

# SPECTRUM

A Cooperative Newspaper for the Tallahassee Community

Issue 46 November, 1984



NEWS TO KEEP YOU GOING

See page 7 for new feature: The Spectrum Index, Part I!



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# Looking For What Is Good in Nicaragua

## Local man sees for himself

by Howard Goerringer

Tallahasseean Howard Goerringer travelled to Nicaragua recently, on a visit sponsored by *Witness for Peace*. Started a year and a half ago, *Witness for Peace* is a biblically based community of U.S. citizens who stand with the Nicaraguan people by acting in non-violent resistance to U.S. covert or overt intervention in that country, and to help mobilize public opinion and change U.S. foreign policy to one which fosters justice, friendship and peace.

Each month three group members recruited by a volunteer coordinator go to Nicaragua for two weeks after a two day orientation. Each member pays his or her own expenses (approximately \$800).

While in Nicaragua the group has access to many leaders from all segments of society. All but four days in Managua are spent in outlying areas in the war zone working with and talking to the people.

I went to Nicaragua looking for what is good because I believe the Sandinista government should be given at least as much support as our government gave to the three Somoza dictatorships for almost half a century which left the country in shambles.

After deliberately exposing ourselves to all segments of that society, here are some facts we can document.

One, an open and honest election is planned for November 4. Every 20,000 people will elect one member to a National Assembly responsible for a new constitution that will express the will of the majority. I think it's called democracy in the U.S.

But the contras are not allowed representation, some say. A lie! Except for about 600 of the old Somoza gang, a blanket amnesty has been offered to all contras who will lay down their arms and live as peaceful citizens. Like everyone else they can have their political party and vote. The government will not negotiate with the top leaders who, they claim, were responsible for almost 50,000 killings before July 19, 1979, and thousands of deaths since. They must be treated as war criminals.

Ninety two percent of Nicaraguans 16 years of age and older have registered to vote on a non-partisan basis. We saw registration lists posted in every community we visited. Seven parties have candidates who are free to speak and travel. Sweden and France have assisted with the electoral plan, and many countries, including the U.S. have been invited to observe the election. This is not the totalitarian dictatorship conjured up by the Reagan mentality. After our Revolution it took eleven years to hold our first election. Nicaragua is doing it in five.



Women at a meeting of AMHLAE (Nicaragua's national women's organization) in San Juan del La Mi. They proudly discussed gains of women in Nicaragua including: enforced father's support of abandoned families; equal rights for spouses after separation; day care programs; cooperatives in which women learn productive trades; prostitution banned; equal pay for men and women who harvest crops.

The day before leaving Nicaragua, our *Witness for Peace* group listened to Robert Fretz from the U.S. Embassy tell us there is nothing good about the Sandinista government. Why? Because the word from the White House is, "the Sandinista government must go."

On October 2 Curtis Winsor, Jr., the U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica told a group of fellow Republicans that Nicaragua is like an "infected piece of meat that attracts only insects" and should be compared to Hitler's Nazis in the 1930s. Why? Because he got the word that the Sandinistas must go.

In the recent vice-presidential debate George Bush said that Dan Ortega, FLSN candidate for President, was opposed to the Church; Nicaragua's human rights record is far worse than El Salvador's; the government is hostile to the Pope and embarrasses the Catholic Church; and the coming election is a farce. Why? Because he is loyal to his Commander who says "the Sandinista government must go." In all of this rhetoric, truth is the real victim, not Nicaragua.

Yesterday someone said to me, "When people go to Nicaragua they find what they're looking for." In one sense that's correct because every country is a mix of good and bad and both can be found. What the Reagan administration is doing is twisting much of what is good in Nicaragua and making it look bad to justify our 'silent war' against a people who have attacked no one. The Sandinista government, like every other government in

Photo by Howard Goerringer



Funeral for Armando Espinoza, 35 years old, married, one child, member of army, killed day before in nearby area by contras. In foreground are two members of militia, many of whom are youngsters 13 and 14 years old.

the world, is far from perfect, but every Christian missionary I talked to said it is a viable government and should be supported, not mutilated. The alternative is a puppet government which would never be supported by the majority of Nicaraguans who have found something they have never had before — a sense of emancipation from imperial wealth and power that is still trying to buy them. I don't think they can be bought by the CIA. They have something money can't buy.

Second, we saw evidence of a government that is addressing human rights. For example, we visited one of seven farm prisons without walls and without guards that allows former members of the National Guard to spend time with their families, learn a vocation, and work on a farm to grow their food. One of them proudly showed us his paintings and sang as he played a guitar. These rehabilitation farms compare with the best in our criminal system.

The death penalty has been abolished and the government has its own human rights commission, one of whose members is a nun who has been working with the poor of Nicaragua for the last 23 years.

We also listened to the director of an opposition human rights group who listed some atrocities which may well be true, but to compare the human rights record of Nicaragua with El Salvador whose death squads have murdered 42,000 civilians over the last five years, as George Bush does, is to throw truth on the scrap pile.

Of the three newspapers, the opposition paper *La Prensa* is censored, but only in military matters that threaten the nation during the present war.

As the U.S. moved its Japanese-Americans into camps during World War II, the Sandinista government resettled Misquito Indians (not in prison camps) to protect the northeast coast from invasion by the contras. A Moravian pastor who is one of them told us about suffering involved in the resettlement, but claimed it was justified as a military strategy. Amnesty has been given to all Misquito Indians who rebelled against the government.

We asked the U.S. Embassy to protest the kidnapping of FSLN candidate Ray Hooker while campaigning near the Costa Rican border only to be laughed at and told "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." I have a copy of a CIA manual distributed by the contras telling Nicaraguans how "selective use of violence" can be used to overthrow the government. When it comes to human rights, the fact is that our "silent invasion" of Nicaragua is the cruelist kind of terrorism in that country as key leaders are liquidated to demoralize the people. The result has been the distribution of guns to all families and militarization of a whole nation in order to survive our attack. The hypocrisy of Reagan's criticism of the military buildup is that it is our very invasion that has forced even the children to learn how to use a gun. Incidentally, a totalitarian State would not distribute guns to its people because they know they could be used against the tyrant.

Unlike Reagan, the people of Nicaragua do not have communism on the brain. We tried to draw a group of high school students into a discussion about Marxism, and we drew a blank. Their hero is Sandino, not Castro or Marx. We saw the silhouette of Sandino on the walls of countless homes all over the country. This is the man who gave himself to rid Nicaragua of the U.S. Marines who occupied his native soil from 1912 to 1933. No wonder the military of the U.S. doesn't like the name Sandinista. His spirit of a free country is the spirit of their revolution, not totalitarianism, not Marxism.

In a very real sense Nicaragua is aiming at a pluralism that puts our two party system to shame, since most of the time it is impossible to tell them apart. They are trying to learn from every system and every country in the world. They have used Marx to help them analyze systems that work to the advantage of the rich and the disadvantage of the poor. Marx has helped them see the problem, but they do not accept an atheistic and materialistic world view. Their world view is Christ-centered as is evident in many offices of the government occupied by priests and those of religious order.

A new synthesis of Christianity, capitalism, socialism, the tool of Marxian analysis, and other ingredients is happening in Nicaragua today. They speak of it as the "process." In their new kind of Bible study in so-called base communities of the church they are learning that God does not ordain many to be poor and a few to be rich. It is the religion of the prophets, not the civil religion of Ronald Reagan.

# SPECTRUM

A Cooperative Newspaper for the Tallahassee Community

The Collective —

Larry Teich, Carmy Greenwood, Frank Brown,  
Linda Miklowitz, Lisa Krehbiel Kathy Blaha

Contributor to This Issue — Tana McLane

Back cover photo by Frank Brown

Ad Sales This Issue — Larry Teich

Article and announcement deadline is the Thursday one week before our publishing dates. We have an editorial meeting at that time and what is selected for the upcoming issue is agreed upon at that time, with rare exception. Please contact us personally if you cannot meet this deadline, so we can still plan to preview your article. Thanks.

Please address all inquiries: SPECTRUM, 625 E. Brevard St., Tallahassee, FL 32308, 904/224-7222.



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## SPECTRUM's Evolution

by Frank Brown

The SPECTRUM you are holding in your hands as you read this is quite different from previous issues. Although it may look similar — same size, similar types of articles — our production method has radically changed.

The paper is now being produced almost completely in our own homes. We are using personally owned microcomputers to enter all copy, and then transmitting the stories electronically to a new typesetter, who provides us with typeset galleys which we lay out onto pages on Carmy and Lisa's ping-pong table. About the only thing we still use a graphics lab for is camera work.

This all came about as a result of losing our former production shop contract. When we looked around and examined our resources, the new method emerged as by far the most cost-effective. It also enables us to keep our ad rates low.

It's going to take some getting used to. Since there aren't three machines in a row at anyone's house, production is more decentralized, which means the whole group isn't together as much as before, and some of the collective feeling is diffused.

Overall I am excited by this evolution, perhaps more by its promise than the actual physical changes themselves. Goodbye to paper jams and light leaks which required retyping entire galleys.

Goodbye to smelly processing chemicals on my hands and breathing in the lab's fumes for 8-hour stretches. Goodbye to patient Flambeau staffers waiting for us to leave their work stations.

I'm certain the new way will have its own problems. But I feel confident that they will be worked out satisfactorily.

All this new computer stuff has not changed the volunteer nature of SPECTRUM. As much as ever before, we are totally dependent on volunteer writers and production assistance. Due to our changes, anyone with a microcomputer, word processing software and a modem may now help us out through making your equipment and yourself available for copy entry. And writers who are equipped can send stories electronically, saving us the task of retyping it all. But we still accept typewritten articles; even handwritten stuff is considered (keep it neat, please). This paper exists for the community; it is what we can make it.

You may note that it is election time again, and no political interviews grace these pages. Don't be fooled; we are all going to the polls to vote against Reagan, and for the candidates of our choice. We urge our readers to do the same; I'd be shocked if our enlightened readership... oh never mind.

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# community announcements

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**Canopy Federal Credit Union,** Tallahassee's money co-op for all food and other type co-op members, is in need of volunteers as tellers and office personnel. Please call Joan at 224-9290 for information or stop by the office at 649 W. Gaines St.

**The Hispanic Student Union (HSU) is a new FSU student organization** founded to promote unity among the Hispanics in Tallahassee and to promote Hispanic culture and the Spanish language. HSU is presenting a play, "La Carreta" on Saturday, Nov. 10 at 8:00 pm in FSU's Moore Auditorium. "La Carreta" is a play about the social-economic conditions of Puerto Ricans living in New York City in the late 1940's - early 1950's. For more information on either the play, "La Carreta," or the HSU, call 222-9886.

**The Tallahassee Junior Museum now has openings in preschool classes.** A class for three year olds meets Wednesday mornings for six weeks. Classes for three-and-a-half to five year olds meet Tuesdays and Thursdays on a monthly basis and Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for the school year. Call the museum at 575-8684 or 576-1636 for more information.

**The Tallahassee Senior Citizens Center is pleased to announce that 1985 Art Folio Calendars have arrived!** Featuring paintings by local senior citizens, the calendar is a major fundraising project for the Senior Citizens Center and is vital to its financial support. The calendar itself is a result of art classes offered at the center. Cost of each calendar is \$3.00 and supports the Tallahassee Senior Citizens Center and its programs. Calendars may be purchased at the Senior Citizens Center at the Old Armory on North Monroe St. or at local newsstands.

**Volunteers needed: to hug mentally handicapped individuals during the Special Olympics;** to sit with terminally-ill persons; to make tapes of computer and accounting classes for a blind individual; to research information about day-care facilities in Florida; to transport blind individuals; to be a friend and help write letters with a young cerebral palsy woman; to assist with clerical work. Share your free time with an individual or a non-profit agency in need. To respond or for more information contact the Volunteer Center of Leon County at 307 E. 7th Ave., Suite 201 222-6263.

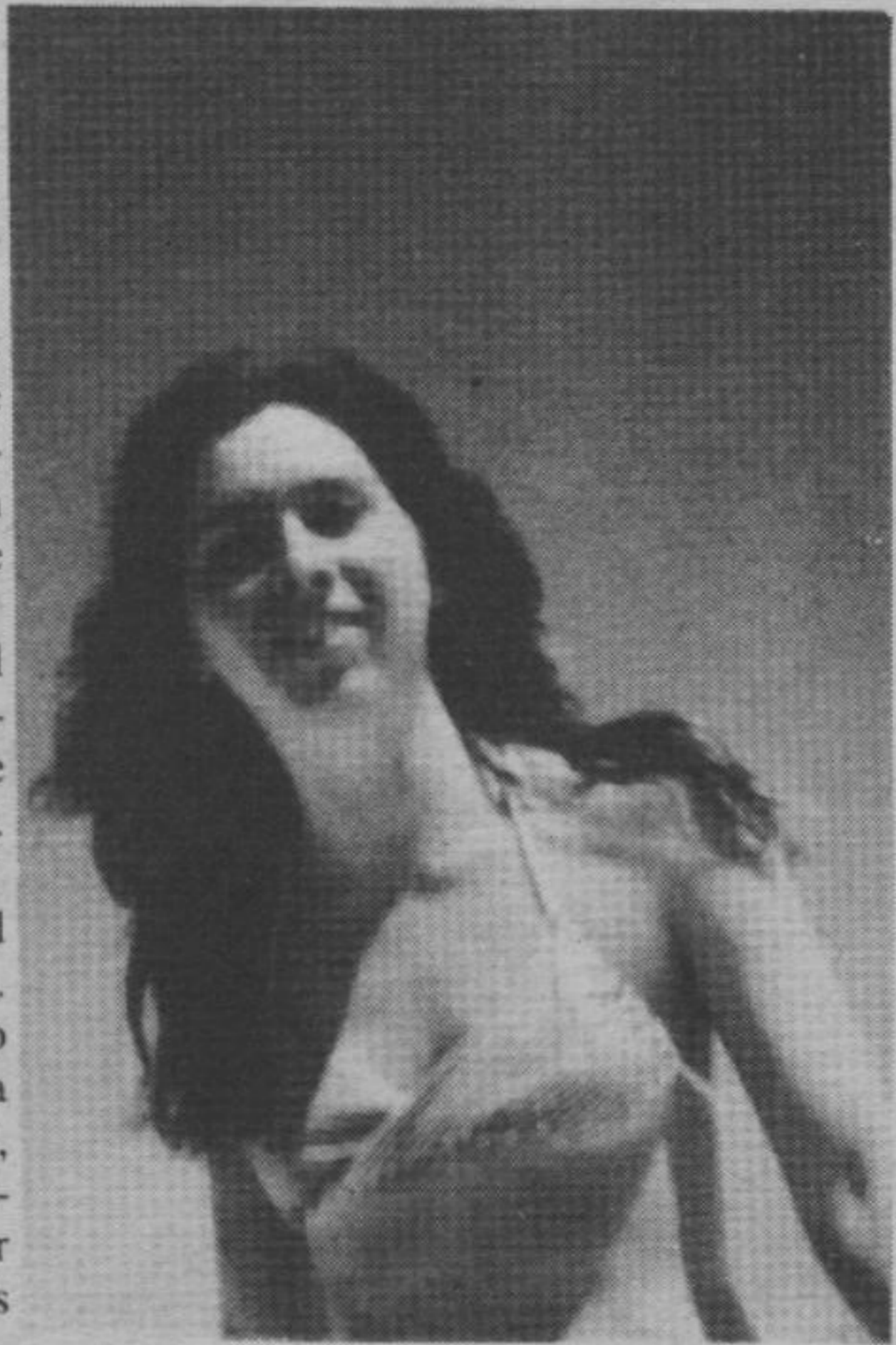
**Organized within the last year, Agape House in Tallahassee** teaches the total rejection of all war based on the life and teachings of Jesus. Agape House invites readers of Spectrum to their meetings every Monday night at 7:30 p.m. at 1113 E. Tennessee St. Also listen to their radio show on Sunday, 4:15 p.m. on WCVC, AM 1330.

Valerie Hunt was a community and co-op member whose body was found after a long disappearance. Her family and friends and the police still do not have enough information to know what happened to her.

According to the Wakulla County Sheriff's department, Ms. Hunt's white over red 1963 Plymouth Valiant was discovered at Lofton Pond on Sam Allen Road near Springhill Road in Tallahassee June 16.

Hunt was last seen at the Westwood Shopping Center on June 11. On September 16, the remains of Ms. Hunt were discovered in a wooded area south of Hwy. 267 in Wakulla County.

Anyone who visited the Lofton Pond area on June 11 or who may have seen Ms. Hunt or her car on that day are asked to contact: Sgt. Roxie Vause, c/o Wakulla County Sheriff's Dept., P.O. Box 160, Crawfordville, FL 32327, phone 904-488-0432 or 904-926-7171; or Investigator John Livings, c/o Leon County Sheriff's Dept., P.O. Box 727, Tallahassee, FL, 32302, phone 904-222-4740.



Valerie Hunt



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# Working For Safer Bikeways

by Kathy Blaha

Concerned bicyclists rally at City Hall.



Photo by Frank Brown



Photo by Frank Brown



Photo by Frank Brown

Whereas, the City Commission of the City of Tallahassee, Florida recognizes the need for planning, implementation, and maintenance of policies, programs and facilities for the safe and efficient integration of the bicycle into the urban area transportation system; Now therefore be it resolved by the City Commission of the City of Tallahassee, Florida: the creation of an Urban Area Bicycle Advisory Committee.

After four years of fighting for recognition and their fair share of the road, bicyclists in Tallahassee have succeeded in two very important ways: October 9, the City Commission, at their regularly scheduled meeting, voted to create an Urban Area Bicycle Advisory Committee and to charge that group to work with city staff to draw up a comprehensive bikeway plan through the year 2010.

Capital City Cyclists (CCC), the local bike club, and other area cyclists have battled city hall steadily for four years on issues of bicycling education and safety, bikeway construction, and recognition of the bicycle as a serious alternative to the automobile. And a majority of Commissioners consistently argued:

- 1) There were few bicyclists in Tallahassee;
- 2) They used their bicycles for recreation and;
- 3) Their area of travel was concentrated in and around the city's universities.

The image, strength, and persistence of local bicyclists in Tallahassee couldn't have been more wrong.

When the city dropped two proposed bikeway construction projects after local businesses, in one case, and adjacent property owners in another, objected, bicyclists began turning out in great numbers at City Commission meetings. The city's original plan, approved by the Metropolitan Planning Organization in 1980, budgeted bikeway construction through 1986. Bikeway construction was to be routine on all new construction and reconstruction of city roads.

By June 1984, the city's bicyclists were keenly aware of the need to bring their constituency to the City Commission. At the June 12 Commission meeting more residents were present at the meeting for the bicycling issue than had ever turned out for any other issue at a City Commission meeting.

This growing dissatisfaction on the part of a growing number of city residents prompted the City Commission earlier this year to request that a survey be conducted to determine the demand for bikeways in Tallahassee. The results, released in September, showed overwhelming support for bikeways and increased city expenditures for bikeway construction. Over ninety percent of the individuals polled indicated a strong willingness to pay for construction of bikeways. A majority would pay bike licensing fees while nearly everyone supported the concept of spending tax dollars for bikeway construction. And most importantly, over ninety percent of the respondents felt that bikeways should be added when a road is scheduled for reconstruction. It is rare, commented the FSU study team that conducted the survey, that you can find an issue where such an overwhelming majority of community residents agree.

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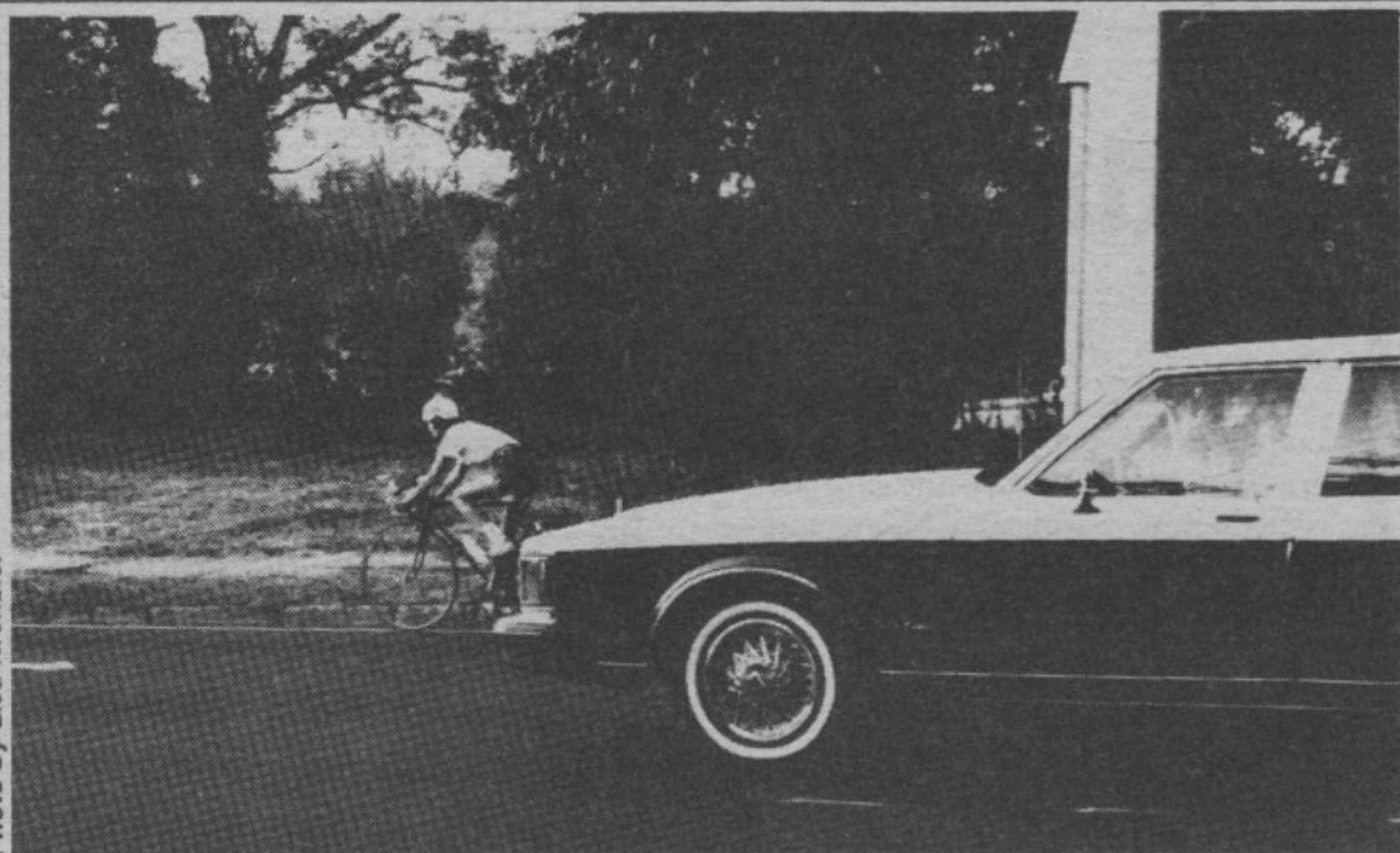


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# Tallahassee's Changing Bikeway

## Philosophy

Photo by Lisa Krehbiel



Almost fifty percent of the respondents were daily or frequent riders. Most ride their bikes for recreation or exercise, and frequent riders were found to live in areas surrounding the universities. But what surprised the Commission was the number of bicyclists who commute to and from work (9.5%) and the high percentage of users outside the university area.

At the Commission's recent meeting in early October, with the Commission chamber once again filled with bicyclists, they voted to review the 1980 plan and appoint an advisory committee, but bikeway construction would be concentrated in those areas of the city where the need was greatest. Commissioner Jack McLean, who called for the review of the bike plan, argued that the city was spending money to create bikeways in a haphazard manner, without directing the money to those areas with the greatest bike use. Bill Armstrong, representing Capital City Cyclists, argued instead that "...you cannot predict where a bicycle is going to be."

The crux of the conflict over bikeways is whether the bicycle is a form of transportation, or a form of recreation that can be restricted to certain roads. Dan Burden, the Bicycle Coordinator for Florida's Department of Transportation (DOT) pointed out at the October 9 meeting how Florida leads the nation as both a role model, and in providing technical expertise in developing programs in bikeway planning and bicycle education. "Today, every roadway funded with state money will be designed with the bicycle in mind," Burden argued that there has been a change of philosophy at DOT and by the State Legislature as a result of something the public wants. "We have left behind the luxury of thinking about places where we expect bicyclists to be," he said.

### "You cannot predict where a bicyclist is going to be."

As part of the review and development of a comprehensive plan, the Commission voted to plan adult commuter routes where they are needed primarily in the northwest and southwest parts of town, and to give preference in planning bikeways to routes that can be created along existing streets through methods that don't cost much. The most controversial decision of the Commission was a change in city policy heretofore: to provide bikeways on new construction projects, or reconstruction, on a case by case basis, instead of automatically. Mayor Spriggs, long a supporter of city bikeways, called this move backwards.

"To some degree it weakened the bikeway program," Spriggs said. "It was very clear (before) that the presumption was in favor of bikeways on all connecting and arterial roads. Now we're facing an individual determination every time."

Bicyclists, having at long last gained the recognition of the entire Commission, were more positive. "I feel they're heading in the right direction," commented Bill Armstrong. "This is what we were looking for four years ago—a comprehensive plan for a comprehensive need."

Though the path for bikeways still may not be paved, bicyclists have brought recognition to an issue whose constituency continues to grow. And the Commission has strengthened the issue with a recognized committee and a plan which they will eventually mark with their stamp of approval.



Pedaling in Tallahassee traffic.



Photo by Lisa Krehbiel

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# Working On A Solid Foundation

by Ira Shorr

The massive house sat precariously on a cliff. It wasn't the precipice that posed the danger per se. The ground under the structure was solid and reassuring; no runaway rocks or sliding dirt offered intimations of a pending collapse. It was the house itself that issued the threat.

Perched high on wooden legs that had once been cause for boastful pride, the house now shook in the wind. It seemed to stammer a creaky warning any time someone walked up the stairs. Years of exposure and apathy had rendered the foundation vulnerable and the house was not shy about telling the family that lived there.

The curious thing was that nobody who lived in the house seemed to care. They all went on living as if the fragile pillars would last forever. "This house was built to last," they reminded each other, as if looking backward would insure the future.

The sound of rotting lumber chips falling to the ground became a lullaby of indifference. "That's just the house settling," they would say. "They all do that."

One morning the spell of inertia was broken by Helen's scream. She awoke from a dream in which the house had fallen to its wooden knees and pitched headlong down the abyss. Grateful to be awake and alive, Helen rushed outside to inspect the underside of the house. She was horrified by what she saw.

The wooden supports were a sickly, peeling gray. Her hand brushed one beam and strips of wood fell to the ground. She could see the posts pitch slightly as someone crossed the living room floor above her.

Propelled by a sense of urgency, Helen bounded up the first few steps, remembered what she had just witnessed, and delicately walked the rest of the way. Once on the landing she burst into the living room.

"We are in trouble! This house is standing on borrowed time. If we let those

beams go for much longer, we'll all wake up one night to the sound of our home crashing down the cliff face," she said.

Helen's words fell upon stunned faces. An unspoken vow of silence had been broken. Finally, Ron answered: "What are you getting so emotional about? Are you trying to get us upset? This house was built to last forever, remember, that's what we were told. You don't know a thing about construction so why should we listen to you?"

Helen roped in her anger and said, "I know what I see, and this house will not last much longer unless we fix it."

The others began to fidget in their seats. As if rotating on a single neck they turned towards Ron. "Listen Helen," he said. "You're upset, no clear judgment can come from such high emotion. We all live here, and we've never seen anything that threatens us. Why don't you lie down and rest?"

Ron's words seemed to have a soothing effect. The rest of the family wanted to believe there was no danger, so they did. Bill said, "Ron's right, things have never been better around here. Besides none of us know anything about building. If the experts say the house will last, that's good enough for me." And he went out to work in his garden, which rested between the house and the cliff face. If the house collapsed it would take the vegetables with it as it plummeted down the cliff.

Helen was incredulous that her family could ignore such a clear and present danger. Myriad feelings surfaced in her consciousness. She wanted to reach out and shake her entire family as they returned their attention to the tv screen. She wanted to shout out her anger and cry out her hurt. She wanted to gather her belongings and flee. But this last thought was erased as a series of images played across her mind. In a burst of time travel she relived many loving moments in the house. It had sheltered, nurtured, and entertained her. She could never leave it to die.

She stepped through her reverie onto the porch and looked out across the garden to the rocks below. Sarah and Michael appeared on either side of her and Sarah whispered, "We want to help you fix the house."

Helen gently touched Sarah's cheek and smiled wearily. She knew that this was the start of something that would not let her go until her home was safe. She also realized that many more members of the family would have to get involved if they were to reverse the spiralling damage to their support system.

The three of them spent a portion of each day pouring over books on carpentry. It was like learning a foreign language. Tentatively they experimented with different approaches to replacing the rotten wood. Tension tightened around them as they realized how much work needed to be done in such a short time. Being ignored by their housemates raised the emotional stakes.

"If they only took a little time each day, together we could save this house," said Michael. After a particularly trying afternoon he said, "Maybe they're right. Maybe this house is stronger than we think." Sarah and Helen surrounded him in their arms and they fell to giggling about the plight of The Three Housekateers.

Often Helen would find herself hammering with her tears falling to the ground in rhythm with her strokes.

One rainy afternoon a glow of light shone underneath the house. It came from the presence of three family members who brought food, tools and an eagerness to participate. Helen, Sarah and Michael felt like kids at a birthday party.



Now doubt and fear mingled with laughter and hope. And a strange thing happened. The wood had been chipping away as if it were a clock ticking towards an alarming end. But the added energy of loving hands had a curious effect. There was a subtle slowing of deterioration as if the house itself was trying to save its own life. Its survival was now up in the air, resting in the hearts and minds of those whose help was so desperately needed.

*Ira Shorr works with the Tallahassee Peace Coalition (TPC), and is a frequent contributor to SPECTRUM. TPC has a monthly newsletter which helps members keep in touch with local peace efforts and congressional legislation on survival issues. He can be reached at P.O. Box 431, Tallahassee, FL 32302; 222-5845.*

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# An Index of Past Issues

I've always wanted to do an index for SPECTRUM — for one thing, it makes a great excuse for keeping stacks of old issues around. Having a computer brought the idea into the realm of workability.

Being my first attempt at indexing, a few words of explanation are in order: each article appears exactly once; that is, there is no cross-referencing. This is not because I don't like the idea, but a concession to space and time constraints.

The following index lists articles published in the last two of SPECTRUM's six years of existence. The current issue is not included, as it was not yet complete when I put the index together.

The format should be mostly self-explanatory, but the numbers in the right-most column need to be explained. They are the issue number, followed after a colon by the page number the article begins on in that issue. FB

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