



'The very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.'

— William Shakespeare

## CAMPUS NOTES

### Rotary Scholarship workshop to be held

Fellowships and Summer Programs will offer a workshop for the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship. To find out more about this foreign study opportunity, come to the Gressette Room at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday.

### Outreach to call prospective students

Carolina Outreach will call students on selected Tuesdays during the spring semester. From 5:15 to 7:15 p.m. Tuesday and Feb. 29 at Lieber College, students can telephone prospective USC students.

### Clothesline sponsors painting sessions

Clothesline T-shirt painting sessions will be from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday. Sessions will be held in Patterson Hall's Garrison Room and in the Bates West classroom. For more information, call Sexual Health Programs and Sexual Assault Services at 777-7619 or 777-8248. Everyone is welcome. T-shirts and paints are provided.

### Workshop to be held on perfectionism

The second session of a perfectionism workshop will be offered from 3 to 5 p.m. Thursday. The workshop will identify the varieties of perfectionism, especially those prevalent on the college campus, and how to recover from the relentless, exhausting way of life.

### Traditional dancing comes to Gallery 701

Traditional dancing from New England with caller Craig Whitehead and live music by Laurie Fisher and Karen Delgado Gaughn will be Saturday from 8-11 p.m. at Gallery 701, 701 Whaley St. There will be a dancing workshop at 7:30 p.m. for new dancers. All dances will be taught, and partners aren't necessary. For more information, call Columbia Traditional Music and Dance at 796-8935.

### Seminar to teach authentic meditation

Authorized representatives of Sant Thaker Singh will offer instruction in meditation on the inner light and sound at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the Russell House and at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Richland County Library. This meditation can be learned by anyone, regardless of faith. For more information, call 1-877-MEDITATE or check out the group's Web site at <http://www.santmat.net/>.

### Police training course offered to Columbians

A free 10-week course is being offered to Columbia residents. Participants receive a graduation certificate and are eligible to participate in a 10-hour elective ride-along program, which offers observation of police work under actual working conditions with an officer. The class will begin March 7 and end May 9. Call the Columbia Police Training Department at 733-8399.

### Ambassadors accept new members

University Ambassadors is accepting new members. Pick up applications at the Visitor's Center from Feb. 24 until March 1. Applications are due at the center by 5 p.m. March 1. For more information, call 777-0169 or e-mail [sarahjones@sc.edu](mailto:sarahjones@sc.edu).

### Nutrition, exercise information available

Nutrition and exercise consultations, body-fat percentage estimations, blood pressure readings and more are offered by peer health educators in the Open Door Drop-in Center from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday at Health and Wellness Programs in the Student Health Center basement. For more information, call 777-8248.

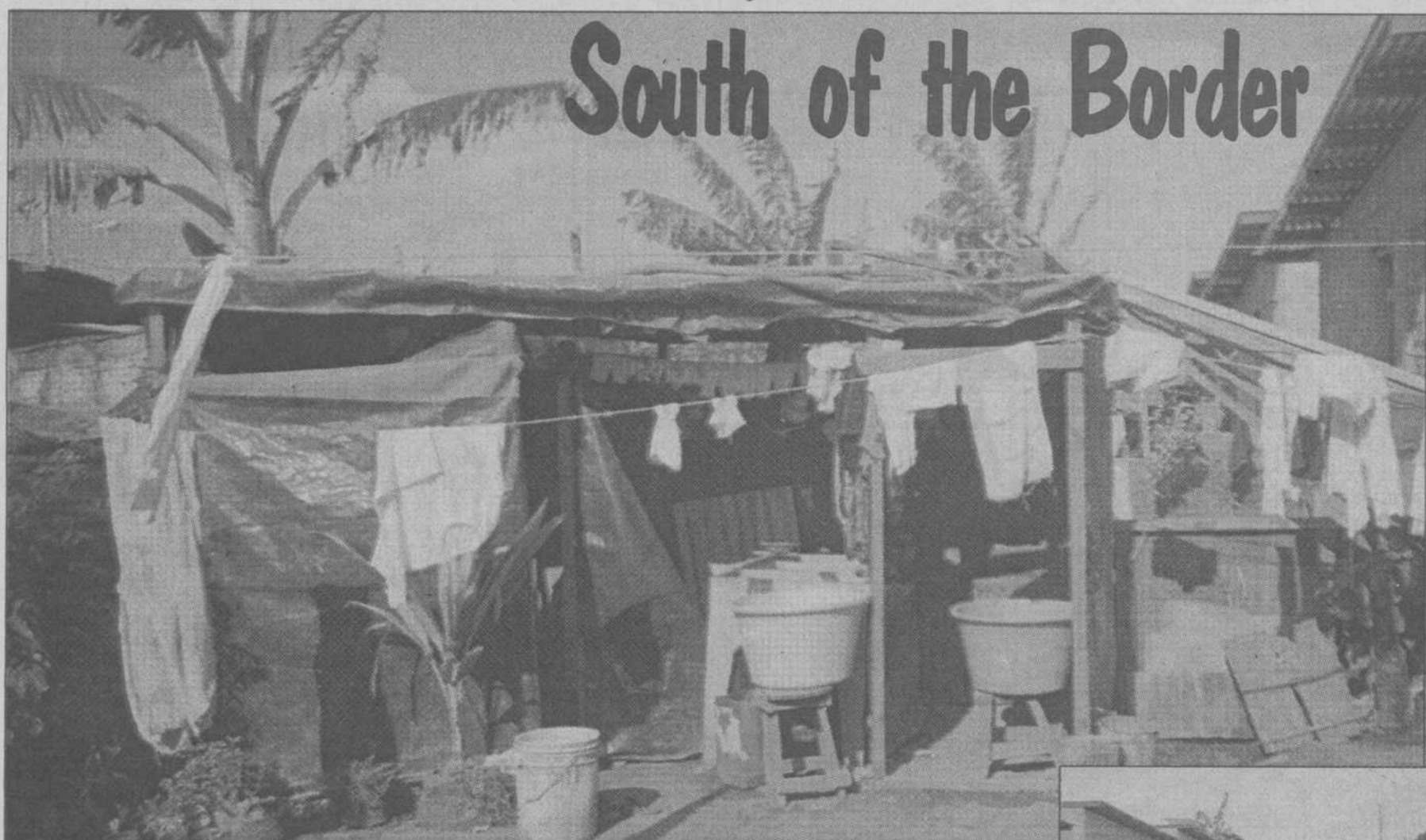
### Applications available for advocate award

Nominate any member of the USC Columbia community who has made a positive impact on your freshman year for the Outstanding Freshman Advocate Award. Professors, advisers, resident advisers, student leaders and staff are eligible. Applications are available in the Student Government office, the Russell House Information Center, the University 101 office, or through freshman English classes.

### CORRECTIONS

The Gamecock strives to report the facts correctly and responsibly. If you come across any inaccuracies in our reportage, please let us know.

# South of the Border



Left: The backyard of a home in Nueva Vida.

Below: Two students from Winthrop University walk to their work site in Nueva Vida.

## Twenty students and faculty spend a week of work and travel in Central America

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KRISTIN FREESTATE COPY DESK CHIEF

In all my life, I never expected to spend the last week of Christmas vacation digging latrines in the Southern Hemisphere. Mom finally gave the trip her blessing after the Y2K non-disaster, and two days later, I was in a plane with 20 other students and faculty members from USC, Winthrop University, Columbia College and the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

We lived in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua, for a week, volunteering at the Jubilee House Community, an ecumenical Christian community that served the area. That's nearly 30 people altogether, sharing all meals, five bathrooms and concerns about malaria. The atmosphere: friendly. The task: to dig 20-foot latrines for local families whose latrines didn't meet Health Ministry standards.

Armed with pikes, shovels, buckets and varying degrees of Spanish fluency, we set to work for about 10 of the more than 1,300 families in the area of Nueva Vida. Nueva Vida ("New Life") is a community where the government relocated families whose homes were destroyed by Hurricane Mitch. The streets were dusty, and families of up to 12 lived in one-room pavement-block houses that were a little less than 20 feet by 20 feet.

The work days began in layers. We awoke around 7 a.m. every day to the sound of a rooster that, toward the end of the week, we thought would make an excellent dinner entree. Then, we would

crawl out from under the sheets of our bunk beds, dress, and put on the sunscreen, the bug spray, the gloves. The first night that we arrived in the airport, we were driven to our new home in a small bus that had been donated to the Jubilee House from a church in Maryville, Tenn. The driver swerved back and forth over the dirt road that branched off the paved road and led to the house. At the time, I thought he was avoiding potholes; the next morning, we saw that he was also driving around the piles of trash in the road.

The country is poor, and the idea of trash pickup doesn't exist. Instead, the people bring their trash to centrally located dumpsters and then, when the dumpsters overflow, leave the rest in the streets. Often, they would burn the paper trash to be rid of it, but it was nonetheless common to see mothers or children picking through the trash heaps for anything they could use.

We split the trip between working and touring. On work days, we paired off and spent the day in a hole in people's backyards, speaking with the families as best we could as we deepened the holes foot by foot. Generally, it took at least an hour to dig a foot, and the work became more challenging the deeper we dug.

I'd never seen the world from a mole's eye-view until this trip.

As the holes got deeper, we'd lower each other in with rope or a ladder and then work as long as we could. It was summer in Nicaragua and the sun was bright, so we had to take frequent breaks to drink water. Although it might have seemed hot above-

ground, it proved to be even more so below. Most of the holes were about 39 inches square, and we worked inside with all the tools, digging the earth that we weren't standing on, sweating profusely for the lack of wind. The earth itself was cool, even damp, but it held in the heat.

At the end of the day, we gathered at the bus. As we waited for

the other groups, we had more of a chance to visit with the people in the community. The children were especially excited to have North American visitors, and they would run up and hug us, hold our hands or pull on our shirt sleeves until we took a picture of them.

The pictures showed children not unlike those in the United States, with tangled hair, smiling faces, bright eyes — but often wearing clothes that, while clean, were worn or faded. Some of the children were naked, many were barefoot and a fair number of them suffered from swollen bellies caused by malnutrition or parasitic infections.

The people had little because they weren't given the chance to have more. When hurricane floods threatened or washed out their homes, the government moved them to this community to start over again. Not everyone was willing; some went anyway. One grandmother told me that she had to be carried from her home not because she couldn't get to safety, but because she didn't want to go.

The area was established as a refuge, not for growth. Men can't find jobs because the community is nothing but houses; women tend their homes and children. The mother at the house my partner and I worked at washed her clothes, dishes and children in the same plastic bucket in her backyard. Her young son carried the needed water in buckets from the spigot on the street, and when she was finished washing, she threw the leftover water over her grassless yard.

The Jubilee House is trying to promote unity and health in the community. It organizes block meetings and community government and has opened a free clinic, which gives people the chance to get examined, treated and educated about any disease or health disorder they might have. But the people still need more, and not just in the way of employment, healthy food and water, clothing. Manuel, one of the Nicaraguans the Jubilee House hired to work, said simply: "Nueva Vida has a sad air about it."

The need makes life simple — as simple as it can be. People worry about their immediate needs, and beyond that, little exists. They keep house, provide for their families, keep their gates closed by bending a nail over the door, hang their clothes on barbed-wire fences to dry.

The fences don't constrain the people, though. For every worker or mother of three or man in search of a job, there is a poet, a dreamer, a comic. And in spite of the differences in language and culture, they recognized that in us, as we recognized the same in them.

The people we saw live differently, but if nothing else, the trip taught us how similar our differences make us. They understand hope, just as we do, and they understand sadness. They know mean people. They worry about their children.

And all this we learned from a few days of working and touring. It's funny what a little digging can do.



The missionaries of the Jubilee House Community.



Right: The Masaya volcano.

Left: The Peace Park, built in honor of the truce between the Contras and the Sandanistas. Guns and tanks were cemented over to make walls and statues.

Below: A mural on the side of a wall in Ciudad Sandino.

