



JUBILEE HOUSE COMMUNITY

*"You shall not oppress one another...
...for I am the Lord your God." Lev. 25:17*

May 1, 1994

We're very excited to let you know that...

The caravan is in Nicaragua! The trip went amazingly well. Here we

had five old vehicles and every one of them made it to Nicaragua. A crew with no experience of border crossings and we made it to Nicaragua with all our cargo intact. A few intestinal complaints and one bad rash but everybody stayed basically healthy. We had no wrecks. Everyone who got lost got found again. The trip took over twice as long as we had expected, but here we are!



On the Road...

Photo by Jeff Griesmaier

Our two biggest hassles were mechanical failures and border crossings. Not a vehicle escaped without some breakdown, and we lost a lot of time either fixing them ourselves or finding a mechanic. Contrary to what we had heard, almost all of the mechanics we dealt with were prompt, skillful, honest and astonishingly inexpensive. We also got pretty good at our own creative solutions.

As for the borders, we had thought that our official donation letter, with a back-up letter from the Nicaraguan Embassy, would get us through with a minimum of trouble. Wrong! Changes in the Mexican law left us trying to cross the border where no group like ours had ever crossed before. We spent 13 days going out to the border practically every day to be told, "You need this one more thing and then you can cross."

We would provide it and then be told, "and this one

more thing..." The Central American border crossings were not quite as expensive and took less time, but they were still full of hassles. Add in unfamiliar social customs, terrific heat, noise and bustle -- whew.

Well, the problems will make humorous anecdotes for our old age. There are plenty of positive memories to hang onto, too. The beautiful Pacific coast of Mexico and the mountains of El Salvador. Stephen always ordering the most exotic thing on the menu. Meeting all kinds of wonderful people, like our 14-year-old customs facilitator in El Salvador, the woman who gave us a drink of water our first night in Nicaragua, the all-night emergency medical attendant in Mexico who let us use his phone (even though we didn't have a medical emergency), the manager of our most unusual motel who had a lady friend in Charlotte, North Carolina. It really was an amazingly good trip.

We were very aware of our support people in the United States and in Nicaragua. Thank you all! Muchas gracias! No one in Nicaragua was quite sure when we would arrive, and as a matter of fact it turned out to be in the middle of the night. So the very next night a large delegation of the Ciudad Sandino community walked all the way out to our house on the edge of town to welcome us warmly. We didn't even have enough chairs for them all to sit down, and nothing to offer them but water. No one minded. As we were apologizing, one woman told us, "Hospitality is nice, but we know you have come with love for our community, and love is better." Another man assured us that although the dozen present were only a "small" delegation, everybody in the community knew we were here, even the children on the baseball teams and at the infant feeding centers, and that all of them welcomed us as well. It's good to be here.



Mexican Customs, Day #1:

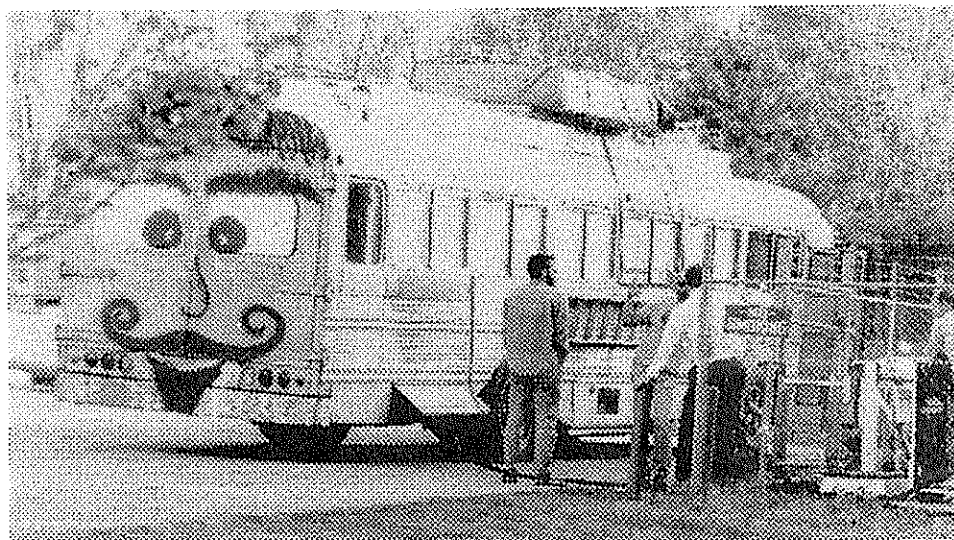
Max, Stephen, Mike, Kathy, Brian, Kayhan. Photo by J. Griesmaier

In our last newsletter we wrote of our excitement to have Cesar Fajardo with us. He was going to help drive to Nicaragua, his home and our new home. Unfortunately, Cesar's 5-year-old daughter went into the hospital with heart trouble. Her mother had to stay beside her bed to provide nursing care. Cesar needed to return home immediately to care for his 8-month-old and 3-year-old, who were left at home, with just a neighbor checking on them. Cesar makes \$120 a month. His medical bills are high because his 5-year-old has severe asthma.

Looking at Coury (5-years-old) and then Daniel (18-months-old), I can't imagine the fear and worry involved. It frightens me to think of sending my kids to poor hospitals and yet seeing Cesar's matter-of-fact courage midst the worry and love he has for his precious little ones tends to give me courage - or at least a little.

We sent Cesar home. He was relieved to go despite his overwhelming desire to get us to his city (frankly, I don't think Cesar thought we could do it on our own!). Why does he struggle so hard? Cesar does what he has to do, because he believes in making life better for his people. He understands that justice never pays well and is never easy.

A word (or several) must be said about our caravan drivers. They were courageous people who boldly set out on this adventure with fools such as we!



Propane Fill-up for The Bus. (Note its new personality) Photo by Jeff Griesmaier

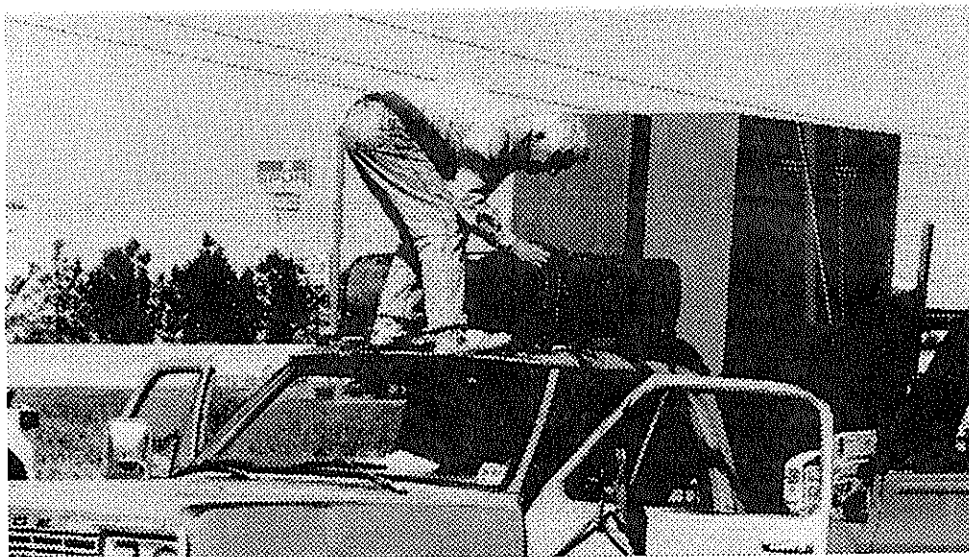
To set out on a 5,000+ mile trek over steep mountains, deserts, and unkept roads; in ancient vehicles that looked as bad as the roads (until the bus got its new look); in countries where "auto parts" are truly a foreign concept; and with leaders who don't always think through every detail quite to its ultimate conclusion - to set out on this kind of journey takes guts.

We lost 2 of our drivers within the first 48 hours, after vehicle repairs had to be done in severe tornado weather. Then a

week to the Mexican border, with "only" one other crucial stop for the vehicles in Lanett, AL, to unload and shift weight, in addition to other continuing vehicle adventures.

In Laredo, TX, we lost Bob Hanafin due to the border-crossing delay (he had heart surgery scheduled and is doing fine now) and Jeff Griesmaier (our photographer who had a business to run. Many of these newsletter photos are thanks to him).

But after 13 long days and \$1,300, the caravan entered Mexico, with 6 drivers and 1 extra crew, to move all 5 vehicles onward to Nicaragua. One month from when they left Statesville, they arrived in Ciudad Sandino, after having driven across 4 more international borders, across and along the Sierra mountains and through deserts, through war zones in Guatemala and Mexico, through election crowds in El Salvador, to arrive exhausted but still speaking to each other. A real achievement.



Bobby shifting spare tires to over the gray truck's hood. Photo by Jeff Griesmaier

Our hats off to Brian, Kayhan, Bobby, Max, Stephen (our head bus lackey), and our own Michael and Kathy.

The morning we intended to cross the El Salvador border into Honduras, we got a real early start. After an hour or so we decided to stop for breakfast. The place with all the chairs where we stopped turned out to be a pharmacy, and the people told us there were no restaurants between there and the border. They did point out a woman who might be able to fix us something. She welcomed us warmly into her tiny yard, full of hens with dozens of chicks, a shy kitten, and a couple of dogs. ("I love animals," she told us.) Their electricity had been off all night so she had nothing cold to offer us to drink but she cooked us some delicious scrambled eggs over a wood fire, added some beans and cheese to each plate, and set out a plate of tortillas. We ate very well and enjoyed her hospitality.

We need your prayers and help, especially now that

CDCA is actually on-site in Nicaragua, to get it fully up and running. Specifically we need prayer for:

- Renters for our Statesville houses.
- Our Spanish to improve quickly, the children to adjust quickly and easily to their new life in Nicaragua, and for us as a Community as we are separated from each other by miles.
- People who are willing to pledge financial support on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis. (The pledges help us show funding sources that we do have a firm base of support.)
- Donations of school supplies. This is the time of year to get your local schools to put out collection boxes for leftover notebooks, pencils, pens, etc. that would otherwise be thrown away.
- Donations of over-the-counter medicines, as long as they are unopened and are not out-of-date.

We need to thank many people who have given much time and labor lately:

- Bob Hanafin and Jeff Griesmaier for driving in the caravan, giving effort, sweat, time, and lots of patience.
- Brian, Kayhan, Max, Steven, and Bobby who drove all the way down and stayed to help... our first official on-site volunteers.



Bob, Mike, Wendy, Jim, Jack at Vine and Fig Tree.
Photo by Jeff Griesmaier

- Vine and Fig Tree Community for hospitality and storage
- Bob Murdock for selling us his truck at a moment's notice and at a discount.
- Vehicle repair wizards who found parts for our old vehicles before the caravan ever left.
- Callers and writers who helped get the caravan into Mexico.
- Marcia Gibbs for managing our rental property and working hard to fix it up.
- Tim Frye for repairing our rental property.
- Weekend clean-up/repair crews.
- Carpenters, painters, and fixer-uppers
- Jean Gowen for grant-

writing.

- Beth Carpenter-Berg for babysitting
- Newsletter colaters.
- Glenn Yoder, Marcia Gibbs, and John Lewis for all their help in obtaining the Self-Help Loan. And to Nora and Becky for advancing loan money to get the caravan off on schedule.
- People who have pledged to give monthly or quarterly... it eases our overwhelming concern re how CDCA will operate.
- And last but not least, contributors who have poured their love, prayers, support, and gifts into the project.



Volunteer work day... Fixin' the porch.

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So often when advertising products as gifts, we hear the slogan "What do you give to someone who has everything?" Well, that is not the case in Ciudad Sandino. The needs are so great that the question is, "What do you give to people who need everything?"

When the caravan arrived, it brought with it for the projects in Ciudad Sandino and for the operation of CDCA (the JHC's Center for Development in Central America) *** 8 boxes school supplies *** about \$20,000 of medicines and medical supplies *** about \$500 of office supplies for our host organization, FUNDECI *** stuffed animals and toys *** a 40-passenger bus *** 3 pick-up trucks *** a Toyota van *** clothes (used and new) *** tools, office equipment, kitchen equipment, etc. *** 5 volunteers *** 2 of our loved ones (because basically all we're really asked to give is ourselves).



Tiff Coury Kathleen Pat Daniel Kathy Jessica Mike Sarah
 Photo by Shawn Doherty

At the end of May, the Jubilee House Community, Inc.'s new North Carolina address and phone will be:

Jubilee House Community
 2425 Spicewood Drive
 Winston-Salem, NC 27106
 phone: 910/922-4794

Personal letters and messages will get forwarded on to us from there. **Currently**, Mike and Kathy are in Ciudad Sandino, Nicaragua. Kathleen, Coury, and Daniel will join them mid-May. Hopefully Sarah, Jessica, and Pat will come the end of May or mid-June. Tiff will come this summer for an extended visit. (During part of the summer Jessica will attend the Forsyth Drama Program and then come home to us the end of July).

In addition to all the expenses and days involved in getting the caravan vehicles ready to roll, we have the following update after its arrival:

CARAVAN EXPENSES
 Border Crossings: \$2,400
 Lodging/ Food: \$2,300
 Gas: \$3,075
 Auto Repairs: \$2,100
 Mexican Insurance: \$ 250
 TOTAL : \$10,125

UNKNOWN IMMEDIATE EXPENSES
 Nicaraguan Customs
 Distribution of supplies
 Repairs of the CDCA headquarters
 May Volunteers (meals, lodging, transportation)
 First Priority Projects of the CDCA

YES! I want to support the JHC's Center for Development in Central America in the following ways:

Enclosed please find my tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____.

For 1994, I pledge \$ _____ per month, quarter, year.

Please contact me about: investment in the Micro-Enterprise Fund
 arranging a speaking engagement or using a video
 volunteering
 other _____

Please correct my name and address to: _____