Las Noticias Estudiantiles

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Re-Dressing a Gender Revolution: Drag and the Politics of Identity in Nicaragua

By Cymene Howe

There is an expression in Nicaragua that describes someone out-on-the-town, with their sweetheart on their arm, dressed to kill and all-around fabulous: "bien armada" ("well armed," literally). Given the confrontational history of Nicaragua, including North American imperialists, US Marine occupation, Somocista dictatorship (for nearly 50 years) and more recently, the Contra war, the notion of being "well armed" takes on an ironic significance. After ten years of revolutionary rule, the Sandinistas were voted out of office in 1990, signaling the demise of their political hegemony. However, in spite of the neo-liberalized state and ultra conservative rule that currently reigns in Nicaragua, there has been a radical "re-arming" on other fronts; in particular in the realm of "identity politics" and non-governmental new social movements. The practitioners of these new politics, advocating for the rights of women and sexual minorities, have needed to outfit themselves with political tools that are both part of the legacy of Sandinismo and comprised of new, global coalitions and tactics. Some of these activists, especially flamboyant in their non-conformity to politics-as-usual: the drag queens of Managua.

While it may be hard for some to believe that a country so impoverished (second poorest in the Western hemisphere after Haiti) or so Catholic (approximately 90% of the population) would host the outrageous glamour associated with drag performance, this has indeed become a key element in activists’ struggle for feminist and gay/lesbian rights. The drag "pageant" is in fact, ubiquitous in the political events found in the country’s capital, Managua, where approximately half of the nation’s population resides. It is not only gay men’s organizations that "do" drag, either. A number of feminist organizations, AIDS groups, lesbian rights organizations, as well as gay male groups, all feature drag as a part of their strategy to disrupt gender and sexuality norms. In this, drag in Nicaragua is quite different than its North American counterpart, which is most often associated with a gay, male sub-culture.

In Managua, drag takes to the streets with the support of all kinds of gender and sexuality bending folks. Drag has become a key political feature amongst new social movements concerned with re-dressing conservative sex and gender values. Moreover, these organizations have done so under threat of imprisonment by the Nicaraguan state, which has the dubious honor of having Latin America’s most repressive anti-sodomy law—one that only indicts same-sex sexual relationships, but any- (Continued on page 3)
President’s Letter

Dear Las Noticias Readers,

Well, we are just about halfway through the school year! First I’d like to congratulate all those LAS students graduating this semester. One LAS student who will be sorely missed is Marty Hueneke, who has devoted much time and energy to SOLAS activities. Marty was our Outreach Coordinator, which means that this position is now open. If you would be interested in helping form ties between SOLAS and the wider UNM and Albuquerque communities, please get in touch with me.

One outreach activity that several SOLAS students participated in was the Southwest Voter Registration Project, in which students sat for hours or braved the cold at several locations on the UNM campus and around town in order to sign up more voters. And as this year’s presidential election has shown, every vote really did count!

Many SOLAS members also helped coordinate the activities of the Prince of Asturias (Spain) visit to UNM, which was in celebration of the Prince of Asturias Endowed Chair in Information Science and Technology. These students worked with Embassy officials to write parts of speeches, translate documents and speeches into English, and serve as guides and gofers for the out of town guests. The help certainly paid off—the Prince’s visit went very smoothly and the U.S. Embassy in Spain wrote to the LAlII to express their gratitude for the help they received.

The Fall Movie Series went very well, concluding with the Cuban film Lejanía. Thanks to Kim Nolan for her invaluable help in organizing the series and to Liz Hutchinson for her Tulane contacts. We plan to continue the series next semester, but it will be even bigger and better. Kim is currently working with the Southwest Film Center to have our films shown there (in a real theater!) We also plan to show 10 films, and many will include brief presentations by speakers who were involved with the making of the film, or with events that a film portrays. We’ll give more details once the schedule has been set.

I hope everyone enjoyed the Brown Bag lectures this semester. We had a very diverse group of speakers, from UNM students and faculty to a Cuban scholar to an Ecuadorian human rights activist. I’m busy putting together the schedule for next semester, so as always, if anyone has ideas for speakers, please get in touch with me.

Thanks to everyone who helped make SOLAS the great student organization that it is, and thanks to Sue Taylor for working hard to put together our newsletter. Good luck with finals and have a wonderful holiday break. See you in January!

Jeannie Ellis
SOLAS President

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers

As I write this I am, as I’m sure you all are, finishing up all of my semester-end projects and papers and preparing for finals. It will feel good to have my first semester at UNM completed. The theme for this issue is Central America. In keeping with that theme we have a series of articles related to the region. These articles represent an interesting variety of subjects. Cymene Howe has written an article about her work in Nicaragua, José Esteban Hernández has written an article about his studies of Salvadoran Spanish and Joanie Swanson, who I’m sure you all know as the LAS advisor, has written an article about Belize. We also have some information about December graduates, field grant recipients and summer study abroad programs.

I want to thank everyone who has submitted an article. I recognize that it takes time and effort to get something ready for Las Noticias, but I know I enjoy reading what my fellow students are working on and I think all of our readers do as well. So I encourage all of you to think about submitting an article for your newsletter.

I also want to thank my wonderful editing staff – I’m not sure Las Noticias would have arrived at your door without them. One of our co-editors, Marty Hueneke, is graduating this semester. I want to thank Marty for his hard work and wish him well in his next adventure.

Also, since this is the last issue before the holidays – I want to wish you all a wonderful holiday and semester break and a fun and safe new year.

See you next year.

Sue Taylor
Redressing Gender Revolution

one who is thought to be “promoting” or “propagandizing” homosexuality. Being “well-heeled” takes on a whole new significance in this political terrain. Although no one has yet been thrown in prison for being gay or lesbian, or even dressing the part, there is the ever-lurking potential that lesbians and gays might be rounded-up and sentenced to up to 5 years for, to use the language of the legislature, “scandalous behavior”. It seems that part of the reason that the conservative government has been reluctant to prosecute sexual minorities is because of the pressure brought against the Nicaraguan government when the anti-sodomy legislation was signed into law (1992). With groups such as Amnesty International watching to see whether the government is willing to incarcerate people based on their sexual preference (a human rights violation) perhaps it is actually a good time to “step out,” in Managua. And step out they do. For the gay and lesbian pride week this last June (2000) in Managua, Xochiquetzal (an NGO, directed by an out lesbian, which maintains a sexuality hotline, gay and lesbian support groups and feminist protests) hosted a drag “concurso”. The contest was to see which biological male could pull-off the most authentic representation of femininity and perform the most “sexi” womanliness. The concurso took the form of a pageant, one more akin to Miss America than anything else. In this, the pageant was a far cry from US drag shows which rely on camp humor and, often, lip-sync performances. In Managua, the contestants are very serious about drag. Each contestant had to demonstrate feminine savvy in the bathing suit, evening gown, and “exotic” dress portions of the pageant, with applause (from the primarily female audience) determining the winner of each event. The preparations which went into each of the contestants’ image were extravagant: expensive gowns, elaborate “exotic” costumes and plenty of lipstick (including that borrowed from the on-site anthropologist). In the dressing room, each contestant had a boyfriend by her side, always a very masculine character whose presence seems to have lent gender legitimacy as well as support in fetching last-minute necessities. Competition was stiff, vying for the title of “Miss Gay Nicaragua 2000”—la reina de orgullo (“the queen of pride”). In the end, only one would wear the coveted crown.

While the event was definitely fun for those in attendance, the political significance was never far from the runway: each performance had the explicit purpose of un-doing gender regulations and challenging the repressive legal situation in Nicaragua. It seems that to be “bien armada” in Nicaragua these days is to transgress the norms of the past: dragging out of the closet that which is best suited to the political needs of the times.

Cymene Howe is a graduate student in the Anthropology Department.

Congratulations to the following people who are graduating in December from the Latin American Studies Program.

**PhD.**
Andrae Marak

**Masters:**
Martin Hueneke
Erin Nolan

**Bachelors:**
Rachel Ball
Erica Garcia
Eddie Rey
Elizabeth Mendez
Patricia Morgan
Jesse Pacheco
Raymond Thompson
Frederico Torres
Elias Vargas
The Underworld of the Maya

My recent vacation trip to Belize was highlighted by what I have come to consider the most exciting jungle adventure of my lifetime. I am not a hardcore caver, but I have scrambled through a few caves carrying only a small flashlight and even encountered a bed of rattlesnakes as I was attempted to climb out of one. I’ve visited the grandaddy of all caves, Carlsbad Caverns, and several caves in Alabama, Texas, and Montana but nothing I have seen can compare to the Actun Tunichik Muknal (Cave of the Stone Sepulcher) in the Cayo district of Belize.

Karbic limestone caves have been discovered in various regions of Central America during the past century, particularly in the small country of Belize. Explorers and archaeologists have found numerous artifacts and remains in the caves indicating considerable use of these underground caverns by the Maya in their ritual ceremonies. Discovered in 1989, Actun Tunichik Muknal was documented by National Geographic Television in 1993. The cave contains approximately 110 pottery vessels, obsidian blades, stone tools, and nine burials. It also contains a carved slate tablet and two slate stela monuments. The formations in its caverns have been ranked among the most beautiful in the world. The logistics involved in reaching the cave’s entrance proved to be an adventure in its own right. Two hours of driving, including one hour of mud bogging in a four-wheel drive Toyota truck, brought us to the trailhead and the second leg of the trip. From the trailhead, we walked an easy two miles in the rainforest, spotting both jaguar and tapir tracks along the way. We found ourselves crisscrossing a river waist-deep four different times before we reached the cave entrance. The third leg of the trip involved a 20-25 foot swim into the entrance of the cave where we found a small piece of dry cave bed to climb out and onto. We spent the next 40-45 minutes wading, walking, swimming and climbing through the cave to reach the main caverns. A series of boulders provided a step ladder into the first large cavern where the ancient Maya conducted their ritual ceremonies.

When we entered the main chamber we were asked to remove our shoes in order not to damage the artifacts on the cave floor. Once inside we understood why this was necessary. Pots, plates, and pieces of pottery were everywhere. We spotted carved jadeite stones under rocks and on ledges, large pottery bowls in near perfect condition, skulls and other skeletal remains.

From the first cavern we ascended into a smaller room via a handmade wooden ladder. We stood in amazement as we spotted the perfect skeletal remains of a young Maya woman believed to have been sacrificed for religious purposes. On a separate ledge we found two pieces of sculpted slate. One appeared to be an obsidian blade and another was carved to resemble a stingray spine. Both of these articles are used in blood letting ceremonies. Behind these artifacts we saw what is believed to be a blood letting plate. Hence the origin of the cave’s English name, Cave of the Stone Sepulcher.

Looting from caves following their discovery is a major problem in Belize. For this reason, only a few guides have been granted permission through the Belize Department of Archaeology to take visitors to this remarkable cave. Today, the artifacts in Actun Tunichik Muknal remain in place as they were originally found in 1989.

Joanie Swanson is LAS Academic Advisor
Algunas observaciones sobre el español salvadoreño

By José Esteban Hernández

Las características fonológicas y morfosintácticas del español salvadoreño que se han descrito hasta ahora generalmente forman parte de breves explicaciones en estudios que describen la situación lingüística del istmo centroamericano como una realidad bastante homogénea. Dichas descripciones se basan sobretodo en estudios realizados anteriormente por lo que su aporte se convierte a veces en un recuento de datos fonológicos y morfosintácticos. De aquí que la validez de emprender un análisis detallado del español salvadoreño comprenda una aportación teórica y descriptiva a algunos puntos importantes dentro de la lingüística centroamericana.

Orígenes del español salvadoreño

La historia del español en El Salvador principia en 1524 con la llegada de Pedro de Alvarado a territorio pipil. Tras la invasión y toma del territorio buena parte de la población indígena adoptó por imposición la lengua de los conquistadores que se convirtió tempranamente en la lengua nativa de la población mestiza. Sin embargo, las relaciones entre conquistadores y vencidos no causaron el rápido abandono de las lenguas indígenas sino que dieron como resultado un lento pero paulatino desplazamiento que favoreció finalmente la implantación del español. Sin embargo, la mantención de la lengua original por un número significativo de indígenas, además de la posibilidad de cierto grado de bilingüismo entre los mestizos indígenas, sugiere una situación de contacto lingüístico intenso entre el español y la lengua pipil.

Ante este corto marco histórico podemos plantear algunas preguntas que caben dentro del debate constante de los orígenes del español americano. El primer punto importante sería determinar por qué la situación de contacto español-pipil resulta en una variedad dialectal tan distinta a otras situaciones de contacto con transfondo histórico y social semejante (e.g. el centro de México). Otro punto importante sería el determinar cuál es la posible importancia lingüística de los primeros conquistadores que se establecieron en la región. Me refiero a que si hubiera manera de averiguar el origen de los primeros españoles que arribaron a la región, entonces, ¿podríamos explicar algunos de los desarrollos fonológicos que florecieron en el español de la región?

Estudios sobre el español salvadoreño

En cuanto a la descripción fonológica, se cuenta con la descripción que Canfield (1960) llevó a cabo tras la recolección de datos a lo largo de la geografía del país. El estudio incluye los rasgos más característicos del español salvadoreño y peculiaridades que comparte con otras variedades del español. La descripción más detallada de la realización de /s/ en el español salvadoreño se encuentra en el análisis comparativo que Lipski (1987) llevó a cabo en su libro sobre la fonología del español hondureño donde determinó cuantitativamente que los dialectos de El Salvador y de Honduras tienden a mantener mayor número de ocurrencias de /s/ que otros dialectos que también favorecen el debilitamiento. En cuanto al léxico, la colección más amplia de voces salvadoreñas la llevó a cabo Geoffroy Rivas (1998) en una recopilación que incluye nahualismos, anglicismos y usos populares.

Un punto interesante que los estudios no han tratado es la descripción de los usos del Pretérito Perfecto (Present Perfect) en el español salvadoreño lo que nos permite ver las diferencias de forma y significado que existen en esta variedad dialectal. Aquí me referiré específicamente a un uso en el español salvadoreño que llamo perfectividad de desenlace y que se ejemplifica a continuación.

Entonces cuando ya cruzamos (...) nos tocó caminar lo que es la caseta, rodear la caseta. Y lo peor es que nos mandaron con un tipo que era primera vez que iba a hacer eso. Como nos dividieron en dos grupos, pos el tipo era primera vez. Se perdió de donde nos iban a recoger, hemos caminado más de lo debido. Y entonces este, lo peor que nos mandaron a todas las mujeres con ese tipo.

Lo primero que notamos es la capacidad que tiene la forma del Pretérito Perfecto (hemos caminado), para expresar el resultado de una acción pasada y de mantener el mismo significado que tienen las formas del Pretérito Simple (cruzamos, nos tocó, nos mandaron, nos dividieron, se perdió) dentro de una secuencia de eventos ocurridos en el pasado. Es decir, hemos caminado se prefiere sobre caminamos. Segundo, este uso del Pretérito Perfecto ocurre en la narrativa y mantiene una función discursiva en cuanto que expresa el resultado final de una secuencia de eventos; por esta razón, las formas del Pretérito Simple lo preceden. Generalmente, los perfectivos de desenlace conllevan una fuerte carga emotiva puesto que casi siempre son el punto culminante de una narrativa.

Estudios sobre el español salvadoreño en los Estados Unidos.

La investigación de los dialectos centroamericanos ha cobrado importancia en los Estados Unidos por el alto número de inmigrantes que se ha establecido en algunas de las grandes ciudades de este país. Respecto al español salvadoreño, estos estudios representan los primeros estudios que toman en cuenta factores sociolingüísticos y que se enfocan en características específicas. Además, se le ha dado gran importancia al contacto de dialectos, por las condiciones bajo las cuales se ha establecido la mayoría de las comunidades salvadoreñas en los Estados Unidos y se ha comparado el habla de las comunidades establecidas en el extranjero al habla de las comunidades que permanecen en El Salvador. Por ejemplo, en El Salvador la forma de tratamiento de segunda persona informal es casi siempre el uso del pronombre vos lo que se conoce como voseo. Así, el salvadoreño dirá casi categoricamente vos hablás, comés y vives en lugar de tú hablas, comes y vives lo que se conoce como tuteo. Sin embargo, los datos que colectó entre los salvadoreños en Houston, Texas muestran que el uso del voseo disminuye cuando los salvadoreños entran en contacto con hablantes de origen mexicano. Entonces, los hablantes encontraron también que la variación entre el uso del voseo y tuteo causa alteraciones en las formas verbales. Por ejemplo, en mis datos, un hablante salvadoreño altera la forma de los verbos con cam-

(Continued on page 5)
el español salvadoreño

(Continued from page 4)

bio de raíz tener y poder. En el presente, la forma con tú de estos verbos se conjuga agregando la forma diptongada (tú) tienes y (tú) puedes, mientras que la forma con vos se conjuga agregando la forma monopletónica (vos) tienes y (vos) podéis. Sin embargo, este hablante altera la forma (tú) tienes a (tú) tenes y (vos) podéis a (vos) puedois. Encontré también el uso del pronombre tú con formas verbales del vos en como en tú sos.

Mi interés por el estudio del español salvadoreño nació de la amistad que pude desarrollar con algunos salvadoreños en Houston, Texas y después en el pueblo de San Sebastían en el departamento salvadoreño de San Vicente donde viajé durante el pasado mes de agosto de 2000 gracias una beca (Field Research Grant) del Instituto Latinoamericano e Ibérico de la Universidad de Nuevo México.

José Esteban Hernández
Spanish and Portuguese Department (ABD)

Bibliografía


Call for Papers

Raza Graduate Student Association is pleased to announce: The Dolores Gonzales Colloquy Series Call for Papers

Latino/a graduate students in the Humanities are invited to submit proposals for the forthcoming colloquy series sponsored by the Raza Graduate Student Association and the Center for Regional Studies. The series honors Dr. Dolores Gonzales, a long time Professor at UNM.

Eligibility Requirements:
Applicants must be currently enrolled in a UNM graduate degree program. Proposals should include a 250 word abstract of the presentation, one letter of recommendation, a recent CV and a completed application form. Completed applications must be submitted to Juan Buriel, Dept. of American Studies, 3rd floor Ortega Hall, Albuquerque, NM 87131, No later than January 5, 2001.

Application Information:
Application forms with complete application instructions are available at El Centro de la Raza, 1153 Mesa Vista Hall.

Proposal Criteria:
The proposals selected will be presented in a weekly public colloquy series to be held in the Spring 2001 on UNM campus. Proposed presentations should be germane to such interdisciplinary fields of scholarly inquiry as Chican/o Studies, Southwest Studies, and/or Latina/o Studies. The presentations should be 30-40 minutes in length, with additional time allotted for questions. Proposals derived in whole or in part from thesis work, dissertation work, conference presentations, or work for publication are particularly encouraged. In recognition of the value of their work, and in support of their future conference or research endeavors, each presenter will receive an honorarium.

For more information email: rgsa@unm.edu.
Summer Study Abroad

WHY STUDY ABROAD (or, What will I do with myself next summer)?
by Robyn Côté, LAII Program Coordinator

With the Christmas holidays approaching and next semester not really that far away, you may be already thinking about what you are going to do next summer. Why not take a trip to Mexico, see some sights, learn about the awesome culture of the indigenous peoples, see some great art work and murals, eat some fantastic “real” Mexican food, earn credit at UNM, and improve your Spanish skills while studying at one of our Short-Term Study Abroad sessions?

Why Study Abroad? Because it will make you become a richer person in a myriad of ways. You will learn sensitivity to people of other cultures. You will see sights that you cannot imagine (like PreColumbian pyramids, wild desert landscapes, beautiful flowers, lush vegetation, fantastic weavings, colorful marketplaces, and poverty that is unrivaled here). You will become more independent, and will learn things about yourself that you never knew existed. You will learn interpersonal and intercultural skills that are difficult to get anywhere else (especially if you live with a family). You will make yourself “sellable” in the emerging global economy, not only with language skills, but by being exposed to international opportunities, which will help you compete in the job market and will give you a competitive edge against other graduates. Best of all, BECAUSE YOU WILL HAVE A GREAT TIME!

Here are some statements from students who attended our programs last summer. Take a look and see if you would like to find yourself in Mexico next summer. When you get bitten by the bug, give us a call (277-2961) to set up an appointment, or stop by our office at 801 Yale NE. We’ve got brochures, application forms, and can answer (hopefully) any questions you might have. This is a GREAT OPPORTUNITY – please take advantage of it – you’ll never regret it!

OAXACA: “I LOVED the intercambio – an hour daily with a university student (from the Universidad Autónoma de Oaxaca). We had a great month, despite our age difference. We walked and talked our way ALL over the place.” “I had the pleasure of having a wonderful housing assignment – was welcomed into my familia. My host was a terrific cocinera who took pride and pleasure in introducing me and her other guests to Oaxacan gastronomía. My home was close to the language school, close enough to el centro – I could walk everywhere and/or catch taxis or busses easily.”

CUERNAVACA: “The program was a valuable learning experience. I am grateful and privileged to attend this program. The Spanish language course was excellent and the excursions to different museums and schools and sites were valuable. I would highly recommend this program.” “I couldn’t have dreamed of a better family to stay with. Along with learning Spanish, I made terrific friends I hope to keep for a long, long time. I always felt welcomed and cared for, like a true member of the family. Excellent barely begins to rate my experience.”

GUADALAJARA: “After a brief glimpse of a flyer in the Spanish department and a little encouragement from my instructor, I realized that going to study Spanish in Mexico was my best bet to ever gaining the ability to speak the language that was lost with my generation. I decided on Guadalajara simply because I knew a family that would allow me to stay with them for a reasonable rate. I had the choice to stay with a family that was provided by the program, however opted differently. I took classes in Spanish at the university of Guadalajara. This branch of the school was only for foreigners attempting to learn Spanish and culture and history. The classes were every day, very small, and much attention was paid to progress in both grammar and speaking skills. Everyone including the administration spoke nothing but Spanish, as a matter of fact English for the most part was not spoken at all. I shared classes with students of all adult ages from all over the world, this provided an environment where Spanish was the only common ground by which I could have made friends. I really liked the simple and brief five-week sessions, they took away the anxiety and tediousness of the 16-week drudgery that students endure in the UNM environment. I truly believe the five-week sessions are more conducive to learning. Above all, being in a large Latin American environment and attempting to negotiate every day existence with a beautiful and interesting people from the perspective of my ignorant northern New Mexican mind set, proved to be the most educational experience of them all. I would recommend to any of my acquaintances, if they are at all interested in language, or breaking the ties of our closed minded American ideology, take a loan and then take a trip and learn.” -- Seth Vigil.

TAXCO: “I found the language classes to be good . . . My teachers . . . were really wonderful. I sat in on a Frida Kahlo class that had 5 people in it and it was fantastic! I highly recommend auditing classes . . . It helped my vocabulary and was great fun.” “We had a maid, so our meals were always fantastic! Food is affordable and the market is close by. You can always eat out and get great lunches near campus for about two bucks.” “Overall, Taxco is fantastic!! It’s a very inexpensive program, it’s a beautiful city, it’s close to the ocean, Mexico City, Cuenca. There are a lot of international students, and it’s easy to meet/hang out with Mexicans there.” -- Kent Reed Swanson.

GUANAJUATO: “I had the opportunity to visit the language school in Guanajuato this fall when I went to Mexico on a recruiting trip. What a beautiful city! It has an old-town atmosphere but full of vibrant students, beautiful churches, cobblestoned streets, brightly colored buildings, theatres, and the wonderful plaza with it’s sculpted trees encircling the locals chatting and relaxing on park benches or in cafes. The school is in the original university, a beautiful Baroque building, where small classes, professional staff, library, language lab (not just Spanish, but English, French, Italian, and Japanese), and conversation sessions are available to all students. Housing is usually done (Continued on page 7)
with a family, but it’s easy to find a small apartment nearby. I had some of the best mole I’ve ever had in Guanajuato. It’s a great place, don’t miss it!” – Robyn Côté.

If you would like to learn more about our Study Abroad opportunities, please come to one of two information sessions scheduled for next semester: Wednesday, January 24 from 12:00-1:00 pm at the LAII, and again on Tuesday, February 6 from 12:30-1:30 pm at the LAII. We are also planning a VIDEO PRESENTATION of our programs soon after the semester starts. Keep your eyes open for the announcement!

Study Abroad Opportunities

Various summer study abroad opportunities are presented on this and the next page. Information on who to contact is included.

Nicaragua

Casa Xalteva is an intensive Spanish language school and study abroad center located in Granada, Nicaragua. At Casa Xalteva we offer small classes (1-4 students per class) taught by Nicaraguan teachers in beginning, intermediate and advanced Spanish; homestays with Nicaraguan families; programs on Central American history, politics, economic development and environmental issues; and volunteer community service projects. Our prices are very reasonable and the cost of living in Nicaragua is very low.

Granada is a safe and charming colonial city located on Lake Nicaragua, within easy traveling distance to excellent Pacific beaches, Nicaragua’s famous lakes and volcanoes, the largest rainforests in Central America, and northern Costa Rica. Several UNM students have studied at Casa Xalteva, and we have earned an international reputation for excellence in instruction and our friendly, homelike atmosphere.

For more information, readers can check out our website at: www.ibw.com.ni/~casaxal or call Ken Carpenter in Albuquerque at 254-7535.

CUERNAVACA
2 Programs

Centro de Lengua, Arte e Historia (CLAHPE)
Universidad Autónoma Del Estado de Morelos (UAEM)
2- or 4-week sessions beginning any Monday
Beginning to intermediate levels/4 hour per day
Fellowships available from UAEM
http://www.uaem.mx/clahpe

CUAUHNÁHUAC
Spanish Language Institute
Quality Spanish language instruction
1- to 4- week sessions beginning any Monday
Beginning to Advanced levels/6 hour per day
Special programs available for business/professionals
UNM CREDIT NOT AVAILABLE
http://www.cuauhnahuac.edu.mx/

GUANAJUATO

Universidad de Guanajuato
Centro de Idiomas

Summer Session 1: June 11-July 6
Summer Session 2: July 9-Aug 3
Semester and Monthly sessions

3 levels of Spanish
Spanish Grammar, Conversation, Mexican History Mexican
Literature, Art, Folklore, Dance
Cost: $555 for Summer Session
$450 for semester courses
$500 for monthly courses
Application Fee: $20.00
Housing with family $480/month – meals included
http://www.ugto.mx/Passper/
LanguageCenter/IDIOMA.htm
GUADALAJARA

UNIVERSIDAD DE GUADALAJARA
Centro de Estudios Para Extranjeros (CEPE)

5-week programs
Winter: Jan 8 - Feb 9 / Feb 12 - March 16
Spring: March 19 - April 27 / April 30 - June 1
Summer: June 18 - July 20 / July 23 - Aug 24
Fall: Aug 27 - Sept 28 / Oct 1 - Nov 2 / Nov 5 - Dec 7
2-week programs: Jan 8 - Jan 19 / June 4 - June 15

10 levels of Spanish
Conversation, Grammar, Literature, History,
Art History, Culture, Dance, International
Relations, Politics & Economics
Spanish for Chicanos, Teachers, Business
Cost: $228 per course (includes 25% discount)
Application Fee: $72
Housing with family (includes 3 meals):
$558/private room - $458/shared room
Dorm (no meals): $417/private room - $292 shared
http://www.cepe.udg.mx

TAXCO

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)
Taxco Campus
Centro de Enseñanza Para Extranjeros (CEPE)

6-week programs
Spring: Jan 18 - March 7 / March 22 - May 17
Summer: June 19 - August 3
Fall: August 16 - Oct 2 / Oct 18 - Dec 7

5 levels of Spanish
Latin American Culture, Art History,
Mexican History, Social Sciences,
Mexican Literature, Chicano Studies, Dance
Cost: $350 for 6-week session
(includes 90 hours of Spanish and choice of
2 culture courses; additional culture courses $45)
Application Fee: $25
Housing: $150 - 230/month with family
Students buy and prepare own meals
http://serpiente.dgsca.unam.mx/rectoria/
htm/cepe.html

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Centro de Enseñanza para Extranjeros (CEPE)

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EL SALVADOR: FLORIDA JURY EXONERATES SALVADORAN GENERALS IN 1980 SLAYING OF FOUR CHURCHWOMEN

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On Nov. 3, a Florida jury exonerated two former military officers in a civil suit stemming from the 1980 abduction, rape, and murder of four US churchwomen. The jury in a West Palm Beach Federal Court acquitted retired Gen. Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova, 60, who was National Guard commander in 1980, and former Defense Minister Jose Guillermo Garcia, 67, on charges that they failed to prevent the crimes committed by soldiers under their command. The two men have lived in Florida since 1989 (see NotiCen, 1999-05-20).

Five national guardsmen were convicted of the crimes in 1984 and sentenced to 30 years in prison. Despite a UN Truth Commission report in 1993 that implicated Vides Casanova and Garcia in a coverup of the murders, no higher officials were tried in El Salvador. In 1998, four of the five convicted men said in an interview with The New York Times that they acted on orders from superior officers and that they were instructed to go along with the coverup (see EcoCentral, 1998-05-07).

In October, the victims' families brought a US$100 million wrongful-death suit against the two men under the federal Torture Victims Protection Act, which allows anyone to sue foreign officials for abuses committed under their authority.

The New York Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (LCHR) represented the plaintiffs in the suit. LCHR director Michael Posner said the families would take the case to a higher court. "Ultimately, we will prevail in establishing individual accountability for the worst human rights crimes," he said.

"El Salvador had to choose during the war between justice and peace, and if we had chosen justice to prosecute war criminals, we would still be at war,"

"They knew perfectly well that I knew the military ran most of the death squads, but they just insisted it was not so," White said. "Short of calling [them] liars, which would have broken the relationship, it was impossible to break through the veneer because they didn't want to bring the death squads under control. I tried to keep it on a civilized plane, but it did test you, because they knew I was not stupid, and I had access to information."

Generals said they knew about abuses

The defendants admitted in court that they knew of the widespread torture and assassinations committed by their troops but claimed they were powerless to stop them.

Vides Casanova said he issued orders instructing officers not to torture or assassinate anyone.

"I did everything humanly possible to correct those deficiencies," he said. "But it is not easy to change a tradition of 50 years overnight or to make democracy in a country."

In reaching their verdict, some jurors said they did not believe the generals had enough control over the actions of their troops to prevent the murder of the churchwomen.

White said he was shocked by the verdict. He told the Inter Press Service that he thought the jury might not have understood the judge's instructions on the commanders' responsi-

(Continued on page 11)
El Salvador

(Continued from page 10)

Official reaction in El Salvador supported the verdict. President Francisco Flores said at the start of the trial that the proceedings would only "reopen the wounds of war." He said it was unfair to reopen this case and not those of victims killed by the guerrillas.

"El Salvador had to choose during the war between justice and peace, and if we had chosen justice to prosecute war criminals, we would still be at war," said Flores.

Rene Figueroa, leader of the governing Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA) delegation in the Legislative Assembly, said the verdict was a wise one. He claimed the victims' families had sued to collect money from the generals.

Human rights groups and some religious leaders in El Salvador lamented the verdict. Auxiliary Archbishop of San Salvador Gregorio Rosa Chavez disagreed with the verdict, but he said the suit had set a precedent that human rights violators can be pursued outside their own countries.

The church's legal-aid office (Oficina de Tutela Legal del Arzobispado de El Salvador) said Garcia and Vides Casanova were responsible for the crimes, as was the US government because of its military assistance to El Salvador. In his testimony, White said that representatives of the incoming Reagan administration arrived in San Salvador in 1981 and let it be known that the military would have a free hand and impunity in dealing with opponents of the government.

[Sources: Spanish News Service EFE, 10/10/00, 10/11/00; Prensa Grafica (El Salvador), 09/28/00, 10/09/00, 10/11/00, 10/12/00, 10/29/00; El Diario de Hoy (El Salvador), 10/10/00, 10/11/00, 10/29/00; The Miami Herald, 10/13/00, 10/27/00, 10/31/00; Inter Press Service, Associated Press, 11/03/00; Notimex, 11/03/00, 11/05/00; The New York Times, 10/20/00, 10/21/00, 11/04/00, 11/06/00]

Grant Recipients

The Grants and Awards Committee awarded grants to the following students:

**Field Research Grants:**

**Larry Larrichio** for Colonial Archive Document Research for Completion of Dissertation: Land Tenure and Labor Along the Quindio Road (Colombia)

**Feliza Medrano** for Ni chicha ni limonada: Depictions of the Mulatto Woman in Cuban Tobacco Art (Cuba)

**Robert Walker** for Strength and Skill Components of Foraging Ability: Implications for Human Life History Evolution (Paraguay)

**Title VI Awards:**

Elizabeth Bagwell – Anthropology

Ken Nystrom – Anthropology

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**Robert Rico:** PhD Candidate in the UNM Political Science Department. Her talk is entitled, “From Peasants to Politicians: The Making of Ecuador’s Indigenous Political Party, Pachakutik.

**Doris Myer:** Professor Emerita of Hispanic Studies from Connecticut College and an LAII research scholar. She will discuss the literary correspondence between Victoria Ocampo and Gabriela Mistral.

**Maria Masucci:** Visiting professor in the UNM Department of Anthropology. She will address interesting aspects of the prehispanic cultures of Ecuador.