

Ometepe Teachers' Visit Charms Bainbridge Island !



Maria Estela with Hudson Family

My Experience on Bainbridge Island

*By Maria Estela Alvarez Gonzalez, Tagüizapa, Isla de Ometepe, Nicaragua
(in her own English)*

My experience on Bainbridge Island was very important in my life because I got to know many people, another culture and customs. The most important aspects are the relationships, love, peace, and comprehension between myself and the people that I met.

I practiced my English and I learned to eat new foods! But the most essential aspect of my trip was working with the children in Alice Mendoza's elementary school class.

All the people that I met will always be in my heart and in my memories. For me, all the people I met are very special. Thank you very much: to God and the BOSIA organization, and especially to the Quitslund and Esterberg families and to the Hudson, Flores, and Moga families.

Thank You!

A Month's Stay on Bainbridge Island

*By Ana Petrona Mendoza Bravo , La Flor, Isla de Ometepe, Nicaragua
Translated by Siri Kushner*

I consider that my visit to Bainbridge Island was of great importance. I lived new experiences above all with the people that I met and I feel that my stay on Bainbridge helped me to learn more with respect to the language. I thank very much Señor Kim (Esterberg) who, as a teacher, helped me in our daily classes and I know that what I learned I will put to use at my school here on Ometepe.

Also, there were many people who helped me and that gave me great satisfaction.

The biggest surprise I experienced was the cold and the snow I watched the day after my arrival. In addition, I appreciated the new technology, the gifts that I received, and the people who were interested in meeting us and sharing with us their support.

The observation that I can make is that this island is very different from my Island in its customs, ideals, and other things. But I am very thankful to have been there during that month because I had the opportunity to live and share with many good-hearted people. God has given this to them and I felt very comfortable with these families that welcomed me and since then I know I have other families that it will be difficult to forget - they will live forever in my

cont'd pg 2



Petrona with Mateo Flores

memories.

I thank BOSIA for having given me the opportunity to travel in this exchange of cultures and language - an experience that was very beneficial for myself.

I only say thank you very much for your good will.

The Bainbridge side of the visit

Quotes from Islanders who spent time with the teachers from Ometepe

Jorge Flores: Having the opportunity to host Maria Estela and Petrona was as much of a learning experience for them as it was for Tasha, Mateo and me. In many ways their visit allowed us to see things that we have grown accustomed to with a new pair of eyes. For me, personally, it was reminiscent of my first impressions when I came to the US, the sense of wonder at seeing so many buildings, cars and development and so few people. I remember asking “*Y la gente, donde esta?*” It was wonderful to see how quickly and freely Maria Estela and Petrona opened their hearts to new acquaintances. Having Mateo spend time with them was also a wonderful grounding experience, that hopefully he will be able to build on during the years to come. “*Con esta visita se fortalecen los lazos entre las dos gentes.*” (With this visit we strengthen the ties between the two peoples).

Magaly McLaughlin: I was delighted to share my home and family with Petrona since I've stayed in her house. It was especially fun to see our son Mario and Petrona practicing the two languages together. In the high school, Petrona taught us a typical Nicaraguan counting song about an elephant on a spider's web. Maria Estela's playfulness and friendliness were wonderful assets she brought to the classroom.

Dana Quitslund: My favorite times were informal chats and joking: both Maria Estela and Petrona love a good laugh. This was also a great chance to get acquainted with Bainbridge neighbors who were involved in hosting the teachers.

Alice Mendoza: It was amazing how wonderfully easy it was to become friends despite language differences. Having the two teachers during our calendar project brought Ometepe "in our midst." When they left, there were tears and hugs and all the children wrote notes to them. They miss them very much and can't wait to go visit them on Ometepe!

Ela Esterberg: One experience I loved sharing with the two teachers was going up to the highest place they had ever been --the 42nd floor of a “*rascacielo!*” (skyscraper) in Seattle. Our ears popped in the elevator; we saw the lakes, the Sound and all the mountains that surround this big city.

Myra, Tom and Clair Hudson: Our time hosting Maria Estela flew, but we will not forget evenings of laughter, music and conversations about our lives and our countries.

Bainbridge Ometepe Sister Islands Association

Co-Editors

Yanira Cuellar, Ela Esterberg and
Christine Llobregat

Tech support

David Mitchell

PO Box 4484

Rollingbay, WA USA 98061-0484

Phone: 206 842 8148

FAX: 206 842 6907

E-mail: info@bosia.org

<http://www.bosia.org>

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Kim and Ela Esterberg and friends
Non-profit organization

A Journey of the Heart as Well as the Mind

By Karen & Ed Kushner

It's now ten days since our return from visiting our daughter, Siri, BOSIA's office co-manager and long-term volunteer on *la Isla de Ometepe*. To say that our visit to Ometepe exceeded our expectations is to understate our experience. Among other things, we accomplished our missions to deliver a new TV/VCR and a Spanish language version of the new BOSIA video to the Sister Islands office in Altagracia and to return home with 20 pounds of select Class A new crop green coffee beans from Hacienda Magdalena. Still, although we are now back into familiar Bainbridge Island routines, our thoughts and our emotions have yet to settle down and permit us to fully return to our life here. We're becoming reconciled to the reality that our lives will never be quite the same. We miss the early morning crowing of Doña Dora's roosters, the whir of the *molina* grinding her neighbors' corn into meal, the un-syncopated clomp-clomp-clomp of cartwheels in the street, the cheerful greetings from Siri's Nica colleague, Dorita, and the beautiful, smiling faces of children dressed in blue and white school uniforms. Everywhere we went, we were greeted and hosted by Nicas in the warmest, most hospitable, generous and genuine manner

imaginable. We were thrilled to see that our daughter has adapted well to the pace and texture of life on Ometepe and, in turn, has been warmly welcomed and integrated into the *Isla* community. With Siri as our personal guide and interpreter, we came to have more than a passing familiarity with the Ometepe bus "system", circumnavigated both *Volcan Concepción* and *Volcan Maderas*, delivered mail from Bainbridge to a number of Ometepe residents, and met literally dozens of people whose lives have been touched by previous BOSIA visits and activities: several families who have previously hosted Bainbridge Island High School students, including Arlington Barahona's family in Moyogalpa (who hosted Siri during her visits to Ometepe in Spring 1995 and 1998); the teachers, staffs and families of several of the schools which have been the focus of Sister Islands construction projects, including those of the pueblo of Las Pilas (where a primary school is now being built using community labor and local building supplies purchased with funds generated by the Wilkes Elementary Calendar Project; Bernabé Lopez and other members of the Hacienda Magdalena coffee cooperative; Jon Roise,

the Director of the *Sí a la Vida* Project as well as the staff and some of the boys (formerly street kids); Alcides Flores, the Director of *Projekt Ometepe-Alemania* now building housing for the poorest island residents, and some of these families with new houses. In large measure, the acceptance we experienced was clearly a result of the enormous reservoir of good will and trust which has been generated by previous Sister Islands delegations, reciprocal visits and cooperative activities. And now, we think Dorita and Siri's work through the BOSIA office in Altagracia has also been instrumental in strengthening these bonds.

Why it took us so long to finally make a visit to Ometepe is a bit hard to explain, especially since we've been BOSIA supporters for many years. Having been there once, however, there is no doubt we'll go back because (with apologies to poet Rachel Field), "If once you've slept on THAT island, you'll never be quite the same."



The Master Goes To the Mountain

by David Mitchell

David Dessinger, owner and roastmaster at Pegasus Coffee on Bainbridge Island accompanied me to Ometepe on a brief trip in January. The occasion was a meeting with the Ometepe coffee growers about how to sell their coffee to markets other than Bainbridge and the Gulf Islands. Also at the meeting was Paul Katzeff, owner of Thanksgiving Coffee in Fort Bragg, California and incoming president of the Specialty Coffee Association of America. The visit provided an opportunity for the farmers to learn about a phase of fine coffee production they don't normally encounter; the roasting and cupping (comparison tasting) of coffee. David had brought samples of green coffee from other locations in Central America and in Africa, and a small test roaster. He roasted these samples along with Ometepe coffee, and then taught the farmers how to uniformly brew and taste the different coffees. Ometepe coffee performed well in the tasting, and the farmers were gratified their coffee held up to the competition.



David Dessinger explains cupping to farmers at Coop. CDC

Coffee 103 - Fair Traded

by David Mitchell

Coffee passes through several hands from bush to cup. The farther along you are in this chain the more likely your children will have shoes.

Over the past 20 years a movement has grown up, first in Europe and Canada and more recently in the United States, that seeks to tip the balance of trade a bit in favor of the poor. Called alternative trade or fair trade, the movement guarantees farmers a living wage. It puts a real safety net under commodities farmers by specifying a minimum price they'll receive for their crops. In Europe the movement goes under the name Max Havelaar (<http://www.maxhavelaar.nl>) after a novel written in 1859 by Douwes Dekker about the abuse of coffee workers in Dutch East India. More recently fair trade has been championed in the United States by TransFair USA (<http://www.transfairusa.org>). Coffee, tea, cocoa, and bananas are the commodities that Max Havelaar covers. TransFair USA certifies coffee and tea.

For fair trade, first the floor price is established. This is an estimate of the average cost, plus a reasonable profit, for growers. For arabica coffee the world-wide price has been US \$1.26 for several years. If the coffee market price goes higher, the farmers receive more. But prices often fall to below eighty cents, far less than it costs the farmers to grow and harvest their crops, never mind a profit. In a fair trade transaction, the price never falls below \$1.26 per pound.

Max Havelaar and TransFair call for two premiums on top of the base price: five cents per pound for cooperatives, and fifteen cents per pound for certified organic coffee. TransFair and Max Havelaar certifications have other requirements, as important in the long term as the guaranteed prices are in the short term. Fair trade is seen as an on-going process, and the growers and importers are encouraged to get to know one another. Buyers must provide financing to the grow-

ers, because local access to credit is often nonexistent. Fair trade rewards healthy farming practices by offering a premium for organic food. (<http://www.ocia.org>) Needless to say, the Sister Islands Association has established long-term relations with Ometepe's coffee farmers. With our friends in the Ometepe-Gulf Islands Friendship Association we've bought coffee since 1991, just after the US embargo against trade with Nicaragua was lifted. The Sister Islands Association has used the Max Havelaar formula, with a modification, since 1996. In addition to the two Havelaar premiums our Association pays an additional premium to reward the ongoing commitment of the farmers to grow shade coffee. This preserves vital habitat for local and migratory birds (<http://www.seattleaudubon.org/Coffee/home.html>). For the past two years that premium for our coffee has also been fifteen cents.

This is the third in a series on coffee: (101=organic, 102=shade-grown)

BOSIA Projects Update

by Emily Mansfield

It is almost overwhelming to consider all the connections that are taking place through projects this year. The Bainbridge partners are mentioned below. In every project, there are also Ometepinos donating time and labor.

Balgüe Community Garden: With financial backing from Dwight Davis and seeds and logistical support by Jane Wentworth, the Balgüe community garden is under way! Families will get small plots (like our "Pea Patches") in the community-owned land near their *Casa Comunal*, and share tools and seeds.

Balgüe Literacy Project: Funded by Grace Church, the project began in early February. Thirty-five students (adult and children) received materials and are now learning to read and write. Two teachers work part-time on the project (*see teachers' letter and translation on page 10*).

El Madroñal School will receive a new roof,

paint, window blinds and a new room thanks to Seabold Methodist Church and the Grainger family. Seabold is re-roofing its church and wanted to do the same for a community on Ometepe!

Sí a la Vida's Ometepe Home: the water system BOSIA supported for the street kids' project is now complete.

The Sintiope School will build a fence with financial contribution from Bethany Lutheran Church and some labor from the Deines family this March.

Sacramento will also add onto its school with funds from Bethany Lutheran and the Patmont family. Some Mansfield-Heppenstalls will provide a little (unskilled!) labor during the March trip.

Las Pilas will receive construction help for its new classroom when the Bainbridge High student delegation arrives in March. The materials for this project were purchased by Alice Mendoza's third grade class through their calendar project.

La Concepción will also get help from BHS students for building a new school playground.

Merida is undertaking a big project, supported by proceeds from our *Café Oro* sales and labor by BHS students. The town has long wanted their own high school so the kids don't have to travel so far (or not be able to go at all, which is often the case). This will get started as soon as ownership of the land is certified.

Projects Seeking Partners

· Ruben Darío School's Grupo de Danza Infantil. \$400 for 48 dance costumes.

· San Marcos School. Fence, small room and teaching materials. \$800.

· Tilgüe School. Mesh fence around new school. \$2,500.

· San Silvestre School - electrical cable. \$425.

· Balgüe Community Sewing Classes. (cost not known)

· *Centro de Salud*, Altagracia - paint for the birthing clinic - \$180.

· Ruben Darío school - special blackboard for monthly mural creations - \$36.80

A Return visit to *la Isla Hermana*

by Nora Ferm

When I returned to visit my family and friends in December, it really felt like I was coming home. I got off the bus alone, but by the time I reached my house I was like the Pied Piper, with a large group of kids holding my hands, carrying my bags, or running ahead to announce my arrival to my mother.

In the three times that I have visited my family in La Flor, beginning in 1996, it has been wonderful to be able to watch the children grow up. My youngest brother, Osman, is now seven years old, and this year for the first time I was able to really talk with him and develop a close friendship. Osman was especially fascinated by the bedtime stories about Curious George and Peter Rabbit that I read to the children every night. For the next week, whenever he thought he was about to get into trouble with his mother, he defended himself by saying he wasn't doing anything bad, he was just being curious, like Jorge!

My planned project was to take school photos of La Flor's 300 primary school kids, but it proved impossible since it was the middle of their winter vacation. I ended up taking photos at the preschool and sixth grade graduation ceremonies. I also took team photos

for one of La Flor's soccer teams after an exciting victory against Moyogalpa. I quickly became known as the visiting photographer, and some days I could hear "Nora! *Saca una foto!*" everywhere I went.

Traveling alone instead of as part of a delegation was a very different and special experience, one that really cemented my connection to the people of Ometepe. My friends in La Flor also realized that this was a particularly special visit: I had returned simply because I missed them. The *despedidas* (farewell parties) were hard as always, but slightly less sad because I feel confident that my ties to the island are now strong enough to keep bringing me back for years to come.



Emily's Family

by Emily Mansfield

In March five members of the Deines family and three Heppenstal-Mansfields travelled together as an "extended family" to Ometepe to stay in the communities of Sintiope and Sacramento. Bethany Lutheran Church and the Patmont family provided financial assistance for the materials for school improvements in these communities. Our delegates stayed with families and worked for several days on the construction projects alongside community members who are volunteering their time and labor. Maria Clara Rekow's Spanish class at Hyla Middle School sent school supplies as well as letters to future pen pals. For several years, the BOSIA board has talked about encouraging "family" delegations — an opportunity for parents and kids to travel together. In this delegation, the "kids" are all old enough to be making the trip on their own; nevertheless, we are excited to have members of families sharing the experience!

HEP Cats Swinging Down to Ometepe

By Mark Cohen

Plans are under way for the Swinging Hep Cats of Bainbridge Island, a teenage swing dance group, to visit Ometepe this August for two weeks. While on Ometepe, the dance team will perform several times at various venues to share this unique part of our culture with our friends on Ometepe. The group also plans to conduct workshops in the schools to teach swing dance to interested Ometepino students. Members of the team also hope to learn some of the local dances from dance groups on the island. In addition, we hope to be able to arrange at least one performance in Managua. The Hep Cats was started in 1998 by

Mark Cohen and Sheila Phillips to help Bainbridge teens master a healthy lifelong activity while providing a safe, fun and energetic social focus to their teenage years. Beginning with a handful of teens, the team has grown to fifty members, ranging in age from 11 to 18. They come from throughout Kitsap County and the Seattle metropolitan area. The Hep Cats have won a number of regional

and national awards for their creative dance routines. They placed second at the Pacific NW Lindyhop Championships last May, and fourth at the prestigious US Open National Swing Dance Championships in southern California last year. Mark hopes to take about 12 of the senior members to Ometepe this summer.

On Friday, May 26, the Swinging Hep Cats will give a benefit performance at the BPA Playhouse to help raise funds for the trip. This will be a special night, with dances by the troupe guaranteed to amaze and delight you. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to see the Swinging Hep Cats and to help them go to Ometepe!



Other Upcoming Delegations

May 2000: Another email delegation will extend service in Altagracia and to Hacienda Magdalena. Our office on Ometepe reports that the first *capacitación* sessions for e-mail systems will begin soon at the *instituto* (high school) in Moyogalpa.

August 2000: Swing dance group (Hep Cats) and possible summer student delegation. Chaperones will include Mark Cohen, Dale Spoor, and Jim Starrs.

November 2000: Coffee picking delegation. Want to learn first-hand how coffee gets from the shrub to your cup? Lee Robinson will lead birding expeditions as an added treat. Call David Mitchell at 206 842 6907 for details.

And Now.. a Word from our Office

by *Siri Kushner*, our long-term volunteer in Altagracia

Tuesday, 22 February 2000

It is a quiet and lovely evening in Altagracia. A gentle and welcome cool breeze is blowing through the office and the street is alive as usual with a chorus of soft voices and whizzing bicycle tires. Behind that chorus I can hear the ever-present hum of the television, just another insect of the night... These sounds were once foreign to me, but they comfort me now and have become an expected part of my daily existence. Each day here on Ometepe seems to flow into the next like a river into the ocean, and each one is as rich as the days that have passed and as rich as those yet to come. Life in the office rarely experiences a dull moment...if nothing else there are the ants to avoid (in sitting down to write this little piece it's been brought to my attention that there is a large ant family defending our unused computer as their home); the mouse to chase (he/she is a nice little friend, very well-mannered and quiet, but not exactly what we need around the office); the nest to watch (a lovely little ground dove built her nest above the back door and I watched the nest for weeks until one day I realized that I was no longer looking at just one set of tail feathers but three!). The list could go on... however, the most obvious life to pass through this office are the people. Some days are busier than others but not a one passes by without movement. Every morning there are kids who come by selling *mandarinas* and tomatoes and in the afternoon *caramellos de coco*, *churritos*, *enchiladas*, and *cajeta de leche*. We have visitors from Pulman, Balgüe, Merida, El Madroñal, Santo Domingo, Tilgüe, Altagracia, Tagüizapa, Sintiope, Urbaite, Las Pilas, Los Ramos, San Jose del Sur, Sacramento, Moyogalpa, La Concha, La Flor...they come from all over the Island, some with business talk, others simply arrive with talk. I've learned so much just sitting here in the office rocking the afternoons away listening to the voices that call this Island home.

This little office has become a very special place for a lot of people and as each day flows into the next it will continue to be that special place. Ometepe is growing, just as any place or any person grows, and BOSIA is growing with her. In a not so distant past the name BOSIA didn't mean anything, but today, within this Island community, the name BOSIA is mentioned only with the highest of respect. We have become a part of the soft chorus of voices and bicycle tires that is heard throughout the streets of every community on this *Isla*. We have become an integral part of her daily existence.

Cultural heritage on Ometepe

by *Dora Gutierrez Traña* BOSIA office manager, Altagracia

My co-worker Siri, my family and I were resting and talking in the sitting room of my parents' house one Sunday, when suddenly we heard many people working very hard, but they were very happy, too! People from Altagracia were trying to move the *Idoles* (Mayan sculptures) into the land of the Catholic Church. They were moving them to prevent the Nicaraguan government from loaning the statues to the Louvre Museum in France.

Now many people in Altagracia know the importance to protect the *Idoles*. They are very important because they are a representation of our archaeology, our cultural identity and a creation of our ancestors. Many foreign people know and visit Ometepe Island to see these idols that until recently were in front of the Church, but now are inside the yard of the Church!

Many foreign people do not know about them, too, but with this situation maybe many people will come and visit Ometepe Island and her *Idoles*. I believe that the foreign people are in agreement with the position of the people from Altagracia to protect the Cultural Heritage of our Ometepe Island.



Building and Expanding our Dreams Together

by Kim Esterberg

We were bouncing down the road, a little late, since the Moyogalpa bus was tardy leaving Altagracia. Siri and Dora sat in front of Ela and me, and we were off for our meeting with *Directora* Soledad in San José del Sur. Siri had our precious cargo on her lap. It was a small box filled with hand bound books, written by the children of Lynn Freeman's fourth grade class at Ordway Elementary on Bainbridge, and translated by Cindy Beck's high school Spanish classes. Each book was illustrated and beautifully bound, again by the fourth graders. I thought of the tiny library in San Jose del Sur that we had visited in February and what a wonderful contribution these new books would make! Forty minutes (and twelve miles) later we could see Soledad and a group of children waiting by the side of the road in front of the San José del Sur School. We apologized for being late and we all went into the school. We were confronted by a greatly expanded library, one that covered one whole end of a classroom, and maps and charts all around the walls. A large poster on the wall proclaimed it to be "*La Biblioteca Comunal*" (the public library). We were all very impressed. Also, on the poster was a picture of the Bainbridge High School students in the 1999 student delegation. The community had used the "thank you money" (ten dollars per day that all the delegation participants put into a pot for some community project, to thank them for their collective hospitality), to buy all these materials and greatly expand their little library. We were very pleased, too, to present the new books as a contribution. We had with us just nine books but Lynn's class was working hard and there would soon be 27 books, all destined for this library. Soledad pointed out through the window at the construction going on in the schoolyard. The community was building two new classrooms (for the first two years of secondary school). This will mean that for the first time young people won't have to travel all the way to Moyogalpa or Altagracia for secondary school. In addition, nearest us was a third room. Soledad explained that this was their new library! The community had been so excited by all the materials they were able to purchase earlier that they wanted their library to have it's own proper location, not just one end of an existing classroom. Here is just one more example of our sister island projects blending with one another and inspiring deeper cooperative efforts on both our islands.

An A+ for Literacy Classes!

Apresiables Hermanos de la Isla de Bainbridge:

Reciban hasta donde se encuentren calurosos saludos. Queridos hermanos, nos dirigimos a Uds. con el proposito de expresarles nuestro agradecimiento por haber aceptado nuestro proyecto de enseñar al que no sabe leer por problemas economicos.

De todo corazon les decimos que Dios les bendiga por hacer que nuestros suenos como educadoras se haya empezado a hechar andar, ya que hemos iniciado nuestra labor con estas personas el siete de febrero del ano encorriente.

La primer colaboracion que recibimos nos ha ayudado en gran manera ya que le dimos a cada estudiante un cuaderno y un lapiz. Los estudiantes que asisten a clases son en total 35. Contestando la misiva enviada estamos de acuerdo en enviarles informes trimestrales es decir cada tres meses.

Att: Profesora Karla Saenz y Profesora Leybi Leyla Lopez M.

Much appreciated Brothers and Sisters on Bainbridge:

We send you warm greetings. Dear Brothers and Sisters, we would like to formally thank you for having accepted our project proposal to teach people who have been unable to learn to read due to economic problems. With all our hearts we ask that God bless you for helping us realize our dreams to become educators. We started our project on the seventh of February of this year. The first donation we received has already helped us a great deal. We were able to give each student a pencil and a notebook. There are 35 students who attend classes. We agree that it would be good to send progress reports every trimester, that is to say, every three months. We would also like to request that the funding be given to us every fifteen days.

Sincerely, Karla Saenz & Leybi Lopez (teachers)

translated by Asha Tran

Calendar an awesome success!



Ms. Mendoza's Third Graders at Wilkes Elementary presenting a check to the Sister Islands Association for \$6,361.00! These funds will be used for building dormitories for the ex-street kids (Sí a la Vida project) and for building a new classroom in Las Pilas.

The \$10.00 sales price was divided thus: \$6.15 for Ometepe, \$3.00 for earthquake relief in Turkey and \$0.85 for production! Kids truly can make a difference! We understand this year there was 100% parent participation in the project. Congratulations and *Gracias* for all your hard work!

This Spring's High School Delegation

By Susan Koch and Magaly McLaughlin

We have eighteen wonderful student delegates going this year — 12 seniors, 5 juniors and 1 sophomore. They were chosen from some 40 applicants, all of whom were exceptionally qualified. It is very difficult to turn interested students away.

In December we began our preparatory workshops on getting passports, vaccinations, medical forms, health concerns, and gathering material aid. At our second workshop we saw a poignant video of the history of Nicaragua. We were very pleased to have the visiting Nicaraguan teachers, Petrona and Maria Estela attend and give us their comments and perspectives.

Our third workshop was an overnight retreat at Seabold Church. This was the first time we have done this and it was a total success. We met at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 4th and began decorating boxes and posters for material aid collection. Food was planned and prepared by the three "town groups": Las Pilas and Merida prepared dinner and dessert and La Concha made breakfast. The food was fabulous and we chaperones didn't have to do anything! This was one way for the students to begin bonding and to practice working together. After dinner everyone shared with the visiting Nicaraguan teachers the photo albums they plan to take with them; we had skits of possible situations (e.g. what do you do when your host family offers you alcohol, or when you are suddenly required to give a speech in Spanish in front of a group!!); Nancy Quitslund did her fabulous packing demonstration; still later we danced, played games and talked until finally the last giggles died down around 2:00 a.m.

After breakfast the next morning came the wonderful interactive culture workshop by Asha Esterberg-Tran. We acted out more complicated situations using informative handouts on cultural sensitivity, etc. After cleanup, we worked all together in the yard as thanks to the Church for lending us their facility. The comments from the students were all very positive and encouraged us to include this retreat as a regular part of the orientation process.

The student delegation continued preparing with more workshops for this most incredible experience which awaits them! The eighteen students and six chaperones left on March 24 and return April 8.

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Annual Membership

Living Lightly	\$10	Individual	\$20
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Bainbridge Ometepe Sister Islands Association

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Rollingbay, WA USA 98061-0484

Join Us!

◆ Membership is open to all who support our mission of *encouraging mutual understanding, education, friendship, cultural and peaceful exchanges between the peoples of the US and Nicaragua*

◆ Non-profit organization

◆ Registered with the State and Federal Governments

◆ Our membership list is not for rent or sale

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Monday, April 17 at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, April 22 at 12:30 p.m. *Islas Hermanas*, the new Sister Islands video will be aired on KCTS Channel 9 in Seattle. Mark it on your calendar and make a party of it! Videos are for available for \$20.00 plus tax. Contact David Mitchell at 206 842 6907, email davidm@bosia.org or see <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com>.

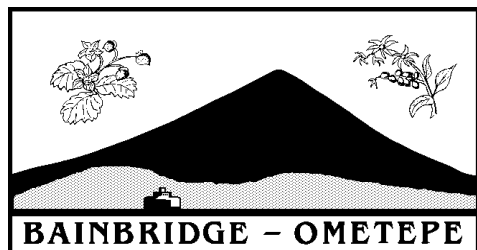
Friday, May 26 at 7 p.m. Swing Dancers' fund-raiser at BPA for their trip to Ometepe (see page 7).

Thanks to "The Traveler" for your \$1,300.00 donation from your December sales. It'll be used for library materials in the new San Jose del Sur library (see page 9).

Student Survey planned: Over the summer, we want to do a survey/evaluation of past Student trips. We need addresses (especially e-mail) for past student delegates and chaperones. Please contact BOSIA (addresses on page 2) with this information.

Warm Sister Island sweatshirts are now available for us Northern Islanders: Hooded sweatshirts are \$ 25.00; Crew neck \$20. Contact Lee Robinson at 206 842 0774 or lee@bosia.org.

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WAIT! Don't just recycle this —Pass it on to a friend!



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