

COMMUNITY

An Outbreak of Peace

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SPORTS

CHULA VISTA'S SUPER BOWL STAR

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ICE leaves South Bay in the cold



SEEKING INFORMATION—A number of students told the governing board that the college needs to share ICE strategies with students.

Hyper-aggressive activity at local K-12 schools has region's Latino college students on edge

BY ARIANNA ANTILLON

ICE has not yet set foot on any of the four Southwestern College academic campuses, but its aggressive activities at other South Bay schools has the community on edge, according to students and staff. Its Otay Mesa Detention Center is one of the largest and most populated in the nation. It is visible from three SWC campuses and a short drive to each.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel dressed in military combat gear have arrested parents in the streets bordering two Chula Vista elementary schools. In both cases children were left behind. ICE also set up a roadblock alongside Bonita Vista Middle School on Otay Lakes Road—less than a mile from Southwestern—but made no arrests.

Messages from campus officials

indicate that they have met with ICE and border patrol representatives and asked them to stay off Southwestern College campuses in Chula Vista, San Ysidro, Otay Mesa and National City. Campus Police Chief Marco Bareno said the college is trying to be proactive.

“Our department maintains established lines of communication with regional and federal law enforcement

ICE / PG 2



THE ICE MAN COMETH—ICE personnel moved protestors away from the Otay Detention Center as Homeland Security Director Kristi Noem approached. JOSH WHITEHEAD / THE SWC SUN PHOTOS

Campus security report indicates college is safe

New chief is first in years to complete Clery Report

BY CHRISTIAN ARCE

When Campus Police Chief Marco Bareno issued the 2025 Annual Security Report few people seemed to notice. It was a fairly routine summary that indicated Southwestern College had few serious crimes to report and was a safe campus.

What is unique is that the report was issued at all. Southwestern College law enforcement officials – prior to the arrival of Bareno – had repeatedly failed to compile the federally mandated report or issued reports that failed to report violent crimes and sexual assaults.

Under the federal Jeanne Clery Act publicly funded colleges and universities

are required to issue transparent, honest summaries of criminal activity on their campuses. Signed in 1990 by President George H. W. Bush, the legislation was named for Jeannie Clery, a 19-year-old Lehigh University student who was raped and murdered on her campus in 1986. Her parents won a seminal lawsuit against the university for not truthfully reporting criminal activity on the campus.

Southwestern College crime reports from 2014 until the hiring of Bareno in September 2023 were either incomplete or intentionally misleading, according to student testimony and corroborating documents from the

SECURITY / PG 3



YANELLI ZAVINA ROBLES / THE SWC SUN

Rats follow pied piper to new locale in the music area

BY JOSH WHITEHEAD

Southwestern College's wandering rats have appeared in the television studio and theater. Now they have been spotted in the recording studio and music rehearsal rooms.

Students and faculty confirmed reports that rats have moved into Southwestern's highly-regarded recording arts building. A facility that has hosted superstar Stevie Wonder, South African

human rights legend Miriam Makeba, Beyonce, the Ramones, San Diego Music Award recipient (and SWC alum) Jessie Lark, Kamau Kenyatta and Brandy Melville recording artist Ella Aldridge is the fourth known campus building to battle rats.

Nakul Tiruvilumala, assistant professor of commercial music, has worked in the recording studio for four years. He said he has

RATS / PG 3



THE MIGHTY HAS FALLEN

Campus work crews began removing the name Cesar Chavez from buildings and signs the same day news of sexual abuse by the UFW icon broke in the New York Times. SWC President Dr. Mark Sanchez said he would form an ad hoc committee to consider a new name for the student services building. JOSH WHITEHEAD / THE SWC SUN

Chavez name removed across campus

Student services building will be renamed after sexual abuse revelations

BY ARIANNA ANTILLON

As a Latino legend fell from grace, all signs of the once-venerated Cesar Chavez literally fell to the ground at Southwestern College.

Just hours after a devastating New York Times investigation reported shocking sexual misconduct allegations against the revered farm workers rights leader, college crews scrambled to remove Chavez's name from the Student Services Building, the center-of-campus edifice that houses admissions, counseling, financial aid and other essential student-related departments. By morning, the letters that once spelled out pride and achievement for American Latinos were piled unceremoniously on the ground like a pile of dusty *basura*, piled with crowbars from their place of honor gracing the entrance.

Chavez's name was also hastily deleted from an annual scholarship breakfast and taped over on campus maps. Within 24 hours all evidence of the man held up for generations as an American icon had essentially vanished.

College President Dr. Mark Sanchez, a one-time admirer of Chavez, was quick to condemn him as allegations of rape by union co-founder Dolores Huerta and sexual abuse of minors came to light following an exhaus-

SIGNAGE / PG 3



DOLORES HUERTA



THE DIE HAS BEEN CAST—All references to Cesar Chavez disappeared from campus in 48 hours following multiple allegations of sexual assault. **JOSH WHITEHEAD / THE SWC SUN**

SIGNAGE

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tive five-year Times investigation. Huerta is a Southwestern College Honorary Degree recipient and the subject of a mural by legendary Chicano artist Salvador Barajas owned by the SWC Foundation.

“What we are learning from Dolores Huerta...is heartbreaking for communities who looked up to someone who was seen as a champion of workers’ rights and those exploited by the powerful few,” he said in a statement. “The hypocrisy rests with the individual, and not the movement. My care is first centered on Dolores Huerta and other women affected by sexual violence.”

Sanchez said he will convene a group of campus leaders to consider a new name for the Student Services Building. Many campus leaders and students have already indicated they support renaming the building for Huerta.

The New York Times article was published less than two weeks before Chavez’s March 31 birthday. The Southwestern College Chicano-Latino Coalition abruptly cancelled its 19th Annual Cesar E. Chavez Scholarship Breakfast and United Farm Workers Flag Raising. Director of Student Equity Dr. Guadalupe Corona said she expects there will be a future event to recognize the scholarship winners and honorees Roger and Norma Cazares. Corona accidentally damaged the wall above her desk removing three



‘HEARTBREAKING’ BETRAYAL—Images of Cesar Chavez are captured in murals and photographs throughout the sunbelt and in Latino communities. Most are already gone.

ARIANNA ANTILLON / THE SWC SUN

paintings of Chavez given to her by former students.

“I hope this serves the community as a good lesson to believe our children and women that these things do not belong under the rug,” she said. “This is a dispiriting morning, but also an opportunity to reevaluate our long history of sexual abuse by the powerful.”

Yanelli Robles, the Editor-in-Chief of The Sun, was interviewed for the KUSI News about the accusations of sexual misconduct by Chavez and revealed that she was also a victim

of sexual abuse as a little girl.

“As a victim myself of sexual assault, it was very triggering, but also very healing to see that women have the strength and the courage to speak up even after so many years have gone by,” she said. “This type of action opens the door for victims of sexual abuse to feel seen, heard and even comfortable coming forward with their experiences.”

She said she was glad to see the Chicano community so roundly denounced Chavez for his behavior toward women and girls. “I think this is a moment for

us to realize that (sexual abuse) has never been okay and it’s never going to be okay,” she said. “We need to hold the abusers accountable and there needs to be repercussions for these actions.”

Robles said the Student Services Center should be renamed for Huerta.

“She was the co-founder of the union and probably the real brains behind its success,” she said. “Cesar Chavez got most of the credit, but without Dolores Huerta the UFW Movement would not have been successful. She is the one who coined the phrase “*Si se puede!*”

DOLORES HUERTA REVISITED

Southwestern College is practically a second home for Huerta, who speaks on campus regularly. She is known and loved by scores of campus employees, said Corona. In 1999 Huerta was awarded the college’s highest recognition, an Honorary Degree. She drew a packed house to the SWC Performing Arts Center for a speech in 2022.

Dolores Clara Fernandez Huerta, 95, remains the activist she was in the 1960s and 1970s during the halcyon days of the UFW Movement. She and Chavez founded the Union Farm Workers in 1965. She led the 1965 Delano Strike of 5,000 grape workers, which led to the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975. It mandated safer working conditions, the elimination of harmful pesticides, healthcare benefits and basic rights for agricultural workers.

In 1972 Huerta hit a roadblock with the Arizona Legislature, which banned farmworker strikes. She called for a boycott of Arizona corporate agriculture conglomerates. She often tells the story of people who tried to discourage her.

“Oh, Dolores in California, you can do all those things, but here in Arizona, you can’t. In Arizona, *no se puede!*” My response was ‘*Si se puede in Arizona!*’” she said.

Chavez would later use that same phrase to inspire people, most of whom did not seem to know it originated with Huerta.

For the past 60 years Huerta has

advocated for farmworkers across the nation. Yet as she was fighting for others, she kept a terrible personal secret. In the New York Times article and a follow up piece the next day she described being raped twice by Chavez and bearing two children.

“I believed that exposing the truth would hurt the farmworker movement I have spent my entire life fighting for,” she wrote following the Times investigation. “The formation of a union was the only vehicle to accomplish and secure those rights, and I wasn’t going to let Cesar or anyone else get in the way.”

Corona said there was great nobility in Huerta’s decision.

“Dolores took one for the team,” Corona said. “She suffered for years because she knew if she had come out earlier it could have destroyed the movement that so many of us would benefit from.”

Huerta learned recently that Chavez had also victimized children.

“I am telling my story because the New York Times has indicated that I was not the only one—there were others,” she told the Times.

Ana Murguía and Debra Rojas, daughters of long-time union organizers, told the Times they were molested by Chavez as 13- and 12-year-olds. Rojas said Chavez raped her when she was 15. Huerta said learning about the abuse of children encouraged her to share her experiences.

“I have kept this secret long enough,” she said. “My silence ends here. *Si se pudo.*”

RATS

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seen a live rodent in the building as well as rodent waste.

ASO President Gian Marco Zuno, a former recording arts intern, said he has cleaned up rodent droppings in the studio.

“I did notice some rat urine, feces or some sort of rat waste,” he said.

Zuno and Tiruviluamala said an infestation in the studio was concerning because the compact building is packed with expensive, state-of-the-art technology that could be damaged by nibbling rodents. Zuno said rats in the studio are a ticking time bomb because

they can get into trenches in the floor that channel expensive cabling.

“Rats can affect the equipment and that’s an \$8 million studio,” he said. “You don’t want to lose that functionality because of rodents.”

College leaders said custodial staff and contractors are working hard to control rats and mice. Performing arts staff, when asked, said they do not see custodians come in to clean. Faculty members said there are specific cleaning criteria to protect the expensive specialized equipment and cabling.

There are no confirmed rodent related illnesses among college employees, but faculty leaders have expressed concerns about unsafe

work conditions in parts of the campus. Last semester the faculty union and college were in arbitration with a dispute over cleanliness of the library, media equipment area and other campus locations. Union officials and college communications employees said they cannot discuss arbitration proceedings until the process concludes.

The U.S. Center for Disease Control warns that rodent infestations and their waste products can transmit dangerous diseases such as Leptospirosis, Hanta Virus and Salmonellosis.

Zuno said working in a building with rodents makes him anxious.

“It’s not a good situation to be in.”

SECURITY

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time. In 2015-17 students who reported sexual assault and rape to SWC and Chula Vista Police said their cases were not included in the Southwestern College annual reports. Some years no reports were filed at all.

Bareno pledged to keep accurate records and make the annual report in a transparent manner. He said a team of eight officers collaborate with local law enforcement agencies, resource centers and student reports to ensure that the annual report is complete and gives an honest picture

of the campus safety situation. Students do not have to report alleged crimes directly to campus police, Bareno said, and may instead report to faculty, Title IX officials and professionals in the Student Affairs Office.

“Sometimes it is harder for a victim to report something to police directly because they are unsure whether they want to or they don’t want to get (someone else) in trouble,” Bareno said. “So I think that’s when the Title IX Office and Student Affairs Office



MARCO BARENO

becomes counseling. Those offices are a huge help because a lot of the time those reports come straight from them to us.”

Bareno encouraged students who feel unsafe or vulnerable to speak to campus police. He said he knows that is not always easy.

“It’s important that we understand the challenges victims may endure to report something,” he said. “(The college) should offer enough channels of communication to make it accessible to report (crimes).”