



FACING A NEW ERA — College president Dr. Mark Sanchez welcomes some staff and students back to campus. SC at is 30 percent capacity. **Photo by Alexandra Demontano**

STUDENTS ‘GLAD’, ‘SCARED’ TO RETURN

Southwestern College is dipping a toe in the murky water to see if it is alright for everyone to get back into the pool.

Still kind of chilly. A year-and-a-half has passed since the late evening announcement on March 9, 2020 that SC would temporarily close to “help flatten the curve.” It has been 18 months of unprecedented chaos and compassion, quitting and pressing on, hiding out and stepping up, improvisation and

SPECIAL PULLOUT SECTION COLLEGE SURVIVES 18 MONTHS IN CYBERSPACE

moments of brilliance. A special four-page pullout special edition of The Sun is our attempt to analyze what happened so far during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and what is still to come. Students share their points of view

as we strive to describe a complicated mosaic of what Phillip Graham called “the first draft of history.”

It is an impressionistic piece culled from the collective memories of students, staff and members of the community still fighting

through bewilderment and frustration, but also slowly embracing hope.

It is also unfinished. Our COVID exile trundles along and may not end until August of 2022. Taco shop doyenne Delores “Lolita” Farfan’s mantra “Patience is the essence of fine Mexican food” may be instructive for Southwestern College and all of us who want back on campus. Patience is essential.

— The Editors

A STEP FORWARD



Long delayed by corruption, construction crises and COVID, the new Southwestern College Performing Arts Center opened to a rousing serenade by SC’s renowned Mariachi Garibaldi. District taxpayers passed bond measures in 2008 and 2016 to fund the \$66 million facility. The 2011-12 South Bay Corruption Scandal stalled the project, as did unexpected construction issues, including discovery of an underground spring. Its main auditorium seats 540 and an experimental black box holds 151. *Photos by Alexandra Demontano*



Firearm violence soars in America

Gun violence prevention group works to reduce South County homicides

BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA
News Editor

Activists at San Diegans for Gun Violence Prevention have a lofty long-term goal.

They would like to put themselves out of business.

If 2020 is any indication, however, SD4GVP will have plenty to do for years to come

At least 43,563 Americans died from gun violence last year, about 20,000 from murder, 24,000 by suicide.

2021 is on pace for more than 50,000 gun deaths across America. San Diego County has already suffered from at least 115 gun-related murders.

Gun violence is also on the rise in areas served by Southwestern College. Crime data provided by cities and San Diego County officials estimates more than 1,500 violent crimes in the South Bay last year. Most involved guns.

America’s love-hate relationship with firearms goes back to Revolutionary War times and the USA has by far the highest per capita rate of gun ownership in the world. In 2017 the U.S. population was 326.5 million. Americans owned 393.3 million guns, according to the Small Arms Survey. Those are just the guns they could count. There are likely millions more.

GUNS PG 2

COLLEGE’S PLEDGE TO DREAMERS — YOU ARE WELCOME AND SAFE HERE

BY YAHIR IBARRA
Staff Writer

In this Age of Disinformation college staff has a clear message for undocumented students: You are safe here.

Southwestern College was one of the first institutions of higher education to pass formal policies to protect undocumented students from ICE and the Border Patrol. Angel Salazar, an SC financial aid specialist,

said the rules are still in place.

“We do not share (immigration status) information with any outside agencies, with ICE or anyone else,” he said. “This is confidential information.”

Salazar said another myth involves financial aid.

“A lot of times students don’t think they are eligible for financial aid, especially some of our undocumented

DREAMERS PG 2

★ Murillo accepts one-year post at Santa Barbara City College

Former president’s retirement is short



DR. KINDRED MURILLO

BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA
News Editor

“The Fixer” has a new gig. Former Southwestern College president Dr. Kindred Murillo, who announced her retirement last August and left in mid-March, has accepted a one-year interim presidency at Santa Barbara City College. Murillo had served just over four years at SC and stepped aside three-

and-a-half months prior to the expiration of her contract.

Murillo came to SC on the heels of a series of racially-charged controversies that led to the dismissal of her predecessor, Dr. Melinda Nish. Her mission upon arrival, she said, was to change the college’s culture to make it more inclusive. Murillo said she was successful.

MURILLO PG 2