PRESIDENT OF THE ASO ANNOUNCES RESIGNATION

Associated Student Organization President Leonardo Vanegas has resigned citing stress and a desire to focus on his studies. Vice President Imani Drew assumed the presidency and will continue his term which ends in May.

Vanegas was elected ASO President in May 2022 as the college was in the process of rebuilding following two years of shutdown and a partial reopening. This fall he and his ASO team had to adjust to the demolition of the Student Center which housed the ASO and campus clubs. It was clubs where Vanegas put much of his time and energy, he said. “(We) gave clubs an extra $3,000 per semester,” he said. “No instead of $20,000 per semester, it (became) $25,000.”

Vanegas said the project he is most proud of is the fall voter registration and civic engagement project when the ASO registered more than 100 students to vote. He lured prominent elected officials to campus, including Congresswoman Sara Jacobs, Congressman Juan Vargas and California Secretary of State Shirley Weber.

Drew said the resignation shook the ASO. “When he told me… it was a big shock to me and a big shock to all the executives,” she said. Vanegas said fatigue and stress led to his decision. “I really got tired when I got to college,” he said. “I have come to realize that I can no longer continue to properly put students first without putting my studies and mental health first.”

Drew said she would miss working with Vanegas. “I felt disheartened, very heartbroken because (we) have been doing everything (together),” she said. “Leonardo is the reason I ran for vice president and stayed in the ASO.”

Drew pledged to work hard to keep the ASO meaningful and an asset to the student body.
BOOK CHECKED OUT IN 1975 FINALLY RETURNED TO LIBRARY

BY CHERI-ANN INOUYE

Boyd Applegate checked out "Asimov’s Guide to Shakespeare" 47 years ago from the Southwestern College Library and, uh, well, forgot to return it.

It was 1975 when the adventure began. Gerald Ford was president, Elton John was the world’s rock star, "Saturday Night Live!" debuted and two tech geeks opened Microsoft in their garage. And Applegate became forever linked to the Bard and a science fiction legend. He said he meant to return the book someday, but "someday" never came. Years rolled by, then decades. Isaac Asimov died in the meantime. (Shakespeare was already dead.)

"The easiest way to solve a problem is to deny it exists.”

ISAAC ASIMOV

Fate intervened, or else Applegate passed through a wormhole. Out of nowhere one morning appeared Dr. Mark Sanchez, Southwestern College President and JEDI Warrior (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion), at a breakfast joint called Hob Nob Hill in Banker’s Hill. Even though Sanchez is not a banker, Applegate suspected he might be experiencing a rich coincidence.

Southwestern teams with Baja university to lower barriers

BY CAMILA A. GONZALEZ

On a hill on the southern flank of the Southwestern College campus, students can see well into Mexico. La linea is just six miles as the crow flies from the Chula Vista campus and a stone’s throw from the Otay Mesa campus.

Yet SC and the Mexican system of higher education can seem as distant as Maine. Despite the fact that Tijuana is home to two universities closer to SC than either SDSU or UCSD, there has been little effort by college leaders in either nation to form meaningful partnerships.

That may be changing. SC is reaching a hand across the border and a major Mexican university system is reaching back.

Dr. Joel Pilco, SC’s director of binational and international programs, will never erase the border, but he has removed dozens of other barriers. Mexico’s venerable Universidad Autonoma de Baja California has done likewise south of la frontera.

SC and UABC have formed a partnership that at first will serve primarily low-income students in Mexico. UABC will help selected students with scholarships for tuition fees and international (F1) student visas. SC will offer the Mexican students California in-state tuition rather than the much higher international student rate.

"I promised my father I would tell the world what (the Nazis) did to us. I am keeping my promise. Now I need younger people to keep telling others what happened during the Holocaust.”

ROSE SCHINDLER, Holocaust survivor

HOLocaust educator fulfilled father’s last wish

Rose Schindler had a constant reminder that life is precious—a concentration camp tattoo on her wrist given to her by the Nazis in Auschwitz. She dedicated her life to educating subsequent generations about the Shoah (the Holocaust) and earned the revered Jewish honorific Moreh (teacher).
Alexia Mora was well known for her courageous and athletic spirit. After she enrolled at SC, she became the first cheerleader at Southwestern College to perform stunts at Southwestern College sports events.

Cheerleader Arelis Olivas said Mora was always willing to help people. Her infectious laugh and an amazing all-around athlete. She was an excellent student, with an exceptional GPA, and an amazing all-around athlete. After Mora graduated from Southwest High, Banani asked her to cheer for Southwestern College and be the flyer. Mora accepted and the two cheered together for two years at Jaguars, where their bond continued to grow.

Alexia always told me how much she admired me, (but) I always admired her and how strong she was,” Banani said. “I never knew how to manage school and cheer at the same time, but Alexia did, and she was so good at everything she did.”

Mora transferred to SDSU in 2021. She was set to be the first in her family to graduate from a university. Her cousin Yvisiana Partida wrote an emotional message for a GoFundMe campaign to raise funds for burial expenses. "She loved to sing and draw, she had big beautiful eyes with a contagious laugh," Partida wrote. "It’s her smile I can’t get out of my head. She dedicated her life to nothing but good things. (She) never wavered and that’s what hurts us the most. She broke so many generational curses and was the sweetest to every single person in her life.”

Banani said she is heartbroken by the loss of her close friend. "I’ll give anything to give her one more hug and tell her how much she meant to me and so many others.”

The Mora Family is accepting donations at https://gofund.me/f72e616e.

FIGHTS OF ANGELS SING THEE TO REST — Alexia Mora was well known for her courageous and athletic spirit. She was a cheerleader at Southwestern College sports events.

Cheerleader • CONT FROM PG 1

An honor student, Mora was near to SDSU graduation had to be diligent and courageous. Mora knew cheerleaders are performers and that all eyes were on her when she was thrown in the air for a stunt, Williams said. "She absolutely owned the cheers," she added. "She was a cheerleader because she was so talented and led by example. She was an excellent student, with an exceptional GPA, and an amazing all-around athlete."

Alexia always meant to me and so many others. She was always kind and helpful, she had such bright energy and was always willing to help people. Her junior year I made her one of my cheer captains because she was so talented and led by example. She was an excellent student, with an exceptional GPA, and an amazing all-around athlete. After Mora graduated from Southwest High, Banani asked her to cheer for Southwestern College and be the flyer. Mora accepted and the two cheered together for two years at Jaguars, where their bond continued to grow. Alexia always told me how much she admired me, (but) I always admired her and how strong she was,” Banani said. “I never knew how to manage school and cheer at the same time, but Alexia did, and she was so good at everything she did.”

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**MARCH**

**CONT FROM PG 14**

Human rights activists honor last migrants

2.3 million people and San Diego County’s 3.3 million souls. “Beautiful, wonderful,” offered Enrique Morones, the Gente Unida founder who organized Walk for Migrants. “We are so blessed to be able to enjoy a morning like this when so many other people can’t.” Morones picked a perfect December morning in Border Field State Park — warm in the sun, cool in the shade, capped by an azure dome spotted by a profusion of swirling white clouds. He and his fellow walkers were there to remember the suffering and tragedy of migrants around the world, including near the U.S. Mexican border.

Padre Dermot Rodgers, in his traditional brown Franciscan friar’s robe and sandals, reminded the line of the reason for the season. It was two weeks before Christmas on el Día de la Virgen de Guadalupe, but Father Rodgers stopped and gathered the pack every few minutes like an Easter Station of the Cross procession.

Instead of the suffering of Christ, Father Rodgers shared stories of suffering by immigrants from Haiti, Syria, Somalia, Ukraine, Venezuela, China and other corners of the world beset by poverty and violence.

“We ask for basic and simple justice,” he said in his light Irish brogue, a vestige of his native Belfast, Northern Ireland. Rosary beads dangling from his weathered fingers and a serious countenance crossed his otherwise welcoming face.

Justice, however, is rarely basic or simple, he said. Inequity, war and corruption have pushed tens of millions out of their native countries and around the migrant trail, an invisible highway of desperation crisscrossing the planet. Like the earliest walkers in the bottom left corner of America, as many as 1.3 million migrants are on the move this very day, said Rodgers.

Many of them never reach their destination, he said, struck down by heat, cold, robbers, rapists, accidents and hunger. More than 1,000 migrants died along the southern border in 2022 alone, according to the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Rodgers gathered marchers to pray a portion of the rosary for Joselyn Quinteras of El Salvador, a migrant who died of dehydration and heat exhaustion in the desiccated southern Arizona desert near Tucumcari.

“She was abandoned in the wilderness by the coyotes she had paid to guide her across the border,” he said. “They found her body three weeks later.”

Quinteras, like the other migrants remembered along the way, was honored with a tangerine butterfly released into the cyan sky.

“Butterflies are symbols of hope in many cultures,” said Rodgers. “They are revered in Latino cultures as messengers to heaven. Butterflies remind us that we are never alone and always connected to the spiritual world.”

Franciscan Padre Dermot Rogers said butterflies are a symbol of hope in many cultures and have a special place in the hearts of Latinos. “They are revered in Latino cultures as messengers to heaven,” he said. “Butterflies remind us that we are never alone and always connected to the spiritual world.”

Monarch butterflies, which undertake long migrations between California and Mexico, are symbols of immigrants and DREAMers. Gente Unida activist Hugo Castro is a man of Latinos. “They are revered in Latino cultures as messengers to heaven,” he said. “Butterflies remind us that we are never alone and always connected to the spiritual world.”

Monarch butterflies, which undertake long migrations between California and Mexico, are symbols of immigrants and DREAMers. Gente Unida activist Hugo Castro is a diminutive and soft-spoken man, who by his reputation as a fierce defender of the weak and vulnerable. He said it was fitting that a Franciscan monk and a team of activists clutched rosaries gathered on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe to fight for the rights of migrants.

“It helps us to recognize the necessity of fighting for human rights, which is really a spiritual quest,” he said. “Some of us do it for spiritual reasons to light a flame of hope and love.”

Marching along the border to honor migrants “is very important,” Castro said, but the event is even more important for the activists walking together in the comforting sun. Caring for others requires people of good will to also care for themselves, he said, and to be periodically recharged with inspiration.

“Every interaction is humanitarian and beloved of God,” he said. “We need to remember that God is on their side and our side. Walking today with other people is the most beautiful way we can help them to remember that and gives me encouragement to do more work.”

Cecelia di Mino was a teenager adrift when she landed at Southwestern College and found herself, she said. Today she is a Harvard graduate who remembers her humble South County roots. She traveled from Las Vegas to participate in the walk, which she felt called to.

“I was blessed with opportunity so many other people do not have,” she said. “Sometimes as people find success and run toward their goals they forget their past, they forget about those they left behind. Migrants are so often the people left behind. They are criminalized and victimized.”

Looking down the path, di Mino said she saw reason for optimism. “The people (here) have great intention and energy,” she said. “Releasing the butterflies...was really beautiful. There is a lot of love. (We need) people to pay attention (to migrants) and treat them with dignity and respect.”

Retiree Dr. Christina L. Moley is far from retired. The former educator now helps run the Oaxaca Education Fund that provides schooling and food to indigenous people in Mexico’s southern states. One part of her organization’s mission is to help people thrive across the world who died while trying to reach for a better life. (from top) Frank Modic hands a slumbering butterfly to Cecelia di Mino. Padre Dermot Rogers helps a young Monarch walk to a native plant. A marcher reads a passage from Catholic scripture.

**MARCH MESSAGERS**

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CECELIA DI MINO
SC alumnae, Harvard graduate

“A little support can go a long way, but the need is great. Mexico is a wonderful but complicated society. Doing humanitarian work there can be difficult because there are so many barriers and challenges.”

DR. CHRISTAURIA WELLAND
Director of the Oaxaca Education Fund

where they are so they do not become displaced refugees.

“Education is a force multiplier,” she said. “One transformed person can transform others. That is how it has always been since the beginning of time.”

Morones and company had planned to march all the way to the beach at the international border, but recent downpours had flooded the path. Padre Dermot Rogers said the God-sent rain was a blessing for the plants and animals of the park, including the squadron of butterflies launched by the marchers that morning.

“The butterflies were born in the desert southwest of Southern California and will later migrate to the Columbia River Gorge around Portland, Oregon,” he said. “Our butterflies represent our migrants who are also undertaking a great trek. May God protect them as they make their journeys.”

MEMORIAL MARCH — Gente Unida volunteers annual Walk for Migrants serves as a memorial for deceased migrants as well as a day of reflection about their activism and their lives. Padre Dermot Rogers stops to share a story of a migrant from the Middle East. Walkers prayed for peace in the world and more humane treatment of refugees.
MORGAN ROSE SCHINDLER
BENT DARKNESS TOLL

From the last time she saw her father at Auschwitz until the day she died, Rose Schindler’s mission in life was to tell the world what happened during the Holocaust. Her father’s last words to her the 14-year-old dwelled within her until she died this month at 93.

“Whatever you do, stay alive so that you can tell the world what they are doing to us,” Mrs. Schindler fulfilled her mission and became one of America’s greatest Holocaust educators and one of our nation’s greatest citizens. The last 45 years of her life were dedicated to keeping the sacred promise she made to her father. There are no exact figures to tabulate how many people she reached, but it would be safe to say it was in the thousands. She was one of our nation’s leading Mohel, the Hebrew word for teacher. In Judaism they is no more honored title.

Moreh Schindler required superhuman stamina and enormous inner strength to travel the land and share her family’s horrific experiences of fear, suffering and death at the hands of one of history’s most barbarous regimes. Her parents and most of her immediate family were among the 6 million Jews exterminated by German Nazis during World War II. Her family members were killed in the notorious Auschwitz gas chamber. A tattoo etched on her forearm by the Nazis was a daily reminder.

Moreh Schindler was compelled to go to IVH in late April of 2022 following darkly ugly acts of anti-Semitic vandalism there and at BV Middle School. It was a seminal event for the high school. Her electrifying presentation transformed the IVH student body. When she began to speak it was if the whole world froze to listen. Students were shocked, outraged and pained to hear what the Schindler girls were just put through. She spoke of her happy childhood that turned horrific after her entire family was arrested and sent to Auschwitz where she was tortured and enslaved. Tears flowed when she told the teenagers in the high school gym that she and her sister were the only two of the nine members of her family to survive the concentration camp. They were also teens.

Among the campuses she visited recently was Bonita Vista High School, our neighbor across the street. Moreh Schindler was compelled to go to IVH in late April of 2022 following darkly ugly acts of anti-Semitic vandalism there and at BV Middle School. It was a seminal event for the high school. Her electrifying presentation transformed the IVH student body. When she began to speak it was if the whole world froze to listen. Students were shocked, outraged and pained to hear what the Schindler girls were just put through. She spoke of her happy childhood that turned horrific after her entire family was arrested and sent to Auschwitz where she was tortured and enslaved. Tears flowed when she told the teenagers in the high school gym that she and her sister were the only two of the nine members of her family to survive the concentration camp. They were also teens.

Several moreh Schindler faced could not retain their radiance spirit. She was a Holocaust survivor who inexplicably remained update and optimistic. She was one of the liveliest and most living people anyone could hope to meet. Faith made her that way, she said. It was her faith in young people that fueled her optimism and her mission.

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Rose Schindler was a warrior for peace right to the end. She spoke to enthralled audiences just a fortnight before she died. Now the torch has passed to us. We honor her and other great Holocaust Mohel like Ben Midler, Gerhard Maschkowski and the late SC honorary degree recipient Ruth Goldschmidtova Sax by continuing our work to reject evil and promote peace. It is now our turn to say “never again” and keep alive the spirits of Holocaust victims and survivors.

History has a disconnecting habit of repeating itself, but people of good will and intention can prevent humanity from repeating its darkest mistakes. In the spirit of Rose Schindler, we accept the challenge.
FOOD ALLERGIES ARE DEEPLY MISTAKEN WAITING TO HAPPEN

BY HAN PSLAMA

A Perspective

Southwestern College does so many things right that support inclusion, enrollment and meaningful learning. People in our faculty and deans for supporting students. Thank you all for our campus police for working to keep our college open and untold million dollars in its facilities, more than $100 million a year to keep the campus operating and unlimited amounts of blood, sweat and tears students places so little priority on the food that fuels its processes.

It is a pit to pour Pepsi into a Marsbar. Other colleges and universities have healthy food options. We should too. Students need lean protein, fruits, vegetables, unprocessed bread and healthy beverages. They provide short-term and long-term energy as well as benefits to mental health.

Sadly, most of our “food” offerings at our college cafes are unhealthy, such as an 18-year-old girl at a gas station. Rows of chips, pastries, sugary trail mix and candy drinks and other slow motion poisons make students lethargic, overweight, unhealthy and unable to think well.

ALLERGIES CAN KILL

About 32 million people in the U.S. have food allergies, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. Most common are milk, egg, tree nuts, peanuts, shellfish, wheat and soy. A boy named Kai Blaggrave, a freshman psychology major, avoids campus food offerings are not kosher and do not meet the requirements of most Muslim students. San Diego County is sprinkled with Jewish, Hindu and Muslim delis and eateries that have a rich variety of offerings, so there seems to be no reason SC cannot provide at least a few.

Chula Vista is disproportionately populated by ultra-rich Jewish children who helped to build and advance our area. Recently Muslim students from Africa and the Middle East have been living on SC, but not a good place to eat on campus.

VEGETARIANS LEFT BEHIND

Religious and secular vegetarians have a better effort from our college. Many vegans and vegetarians are on medically-informed diets for heart conditions, high blood pressure, migraines and even hair loss problems. To the “Old You” in Wisconsin, eating meat does not exist in metropolitan San Diego County.

Arturo Andres Salas Garcia, a federal justice major who transferred in 2021, used to depend on campus food offerings to survive.

“There isn’t really a wide variety,” he said. “They should include some milk, bread, milk, pasta, rice, potatoes, legumes, and grains. They provide short-term and long-term energy as well as benefits to mental health.

HIGH COST OF HEALTHY CHOICES

Too often, food is the last thing students can afford. After paying for educational costs, rent, gas transportation, there may be little or nothing left for food. SC deserves a lot of credit for its work on student hunger. When it learned just before the pandemic that nearly 40 percent of students suffer serious food insecurity, SC opened the Jaguar Kitchen food pantry.

There has been no progress, though, in the real problem of expensive food in the cafeterias. The State of California and SC do so much to subsidize the costs of higher education, but nothing meaningful related to food. Johnny can’t learn if Johnny is hungry. Neither can Maria, Mustafa, Sally and Kylam.

Improving the quality of food in the cafeteria is a moon shot or as difficult as curing cancer, but it makes education possible and will help our leaders. It is doable if it is a priority.

We are who we eat. Garbage in, garbage out. Let’s start feeding our students with the food that will fuel success.

DRAG ARTISTS, ALL’S PUSH BACK AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

BY HAN PSLAMA

A Perspective

Chula Vista voters once again showed a hate-monger how the LGBTQ community and drag artists time and again, only to be swayed aside by the Chula Vista community. A self-proclaimed minister, Contras has engaged in unchurched behavior since he first opened his mouth to insert both of his feet. He is just the latest homophobic bully hiding under the guise of glory who has tried and utterly failed to stigmatize the South County LGBTQ+ community and drag performers.

Hope’s let’s help today.

Contras took to Instagram to slander Manno Cakes, a small business on Third Avenue, for hosting drag queen Mariam T at Disney Villain Trivia Night. Exposing children to drag queen entertainment is child abuse,” he belched forth.

The “child abuse” canard hit deep with members of the LGBTQ+ community, historically struggling with hypersexualization, and historically NOT child abusers. Nearly 99 percent of child abusers are straight, white women. Ironically, a disproportionate number are clergy.

Drag is a centuries-old art form from England meant for expression of self and to celebrate diversity. Drag artists are among the world’s most talented and popular performers, including prime time American TV.

In recent years family events featuring drag performers have become a popular way to teach children the beauty of diversity and acceptance. Contras clearly did not learn these lessons as a child. Sadly, he mistakenly believes the rest of us are as small minded and hateful as he is.

“As an entrepreneur and businessman, Marco knows the value of community support for business to thrive,” crowed his campaign website.

Nevertheless, he blacklisted and bullied a small business in Chula Vista that values community. Manno Cakes owner Jose Vargas called out the hypocrisy.

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Contras swung open the Gates of Hell and set free his chorus of internet trolls and rightwing homies. Manno Cakes received non-stop harassment from Contrasians and their minions called out the hypocrisy.

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“IT’s not a good look to attack a citizen while you claim to be trying to help citizens,” he said.
The ugly truth, he said, is that narcissists are unwilling to change. Narcissists lack self-awareness and avoid introspection. They are unable to acknowledge that they need to change because they think they are fine (and probably wonderful).

“Damage done by narcissists can be intense. Victims may suffer complex post-traumatic stress disorder that can require years to recover from. It takes time to recognize and accept the warning signs. Murray said, and it takes time to break free from the highs and lows victims unconsciously learn to crave.”

Mental health professionals have not caught up with diagnostics, said Hall. “Many therapists do not understand or recognize the trauma that results from being around it,” she said. Hall said a clean break with zero contact is best. If that is not possible, Murray recommends a strategy he calls “diversification of hope.”

Instead of hoping you will change this narcissist, which is not going to happen, you diversify it,” he said. “Maybe you go 50/50 or 80/20 and you start spending your hope on what makes you happy. Take some of that hope and give it to someone else — someone you care for and that you thought cared for you.”

Narcissists often target people who give them admiration, affection and status. Victims are usually empathetic, kind and vulnerable, making them easier targets for a narcissist to manipulate and control, according to Hall. Over the past several years, narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) has become more prevalent, Murray said. “It is the hope that they’re going to change and modern narcissists do not change,” he said. “Victims can change and can eventually leave the toxic relationship.”

In ancient Greek mythology Narcissus was a beautiful man so enamored of his appearance he fell in love with a reflection of himself in a pool of water and spent the rest of his life admiring it. Narcissus would have lots of company today. Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) affects at least 6.2 percent of the U.S. population, but the number is almost certainly higher. Narcissists, it seems, rarely seek help because they have convinced themselves they are wonderful.

Unfortunately, it is the people around them who suffer. Narcissistic Abuse is a recognized mental disorder but it is the people in relationships with narcissists who take an emotional beating.

Julie L. Hall is the author of “The Narcissist in Your Life: Recognizing the Patterns and Learning to Break Free.” She is a registered psychologist and author. For more information on narcissistic abuse and relationships, please visit juliehall.com.
**OTAY VALLEY REGIONAL PARK IS A LOVELY NATURAL RESOURCE IN NEED OF SOME LOVE, STORY BELOW**

**OTAY RIVER VALLEY**

**THREE GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES DO NOTHING TO MAINTAIN AND PRESERVE A NATURAL TREASURE**

**BY HAN PSALMA**

Otay Valley Regional Park is a good idea. It is an increasingly precious sliver of nature wending its way between San Diego County’s two most populated cities. It has a river, ponds teaming with life, beautiful vegetation and some wonderful wildlife. It is also in need of attention. Otay Valley Park is full of trash, fouled water and petty vandalism. It is crying out for help.

Humans have traversed the banks of the Otay River for more than 10,000 years. La Jolla and Kumeyaay People traveled along the river to the mountains and ocean following the seasons. In the 1770s, Junipero Serra and Spanish conquistadors used the valley for their first camp in Alta California. Spanish ranchos occupied the area in the 1800s prior to California statehood in 1850.

American towns and settlements were sited from the face of the Earth in 1916 when the original Otay Dam gave way following torrential rain, killing hundreds. A new dam was built and the riverbed was mined for gravel from 1920-1990.

A park sprang to life in 1990 as an agreement between San Diego and the Southwestern College Sun

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**LATINO VIBE FADES**

Administrative churn has obliterated institutional memory and has left no one to advocate for the Latino architecture and culture of Southwestern College. A great whitewash continues unchecked.

**BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD**

Frederick Buechner never took classes at Southwestern College, but he has stared right into our soul.

“You have to suffer in order to be beautiful,” he wrote.

Our once-beautiful campus looks like a war zone, especially in the center which is, gulp, gone. The college is now a 156-acre donut—tasty on the perimeter, empty in the middle. College leaders are justifiably boastful about what is coming. Taxpayers in the district have been very generous with SC and have invested in the future of the community by passing three bonds in two decades. Between the college and the Sweetwater high school district, local voters have taxed themselves almost $2 billion.

Proposition Z alone will fund a modernized student center, bookstore, SWC Cares Hub, culinary arts, learning communities, veteran’s center and personal wellness. Thank you voters. Now to the suffering.

This generation of students is paying the price for attending a college in transition. We attend classes in the middle of a major construction zone. Sure there is the dirt, dust, mud, noise, ugly fencing, rude construction workers, competition with heavy equipment and almost-daily alterations to the pathways around campus. That is to be expected.

What was unexpected is the disregard for our Latino culture and history of Southwestern College. Our DNA is being rewritten before our eyes. Construction is whitewashing our Latino/Mesoamerican architecture and our SoCal vibe.

This was entirely avoidable, but inevitable due to the dizzying revolving door of college leaders we have suffered the past 25 years. Through no fault of their own there is no institutional memory in our senior college administration. None know our history and culture. Even our “homeboy” president is a La Jolla community member. A great whitewash continues unchecked.

Our Moyam architecture is dismantled piece by piece, new building by new building, Egol trumps our culture. Proud architects who wanted to “make their mark” selfishly whipped up their own little monuments rather than working cooperatively to maintain a cohesive theme that represents our unique borderlands community.

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**CAUTION HARD HEAD AREA**

**NO LATINO CULTURE ON CAMPUS**

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March 24, 2023 / Issue 3
College president denies that Chavez received special treatment, said he was entitled to retirement.

**THE ATM THEFT**

SC Campus Police records indicate the incident was reported on September 26. Chavez later admitted that he and his partners drove a forklift into the former Student Center and broke into an ATM for FAFSA recipients that was bolted to the floor. Chavez and Hernandez-Jimenez then took the ATM to the Grounds Department in the south area of campus where they used a jackhammer heavy college equipment to break it open. College officials said about $9,600 was removed from the ATM, which belonged to a local bank.

Buildings 66A and 67A — the former Cafeteria/Student Union and the Student Center — were scheduled to begin demolition preparation in late last September. Director of Facilities Aurora Ayala directed her staff in September to email and remove items remaining in the buildings before demolition fencing was installed.

Once the area was fenced, she said, access to the buildings would be restricted.

The privately-owned ATM machine was scheduled to be relocated October 4 or 5.

Chavez was included in the message.

Four days later, on September 26, the SCAT was reported.

The episode launched two immediate actions, according to SC Police Information Officer Lillian Leopold.

“Chavez was investigating a criminal investigation done by the college police and one was our administrative process that was conducted by HR,” she said. “College police collected the evidence and attempted to turn it over to the (San Diego County) District Attorney’s office and then our HR department.”

Leopold said Chavez and Correa were immediately placed on paid administrative leave during the investigation, as required by their employment contracts.

**UNEXPLAINED ACTIVITIES**

Pallets with surplus phones, desktop computers and laptops were also found in the area behind the Grounds Department, though they were usually stored inside the college warehouse prior to a public audit.

It is because they do not leave anywhere,azione. Campus Police Chief Marco Bareno said he did not know about the pallets until he got there, and they were not stolen because they were not damaged and had not left the campus.

Sánchez agreed.

“Correct,” Technically,” he said. “They were moved, yeah. Should they have been moved? No. There was no work in the area to remove the pallets. But there’s a lot of construction happening, so what they did was to blend it in with the construction work.”

Sánchez refuted statements by some college employees that there was broader theft.

“We have recordings of everything and we didn’t see anything that was removed or taken off campus,” he said. “As a matter of fact, we check inventory. I don’t have evidence that there was broader theft.”

**LINGERING ON THE PATRULL**

Hernandez-Jimenez, a non-union hourly employee, was immediately fired. At the hearing in the SCAT, he was not considered a full college employee and his employment was at the discretion of his supervisor.

Correa is the full-time employee and member of the CSEA classified employees union. Under the CSEA contract, unit members under investigation have due process rights. They cannot be fired without a hearing, though they may be placed on paid leave.

College officials said the CSEA contract empowers employees under investigation or on leave to resign or retire at any time during the process.

Item 15.19 on the Feb. 13 Governing Board agenda said the college would accept Correa’s resignation on Feb. 28. Five months after the ATM theft his name was still listed in the college faculty and staff directory as an active employee.

Correa confirmed that he was on paid leave through Feb. 28 while he was under investigation.

Chavez, an 11-year employee and classified manager, chose to retire, according to Sanchez.

At the Oct. 10 meeting of the governing board he was to be presented a retirement resolution that did not mention any criminal activity, sanctions or termination. Agenda Item 18.20 said that Chavez’s last day of employment was Oct. 5.

Days before the meeting took place and about two weeks after the theft of the ATM, the college froze his account.

In Item 25.6 Chavez was praised in a glowing proclamation announced by the PD.

“BE IT PROCLAIMED, that Juan Chavez is deserving of recognition for their dedicated years and services and deserved the commendation of the Governing Board, administrators, faculty and staff,” read the proclamation.

The proclamation was pulled from the agenda at the request of Trustee Don Dumas.

**FUTURE PROSECUTION POSSIBLE**

SC did not punish Chavez, but his case was turned over to the Chula Vista Police Department and the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office, according to Sanchez.

Other suspects who claimed to be fired with felony Grand Theft, a crime punishable by up to three years in state prison with fines.

California Penal Code statute of limitations for prosecution of Grand Theft is four years.

Bareno said the case was complicated and required investigation. SCPCO has no detective, so the case was turned over to Chula Vista Police.

Bareno said he and his officers were constrained by state law and college personnel policies, but that further action could be taken against Chavez, Correa and Hernandez-Jimenez by the CVD and the District Attorney.

“We want what to make sure that we hold people accountable,” he said. “And when I say ‘people accountable,’ I mean all people. It doesn’t matter whether you’re an employee or whether you’re a student or whether you’re a police officer. If you commit a crime we’ll process it accordingly and we will submit it to the District Attorney just like anyone else.”

**POLICIES ALLOW QUICK RETIREMENTS**

Sanchez refuted complaints by some employees that Chavez received special treatment. He said the district acted properly and because Chavez had not been convicted of a crime, he was granted retirement without sanctions.

“He was allowed to retire,” Sanchez said. “That’s our public record. That part of it, in this country you are what you prove guilty. What are you? You are innocent, right? So by contrast, he was not fired and considered his case was over to Chula Vista Police. Bareno said he and his officers were constrained by state law and college personnel policies, but that further action could be taken against Chavez, Correa and Hernandez-Jimenez by the CVD and the District Attorney.

**PARK**

Pollution and trash despoil a beautiful riparian valley.

County, Chula Vista and the city of San Diego to restore natural habitats and give the community the opportunity to appreciate nature.

Otay Valley Regional Park is potentially lovely, but isn’t. Neglect, trash, pollution and some shady people have taken their toll.

Upon entering the park through a residential area on Beyer Boulevard in western Otay Mesa, the first sight is the popular Greg Cox Bike Ramp Park. A children and teens whooping in delight as they launched their bikes skyward from ramps and dirt mounds.

A wooden bowl for expert skateboarders is now closed off by a homemade fence. While it felt incredible to see huge palm trees the size of the bridge, it was also a bit creepy, even in broad daylight.

The sight of cast aside women’s shoes did not help.

A mound of trash wrapped around the bridge like malignant Christmas presents under a grey concrete tree. Bags of recycling, Amazon boxes, refrigerator filters, mattresses, cans and bottles despised by the affected riparian pathway. Trash persisted, nature resisted. A battle ensues.

People need to rescue the rare plants and animals in the Otay Valley Regional Park before it becomes the northern twin of the filthy Titus Canyon River.

At the Otay Valley Regional Park remains a good idea, even a great idea. All great ideas need effort and commitment to reach their potential. Otay Valley needs us to rescue it.
Salvador Barajas is an artistic legend who made his name by thinking big — really big — including several towering murals in Chicano Park.

Now the 79-year-old master of murals is thinking small. Really small. Postage stamp small.

Barajas has designed a set of U.S. postal stamps that celebrate migrant laborers. “Los Indispensables” was inspired by the indispensable contributions of unsung workers to American society. He said he is thinking smaller so others will think bigger.

“These stamps are meaningful,” he said. “People who work at Walmart or Burger King, places like that, someone has to, but it should not be forever. Perhaps to earn money to buy a car or a computer, yes, but one’s aspirations should be bigger and grander than Burger King.”

Barajas has portrayed honorable migrant laborers including a Field worker, a nanny, an agricultural worker, a construction worker, a hotel domestic and a busboy.

“I worked as a dishwasher and a busboy before I entered the Air Force,” he said. “I told myself being a busboy was not going to get me anywhere.”

Getting his stamps on the envelopes of America will take an act of Congress in the most literal way.

“I would like to present a sample of Los Indispensables to Juan Vargas, our Congressional representative for the South Bay,” he said. “I am hopeful he can help get the prototypes to the right people at the U.S. Postal Service.”

Barajas is stuck on the idea of publishing Los Indispensables as a set of Forever Stamps.

Salvador Barajas needs a little help, he said, from Congressman Juan Vargas. Barajas is hopeful that with Vargas’ help the prototypes can get to the right people in the U.S. Postal Service.

POSTAGE DUE —
Salvador Barajas drew on his wife’s experience as a nanny and his own teenage jobs as a field laborer and busboy to develop six designs for U.S. postage stamps that honor the work of migrant labor.

PHOTO BY
JUAN HERRERA / STAFF

FROM ART TO STAMP

The U.S. Postal Service created the Citizens’ Stamp Advisory Committee in 1957 to assist the Postmaster General. Committee members use their knowledge and expertise to consult and recommend potential stamp subjects to the Postmaster General for final approval.

The U.S. Postal Service welcomes suggestions for stamp subjects that celebrate the American experience. Any proposal that meets the established criteria will be considered. To submit an idea, there are four steps:

• Carefully consider your stamp subject.
• Submit a proposal in writing by U.S. mail. Has to be by mail.
• Include historical information, facts, and dates about the subject in the proposal.
• Mail your suggestion. One topic per letter.

Here’s the address:
Stamp Development
Attn: Citizens’ Stamp Advisory Committee
475 L’Enfant Plaza SW, Room 3300
Washington, DC 20260-3501

Source: USPS
JAZZ PLAYERS SHOW CHOPS IN NOTEWORTHY PERFORMANCE

BY ALICIA RIVERO

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KEEPING TRACK OF WHAT’S MOST IMPORTANT

BY EMILY INGCO

September 26, 1988

XXIV Olympiad. Seoul, South Korea.

Heart pounding, Anthony “Tonie” Campbell wiggled his feet tightly into the blocks for the 110-meter hurdle race in front of 70,000 cheering people.

“On your Mark!”

Campbell tensed and stretched in his red, white and blue tights. “Set!”

Dropping his head low, Campbell raised his hips and stared ahead.

Inhale. Exhale.

“Bang!”

Smoke drifted from the starter’s pistol. Campbell was already meters down the vermillion polyurethane. Just 13.38 seconds later, Campbell blazed across the finish line, bullets of sweat streaking across his taunt face.

13.38. Bronze. Made the podium!

Three-time Olympian Campbell, the kid from Banning High School in Wilmington, California, had a medal. His life would never be the same.

“Track was not even teenage Tonie’s favorite sport.

“I was always a baseball and football player growing up,” he said. “When I got to high school I wanted to take one year off from baseball and football.”

Campbell’s father said okay as long as he played another sport to stay active during the spring.

“My friends were all going out for track and field,” he said. “I didn’t even know what that was.”

He was drawn to the hurdling group, specifically the low hurdles. Banning’s hurdles captain had other plans for the sprightly Campbell.

“He showed me really really hard,” Campbell said. “I admired him right in my way. I was going to crash into it, but instead I jumped over it. Lo and behold it was a high hurdle.”

It was love at first flight for Campbell who was a high hurdler from that day forward. He became a state champion and earned a scholarship to USC where Track was not even teenage Tonie’s favorite sport.

“Initially I didn’t understand why he was so into track and field,” Campbell’s brother said, “but it changed my life.”

He said it was a third to be on the podium while the national anthems played.

“I imagine what it’s like to be in front of millions of people (watching on television) and (a packed) stadium. Having an Olympic medal hung around my neck and I’m being handed a bouquet of flowers. It’s awesome. It was an amazing moment I’ll never forget.”

“One of the most surreal memories in life, I’ll be the day he met my wife and the day I got my Olympic medal.”

JOSH GODFREY, UC Santa Barbara decathlete

“I admire all the things he has done as an author, Olympian and philanthropist. He’s someone I’ve admired for years. I love him like a brother.”

JENNIFER HARPER

SC Athletic Director

JENNIFER ROBINSON

Campus Sports

“Somewhere on my body I’ll still have on Jaguar colors.”

TONIE CAMPBELL

DEAN OF ATHLETICS, Kinesiology, and Health Sciences at Cuyamaca College

CAMPBELL • PG 14

PODIUM IS ‘AWESOME’

Campbellło leaves the Southweste College track and field program much better than he found it, but never received the support he was promised — including a new track.

COACH HELPS VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE FLIP THE SCRIPT

BY ALICIA RIVERO

Mariah had something taken from her when she was assaulted. Even though he is a man, Elias Gallegos said he understands the feeling.

Gallegos is helping women like Mariah to fight back and reclaim their confidence in a world that has beaten them down. Martial arts such as Brazilian Jiu Jitsu — a preparation for battle — can actually help assault victims find the road to peace.

One in four American women experience violence of some form and one in five women have been raped.

Practicing a male dominated martial arts form can be intimidating bordering on the unthinkable for many survivors. Benefits, however, can outweigh the doubt, according to Gallegos. Martial arts used for self-defense, he said, can be tremendously empowering.

Gallegos, owner of Alliance BJJ Eastlake and a black belt with 20 years experience, welcomes people he meets with warmth and enthusiasm. He is not a typical sensei. His background is rife with crime, juvenile jail and drugs. More than most people he took special pleasure coaching Paralympians and disabled athletes.

“Whenever I had a decathlon meet, we would always take his car or rent a van and it would be just us, hanging out and talking a lot. He knows so much, so to me he was a really great coach, a really great mentor. He was a really nice, supportive guy.”

JOSH GODFREY, UC Santa Barbara decathlete

“‘We look forward to having him work with our student athletes as well as our athletic, kinesiology, and health education faculty and classified professionals.”

JESSICA ROBINSON

Campus Sports

FIGHTING FOR INNER PEACE — Alliance BJJ Eastlake teaches children but also women who survived violence.
The Horton Plaza mall, hundreds of people cheered at the sidewalk across from the day it was unveiled in 2007. “Enough is enough.”

services to illegal immigrants,” said a supporter of both measures.

community want Latinos, LGBTQ community didn’t care about it. They knew, people in my own family – awful. They were portrayed as parasitics with no value.

Flores said Latinos then and today are essential contributors to the regional and national economy. “Latinos pick our food,” he said.

to pick our food in 100 degree heat. I remember the serial procrastinator. It wasn’t there. Parting is such stuff, sweet sorrow!”

Applegate was undeterred. “When I am at home, I am in a better place,” he said.

83% of the region's workforce is Hispanic. “Latinos pick our food,” he said. “Hispanic families would be just us, hanging out and

Flore's advocacy for the Proposition 187, a non-profit that assists underserved communities with grants and economic partnerships, said he was “repulsed by Wilson's xenophobic and racist agenda.”

For Californians who work hard, pay taxes and obey the law, I’m suing to force the federal government to control the border and I’m working to deny state services to illegal immigrants, he said during his 1994 campaign. “Enough is enough.”

Because this symbol of hate in the middle of our beautiful city. Pete Wilson, like Robert E. Lee and Christopher Columbus, represents a past that should be removed. Nobody should ever see this statue up. It is not a good symbol for our community.”

Latino immigrants first, Mexican Americans, then all Americans, he said. “If any of you find yourself in a similar situation with a book, do not hesitate to ask me. I will feel like I really accomplished something huge!”

Campbell accepted an offer to work as a marketing executive for AMC Theaters and became a published author. Campbell accepted an offer to coach at Southwestern College and began his national track program. Campbell was promised a new track and field project as well as ample resources, which the college consistently failed to provide.

USC Santa Barbara decathlete Josh Godfrey is an alumnus of Southwestern College who credits Campbell for his success in the national track and field circuit. “He was a great, great guy,” Godfrey said. “We made it work and he was super supportive. Whenever I had a decathlon problem, he took his car or rent a van and it would be just us, hanging out and talking a lot. He knows so much, so much about how a really good athlete is. He was a really great guy.”

Flores said Latinos then and today are essential contributors to the regional and national economy. “Latinos pick our food,” he said. “They work in this region, work in this region, prepare students so they can stay in this region, are in charge,” Flores said.

Latino activists to have a statue removed. Most of the recent successful removals have been led by African-Americans.

“Wilson’s statue was unpopular among working individuals – people I knew, people in my own family,” Godfrey said. “When I am at home, I am in a better place,” he said.

Steve Whitburn. As soon as they were elected to office they backed Proposition 187 and other anti-immigrant policies.

When I am at home, I am in a better place,” he said.

I admire all the things he has done as an author, Olympian and philanthropist,” she said. “He’s someone I’ve admired for years. I love him like a brother.”

As a car he rolled on his campus he flattered with the notion that police might be waiting for him. Alas, Chief Morones said the peace officers' on campus and walked up to him looking for the book, Campbell. He and Sanchez then took part in the final part of the epic journey together, returning the book to a library building that did not exist when Asimov contemplated “Shakespeare.”

The Southwestern College Sun
CONT FROM PAGE 2

Upperclassman student to attend SC at local rate

SC at local rate

would allow students who reside within 45 miles of the California-Mexico border to attend local community colleges.

Border blog Raja Karia calculated that San Diego County alone has populations of about 2.26 million and the approximately 850 miles of border that its borders are uniquely borderland, Pilco said. We are a community of 7 million people on both sides, and we exchange so many things every day for work or school. Our students work in San Diego and Tijuana and vice versa. We are not a separate economy like the borderlands economy. We are a relational economy.

Borderland commerce may exceed $250 billion annually, Pilco said. We need to work together to prepare students so they can stay in this region, work in this region, get paid well and stay with their families,” he said.

Colleges on both sides of the border have found it to be a valuable service to our students. Colleges will handle transcripts translated in Mexico before we take care of it.”

Steve Whitburn. As soon as they were elected to office they backed Proposition 187 and other anti-immigrant policies.

Most of the recent successful removals have been led by African-Americans.

“Think it in a healthy movement in society to critically examine all statues, monuments and plaques in society to critically examine all statues, monuments and plaques of the Racial Justice Coalition of California,” he said. “It is time for me to move on while

After 20 years at SC, Campbell became Southwestern College’s Olympic medalist transcended SC’s dreadful track to forge champions

Decathlon meet, we would always hand you a bouquet of flowers.

laus, Chief Morones said the peace officers' on campus and walked up to him looking for the book, Campbell. He and Sanchez then took part in the final part of the epic journey together, returning the book to a library building that did not exist when Asimov contemplated “Shakespeare.”

If any of you find yourself in a similar situation with a book, do not hesitate to ask me. I will feel like I really accomplished something huge!”

“When I am at home, I am in a better place,” he said.

William Shakespeare

SC Athletic Director Jennifer Flores said he is disappointed by the decision. That is irrelevant, Morones said. “For the first time, people from the community are in charge,” he said.

And he became a national champion.

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MAYAN EXTINGUISH

Selfish architects and an inattentive parade of out-of-town administrators have whitewashed Southwestern's striking Mayan aesthetic and removed the Latina from America's most Latino college.

CAMPUS & SPORTS

Evergreen admins allowed ego to extinguish SC's cool Mayan vibe

High school kid who attended Point Loma Nazarene College before leaving SoCal for decades. No disrespect intended, but it is fair to say we have no homegrown George Bailey or Chunky Sanchez. We have no homegrown leaders, and no one can count on to stay here and grow with us. Churn has left its mark on our campus.

So our Mayan architecture is dismantled piece by piece, new building by new building. Ego trumped our culture. Proud architects who wanted to "make their mark" selfishly whipped up their own cohesive theme that replaces our unique borderlands community. Our previous administrators allowed them to do it. From the flat-out ugly science building to the Soviet-era cafes and IT building, our college has become a drive-through collection of random, generic designs that could be plugged into Iowa, Wisconsin or Kentucky.

Even Dr. Mark Van Stone's elegant and striking Mayan glyphs on the gym and theater are aesthetic afterthoughts, attempts by architects to cover up the fact that the buildings are not Mayan at all. His lovely art deserved a better canvas and our community deserved a better corner at Chula Vista's busiest intersection.

Our campus mascot, the jaguar, once represented our Mesoamerican Latino heritage. Johnny Jaguar will soon be an irrelevant and unthreatened big cat with no connection to the emerging whitewashed college culture.

BOTANICAL GARDEN

Where there's life, there's hope, so here's hoping we can preserve at least a few of the elements from the 1964-2014 Mayan pyramid era of SC.

Our South Bay Botanical Garden was once the artistic pride of the campus. It was an oasis of biodiversity and spirituality in a sea of concrete. It was the fingerprint of God where students and faculty could escape to destress and re-center.

College planners have said it will be built back, but they have not said it will be built back better. We have an opportunity to double or triple the size of the garden and we should. We should also think big and dream up a way to create a "natural" pathway from the center of campus to the garden, perhaps even an elevated footbridge that takes pedestrians safely over the busy perimeter road.

Mental health benefits alone would justify expansion of the Botanical Garden, but there are many other reasons. It could become a living laboratory for environmental science students, a meditation center, and a gathering place for respectful celebrations and memorials.

RARE PLANTS SANCTUARY

SC is home to a few specimens of the world's rarest tree, the Torrey Pine. We should plant more. We should also plant the endangered San Diego County species on our grounds and protect the protected status. Our breezy mesa-top topography lends itself to many threatened plants found in the transition zone between coastal and inland climates.

Besides serving as a sanctuary for the plants, our college should be a sanctuary for visionary students. Being among endangered plants will expose students and the community to species they may not know about. To care for something, you must first know it and love it.

CAMPUS WILDLIFE

Prior to construction SC had a charming and healthy array of nocturnal wildlife. We shared the college with the same animals that lived here long before we studied here.

As the night students and faculty headed out around 10 p.m., the animals reclaimed their range. Skunks, opossums, coyotes and even bob cats crossed the lawns where just hours earlier lounging students strummed guitars and read Shakespeare and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Owls perched high above it all, giving constant notice that the coast was clear and the nighttime court of the Animal Kingdom was once again in session.

Let's hope our facilities team and the building crews will respect and guard the streambeds that border the southwestern quadrant of the campus. They are the daytime homes of most of the animals we share our campus with. We also need to be mindful of their pathways to the campus center.

IT IS NOT TOO LATE

Much is already lost, but there is still time to build a beautiful Southwestern College. The angels are in the details. Our urban foresight is re-emboldened. Our spiritual center needs to be expanded and improved. Our thin but inspiring connection to nature must be fiercely defended.

We are going to suffer construction for many more years. Let's hope it is all worth it someday.
MESSENGERS OF HEAVEN

Gente Unida volunteers walk along the U.S.-Mexico border in a solemn remembrance of refugees around the globe.

It was actually pretty quiet at the border on a sunny but brisk winter morning. Not a riot or humanitarian crisis in sight.

There were foxes, but no FOX, open fields but no open border. Indeed, a hulking metal wall was a rusty slice of nationalism vivisecting a binational hillside festooned with blocky concrete houses on the developed south and fragrant chaparral mixed with a touch of salty sea breeze on the still natural north.

There were no teaming swarms of immigrants, just a swarm of gnats and a team of human rights activists in running shoes and hiking boots trudging along a sandy path threading a riparian oasis between Tijuana's...
Dr. Cleavon Gilman returned from Iraq to find an even more deadly war raging in America. Coronavirus trumps even Isis.

Gilman, a Southwestern College alumnus and emergency medical physician, is in the trenches of a pandemic battle that has killed more Americans than the Revolutionary War, World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam combined. Gilman and his colleagues have engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the novel coronavirus and its enablers — denial, misinformation, political cowardice and anti-maskers.

Gilman said he recently worked a fortnight of 14-hour shifts. Even for a war-hardened former Navy corpsman, battling this pandemic is a nightmare.

“I’ve seen more death in this pandemic than (six months in) Iraq,” he said with a sigh. “I’m in a war zone at home.”

Former President Trump and his supporters created and regularly fed the misery, Gilman said, with politically-motivated coronavirus denial and damaging rhetoric. Gilman said he was saddened and offended by the disregard for the health of Black, Latino and Native Americans by the government.

“I’m watching people who do not care about this war (on COVID-19),” he said. “Returning to America was like going back into the war zone, being traumatized again and watching my (Black) community die.”

Gilman was a U.S. Navy veteran of five years when he enrolled at Southwestern College in 2005. Professor of Chemistry Dr. David Hecht said he recalls Gilman as a young man with laser focus. Not satisfied with 100 percent on his labs and exams, Gilman craved a deep understanding of the subject matter, Hecht said, that made him a generational student. Besides being a talented scientist, Hecht said, Gilman was a gifted public speaker who, as a student, gave one of the best and most professional presentations he has ever seen.

“He was on a mission to become a doctor and nothing was going to get in his way,” said Hecht.
Pernisha Gaines led her college magazine staff under impossible circumstances to a national championship and earned the HBCU of the Dreams.

BY JULIA WOOCK

Pernisha Gaines is an award-winning student journalist and a talented leader who guided a national championship publication. Gaines' favorite title, though, is Mom. Gaines, her adorable daughter Ayris and her array of Gaines were left through the College for North Carolina A&T State University, an elite HBCU, to make it, a new elite institution? Transferring to an HBCU was her dream, her goal, and her mission—all of which crystallized during a painful divorce.

Gaines' daughter, Allison, was finalized with her daughter's father. I started to recognize that I needed to put myself in a position to win,” she said. “I needed to put myself in a position to succeed in life, take care of my daughter, my health and my education.”

Gaines said she faced many challenges that would have made anyone want to quit. Being a single parent in college in a city with no relatives was tough when she or her daughter got sick. There were times she cried and prayed to make strength to go through the divorce. As she realized she was going to make it, a new elite institution? Transferring to an HBCU was her dream, her goal, and her mission—all of which crystallized during a painful divorce.

“Diverse taught me that I can overcome anything, because that is the most challenging thing any woman with a child can go through by herself,” she said. “I didn’t have family or friends holding my hand during the process and it instilled confidence that this day cannot be shaken.”

Ayris is the president of El Sol. He said he noticed a natural leader about anything, she can talk to anybody. She is the daughter of El Sol. He said he noticed a natural leader.

“Gaines was a beautiful vision that was nowhere near finished. Staff scurried to every corner of San Diego County and into Mexico. Slowly, relentlessly, Gaines and her staff pulled together the contents and published El Sol Magazine in July. It was named National Community College Magazine of the Year by four college journalism organizations so far, as well as Best Community College Magazine by the San Diego Press Club and the Society of Professional Journalists.

SC graphic designer instructor Kenneth Pagano worked closely with Gaines on the publication of El Sol. He said he noticed a natural leader with the perfect balance of managerial and interpersonal skills.

“She’s so bright,” he said. “She could talk about anything, she can talk to anybody. She could listen and she really inspired us. Gaines said that developing leadership skills is an important part of her career.

“It would much rather go to a school which is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association than to a school which is not,” she said. “I would much rather go to a school which is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association than to a school which is not.”

Gaines said the pandemic pushed baccalaureate students to the University of California, Santa Barbara, to attend private institutions that were less accessible to public universities.

“Nothing is a fail. Everything is a lesson and I’m going to learn from what I did,” she said. “I only see myself winning,” she said, “I only see myself winning.”

“A year later, Lilly was herself. She said she learned that she was capable of accomplishing things she thought she couldn’t.”

“I would rather do a few things well, but I have the perseverance to flourish,” she said. “I have the perseverance to flourish.”

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GILMAN

Ex-Marine found a home and a mentor during his time at Southwestern

No one outworked Gilman, whose legendary 14-hour days on campus usually began before dawn and ended with security asking him to leave at 10 p.m. General Chemistry was hard, he said, but fascinating, fueling an intense passion to learn. Hecht was a crucial mentor, Gilman said, who was always there with support, advice or a swift kick to the rear when required. Both men were from New Jersey, which conservative differences between

Hecht was also there with the right advice at a crucial moment. Gilman had the pleasant problem of choosing between UC Berkeley, UCSD and UCLA.

“You get into UC Berkeley?” Gilman recalled Hecht saying. “You gotta go there! That’s where all the Nobel laureates are and they even have (chemical elements) named for them!”

An East Coast guy, Gilman said he was unfamiliar with California universities, so he decided to drive to Berkeley. When he saw Cal’s Gilman Hall he figured it was a sign, he said.

Hecht also saw Gilman himself as a sign. He was a young teacher and Gilman was one of his first students, Hecht said. Gilman was exceptional and a pleasure to teach.

“A great way to get into teaching,” said Hecht.

Transferring into an elite institution was very hard for a Black Jersey kid, said Gilman. He said attending UC Berkeley opened his eyes to the privilege other students had, but also proof that someone from humble beginnings can succeed. He attended UCSF for medical school and then did a four-year emergency medicine residency at New York Presbyterian Hospital in Manhattan through Cornell and Columbia universities.

POLITICS AND THE PANDEMIC

Gilman said the Trump administration inexplicably downplayed the pandemic from the beginning, even though Trump and members of his inner circle told Washington Post journalist Bob Woodward they knew from the beginning exactly how deadly this virus was. Trump’s ill-advised comparisons of COVID-19 to the flu, flippant remarks about masks and disparagement of scientists were damaging, he said.

“It doesn’t work when you have a president that is saying this (misinformation) to his followers,” said Gilman. “We were really doomed. I knew at the beginning it was going to be a test of American solidarity like 9/11.”

Gilman worked in New York during its grim COVID-19 outbreak last spring when hospitals and morgues were overwhelmed. Refrigerator trucks that usually hauled beef and dairy products to supermarkets were brought in to store bodies as they piled up. Affluent travelers who had returned home from Italy and Spain unknowingly brought the novel coronavirus with them, Gilman said, launching one of America’s worst ever urban contagion episodes. Coronavirus got loose in crowded low-income neighborhoods of color, he said, killing thousands.

After months of grueling work in New York, Gilman transferred to Yuma, Arizona. There he saw firsthand the stark differences between Democratic- and Republican-led states and the effect governors had on public health policies during a crisis. New York lost 20,000 people in 10 weeks, he said, but moved assertively to enact stringent measures to curb the spread of the virus. New York’s efforts were painful, but worked, Gilman said.

Arizona, on the other hand, politicized the virus and took little meaningful action. Masks were never encouraged, much less required, and everything remained open to such an extent that COVID deniers from California and other states traveled to Arizona to engage in sports events, political rallies and other super-spreader activities. Politicizing the novel coronavirus, blaming it on Asians and downplaying its danger in an inexplicable effort to prevent an economic slowdown were all catastrophic moves by conservative elected officials, he said.

Yuma, much like the San Ysidro- National City corridor of the South Bay, is still getting hammered by COVID-19. Gilman said the U.S. Army has deployed personnel to Yuma due to a severe shortage of doctors and nursing staff, he said.

Almost 90 percent of Gilman’s patients are people of color, including Latino and Indigenous people. He said there is a monstrous and uncountable population of Mexican farm laborers considered essential workers that have been hit particularly hard.

PEOPLE OF COLOR

DISTRIBUTED HEALTHCARE

The U.S. has a long and dark history with people of color and health care due to heinous
experimentation on African-Americans and Native Americans. Gilman said his grandmother, an acolyte Henrietta Lack's without her knowledge in 1951 to 1955, worked across the nation without compensation to help the federal government. The Tuskegee Syphilis study was used in cancer research, in vitro fertilization, immunology and molecular and cellular development of COVID-19 vaccines.

In one infamous case, the brutal Tuskegee Syphilis Study, was a 40-year observation of the effects of untreated syphilis on black men. It began in 1932 when syphilis had no known cure. The disease became available for treatment, but data indicates more than 90 percent of test subjects were not retested after initial testing, even though one dropsy could have saved their lives. By 1972, lack of knowledge was turned into malpractice, and the study was shut down.

GILMAN

“DAUGHTER OF LIGHT”

Gilman said his grandmother's sacrifice for science was a personal tragedy for his family. “My grandfather would have wanted to help the world, but he never saw it. He was a victim of science,” he said.

In 1991, two decades after the end of the study, the U.S. government issued an apology to African-Americans for the syphilis study, and in 1997, bills were enacted to make sure people could access Medicare and Medicaid.

“Seeing the damage it caused to my family and to my mother and my sisters, in particular, was devastating,” Gilman said.

“Watching people die never gets easier,” Gilman said. “You become numb to it, but you never...”

“Never give up on yourself no matter how hard things get...”

“In two years, there are going to be millions of Americans who are going to have to die alone. The flooding of patients...”

“Misinformation and political rhetoric...”

GAINES

Editor led student magazine to multiple national titles

Gaines, Vice President Kamala Harris’s personal physician, said she, paving the road for all women, colored Black women, to always care about what all women are burdened, and be a female physician. “I think Black women are the most important thing we can ever be to our community...”

“Get the vaccine, because we can never be normal enough...”

GAINES

THE SOUTH-WESTERN COLLEGE SUN

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FRONTLINE WARRIOR—Dr. Cleavon Gilman, left, an emergency room doctor in New York during the coronavirus pandemic. In 2021, he received medical praise for his leadership in tackling COVID-19 and other medical crises. His work has been acknowledged with Fellowships from the Institute of Medicine, as well as the President of the American Medical Association. He is known for his dedication to public health, social justice, and the fight against health disparities, especially among marginalized communities. Gilman’s efforts have been recognized by organizations such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights. In 2022, he was named a MacArthur Fellow. Gilman’s story is one of resilience and hope, as he continues to fight against the devastating effects of the pandemic and in the ongoing struggle for health equity.

GAINES

MISINFORMATION A LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH

Coronavirus has led to the spread of misinformation since the start of the outbreak. In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic was one of the leading causes of death in the U.S., with the virus responsible for over 350,000 deaths. However, the pandemic also highlighted a global problem with misinformation spread on social media and other platforms. According to a study by the World Health Organization, up to 40% of the population in some countries is exposed to misinformation daily. The spread of misinformation has been a major challenge in the fight against the pandemic, with many countries struggling to combat the spread of false information. The pandemic has also highlighted the importance of accurate and reliable information to help prevent the spread of disease and ensure public health.

GAINES

ESCAPING THE PANDEMIC

As the coronavirus continues to spread, it is clear that we are now in the midst of an unprecedented global pandemic. This pandemic has brought about widespread disruption and suffering, with millions of lives lost and many more affected. The pandemic has highlighted the need for a global response to public health crises, with a focus on prevention, preparedness, and response. As the pandemic continues to evolve, it is clear that we must remain vigilant and continue to take action to mitigate its impact. The future of public health will depend on our ability to learn from this pandemic and to build a stronger, more resilient global health system.

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