

DISABILITY RIGHTS LEADER PLEDGES TO FIGHT ON



JUDY HEUMANN

★ *Legendary Heumann encourages 'feisty' activism*

BY ANETTE PEDROTTI
Staff Writer

Judy Heumann may be America's greatest civil rights leader that hardly anyone has ever heard of.

Few Americans have so profoundly changed the national landscape for so many.

Heumann is a disability warrior who served two presidents, has six honorary

doctorates and was described by the Washington Post as "a badass." Her recent appearance at Southwestern College attracted few but inspired virtually everyone in attendance. President Obama's Assistant Secretary of Education and Rehabilitative Services and subject of the Sundance award-winning 2020 documentary "Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution," Heumann said disabled Americans still have much to fight for.

"I want to see feisty disabled people change the world," she said. "If you're not loud in the disabled community, you're dead."

Like Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez, Heumann used peaceful but assertive civil disobedience to demand change. In 1977 she led the 28-day occupation of the federal Health, Education and Welfare offices in San Francisco to advocate for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which gave every disabled

person in the U.S. the right to attend public school. Previous to this landmark legislation, most disabled students were institutionalized rather than educated.

Some Southern members of Congress attempted to derail the legislation by drafting "separate but equal" laws for disabled students. That helped to draw able-bodied African-Americans into the cause, including the Bay Area's formidable Black Panther Party. Black

HEUMANN PG 2

SOUTH COUNTY HOMELESS

From the Mexican border in San Ysidro to the northern edge of National City and east to the slopes of SR 125, the region's homeless population has exploded. South Bay's homeless citizens share their travails and ask for help. *Special Section*



HONORARY DEGREE FOR ACTIVIST ARTIST

★ *'Mr. National City' Memo Cavada captured a generation's history*

BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA
News Editor

Beloved photographer Manuel "Memo" Cavada has his own mural in National City and a place in the hearts of generations of South Bay Chicanos.

Now he has a Southwestern College Honorary Degree.

Cavada is the college's first-ever posthumous recipient of its highest honor, thanks to a suggestion by SC President Dr. Mark Sanchez last semester. He was nominated by a



MEMO CAVADA

faculty member and selected by the Academic Senate. Cavada died in October 2020.

"Cavada dedicated his adult life to capturing people at their perfect

moment," read his nomination. "For more than 50 years he was ubiquitous in the San Diego-Tijuana region. The region's Chicanos smiled (when they saw him at an event) because they knew they were in the right place at the right time if Cavada was on scene loading 35mm film into his Kodak."

"Like a Chicano Forrest Gump, Cavada journeyed through history. He photographed nearly every Chicano Federation event since its formation in the early 1970s. Richard Nixon was president when he began photographing homecomings, proms, special

CAVADA PG 3

SI SE PUEDE!



Civil rights legend Dolores Huerta told an audience at the PAC that America is in an existential fight to preserve democracy. She urged Latinos, Catholics and Progressives to set aside differences on "wedge issues" like abortion and immigration to fight together for the preservation of civil rights and our form of elective government.

Photograph by Ernesto Rivera. **Back Page, P12**

Astronomy students lose a star attraction

Faculty criticizes plan to demolish planetarium without a replacement

BY CAMILA GONZALEZ
Editor-in-Chief

Southwestern College's iconic domed planetarium may soon disappear into a black hole with no replacement on the event horizon.

Professor of Astronomy Dr. Grant Miller said he and faculty colleagues were stunned to learn that the college plans to tear down the existing planetarium this summer before a replacement is built. Miller said the destruction of the planetarium will make it impossible to teach college-level astronomy and denies visiting K-12 students in the community a vital asset.

"The new gym was built before the old gym was torn down," he said. "The new theater was built before the old one was torn down. Other new buildings were built before old ones were built. Why is the planetarium the exception?"

Miller, who has taught astronomy for 30 years, said instruction would suffer substantially during the 2-3 years it is scheduled to take to build a new planetarium. Entire cohorts of SC students will receive inferior instruction, he said, because faculty will lack proper facilities and technology.

"There is nothing quite like sitting in the planetarium dome and seeing the things I have been talking about during the lecture," he said. "It is a disservice to the students and community (that) the college and the community will not have access to a planetarium."

Like many SC construction projects, plans for a new planetarium have been created, altered, cancelled, resurrected, rescheduled and redesigned in the past 13 years. Problems started shortly after the passage of Proposition R in November 2008 with the 2010-14 South Bay Corruption Scandal and the felony bribery convictions of former SC administrators Raj K. Chopra and Nicholas Alioto in 2014. SC's extraordinary administrative instability since 2002 has also caused multiple redesigns and start overs.

Despite all that, Miller said he and his



DR. GRANT MILLER

PLANETARIUM PG 3

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

Four survivors of the Holocaust urge Southwestern College students to carry forward their message of justice, humanity and peace. *Special Section*

Photo courtesy of
Judith Heumann



"I want to see feisty disabled people change the world. If you're not loud in the disabled community, you're dead."

Judith Heumann
DISABILITY RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Photo courtesy of AP Images

CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

HEUMANN: Led national movement for disabled rights

leaders said at the time that African-Americans "had been on the wrong end of the separate but equal bullshit for far too long" and were inspired to support the disability cause.

Black Panthers brought food and water to the protesters, helped bathe those who needed assistance and took on other care roles. When the FBI cut the phone lines, hearing impaired protesters used American Sign Language to communicate with allies on the outside. The sit-in lasted 28 days and Heumann's army of the disabled was victorious.

Psychology instructor Shannon Cappa, whose graduate work focused on the mental health and rights of disabled Americans, said Heumann changed history.

"She was the Malcolm X of the Disability Rights Movement," Cappa said. "She was and remains a fierce proponent for the rights of disabled Americans."

Heumann's next major protest again fueled national change. In 1990 she led the Capitol Crawl, an audacious rally in Washington D.C. At the end of the rally, 60 activists left behind their wheelchairs and crutches and crawled up the steps of the capitol building demanding the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA is considered the most important legislation in American history for the rights of the disabled.

"It was our Civil Rights bill," said Cappa.

Heumann said the ADA was only a first step. Too much of America is still inaccessible to its disabled citizens, she said, including its transportation and public education systems.

"If I am supposed to feel grateful for accessible bathrooms, when am I ever going to feel like an equal in the community?" she asked the SC audience.

Too many American institutions just follow the letter of the ADA laws but not the spirit, Heumann said. Cappa agreed.

"We are guilty of that here at Southwestern College," she said. "It's not about minimal compliance and checking off those boxes. ADA is about true inclusion. It is about Universal Design architecture that makes our facilities usable for disabled Americans. It is about disabled people having a seat at the table. Able bodied people, even well-intentioned people, cannot make decisions for the disabled."

Restrooms remain "ground zero" for legions of disabled people, Heumann said, because people who are worried about whether or not they will be able to urinate are often too afraid to venture out. Too many disabled people intentionally dehydrate themselves before boarding an airplane or going to school because they know they may not find a restroom they can use.

Cappa said restrooms remain a problem at SC because many of the doors are too heavy for people with disabilities to pull open or have handles that are too high to reach from a wheelchair.

"Then there's the issue of washing your hands," she said. "Oftentimes the soap is too high or there is no sink for people who are using a wheelchair."

"Crip Camp" is a revolutionary film, Cappa said, because it captures so much of the past half century of disability history in the United States. It is told primarily through the point of view of Heumann and other disabled Americans.



Photo courtesy of Tari Hartman Squire

"Having Judy Heumann at Southwestern College is as significant as any of the many civil rights leaders we have hosted.

Most people – even most well-educated people – do not know about the Disability Rights Movement. It was our Civil Rights Movement. Judy Heumann changed the world for disabled people. We have ADA because of Judy."

Shannon Cappa

SC PSYCHOLOGY INSTRUCTOR

The documentary begins with footage from the seminal Camp Jened in 1969 and moves on to the 1977 San Francisco sit-in. Originally scheduled for a theatrical release, "Crip Camp" was scuttled by the pandemic and is now available online.

Cappa said it was an honor to having a great American like Heumann speak to SC students and staff.

"Having Judy Heumann at Southwestern College is as significant as any of the many civil rights leaders we have hosted," she said. "Most people – even most well-educated people – do not know about the Disability Rights Movement. It was our Civil Rights Movement. Judy Heumann changed the world for disabled people. We have ADA because of Judy."

ONE PAINFUL STEP AT A TIME — Heumann led the Capitol Crawl, an emotional protest where disabled Americans left their wheelchairs and crutches to crawl up the steps of the U.S. Capitol demanding passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.



Photo courtesy of AP Images



Judy Heumann: Civil Rights Icon

- Contracted polio at 18 months and lost her ability to walk.
- Refused admittance to public schools by administrators who declared her a "fire hazard."
- Heumann's mother sued and Judy was admitted to the fourth grade where she studied with other disabled children in a basement.
- Degree in speech therapy from Long Island University in 1969.
- Founded Disabled in Action (DIA) in 1970.
- Denied her NY teaching license in 1970, again as a "fire hazard." She won a seminal lawsuit to become New York State's first teacher to use a wheelchair. She taught elementary school for three years.
- Helped develop 1974 Individuals with Disabilities Act as a Senate legislative assistant.
- Master's Degree in public health from UC Berkeley in 1975. Honorary doctorates from six universities.
- In 1977 led a 28-day sit-in to demand passage of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Supported by the Black Panthers, the San Francisco protest drew international news coverage.
- 1983-93, Co-founder and co-director of the World Institute on Disability.
- 1993-2001, appointed by President Bill Clinton as Assistant Secretary at the U.S. Dept. of Education for Special Education and Rehabilitation Services.
- 2002-06, Advisor on Disability and Development at the World Bank.
- 2010-17, appointed by President Barack Obama as Special Advisor on International Disability Rights for the U.S. State Dept. Donald Trump eliminated the position.

CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

CAVADA: Beloved photographer used his artistic gifts to capture and celebrate South Bay culture

assemblies and graduations at his alma mater Sweetwater High. When Chicano Park was born of protest in 1974, Cavada was there documenting it. As Salvador Barajas, David Avalos and Michael Schnorr began painting the park's murals, Cavada captured the progress. Since 1989 when Teatro Mascara Magica came to life, Cavada documented its revolutionary plays."

And he never charged a penny.

"Cavada and his cameras collected Chicano history and Mexican culture like Woody Guthrie chronicled the Great Depression, granting them immortality," read his nomination.

Friends of Cavada say he was always humble, but knew he was documenting his community's heritage.

"Someone needs to create a record of our history," he once said. "Besides, it's fun and I meet a lot of nice people doing things they are passionate about."

Cavada considered himself an OTNC homeboy and graduated from Sweetwater High in 1962. His childhood friend Aranda said their high school counselors almost never encouraged Latinos to pursue higher education. Cavada enlisted in the Air Force and became a Vietnam War hero, surviving a savage bombing attack that left him injured.

He returned home to recuperate, a Purple Heart recipient. Following his 1969 discharge, he used his GI Bill to attend Sacramento City College where he discovered his passion for photography and met his mentor, world-renowned nature photographer Ansel Adams.

Cavada said he was amazed by Adams' vision and determination to create great art. The pair camped on frigid plateaus to capture predawn moonrises, sat quietly for hours waiting for wildlife to drink from mountain streams and hiked through triple digits to be in perfect position for a desert sunset Adams imagined might await them.

Adams chuckled when Cavada once told him how amazed he was by the work Adams put in to capture landscapes at the perfect moment.

"Ain't half as hard as capturing people at the perfect moment," Adams told him.

Whenever he had time and money, Cavada would head to a remote or seldom documented part of Mexico to capture its rich, but eroding culture. His stunning catalogue of photographs includes rarely-photographed Tarahumara Indians, religious rituals, performing artists, laborers, food vendors and wildlife – all in vivid, life-affirming color. He had not completed his "The Spirit of Mexico" book before he died.

"Spirit of Mexico" was presented as an exhibit in the brand new Southwestern College Library and was one of the most popular, best attended exhibitions in college history, according to his nomination.

"Asked which was his favorite photograph, he pointed to a panoramic shot of a score of glorious monarch butterflies lined up on a taunt rope almost like soldiers anticipating inspection. He said he loved the monarchs because they represent hope and are messengers that travel between Heaven and Earth."

His friends say Cavada loved teenagers and young adults like a good teacher or coach. He was both. For decades he was a regular guest speaker at Southwestern College in photography, art and Spanish classes. He never forgot his start at a California community college and the *profe* who brought him to his mentor Ansel Adams.

A pair of prominent muralists made sure "Mr. National City" is remembered. In December Guillermo Aranda and Salvador Barajas unveiled a 10' x 22' mural of Cavada on the wall of the Chamber

Photo courtesy of National City Chamber Foundation

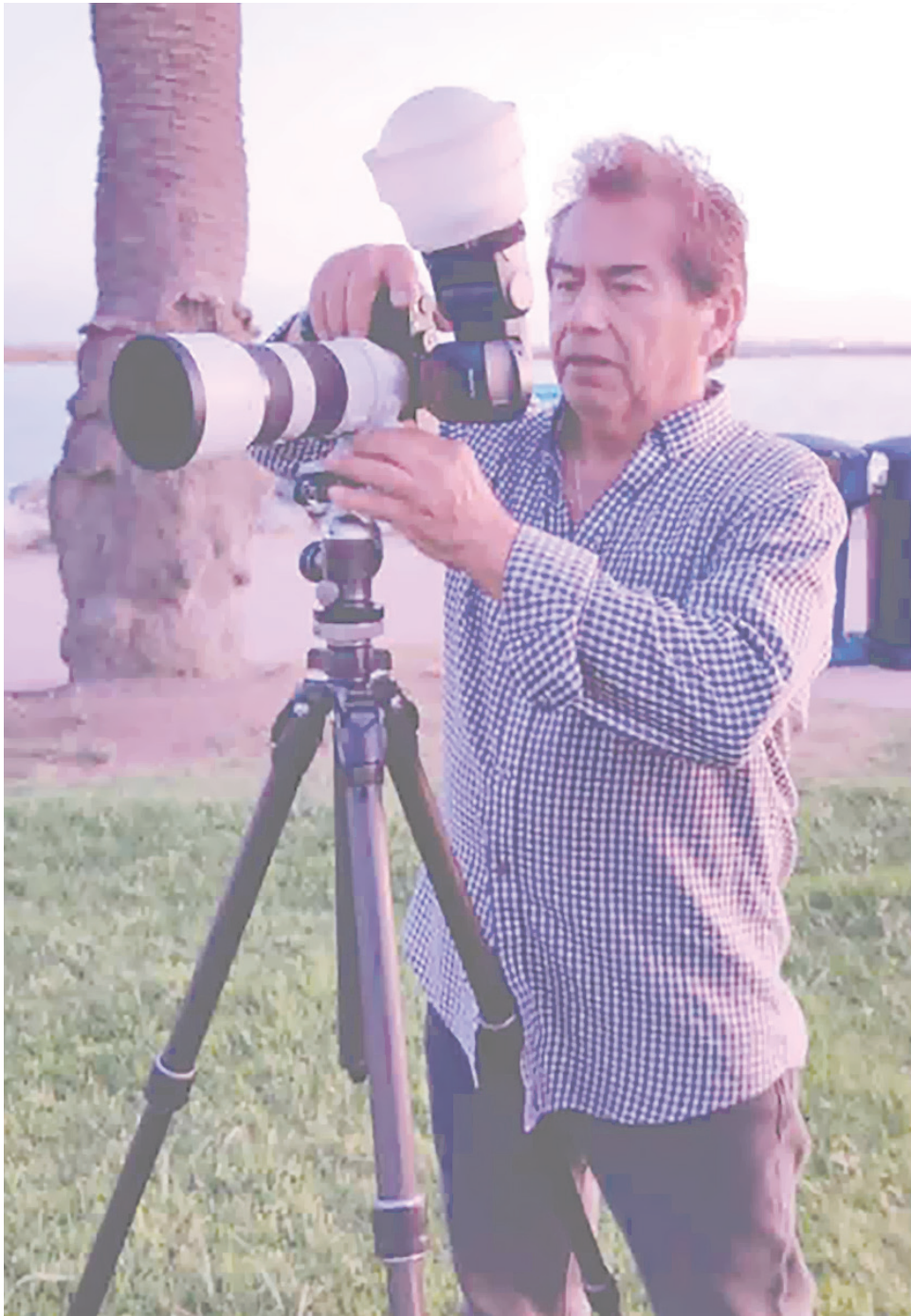


Photo courtesy of Salvador Barajas



PICTURE OF GRACE — For more than 50 years Memo Cavada chronicled Chicano activism, Latino theater, South Bay history and seminal moments for Sweetwater High School students. He was honored with a mural painted by legendary artists Guillermo Aranda and Salvador Barajas on the wall of the National City Chamber of Commerce.

"Someone needs to create a record of our history. Besides, it's fun and I meet a lot of nice people doing things they are passionate about."

Memo Cavada

2022 SC HONORARY DEGREE
RECIPIENT

of Commerce building, steps away from his former home on fabled Brick Row, where for 30 years he photographed Sweetwater High School prom goers, thespians, athletes and graduates.

Actor Macedonio Artega said Cavada seemed to be everywhere he was needed.

"When you are involved in the community you see him at all the events," said Artega. "You would get to know who he is and he starts getting to know who you are because he takes pictures of you performing or speaking. It is a relationship where he has this really unique opportunity to photograph people, but he also starts to form friendships through photography."

Aranda said Cavada was tough and resilient, but always cheerful and optimistic.

"He was like a lot of us who had it rough when he was young," Aranda said. "He managed to make something good out of his life."

Cavada's mural was commissioned by the National City Chamber Foundation, and the National City Arts and Culture Collaborative. Artists Barajas and Aranda – two of the nation's greatest muralists – counted Cavada as a dear friend.

Jacqueline Luna Reynoso, former CEO of the Chamber of Commerce, said it was a confluence of good fortune.

"(We wanted) an artist that would do justice bringing Memo to life and be able to share this gift with the community," she said. "We are so blessed to have found Guillermo Aranda and Sal Barajas."

Former MAAC Project Director Roger Cazares said the mural has much in common with Cavada's enriching photos.

"I think it is going to be a lasting message to our *gente*," he said. "You work hard, you persevere, you fight against all the odds and all the barriers that have been put up against us, but you knock them down. That's what *mi hermano* Memo always did."

CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

PLANETARIUM: Faculty decries teardown of facility before a replacement is completed

astronomy colleagues worked hard to stay on top of the ever-evolving situation.

"The planetarium was supposed to be built in an earlier phase of (the \$389 million 2008 Proposition R bond measure) project, but for reasons I don't know the planetarium kept being moved further and further down (the schedule)."

Miller said the plan in 2019 was to build the new planetarium in the space between the library and the new science building. At least that was the most recent in a long series of plans.

"(SC's) planetarium project has been disorganized, lacking in preparation and not a priority for the college," he said.

Military service has made it difficult for Miller to stay on top of the careening construction landscape at SC, but he said he has made the planetarium a priority even while overseas. A former Naval Intelligence Officer who remains on reserve during times of national emergencies, Miller was called back for active duty after 9/11 and again during the war in Afghanistan.

While in Afghanistan Miller received an email from the college asking how to properly disassemble and "pack up" a planetarium. Miller said he is the only SC professional with the qualifications and expertise to relocate a planetarium. Some of the astronomy equipment belongs to him, he said, augmenting the taxpayer-purchased equipment that belongs to the college.

Miller's military obligations may have prevented an even earlier tear down of the planetarium, he said, when he informed his former dean that it would have to wait until he was released from service. He learned during a December 2021 Zoom meeting with some administrators regarding funding for a new star projector that the planetarium would be torn down this summer.

"I was shocked," he said. "I thought we were going to keep using (the planetarium) until the new one was built and ready."

Miller said he checked in often with bond construction manager Balfour Beatty about evolving building schedules.

"I asked them many times in many different meetings (the same question) 'The new planetarium will be built before the old one is torn down, right?'" he said. "They said yes every time."

Balfour Beatty lacks the competence to manage this aspect of the bond construction, Miller said.

"I don't think Balfour Beatty has any experience with planetaria," he said. "Nobody there is an astronomer and not even all astronomers understand planetaria."

Miller said he trained at the world-renown Adler Planetarium in Chicago. He is also a regular guest astronomy lecturer and visiting scholar at the Ruben H. Fleet Space Center in Balboa Park and other American astronomical centers.

SC's classic planetarium was an attraction when it was built in the 1960s, but began to show its age at the dawn of the 21st century. Southwestern's first bond measure, the \$89 million Proposition AA passed in 2000, included a commitment to renovate the planetarium. Felony charges of campaign fraud and illegal expenditures of public funding against former President Dr. Serafin Zasqueta and a period of economic instability that followed derailed many of the stated goals in the Proposition AA ballot statement and redevelopment plan. Zasqueta's firing in 2002 started a 20-year period of administrative churn and turnover that continues at Southwestern College today.

Not a penny of Proposition AA ever went to the planetarium, Miller said.

"It's one broken promise after another," Miller said. "At this point, I do not have a lot of confidence in the

district or the administration."

College leadership has failed to grasp the implications of its decisions, said Miller.

"The planetarium is a unique resource for the entire South Bay community," he said. "There is no other planetarium in the South Bay. Students who go to the local elementary schools and middle schools deserve to come to SC to visit the planetarium. Our own students deserve to have a planetarium available for their education, their growth and experience. More broadly, the South Bay communities deserve to have a planetarium that is supported."

SC President Dr. Mark Sanchez said the facilities master plan was updated in 2018, about three years prior to his arrival last year. It went through "the governance process," he said, during which "faculty, students, and staff all had a say in that process."

"I understand the outrage," Sanchez said. "I think I would channel the outrage to say they are going to get a brand new world-class facility."

Sanchez said astronomy faculty will have to adjust to a few years without a planetarium.

"(SC's) planetarium project has been disorganized, lacking in preparation and not a priority for the college"

Dr. Grant Miller

SC ASTRONOMY
PROFESSOR

"We are going to have to be creative in finding solutions and there are (planetaria) in the county we will probably have to utilize," he said. "It is not the best case scenario. I will acknowledge that."

Dean of Math, Science and Engineering Dr. Silvia Nadalet was not yet an administrator during the previous round of negotiations and decisions regarding science facilities. She said she agreed with Sanchez that it is a difficult situation faculty will have to work through.

"I have confidence that our astronomy faculty will find ways of providing alternative learning experiences," she said. "Are they going to be exactly the same? No. But hopefully, there are ways (faculty) can compensate for that."

Miller said the new planetarium will not be state-of-the-art because current plans call for installation of a substandard projection system. Along with a proper dome shaped facility, a stellar projection system is essential to astronomical studies, Miller said. A planetarium's projector is a very sophisticated collection of technology that can show in nearly perfect detail where all heavenly bodies – including known comets and asteroids – were or will be located, depending on the terrestrial location, time and date programmed in by the astronomer.

Nadalet and physical science faculty submitted a formal request for \$461,113 to update the new planetarium's projection system, but the request was denied. Miller said faculty was not included in the discussion with Seiler Planetarium Division regarding the projection system. Outdated projection technology even in a brand new planetarium renders the facility as less than optimal, Miller said.

"We ought to be providing our students and our community with the best possible instruction on modern technology," he said. "We seem to be getting away from that."



The mission of the Southwestern College Sun is to serve its campuses and their communities by providing information, insights and stimulating discussions of news, activities and topics relevant to our readers. The staff strives to produce a newspaper that is timely, accurate, fair, interesting, visual and accessible to readers. Though The Sun is a student publication, staff members ascribe to the ethical and moral guidelines of professional journalists.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-Chief
Camila Gonzalez

News Editor
Nicolette Monique Luna

Sports Editor
Sebastian Sanchez

Staff Writers
Ramon Armenta
Esteban Fernandez
Lesley Garate
Anette Pedrotti
Amber Plasencia
Esteban Preciado
Janine Rivera
Carson Timmons
Colton Tull

Staff Artist
Ji Ho Kim

Assistant Adviser
Kenneth Pagano

Adviser
Dr. Max Branscomb

Awards/Honors

National College Newspaper Hall of Fame Inducted 2018

Student Press Law Center National College Press Freedom Award 2011, 2018

National Newspaper Association National College Newspaper of the Year 2004-2021

Associated Collegiate Press Pacemaker Awards 2003-06, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012-2017, 2019, 2020 General Excellence 2001-20 Best of Show 2003-22

Columbia University Scholastic Press Association Gold Medal for Journalism Excellence 2001-22

College Media Association National College Newspaper of the Year, 2020

California College Media Association Outstanding Community College Newspaper

San Diego County Multicultural Heritage Award

California Newspaper Publishers Association California College Newspaper of the Year 2013, 2016, 2020, 2021 Student Newspaper General Excellence 2002-21

Society of Professional Journalists National Mark of Excellence 2001-22 First Amendment Award 2002, 2005

San Diego Press Club Excellence in Journalism 1999-2021 Directors Award for Defense of Free Speech 2012

Journalism Association of Community Colleges Pacesetter Award 2001-18 Newspaper General Excellence 2000-2022

American Scholastic Press Association Community College Newspaper of the Year

Ghosting haunts frustrated students

The issue: Many students and employees sparked during the very challenging 2021-22 academic year, demonstrating courage, creativity and resilience. Many employees, however, were AWOL.

Our position Administration and managers need to weed out ghosting employees whose passive-aggressive behaviors have damaged the operation of our college. There has to be accountability.

Southwestern College made more adjustments this year than a chiropractor at a boulder lifting competition, and the challenges will keep on coming as the COVID-19 pandemic stretches into its third year. After predicting a 60 percent return to in-person classes for spring semester, we probably saw closer to half that, but SC rolled on.

It is interesting how SC employees have responded to the coronavirus crisis during the course of performing their jobs. Many were heroic and worked harder than ever. Others quit on us and did as little as they thought they could get away with. Cheers to this year's pandemic superstars...jeers to the ghosts and slackers. You know who you are. So do we.

CHEERS: To student leadership. ASO President Sonia Camargo and MEChA brought the great Dolores Huerta to our campus for an inspiring afternoon. Camargo and her various ASO colleagues also spoke up for early implementation of the state's new laws requiring availability of feminine hygiene products, and the distribution of hand sanitizer and masks.

JEERS: To all the ghosters in DSS, Counseling, Financial Aid, Admissions and Records, Facilities and anyone else who ignored emails from students and their colleagues. Shame on all of you who engage in this passive-aggressive, completely unprofessional dereliction of your duties as public employees while drawing a salary. You should all be terminated for cause.

CHEERS: To the speech and debate team for another successful season of brilliant argumentation and upsetting tony university teams. With a talented team of advisers and a growing program, we are eager to see what next year brings.

CHEERS: To Shannon Cappa and professional development staff for bringing the legendary disability rights leader Judy Heumann to students and staff.

JEERS: To SC's perpetually dirty restrooms. It is inexcusable that restrooms at our beautiful college smell so bad and are so unsanitary, especially during a pandemic. We need more daytime custodians, but we are getting more and more administrators instead. Perhaps if every administrator spent one hour of each work day cleaning restrooms we could get them up to standard.

CHEERS: To the swim, tennis and track teams for excellent seasons under trying circumstances. Double cheers



Ji Ho Kim / Staff

to 64-year-old competitive swimmer Monte Cotterill, a full-time music major. His walk-up song is (of course) The Beatles' "When I'm Sixty Four."

JEERS: To SC's lack of a Remote Learning Area with privacy, quiet and good wifi for students taking Zoom classes on campus. With all the mixtures of modalities, we often have a Zoom class right after an in-person class and do not have time to drive home.

CHEERS: To the theater department for its outstanding production of "The Addams Family." It was an uplifting gift to our COVID-battered community.

CHEERS: To all the 2022 Student of Distinction Award and scholarship recipients. Cheers to the SC Foundation for its excellent work raising the scholarship funding and for expanding the number of SODA scholarships from 20 to 25.

JEERS: However, to the same SC Foundation for ruining the Student Scholarship Ceremony that used to be one of the inspiring highlights of the academic year. The new format was pretty much a disaster and robbed the SODA recipients of their brief, shining moment of recognition. The Sun is very disappointed that SODA recipients did not have portraits taken for our annual SODA winners page, which for the first time in 25 years, was cancelled.

CHEERS: To all of SC's outstanding learning communities including BAYAN, CHEL, PUENTE and UMOJA. Props also to the DREAMER Center, Veterans Center and other support organizations that elevate students.

CHEERS: for student surveys and questionnaires. We appreciate opportunities for meaningful input.

JEERS: To the boneheaded decision made during the Murillo administration to tear down the planetarium before building a new one. It will likely be 2-4 years before the replacement planetarium is ready. We know current

administrators did not set this forehead slapping mistake into motion, but now that they know there is a problem, they are responsible for fixing it.

CHEERS: *Otra vez* to Sonia Camargo and her *compadres y comadres* working to establish a Chicano Studies program at America's most Chicano community college. El Plan de Southwestern is right on target and a blueprint to correct this historic injustice.

JEERS: To the college Reopening Committee for ending the indoor masking requirement starting in June. With COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations and deaths rising again and a CDC prediction of another serious coronavirus wave in the fall projected to infect 100 million Americans, this action was premature and reckless.

CHEERS: to the Basic Needs Program and the kindly folks who make it work. Your efforts have kept hundreds – perhaps thousands – of struggling students in college. Please continue your work on a Homeless Safe Zone in the campus parking lot for students who live in their cars.

JEERS: Once again to ghosting and ghosters. Shame on all of you who engage in this loathsome practice.

CHEERS: To Dr. Tina King on your new position as a college president and to Dr. Minou Spradley on your retirement. Both women modeled professionalism and kindness while doing challenging jobs. No ghosts here.

CHEERS: To former El Sol Magazine EIC Xiomara Villarreal-Gerardo, the next Managing Editor of the SDSU Daily Aztec and president of the SDSU Chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. Both organizations are fortunate to have such a capable and selfless leader.

CHEERS: To our readers. The Sun rises for you. Stand by for a new issue of El Sol Magazine in June. See you in August!



TRANS DAY OF VISIBILITY



BRAVO ZULU
ESTEBAN PRECIADO

Ignore the naysayers, college vets thrive

As much as we like to play it cool and stoic, being a military veteran in college is tough. We were thrust back into the same world we originally eschewed for the military and we now face a transition from military to college. We are usually older than our classmates. Most of us have few connections or college-age friends.

Veterans very often struggle adapting to college life. This seems counterintuitive because we have many advantages. It is surprising that so many veterans flounder in college because we have much in common with college freshmen. Four or five years ago we did many of the same things our younger classmates do. Vets left our homes, friends and families to join the military. We faced the challenges of adapting to the military with no friends, yet we succeeded time and time during our military careers.

So why do legions of veterans think college is going to be a hard place to fit in to and a difficult place to succeed? I have a hypothesis. I think we were influenced in a negative way by some of our military superiors. Too many of the old salt dogs had an unflattering view of college because they never attended or had failed experiences. They told us how difficult college was, they psyched us out and implanted the notion that we could not possibly make the transition to an academic life.

My humble advice, from one veteran to another, is to shake that indoctrination out of your head. It is in your past and college is in your future. We can succeed. We do succeed.

Veterans have every necessary tool to thrive in college. We are more seasoned by hardship and stress than younger college students. We know how to press through tough moments. Our age and experience are advantages. We are used to late nights and early mornings most of our classmate are still learning how of cope with. We are resilient. We are survivors.

I encourage my fellow veterans to plunge into your college experience with confidence and joy. We paid our dues in the military and we earned our place here. College can be tough, but we have been through worse and we are still standing. College is just another hill to hike, but this time the view is better.

Esteban Preciado is a graduate of San Ysidro High School and a former United States Marine. He is a 2022 Southwestern College Student of Distinction Award recipient. He will transfer to SDSU this month.

Transgender people are America’s most abused, murdered and assaulted population. Right-wing states like Texas and Florida are actually attempting to criminalize transgender people, their parents and their allies. The Editorial Board of The Sun enthusiastically supports all transgender Americans and transgender people across the globe. We soundly condemn transphobic elected officials attempting to villainize Trans people to breed fear for their own political gain. *Illustration by Ji Ho Kim / Staff*

Stress is a state of mind that can be managed with practice

BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA
A Perspective

Master stress buster Dr. Clarence Amaral likes to say that the best time to deal with stress and consider new strategies is when you are not stressed. Students who develop healthy habits and

repeatable routines can manage stress and often turn once-stressful situations into enjoyable challenges.

A few tips from the experts:
• Exercise releases stress, burns up the harmful hormone cortisol and releases relaxing endorphins into the brain.

• Sleeping 7-9 hours every night on a regular schedule keeps the body from wearing down and letting stress take hold.

• Healthy diets low in fat, sugar and starches can facilitate a mellow mood.
• Never beat yourself up. Talking to yourself with love, compassion and forgiveness is very important.

• Remember that stressful situations are usually temporary. Things will likely look better tomorrow.

• Hang out with positive, supportive people and avoid people who bring you down.
• Hug a puppy, play with a kitten or watch fish swim and your stress will diminish.

Words of wisdom about stress from some wise people:

“A very little key will open a very heavy door.” — Charles Dickens

“Stress is not what happens to us. It is our response to what happens. And response is something we can choose” — Maureen Killoran

“Some people feel the rain. Others just get wet.” — Bob Dylan

“Don’t be pushed by your problems. Be led by your dreams” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Lord, grant me the strength to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.” — Reinhold Niebuhr

“The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another” — William James

“Stress is something that’s created in the mind. It’s how we look at things. Our greatest defense against stress is the ability to change our thinking” — Goldie Hawn

“The only devils in the world are the ones running around in our own hearts.” — Mohandas Gandhi

“Wait to worry. Only eight percent of what we worry about ever comes true.” — Eric Barker

“Worry is misuse of the imagination” — Dan Zadra

“Out of clutter, find simplicity. From discord, find harmony. In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.” — Albert Einstein

‘An inspiration and a great role model’

FREE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

★ *Sonia Camargo overcame neglect, poverty and prison to become ASO President, SODA winner*

BY CAMILA GONZALEZ
Editor-in-Chief

Sonia Camargo needed a second chance. Then a third. She made the most of that one. Camargo has, against all odds, blossomed into one of the college’s most productive ASO Presidents and MEChA leaders. She has led or contributed to efforts to create a Chicano Studies program, place free feminine hygiene products in college restrooms, create a safe zone in a college parking lot for homeless students and mentor other students who are mothers.

Her crowning achievement may be her work with MEChA colleagues to bring Chicana icon Dolores Huerta to campus this month.

It was not all that long ago that Camargo was in prison.

Her life got off to a rough start. “I did not have parents,” she said. “My grandparents tried raising me. My biological father took off when (my mother) was pregnant with me. When I was three days old she gave me away because she did not want me. My grandparents tried raising me, but it didn’t work out. I was raised by my neighborhood, by the streets and other people’s families.”

Things only got worse from there. At the tender age of 12 she was entangled in drug dealing and other criminal activities that resulted in severe consequences.

“That was all I knew,” she said. “That’s just how it was. All my mentors were in prison, they were drug dealers doing life in prison. Those were the people we looked up to.”

In and out of juvenile detention and prison as a teen and young adult, Camargo described herself as an unfriendly person engaged in petty theft and gang banging. She said her longest stretch out of prison during those years was just 30 days. It was a self-destructive cycle of criminality and incarceration.

Her grandmother gave up on her, Camargo said, and she bounced around from the couches of neighbors and fellow gang members, often sleeping on the streets. Already a single mother, she found herself pregnant, unemployable and surrounded with despair when she hit rock bottom. From there, she said, she could only look up.



Camila Gonzalez / Staff

Camargo said her unborn second daughter was her salvation and redemption.

Trapped in an abusive relationship while pregnant struck a sour chord. Camargo said she did not want her younger daughter to suffer the same traumas her older daughter witnessed.

“I decided it all stops here,” she said. Leaving behind her “hood life” for collegiate life was a challenging transition. She enrolled at San Diego City College and struggled. Dealing with homelessness and a custody case almost

caused Camargo to lose faith. She bailed on City College and could feel the tug of the mean streets.

Then came the decision that changed her life. She enrolled at Southwestern College, a few trolley stops away from her native Logan Heights.

“Southwestern College was a completely different kind of experience compared to City College,” she said. “The faculty cared more at Southwestern. They are genuine and family oriented. I never felt judged.”

Like a monarch butterfly, the beloved

“I want everybody to know that people like myself and other non-traditional students can make it. We can be somebody and we can be successful.”

Sonia Camargo

symbol of Chicanos, Camargo went through a metamorphosis. She exited her cocoon and spread her new wings.

In the fall of 2020 Camargo became friends with former ASO VP Julia Wook, who had just become Editor-in-Chief of The Sun. They worked together in MEChA and collaborated on “El Plan de Southwestern College,” a 10-point manifesto calling for the creation of a Chicano Studies program. Wook said Camargo views Chicano Studies as a legacy that all Mexican-American students should have.

“This program is close to Sonia’s heart and something she is working on for the generations to come,” Wook said. “She is determined, tenacious and loyal. Her story is admirable. She’s gone through so much and honestly there is nothing that life can throw at her that she is not prepared for.”

Rizzy Nunez, president of the SC Parent Scholar Club, agreed. Her motto in a tough situation, she said, is to ask “What would Sonia do?”

“Sonia’s story is an epitome of strength,” she said. “I look at her as an inspiration. She’s a great role model. She’s so humble, which attracted me towards her. Sonia makes you feel safe, she reminds you that you are human. School is hard, being a parent is hard, being a leader is hard, and there is Sonia doing it all with grace.”

Camargo said SC gave her a sense of family for the first time.

“I have been alone all my life,” she said. “I’m not like most students. I have a lot of life experience and it took me down dark roads a lot of people do not want to go.”

Today she has the ear of faculty, college administrators, local Chicano leaders and ... Dolores Huerta. She is consulting with Gente Unida President Enrique Morones and legendary Chicano artist Salvador Barajas on an art project to welcome the 92-year-old Huerta to campus. Professor of History Dr. Gerardo Rios said he is a fan.

“Sonia is doing a great job with the ASO and MEChA” he said. “I look forward to her continued academic and personal growth. She has a great deal of potential.”

Camargo said it is important never to give up on a person.

“I want everybody to know that people like myself and other non-traditional students can make it,” she said. “We can be somebody and we can be successful.”

BAYAN LEARNING COMMUNITY CELEBRATES FIL-AM CULTURE

LEARNING COMMUNITY

In Tagalog, Bayan means “home.” Bayan was founded in 2006 by SC professors Maria Abuan and Henry Aronson.

BY ADRIAN PUNZAL, Staff Writer

Life is like a *balikbayan* box. You never know what you are going to get.

Filipinos love to give and receive the wondrous *balikbayan* box, a form of gifting that is a cross between a Christmas present and a Care Package. Good ones are created with love and imagination. They can be expressions of individuality and cleverness.

At Bayan’s annual Cultural Autobiography Symposium and Presentations event students created their own *balikbayan* boxes that represented them. As they shared the contents of the boxes, said English Professor Henry Aronson, they also shared their Pinoy and Pinay pride.

BAYAN PG 7

Former ASO director brews up a magical transformation at the Tavern at the Vogue

BY JORGE WOO
Staff Writer

Chula Vista’s Golden Age movie house, The Vogue, is no more, but it’s still a place to make the scene.

Dr. Gonzalo Quintero and his crew pulled down the plywood from the boarded-up motion picture palace and converted it into one of the South Bay’s coolest hangouts on one of its hippest streets. The Tavern at the Vogue brought 226 Third Avenue back from the dead and filled it with life. Quintero has a doctorate in his

brain and education in his heart, but beer in his blood.

He also has the stomach for politics and business.

A scholarly former ASO director at Southwestern College, Quintero set aside budding journalism and political careers, as well as aspirations to become a college president. There are beer glasses to fill and meals to serve.

Though he married into Chula Vista restaurant royalty – his wife’s clan runs the stalwart La Bella Pizza – Quintero said he did not expect to see himself creating a craft beer mecca. He earned a

doctorate in Higher Education Leadership at SDSU when he was in his 20s, the youngest-ever graduate of the highly-regarded program. He served for a time as SC’s Interim Director of Student Services, which oversees the ASO.

“I worked in several departments during my tenure at Southwestern College (including) community outreach and recruitment, student activities and the Associated Student Organization,” he said. “My memories revolve around the

TAVERN PG 7

CONTINUED FROM PG. 6

BAYAN: Filipino students shine in learning community

“A lot of students don’t recognize their lives are worthy of examination,” he said. “We want them to pay attention to who they are and be able to articulate (that).”

Balikbayan boxes help students develop a sense of individuality as well as their place in a community, said Aronson.

“When I’m sharing my story I’m not sharing to be the best or win a prize, but to realize that we are part of a larger human family,” he said.

Bayan is a Tagalog word that means “homeland” or “community.” Southwestern College’s Bayan Scholars Learning Community strives to help Filipino-American students thrive in community college and transfer to universities. Like Puente for Latinos and Umoja for African-Americans, Bayan supports underserved students of color, according to personal development instructor Crystal Alberto.

“Our goal is to help students succeed,” she said. “Students take personal development and English classes for a full year. We infuse Filipino cultural history and help students discover their identity. We teach them time management, stress management, communication skills and team building.”

Filipinos fill a balikbayan box with items to send to relatives and friends. Boxes can include gifts and treats or essential household items. Bayan students filled their boxes with items that represented themselves, then gave short presentations about the contents. Boxes held music albums, photos of relatives and friends, and, in one case, a can of Spam, which is popular Filipino culture.

Bayan member Camille Briones said she enjoyed the experience.

“The project taught me a lot and helped me remember who I was before I came to America,” she said. “I recall events that influenced me, both the good and the terrible. It was a pleasure to showcase this project because it shares my belongings and my culture. Despite the fact that we all came from the same nation, this project demonstrated the uniqueness of each individual.”

Photo courtesy of Nielsen Construction California



A BORDERLANDS BEACON — SC’s San Ysidro satellite campus, built on the site of the horrific McDonald’s Massacre, has been an anchor in a community buffeted by change. SY’s visionary Chamber of Commerce director and his team are working to transform the community from a pass-through point to a culinary and artistic destination.

Turning America’s revolving door into a hub of borderlands culture

BY LESLEY GARATE
Staff Writer

SAN YSIDRO – Planet Earth’s busiest border crossing has been strangely quiet this decade. As

COVID wanes, however, The Great Gateway is spinning again.

People entering though San Ysidro may notice some enticing innovation. San Diego’s southernmost community hard against la linea is determined to evolve from a pass-through to a destination.

Visionary Jason Wells of the San Ysidro Chamber of Commerce & Business Improvement District used the COVID border slowdown to fine tune his “Clean Safe Promote” initiative. It endeavors to empower business and citizens to engage in the San Ysidro Renaissance. It offers incubators for people wishing to start a business and incentives to spruce up the once-gritty main drags.

A border that used to average 10 million crossers annually slowed to a relative crawl between March

2020 and November 2021 due to restrictions. Employees of American businesses who lived in Mexico had considerable trouble crossing, as did students.

“Border wait time affected students getting to school on time, especially Southwestern College students,” Wells said. “On a bad border day eight of your employees might not even show up, or be an hour late or even two hours late. Who can run a business like that?”

An essential part of his job, Wells said, is to represent the San Ysidro community in matters of border construction. PedWest, the reimaged pedestrian facilities, will improve and simplify the experience, he said.

“For 50 years we’ve had one northbound pedestrian crossing on the east side and one southbound crossing on the west side of the

freeways,” he said. “That doesn’t really work if you’re trying to park in San Ysidro and walk across because eventually you’ll have to cross (over the freeways) twice.

PedWest came from my desk and that’s what I’m proud of.”

Wells said efforts to create an upscale restaurant and bar district along San Ysidro Blvd. and Camino de la Plaza is gaining momentum. Its twin goals are to lure would-

be passersby and to create a fun and walkable evening vibe like downtown San Diego Gaslamp District or Chula Vista’s Third Avenue. The Paseo is negotiating with an elite Tijuana brewery to open a San Ysidro tasting room. Wells said he hopes the restaurant district will encourage other businesses to stay open past 9 p.m.

After all, he said, the border never sleeps.



JASON WELLS

CONTINUED FROM PG. 6

TAVERN: Brains, beer rescue beloved House of Munich, Vogue

students I worked with and their successes.”

Quintero departed SC unaware he had also left behind higher education, he said.

“After leaving Southwestern College I found success as a journalist focused on the craft beer industry in San Diego,” he said. “I started an LLC focused on event design and production. Later I served as a founding advisory board member and instructor at the SDSU College of Extended Studies (certificate program) in The Business of Craft Beer.”

He also became general manager of La Bella Pizza, where he honed his restaurateur skills.

“I am grateful to be part of an industry juggernaut,” he said. “It inspired me to bring something new to Third Avenue because it was on the cusp of a renaissance. The opportunity to revitalize the old House of Munich on Third Avenue as a European-style beer and food hall was too good to pass up.”

The trick, he added, was to bridge the nostalgia of an older generation with the energy of a new one. Built in 1945 just after World War II, The Vogue was local Baby Boomers five cinema until 2006. As the building aged, the wrecking ball loomed. A series of prospective makeovers tanked.

“People of a certain age remember the old Vogue Theatre and the

Photo courtesy of Tavern at the Vogue



BACK IN VOGUE — Dr. Gonzalo Quintero and his team resurrected both the historic House of Munich restaurant space and the Vogue Theater to create The Tavern at the Vogue on Chula Vista’s reimaged Third Avenue. Then they survived a global pandemic.

German restaurant beside it,” Quintero said. “They remember when Third Avenue was Chula Vista’s central business district. Aside from nostalgia and a desire to return it to greatness, I was tired of leaving The South Bay to have a good time.”

Quintero said Tavern at the Vogue represents economic empowerment and sustainable living.

“I want my money and my tax dollars to stay in the community where I live,” he said. “I like being part of a community focused on the future of transit and housing that’s

not stuck in the car-(dependent) past.”

Then came COVID-19. Restaurants folded in droves across the nation, but not The Tavern at the Vogue.

“We never closed our doors for even one day,” he said proudly. “Our mantra from Day One was to pivot. No dine in? Make takeout meals that can feed a family. People can’t get groceries? Set up your dining room as a storefront for people to get daily necessities like eggs, flour and sugar. People are scared to leave their house? Curbside pickup and delivery

Healthy food fuels successful students

BY JANINE RIVERA
Staff Writer

Good nutrition can take a beating when students start college. And there’s nothing like a global pandemic that’s killed a million Americans to pile on the stress.

When stress goes up, so does a college student’s weight. The Freshman 15 is a real thing and so is the COVID-19, tongue-in-cheek nicknames for the unfortunate tendency of young people to gain weight their first year of college and for all people to put on pounds during a period of great anxiety.

Healthy eating does not have to be difficult or expensive, but it requires a little planning and a smidge of discipline.

HEALTHY CHOICES

- Stay hydrated. Being dehydrated can cause overeating. Sometimes when we think we are hungry, we are actually thirsty.

- Carry healthy snacks. Bananas, nuts, unsalted peanuts, grapes, apples, baby carrots and granola travel well and provide a healthy lift.

- Salads are your friend. Vegetables and most salad makings are good for you, vanquish your appetite and provide fiber. Take it easy on the fatty dressing and high-calorie toppings.

- Soup is a student superfood. Clear soups are cheap, delicious and easy to make. Plus they are the foundation of many creative combinations. Add healthy ingredients to soup and ramen like rice, sliced veggies and seeds.

- Eat small meals or snacks throughout the day. Humans evolved as scavengers and hunters who grazed throughout the day. Regular small amounts of healthy food keeps energy up, mood good and digestion running smooth.

UNHEALTHY CHOICES

- Avoid energy drinks. They are flat out not good for you. They are full of chemicals human beings are not meant to consume and the ridiculous amounts of caffeine can cause headaches, anxiety and the jitters.

- Take it easy with coffee. A cup of coffee can be good for you. Coffee is rich with cancer-fighting anti-oxidants and can aid digestion, but has a tipping point. Too much can cause dehydration, anxiety, headaches, vascular constriction and stomach issues. A little goes a long way. Too much goes too far.

- Fast food is rarely nutritious. Hamburgers, French fries, lardy burritos and anything deep fried is bad, bad, bad. Saturated fat tastes good and satisfies hunger in the short term but does severe damage to your body by causing inflammation, arterial clogging, weight gain and heart problems. If fast food is unavoidable, choose items that are grilled or baked...and look for salads!

- Limit alcohol. Ignore the mythology that a few drinks are good for you. It is just not true. Alcohol is a poison the body has to fight off (that’s what causes the buzz). More than one a day or four a week is pushing the needle into the warning zone. Alcohol is not a good way to alleviate stress...exercise is better, so is a good comedy.

May is mayday month for college students and a period of great stress. Rather than drinking too much and eating fatty “comfort foods,” crank up the exercise and improve your nutrition. It will give you the energy to carry the day and you will feel better, too.

REVIEW

Jazz Café serves up Disney Magic

BY CAMILA GONZALEZ
Editor-in-Chief

Last year Jesselle Lopez sat in the audience at the Jazz Café concert.

This year she was one of its stars.

Lopez nailed her debut on the main stage of the PAC during the Disney-themed polylingual concert, a delightful collection of familiar tunes that got the jazz treatment. Her pair of solos were twin highlights, bookending a suave performance by Jose Pelayo, feisty turns by Joselyn Castillo and Claudia Alarid, and a groovy cherry on top by director Tracy Burklund.

Lopez was a scatting fairy godmother in “Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo,” the scene stealer from “Cinderella.” Her sassy French rendition harkened back to Louis Armstrong and Elle Fitzgerald, scat masters from the 20th century who would use gibberish syllables during fanciful improvisations on a melody. Lopez peppered the chestnut with *joie de vivre*, launching an evening of musical exploration with flair and moxie.

Pelayo channeled Vegas headliners and *crooners mexicanos*, sprinkled with a touch of Elvis during his Spanish take of “Cruella de Vil.” He was smooth like Nat King Cole and Jose Jose, which had the ladies in the audience hooting their approval. His sexy-menacing interpretation was a departure from the ruffled comedy of the film version. He was a debonair playboy with the timbre of Rob Thomas in the Carlos Santana hit “Smooth.” Pelayo’s Latin twist on a 63-year-old standard helped it to resonate in the borderlands.

Castillo provided the sultry from the women’s side with her slow burn torch number “Why Don’t You Do It Right?” from “Who Framed Roger Rabbit?” the frantic Disney comedy with surprisingly good music. Less campy and more vampy than the original, Castillo bent the song to her will, letting it settle over the audience like a warm summer mist.

Alarid was less experienced than some of her fellow performers, but compensated with outsized personality in the Elton John-Tim Rice romp “I Just Can’t Wait to Be King” from “The Lion King.” She and some friends held up popsicle stick puppets of the animated animal characters who sang the number in the film, providing some welcomed levity.

Lopez almost stole the show with her bold rendition of “Alice and Wonderland,” a gentle Disney song that Jazz masters have transformed into a nightclub standard. Jazz arrangements of “Alice” are complicated, technical and not always for the musically feign of heart. Dissonant chords stab the brushy tempo and singers must navigate tricky phrasing, twitchy melodies and vocal pyrotechnics. Lopez showed guts and artistry in her stirring performance. Her voice was at times soft and soothing like crashing waves in the night, and at times taunt as a clothesline in the wind. It was Jazz Café’s jazziest performance.

Burklund worked her own magic

JAZZ PG 9

“Tio was such a wonderful and rare person. I know his spirit lives on in the park amongst the pylons under the bridge and the community that makes that park a vibrant and important place for Chicano history.”

Chelsea Pelayo

MEDICAL STUDENT, FRIEND OF TIO CAMARILLO

Chicano Park’s Guardian Angel

Photo courtesy of Salvador Barajas

BY LESLEY GARATE
Staff Writer

BARRIO LOGAN —

Tio Camarillo was a mystery, even in death. Like a lost angel he seemed to drop in from out of nowhere. When he left the Earth in February, admirers called him a guardian angel returning to Heaven.

His 33 years of fiercely loyal stewardship of Chicano Park earned him the honorific “Guardian Angel” and a place on a mural alongside other Chicano heroes. Camarillo would say he was no angel but he embraced the role of guardian.

Little is known about the early life of Antonio Chavez “Tio” Camarillo other than he was originally from Guanajuato, Mexico and a huge fan of the Club Leon soccer team. He was once married, but no one seems to know if he had any children. Nor did acquaintances know what he did in Mexico before crossing *la frontera* for good in 1989.

He came upon Chicano Park and rarely left. Without housing for most of his 33 years in the United States, Camarillo considered Chicano Park home.

His best friend Jose Cruz Mendoza said Chicano Park embraced Tio and he embraced the park.

“They took good care of each other,” Mendoza said. “He was always there, keeping an eye on things.”

Gente Unida founder Enrique Morones said it was no accident Chicano Park was always pristine and void of graffiti during Camarillo’s residency as its guardian angel. Morones said he often escorted university students and Chicano scholars to Chicano Park. An introduction to Camarillo was part of the ritual. *El Angel Guardian* would regale them with stories.

“Tio loved our beautiful Chicano Park very much and made sure it was always spotless,” said Morones. “He knew so much about the park. He was kind of like a (museum) docent and would answer questions if you asked him. He was an encyclopedia of park history.”

Camarillo, after 33 years, was almost as iconic to the park as its world-renowned murals and colorful Indio-Chicano ceremonies. His long silver mustache, *caballero sombrero* and cowboy boots were unmistakable, as was his insistence that the past stay in the past.

He declined offers from his *hermano* Mendoza to visit Guanajuato and other parts of the United States. He said he was happily plugged into *la tierra firma* of Chicano Park, occasionally posting up in a nearby cantina to watch his beloved Club Leon on TV.

Chelsea Pelayo, a Chula Vista Chicana studying medicine in New Mexico, said Camarillo was essential to the park and the broader community.

“Tio was such a wonderful and rare person,” she said. “I know his spirit lives on in the park amongst the pylons under



Photo courtesy of Salvador Barajas

Photo courtesy of Salvador Barajas



GOOD GUY IN THE WHITE HAT — (clockwise from top) Antonio Camarillo had such a profound impact in Chicano Park the legendary muralist Salvador Barajas included him on the Border Angels mural. Gente Unida founder Enrique Morones pays his respects. Camarillo’s best friend Jose Mendoza.

CAMARILLO PG 9

CONTINUED FROM PG. 8

CAMARILLO:

*For 33 years
watched over
Chicano Park*

the bridge and the community that makes that park a vibrant and important place for Chicano history.”

Morones said Camarillo was a rock in the winds of history. He cleaned and raked Chicano Park in the tense days after 9/11, through the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, during COVID and across six presidencies.

“None of that mattered to him as much as the park,” Morones said. “He could not control everything that went on in the world, but he could impact the park and help to make people happy.”

At least twice the outside world shattered the solemnity of the park. In 2016 a drunken sailor drove a pickup truck over the side of a Coronado Bridge off ramp, plunging into a crowd at Chicano Park. Four visitors attending a classic car show were killed. Camarillo was there to help clean up the aftermath and repair the damage.

In 2018 Camarillo joined Morones, Chicano muralist Salvador Barajas and more than 1,000 other allies of Chicano Park to defend it against a mob of white supremacists calling themselves Patriot Picnic 2.0. A ragtag coalition of about 60 Klansmen, Trump supporters, Minutemen and neo-Nazis threatened to deface the park’s collection of murals, but they were turned away without making so much as a scratch.

Most days were much less eventful. Camarillo marked them by tending to the park and chatting with visitors. Mendoza said Camarillo did not know a stranger. He made it a point to know the San Diego Police officers who patrolled Chicano Park and Barrio Logan.

“*Tenia un character charismatico,*” he said. “Others were attracted to him.”

Tio was in poor health his final two years and frequently hospitalized. Mendoza and his wife Gloria visited him regularly. On the day he asked a nurse to shave off his mustache, they said they knew the end was near. Camarillo died that day at age 82, decked out in emerald Club Leon gear.

Camarillo wished for his ashes to be scattered around roses Mendoza planted in Chicano Park to honor La Virgen de Guadalupe. Mendoza granted his friend’s request, dusting the plants growing not far from the Barajas mural featuring a sprightly Tio with his flowing mustache, weathered hat and worn cowboy boots.

He is at home in the park forever more.

People wishing to contribute to the cremation fund for Antonio “Tio” Camarillo may send a check made out to Gente Unida with the notation “Tio Funeral” on the Memo line. Mail checks to: Gente Unida, P.O. Box 86598, San Diego, CA 92138.

Photo courtesy of The San Diego Union-Tribune



A LOT TO UNPACK — Retired principal Maria E. Garcia wrote her latest book about Chicano leaders who overcame racism and discrimination, including former SC President Norma Hernandez.

Collection of biographies celebrates Chicano resilience

★ *Maria Garcia explores challenges of South Bay Latino leaders*

BY CAMILA GONZALEZ
Editor-in-Chief

Petite septuagenarian Maria E. Garcia read with a brittle voice that shook the walls like thunder.

A retired principal and former radio host, Garcia is not retired from her *fuego*, which is sharing the stories of remarkable Chicanos.

Her second book, “We Made San Diego” is a collection of hard hitting biographies of San Diego County heroes and heroines, including former Southwestern College President Norma Hernandez. Her diverse array of subjects have one thing in common – they prevailed over racism and discrimination.

Robert “Augie” Bareno was just starting college when he was drafted into the military to fight in Vietnam. He survived the war overseas to return to one in Chula Vista where he attended SC under the GI Bill. A brilliant student, he wrote the curriculum for a Chicano Studies program at the seedy Elbow Rest Bar in National City. Bareno, Charlie Vasquez, Herman Baca and Roger Cazares were the early masterminds of a South Bay Chicano Rights Movement that spread nationwide.

In the early 1980s Bareno faced discrimination from elected officials in National City who told him a Latino could not possibly win elective office. Undeterred, he ran for the National School District Governing Board and was victorious. He served for six years before his election as a Southwestern College trustee.

Cazares had an affinity for politics since elementary school and held ASB offices in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades. During the summer he and his family would pick crops. Ashamed of being a farm worker, he fabricated stories of elaborate camping trips for his friends. In high school Cazares was enrolled in college prep classes, but his counselor discouraged him from

“I hope you learn the struggle these people went through. I hope that someday you don’t have to read a book like mine. I hope you can pick up any history book and see our history.”

Maria E. Garcia
AUTHOR

continuing his studies and suggested he enlist in the Army.

Unfortunately, Cazares did just that. After serving the Army, he started taking courses at SC where he was accused of plagiarism by an instructor who assumed he was incapable of exceptional work. He later became the Executive Director of the MAAC Project and remains a pillar in the community.

Hernandez, the first Latina president of SC (and the second ever Latina college president in the United States) was punished in the second grade for speaking Spanish in school and ordered to stand on top of a trash can where everyone could scorn her. She persevered to become a community organizer in Barrio Logan and earned advanced degrees. She remains a prominent political figure in San Diego who once hosted Secretary of State and U.S. presidential candidate Hillary Clinton at her home in Sunnyside.

Garcia was direct with the young audience. “I hope you learn the struggle these people went through,” she said. “I hope that someday you don’t have to read a book like mine. I hope you can pick up any history book and see our history.”

SC, USC ALUM EDWIN ORTIZ DEBUTS HIS FILM ‘FUEGO’

BY LESLEY GARATE
Staff Writer

Filmmaker Edwin Frank Ortiz *es en fuego* (on fire) and the heat is on.

A recent graduate of the University of Southern California’s legendary School of Cinematic Arts, the Southwestern College alum now has the same degree as filmmakers like George Lucas (“Star Wars,” “American Graffiti”), John Singleton (“Boyz in the ‘Hood,” “Rosewood”), Robert Zemeckis (“Back to the Future”), John Carpenter (“Star Man”), Ron Howard (“Apollo 13,” “A Beautiful Mind”), John Milius (screenwriter of “Apocalypse Now”) and Ryan Coogler (“Fruitvale Station”). He said he also has the same fire to make great films.

Ortiz recently completed his short film “Fuego,” a sentimental look at life, love and salsa dancing set in Chula Vista. *Fuego* literally means fire in Spanish, but can also refer to a person’s greatest passion. He said too many people get wrapped up in the everyday grind of life and do not make time for their *fuego*.

“My purpose in life is to make sure that members of my community are pursuing what makes them happy,” he said. “I’ve come across people who have yet to discover what they are passionate about. Some think they are not meant to succeed and that bothers me.”

Filmmaking is Ortiz’ new passion, but not his first. He is a talented hip hop and salsa dancer. He is well known in the community for his performances at the Old Globe and San Diego Repertory Theater as the Archangel Gabriel in the long-running holiday musical-comedy “La Pastorela.” He is also a choreographer.

“Fuego,” the film, is semi-autobiographic, Ortiz said. He was once a bartender in the bar featured in the film.

“I went back to the bar in September 2021,” he said. “I recalled a lot of regulars that would come back and visit me. I realized I always told stories at the bar. I loved socializing, so (there is) is a bartender telling a stories reminiscent of Forrest Gump.”

One of the locations Ortiz used is Chula Vista’s venerable Silver Dollar Saloon on Third Avenue. Like the characters in Billy Joel’s “Piano Man,” regulars come in to drink and escape reality. He also filmed at the Otay Ranch Mall and other locations around the city.

“Most of the crew was from Southwestern College,” he said. “They had lots of good ideas for locations. Chula Vista is an extraordinarily photogenic city.”

Southwestern College helped create his path to USC, Ortiz said.

“I had a great experience there,” he said. “I had lots of great professors and made some real friends.”

CONTINUED FROM PG. 8

JAZZ: Disney songs get a sophisticated makeover by adventurous music students

by guiding her experience-diverse group through some challenging numbers. She did what a talented director can do, making beginner, intermediate and advanced singers feel comfortable and look good. Some performers betrayed nerves, but they pushed through and won over the audience with their moments of courage in the spotlight.

Snaps and claps to the marvelous backing trio of pianist David Castel de Oro, bassist Alex Vargas and drummer Niccolas Nordfelt. Castel de Oro is a Southwestern College institution who has helped to make generations of singers shine with

his spot on accompaniment. Vargas and Nordfelt are Jaguars-for-Life who came to the college as young musicians who are now supporting the next generation.

“Lilo and Stitch” did not get a number in Jazz Café, but the evening felt like *ohana*, family in every way. The *esprit de corps* was palpable among the performers and that covered the audience like a soft Hawaiian quilt. Jazz Café is Southwestern College performing arts at its multicultural best – inclusive, explorative and comfortable in each other’s company.

CONTINUED FROM PG. 12

HUERTA: Americans must stand up to extremists

look at the issues collectively and determine how our votes affect our overall quality of life. Don’t fall for it! Don’t let our people be split apart.”

Voters in the South Bay should give priority to free healthcare, more funding for education and better infrastructure for underserved communities, she said.

“Education is our way forward,” she said.

Huerta said one of her favorite all-time inspirational quotes was from former Mexican President Benito Juárez who said, “*Entre los individuos como entre las naciones, el respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz.*”

“Among individuals, as among nations, respect for the rights of others is peace.”

“Peace should always be our end game,” she said.

Huerta came to SC at the invitation of the college’s MEChA Club and ASO President Sonia Camargo. She was greeted by MEChA leaders and SC President Dr. Mark Sanchez, who said he was greatly influenced by the work of UFW leaders Huerta, Cesar Chavez and Larry Itliong. Sanchez said UFW was powerful because Latinos and Filipinos worked together with White and Black allies, a point Huerta emphasized later in her

address.

Following Huerta’s 80-minute talk and Q&A session she was met onstage by Gente Unida founder Enrique Morones and legendary Chicano artist Salvador Barajas for the presentation of a 5’ x 4’ canvas mural which Huerta signed. Morones said the mural will be varnished and framed, then presented to SC as a mobile artwork. Huerta, Morones and Barajas are all SC Honorary Degree recipients for their dedication to human rights in the United States.

Huerta said she always enjoys visiting Southwestern College and hopes to return.

FAB FIVE FROSH PROPEL TENNIS TO REGIONALS

★ Veteran coach Reasons once again brings women's tennis back from the dead

BY JANINE RIVERA
Staff Writer

Like so many athletic teams in the region, the Southwestern College tennis team had to bounce back from the "Terrible Twos" – namely a pair of pandemic plagued seasons.

Five Lady Jaguars survived a roasting Pacific Coast Athletic Conference final on

SINGLES



IVANNA PEREZ



SOFIA TORRES

DOUBLES



ARIANA MARTINEZ



AOLANY MORENO

the 100 degree courts of Grossmont College to score a spot in the Southern California Regionals in Los Angeles.

Singles players Ivanna Perez, Sofia Torres and Anna Llusorio as well as the doubles team of Ariana Martinez and Aolany Moreno represented SC.

Coach Susan Reasons said her players were "the brave souls" who led the way out of the COVID wilderness.

"After two years of not having a team and being cut in the middle of the 2020 spring

TENNIS PG 11

★ Dionicio Monarrez takes over for Carberry, all-time winningest coach

New era awaits football program

BY SEBASTIAN SANCHEZ
Sports Editor

Retiring football coach Ed Carberry leaves big shoes to fill.

His successor Dionicio Monarrez has big shoes, too.

Monarrez, the beefy coach-in-waiting and defensive coordinator, is a military veteran, a community college All-American and won a major bowl championship at the University of



DIONICIO MONARREZ

Nebraska. He has 30 years of coaching experience, including 13 with Carberry.

"I am very excited to take this new challenge in my life," he said. "I'm a grinder. I'm

going to make sure that we dot the i's and cross the t's when it comes to practice and game planning."

Monarrez lined up at defensive tackle at Cerritos Community College and was a dominating player. After earning All-American honors he transferred to perpetual powerhouse Nebraska. He earned a championship ring which he still wears to work at Southwestern College.

After playing two seasons at Nebraska, Monarrez decided to start coaching. Early coaching experience at Nebraska launched his career, he said.

"I worked with position groups on both sides of the ball," he said.

Carberry was his most important mentor, he said.

"Coach Carberry taught me a lot about the organizational aspects of running a really good program," Monarrez said. "The coaching culture should be positive, encouraging and approachable. We need to be there for our players and each other. We need to be prepared to help our players get better, because in the end we're coaching young men to be better people."

Monarrez said he enjoyed playing several sports while growing up, but

MONARREZ PG 11

SOUTHWESTERN 24, COVID-19

Photo courtesy of SC Baseball



BASEBALL'S BACK — A team of 24 freshmen, including pitcher Robert Carrillo, took the Jaguars to the post conference playoffs after a two-year absence.

★ WILCOX, ARMAS, DEFENSE ONCE AGAIN STIFLE GROSSMONT

BY ESTEBAN FERNANDEZ
Staff Writer



GIO ARMAS



DANNY ZEPEDA

Jaden Wilcox had Grossmont runners on first and second with no outs in the seventh when he peered from the mound into the Jaguars' dugout as if a visit by the coach was inevitable.

Coach Jay Martel stayed put. So did Wilcox.

Southwestern's ace struck out the next two hitters and coaxed a lazy fly ball to retire the side and maintain a 2-1 lead. Gio Armas recorded a two-inning save to wrap up the win in front of a rowdy crowd at Jaguar Junction.

Wilcox, as usual, was magnificent. His seven-inning, 88 pitch outing included seven strikeouts and no walks for his sixth win of 2022. He had the second best ERA in the conference and was also a potent hitter.

Armas recorded his team-leading 14th save.

SC had little trouble getting on base, but lots of trouble

BASEBALL PG 11

SOUTHWESTERN 2 GROSSMONT 1



XAVIER GONZALEZ

Track star Amanda Shaw soars well beyond competition

BY SEBASTIAN SANCHEZ
Sports Editor

San Diego Mesa College won the 2022 Pacific Coast Athletic Conference track meet, but it was the Southwestern College women's team that won the hearts and respect of competitors and spectators.

Vastly outnumbered, SC women competed in multiple events throughout a grueling day and nearly pulled an epic upset.

Coach Tonie Campbell said he challenged his athletes to double and triple up on events to gain points in the standings.

"We did some things that I'd never done before with a team and probably never will do it again," he said. "Members on the team volunteered to participate in extra events. We had three (women) that did. I've never had that happen in the 20 years I've been at Southwestern because it's just really hard on the body."

Illiana Cortazar was a winner in the shot put (9.25m) and discus (31.12m). Super athlete Amanda Shaw prevailed in the long jump (5.26m) and triple jump (11.91m).

Sprinter Omar Williams led the men's team to a second place with his win in the 200 meters (21.52).

Campbell said he was happy with the results after two years of COVID-19 restrictions and cancellations.

"I think it went well," he said. "This is the first time in a while that both the men's and women's teams finished second in the conference. We had some good performances, but we weren't able to close that gap (with San Diego Mesa)."

Campbell said SC's tiny team was a dynamo.

"San Diego Mesa has a much larger team than Southwestern (and we stayed close)," he said. "This shows that the quality of athletes we have is far superior to anybody else."

Next season Campbell hopes to flip the script, he said.

"We came back together after a tough two years of being off with COVID and we had individuals that really stepped up and became leaders," he said. "The future is bright for the track and field team. We'll have a majority of (the athletes) back next year and we're looking to have a good run at it."

CONTINUED FROM PG. 10

MONARREZ:

Ex-Nebraska star now heads SC's 'brotherhood'

football was always his true passion. "I love the comradery, the challenges, the working out, the whole thing," he said. "The team concept always appealed to me. Football is a brotherhood."

Monarrez said he hopes there will not be major changes on the coaching staff.

"We have a strong staff," he said. "I hold them in high regard. We are on the same page when it comes to interactions with the players."

An internal mission statement drives his decisions, Monarrez said. He has high expectations of his coaching staff.

"Are you doing it for the right reasons?" he said. "Do you have a passion to do this? Do you want to really help and support young men to move on? Are you approachable?"

He said he expects his players to be "disciplined, coachable and tough."

"We're here for them," he said. "We're that stepping stone to help them develop and transfer to the next level."

Athletic Director Jennifer Harper said Monarrez shares her most important values.

"I want someone who is going to create a team," she said. "Not a bunch of all-stars, but a team dynamic where everyone is valued."

Playing time will be based on merit, Monarrez said.

"We'll encourage a competitive environment where players will have the opportunity to earn playing time," he said. "You're the best player? Then you're going to play."

Sophomore defensive end Gabriel Acosta said he is excited to play for Monarrez.

"He brings a different type of energy out of the players and knows how to put the team in a position to win games."

CONTINUED FROM PG. 10

TENNIS: *Five Lady Jaguar frosh reach PCAC playoffs*

season, it was difficult to get the ball rolling," she said. "Not being able to recruit face to face made it especially difficult to rebuild our team."

Perez was a leader on the all-freshman squad. Her motto is "Mind, eyes and heart on the game."

"Tennis is mostly mental," she said. "You have to stay focused and be ready."

Martinez praised Reasons for her emphasis on communication, which is essential for doubles.

"We are basically one mind at this point," she said. "That really showed in our matches. That's how we reached the regionals."

Reasons said she hopes COVID infection rates in the South County stay low and SC can continue to rebuild its athletic programs.

"These recent years have been tough, but our heads are still above the water," she said. "Next year will be better. I'm proud of these ladies for getting this program back on the court."

Athletic Director Jennifer Harper agreed.

"We are very proud of the (women) for being able to accomplish making it into the post-season competition. We look forward to building on this experience next year."



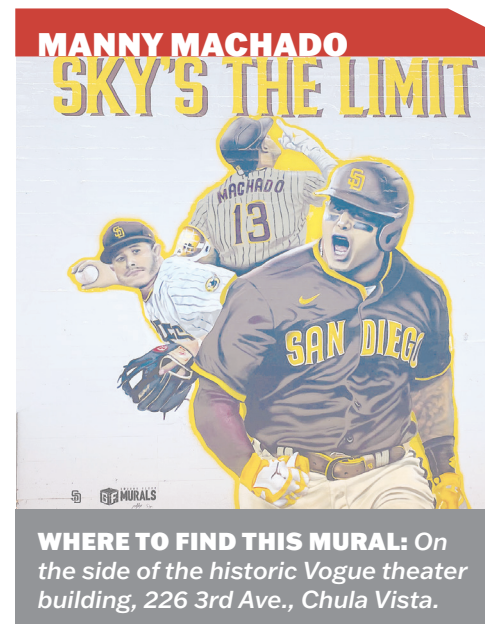
ANNA LLUSORIO



WHERE TO FIND THIS MURAL: On the side of Hansen Surfboards, 1105 S. Coast Hwy 101, Encinitas.



WHERE TO FIND THIS MURAL: On the side of the Undisputed building, 4151 University Ave., San Diego.



WHERE TO FIND THIS MURAL: On the side of the historic Vogue theater building, 226 3rd Ave., Chula Vista.



WHERE TO FIND THIS MURAL: On a parking lot wall in the 4600 block of Convoy Street, Kearny Mesa.



WHERE TO FIND THIS MURAL: On the side of Apple Tree Supermarket, 4976 Newport Ave., Ocean Beach.



WHERE TO FIND THIS MURAL: At Grossmont High School, 1100 Murray Dr., El Cajon.

Murals of Padres a wall-to-wall artistic success

BY COLTON TULL
Staff Writer

It took the San Diego Padres 53 years and 8,205 games to get their first no-hitter.

It took just 36 hours for a talented pair of Chula Vista natives to paint a wall-sized mural of no hit pitcher Joe Musgrove.

Paul Jimenez and Signe Ditona loaded up on spray paint and headed off to Musgrove's alma mater Grossmont High School to create a stunning replication of the pitcher's exultant expression as he bounded off the mound at the moment of the final out.

Community reaction was also exultant. Before the paint was dry crowds flocked to the Musgrove mural like they had the rumored Banksy mural that appeared overnight in Oceanside in 2011. (The Oceanside mural, it turned out, was not by Banksy.)

Jimenez said he and Ditona were inspired by the enthusiastic reaction to their mural.

"It just let me know we were doing the right thing," he said.

Musgrove's mural started a chain reaction of Padres murals in heavily Chicano San Diego County. An indigenous art form met America's National Pastime on walls up and down the coast. Next up was a mural of Fernando Tatis Jr. in Ocean Beach, followed in short order by a Manny Machado mural in Chula Vista at the Tavern at the Vogue on Third Avenue. Star pitcher Yu Darvish followed with a mural in Kearny Mesa and Hall of Fame closer Trevor Hoffman locked down a wall in Encinitas. A 2020 mural of Tony Gwynn was their first project.

Ditona and Jimenez are 6-for-6 so far and more murals may be on the way.

Like the walls they make over, Jimenez and Ditona reinvented themselves during the pandemic after losing their jobs. Jimenez, who was working as a server, said he "felt trapped" and called his job loss "a blessing in disguise for me and Signe." They practiced by spraying murals on the backyard walls at the Chula Vista homes of his mother and aunt. Those projects generated some unexpected business when a neighbor hired them for a third backyard mural.

"It felt like it was meant to be so we got to work," he said.

Ground Floor Murals was born.

"We really liked the idea that we're all equal," he said. "People are all in this (life) together, so from the ground up we want to bring our community with us."

Unlike most painters, Ditona and Jimenez go brushless. All their murals are sprayed on in the manner of graffiti artists and Chicano art revolutionaries. They strive to make each piece look as though it was painted by one person.

Third Avenue's Machado mural seems to be a hit in Chula Vista. Raul Martinez said he was heading over to Tavern at the Vogue when he first saw the Machado mural.

"It's pretty badass," he said. "I like murals and I like baseball, so I think it's pretty cool. It's also cool to have a Latino athlete on a wall in Chula Vista. I think they should paint more of them."

Softball preps for hardball in 2023

BY ESTEBAN FERNANDEZ
Staff Writer

It is hard to sugarcoat a 7-30 record, but for one brief, shining moment the softball team had a glorious afternoon in the sun and an emotional 7-0 win over San Diego Mesa College.

It was popular sophomore catcher Natalia Ojeda's final time behind the plate and her teammates all wrote her #12 on their arms with fat Sharpies.

Now 12 is the team's lucky number. Katalina Contreras is the team's lucky arm.

SC's star pitcher gave her battery mate a going away gift by having a Shohei Ohtani type of game. She shut down the Olympians on the mound, punished them at the plate and confounded them on the bases.

Contreras spun a complete game, reached base four times and stole three bases. She was named CCAA Player of the Week.

It was, ironically, Contreras' roughest inning that was the most inspiring. She worked her way out of a bases-loaded jam in the first, which fired up her teammates as they triumphantly exited the field.

Runs came early and often. Patient hitters forced eight walks from Mesa College pitchers Auriel Yeager and Alena Liseski. They also hit four batters, including SC first baseman Shemia Clady, who was drilled by a fastball in the head. Clady was clearly dazed and underwent concussion protocols for several minutes. She was allowed to stagger to first and stomp it defiantly before being helped off the field.

Her angry teammates responded with an outburst of offense, running the score to 7-0. Third baseman Erica Simon and Designated Player Analeah Garcia combined for four hits, three RBI and four stolen bases.

Contreras and Simon lead a large contingent of returning players, all of whom may be asking to wear #12 in 2023.

CONTINUED FROM PG. 10

BASEBALL: *Jags ride talented pitching staff to the playoffs*

scoring. All but one of their hitters reached at least once, including two hits each from Zak Farris and Danny Zepeda. Xavier Gonzalez blooped a single to left to score Farris with the winning run after he raced from first to third on a soft fly ball in front of the outfielders.

Rangy shortstop Gonzalez led the talented, but sometimes error-prone defense.

SC capped a 24-16 season (15-10 in conference) by qualifying for this month's Post Conference Playoffs against Los Angeles Valley College, a precursor to the California State tournament.

Like so many post-COVID athletic squads, the Jaguars baseball team was comprised entirely of freshmen. Martel said his 2023 team will be championship contenders.



Photo by Ernesto Rivera

'OUR WORK CONTINUES'

— (above) Dolores Huerta with Chicano muralist Salvador Barajas and Gente Unida leader Enrique Morones. All three are SC Honorary Degree recipients. (l) ASO President Sonia Camargo and former MEChA Adviser Dr. Francisco Fuentes. (far r) Southwestern College Sun Editor-in-Chief Camila Gonzalez and News Editor Nicolette Luna.



Photo by Ernesto Rivera



Photo by Ernesto Rivera

★ UFW co-founder Dolores Huerta urges a fight against growing American fascism

Civil Rights icon has stark warning

BY CAMILA GONZALEZ
Editor-in-Chief

Civil rights icon Dolores Huerta packed the Southwestern College theater, then packed a punch in a powerful address about looming threats to American democracy.

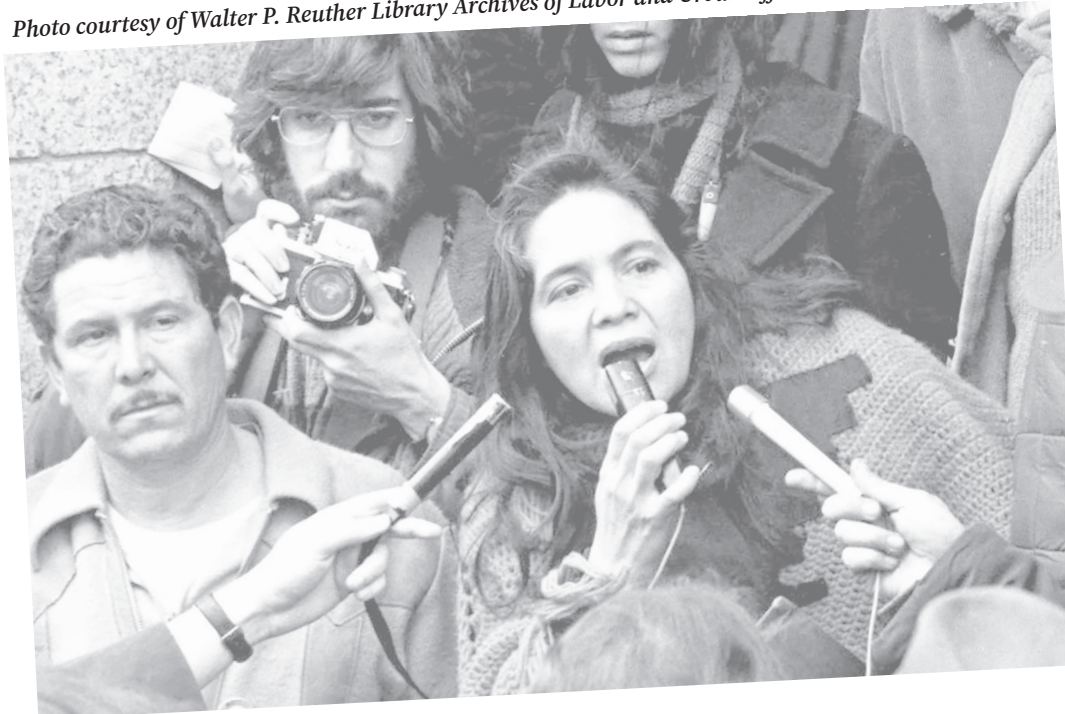
“Fascism is on the rise in our nation and we are the only ones who can stop it,” she said. “Right now we should not be fighting for ourselves, but fighting for democracy in the United States.”

Huerta, the 92-year-old co-founder of the United Farm Workers labor union, said she was “stunned and horrified” by the right-wing attack on the U.S. Capitol January 6, 2021. It was, she said, an attempt by white supremacists and other political extremists to overthrow a duly elected president and end the American form of democratic government.

“Fascism is here and it is alive,” she said. “We have to do the democracy work and that democracy work is voting. In this critical moment, we need you to engage right now in this war against us.”

Huerta also spoke directly to Latinos and Catholics, urging them not to be played by right-wing Republicans and others attempting use the issue of abortion rights to drive a political wedge

Photo courtesy of Walter P. Reuther Library Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs Wayne State University



SI SE PUEDE! — Dolores Huerta at a press conference in 1975.

through their ranks.

“No one has the authority to tell someone how to live their life,” she said. “If you can’t control your body, how can you control your life?”

Republicans historically never cared about the abortion issue until they realized it could be weaponized politically, Huerta said.

“Republicans have used the abortion issue to

divide us,” she said. “We need to stick together or we lose. I challenge Latinos and Catholics to consider some political realities. Even if you are not a supporter of abortion rights does not mean you throw the entire Democratic Party and all of its other positions out the window. We need to

HUERTA PG 9



★ A complex blend of economic and mental health maladies fuel an explosion in the South Bay's homeless population.

NO HOME IN THIS WORLD

Chula Vista



Imperial Beach



National City



Chula Vista



National City



Chula Vista

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE — Homelessness is often the end result of a series of factors, but it can also happen suddenly. (clockwise from top l) Daytime on the streets of Imperial Beach. Near the Sweetwater River in National City. On Broadway in Chula Vista. In Memorial Park on Third Avenue, Chula Vista. Deep in the brush along the Sweetwater River east of Plaza Bonita mall.



Imperial Beach



Chula Vista



Chula Vista



Chula Vista

HOMELESS AMONG US

Homelessness swells across the South Bay

BY ESTEBAN PRECIADO | Staff Writer

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ESTEBAN PRECIADO

Frank gazed at the ground as he spoke. He was used to people not listening. “There’s a lot of homeless people that are desolate and lost,” he said. “There are a lot of people like me that have stood on the edge of cliffs and thought about taking the big plunge and letting it all go.”

Yet most push on.

Dusted across bustling roads, trolley stations, alleys and crevices of the South Bay, the homeless persist.

There are more every day, some visible, some not.

From *la frontera* in San Ysidro to Division Street, from the bay to the 125 tollway, the homeless population of the South Bay is swelling. Lands within the Southwestern Community College District have had homeless since Frank Kimball and Col. W. G. Dickerson established National City and Chula Vista 140 years ago, but never like this. Not even close. Double digit homeless counts of the 1970s are now in the thousands, though no accurate tabulation exists.

It changes too quickly.

Unlucky, Addicted, Loners

Homeless people in the South Bay seem to sort into three categories: hard luck, loners and addicts. They have noticed this themselves.

“Hard luck” homeless like Keke Gonzalez, a 50-year-old who camps near the Palm Avenue trolley station in Imperial Beach, said he was laid off from his job and has a bad hip. Gonzales recounted a litany of “bad luck” as he sprawled on the grass eating his first meal in days. His belongings consisted of a black backpack and an old speaker.

Gonzales said the meager Chinese food represented a full day of panhandling. He had nothing else to discuss. He was hungry.

Self-described “loners” say they choose to exist on the fringes of society because they chafe under rules and do not like to be told what to do. They are harder to find, but there is a growing population along the banks of the Sweetwater River near the Highway 54 in National City steps from the riding/hiking trails. A Hooverville-style encampment is sizable, but U.S. Census teams and social workers consider it dangerous and have had trouble surveying it.

Folks living there made it clear they want to be left alone, including the man wielding a makeshift hammer to set up his tent.

Addicts are arguably the most visible type of homeless people. They can be erratic, like the woman camped in the Sweetwater River channel west of the Plaza Bonita mall in National City. She and two companions had a makeshift camp. She obliged to a conversation and some photos. She willingly led a visitor deeper inside the camp until she had a sudden shift in mood and screamed at him to leave. Now!

Across town, Gilbert Alan was considerably more pleasant. He camped near the Chula Vista Tacos El Gordo adjacent to the H Street trolley station.

“I’m broke because of the drugs and alcohol in my system,” he said matter-of-factly.

As he spoke, laughter and chatter echoed from people enjoying their authentic Mexican cuisine. Gilbert Alan could smell the fragrant food, but had none of his own.

Third Avenue Freeze Out

In Chula Vista’s manicured Memorial Park, a trio of homeless men held court just a short stroll from the trendy row of revitalized restaurants and bars dotting Third Avenue. Marco, Ted and Dougie spoke from the sidewalk where they had set up for the night. A tattered beach umbrella shielded their food, blankets, knick-knacks and a small TV.

Ted said his life “fell apart” after a bad divorce.

“(Homelessness) can happen to anyone in a blink of an eye,” he said.

Marco and Dougie nodded in agreement.

“Half of Chula Vista is homeless,” Dougie said, “just living with someone else.”

Ted butted in by describing how when he was first on the street, he was given a homeless evaluation called the VI-SPDAT by the Chula Vista Homeless Outreach Team (HOT).

“If you ain’t on a lease, you’re homeless,” he said. “Here the HOT team ain’t so hot. They pretend they want to help people, but (for us) it’s obstacles and deterrents.”

Dougie agreed.

“The first thing they do is take your name and then they run your name (to see) if you have any warrants,” he said. “Then they categorize you as a resident vagrant. Which is a transient. Once you’re on that list...”

Ted interrupted.

VIOLENCE LOOMS IN THE DARKNESS — People living on the streets of Chula Vista say they are frequently victims of violent attacks by “young hoodlums” that cause anxiety and serious injuries. (from the top) Keke eats Chinese food he purchased panhandling in Imperial Beach. Frank in the streets near the Chula Vista mall. A sidewalk on Broadway. Trying to wind down for sleep on a Chula Vista sidewalk.

CONT ON NEXT PAGE



Imperial Beach



Chula Vista



National City

'SHOW US THE WAY OUT OF THIS' — (from the top) Living on a sidewalk in front of a \$14 billion Fortune 500 company in Chula Vista. Evening near the Chula Vista mall. Passing time near the Sweetwater River in National City.

“They take your stuffed, your belongings,” he said. “They took (Marcos’) stuff and called it trash. If that’s help, they need to stop helping.”

Dougie concurred.

“Homeless help is a fraud,” he said. “It is just their way to have a job.”

Ted said permanent housing was a myth.

“This (sidewalk) is what I think permanent housing is,” he said. “It’s gonna kill you getting there or you’re gonna drive yourself crazy. It’s never permanent housing, it’s always rapid re-housing. Basically you go somewhere for six months and then you got to move again.”

COVID was savage to the homeless population, said Ted. Coronavirus was often a death sentence for people on the streets or in encampments. Shelter-in-place policies hammered the homeless by cutting off access to their already-tenuous urban lifelines.

“Homeless people can’t charge their phones,” he said. “(We) can’t even go to the bathroom during this whole (COVID) thing.”

Young Faces of Violence

Night had fallen and Linda was on the sidewalk near the Lil Caesar’s on Broadway close to Pep Boys. She is an elderly woman who said she has been on the streets of Chula Vista for nearly seven years. She is also no fan of HOT.

“They will roll up and take all your stuff, every last thread of it,” she said. “You won’t have any clothes left to wear. You’ll have no food.”

Random violence by young hoodlums was an even scarier problem, she said. Raising her hands revealed cuts, bruises, bandages and scars. Her leathery face was weather beaten and creased by the sun. Her bare feet look like those of a pilgrim who had walked to hell and back.

“Look at me!” she said. Her voice cracked. “Unfortunately it’s a lot of young kids. (We) are just frustrated and don’t wanna get caught (by the hoodlums).”

Linda was interrupted by a homeless man inexplicably hanging like a chimpanzee in a tree beside her.

“I’ve been attacked by the police,” he said. “So yeah, the police arrested and tased me and it was caused by the locals (who started the scuffle).”

Linda nodded in agreement.

“I have had that trouble also,” she said. “A lot of the older people (who are) drunks. They wanna start trouble with ya, get ya attacked.”

Heaven Help Us

Frank said he is a 56-year-old Signal Corps veteran who served in Korea. He said he is “on a never-ending merry-go-round” to retrieve his birth certificate, which he needs to get a state ID. With proper identification, he said, he can receive his military pension.

Challenges come daily, he said.

“Probably number one would be waking up in the morning and needing a restroom in the vicinity of where you’re at,” he said.

Most are locked in the evening, he said, because people worry about homeless people sleeping in them. Frank acknowledged that the homeless can make other people feel uncomfortable.

“It’s up to the homeless to regulate ourselves,” he said.

Random violence is an ongoing threat, he said.

“There’s a lot of (violence), a lot of judgement on homeless,” he said. “There is a group of young people who think it’s funny to go around and pick on homeless people.”

For the most part homeless people do not bother others, Frank said, and just want to be left alone.

Frank gazed at the sky as he spoke.

“We’re in despair, man. We look at the sky (for help). We don’t really see God. We’re asking the stars, we’re asking the moon and the sun or anything that’s out there that has the power to show us the light. Show us the way out of this.”



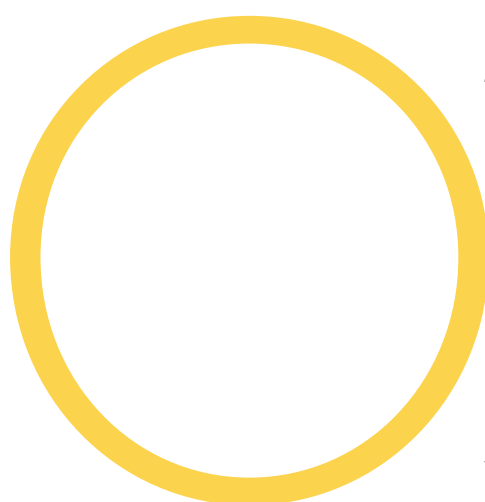
★ An intrepid group of 80- and 90-year-old Holocaust survivors continue their tireless efforts to teach tolerance and peace.

‘WE MUST NEVER FORGET’

Photo courtesy of Sandra Scheller

★ PERMANENT REMINDER — (l-r) Holocaust survivors Rose Schindler, Benjamin Midler and Gerhard Maschkowski show the tattoos they were given by the Nazis at the Auschwitz and Birkenau extermination camps. The trio, gathered for Maschkowski's 97th birthday, remain active speaking at schools and gatherings about the shoah (the Hebrew word for Holocaust).

Regional Holocaust survivors continue to share their stories of horror, survival and joyfulness with younger generations



BY NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA
News Editor

In January 27, 1945 allied troops liberated Auschwitz, the notorious Nazi concentration camp where at least 1.1 million Jews were killed. Shocked citizens of the world cried “Never again!” On October 31, 2021 persons unknown spray painted Nazi swastikas, anti-Semitic messages and anti-LGBTQ screeds on the walls of Bonita Vista High School and Middle School just across the street from Southwestern College. Citizens of the community cried “It’s happened again!” Holocaust survivor Rose Schindler had seen it all before ... in Czechoslovakia in 1943. “That is often how it starts,” the 93-year-old told assemblies of BVH students days after the vandalism. “We also had messages on the walls. They told people we were criminals and sinners. At one time (Jewish people) were the leaders of (our home) city. Then, because of the Nazis,

REMEMBRANCE PG C2

Candle and Star / Adobe Stock

Jews are a small but mighty minority who have contributed much to America

Jewish people are a small minority of Americans, according to the 2020 census, representing 2.4 percent of the United States population. It can be argued, however, that Jewish Americans have had an outsized influence on our nation and culture. Bob Dylan, Steven Spielberg, Natalie Portman, Harrison Ford, Barbra Streisand and Daveed Diggs are Jewish as are sports giants Aly Raisman, Sandy Koufax, Rod Carew, Theo Epstein and Hank Greenberg. The great Albert Einstein was Jewish as is Bernie Sanders.

California is about 3 percent Jewish and so is San Diego County. There are no reliable measures of the Jewish population in the South Bay, but Jewish leaders and demographers have estimated that its percentage is higher than the state or nation. One possible reason is the thriving Jewish community in Mexico, which American Jewish scholars say is concentrated in Mexico City and Tijuana.

JEWIS IN MEXICO

Jewish-Mexican-American filmmaker Isaac Aronstein said Jews have thrived in Mexico for about 500 years, but particularly since about 1910 when turmoil in Russia compelled Jewish people to immigrate to North America. World War I caused more Jews to leave Europe for the United States, but untold numbers were not allowed entrance. His documentary “Tijuana Jews” concluded that a wave of immigrating Jews settled in Mexico instead.

“In the early 1900s many European Jewish immigrants hoping to enter the United States were blocked, so they ended up entering Mexico through the port of Veracruz,” according to the film.

Jews entering Mexico came from Russia, Poland, Turkey and other parts of Europe where anti-Semitism was swelling.

“Mexico basically welcomed European Jews with open arms,” said Aronstein.

Thousands of Jews still hoping to enter the U.S. came to Tijuana. After World War II others joined them, including a wave of Holocaust survivors. Many of Tijuana’s iconic businesses and restaurants, including Dorian’s, were started by Jewish-Mexicans.

“I grew up eating lox and bagels, chilaquiles, and rice and beans,” Aronstein said. “It is also wonderful that vodka and tequila are both kosher!”

JEWIS IN CHULA VISTA

Historians Steven Schoenherr and Susan Walters researched the influence of Jews in Chula Vista for their 2011 book “Chula Vista Centennial.” Much of that research did not make the final version of the book, but was published online by the South Bay Historical Society. Schoenherr and Walters zeroed in on a few notable Jewish Chula Vistans who made substantial contributions to the community.

Dr. Alvin May

An optometrist, Dr. May moved to Chula Vista in 1943 and opened a practice. He became president of Tifereth Israel Synagogue and helped attract other medical doctors to the city, include fellow ophthalmologist Dr. Robert Penner.



Dr. Robert Penner

A founder of the venerable Temple Beth Shalom, Penner served as a member of the San Diego Port Commission. He may be best known as the husband of legendary KPBS journalist Gloria Penner.

people in our community began to look down on us. Suddenly they did not like what we were doing. They began telling us we had no rights.”

Schindler and most of the dwindling family of Holocaust survivors tend to be, against all odds, cheerfully optimistic people. They profess to being worried, however, about young Americans who, as time marches on, are distant from the Holocaust and unaware of that savage time in history when German Nazis exterminated more than 6 million Jews.

Planet Earth’s “never again” generation is running out of time. A quintet of determined Holocaust survivors relentlessly continue their work as messengers from the dark times of the *shoah*. Schindler is joined by 94-year-old Ben Midler, 86-year-old Ursula Israelski, 88-year-old Louis Peschi and Gerhard Maschkowitz, who turned 97 this month.

Sandra Scheller, a Chula Vista Holocaust scholar and human rights activist, said the world is nearing a time when no Holocaust witnesses remain.

“We are steadily losing our last Holocaust survivors,” she said. “Our Holocaust survivors are all in their eighties, nineties and one hundreds. It is essential that we help them teach younger generations about what happened to the people who suffered through the Holocaust and those who were killed. So many (survivors) are soldiering on, but the time will come when we will not have their voices to remind us about the horrors of the Holocaust.”

Scheller, the daughter of Holocaust survivors Kurt Sax and Ruth Goldschmiedova Sax, is working tirelessly to amplify the voices of the region’s remaining survivors – particularly with children and teenagers. She spent years shepherding her mother to hundreds of school assemblies, television appearances and recording sessions. Ruth Sax was a 2018 Southwestern College Honorary Degree recipient. She died in December 2018, but not before enjoying her Bat Mitzvah at age 89.

Inspired by her mother, Scheller curated an exhibit at the Chula Vista Public Library Civic Center Branch called RUTH: Remember Us, The Holocaust. It opened in March 2020 and has been extended through August 2022 due to pandemic-related closures.

RUTH tells the stories of local Holocaust survivors and has a rich collection of artifacts from World War II. Scheller said her mission is to tell the stories of Holocaust survivors and to eventually establish a permanent museum in the South Bay.

“This exhibit is a seed, a gift to my city,” she said. “Like any seed, it takes people to water it and nurture it. I am hopeful it will find a new home.”

Chula Vista has an unusual number of Holocaust survivors, Scheller said, as an active community coalesced in the 1950s and 1960s.

“Chula Vista should be home to a Holocaust Center,” she said. “This loving community gave Holocaust survivors a chance and in return the survivors gave their love and best efforts to their community.”

Scheller has been actively seeking out Holocaust survivors and interviewing them on video to preserve their experiences for future generations. She has a YouTube channel with interviews of her mother, Ruth Sax, as well Schindler, Midler, Israelski, Peschi, Maschkowitz and other Holocaust witnesses.

“They are amazing stories,” Scheller said. “These people endured so much brutality, yet they are such loving and generous souls. They are all determined not to let the Holocaust be forgotten.”

Louis Peschi, 88

Louis Peschi was born in 1934 in Zagreb, Yugoslavia (now part of Croatia). His mother and father were Jewish, he said, though not particularly religious.

On Easter Sunday 1941, Peschi and his mother traveled to Belgrade, Serbia to visit his grandfather and uncle. They were unexpectedly caught up in the Bombing of Belgrade, which killed an estimated 70,000 people. Trying to return to Zagreb by train they came to



Photo courtesy of Ben Midler

BEFORE THE STORM — Young Benjamin Midler (front) with his grandmother and grandfather in Poland before the 1939 Nazi invasion.



Photo courtesy of Louis Peschi

LOSING MY RELIGION — Some members of the Peschi family converted from Judaism to Catholicism so they could travel in Yugoslavia to escape the Nazis. Louis Peschi was captured anyway and would have been shipped to Auschwitz were it not for the fast thinking of a clever uncle.



Photo courtesy of Louis Peschi

A PIONEERING ISRAELI — Louis Peschi grew up confused about his religious beliefs and his Jewish heritage because his parents told him to pretend he was Catholic in hopes that he would survive Nazism. As a teenager in 1948 Peschi went with his father to the brand new nation of Israel, where he lived for seven years before immigrating to the United States.

a screeching halt. A railway bridge had been destroyed in the bombing. They made a perilous journey home only to discover German officers staying in their house. The Nazis left in the morning and the Peschis thought they would be okay.

Soon, however, Peschi’s father was informed by his German business partners that the next time he encountered Nazis the soldiers would kill his family. Only Catholics could travel, so they converted and were baptized.

“We converted just so we could live, survive,” said Peschi.

His parents sent him to live in a small provincial town with his Catholic aunt and uncle. He hid in plain sight and played the role of a Catholic boy.

“I had to hide my name, I had to hide who I was, I had to hide everything,” he said.

Somehow the authorities caught on. When Peschi was in the second grade he was arrested and jailed by the police. His aunt stayed with him. His uncle was able to negotiate with the chief of police for the boy’s freedom. He was spared a terrible fate.

“I got out at six in the evening,” he said. “At midnight all the people in the jail were put on a transport and ended up in Auschwitz.”

Most of them were never seen again. His resourceful uncle found a woman to take Peschi to Italy where he was reunited with his parents.

After the 1945 liberation of Italy, Peschi’s parents divorced. He returned with his father to Yugoslavia, but three years later they moved to Israel where



Photo courtesy of Louis Peschi

A BIG FAN OF THE YANKEES — Louis Peschi with a trio of American soldiers during the liberation of Italy, where he moved with his parents to avoid the worst of the Nazis' ethnic cleansing of Jews.

he lived for seven years. In 1955 he joined his mother in the United States after she managed to get him a Visa.

A Vigilant Second Generation Scheller urged the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors to carry on their work.

"I hate to say it, but in five years there will be many fewer survivors still with us," she said. "We, as the second generation, need to stay on top of things to keep the message going forward."

Rose Schindler, 93

"Young people who care about peace and justice need to pick up the torch and carry it forward," Schindler said. "The Holocaust ended more than 75 years ago. Most of the survivors are gone. There are fewer and fewer left to pass on their stories."

Research by social scientists verifies Schindler's concerns. A 2020 Pew Research Center study reported that half of American teens and young adults do not know much about the Holocaust, the concentration camps or the Nazis' mass extermination of Jews.

"It's not your fault," Schindler told her young audience. "It's the passage of time. As time goes by people tend to forget. We cannot let that happen. We need you to help."

Born in 1929 in Czechoslovakia, Schindler called herself a "happy child" until she and her family were arrested by Nazis and shipped by train to Auschwitz, the notorious death camp in a corner of Nazi-occupied Poland.

Days after she arrived, a haggard but kindly man she did not recognize approached her. It was her father, an orthodox Jew who she had always seen with a beard, suit and tie. He was clean shaven and dressed in drab prison garb. She told him her two sisters were with her.

"Stay together," her father implored Rose. "Survive and tell the world what they're doing to us."

Her father and brother died in a slave labor camp. Rose and her two sisters miraculously survived the horror of Auschwitz.

"I promised my father I would tell the world what they did to us," she said. "I am keeping my promise. Now I need younger people to keep telling others what happened during the Holocaust."

Surviving the atrocities of Auschwitz took courage, determination and shrewdness, Schindler said. Also a great deal of luck. She and her sisters had another power that helped them to stay alive, she said.



Photo courtesy of Ben Midler

A SLOW RECOVERY — Benjamin Midler suffered severe malnutrition in Birkenau and other Nazi concentration camps. He said he survived by eating food left behind by the dead. It took years for him to regain his health. Today Midler is a sprightly 94 and a gifted storyteller.

"I had hope," she said. "Hope is what kept us going."

Benjamin Midler, 94

Ben Midler agreed that hope and optimism were essential to his survival. So were other strategies.

"I volunteered for everything," he said. "I learned that it was not a good idea to stay in one place for too long. Your chances of being killed were greater. So I volunteered for every work detail and every project hoping that I would seem valuable and they would keep me alive."

Midler said he grew up in a Polish city that was 65 percent Jewish "with a temple on every other block." His father made a good living selling milk as a distributor.

He was 11 when his happy childhood turned into a six-year struggle to survive. In 1939 Germany declared war on Poland and partitioned the country. Germany took control of the western half while its then-allies the Russians took over the eastern portion. Midler said in the beginning of the occupation the Russian side was better for Jews than the German half.

"We could do most of the things we had always done except run businesses

and practice our religion," he said. "The Russians did not want us going to Temple on Saturday."

Jews who fled the German side without permission that were captured by the Russians were shipped to Siberia and put to work, he said.

Matters took a turn for the worse in 1941 when Germany declared war on Russia and took over the entirety of Poland.

"The happened on June 22, 1941," he said. "I remember that clearly because I was 13 and looking forward to my Bar Mitzvah. I never got to have my Bar Mitzvah as a teenager. I was 88 years old and in America when I finally had my Bar Mitzvah."

Polish Jews were forced to wear cloth Stars of David that read "Jude." Failure to do so meant summary execution. He and his family were forced to live in a Jewish ghetto created by the Germans. Each family was allotted one room in a house or apartment.

"It was very difficult," he said. "We were all forced into very small spaces without enough food or mattresses or blankets."

Midler said the German captors realized the same thing and decided to cull the population of his ghetto. Soldiers took his father and others into nearby woods and shot them, dumping their bodies into a mass grave. He said it was years after the war before he learned what had happened to his father.

Midler said he is alive today because of "three miracles." His first miracle happened in 1943 when the Jews of his ghetto were rounded up and stuffed into railroad freight cars. They were taken to the Treblinka extermination camp and murdered. Their bodies were cremated in groups in large ovens designed specifically to eliminate bodies after mass executions. There was not room for him in the car, so he was left behind.

Miracle number two happened at the Birkenau extermination camp when his well-intentioned uncle advised young Ben to tell the Nazis he was a mechanic. His uncle thought the Nazis needed mechanics and would spare them. At the moment he was face to face with a scowling Nazi officer, the 13-year-old panicked and told the truth.

"I worked as a presser in a tailor shop," Midler said. "So I told the German officer I was a presser."

It saved his life. Young Benjamin was sorted into a group of tailors and cobblers. All mechanics were killed. German and Russian soldiers needed uniforms, coats and shoes, so Midler survived by making and repairing clothes. Afterwards he worked in a quarry making gravel for muddy eastern European roads.

His third miracle was his strategy of volunteering at the right moments.

"By volunteering for every difficult job and working hard I was able to stay alive," he said. "I was motivated by my belief that my family was still alive and that if I could survive I would see them again someday."

He never did. He learned years later they were all murdered by the Nazis.

Teenage Midler struggled with malnutrition while he was a prisoner and he was afraid of not getting enough to eat to stay alive.

"I always ate all of my food right away," he said. "Some of the other people would save some of theirs for later, but not me."

In a hushed voice Midler said he also consumed uneaten food he found next to people who had died. Most days food rations were no more than a stale piece of bread with or without marmalade in the morning, a small bowl of clear soup at midday, and a piece of bread and butter in the afternoon. Often there was not even butter, he said.

In 1945 Midler's prison was liberated by the Russians. A rare Jewish officer in the Russian army saved Midler from further suffering by taking him to Russia to recuperate before returning him to ravaged Poland. Over the course of a year he was shipped to Czechoslovakia, Italy, Palestine and Cypress before ending up in the brand new Jewish homeland of Israel in December 1946. He was drafted into the Israeli army in 1948 to fight in the Arab War with the Israeli Defense League.

Sam Vener

A Chula Vista Harbor Commissioner, Vener owned vast tomato and cucumber fields at the foot of E Street and south along the waterfront. He was active in the Chula Vista sister city initiative with Argentina city General Roca, for which the park on the northern end of Fifth Avenue is named. In 1975 Vener famously quit the tomato business by throwing open his fields and giving away his final crop. He said labor costs made it unprofitable to continue.

Lowell Blankfort

Arguably one of Chula Vista's most important citizens of the second half of the 20th century, Blankfort purchased the "Chula Vista Star News" newspaper and built it into one of the



best community papers in the nation. Under Blankfort's stewardship, the "Star News" had a staff of about 12 reporters, four full-time photographers and a staff artist. He was progressive ahead of his time, advocating for equal pay

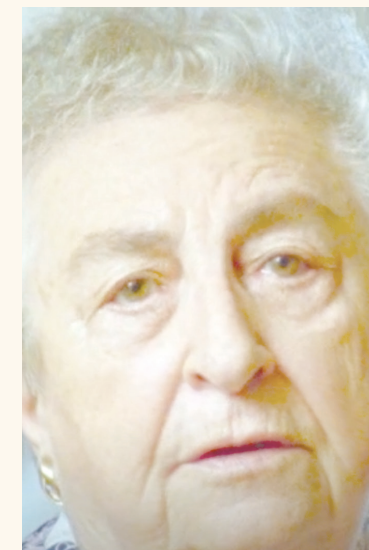
for women, passage of the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act, environmental protections, the decriminalization of marijuana and humane immigration policies. Many of his young journalists went on to notable careers in the news media, politics, education and business. Blankfort was a fierce defender of student free speech rights.

Dr. Leonard Servetter

Dr. Servetter became principal of Rosebank Elementary School in 1963 and by 1975 was superintendent of the Chula Vista Elementary School District. He famously told a "Star News" reporter, "My religion doesn't enter into my job, but it does affect my philosophy. My religion teaches how to conduct myself, to be concerned, to help those less fortunate and not to embarrass anyone in public." Servetter was universally respected by younger South Bay educational leaders and was a mentor to many.

Helen Waterford

A Holocaust survivor, Waterford joined forces with former Hitler Youth Alfons Heck and the



pair made presentations about the destructiveness of fascism and anti-Semitism during World War II and beyond. Their depictions of the mistreatment of Jews from their very different vantage points were compelling and life changing

for thousands of students and community members who attended their talks.

Anne and William Hedenkamp

The education and civic activists had a Chula Vista Elementary School District campus named in their honor in 2003. Anne Hedenkamp was a Congregation Beth Israel "Woman of Valor," a labor union activist and co-founded the sister city relationship with General Roca, Argentina.



Steve Kowitz
One of Southwestern College's best known and most loved professors, Professor Kowitz was a nationally-revered poet, editor and critic who was friends with Bob Dylan, Lawrence Ferlinghetti

CONT ON FAR LEFT COLUMN, NEXT PAGE

He served until 1950.

He eventually located uncles and cousins in Argentina and the United States. He moved to the Chicago area in 1978 and worked in the dairy industry. He later bought an auto parts store from his son-in-law and turned it into a successful business. In 1984 he retired. He and his wife Esther joined a friend in Rancho Bernardo. He was married for 71 years.

Midler became an active advocate for Holocaust survivors and one of the region's most respected *mourets* (teachers). He also published an autobiography, "The Life of a Child Survivor."

"I know by now I survived the Holocaust so I could speak up and tell others about the tragedies that took place in the hope that history would not repeat itself," he said. "The Holocaust must not be forgotten. We must speak up and fight back by confronting anti-Semitism. There is a rising tide around the world of bigotry, hatred and prejudice that is built on intolerance. We should confront hatred and racism forcefully (without) compromise to stop atrocities and the persecution of people because of their religious beliefs."

Midler extended his arm to reveal the tattoo he was given at Birkenau. B-2433 was still dark and clear across his inner forearm. So many prisoners came through Birkenau the German eventually had to issue five digit tattoos. Most never left the gruesome camp.

"On behalf of the millions who can no longer speak, I am the voice of their dead, burned bodies."

Ursula Israelski, 86

Ursula Israelski was only 3 in 1939 when she and her mother fled their native Berlin to avoid capture by Nazis. They went to Belgium where they huddled for two years in a tiny attic, much like Anne Frank and her family. Like the Franks, they too were eventually discovered by the Nazis.

Young Ursula was 5 when SS officers showed up at their door and took her and her mother to their headquarters where they huddled in terror all night. In the morning German army trucks arrived and the crowd of Jewish prisoners massed at the headquarters were ordered aboard.

Nazis wedged as many Jews into the trucks as possible, but Ursula did not fit.

"They didn't take me," they said. "They took everyone else. I stood there by myself. The truck drove away with my mom. I saw her wave at me as the truck drove away."

Abandoned and utterly alone, Israelski was sent to an orphanage. Then another. Then another and another for the next decade. She estimates she lived in about 15 different orphanages or family homes. She said she suffered constant physical, mental and sexual abuse.

When the war ended in 1945 Israelski was about 13 years old. Her mother miraculously survived concentration camps and later that year they were reunited.

She said she did not recognized the pallid, skeletal woman she was presented to.

"I can still see her in that bed," she said. "I didn't recognize her. She weighed only 28 kilograms (61 pounds). She didn't have any hair and she looked like a ghost. I looked at her... and I didn't know who she was."

Her dreams of living again with her mother dashed, Israelski returned to a churn of abusive orphanages and foster homes until she was 18. She was sent to live with her father, but the nightmare ground on. Her father was abusive and mean, she said, so she left.

A moment of grace came when she was given a used pair of ballet pointe shoes. She practiced the positions and moves of ballet alone in front of mirrors for hours on end, imagining herself as a graceful and athletic prima ballerina. Her love for dance and the performing arts helped her to redirect her thinking about her dreary life and find happiness through expression.

Some orphanage friends invited her to join them in Israel, which had just been recognized as a nation.



Photo courtesy of Ursula Israelski

GILDED SPLINTERS — Ursula Israelski suffered physical, mental and sexual abuse while fighting to stay alive during World War II and its aftermath. She found solace in a pair of discarded ballet pointe shoes.



Photo courtesy of Ursula Israelski

AMAZING GRACE — Trapped in orphanages and foster homes, Ursula Israelski taught herself advanced ballet moves, including the very difficult toe dancing of prima ballerinas.



Photo courtesy of Ursula Israelski

'URSULA ISRAELSKI SUPERSTAR' — The 86-year-old is a talented speaker, according to her friend Sandra Scheller. In addition to her Holocaust testimony, Israelski is an active volunteer at the Chula Vista Library.



Photo courtesy of Ursula Israelski

LIFE IS SO SPECIAL — After years of fear and deprivation, Ursula Israelski (r) was thankful to be a survivor of the ravages of World War II, and determined to live a long and happy life. She immigrated to Pendleton, Oregon and later moved to the South Bay's Paradise Valley community.

Israel transformed her, she said. "All my life I felt like I was nothing," she said. "I felt so inferior. I was told I would never amount to anything."

Israelski eventually returned to Germany where she married before moving to Pendleton, Oregon. In retirement she moved to Chula Vista and regularly volunteers at the public library and as a Holocaust witness.

"Ursula is a superstar," said Scheller. "She is such a good speaker. She has made invaluable contributions to the world with her advocacy for Jewish people and her testimony about the shoah."

RUTH: Remember Us, The Holocaust will remain on exhibit in the main Chula Vista Library through August. It is open during library hours and there is no charge. Visitors may pick up a copy of Southwestern College El Sol Magazine X, which features Ruth Goldschmiedova Sax on the cover as well as a detailed recounting of her Holocaust struggles.

and Jack Kerouac. He was a peace activist and animal rights advocate who used his facility with language to inspire young Americans to become involved with meaningful causes in their communities.



Kurt and Ruth Goldschmiedova Sax

Holocaust survivors who actively helped other Jewish immigrants to get on their feet in America, the Sax's were pillars in the Chula Vista community. Kurt was a leader in the Temple Beth Shalom, which in 2012 received an historic designation from the Chula Vista Historical Preservation Commission.

Ruth Sax was a tireless speaker and witness for Holocaust victims and survivors. She spoke at hundreds of schools, service organizations, conferences, churches and historical gatherings, sharing her harrowing experiences at Auschwitz and Theresienstadt as a young Jewish prisoner. Mrs. Sax was present an Honorary Degree from Southwestern College in 2018. She was also Grand Marshal of the Bonitafest, California Senate "Mother of the Year," and "Woman of Valor" at the San Diego Jewish Arts Festival. She is the central subject of RUTH: Remember Us, The Holocaust, the ambitious exhibit at the Chula Vista Library.

Jessie Lark

Born Jessica Lerner, the prodigiously-talented Bonita Vista High School graduate is a critically-acclaimed singer-songwriter and recording artist. She is also an actress who has starred in "La Pastorela" and other regional musical productions.



Sandra Scheller

A gifted artist and costume designer, Scheller worked for Cirque du Soleil for many years in Las Vegas before returning home to Chula Vista to assist her mother, Ruth Sax, as she continued her Holocaust witnessing into her 90th year. Scheller has taken up her parents' torch and helps other Holocaust survivors to schedule appearances and make presentations.



She curated the RUTH: Remember Us, The Holocaust exhibit at the Chula Vista Public Library and has a YouTube channel with interview of Holocaust survivors. She is currently working to establish a Holocaust Center in Chula Vista.

Robert Penner photo courtesy of San Diego Jewish World

Lowell Blankfort photo courtesy of Paradise Post

Helen Waterford photo courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Steve Kowit photo courtesy of Wikipedia

Kurt and Ruth Sax photo courtesy of Sandra Scheller

Jessie Lark photo courtesy of Jessie Lark

Sandra Scheller photo courtesy of Sandra Scheller