber que tienen para ese día.

Con el cambio reciente de gobierno nacional ha beneficiado, al menos el gobierno lucha por una educación de calidad y gratuita. Se hace énfasis en la alimentación escolar, y



have been teaching for three years at Martín Luther University.

In September of 2006, I accepted a position as the Director at Rubén Darío. I ask God every day to help guide me to improve the situation of the school's 420 students. Everything I do is for those who

Everything I do is for those who need me the most, like these little ones who have hopes. Some, at their young age, have lost their hopes but we can help them find them.

find them.

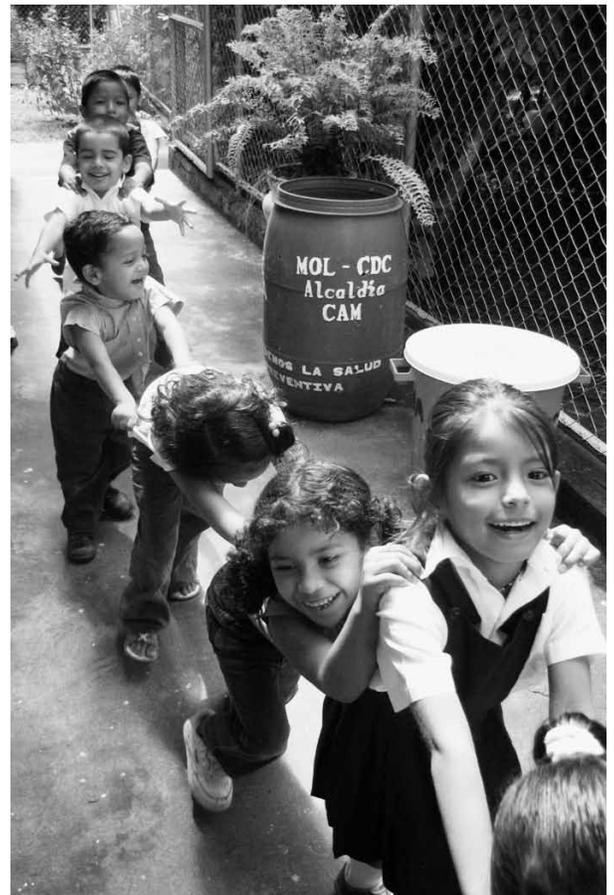
Though the government has projects to better the lives of the poor, it's difficult in the short term to improve the situation of children. Many governments have projected changes, but it seems to me that they haven't seen the sad glances of the children, they haven't come close enough to talk with those who go to sleep at night without eating and who get up without knowing what they have for the next day.

With the recent change in national government, there is at least an effort toward free, quality public education.

need me the most, like these little ones who have hopes. Some, at their young age, have lost their hopes but we can help them

The government is emphasizing school nutrition, and in December Rubén Darío was painted and repairs were made. The greatest needs of the students at Rubén Darío include school supplies, which many children don't have the resources to buy; technological equipment to better support learning; improvements to the library; and support for projects that employ parents so that their children have more time to study instead of working themselves.

We have greatly benefited from the sister school relationship that Rubén Darío has with Lincoln Elementary. I am happy to visit Olympia and share experiences. I hope to learn, and upon returning to my country, put that learning in practice and use my experiences to increase the quality of life here. ♦



Children play near a barrel of water outside the pre-school of the Pancasán Neighborhood in Santo Tomás.

en el mes diciembre pintaron toda la escuela y hicieron algunas reparaciones. Las necesidades más grandes de los estudiantes de la escuela Rubén Darío son obtener materiales escolares, ya que muchos no tienen recurso para comprarlos; algunos equipos tecnológicos para un mejor aprendizaje; mejoramientos a la biblioteca; y apoyo en proyectos donde los padres puedan emplearse para que los niños tengan más tiempo de estudio en vez de estar trabajando ellos.

Hemos beneficiado mucho de la relación de hermandad entre Rubén

Darío y la escuela Lincoln. Estoy feliz por visitar Olympia para compartir experiencia. Espero aprender y venir a mi país a poner en práctica lo aprendido, y ayudar aquí con mi experiencia para tener una mejor calidad de vida. ♦

9th Delegation from Santo Tomás, Nicaragua

April 23 – May 13

Calendar of Events

Please come help us welcome our visitors at these public events!

Procession of the Species

Saturday, April 26 at 4:30 p.m.

Join us during Procession at Capitol Way in downtown Olympia, on the Sylvester Park side. We'll be with our visitors from the tropics who may be wearing heavy winter coats!

Mount Rainier

Sunday, April 27 at 8:30 a.m.

Come with us—weather permitting—for a day of wonder, snow and sledding, departing Olympia at 8:30 a.m. Call by April 20 to reserve space. *For more information: Jean Eberhardt (360) 943-8642.*

“Cuando Venga La Paz— When Peace Comes”

Friday May 2 at 6:30 p.m.

Join our potluck dinner with the Santo Tomás community delegation and hear perspectives on our sister county in Nicaragua. Great family event! In Saint John's Episcopal Church on Capitol Way and 20th Street, Olympia. *For more information: Jean Eberhardt (360) 943-8642.*

Poetry and more!

Monday, May 5 at 7:00 p.m.

Artists Look South, a project of Olympia area artists, will highlight an evening of poetry by delegate Wilfredo Espinoza, along with Maritza Sanchez of Mujeres in Motion. In the Mixx 96 meeting room on the corner of State and Washington in Olympia; donations welcome. *For more information: Lee Miller (360) 753-0942.*

Carbon Footprints: Santo Tomás and Olympia

Thursday, May 8 at 6 p.m.

Explore climate change and sustainability issues with Climate Solutions and the delegates from Nicaragua. Great family event! Traditions Café at 5th and Water Street in downtown Olympia. *For more information: Beth Doglio (360) 570-8804.*

See the calendar listing for the Dance Party, Baile los dos Pueblos, Saturday May 10, on the back cover!

Also, see page 13 for details on two community presentations (April 29 and April 30) about the water crisis in Nicaragua.

.....
• **I support the self-empowerment projects and goals of TSTSCA...**

• My contribution is enclosed:

- \$5. Basic, limited resources
- \$15. Individual, help us defray newsletter costs
- \$25. Family contribution
- \$50. Help sustain this organization
- \$___ A monthly pledge to support this specific project: _____

• I am interested in going to Nicaragua with a delegation or on the TESC student trip

• I want to volunteer with TSTSCA. Please send me more information.

• These are my skills or interests: _____

• Name: _____

• Address: _____

• Phone: _____

• **Donations are tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to:**

• TSTSCA
 • PO Box 561
 • Olympia, WA 98507
 • Phone: (360) 943-8642

Baile Los Dos Pueblos:

Salsa, Merengue,
Reggaeton, y Pop
Saturday, May 10
7:30 p.m.

Shake it with D.J. Bernys
from Santo Tomás &
Olympia's own D.J. Dalya!

Come for salsa and meren-
gue lessons at 7:30...

Practice your new moves
or bring your own at 9:00.

\$10 with lessons,
\$7 from 9:00 on.

In the old K-Records space
across from Fish Brew Pub in
downtown Olympia

(Enter at 525 Cherry Street
near Legion Way)



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Inside:

- ▶ Meet our four visitors from Santo Tomás!
April 13-May 23
- ▶ Flooding, North and South
- ▶ Reflections from
Delegation to Santo Tomás