

Montgomery High School 1968-1972

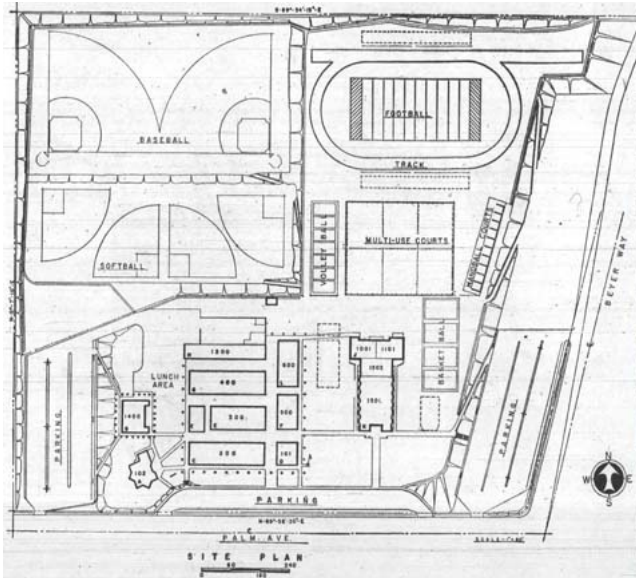


Montgomery High School at Beyer and Palm Ave. (photo by Steve Schoenherr 2017)

INTRODUCTION

Montgomery High School was born in an era of social turmoil. The Vietnam war was escalating and causing protests and moratoriums in schools across the country. The Civil Rights movement gave a voice to Mexican-Americans who no longer remained a silent minority. Students at Castle Park High School staged the first student strike in 1969 and demanded reforms. In Feb. 1970 a coach in the National City Junior High School kicked a Mexican-American student and was forced to resign. In March at Southwestern College students held a sit-in like Mario Savio had done at Berkeley in 1964. In April, students from San Diego schools occupied the residents of Barrio Logan in an occupation of land under the Bay Bridge to create a "Chicano Peoples Park" like students had done in Berkeley on "Bloody Thursday" in 1969 to create a People's Park. Cesar Chavez inspired waves of student activism throughout California with his marches and boycotts. He inspired the creation of Mexican-American organizations such as MAYA and MECHA in colleges and high schools to push for social change. Victor Salandini was a Catholic priest in San Ysidro who organized farmworkers into the first chapter of AWOC in San Diego county and led a strike of tomato workers in 1965, the first such strike in the South Bay. National City labor organizer Fred Martinez created IMPACT that enlisted Mexican-Americans in Lyndon Johnson's Great Society anti-poverty programs. Martinez invited the fiery Los Angeles teacher Sal Castro to speak in Chula Vista in April 1968 when criticism was mounting against the Sweetwater School District for failing to meet the needs of the "Forgotten Minority" of Mexican-American students. Castro had been arrested the previous month in Los Angeles for inciting a riot at his Lincoln High School (a year later, the high school with the same name in San Diego would be closed by police after a similar riot). Student strikes and walkouts became more common in 1968 and 1969, across the nation, and in the South Bay at Mar Vista and Castle Park high schools.

Montgomery High School's construction was delayed by strikes and financial problems. No classrooms had been built when the school term began in September 1970. Instead, students were forced to share the campus of Mar Vista High School in split sessions during the 1970-71 school year; Montgomery in the morning and Mar Vista in the afternoon. Clashes occurred between the predominately white students of Mar Vista and Mexican-American students of Montgomery. The railroads, longshoremen and Rohr Aircraft strikes slowed the economy in 1971. Pickets from a six-month farmworkers strike at the Egger-Ghio farms on Palm Avenue were seen daily by students going to and from school. The first graduation ceremonies for the new school were held in June 1971 on the site of the unfinished school. When the 1971 school term began in September, only half the classrooms were ready and trailers were installed for the other classes. Students attended classes only in the morning to allow workmen to finish construction of buildings in the afternoon. Dedication of the finished school finally took place May 21, 1972.



Montgomery High School in 1971 and 2017. The original star-shaped library building (lower left) still remains, but is now a Learning Center after the library was moved to a new building in 2000. Building 101, the original office and school entrance, still remains, as do 200, 300, 400, 1200 and the 1501 gym.

CHRONOLOGY

1968/03/17 - Schools Get 1.6 Million From State. A cool \$1.6 million in state building funds has been allocated to the Sweetwater High School District, Sup Rindone said this week after a state Allocations Board meeting in Sacramento. Rindone reported plans and funds were approved for a new high school and six junior high plants. He said the board approved \$163,387 for architect fees and site development for the new high school, the seventh in the district, which built near the Montgomery Memorial Wing south of Otay. Rindone said allocations totaling \$448,703 were approved for furniture, equipment, handball and courts, turf areas and additions to the new Bonita Vista Junior High School. Other allocations approved included \$190,867 for National City Junior High, \$2 for Chula Vista Junior High, \$202,396 for Southwest Junior High. \$322,168 for Granger Junior High and \$147,291 for Hilltop Junior High. Rindone said six projects, all additions to existing high school plants, will be before the allocations board at its April 10 meeting. (Chula Vista Star-News, Mar 17, 1968)

1968/04/21 - New School Named After Pioneer Flyer. Montgomery High school was selected Thursday as the name of Sweetwater Union High school Distri newest high school. Trustees voted unanimously to call the district's seventh high school Montgomery High rather than Montgomery Wing High, a name wh also been suggested. The new high school, by far the most modern in the San Diego area if built to the present plans, will be located on Palm avenue and Be just south of Chula Vista. The school will be completely air conditioned, according to plans reviewed by trustees Thursday and will be built to hold 1,800 st although 1,000 will probably be enrolled when the school is opened in September, 1969. Trustees noted that usually the student body was allowed to help se name for the school, but in this case, there was no student body "They will select their own nickname and colors and everything else," superintendent Joseph said. (Chula Vista Star-News, Apr 21, 1968)

1968/05/16 - Mexican-American Parent Says Schools Discriminate. The meeting was conducted mostly In Spanish, but no translator was seeded to know th parents of Mexican-American students in the Sweetwater High School District are angry, frustrated, nearly to the point of despair that their children will rec decent educations. Teenagers were at the Tuesday night meeting at the San Ysidro Civic Center, too, and they were frustrated and hurt and wanted to know v teachers discriminated against them. Teacher were there and some of them were perplexed about what they could do and some of them, who know Spanish e the Mexican-American culture, tried to point out what could be done. Administrators and principals were there and they defended what had been done and s doors were "always open" to parents who wanted to talk to them. The meeting was called to answer a lot of questions. There was a long list concerning susp which indicated the more than 200 parents in attendance had a deep concern in this area. Indeed, several parents who rose to present their grievances did so i issue of suspensions. Joseph Torres, principal of Southwest Junior High School said there were only 35 suspensions at his school during the year, a figure m audience thought was higher than it should be. It was not a productive meeting. Many persons walked out in the middle of it because, they said, they were n answers to their questions. Ward Donley, director of special projects in the district, Heisted that many suspensions were due to problems in the family. "Som situations are very unstable," Donley said, "and this affects the way youngsters behave. "If a child comes from an insecure home it is very difficult for him t school." He said he had visited Mexican-American homes in the area and "many times I found the source of a student's difficulties in the home." But others differently. "How many teachers or counselors do we have who can understand Spanish so that they can even begin to understand a Mexican-American child problems?" asked one parent "How many teachers are familiar with the cultural traits of Mexican-American children?" asked another. "Are there adequate t materials for Spanish-speaking students?" To the latter Donley admitted that "tests for Mexican-American students are not as valid as are those for Anglo st The result of this is that many Spanish-speaking students are placed in EMR (educable mentally retarded) classes when they shouldn't be. At one point in the many of the teenagers suddenly left the room with a shout that wasn't complimentary to the proceedings. A little later two firecrackers exploded in an open v the room. There was much confusion. There were attempts by John Erickson, district community aide for federal English-as-a-second-language programs (u I Elementary Secondary Educational Act) to translate from English to Spanish and from Spanish to English. But the communication problem was dramatica Illustrated. Those in the audience speaking only one language were concerned and frustrated when they could not understand what was going on. Attempts t district-wide parents committee to meet with teachers and administrators failed. Toward the end of the meeting it was conducted mainly In English as most c Spanish-speaking people had gone home. A Mar Vista High School teacher said he wanted to help but he didn't know how. He said there was only one teach whole school who could communicate with Mexican-American students. Hhe pointed out a curious observance that the three teachers who teach Spanish at High cannot communicate, are not "simpatico" as he put it, with Mexican-American students. Another teacher, an ESL teacher, said it was a "tremendous" jo to fill an educational gap of many years in a short time. But he urged that "we continue to have these meetings. We must continue to strive to work together benefit of the students." He also advised that people throughout the San Diego area who don't know Spanish should learn it "I couldn't speak Spanish two ye

he said. "But, by God," he said to the English-speaking people in the audience, "if you can't speak Spanish you can learn it." Another teacher cautioned that Mexican-American students who can speak English still can't express themselves well in that language when they have emotional problems. She said these often exist "as nothing in the school." (Chula Vista Star-News, May 16, 1968)

1968/05/19 - Forgotten Minority (editorial) - The failure of the Sweetwater Union High School District to come to grips with the problems of Mexican-American youngsters in our community was dramatically, and tragically, illustrated five nights ago. It was symbolized by the empty chairs at a meeting in the San Ysidro Center, chairs that had been vacated by most of the 200 Mexican-American parents midway in the meeting. The parents had come full of hope. Many were confident and spoke English imperfectly, if at all. But they were hopeful of hearing what the district was doing to prepare their youngsters for a better life than their own. They were doing to help these youngsters overcome the barriers of language, and of a curriculum based on an Anglo-Saxon middle-class culture and Anglo-Saxon class values. They asked questions. The kind of answers they got were testified to by the empty chairs, as empty as the lives of meet of these parents, and as promises of equal educational opportunity that America is supposed to guarantee to all its children, regardless of race, color, creed or national origin. The answers were defensive excuses, explanations that "it takes time," and even an admission that district testing procedures for Spanish-speaking students are so invalid that these students are placed in mentally retarded classes when they shouldn't be. The parents were polite enough to simply leave quietly. Teenagers at the meeting were less so, they stomped out with angry curses at the district and a little later two firecrackers exploded in an open window of the room. A belated attempt at parents' advisory committee failed. A Mar Vista High School teacher said there was only one teacher in the entire school who could communicate with Mexican-American students (three teachers of Spanish there, he said, aren't "simpatico" with the Mexican-Americans). At the beginning of the meeting, halting effort was made to translate the proceedings from English into Spanish and vice-versa. At the end of the meeting this wasn't necessary; few Mexican-Americans were present. It is not the first time that the Sweetwater District has bumbled and bungled in its relations with our Mexican-American citizens. Just two weeks before, Community Action Council representatives on a so-called advisory committee to the district on anti-poverty funds complained they hadn't been kept informed about the use of the funds. In fact, they complained, the district had used federal anti-poverty money for a mobile speech and hearing laboratory which seldom is seen in anti-poverty areas. Moreover, they pointed out, federal law requires that half the members of the advisory committee be parents, preferably parents of the disadvantaged, in fact, only one of the 20 members of the committee is a parent. Now it might be argued that all this "takes time," that it is only relatively recently (like five or six years ago) that attention has been focused on the educational plight of Mexican-Americans, (which in itself is a terrible indictment of our status-quo educational system). Yet the Chula Vista and San Ysidro elementary school districts have had no such difficulties as Sweetwater. They have found qualified leadership for special education programs, people who can communicate with Mexican-Americans, who can give Spanish-speaking youngsters a sense of pride in themselves and in their heritage, who can make school a satisfying and rewarding experience. In fact, the programs in both districts have won statewide recognition. This is not true in the Sweetwater District. Its efforts have been half-hearted, by poorly chosen persons with insufficient budget and little understanding of Mexican-American problems and needs. The difficulty, we believe, starts from the top. And perhaps it is too much to expect a school board composed exclusively of well-to-do Anglo-Saxons (a banker, an estate broker, physician, optometrist and engineer), no matter how well-intentioned, to demand that this problem receive the funding and the attention it deserves. One-third of the residents of the South Bay are of Mexican birth or descent. It is time that the Sweetwater district devoted maximum energies to making sure that our youngsters from these families may play a meaningful and constructive role in American life. (Chula Vista Star-News, May 19, 1968)

1968/08/24 - ACLU Files Two Unusual Legal Actions Involving School Strikes by Latin Students March 5-8 of 1968. Two unusual legal actions designed to prevent prosecution of 13 men accused of sparking the March student walkouts at four largely Mexican-American high schools were filed Friday by A. L. Wirin, chief counsel for the Southern California Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. The defendants are awaiting a Sept. 6 hearing in which their lawyers are seeking dismissal of the charges on such grounds as insufficiency of the evidence and because persons with Spanish surnames allegedly are systematically excluded from the County Grand Jury, which returned the indictment. Superior Judge Robert W. Kenny set Sept. 11 as the date for Younger's office to show cause why it should be barred from prosecuting the matter and Superior Judge Kathleen Parker tentatively set Sept. 23 for a hearing on the petition for a writ of habeas corpus. Deputy Attorney Richard W. Hecht said the district attorney's office is prepared to oppose all attempts to halt the prosecution. The defendants include Salvador B. (Sal) Contreras, controversial Lincoln High School teacher, and Elezer Risco Lozado, Cuban-born publisher of an underground newspaper circulated in East Los Angeles. Other defendants reportedly are members of either the Brown Berets or the United Mexican-American Students. They all are accused of conspiring to disturb the schools (Garfield, Lincoln, Roosevelt and Belmont) and the peace of the students. It has been alleged that the student walkouts and demonstrations of March 5-8 were not spontaneous but rather were the result of careful off-campus planning by the defendants, none of whom were registered at the schools involved. In the request for an injunction, Wirin contends that the intentional singling out of the defendants for prosecution is discriminatory and arbitrary. (The Los Angeles Times, Aug 24, 1968)

1968/10/16 - The Mexican Student Movement from July/October 1968 was a student movement caused by an ideological clash between generations. The 1968 Olympic Games took place in Mexico Oct. 12-17, 1968, making it the first developing country to host this event. The photo on Oct. 16 of two black sprinter raised fists, Gold medalist Tommie Smith (center) and bronze medalist John Carlos (right) showing the raised fist on the podium after the 200 m race.

1968/11/21 - Race Cauldron Explodes at Mar Vista High. One Youth Stabbed, 70 Walk Out. A tense racial situation at Mar Vista High School exploded this campus knifing incident and a walkout demonstration by 70 Chicano (Mexican-American) students. Tension has existed since the publication of a cartoon in the Vista school newspaper Nov. 8 which showed a Chicano being stepped upon by a boot with the tag "Anglo" (a term used to refer to white students). Mayor ("Mannie" Stames issued a plea at the Tuesday City Council meeting for "mutual understanding and the discontinuance of strife" after a fight on the Mar Vista campus at 2:45 that afternoon sent Mike Brown, 18, of 481 Palm Ave., Imperial Beach, to Balboa Naval Hospital in critical condition. Brown, a member of a campus group called the Rebels, which had figured prominently in two weeks of Anglo-Chicano strife, was stabbed with an unknown object during an after-school melee involving 50 students. Observers reported that Brown had been in an argument with two Chicano students which then erupted into a fist fight involving Anglos and Chicanos who reportedly left disembarking from school buses to join the fray. Balboa Hospital doctors said that Brown's lung had been punctured but that he had been recovering from the "critical list" and was recovering satisfactorily. Imperial Beach Police Chief Frank Le Count related that his officers had obtained the names of those involved in the fracas but speculated that it might be impossible to pinpoint a suspect among the participants. Le Count noted that the Rebels "seemed to have provoked" the Tuesday incident and had figured in a number of sporadic fights which had occurred on the Mar Vista campus since the cartoon publication. "Our officers have stopped members of the group who were apparently cruising around looking for the Mexican kids," Le Count added. The Mar Vista situation yesterday after a confrontation between Vice Principal Donald Hillier and a number of students wearing brown berets caused a mass walkout. Ruben Gonzalez of a Mexican-American "cultural group" called the Toltecs, alleged that a high school coach, Ed Teagle, had stopped four persons wearing the berets from entering the 11:30 a.m. student assembly. "Mr. Hillier came to the doorway of the gymnasium where the assembly was being held," Gonzalez said, "and told everyone to wear berets to go home." Gonzalez said that one of the students took off the cap but that the other three walked off the campus and were joined by around 70 students. Both Principal Myron Smull and Gonzalez asked that tSan Diego State College Asst. Dean Bert Rivas, who had visited the campus Tuesday for the Educational Opportunities Program, be called in as a mediator between the 70 students and the administration. "I met with Mr. Smull, Ruben Gonzalez and a committee of students," Rivas related, "to try to work out a compromise that would suit both groups." The State College administrator said that an agreement had been reached which would allow the brown berets on campus three days a week if the caps were designated with an Indian (the Toltec symbol) or some other cultural identification. The 70 students were also allowed back on the campus with a "clean slate" although administrators said they would talk with their parents. I

said that the controversy had begun because school dress codes did not allow "inappropriate insignia" such as the berets. "I told the students this on the loud system earlier in the morning," he added, "but we still had the problem by the time of our study class around 11:30 a.m." Hillier explained that the school was "seriously looking at the problem" and had stopped "a great deal of the friction" because Rivas and Smull had talked to the dissenting students. "We are trying to come up with a way for both groups to express themselves and stay within school rules," he concluded. Gonzalez was critical of both Hillier and Smull, blaming the school administrator as the "major cause" of the strife. Antonio del Valle, a Toltec member, said that Smull had called the Chicanos "a mob" and "a herd of cattle" during a conference with Rivas although the administration claimed this was untrue. Del Valle claimed that it had been unjustly ordered from a classroom for "profane language and disruptive behavior" in wearing his beret. He also alleged that a group of Chicanos had been huddled in a hallway during a recent rainstorm when Mexican folk songs were played and teachers slammed the hall doors shut on them. "They were trying to isolate us so they could suspend the people individually," he said. Gonzalez said that his group had scheduled a p.m. meeting next Monday night to discuss their problems with the school administrators. (Chula Vista Star-News, 11/21, 1968)

1968/11/24 - Mar Vista Explosion (editorial) - Knock, knock-but who's there? Nine days ago, after a cartoon in the Mar Vista High School newspaper (showing an "Anglo" boot stomping on a Mexican-American) provoked fist fights and other intense ethnic passions, the school principal said he considered "the issue resolved" no longer a cause for concern. Four days later, gang fights intensified between Anglo and Mexican-American students, 70 Mexican-American members of an organization staged a mass walkout, one youth's lung was punctured in a stabbing and youngsters of all ethnic backgrounds feared for their safety. Obviously, the school administration had poorly appraised the situation. Which was no surprise. For an underlying cause of the Mar Vista problems that is far more significant than the cartoon has been the lack of understanding by school officials, and officials throughout the Sweetwater High School district, of the special problems of the Mexican-American student. Today, peace of a sort seems to have settled on Mar Vista. But if it is to be a permanent peace, if any good at all is to come out of the agony of the last 10 days, the Sweetwater District must pay heed to the problems, needs and aspirations of the community. At Mar Vista, these students comprise 43% of the student body. And by "paying heed," we don't mean simply spending money on token programs. The district at last has started to do this, although belatedly. At Mar Vista, in fact, officials say they now spend more money on the bi-lingual English-as-a-second-language program than they do on regular English classes. But such programs are essential, the problem goes deeper. It goes, basically, to attitude administrators and teachers who among each other refer to Mexican-American students as "greasers" or "spics" and are sometimes overheard doing so, cannot be expected to be sympathetic to the problems of Mexican-American students. Administrators are teachers who can't speak a word of Spanish, and that's 90% of them, can't communicate adequately with many parents. Counsellors who are smugly convinced that Mexican-Americans are lazy, inferior beings will not recommend academic courses to qualify such youngsters for college. On the basis of tests given to Anglo-Saxon middle-class children (who learn different things in the home than Mexican children do), these school officials confirm to themselves that Mexican-Americans are inferior. In fact, one prominent Mexican-American professor recalls how he was marked "mentally retarded" in elementary school because he could not cope with such tests. From the attitude stems other evils. The teacher tends to "write off" the Mexican-American student who is doing poorly, while giving special help to an Anglo child in a similar situation; after all, the Anglo parent comes to see the teacher while the Mexican-American parent, who is ashamed of her child's English, does not. Courses stress this country's Anglo-Saxon heritage, Anglo-Saxon history, Anglo-Saxon literature, Anglo-Saxon culture, ignoring the fact that California's deepest roots are not Anglo-Saxon, but Spanish and Mexican. Indeed, the very names Mar Vista, and Chula Vista, and California, are of Spanish heritage. All of this is a prime reason why the school dropout rate among Mexican-Americans is the highest among any California ethnic group; even Negroes get more education (although, interestingly, because job discrimination against Negroes is worse than against Mexican-Americans, the latter's average income is higher). The school system does not "talk" to Mexican-American students. Because of the large proportion of Mexican-Americans in the Sweetwater Union High School District, our district has a special responsibility to improve the situation. But, from the all-WASP (white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant) school board and superintendent on down, the district has shown an insensitivity to the problem. It lacks the administrative structure, the skilled personnel, the imagination, the will and the attitude, to deal with such problems. The results have just been seen at Mar Vista High School. Nor are we second-guessing. For this newspaper has been warning for several years that our school district has been derelict in its responsibilities to our Mexican-American community, and the chickens have finally come home to roost. However, while Sweetwater district policies (or lack of policies) must bear a large share of the underlying blame for the Mar Vista disturbances, the district does not justify any group indulging in violence. There is never any excuse for the senseless kind of race-baiting and fist fights and beatings that have occurred at Mar Vista, involving both Mexican-American and Anglo groups of students, some of them organized. Students indulging in such behavior should be dealt with severely and their parents should be put on notice that there can be serious consequences. Inflammatory material, such as the cartoon that touched off the latest controversy, should be discouraged, although students should have full opportunity to express their grievances in print and otherwise. Students who think it "smart" to practice bigotry and hate on campus or elsewhere (and bigotry is often a two-way street) should be given some lessons in what America is supposed to stand for. And school officials might profit by sitting in on the class. There are no immediate cut-rate solutions to the Sweetwater District's ethnic problems, any more than there are to America's. Such problems stem from racist bubblings in the American melting pot. Most Americans now recognize the seriousness of these kinds of problems. It is high time that the Sweetwater District, as an educational institution, makes more than a token effort to tackle them. (Chula Vista Star-News, Nov 24, 1968)

1968/12/12 - Teachers Learn From Mexican-Americans. Sixty Sweetwater teachers trade places with Mexican-American students in a unique Spanish workshop designed to improve the teacher's ability to use Spanish and to help him become better acquainted with high school students of Mexican-American background. On Wednesday evening at 7 o'clock at Mar Vista High School, teachers for small groups to discuss in Spanish with a native speaker of Spanish, the things and attitudes of daily life and how they differ in the two cultures. These native speakers are students in the advanced Spanish class of the workshop director, David L. Gutierrez. This teaching is a part of the students' activities in high school. The conversational exchange in Spanish places the teachers in somewhat the same position as the speaking student in his classes taught in English during the day. It also provides practice in the use of the Spanish language in actual communication. The workshop activities are conversational and there are no tests, nor written assignments. While it is not possible to master a language in a workshop, there is improvement in the use of Spanish and understanding. (Chula Vista Star-News, Dec 12, 1968)

1968/12/26 - Mexican-American Praises Sweetwater District; Other Mexican-Americans Object. Twenty-four Mexican-American leaders, representing an organization with more than 4,000 members, took sharp issue this week with a letter from some Mexican-Americans praising the education given them by the Sweetwater High School District. The latter letter, addressed to Superintendent Joseph Rindone and signed by 32 one-time district students, said: "The opportunity to learn Spanish here, as it is now. Those who had ambition to learn succeeded; those who were lazy did not." In an answering letter, the 24 leaders, many of them educated in Sweetwater district schools, charged that the letter was initiated and written by a 20-year employee of the district, and "we can therefore legitimately question the motives for which it was written; i.e., conflict of interest and an expression of bias." They charged that the letter-signers were "extremely misinformed." They said that, if the signers had been treated with "equality and understanding (as they contended) in their school years, they should consider themselves extremely fortunate because "their fellow Mexican-Americans have not been so lucky." The letter they assailed was touched off by a Star-News editorial which charged that one of the underlying causes of racial problems at Mar Vista High School in Imperial Beach had been "lack of understanding by school officials, and officials throughout the Sweetwater High School District of the special problems of the Mexican-American student." The editorial stated that school administrators and teachers have been overheard speaking derogatorily of Mexican-Americans, that few can speak Spanish, and that the curriculum includes little pertinent to Mexican culture. It said there are no "cut-rate" solutions, and urged the district to "make more than a token effort" to tackle the problem. The letter praising the district, it was learned, was initiated by Beatrix Contreras, a 20-year district employee. It said the signers "resented" the editorial and expressed "appreciation" to Rindone, Mrs. Contreras.

The answering letter noted that the dropout rate for Mexican-American high school students exceeds 50%; and that the average Mexican-American in Calif receives only 8.2 years of schooling. "How many Mexican-Americans have been employed as teachers and administrators by the district?" it asks. "What pe of staff is this compared to percentage of students?" As for implications by the writers of the first letter that many of their fellow Mexican-Americans are laz leaders stated: "Can we say that the minority group that has produced the highest number of Medal of Honor winners, that has the highest casualty rate in Vi that has highest number of people working in the hot and dirty fields of this state, are lazy?" The letter inspired by the district secretary stated that there are ' different types' of Mexican-Americans, those born here from original families, immigrants who became citizens and children were born and immigrant alier that "a great percentage" are immigrant aliens and questioned whether they pay taxes or tuition, it said that many students commute from across the border c establish a "supposed residence with relatives" to avoid paying the \$77 tuition fee. The answering letter stated that 85% of the county's Mexican-Americans American-born, and "the remaining 15% are persons who pay taxes, work hard at jobs nobody else wants and whose sons may even be members of the U.S. forces." The leaders decried "categorizing Mexican-Americans into three neat and simple groups." It said Mexican-Americans have been immigrating to this since 1768. In fact, the letter stated, when Mexico ceded the southwest to the U.S.. the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo "assured that Spanish-speaking Americ the legal right to maintain their native language and customs. "Why would anybody object to a bilingual society," the letter asks. "We think it is a beautiful tl This apparently was in answer to a statement in the letter to Rindone: "We considered English to be the accepted language of the United States (when they w school); and if we were to live here, we should learn the language of the land." The ex-students also stated, "The problems of juvenile delinquents, regardles nationality, should be dealt with accordingly. "The behavior and conduct of our children is, and should be, the parents' responsibility. Manners and respect ar at home; a child from a well-disciplined home is a responsible citizen at school and in the community," The 24 leaders said this implied "that we condone ju delinquency In our youth." "It is a fact," their letter stated, "that the lowest percentage of youngsters fitting the category of juvenile delinquent are Mexican-Americans." "If our society is unable to produce well-rounded and educated citizens," the letter continued, "we will have lost a huge potential wealth of man which is what makes our country great. "We want the 'American dream' to become a reality for our youth, as well as all others." The letter initiated by the di employe praised "the wonderful, dedicated teachers we had and the sincere respect we had for them." It said the district offered them "wonderful opportuniti that today's children have more, including special equipment, language laboratories, special teachers and English-as-a-second-language programs. The latter initiated by the district a few years ago, with most of the money coming from federal aid. A copy of the letter to Rindone was given to The Star-News, whic over to Mexican-American leaders for comments. The latter drafted their own reply in the form of a letter to the newspaper. The signers included a wide ran Mexican-American leaders in educational, family service, veterans, political and social fields. Most live In the South Bay and many attended Sweetwater di schools. THE SIGNERS were: Antonio C. Hernandez, president. Council of Latin-American Clubs; Manuel Camacho, chairman, Mexican-American Advis Committee (MAAC); Ernest Azhocar , chairman, National City chapter, American GI Forum; John Billings, director, Imperial Beach Community Economic Opportunity Center. Alex Torres, Region I chairman, American GI Forum; Larry Montoya, National City project director. MAAC; Jesse Ramirez, National (assistant director , MAAC; Ruben Dominguez, project director, Neighborhood House; Phil Usqulanao, president. San Diego county chapter, Mexican Amer Political Assn. Vicente (Bert) Rivas, assistant to (he vice-president, San Diego State College; Charles Zamarron, past state chairman, American GI Forum; J Bareno, Mayor's Council on Youth; Mrs, Marta Shaltier , IMPACT, director, Southeast office, Family Service; Joseph R. Gonzalez, MAPA; Mrs. Gloria Gor neighborhood aid, Imperial Beach Community Action Council, Daniel Padilla, American GI Forum (and president Parent-Teacher Group, Marian High schc Padilla, Ray Villanueva, John C. Gutierrez, Godfrey Chaves, Isaias Sanchez, Wilfredo Ortiz and Tony Durango. Signers of the letter to Rindone were, in adc Mrs. Contreras: Lucille Bonbrake Leal, Alfonso W. Crostwaite, Jeaus M. Nava (Cnchl), Cacilia C. Shores (Nava), Corwin A. Pericano Johnson, Charles Val Matthews (Martinez), Gene Goycochea, Henry M. Contreras, Helen M. Sanchez, Jane R. Sanchez, Maria Valazquez Hubbell, Evangeline Leal Garcia, Frank Etalirna (Vina) Gonzalez Verdugo, Elodia Montano de Polite, Francisco Montano de Everett, Rachel Lujan Castro, Teresa Gonzalez Zolda, Blanche Fguero William J. Denton, Eloisa Valencia Denton, Celia R. Celiceo, Carol Valela Armas, Fernado L. Armas, Ethel Hagen, Donald Soto, Jovlta Esparza Cordova, E Esparza and Anthony Leal. (Chula Vista Star-News, Dec 26, 1968)

1969/01/02 - Defending Failure (editorial). We have been following with interest an exchange of letters among various Mexican-Americans concerning the j the Sweetwater Union High School District. The exchange was touched off by an editorial in this newspaper critical of district attitudes toward the special p of Mexican-American students. It urged that the district make more than a token effort to rectify a situation which, for example, sees only one out of every 2 Mexican-American students go on to college, compared with one out of three "Anglo" students. This editorial inspired a district employe to round up 31 oth students of Mexican-American descent and get them to sign a letter to the district superintendent (her boss) thanking him for their "wonderful, dedicated tea the great "equality and understanding" with which the letter said they had been treated in school. And this letter, in turn, brought about another letter from 24 Mexican-American leaders, many of them educated in Sweetwater schools, that laid, in effect, that the other letter was all wet. We have no intention here of debating the merits or demerits of the Sweetwater district's educational policies (or lack of them concernlflg Mexican-Americans) although we'd like to poin some people always have been perfectly content with inferior merchandise, not knowing any better. Educational experts know a lot more about education, ar cope with the special educational problems of Mexican-Americans, since the signers of the district-inspired letter went to school. Unfortunately, none of the are on the staff of the Sweetwater district, which prefers ex-athletic coaches in its higher echelons. However, there were a few implications in the district-ins letter which troubled us. One was its categorizing of Mexican-Americans into various groups , those from original families, immigrants who became citizen: immigrant aliens, and its questioning whether the latter "pays taxes or tuition." The implication, of course, is that if the immigrant aliens don't pay taxes or t then the district needn't bother to go out of its way to give their children a quality education. Such reasoning (which is typical of the district hierarchy) is bot its premise and specious in Its conclusion. While it is true that some Mexican-American immigrant aliens are on welfare, it is also true that many do back-br work at low wages as their contribution to this country. Most, moreover, eventually become citizens, and their children most certainly do. To imply that thes educationally disadvantaged immigrant children are not entitled to compensatory education is simply to condemn them to a life on welfare or in unproductiv employment, at an ultimate cost to taxpayers of far more than the education. Such a policy is not only inhumane; it is self-defeating. The letter also states tht Sweetwater district schools are along the border, "a great percentage" of Mexican-American students commute or establish "a supposed residence with relati avoid paying the \$77 tuition fee for non-residents. We don't know of the facts of this matter. If the signers of the district-inspired love note to the district hav knowledge of this situation, they have an obligation to report the offenders. But we do know that the San Ysidro elementary school district wiped out this pr several years ago by sending home stiffly-worded warnings and questionnaires with each new student. If the Sweetwater district has been too lazy or unthi take such action, it has been derelict in its responsibilities to taxpayers, just as it has been derelict in many other educational areas. (Chula Vista Star-News, 1969)

1969/04/15 - San Diego (AP) -- Police moved shoulder-to-shoulder through the patio of Lincoln High School today arresting students and others who refuse the campus after the school was closed. At least one person was injured in the scuffling and 25 persons, including 16 juveniles, were taken into custody. They were released later but four adults were booked charges of failure to disperse. School officials closed the school Monday morning when only a few of the stu body of 1,200 attended classes. A School spokesman said that the boycott was a continuation of the walkout by students last Friday. Students left their class 17-year-old youth ran through the halls smashing windows and display cases. Following announcement of Monday's closure, police were called when about students refused to leave the campus. Plainclothes officers forced a number of students out of the patio. The crowd then surged forward but was held by representatives of the Black Panthers and the Congress of Racial Equality. Police then agreed at the suggestion of the Black Panthers, to release those in cust

crowd would disperse. The group reconvened later at a nearby park to continue discussions over the situation at the school and student demands for improvement there. Spokesmen for the students said the patio meeting had been called to present demands to school authorities. (Independent (Long Beach, California), April 16, 1969)

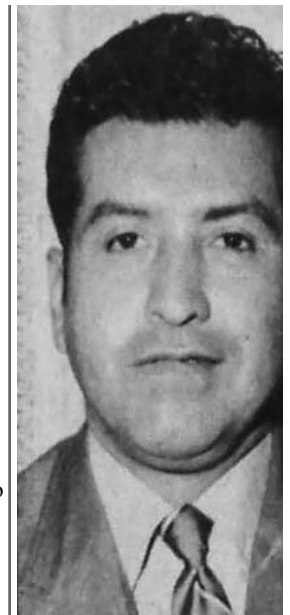
1969/04/16 - San Diego Race Strife Hits 2 More Schools. Students at One Junior High Walk Out After Principal Bans Meetings, Rallies. Racial disputes at Lincoln High School in southeast San Diego, now closed, spread to two other campuses Tuesday. Principal William Burrows banned all meetings and rallies at Gom Junior High School following minor clashes there. Students responded by staging a walkout. Burrows told the students to either return to class or go home. 33% went back to class and the rest left the campus. Attempts to spread the dispute were less successful at San Diego High School, the most evenly integrated in the district with 32.9% Mexican-Americans and 20.6% Negroes. Students there demanded an assembly, and it was held at 10 a.m. A Lincoln High School official told the students there was nothing the administration could do if they decided to walk out. However, school officials estimated that only about 10% of the 2,100 students left the campus. Demands of Militants The dispute is the outgrowth of some 22 demands, ranging from less discipline to higher education standards delivered at Lincoln by student militants. Only two weeks ago the school board appointed Ernest Hartzog, a Negro, as principal of the school, effective next month. About 77% of Lincoln's students are Negroes and 15% are Mexican-Americans. (The Los Angeles Times, Apr 16, 1969)

1969/04/20 - Castle Park Walkout Ends. The first student walkout in the history of the Sweetwater Union High School District ended this week when 25 Mexican-American students at Castle Park High School returned to class Friday two days after they had gone on strike. Principal William Padelford readmitted 25 Mexican-American students, acquiesced to student request to wear Chicano buttons, and agreed to meet regularly with separate parent and student negotiating committees this week. Forty Mexican-American students confronted Padelford Wednesday morning with 11 demands for improved Chicano education. Twenty-five students walked off campus and 15 reportedly returned to class after talking with the principal. Parents will meet with school and district officials Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. at the school cafeteria to discuss Chicano problems and possible solutions. Approximately 50 Otay parents gathered at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church Friday to elect a committee of community representatives to the meeting. Gloria Becerra is chairman of the committee which consists of five elected adults and five students. Other adult members are Kirby Johnson, Otay Youth Center director, Hank Contreras and a Mrs. Garcia and Mrs. Miranda whose full names were not announced. Student members are Tony Hernandez, Dominic Enjambre, Santos Jordon, Sharon Miranda and Norma Bacnat. An additional school committee meeting of students will meet weekly on Thursdays at 2 p.m. to discuss Chicano concerns. Sylvia Caballero is one of the six members. Padelford described the school walkout Friday as "quiet and peaceful." He said that students who participated in the Wednesday morning walkout were "voluntarily truant" and would not be able to do that day's school work or tests. "However, the suspension Thursday was school-directed so any work missed Thursday may be made up," he said. The principal promised there would be no grade penalties for the demonstrators who were reinstated at a private conference suspended students and their parents Thursday. The students had been suspended for the walkout which followed their presentation of 11 demands for more bilingual education, Spanish-speaking counselor teachers, and the right to wear Chicano buttons and clothing. "They each received two slips, one for truancy and one for lifting of suspension," Padelford said. "They cannot make up work missed when they were truant but there is no real punishment." The reinstatement meeting Thursday was followed by the regular biweekly meeting of the Sweetwater District School Board. (Chula Vista Star-News, Apr 20, 1969)

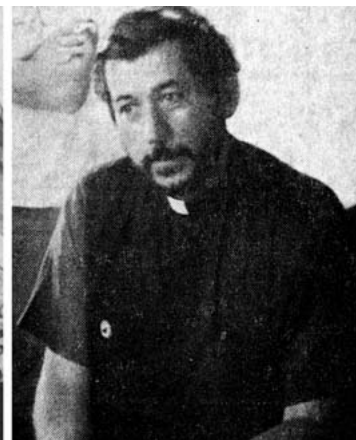
1969/04/20 - Chicanos confront school officials. Tempers flared, taunts were aired and concessions were shared at an emotion-charged meeting of more than 100 Chicano students, parents and school officials in Otay the evening of the Castle Park High School student walkout. An anxious crowd packed the parish hall at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church Wednesday night until there was standing room only. Present were Ward Donley, director of special projects for the Sweetwater Union High School District; Russell Rogers, supervisor of attendance and student welfare; William Padelford, principal of Castle Park High; Mrs. Jeanette Ibarra, Spanish teacher and Tom Snow, 10th grade counselor. Kirby Johnson, director of the Otay Youth Center, moderated the meeting and spent the better part of the evening struggling to maintain order and prevent a verbal free-for-all fight. Discussion centered on the 11 student demands prompting the walkout and the reinstatement and suspension of the 25 students. "We started drawing up these demands a week ago when we finally got fed up with being pushed around," said Tony Hernandez. "We get tired of not having a chance to learn the things we want to learn like Mexican-American history and the Chicano contributions to this country. We want to learn too. We have many problems in communication both at home and in school. What touched off the walkout was when we were going over our demands and we couldn't wear the Chicano buttons. They don't represent any organization. They just refer to our people. We were in agreement with what Padelford was saying about adding bilingual education. If it hadn't been for having our buttons banned we wouldn't have walked out." Padelford stood up and said the buttons had been discussed twice with the students. He asked Hernandez, a Castle Park student, if he remembered what the school's position had been. Hernandez answered that school officials had told the students that there was concern that some students might wear buttons bearing obscenities. Padelford then pointed out that the primary concern was that the County Counsel in the past had said each school could set a policy allowing all students to wear any type of button or no students to wear any buttons. "We decided not to allow any students to wear any buttons," Padelford said. "However, the recent Wisconsin Supreme Court Tinker case made us check our decision." The Castle Park principal said he could not authorize wearing the buttons until he got a reviewed decision from the counsel. "Once I got that authorized this afternoon I told the students to pass around the word that they could wear them," he said. Hernandez hopped up and shouted "Then why didn't you check it out? It caused the walkout so the whole thing is your fault and not ours." The room rumbled with assent from the students. Padelford, obviously piqued, snapped "We made it very clear what the school policy was at the time." The room turned into an uproar with students and some parents insisting that the buttons had caused the walkout which resulted in the suspension and that the students had a constitutional right to wear the buttons as silent protest. "Wearing the buttons against the law," shouted a boy in a brown beret "It was your interpretation that was against the law and caused the trouble." (Chula Vista Star-News, Apr 20, 1969)

1969/04/20 Election aftermath (editorial) - Tuesday night [Apr. 15] at about 8:30, it was clear that a milestone had been reached in the history of the Sweetwater Union High School District. For the first time, since the district's formation half a century ago, a Mexican-American had been elected to the school board. Wednesday [Apr. 16] morning at 8:30, the district experienced another, less fortunate, milestone. A group of 40 Mexican-American students at Castle Park High School staged the first student strike in district history. There is an ironic dichotomy in these two events. On one hand, the election of Ernest H. Azhocar is recognition that it is high time that a district with a quarter of its enrollment Mexican-American has a board member who is sensitive to the special educational and cultural problems of these students. On the other hand, the student strike is a reflection of the slowness of the district in facing up to these problems. Most (though not all) of the student demands were reasonable, more and better bilingual education and English-as-a-second language classes . . . bi-lingual counsellors . . . instruction in Mexican-American history . . . the chance to have some Chicano speakers at assemblies . . . the right to wear Mexican dress and Chicano buttons to show pride in their origin. After all, the forefathers of these students inhabited this area long before the Anglo-Europeans moved in. District officials, in fact, did not say the requests were unreasonable. They were "already working on them," or many of them, they said. Four years ago, when Mexican-American adult leaders first met with Sweetwater District officials, the officials also were "already working" on these leaders' objectives. And, in truth, they are. But they work very slowly. And they often fail to communicate to the students what they're doing. So, to many students, it seems that some dramatic move is the only way to generate real action. Robert Finch, President

Nixon's Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, told Congress Friday that campus conflict often "is based in legitimate grievance" and educators have "brought much of it on themselves." He was talking about colleges, but he also could have been talking about high schools. Happily, the strike at Castle Park is now over. Some of the demands have been met and students have been assured that several of the others will be. But we hope the lesson has not been lost on district officials. We are more optimistic about this than we were a week ago, because of the results of Tuesday's election. Indeed, i of the very same grievances voiced by the striking students were also voiced by several candidates, including Mr. Azhocar and Mrs. Judith Bauer, who won. Their election, we are confident, win bring new energy to the district in developing meaningful education programs for all students, not just the college-bound. Mrs. Bauer's experience as a mother and a former district teacher, and Mr. Azhocar's as a long-time worker for the disadvantaged, add two new' dimensions to a board that for decades has been unrepresentative of the total community. It is clear from the election returns that a substantial segment of the community believes that the Sweetwater District is not doing its job. While the incumbent, Dr. Bernard Schemmer, was reelected handily, this was only because the large field of candidates split up the opposition vote. Even though voters could cast their votes for three candidates, and Dr. Schemmer had the advantage of incumbency, fewer than half of them chose to vote for him. And the only other pro-administration candidates in a field of 14 ran fifth and sixth, respectively. The voter turnout, less than 20% of the registered voters, was disappointing. One reason, we think, was voter confusion over the large number of candidates, 26 in the high school and Southwestern College races, on top of elementary races In National City and Imperial Beach. This situation also makes it difficult for any candidate to obtain a majority vote. None did in the high school or college races. We think that the South Bay is getting large enough to consider runoff elections in cases where candidates do not obtain a majority vote. The multiplicity of candidates also makes It easier for candidates to win with a "bloc vote", sometimes obtained by trickery, to which voters are particularly vulnerable when they are confused by the number of candidates. This almost happened in the college elections when a last-minute ad, linking an unknown's name on a fake "slate" with two popular candidates, enabled him to poll 2,800 votes, although he hadn't campaigned, had never been active in the community, and spent the last two weeks before the election ill in bed. The deceptive ad was placed in a San Diego newspaper by local conservatives without authorization of the two major candidates whose names were used in it. We think such type of advertising should be outlawed In the future without the written consent of the candidates. Fortunately, voters nonetheless elected three excellent candidates college board in Robert Frazer, Marilyn Lassman and Gordon Browning The board is still somewhat unrepresentative, Drs. Fraaef and Browning are both de and a physician is already on the board, but the new members are all thoughtful, dedicated people. We are sure they will continue, and improve on, the progr college has made. We were also pleased that the incumbents were returned in the South Bay (Imperial Beach) elementary district election, and that two of th incumbents and Oscar Canedo, a college instructor, were elected in National City's elementary district Mr. Canedo, who ousted an incumbent, should be a n to a school board which, like Sweetwater's, also has never had a Mexican-American (even though 30% of National elementary district students are Chicanos whole, we think South Bay voters showed great wisdom Tuesday, a wisdom that should be reflected In substantial educational progress for all students, not c from a limited segment of our population. This can come none too rapidly. For, as the ferment on campuses all over our nation shows, the hour is drawing la Chula Vista Star-News, Apr 20, 1969)



Ernest Azhocar



In May 1969, Cesar Chavez led a nine-day United Farm Workers (UFW) march across the desert from Coachella to Calexico to convince Mexican workers to honor a strike against vineyards in the Imperial Valley. The workers endured brutal heat, carrying the black-eagle flag of the UFW and a banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe proudly under the scorching sun down to the border, where Father Victor Salandini held mass for them. The priest, who wore a UFW emblem on his vestments, was chastised by the bishop of San Diego but loved by t They were joined by celebrities, politicians, and the media but would later have to struggle with a new generation of vigilantes. (Davis, 2003, p. 256)

1969/05/11 - Mexican-American students form Sweetwater Latino Club. Mexican-American students at Sweetwater High School recently banded together t Latino Club, establish a constitution and be recognised as a legitimate organization on campus. The club has been in existence about two weeks and present members. Membership in the Latino club is not limited to Mexican-American students, according to advisor, Will Hyde. Hyde, a U.S. government instructor a group of students worked on organizing the club for over two months and asked him and Leo Perkins, family life instructor, to be faculty advisors. Hyde s that the Latino Club is not a militant organization, Just the opposite. He said it is a group of students who want to take "positive action to help solve problem encountered by Mexican-American students. "The club is only in its early formation period," Hyde said, "but it is beginning to develop a program of project the first tasks of the Latino Club will be to translate the school ASB constitution into Spanish. Plans are being made to translate the student handbook and ot important school materials. Hyde explained that the club members feel it would be helpful for new students at Sweetwater to be able to read these materials if they have problems reading English. Hyde said mat there are several students presently at Sweetwater enrolled in an English as a second language prograr Latino Club had a late start this year, hopes to form a welcoming committee to meet and assist new students at Sweetwater. The welcoming committee will e students with cultural and language problems to become ented to the school. The objectives of the newly formed organization are to promote and encourage American students to participate in school activities, and to cooperate with the school and local organizations that are trying to further their education. It hop encourage better relationships between students of all races. Instrumental in organizing the dub were Manuel Galindo, Jose Martinez, Yolanda Flores, Inez A and Rosario Rios. (Chula Vista Star-News, May 11, 1969)

1969/07/17 - Assemblyman Wadie Deddeh (D-Chula Vista) said this week that he is investigating ways of eliminating IQ tests in schools that discriminate against culturally disadvantaged children. Deddeh said he would contact the State Department of Education on the matter. The assemblyman acted after conferring with Ernest Azhocar, who early this month became the first Mexican-American to be elected a trustee of the Sweetwater High School District. Mexican-Americans, and members of other minority groups, have long complained that IQ tests are biased against minority group children. They test children on vocabulary and cultural concepts that are emphasized in middle-class Anglo homes, but not necessarily in other cultures. Azhocar said that the California Association of Psychologists supports this view. As a result of biased tests, Azhocar said he told Deddeh, a disproportionate number of Mexican-American children are in mentally retarded or educationally handicapped classes. This, he asserted, creates an image of inferiority for Mexican-Americans, robs minority children of self-confidence, weakens Mexican-American support of public schools, and helps perpetuate conditions which have led in some areas to racial disturbances. Azhocar said he presented Deddeh with a program backed by eight statewide Chicano organizations. This calls for five immediate goals: 1) Proportional representation of Mexican-American children in mentally retarded, educationally handicapped and gifted classes, with no more than a 10% deviation from the school population as a whole. 2) Elimination of group and individual IQ tests that discriminate against minorities (i.e., do not allow a normal curve for them). 3) Removal of all biased test scores from a child's cumulative record, on the assumption that all children who are not in special programs have normal intelligence or above. 4) Funding for English-as-a-second-language classes and bilingual classes on the same average, daily attendance basis as for mentally retarded classes. 5) Removal of artificial barriers for admission to special programs "for those children who need help most, such as those of average intelligence." Azhocar said that special state funding for ESL and bilingual classes be a financial boon for the Sweetwater district, because one-quarter of its students are Mexican-Americans. He said that other points in the program, such as elimination of poor IQ scores from most children's records, and the opening of special programs to "average" children, would benefit all students, not only the minority groups. As an intermediate goal, the eight groups sponsoring the program call for reevaluation of many educational concepts. ONE IS "fixed intelligence" the concept that a child's intelligence level, once determined, does not change significantly throughout his life. Re-evaluation also was called for on what is called "normal curve" (on tests); standardization of tests; admission requirements for special programs, and what students constitutes "average intelligence." The groups sponsoring this program are the Association of Mexican-American Educators, the League of United Latin-American Clubs, Mexican-American Youth United Mexican-American Students, Mexican-American Political Assn., American GI Forum, California Rural Legal Defense Assistance and the Equal Educational Opportunities Office. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jul 17, 1969)



Wadie Deddeh

1969/07/24 - Program to improve teacher attitudes object of trustees. The Chula Vista City Schools Board of Trustees authorized application this week for a program to improve teacher attitudes and understandings of Mexican-American students. The program is to be established under the Education Professions Development Act of 1967 Superintendent Burton C. Tiffany said. If the program is funded, the district would establish a center at Montgomery School for the inservice education program, he said. "Auxiliary teachers would be employed to release five teachers at a time for eight-week periods of intensive study. Mexican-American citizens from the California community would be used as consultants in the project." Joe Casillas, executive director of San Diego mayor's commission, is among those suggested as a consultant, he said. In the application for the funds, the district said teachers participating in the program would be those in schools having higher percentages of Spanish surnamed students. All eligible teachers from Montgomery school would be invited first, followed by those satellite schools, beginning with the highest "percentage rated" schools. Tiffany said he felt that the program would result in significant improvement in reading mathematics scores on standardized tests will occur in the schools having larger concentrations of Spanish surnamed students if the program goes. In other Board set the cost to parents of sixth-grade camp to parents at \$20.35. This includes a camp fee of \$17, an increase of \$1, insurance fee of 35c and a transport of \$3, Tiffany said. Engineering studies for an Allen School sewerline were authorized. Tiffany said that the district had had considerable trouble with the sewer and drainage fields at the Allen School in the past. He said he hoped the state would pay a portion of the cost of the sewer as part of the building of a center for educable mentally retarded children at the school. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jul 24, 1969)

1969/09 - SDSU created the first Mexican-American program in the state, 41 courses in Chicano Studies (name later changed to Mexican American Studies Mexican-American History in the United States (History 33) course is being given by Mr. Gilbert Robledo, who holds a Master's degree in sociology from SDSU State College. (Starr, San Diego State University A History, 1995)

1969/11/23 - Ben Moreno joins SW board to music. Mariachi band serenades new trustee. No one present had ever heard of a college board opening its meeting in such a manner but there was no doubt that the festive opening was thoroughly enjoyed by both the audience and Southwestern College trustees. There were chuckles and foot tapping and vigorous hand clapping, and the president of the board Dr. E. M. Hayes called it "the most delightful introduction we have ever had at a board meeting." It happened this way. Hayes called the board meeting to order and then glanced expectantly out the door. There was sound of a trumpet and then in came a Mariachi band complete with horns, a violin, guitars and big bass. The musicians, who wore traditional Mariachi uniforms, marched to the ballroom, playing all the while. There they stood in a row and played and sang two songs. Not everyone understood the Spanish lyrics of "La Paloma Negra," a Mexican song played at important events, but everyone understood the reason for the celebration. At the board table for the first time in the college's history Mexican-American trustee, Benjamin Moreno, looking both pleased and slightly embarrassed with a faint smile at times. In the audience for this historic occasion Moreno's pretty wife, Gloria, their son Terry, 14, and their three daughters, Luana, 12, Yolanda, 6, and Tina, 5. Mrs. Moreno's parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. A. G. Chula Vista, also were present. Also in the audience to witness the memorial breakthrough for the Mexican-American population of the community were approximately 80 Mexican-American students. Moreno, 36, a life-long resident of the South Bay area, was named to the board by the trustees on Oct. 28, the last of a number of executive sessions where a number of candidates for the position were considered. Moreno, a Convair program analyst for the DC-10 has been active in community affairs for the past 15 years. (Chula Vista Star-News, Nov 23, 1969)

1969/11/27 - Armando (A.Y.) Casillas, this week became the first Mexican-American to sit on the Chula Vista Elementary School Board. Casillas, 39, was elected by the four other members of the board to fill the seat vacated by Dr. Ralph Sebrock two weeks ago. A year-and-a-half ago Casillas missed being elected to the Sweetwater Union High School-Junior College District board by 276 votes. It was the closest anyone had come to unseating an incumbent in that district's 49 year history. Since then Casillas has worked on several citizens committees for the elementary schools. "Of course, I was surprised and flattered with the appointment," said. "I used to be interested in secondary schools but since I lost the election of April 1967 and Ernie Azhocar's winning of the high school board seat, I have become interested in the elementary schools." Casillas said he has come to the realization that it is very important to properly educate children at an early age. President of the school board, Mrs. Susan Fuller, said that one of the main reasons the board picked Casillas was that about 20% of the elementary school youngsters are Mexican-American. "We felt we would give us a good balance and understanding in this area," said Mrs. Fuller. "He has also taken an active part in the community an education over the years and he is still interested." The board called a special meeting Monday to interview Casillas and make a decision. It was their third meeting for the purpose of filling the vacancy. The board held another special meeting at noon yesterday to announce their decision. Casillas was unable to attend because of the death in the family. Mrs. Fuller said that five people were originally considered but they wanted to interview Casillas because he was the only person known to every member of the board. She said she had received no direct inquiries from persons wanting to be on the school board. "I guess the Southwestern trustee

overshadowed our situation," she said. Casillas works at Rohr as a supervisor of systems and procedures for manufacturing control. He has been active in the Committee for better education, the Project Headstart advisory committee, the Chula Vista Jaycees, and his church's Holy Name Society Men's Club. He is president on the Otay Community Forum. A life-long resident of Chula Vista, Casillas has a wife Margaret, and six children. Two of the children attend Lau Elementary School. Casillas graduated from Sweetwater High School and received a general degree in education from San Diego City College. A feature on Casillas will be published in the near future by The Star-News. The first regular board meeting Casillas will attend is scheduled for Monday, December 15 at the district's headquarters. (Chula Vista Star-News, Nov 27, 1969)

1969/12/14 - Mar Vista seniors to get tutoring help for college. Students who are college bound from Mar Vista High School will have special assistance under a program approved this week by trustees of Sweetwater Union High School District. Scholastically able high school and college students will be employed by the district to tutor seniors who need assistance in their high school work to enable them to meet college requirements. The student tutors will work under the direction of a certified supervisor. The plan called "Tutoring the College Bound" is under a Title One project and will be funded by shifting areas of emphasis in the program in the school district, according to the report presented to trustees by Ward T. Donley, director of special project. The decision to adopt the tutoring program for Mar Vista followed a volunteer program conducted this year at Mar Vista by representatives of MAYA (Mexican American Youth Assn.) from Southwestern College. District representatives visited the high school four times this year to provide counseling and educational guidance to Mexican* American students who plan to go on to college. Members of student groups from San Diego State College and the University of California at San Diego are also planning to work with ambitious middle and low income students at the school to prepare them for college entrance. A maximum of 80 Mar Vista students could participate in the tutoring program which is estimated to cost \$8,350. The report states that teachers feel some of the students to be tutored will need only one hour per week. Others will need more. The supervisor for the project will be selected on the basis of interest in the activity and willingness to serve an extra hour after school. The supervisor will be paid an hour, the pay rate, for teachers in the district's, adult schools. (Chula Vista Star-News, Dec 14, 1969)

1970/01/15 - Racial imbalance at 2 schools reported. Two schools in the Chula Vista Elementary school District are racially unbalanced and the school board is considering whether to take corrective action this week when it was presented with the report. The two schools are Harborside and Montgomery which are south of Chula Vista and have a large percentage of minorities, mostly Mexican-American. (Harborside has 47% and Montgomery has 69% minorities.) A. Y. Casillas, the first Mexican American on the board, said he favored a concentration of minorities in a few schools because the staff could then be more effective. This plan would allow specially trained teachers to work in a few schools rather than have their efforts dispersed over the whole district, he said. Superintendent Dr. Burton Tiffany would be almost impossible to get the district's 609 teachers enthusiastic about helping minorities but it would be very easy to get two or three school staffs to support the problem. The matter came up as the result of a recently received letter from the State Board of Education. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan 15, 1970)

1970/01/15 - South Bay schools in trouble with double sessions coming. The old woman who lived in a shoe without enough room for her brood had nothin' in Sweetwater Union High school District which is bursting at the seams with students. The inevitable outcome of the student squeeze is double shifts for students at some schools. With the opening of the new semester, Feb. 2, one junior high school (Southwest) will go on extended day sessions. In September at least two schools are expected to open with double sessions. These two high schools may occupy one plant, according to plans being worked out by Supt. Joseph Rindone. Rindone said he is working on a plan to organize the new Montgomery High school faculty and have the new school occupy one of the present high school plants on a split shift arrangement. Rindone said the plan will not be completed for another month and "no decision has been made. We have to work things out. I don't know which plants we are talking about at the moment." Rindone said he would like to avoid "premature publicity" but "as of now three high schools would open on double sessions. We hope to have only two or double sessions with the plan we are working on." The district's plans to build Montgomery High school open in September of this year bogged down when the state was unable to finance its half of the \$3.2 million the school would cost. Voters in October approved a million bond issue to build junior and senior high schools and also approved a \$6.5 million state loan. The state cannot borrow its share of the money because of low interest rates. Also, the district can only sell bonds in proportion to its assessed valuation which is not enough to finance the building of Montgomery High school. Rindone said the district will hire three or four additional teachers for Southwest Junior High school and that the first shift of students will arrive at school hours before the second group. There will be overlapping classes during the middle of the day. Southwest, which was built for a maximum of 1,000 students and 1,400 students and the population boom continues. Enrollment in the district's schools has almost doubled within the past 10 years, A statistical report issued last week by Rindone shows a student body of 10,967 in 1959 as compared to 19,090 in October of 1969. The recent mushrooming growth is due to tremendous numbers of new homes being built, particularly in the southern part of the district. Builders predict an additional 16,000 homes by 1974. The bond issues and the state approved by voters are scheduled to build three complete high schools or junior highs, plus new facilities at all existing schools and acquiring a site for a fourth school. The site for Montgomery High school has been bought and a principal for the school hired. The district has seven high schools Sweetwater, Hilltop, Vista, Castle Park, Mar Vista and Bonita Vista, and eight junior high schools Granger, National City, Hilltop, Chula Vista, Castle Park, Southwest, Mar Vista and Bonita Vista. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan 15, 1970)



Where Montgomery Hi began, in a building on the Mar Vista High School campus. (photo from the *Tonalamatl*, 1971)

1970/02/15 - 2 high schools in one building to open in September. A new high school with at least 1,289 students and a full faculty but no building, will open at Imperial Beach's Mar Vista High school plant in September. Both Mar Vista and the new school, Montgomery High, will operate on half-day sessions. Mar Vista students will attend afternoon classes and Montgomery students will attend morning classes, the new Montgomery High school district includes areas south of River and east of 19th St. in Palm City. The opening of the new high school was announced by Joseph Rindone, superintendent of Sweetwater High school district along with boundary changes for a number of high schools and junior high schools in the district. The Chula Vista High school boundary will be changed to include all students north of Orange between Fourth Ave. and Broadway. These students (approximately 92) are now attending Castle Park High school. Sweetwater High school boundary will be changed to include Lincoln Acres. Two years ago these students were transferred to the Bonita High school district. The change will affect approximately 70 students. Bonita Vista High school boundary will be changed to include all students east of 805 Freeway between Oxford and Main Street. Students (approximately 136) now attend Castle Park High school and Bonita Vista Junior High school. Among the junior high schools the opening of Montgomery High school will eliminate half day sessions presently in effect at Southwest Junior High. Grades seven and eight will be housed next year at Montgomery High school. The boundary of Chula Vista Junior High will be changed to include all students north of Orange between Fourth Ave. and Broadway. This change will affect 68 students. The boundary of Hilltop Junior High school will be changed to include all students north of Emerson between First Ave. and Myra Ave. These 68 students now attend Castle Park Junior High school. The Montgomery student body will be made up of 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students from Castle Park (330 students); Mar Vista (260); Chula Vista High (244), plus 455 9th grade students from Southwest Junior High. Rindone said all seniors will have the option of remaining at their present school or attending the new school. Traditionally about half of a senior class will choose to remain at the home school, Rindone said. The net increase in students to be housed in senior high school plants next year will be \$1,446, including the Southwest Junior High school students. Rindone said, "and I am talking about students we know about now. I don't know how many more may be here by September." (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb 15, 1970)

1970/02/19 - A National City JHS coach who said he was asked by the Sweetwater Union High School District to resign, made headlines this week when school faculty members rallied to his defense. Petitions were circulated among students and faculty members asking that the case be reviewed. Sean Sweeney, who had accidentally kicked a Mexican-American student before Christmas, contends that pressure from the Mexican American Political Assn. (MAPA) sparked the coach's resignation, and caused the district to swing its prior support in his case against him. A MAPA spokesman said the political group felt it had to get involved in incidents like this are stopped. The District will review a formal complaint submitted by parents of the student kicked at its next meeting. (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb 19, 1970)

1970/02/26 - Parents protest transfer of 9th grade students. Petitions protesting the announced transfer in September of 9th grade students from Southwest Junior High school to Montgomery High school are being circulated by parents of students. The parents are demanding that the 9th graders be left at Southwest to finish their junior high school. Betty Thuesen of 531 Cochran St. Imperial Beach said the superintendent of the district, Joseph Rindone, has not been contacted about the protests. "We want Mr. Rindone to know this isn't just a handful of us opposed to this," Mrs. Thuesen said after the parents met at her home to start circulating petitions. In a press release Mrs. Thuesen said the students are being cheated out of their chance to express their leadership ability. "They have looked forward from the 6th grade to being top dog assuming student body offices, playing on the varsity team and taking the more mature roles in glee club. The students won't do as well academically out of their element." The parents also stave the removal of the top class from Southwest "will play havoc with Southwest. It cannot compete with any other junior high schools in the districts." The parents will propose that mobile classrooms be brought in to accommodate the entire Southwest student body on extended present day sessions left as they are this semester. The parents group also proposes that the district administration take a look at class size at Bonita and Hilltop Junior High Schools "and see if 7th graders not established at Southwest could be bused there. It would be interesting to know if there is such an overflow in our more affluent areas," Mrs. Thuesen said. Rindone was asked about the parents complaints on moving of 455 9th grade students from Southwest next September. He said the decision to move the 9th graders to Montgomery High School (in the Mar Vista High School plant next year) was a hard one. The Star-News in its report the schedules of the two high schools which will use the same plant Mar Vista students will attend classes from 7:40 a.m. to 12:05 p.m., Montgomery students from 12:15 to 4:50 p.m. Rindone said if the 9th grade were left at Southwest all classes, 7th, 8th and 9th, would have to continue on half day sessions.

said the decision to move the top grade into high school a year early "seems the very best of all possible solutions." The proposal to move in portable classrooms at the Southwest campus is impossible, Rindone continued because of the lack of grounds and the lack of locker and shower space and other special facilities need students. He said the present facilities will not accommodate additional students. Rindone added the 9th graders will become a part of the new high school as well as in on the ground floor in helping set up the new Montgomery High School. They will help choose the school's color, the name of its newspaper, and will be able to participate in the school's glee club and band, Rindone said. In addition to better 9th grade athletes will be able to play on the school's varsity club. Rindone said this district and the San Diego city school system has three grades in junior high schools. Other cities such as Coronado, La Mesa and El Cajon have only 7th and 8th grades classes in junior high school. (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb 26, 1970)

1970/04 - April 1970 Nixon invaded Cambodia, caused disturbances at 1350 colleges, over half in the nation; Kent State May 4; most public colleges in California were closed on May 7 and 8 in the face of massive anti-war demonstrations planned on almost every campus for those two days; March on Washington May 21-22

1970/04/20 - It was City College student Mario Solis who noticed the start of construction of a Highway Patrol substation under the Coronado bridge in Barrio Logan on April 20, 1970, and brought the news back to campus. MEChA had been working with the barrio community on developing a park under the bridge that was promised to them when construction began in 1967. MEChA volunteers were active in a wide variety of community enterprises. The Mexican American students were the largest minority at City College, from the largest minority in San Diego. Students came from families that had relatives from Tijuana to Los Angeles. During the United Farm Workers strike in the South Bay at the Egger-Ghio farm dragged on for months in 1971, MEChA students collected donations of food, clothing and money for the strikers, and helped maintain the picket line to allow the farmers time with their families. The students boycotted their own cafeteria at City College when it served "scab lettuce" from non-union farms. On April 21, students led by Solis formed a picket line at the substation but they could not stop construction. On April 22, several hundred students from Lowell, Memorial and San Diego high schools arrived in a car caravan down Logan Avenue to join the picket line. The substation workers decided to stop and go home. At 1 p.m. that afternoon, residents with shovels and picks occupied the site under the bridge and began clearing the ground to plant grass for their park. That night of April 22, the residents held a meeting at the Community Center that had been known as Neighborhood House. It was founded as a settlement house in 1914. At the meeting Jose Gomez, vice president of the Associated Students at City College, declared "The only way that park away is to wade through our blood." Between 250 and 500 people representing a wide cross-section of the community disrupted grading work that was already in progress. The site was occupied for twelve days and the demand that a park be created immediately was the rallying cry to the community. To emphasize the point, the community began the work of creating their own park by using shovels, pickaxes, hoes and rakes to prepare the ground for the planting of grass and flowers. By the third day of the land occupation the Cacho family, prominent landowning Mexican-American farmers, from the Otay Mesa area of San Diego and cultural preservationists, lent tractors, bulldozers and other essential farming tools to assist in the building of a park. The occupation lasted 12 days, until a meeting with the Bridge Authority and the city removed the substation and gave the residents their park. (Schoenherr, 2014, p. 147, and National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Chicano Park and Chicano Park Monumental Murals, 2012)

1970/05/28 - Students, faculty wait eagerly for birth of Montgomery High. It will take almost as long for Montgomery High school to be born as it does an elephant. Sweetwater Union High school District's new high school on Palm Ave in Imperial Beach, slated to draw students from Mar Vista High, Chula Vista High, Coronado Park High and Southwest Junior High, will be completed next year. Principal Joseph C. Torres dates Montgomery from Lincoln's birthday, Feb. 12, 1970, though after district trustees approved the school's boundaries. Completion date is set for July, 1971, 17 months later. A mother elephant carries her calf 21 months. One of the few Mexican-American high school principals in the state and the first in this area, said the main reason Montgomery construction completion is delayed is that old problem, money. Local bonds financing the school have been sold at the going interest rate of 7%. The slate's half of the cost also set to come from bonds, cannot be financed at the present 5% interest ceiling set on state bonds. "With money the way it is, no bank will buy bonds at 5%, and you can't really sell them," said Torres. "We have \$1.5 million from local bond sales," he said, "and if Proposition 7 passes this June, state bonds can be sold at 7% and we'll have the other half" (If passed, Proposition 7, a constitutional amendment, would allow the legislature, by a 2/3 vote of both houses and with the governor's approval, to increase the interest rate on general obligation bonds approved but not sold, including bonds for Montgomery. Passage would also put a statute into effect already passed by the legislature increasing the maximum bond interest to 7%.) Top priority matter in the birth of a new school is the philosophy a principal formulates for his school, according to Torres, who calls his age a "young 50." Student needs play a key role in Torres' thinking. Also important are school district and community requirements. Since Montgomery will draw from residents of the Imperial-Beach-San Ysidro area and about 30-35% of the student body will be Mexican-American, Torres wants many of his teachers and counselors to be bi-lingual. "We want a school that can bring the two cultures, Mexican and Anglo, together so education becomes more meaningful to all students," he said. School personnel selection starts at the top. Torres, previously principal at Southwest Junior High in Imperial Beach, was selected by district trustees. The boys' and girls' vice principals, Vernon E. Brizendine and Mrs. Doris K. Bilben, were then selected by the board on Torres' approval. They also served at Southwest Junior High. Under the present employment procedure, the principal interviews applicants for other positions and passes his recommendations to the board, who makes the final decision. Torres said so far about half his staff is from within the district and half from outside. Students have played a large part in forming the new school. Torres said student response has been very enthusiastic, even though Montgomery students will share Mar Vista High school's facilities in Imperial Beach on a double session basis next year. To pick the school's nickname and colors, Torres randomly selected 24 students from each of the feeder schools, to work with him. Nickname and color suggestions were solicited from each student set to enter Montgomery High. Torres got at least 2,000 name suggestions alone," Torres said. Torres met with the student committee and between them they managed to narrow suggestions down to 10 names and five color combinations. All students were asked to vote on the five remaining choices. Students overwhelmingly picked the "aztecs" for a nickname and the new school's colors will be red, blue and white. "This is beautiful," Torres beamed. "The students consciously or unconsciously picked a nickname symbolic of Mexican culture and colors symbolizing the American system. Spring football practice has already begun for the Montgomery Aztecs. The Associated Students (ASB) advisor is working with students on class officers and the school constitution. When the teacher is hired, the girls drill team will start practice. "We're all the loose ends as different people come on board," said Torres. Some 1,300 students will begin classes next fall. About 150 of them will be seniors, so expect the prospect of putting a new school together they were willing to transfer for their senior year. "We really need the leadership students on the 12th grade level to give a school," Torres said, "and, frankly, I was once afraid we wouldn't get any seniors. Montgomery will be the eighth school built by the district in the last 20 years according to district superintendent Joseph Rindone Jr. Rindone said plans for the school were finished two years ago by architect George D. Poster, designer of Southwestern College's award-winning buildings. "We're looking forward to completion of our newest and most modern school. It will give students in the district the most modern facilities and I'm hopeful we'll be in it soon," Rindone said. Torres, with 21 years in the Sweetwater Union High school District, looks forward to an exciting and meaningful school, both for students and the community. "We've picked teachers students can relate to and who are flexible. Courses will be planned to enrich both the Mexican and American heritages. Our students will learn we're all part of the same society and same social structure." (Chula Vista Star-News, May 28, 1970)



Montgomery High Aztecs: Robert Haman, Southwest Junior High; Susan Baywoll and Grace Judal, Chula Vista High and Frank Ramos, Southwest Junior High, were part of 24-student group that chose the school name and colors. (Chula Vista Star-News, May 28, 1970)

1970/07/05 - Montgomery High ready to open at Mar Vista in September. Montgomery High school, the 15th school in Sweetwater Union High school District, will open in September in the Mar Vista High school plant in Imperial Beach. Student leaders who will be going into the new school are already meeting with principal Joseph Torres. They have chosen Aztecs for the student body symbol and red, blue and white as school colors. Frank Giardina, associated student body advisor, is working during the summer to put the ASB on a full operating basis by fall. Although voters in the district approved a bond issue two years ago to build the school, local districts were caught in the interest squeeze that left 5% bonds gathering dust as investors, such as banks and savings and loan institutions, refused them. The district was forced to create double sessions for both the new school and Mar Vista High. In order to relieve the pressure on Southwest Junior High which is already overcrowded and on split sessions, 9th grade students are enrolled in Montgomery. Bonds for the new school are now being sold. Superintendent Joseph Rindone said he expects the new school will be ready to open September, 1971. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jul 5, 1970)

1970/07/05 - Montgomery High protestor claims inaccuracies. (Letter to the Editor) An article on July 2 entitled "200 Otay Parents Must Musing Plan" (and dealing with protests by Otay Mesa parents, against grouping their youngsters in a new Montgomery High school whose classes would be held afternoons in Mar Vista High school) contained many errors. We feel that this article has done great injustice to the students, not only of Mar Vista High school but also of Montgomery High school. 1) This is not and has never been a racial issue. 2) Making it a racial issue would be to imply that strife exists between the Mexican-American people and Anglo people and this is false since we have always been working together on this issue for all of our children's education and for education only. 3) The protesting was not at any time brought up as, no matter which school the students attended, they would have to be bused. 4) I wrote my letter to the board member before the board as a parent and a citizen concerned with all young people's education, as I felt this was the proper place to take the problems of the community. 5) The statement was made in the newspaper that I had written in my letter that Mar Vista is being called "The Taco Bell of the South Bay." Nowhere in my letter was this statement to be found and this was grossly misstated. 6) The petition in question was signed by parents of next year's 9th grade students from both Otay Mesa and San Ysidro. 7) I requested at this board meeting that the answers to the questions of the areas of Otay Mesa, San Ysidro and Imperial Beach be given to the newspapers and published so that all parents could once and for all understand, and then try to work together for the education of the students involved. MR. SURBER 661 Picard Ave. Imperial Beach (Otay Mesa) EDITOR'S NOTE: Mrs. Surber told Sweetwater High school District trustees that racial discrimination exists at Mar Vista, and she doesn't want her children attending a school with racial discrimination. Although she did not state in her letter that Mar Vista is called "The Taco Bell of the South Bay," she stated this verbally to the board of trustees. Her letter cited drug problems at Mar Vista and stated, "Had we known there was any possibility of our children attending Mar Vista High, we would never have bought in this area." (Chula Vista Star-News, Jul 5, 1970)

1970/10/11 - Race tension at Montgomery High. Parents will go on patrol duty at Montgomery High school in halls and during lunch period in an attempt to defuse tension and prevent further conflict between groups of Anglo and Mexican-American students. Principal Joseph Torres said yesterday he will accept offers of monitoring help which came from a meeting of about 150 Anglo parents Friday night at Silver Wing Elementary school. Torres said he will also request help from Mexican-American parents who met with him earlier this week. Meeting with Torres and parents Friday night were the president of the trustees of the Sweetwater Union High school District, Dr. E. M. Hayes, and Trustee Ernest Azhocar, who also attended the meeting of Mexican-American parents. Torres said the disturbance between small groups of Mexican-American and Anglo youths is disrupting the educational process at the school. "I am happy to have the parents get involved," he said. "It is up to me how I will use them, but I can see them helping out in the halls and during lunch breaks." Torres said the number of youths involved in the disturbances is a very small percentage of the student body. "Our student body is one of great spirit as a visit to an assembly will demonstrate to anyone," he said. "It is too bad that the student body proper must suffer bad publicity brought on by the few." The meetings of parent groups was the outgrowth of a fight at the school last week. Torres said a rumble in the community last Thursday resulted in a fight between opposing groups on the school grounds. Torres said as a result of the fight about 15 students were suspended. The majority of those suspended were Anglos, Torres said in answer to a question from the audience. Torres said students were suspended for infraction of rules not because they are either Mexican or Anglos. Torres pointed out the underlying problem at Montgomery High school is the new school without a home and must use the afternoon shift at the Mar Vista High school plant in Imperial Beach. The construction of Montgomery High school

which was due to open last month, was delayed by tight money on the state level. The district trustees expect Thursday to award a contract for construction of a school and to open it by the 1971 fall semester. Supt. Joseph Rindone said the school situation reflects problems in the community and that the lack of a school has greatly added to other problems. "We can see light at the end of the tunnel this week if we can get this construction under way," he said. The meeting Friday called by the Otay Homeowners Association and was chaired by president Robert Carter. (Chula Vista Star-News, Oct 11, 1970)

1971/01/14 - Azhocar worried over effects of unification on minorities. Concern about how unification might affect the educational opportunities of Mexican American students was expressed by Ernest Azhocar, a trustee of the Sweetwater Union High School District. "it is not that I oppose unification," Azhocar said that there are a lot of things about it that I really don't know. "One of them, I feel, is the effect it might have on our bilingual program and on the representation of Mexican-Americans on the school board. "I feel we have made great progress in improving the educational program for Mexican-American students who need additional help. I know we have not made enough progress, and that we must make more, but, at least, we have turned the corner." Azhocar said it is necessary to insure the present bilingual programs not only be continued but that they be improved. "We must have trustees who are sensitive to the needs of this segment of the school population," he said, "and I am not speaking just for myself. There is considerable concern in the Mexican-American community over the possible effect of unification on the retention of programs designed expressly for the Mexican-American student." Azhocar said he is concerned that Mexican-Americans might lose representation on unified school boards. For the first time in the history of South Bay, Mexican-Americans are presently serving on each of the five school district boards and on Southwestern College board. The breakthrough was completed about 13 months ago with the appointment of A. Y. Casillas to the Chula Vista school board. Mexican-American students comprise from 21% to 30% of the student population of the elementary, junior and senior high schools of South Bay according to estimates reported by Azhocar. Figures compiled for the Title VII federally assisted programs last year showed National City had 37.6% Mexican-American students, Chula Vista had 19.5%; South Bay Elementary District had 13.5%; and San Ysidro had 80%. "I am fully aware that as a trustee I am the representative of all students," Azhocar said, "and I am concerned about the education of all students." Azhocar said, "and I am definitely must include concern for some 30% of the members of Mexican-American families." (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan 14, 1971)

1971/01/24 - Montgomery High school students from the Palm City-Nestor area (west of 25th St.) will be able to transfer to Mar Vista High next month, with transportation provided. Sweetwater District trustees agreed students voluntarily transferring would have to stay at Mar Vista until graduation. Approximately 100 students are eligible to transfer. In response to a question from trustee Frank Whittington, District Superintendent Joe Rindone said he didn't want to make the transfer mandatory "because these kids have already been moved enough." "Some of these students have established rapport with their teachers," added trustee Mrs. Bauer. "It wouldn't be fair to move them." The moves would help reduce overcrowding at Montgomery, which uses the Mar Vista campus. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan 24, 1971)



Walkout at Montgomery Hi. Students mill around on front lawn. (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb 7, 1971)

1971/02/05 - Hundreds of Monty High students stage walkout. Several hundred grievance protesting students walked out of classes Friday [Feb. 5] at Montgomery High school in Imperial Beach. The walkout came after Principal Joseph Torres had already met with a group of protest leaders and agreed to take action on ten demands ranging from hot water and soap for showers to abolition of the school dress code. (For a complete list of the demands, see separate story). But students had apparently not gotten the word, and leaders of the protest joined Torres in urging students to return to classes. Most of the students were back in class by 2:45 p.m., about twenty minutes after the students poured out of the buildings onto the lawn in front of the high school. There was some delay in getting the students back in class when at least two teachers temporarily refused to re-admit them to classrooms. There was no violence or immediately reported damage to the property, and Imperial Beach police, who had a unit observing at the scene of the walk-out, made no arrests. Torres says that neither the participants nor organizers of the walkout or other protest efforts face disciplinary action. He says he may hold a general assembly at which the walkout and student grievances will be discussed. Looming in the back of the other grievances are charges that coaches and an administrator have been "manhandling" and "roughing up" students. Torres says he has no knowledge of any such incidents, one of which is alleged to have occurred earlier Friday afternoon. He says the matter is under investigation. Some protest leaders who declined to give their names because they feared disciplinary action, said that a "gestapo-type" atmosphere had prevailed on the campus all year. "Man, you can't turn around here without gettin' hassled or frisked or something like that," was the way one youth put it. The students apparently began to talk about some form of protest about a month ago. They say they attempted to get action through the student council, which consists of two representatives elected by each class plus other officers, but without results. Some students say that a petition supporting "constitutional rights" for students was circulated and signed by about 200 students before the administration ordered a halt to its circulation under the threat of disciplinary action. Torres says he never saw any such petition and was not aware of its circulation. The students say that they have consulted and are consulting with representatives of the American Civil Liberties Union concerning what they claim are their rights to circulate petitions on the campus and hold peaceful demonstrations. The walkout was originally scheduled for Jan. 29, but was put off for a week because of what students say were administration threats that those walking out would be expelled. The word of Friday's walkout was spread by the distribution of a pink mimeographed sheet bearing the title "United Student Movement." On one side of the sheet, students are urged to "walk out today" at 2:25 p.m. and there also appears, among other things, the list of demands. On the other side three clenched fists are pictured inside a ring which bears the slogan "student power." Distribution of the sheets was stopped by the administration, but apparently the word got around. Torres terms their distribution "unwise" and maintains he had already agreed to discuss the grievances with protest leaders. Torres met with several of the student leaders early in the afternoon, and they agreed to initiate action on all the demands. The leaders of the walkout emerged from the conference indicating that they were satisfied with the assurances which Torres gave them, and began spreading the word that the walk-out was off. But at least several hundred students either did not get the word or decided to disregard it and poured out of the classrooms and began milling around on the front lawn. Another several hundred students of not immediately determined number, perhaps

majority of the student body, remained inside the buildings. Torres, the protest leaders, several instructors and Sue Bagwell, ASB president pleaded, eventually success, to get students to return to class. Torres at one point used a bull horn, shouting to students in both English and Spanish. Contacted after things had quieted down, Torres said he thought that tensions leading to the protest were caused by "constriction that makes things difficult in terms of time." The high school is on the same campus with Mar Vista High and meets during the afternoon half of a double session, cutting time available for classes, passing periods, nutrition period and student activities. Torres said he had already been aware and working towards the solution of some of the problems, such as the desire by students for more assemblies, but had been unaware of others. He voiced suspicion that outside, non-student youths were responsible for some of the problems. Some non-student at least one of which had been previously expelled from the high school were in evidence during the walkout, and at least a half dozen were escorted off the campus by Torres and faculty members. Torres says he will do "everything possible" to solve any problems that are brought to him by any student and is willing to meet with students even in their own homes. He has indicated that action on some of the demands "may take some time" but is confident results will be obtained. He promises immediate action to improve the quality of food served during nutrition period and lengthen the time available for nutrition by combining the two nutrition periods now held into one longer one. He says action will be taken as demanded to lengthen shower periods but it will take longer to guarantee everyone a hot shower. More boilers will have to be acquired and installed. He also promises that soap will be made available for the showers, that the dress code will be abolished and headgear allowed to be worn on campus except in classrooms. He said that he will accede to the demand for an "open campus," understanding it to mean that students will have the right to go anywhere on campus they want during nutrition periods instead of being confined to specific areas. He was vague and non-committal when and what kind of notion would be taken concerning a demand that a teacher or a parent be present while a student is facing charges in the vice-principal's office. Students have charged they have been subjected to verbal and physical intimidations during such incidents. The high school, which has a predominantly Mexican American student body, was the scene of racially connected altercations last fall. But last week's protests did not appear to have any overt racial overtones as Anglos and Chicanos were among the organizers. (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb 7, 1971)

1971/02/05 - Students list demands. The text of a leaflet handed out by protesters Friday at Montgomery High school in Imperial Beach. Including the list of demands, is as follows: "Walk out today (repeated twice) 2:25 pm. "You will not be alone! Join us in the front lawn for a peaceful rally, to demonstrate against the injustice of the administration ." "We understand that the administration has a job to do but they are over reacting. The following are our demands to correct the situation: 1. Sell better food in nutrition. 2. Inlarge (sic) nutrition periods. 3. Extend showers to 12 minutes. 4. "Hot" water for all P.E. periods. (Soap was late) 5. Legalize (sic) headgear on campus. 6. Abolish dress code. 7. Abolish double punishment (detention after suspension). 8. The right to have an adult (parent etc.) present while facing charges in the Vice Principal's office 9. Open Campus (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb 7, 1971)

1971/02/11 - Monty high keeping its cool after walkout. A calmer atmosphere prevails at Montgomery High school in Imperial Beach, the scene of a walk-out by several hundred protesting students last week. Principal Joseph Torres indicated he was making "real nice progress" in cooling things off and was optimistic that "things will pretty well be ironed out very soon." In an apparent mix-up, the students walked out Friday afternoon after Torres had already met with a delegation of students and agreed to take action on a list of 10 demands ranging from hot water for showers to an end of the grooming code. Torres says he has instituted a student-principal committee which now includes himself and 15 students, consisting of protest members and representatives of the student government. He says he may expand the membership of the committee to 20, to include more students and perhaps some faculty members. Torres indicates he has concluded an investigation of an incident allegedly involving the striking of a sophomore boy by a coach. Although he says it is possible that the coach "may have grabbed" the boy, he says he has discussed the incident with the parents and they consider the matter closed. Torres has decided against having a general assembly to discuss the walkout and related matters with students, and indicates that instead he used the school's public address system to talk to the students on Monday. The Montgomery principal also plans to circulate a questionnaire so he and other school administrators can become better informed on student attitudes. He said the results of the questionnaire will in part determine what specific measures he will take in acting on student grievances. One such grievance was expressed in the demand which called for extension of physical education shower periods to 12 minutes. Torres says this could easily be done but would require that the length of the school day be extended another 10 minutes. So one of the items in the survey, Torres indicates, will be whether students are willing to see an extension of the school day in order to have longer shower periods. The questionnaire will pose a similar query concerning nutrition period. Torres says. He says that he has already ended the practice of placing students returning to school from suspensions on detention. Students had called this "double punishment" and made it the subject of one of the demands. Restrictions on grooming will also be completely ended, Torres Indicated Last year the Sweetwater High school District Board ended dress and grooming codes, but this year, Torres says, a student faculty-administration committee drew up some "guidelines" these "guidelines," which are now to be dropped, beards and mustaches, among other things, were declared to be inappropriate as forms of grooming for high school students. While Torres insists the guidelines were not mandatory and were not enforced as such, he concedes that some faculty and students may have not been informed concerning their status. Concerning the demand that another adult be present when a student faces charges before the vice-principal, Torres claims legal implications which will prevent any immediate action. Students say they made this demand because of alleged verbal and physical intimidation some had been subjected to during interrogation. Torres says he has been consulting on the matter with Russell Vance, assistant superintendent of the Sweetwater High school District. He also indicates he is discussing some of the other demands with district administrators. Torres says there will be "some time element" satisfying such demands as hot water and soap for the showers and better food during the nutrition period. But he is already taking action on such demands as more assemblies and an "open campus," which he takes to mean that students will be allowed to go anywhere on campus during nutrition period, instead of being confined to one place. (Some students have argued in favor of being able to leave campus during nutrition.) No arrests, violence, or damage occurred in the walk-out Friday, and within a half hour most students had "returned to the classrooms. Protest leaders had called off the strike after meeting with Torres, but hundreds of students either didn't get or failed to heed the word. Protest leaders, which included both Chicanos and Anglos, assisted Torres in urging students to return to class. Student body president Sue Bagwell, a member of the student-principal committee formed by Torres, says now that the committee has been formed, the ASB probably not have too much to do with any settlements which are reached. She says the ASB had already taken action to hold more assemblies and had discussed the "open campus" question. Miss Bagwell disputed contentions by some protesters that the ASB had refused to take any action, claiming none of the protesting students had ever brought any of their grievances to student council meetings. She Indicated she felt most of the demands were "justified" but adds she "would have preferred they had approached the student council first" before planning the walk-out. A council meeting was held the night before the walk-out, she said The student body president said she thought it was "foolish" for the students to walk out after Torres had agreed to act on their demands. She speculates rumors that a newspaper reporter and photographer were on campus, which turned out to be true, were responsible for drawing the students out of the classrooms. Her estimate is that only about 100 students walked out, with the rest remaining inside. There are about 1,650 students enrolled at the high school. Miss Bagwell said she was "glad it all came to an open" and hopes that the incident will increase campus interest in student government. (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb 11, 1971)



Principal Torres

1971/02/18 - Bucking Change (editorial). Talking of school bureaucracies' resistance to change, a major problem in schools has been so-called "grooming codes" which school authorities insisted on dictating to students what is stylish or unstylish, fashionable or unfashionable. Last year, at the urging of two new trustees after being slapped in the face by the courts for expelling students, the Sweetwater High school District board voted to abandon such codes. We were surprised therefore, to discover that one of the causes of a recent walkout of several hundred Montgomery High school students in Imperial Beach was objection to the

grooming code. It seems that, after the school board ordered the codes abandoned, an administration faculty-student committee at Montgomery decided to own set of "guidelines." Mustaches and beards, among other things, were declared to be "inappropriate." Now, after the walkout, the principal insists the "gu were not "mandatory," but he concedes the students may not have been "fully informed" concerning this. In any event, the restrictions have now been compl ended. But it took a student walkout to do it. These shenanigans by school administrators on the grooming code, which subvert the ruling of the school board not limited to Montgomery High school by any means, offer an example of how an entrenched school bureaucracy, resistant to change, can frustrate the will elected officials who theoretically are supposed to set policy. The Sweetwater district is shot through with these autocratic, insensitive administrators who fi change. The walkout at Montgomery, the second student strike the district has suffered in 19 months, is merely one reflection of problems in the district's up echelons. Most students don't strike; they merely turn off or drop out. (Chula Vista Star-News, Feb 18, 1971)

1971/02/28 - District's headway in small doses. Vocation, handicapped schools set. Progress which comes in small amounts is still progress, believes Sweetwater High school District Supt. Joseph Rindone "We are continuously working to improve our system," he said. "If we compare our instructional programs now to what they were five years ago, you can really see change. "Last year we made a number of improvements which are not dramatic. but which we think are important." he said. And progress will continue this year, he believes. "We will open Montgomery High school in the fall; that will eliminate the double sessions at Mar Vista." he said. "Grading is beginning now at Montgomery Junior High." A new facility for the trainable mentally retarded is being constructed on Castle Park Junior High property, and should be ready by April 1. The school will have four classrooms, a vocational shop, and a large multipurpose room. "This building will enable us to further improve our service to the handicapped." Rindone said "The only group we don't have a special program for now are the severely hard of hearing, and that's because we haven't been able to find a qualified teacher." A continuation vocational school is being planned now, although Rindone didn't have a date for its completion "We will be able to accommodate 300 students there when it is completed," he said. The school will have excellent shop facilities, said Rindone. and will offer trades such as carpentry and auto repair "There are some students who want to learn a trade, learn it well, and who are frustrated in our current programs." Rindone said. He admitted the district used to have a rigid curriculum, oriented too heavily toward college-bound students. "But things have really changed. We now have a strong work-experience program, and plan new buildings for some high schools to shop and vocational courses." The board of trustees have decreased the teacher-student ratio for two straight years, and last week added a new summer sessi approved a program allowing high school students to graduate at the end of 11 years schooling "This is aimed at the average student as well as the gifted." R said "This way a student can graduate at 15 or 16 Instead of being, let's say, 17 years old." Last year the district spent \$51 more per student than the year bef had 1,600 more students. It had 77 more teachers than the previous year and 21 more classrooms. And the tax rate increased slightly, from 2.445 to 2.634. (Vista Star-News, Feb 28, 1971)



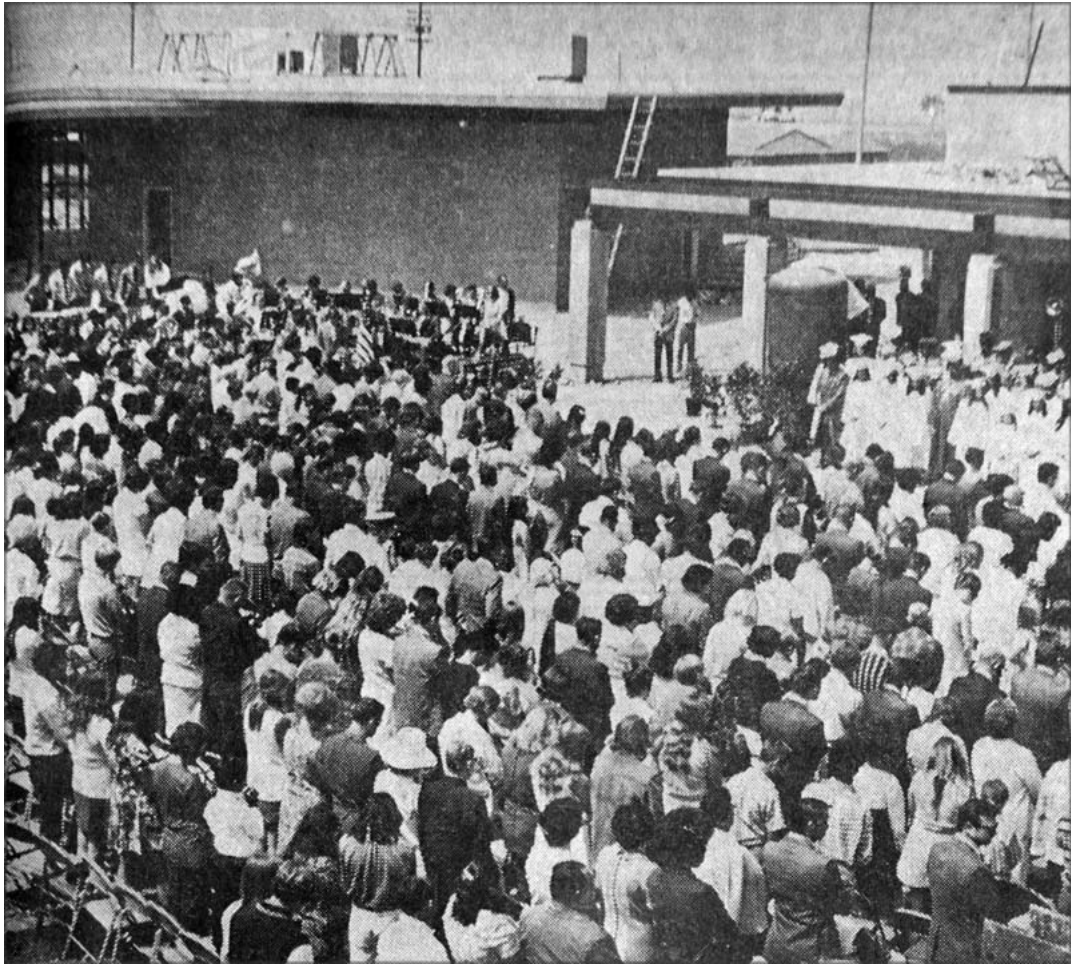
Superintendent Ri

1971/03/04 - Monty High ironing out student grievances after walkout. Montgomery High school, scene of a student walk-out over grievances early last mo appears to have worked out most of the walk-out related difficulties "We've pretty well got it ironed out," Principal Joseph Torres said this week. Torres says avenues of communication with the students have been opened and that the administration has acted on all but one of a list of demands circulated by the pro students. The new channel of communication is a student-principal committee. Torres says he meets regularly with the committee, which consists of about 1 students, including both protest leaders and ASB representatives. A survey was also taken to indicate to the administration the best ways of solving a numbe problems relating to the demands. In reference to specific demands, Torres says that condiments were now being provided for hamburgers during nutrition p that new items indicated in the survey had been added to the menu. He also indicated the nutrition period had been lengthened from 12 to 20 minutes by the combining of the two separate periods which were previously used for nutrition. Concerning demands related to showers, Torres says shower periods will be lengthened from 8 to 12 minutes and soap will be made available to anyone who wants it. The Montgomery principal also indicated that, by lengthening one school periods so that the boilers have a chance to warm up and by repairing a valve in the heating system, the school can now provide hot shower water on regular basis. He said the survey also asked the students whether they would be willing to create the time for longer showers adding a few minutes to the sch and they responded they would be willing to come earlier. (Montgomery shares the Mar Vista High School campus during the afternoon half of a split sessi Torres says he has, for the time being, decided to solve the problem by instead shortening one of the advisory periods. One of the student demands, Torres sa undergoing scrutiny by the county counsel. The demand called for the presence of an adult, either a parent or a teacher, while a student is facing charges in t principal's office. The demand was made amid accusations that students facing charges are sometimes subjected to physical and psychological intimidation r referred the question to the county counsel after being advised by the Sweetwater Union High school District officials that there are important legal questio Involved. He says he has received no complaints about alleged intimidation in recent weeks. He is still awaiting a reply from the county counsel, he says. La after the walk-out, Torres indicated he was taking action on other student demands. This included an end to the dress code and prohibition of head gear, an e "double punishment" (detention for students returning to school following a suspension), and an "open campus." Torres explained that since last year there h no dress codes, only "guidelines" which are no longer being enforced, and that head gear is now being allowed except inside classrooms. Torres understands campus" demand to mean that students can go anywhere on campus during nutrition period, rather than being confined to a small area. He indicated that the where students can go have been enlarged. In an apparent mix-up the students walked out Feb. 5, after Torres had already met with a group of the dissidents agreed to take action on their demands. The protest leaders hurriedly tried to call off the walk-out. but things had gotten beyond their control. A majority of t students remained in class and the dissidents who milled around on the front lawn were all persuaded to go back to class within a half hour. There were no reports or violence or damage. Torres indicated that a Brotherhood Week held last week on the campus had contributed much to improving attitudes and mu understanding at the school. (Chula Vista Star-News, Mar 4, 1971)

1971/04/11 - Leaders of a two-week old farm labor strike near Imperial Beach say they will lift their curtain of silence at a press conference Tuesday mornin will be the first official statement by representatives of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC) who have been at the Eggar and Ghio C 19th St. north of Palm Ave. since the dispute began. The strike started when 12 men of a 116-man work force were either fired or laid off, depending on wh version of events is accepted. (Chula Vista Star-News Apr. 11, 1971) - see [Farmworkers Strike of 1971](#)

1971/05/09 - Van Deerlin Critical of Work by Border patrol in Strike. U.S. Border Patrol efforts to find violations of the "green card" regulations at struck in In Imperial Beach have been blasted by Rep. Lionel Von Deerlin (D-San Diego). He termed inspection at the farm "half-hearted" and added the Border Patro to follow established investigative procedures was "totally inexcusable." However, investigation has absolved the owners of Egger-Ghlo farms, which have struck by the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC) of importing Mexican strikebreakers. The complaint was made public by Raymond F. commissioner of the U.S. Immigration and naturalization Service, which supervises Border Patrol work. Federal law prohibits green card workers by farmer strike has been certified by the secretary of labor. Green card workers are Mexican nationals who have received permission to commute to the United States employment. "Shortly after the certification, organized labor asked the immigration service to check the credentials of the 120 persons still at work in the Eg fields because of the widely held concern that green card workers were being illegally employed," Van Deerlin said in a letter to Farrell. The Border Patrol f some 32 of the employes were U.S. citizens, Van Deerlin said he was informed later. "At this point," he said, "the inspector should have matched the credent

86 Mexican commuters with the Egger-Ghio employment records to ascertain whether the members of this group had been employed by the company prior April 28 certification date. "But, according to reports I received from Independent sources which were later confirmed by the immigration service in Washin procedure was not followed. Instead, the inspectors relied on verbal Interrogation in what struck me as a very half-hearted attempt to determine if these worl legally in the field." The Border Patrol checked the records after Van Deerlin's office telephoned a complaint to the immigration service, the congressman ac The Chula Vista Star-News, May 23, 1971)



Graduation at unfinished Montgomery High School. (Chula Vista Star-News, June 20, 1971)

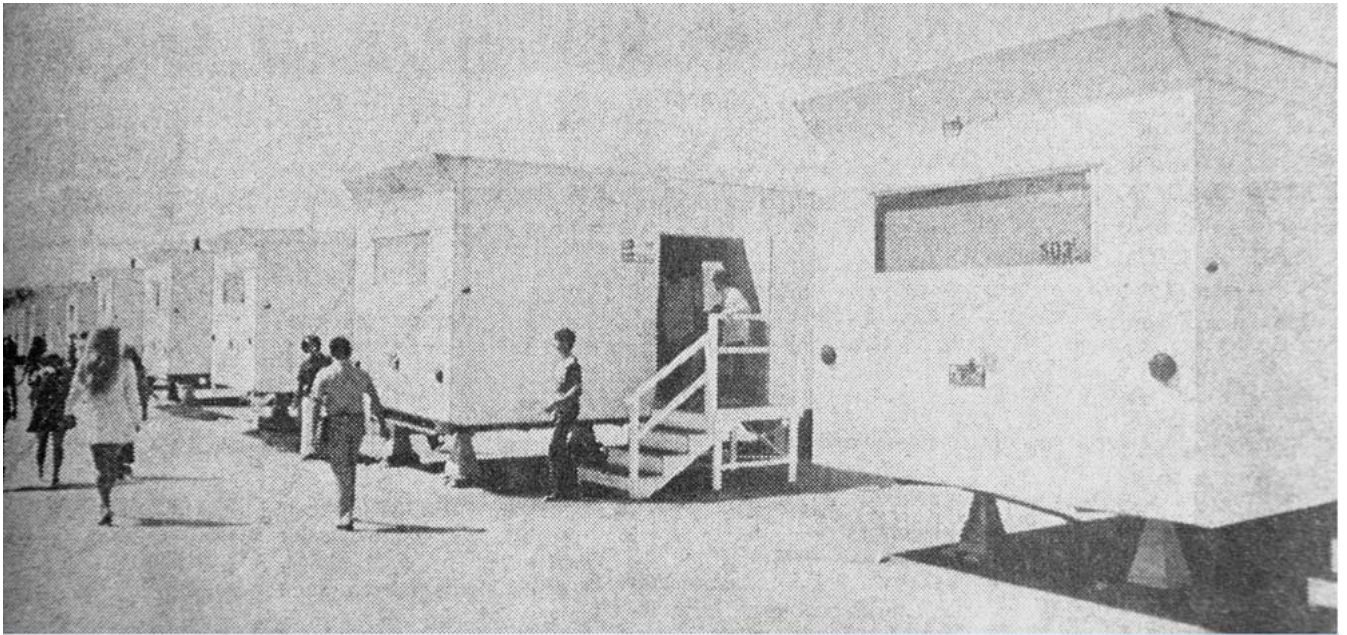
1971/06/20 - Amidst construction chaos on school's campus, Montgomery graduation to beat of hammer, saw. Some 124 Montgomery High seniors finally r both into and out of their school last week. Their graduation ceremonies were held lo the strains of "Pomp and Circumstance" and a cacophony of constructi on the new Montgomery campus, where the she said, "but they will walk in the school is currently under construction. Potted plants brightened the grim and scene a bit, but numerous friends and parents of the graduates trudged around building supplies. through sand and over dried scrap concrete to see the gradu: Bagwell. ASB president, told the senior class the ceremony marked the "end of its beginning" and told them that as the first senior class they have "experien something few people do. "Future classes will do more." footsteps we made." Senior Stephanie Harris told her assembled classmates that "now we get to prc make it at age 18." Cathy Work, in her speech, said the graduating seniors would have to decide whose society they want to join, "the ruling class or the joy Victor Delgadillo, speaking in both Spanish and English, said the class would never forget the chance lo set up a new school, and added the students had wo up a place in which Anglos, Chicanos and Blacks could study, work and play together. Next year the school will be completed and Montgomery High will n have to share a campus with Mar Vista. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jun 20, 1971)

1971/08/01 - Chula Vista may feel pinch of big labor strikes soon. If the nationwide rail strike isn't settled in the next few days, the South Bay's tomato grow going to be In trouble. And if both the rail and longshoreman's strikes aren't settled inside about two weeks, lumber supplies in the area could be used up and all construction may come to a halt. Fred Stephens, a sales manager at the Chula Vista Farms Co. in National City, said "right now, we aren't hurting too mu we're planning to begin harvest of our summer tomato crop next Monday, and a strike will be critical then. "When your tomato crop comes in, it has to be pi can't leave the fruit on the vine. If you can't sell it, it has to be thrown away." He said about 40% of the tomatoes grown in the South Bay are shipped by rail, strike has made trucks "almost unavailable." "And, if you can get a truck, the rates are way up. Trackers can charge whatever they want for certain commodi agricultural products are charged what the traffic will bear." Construction personnel in the South Bay will also begin to feel effects from the rail strike if it co beyond next week. Clyde Jennings, an executive at the Western Lumber Company's National City office, said "We're running out." About 70% of our wood by barge, but the longshoremen are on strike. Normally the rails could take up much of the slack but of course, they're unavailable. "And we usually get mos plywood by rail, so just the rail strike by itself would hurt." Jennings said his firm hasn't had to turn away any customers yet, "But the time will come, and se don't start to get shipments And all lumber companies get their supplies the same way. "I don't want to put any definite day on this, but let's say we don't hav than a two-week lumber supply. When we're out, contractors will simply have to stop working in many cases, as lumber is needed for all construction work. concrete work, after all, needs wood forms." South Bay supermarkets haven't been affected yet, but a spokesman for Safeway said, "We're just playing this t have a two arid a half week supply of most commodities, so the rail strike hasn't hurt us yet. "Most of our meat comes by rail at one time or another, howeve prolonged strike could tighten our supply. The firm that packs Farmer John's, for example, has already closed its Los Angeles slaughterhouse. "But we have suppliers, and don't see any immediate shortages." He said the strike could actually benefit produce consumers "if marketers have to dump large quantities o

(he local markets. The price could go way down." But if that's good news for the consumer, it's bad for the farmer. Bob Dameron, a sales manager at the South Bay Farmers Cooperative Assn. in San Ysidro, said, "Farmers are going to have a financial disaster even if the strike is settled at the end of next week. "Once you're three days behind in harvesting a crop, you just don't catch up. Even if the fruit is still good, there is so much of it at one time that prices are severely depressed." "This strike couldn't have happened at a worse time. If it continues another two weeks, we'll lose perhaps the better part of this year's summer tomato crop." The dairy industry, a major South Bay agricultural operation, is in much better shape, and may weather the strike without any damage. A spokesman for the Dairy in San Ysidro said most cattle feed comes in by truck "and we've received all needed shipments. "Of course, the strike could hurt us in ways we don't know about yet. Some items of supply come by rail, and these might not be available. We'll just have to wait and see." Dameron said people who have contracts with truckers shouldn't have any trouble with their service, "but trying to get a truck is almost impossible if you just walk into a trucker's office. "Put it this way. If you quibble at all about their prices, you've lost the truck. There is strictly a seller's market, and they know it." (Chula Vista Star-News, Aug 1, 1971)

1971/09/02 - Bids too high, new high school facilities delayed. Inflation has hit the Sweetwater High School District in what might be called a very dramatic way. Bids for seven music-drama buildings and 12 classrooms were more than the district expected and than the state will probably allow. And district administrators don't know quite what to do next. "If the state rejects these bids, and we expect it to, we will probably want to re-bid," said James Tucker, district business manager. Now, there is a shortage of some labor because of the amount of construction in this area and it's possible a later, bid might be lower. It isn't likely, but it might be worth a try. "If we can't get a low enough bid, we might have to try for just some of these buildings, instead of the entire package. In that case, Superintendent Rindone would have to determine the priorities and the board of trustees would have to approve them." Rindone said the low bid was \$1,444,000, which is \$100,000 more than the state allowance. "Building costs have really been skyrocketing," he said. "The construction industry has been hard-hit by inflation, and cost estimates and guidelines even a few months old can be misleading." The bid included music-drama buildings for all seven senior high schools, plus five classrooms for Hilltop Junior High school and seven classrooms for Castle Park High school. Low bidder was White-Shirley-Wark Construction Co., now building Montgomery High school. Clancy Construction was next with a bid of \$1,488,000, followed by the Christensen Construction Co. at \$1,520,000. Rindone said all necessary documents and review of the bids have been sent to the Office of Local Assistance of the State Department of Education. But he strongly doubted they would approve them. "I can't tell for sure, but they have definite cost guidelines they follow pretty closely," he said. "They have to approve all bids, even when they are to be paid with state funds. Our projects will be funded by the state so we don't have much hope." Tucker said the buildings facilities for music and drama have been on the drawing boards as well as provide for boards for about six months, and are designed to give each high school specialized facilities for music and drama, as well as provide for classrooms at Castle Park High and Hilltop Junior High. (Chula Vista Star-News, Sep 2, 1971)

1971/09/05 - Montgomery students face half-days on own campus. Students at Montgomery High school, forced into half-sessions at the Mar Vista High school campus last year, face at least another month of half days because of construction delays on their new school. Some classes, especially science, homemaking, and shop, will be forced to meet in trailers parked at the school site. About 20 classrooms have been completed and are ready for use by students, said Jim Ticker, Sweetwater District business manager, and another 20 classrooms will be housed in trailers, which the district is renting at a cost of \$2,750 per month. The students will attend school only in the morning, from 7:15 to 11:50, to allow workmen greater freedom on campus. However, construction crews will be at the school site. Completion date for the school, once set for the beginning of the last school year, is now Nov. 6, Tucker said. He attributed the latest delay to rain, strikes, late deliveries and a shortage of workmen. "There are a number of school districts trying to finish buildings now," he said, "and the competition for workers is fierce." "Students will move into their regular classrooms as they are completed," Tucker said. Most of the uncompleted classrooms are intended for science, home and shop classes. Tucker said the district is assuming the costs of the extra trailers because the contractor was delayed by circumstances beyond his control. Sweetwater officials expected the school to be completed in time for the opening of school this year. However, during the summer the contractor asked for a time extension, citing rain and strikes as the cause. Students at Montgomery, the Sweetwater District's seventh and newest high school, attended half-day classes at the site of Mar Vista High school last year because their school was not complete. In June, graduation ceremonies were held amidst workmen at the uncompleted Montgomery High site! Montgomery students will attend school from 7:40 a.m. to 2:20 p.m. once their campus is complete. (Chula Vista Star-News, Sep 5, 1971)



Trailers at Montgomery Hi in 1971 and 2017.

1971/09/16 - First day of school was Monday, Sept. 13; 'Spirit of '72' prevails at unfinished Monty High. Twenty-six trailers stand and stark like quiet sentinels. A light waft of air floats in the hot morning sun, but not enough to lift the dust from the asphalt lot. The doors of the trailers hang open so that some of the slightly moving air will find its way inside. The same doors help break the hushed silence. A voice from one door, sounding distant, but clear, says, "and in case of an emergency, students will file out the back door." Farther on down the line of trailers, younger voices blend quietly, and from another white structure, a teacher's steady voice explains, "Write your names on the sheet of paper I will pass around." Outside the trailers a youngster carrying a white slip (a hall pass?) wanders among the row of trailers. "I'm lost," he explains. "I can't find my class." Later on, students, wearing their new back-to-school fashions flow from the trailers during the change. The first day at uncompleted Montgomery High school was almost like any other first day at school, except classes might have run even more smoothly. The day also marked the start of the final year of study for its first group of seniors, the Class of '72, under its own roof. Montgomery High school principal Joseph C. Torres smiled genially as he explained how cooperation among students and faculty overcame the physical difficulties of manning classes in trailers at the half-way constructed new school. Although administrators estimated that nearly 1,600 students would show up for the first day at Montgomery High school, enrollment figures indicated that 1,258 students enrolled, 400 more than expected. Two wings of the new school which are completed accommodate half the student body in 26 classrooms. Most of the uncompleted classrooms are earmarked for special classes such as home economics, shop, physical education and the sciences. Until the school is completed four to six weeks from now, individual classes will meet in each of the 26 trailers parked on grounds below the new school. As the new structure is completed, classes will be moved out of the trailers into more traditional quarters. The school is renting the 10 by 52 foot trailers at a rate of \$2,600 per month, or \$100 for each trailer, according to James W. Tucker, business manager for Sweetwater Union High School District. "We want to get the trailers as quickly as possible," Tucker said. "As soon as a classroom becomes available we will move a class out of a trailer." Although the trailer classroom is not an ideal situation," Tucker said the accommodations were far better than those used last year when Montgomery High school students shared facilities on a limited basis with Mar Vista High school students. The trailers were rented from Action Trailer Rentals, a Los Angeles company. Montgomery High school was fortunate to acquire the trailers, Tucker said, because "the demand for trailers is tremendous." Many schools in Los Angeles are renting a large number of trailers due to earthquake damage there and an unprecedented number of schools are building new facilities which have not been completed in time for the new school year, Tucker explained. Besides the 26 trailers, Montgomery High school has three trailer complexes which house two classrooms each. These larger trailers, 26 by 30 feet each, provide

not of a temporary nature. Tucker said. "Depending on enrollment, those might stay here until eight additional classrooms are constructed." Rental of the trailer units is \$430 a month. Tucker said. Unlike the smaller trailers, the double classroom units are equipped with air conditioning because they are more permanent. Temperatures soared on the first day of school Monday and students and teachers sweltered in the heat. "We're hoping for a break in the hot weather," Tucker said. However, half-day schedule until the construction is finished eliminates classes during hot muggy afternoons. But students and teachers can look forward to moving into the new school, it helps to know that the trailer classrooms are only a temporary measure. "We're working together to overcome a problem," he said. The cooperative efforts of students, parents, faculty and administrators have built up more cohesiveness at the school. "We can overcome a bad situation together and be better for it," he added. (Chula Vista Star-News, Sep 16, 1971)

1971/09/19 - Builder granted 39-day extension to finish work on Montgomery High. The Sweetwater Union High school District Board of Trustees granted White-Shirley-Wark Construction Company a 39-day extension to finish work on the new Montgomery High school. The contractors had asked for a 52-day extension due to delays caused by rain, strikes and a labor shortage. But members of the board determined that 39 days were sufficient under terms of the contract. "The letter from the contractor reads like a soap opera," Trustee Charles J. Hess said during discussion. "I think it's a build-up for an additional request. Board member Bernard C. Schemmer O. D. Agreed. "Unless we are absolutely bound legally, I'm opposed to the extension," he said. During discussion, Trustee Jud asked, "Would a shortage of labor be considered unforeseen?" Under terms of the contract the board must grant the White-Shirley-Wark Construction Company an extension due to "unforeseeable causes beyond the control of the contractor and without fault or negligence of the contractor." If the contractor does not meet the deadline and if he is not granted an extension, he is liable to pay a fine of \$50 for each day that the work is not completed. The Board decided to check with San Diego City Counsel to determine if a 52-day extension is in order. School District Business Manager James W. Tucker expressed optimism that the 39-day extension would be sufficient to complete the high school. (Chula Vista Star-News, Sep 19, 1971)



Special supplement on new Montgomery High School. (Chula Vista Star News, Sept. 26, 1971)

1971/09/26 - Montgomery High school is located on 48.3 acres at the intersection of Palm Ave. and Beyer Way in Otay Mesa. It serves students in San Ysidro and parts of Nestor. Over 50 classrooms are arranged in a unique complex design unlike other Sweetwater High school District schools which have "fingertyping" instead of one large unit. The four wings of Montgomery High school are tied together by an outdoor corridor with overhead beams spanning its sunlit malls. Aggregate construction of the outside walls of the facility are maintenance free and never need painting. The school was constructed at a cost of \$2,931,000. The site cost was \$227,057 and grading ran another \$199,984. (Chula Vista Star-News, Sep 26, 1971)

1971/09/26 - Air conditioning is in, just waiting for motors. Opening day of school was a real scorcher, especially for faculty and students at the Montgomery school. Complaints poured in from parents after the children returned home. "Why didn't somebody turn on the air conditioning in that brand new school?" Joseph C. Torres was ready with the answer. The school had to remove the motors on the air conditioning units to cut the cost of school construction, he explained. However, it won't be difficult to put in air conditioning once the funds are available, Torres said. The school is designed with air conditioning units just waiting for motors to turn them on. (Chula Vista Star-News, Sep 26, 1971)

1971/09/26 - The school blueprint went back to the drawing board and some alterations were made to lower the cost of the facility. To make up for the delay the school was bid for a 10-month contract, rather than the original 12-month plan. Target date to finish construction was Sept. 13, the first day of the 1971-72 school year. But the contractor, White-Shirley-Wark Construction Co., lost 39 working days due to a 20-day roofers' strike and 19 days of rain. Late deliveries of materials and a shortage of labor in some areas have caused delays. The Sweetwater High school District granted the construction company a 39-day extension, but the contractor has asked for even more time to finish up the work. The extension will give builders until Nov. 8 to complete the school. Despite the delay, Tucker said he is "hopeful" that Montgomery High school will be finished then. (Chula Vista Star-News, Sep 26, 1971)

1971/10/03 - South Bay Chicanos are involved in an effort to register voters for a new Chicano party, La Raza Unida. Herman Baca, executive director of LRU Chicanos are turning to the new party because they are tired of "tokenism, which has been the answer in both political parties in representation, in programs and solutions to problems." He called the LRU movement a grass roots organization and said registrars have only been at work for about a month. Baca also heads the county chapter of MAPA, Mexico-American Political Association. La Raza Unida was formed in Texas and spread to California. There are 260,000 Chicanos in San Diego county (Chula Vista Star-News, Oct. 3, 1971)

1971/10/14 - South Bay farm strike action seen winding down until spring. Speculation mounted this week that there will be no real action in a six-month-old labor strike until next spring. Only six pickets showed up at the truck fields of Egger-Ghio Farms in Otay Mesa Tuesday and yesterday, and there were none on Monday, a holiday. The ranch is winding down its fall tomato harvest which should be complete within a month. The usual winter-spring crop has been deleted and the size of the annual winter celery crop has been reduced. Since not even the celery crop, which co-owner Emil Ghio calls "a little important to the farm's income, it appears that the next opportunity for the strikers to hit hard will be in the spring. Then major plantings of tomatoes and green beans will be in the ground."

will be done. UFWOC continues to maintain a shack and shrine near the Egger-Ghio fields near Imperial Beach where most of the large-scale picketing and demonstration took place earlier this year. The growers have complained to the city of San Diego that the buildings violate zoning and building codes, but have no action. UFWOC admits the violation, but justified them by pointing out that the growers planted over public rights-of-way designated in a 1910 subdivision. About three weeks ago UFWOC mustered about 250 supporters, mostly college students and farm worker from other parts of the state, to march from its San Diego office to "reconsecrate" the shrine and the strike. An increase in picketing and other trike activities was expected to follow, but never materialized on a sustained basis. One day the number of the picketers climbed to 18 for a few hours, but then fell off to the usual six or eight. Instead of arriving at 8 in the morning as they usually do, they have recently been rolling in around 10 a.m., according to the growers. By contrast, UFWOC regularly mobilized from 40 to 60 pickets per day during the summer and more than 150 on two occasions last spring when they were joined by college students. UFWOC spokesmen have not been available for comment, having failed to return reporter's calls. (Chula Vista Star-News, Oct. 14, 1971)

1971/10/25 - Local 75 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers voted yesterday to strike If the Rohr Corp. in Chula Vista does not meet their demands for a new contract. Results showed 979 in favor of a strike and 57 against as members voted by secret ballot in Chula Vista Bowl. The biggest walkout in South Bay history moved into its fourth day today with no end in sight. . The walkout by the International Assn. of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Local 75 representing more than 3,104 of 8,400 employees at the sinick Rohr Industries of Chula Vista, commenced just after midnight Sunday. The strike began Nov. 25 and lasted for 63 days. (Chula Vista Star-News , Dec 2, 1971 and Feb. 13, 1972)

1971/11/07 - A group of Chicanos which has denounced the appointment of an intergroup relations counselor by the Sweetwater High School District was told of criticism themselves from Ernest Azhocar, chairman of the district board of trustees. Azhocar, a Mexican-American himself, chided the Chicano group for "lack of understanding" for the "total problem." The Chicanos had announced their "rejection" of the attendance and community relations officer by the trustees. They oppose the position and the method used to select the man to fill it. Among the Chicano critics were Gus Getner, Chicano studies instructor at Southwest College; Augie Bureno, chairman of MAPA (Mexican-American Political Assn.) in National City; Joe Bonilla, chairman of the MAPA education committee; Contreras, head of Southwestern College's Mecha Club; Jose Viesca, a Chula Vista real estate agent, and Herman Baca, executive director of La Raza Unida. Contreras criticized Sweetwater's trustees for "failing to give any direction and not having the foresight in trying to solve the many problems that exist as far as Chicanos are concerned in the high school district." The Chicano group initiated the criticism after the school board appointed former Montgomery High School counselor Llera to fill the intergroup relations counselor post. Llera's job is to check attendance in six high schools in the South Bay area and to serve as a trouble shooter for community problems in the bud. The Chicano group had asked for Mexican-American assistant superintendent to do the job, but district officials modified the proposal. Llera is a "highly competent and qualified teacher," he said. For the Chicano critics "to deny him the opportunity to prove himself as an intergroup relations counselor is to deny the very right which they claim to fight for," Azhocar asserted. In a statement to "give the parents in our district some of the facts," the chairman said, "Some of the elements within our community make statements without knowing or realizing many ramifications that exist leading to the solution of our many complex problems." He criticized the group's "constant negative rhetoric" and said if anyone cared to check the attendance records of the school board meetings in the South Bay area, he would "seldom" find the names of this group. (Chula Vista Star-News, Nov. 7, 1971)

1971/11/07 - A watered-down version of Chula Vista Assemblyman Wadle P. Deddeh's bilingual education bill was approved this week by both the Assembly and the Senate. The compromise bill, which will provide only \$425,000 for two pilot bilingual programs rather than \$3 million as originally approved, came after Governor Reagan vetoed Deddeh's original bill. Following the veto, Deddeh agreed to the compromise that limits the bilingual education to two, three-year pilot programs in San Diego and San Francisco. The two districts were chosen because of the large number of Spanish-speaking children in one and Chinesespeaking children in the other. "I'm very pleased that we managed to reach this agreement," Deddeh said. "I am sure that these two school districts will demonstrate that we can effectively prevent under-achievement because of lack of facility in English." The compromise program is now contained in Assembly Bill 116, another Deddeh bill, which requires the state Department of Education, to complete work on a Spanish-English aptitude test. In the past, Mexican-American children have been placed in special classes for the mentally retarded because they could not understand the IQ test written in English. The bill provides a total \$500,000, with \$75,000 going for testing former teacher myself," Deddeh said, "I intend to watch the progress of the program very carefully. If it works as well as I expect it to, we will have the kind of convincing evidence to win the governor's approval of my original proposal." (Chula Vista Star-News, Nov 7, 1971)

1971/11/14 - Montgomery meet to feature 'Ecology' - The Montgomery High School Ecology Club, supervised by Robert Bush, will show slides at Wednesday meeting of the PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Assn.) at the school. Slides will show different landscaping used in other area schools, and after the presentation there'll be a discussion of what would be best at Montgomery. (Chula Vista Star-News, Nov 14, 1971)



The organic garden envisioned by Robert Bush in 1971 became a reality by 1975. "To a handful of students at Montgomery High, ecology is alive and well, out back behind their school. Gifted students are enrolled in Ecology (Action X), an experimental course at Montgomery which teacher Robert Bush hopes will create constructive ideas and experiments which have an effect on the environment. Bush, who took a leave of absence last year for a short time with the Peace Corps in Africa, points to the sterile halls and rooms of the school. "I want to get out of the classroom, to the outdoors and teach out here where the world is." To accomplish this, the Chula Vista school secured some school ground behind the main buildings for organic gardens. Each student has his own plot and decides what he wants planted. Some of the seeds, Bush said, are bought with gifted program funds, others are purchased by the students themselves. One girl, who forked out \$70 for her flower garden. "We want to get all kinds of plants growing here. Oriental, soul food..." Bush said. "Nowadays, people don't know about food." Other plots, made with walls or old bleachers from Mar Vista High School, hopefully will sprout turnips, tomatoes, radishes, egg plants and watermelons. But Bush hopes the organic garden is just a start. He wants to raise chickens, goats, pigs, etc., and crops to sustain them to show students first-hand how the food chain operates. Pointing to a spot behind the school, Bush said it would be a nature walk. "Look at the city, look at the smog. You can't find a better classroom," he argued. (Chula Vista Star-News, Mar 23, 1975)

1971/12/20 - Joe Rindone went to Sacramento, hat in hand, Tuesday morning. He returned that night with the promise of \$1 million in his pocket and the goal of starting to build much needed Southwest High school. Rindone, superintendent of the Sweetwater High school District, received unexpected approval to build the district's eighth high school in the 1400 block of Hollister in Nestor. Groundbreaking is expected the first week in January with doors opening fall, 1975. The award a contract tonight to White Construction Co. The state allocation board's approval was the first time in its 23 year history the board had allowed a school to exceed the maximum pricing set for it. Rindone told the allocations board which proscribes just how much school facilities can cost that Southwest Junior High, Montgomery High and possibly Mar Vista High would have to go on double sessions if the school were not built. Rindone went to the Sacramento meeting in desperation after trustees had to reject bids on two different occasions because they exceeded the maximum the allocations board would allow them to spend. Rindone petitioned the board in person for the exception to exceed the maximum. In the unprecedented decision the board increased the allocation a phenomenal 19.7 percent, or \$941,561, to \$5,968,707. The increase was needed to keep up with swiftly rising labor and material costs which have boosted the cost of Southwest High 49 percent over its twin Montgomery High, built just three years ago. "When we opened bids Aug 23 they were 11 percent too high," Rindone said. "We sent the plans back to the architect and he cut out about a quarter of a million dollars and we re-bid it." The second bid was even higher, 19.6 percent more than the state allocation. The allocation board upped the maximum cost of the school by 19.7 percent so the district can use its 1 percent margin to begin furnishing the high school. Rindone had been told he had "one chance in a million" of convincing the board to break with tradition by exceeding its maximum allocation. "I don't know if it's up there determined," he said yesterday. "I don't think they would have approved the school if we had only sent a letter." Rindone stressed the difficulty San Diego area schools are having with contractors who prefer more lucrative Navy work to the red tape-shrouded job of building schools. Only three contractors bid and only two Dec. 7. Rindone reminded the allocation board that when the last high school was built, Montgomery, overcrowded conditions forced Mar Vista High to have double sessions. "THIS IS a situation we are desperately trying to avoid," said the superintendent, citing an unhappy community and "racial problems came about resulting in the stabbing of one student on the high school campus. "Many of the younger brothers and I sisters, and thus the same parents, will be involved," he warned. He told the board that if the school isn't built immediately prices would continue to go up "and taxpayers will have to pay more in the near future." Rindone said even though the school will open in the fall, 1975, overcrowding is anticipated this coming fall at Montgomery High. "WE ARE starting, to plan now how to handle that," he said, explaining extended day sessions with seven or eight class periods would probably be started at Montgomery next fall. Immediately after Rindone won the 10 percent general increase and 9.7 percent special increase for Southwest, four smaller district also asking for increases were also given the necessary increases. "Now I see why they wanted me to go first," he laughed afterward. Although there the odds were against Rindone, Board President Judy Knevel knew how her superintendent operates and wasn't surprised at the outcome. "Mr. Rindone went in and talked to the board for 45 minutes," she said. "And they surrendered." (Chula Vista Star-News, Dec 20, 1973)

1971/12/22 - A class of 24 students at Montgomery High School is tackling material that you can't find in most high school history books. They want to learn about the black man - his culture, history, literature and his problems. "Most history books leave blacks out," said Mrs. Brenda Balthazar, who teaches the course. "They only mention people who make the headlines - like Martin Luther King, George Washington Carver and the Black Panthers. The young black teacher is a part-time counselor at Montgomery, is teaching the first black culture and literature course offered at the school, and the only course of its kind in the Sweetwater High School District. Mrs. Balthazar would like to see all high schools in the district begin courses in black literature and culture, she emphasized that school

need to have black students to study black people. "Not just blacks need to know about black culture - that's part of the problem," she asserted. Mrs. Balthazar considers the course "preparation for life. Students are not going to be living in a completely segregated society." The counselor-teacher's office is right inside the school's administration center. Its location is convenient for students and teachers who drop in to get course cards signed, iron out problems or j Mrs. Balthazar, who just started teaching at Montgomery this year, has high hopes for the new course, which is on an experimental basis. The students asked Montgomery High School Principal Joseph C. Torres to begin a course in black studies last year. Twenty-four students, 14 blacks, five Chicanos and five whites signed up for the first semester, which deals with black culture. Black literature will start in the second semester. Brenda J. Williams and Joe Ibarra and Char Harris in the class A Black Student Organization (BSO) is in the formative stages at Montgomery High School. The group, which is open to any student, hopes to promote unity and pride among members in the school. (Chula Vista Star-News, Dec. 21, 1971)

1971/12/26 - Sweetwater High school district officials got an \$800,000 federal grant for educating low achievers but wonder how long they'll keep it since the Ysidro Elementary district decided to withdraw 500 students and build its own junior high school. The grant, to help students who place in the bottom half of districtwide tests, would largely benefit minority students in special programs at Montgomery High school and several junior high schools. Many are from Sweetwater. To assure the grant, the Sweetwater board voted to initiate a busing program, sending students from largely Mexican-American Sweetwater to Mar Vista Junior High in Imperial Beach, a mostly Anglo school Sweetwater received the \$800,000 grant this year, but it has to be renewed annually. (Chula Vista Star-News, Dec 26, 1974)

1971/12/29 - The Rohr strike was the third major one this year in the South Bay. In the spring, farm workers at the Egger-Ghio farms in Imperial Beach and Mesa walked out leading to a long and inconclusive struggle between the growers and Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers Organizing Committee. And longshoremen at the docks in National City walked out in August, as part of a nationwide strike that lasted over a month and tied up local deliveries. (The Chula Vista Star-News Dec. 29, 1971)

1971/12/29 - Several hundred students staged a walkout at Montgomery High school in February to force the administration to meet demands ranging from hot water for showers to the student's right to have an adult present while facing charges in the vice principal's office. Principal Joseph C. Torres had already taken action on the students' demands before the walkout, and protest leaders joined him in urging students to return to classes. Torres said he thought tensions during the protest were caused by the restriction of school time which forced cuts in time allotted for classes, nutrition periods, abbreviated lunch hours, and student activities. The students had been sharing facilities with Mar Vista High school students in half-day sessions until their new school opened in September. Some Chicanos became more active, organized and vocal this year, blasting what they considered inequities and pushing for Mexican-American registration in a new political party, La Raza Unida. A major dissatisfaction was the Sweetwater High school District's choice of an intergroup relations counselor. A private, long disagreement between high school board President Azhocar and Chicano activist John Garduno surfaced at a board meeting when Garduno termed the post : man who filled it, Manuel Llera, "a brown cop." During a heated exchange, Azhocar replied that he was tired of being called a "Tio Taco." (Chula Vista Star-News, Dec 29, 1971, Page 6)

1972/05/11 - Racial Unrest Flares at Monty, Jr. Community unrest and racial tension in the Otay Mesa area resulted in a minor disturbance at Montgomery Junior High School this week. A crowd of 100 youngsters gathered before Tuesday's lunch period to watch a fist fight involving "a half dozen students," according to Principal Russell Vance. "This isn't something that happened overnight," he explained. Individual students had been involved in fights before school, which Vance said "erupted again on the school grounds." The principal attributed the tension on the school campus as a "spillover" from the community. Several parents complained that the incident occurred after groups of "Chicano" students jumped individual Anglo and black youngsters at school. "I don't think I'd be in a position to place the cause or blame on any one group," Vance said, "but I suppose it's racial. You could give it that connotation." The principal explained that the students had gathered along "clearcut" racial or ethnic lines, although there were some racial tensions among the students. Vance reported that he conducted a "staggered" dismissal of students 45 minutes before the official school dismissal time Tuesday. "Things are back to normal," the principal observed yesterday. "I don't expect any further incidents." No students were suspended in the Tuesday disturbance, but Vance said "one or two" students had been suspended earlier as a result of "individual kid type" incidents that were unrelated to the incident Tuesday. Several police units were called to the junior high campus at 12:30. Sgt. J. L. Robinson reported that, the fight involved 100 children and that school officials were "afraid it would escalate even more: "We try, where possible," Robinson noted, "to let schools handle internal discipline problems." The policeman added that the presence of four police units would "effect a calm over the school." The police officers were recording license numbers of vehicles driving into the school campus to identify nonstudents who might instigate a disturbance. Robinson explained that school disturbances can usually be prevented "as long as you don't have outside agitation." One black parent at the campus Tuesday declared, "The Chicanos are after anybody they can get." Another woman, also a black, said, "There's a lot of prejudice out here. I've never lived in so much in my life." They also reported that air had been let out of the tires of 20 cars parked in the Princess del Sol apartments on Monday night. Ward Donley, assistant superintendent of student services for the Sweetwater High School District, said "strains and tensions" resulted in the fight at the junior high school. "It's a problem within the community itself," he explained, adding that there are "underlying racial feelings." Manuel Llera, district intergroup relations counselor, is working with Vance on the problem, and Donley said school officials are working with parents. (Chula Vista Star-News, May 11, 1972)

1972/05/18 - District to dedicate 2 new Monty schools. The Sweetwater High School District will hold a "double header" dedication at two new schools Sunday at Montgomery High School, 3250 Palm Ave. and Montgomery Junior High School, 1051 Picador Blvd., both in San Diego, opened their doors during the school year and will be dedicated this weekend, on Sunday, May 21. Dedication for the \$4 million high school, which opened in September with the help of temporary trailer classrooms, is scheduled at 1:30 p.m. Sunday in the Montgomery gymnasium. Montgomery Junior High School, which cost almost \$3 million, began operating in February. It will be dedicated officially at 4 p.m. Sunday. Ceremonies will be held in the school's cafeteria: Both schools include carpeting, shaded glass windows, a multi-use communications system and suspended ceilings of acoustical panels for sound control. Maximum classroom flexibility is achieved through the use of folding partitions. In addition, the junior high school building is equipped with air conditioning. Trustee Charles Hess will present the welcoming address at the junior high school facility, while Board President Ernest Azhocar will speak at the high school dedication. Trustee E. Morris Hayes will present both schools to the community. A public open house and tour of the campuses and facilities will follow the dedication program at both schools. (Chula Vista Star-News, May 18, 1972)



Principal Joseph C. Torres

1972/09/24 - Montgomery quiet after reopening. Montgomery High School, at Beyer Way and Palm Ave. in Otay, was quiet Thursday and Friday after several disturbances shook the school Tuesday and Wednesday. More than 10 fights between black and Chicano students erupted Tuesday and two students were arrested. On Wednesday at least three more fights occurred but were broken up immediately. However, the district closed the school to prevent what could have been an explosive situation. Ward Donley, assistant superintendent for student services, met with parents at the school Thursday evening to discuss ways to avoid further problems. School administrators blamed the disturbance on racial unrest and tension in the community, especially the Del Sol area. Friday, Superintendent Joseph Rindone reported that classes had gone smoothly at Montgomery since the shut-down Wednesday. He added that most students had focused attention on the school's opening football game Friday night, away from the disturbances at school. (Chula Vista Star-News, Sep 24, 1972, Page 6)

1972/09/28 - Students protest suspensions. Blacks and browns at Montgomery High School, involved last week in a score of fist fights, this week turned the hostilities toward school and district administrators whom the minorities accused of dragging their feet in reinstating students suspended for the fighting. Approximately 20 students walked out Monday in protest of fellow students' continued suspension. Twenty-one youngsters were suspended last week in the fighting, five had been reinstated early this week by school administrators, with parental conferences scheduled for the rest. The fights forced the school at noon one day last week. Administrators said the suspended students were "about 50-50" black and brown. By Tuesday, the campus was again calm. The walkout was light Monday, probably because of the visible presence and coaxing of Joseph Torres, principal, and Doris Bilben and Vernon Brizendine, vice-principals. The trio working in the shadow of 15 policemen standing nearby, persuaded some 200 students milling about the new campus to return to class and join the walkout. The school appeared quiet Tuesday afternoon, and Luckie Waller Park, where the students gathered Monday after the walkout, was deserted for a groundsman. Russell Vance, Montgomery Junior High School principal, reported "a few, less than 20," junior high students walked out Monday. (The News, Mar 28, 1992, Page 54)

1972/10/26 - Deddeh delivers major speech on education. Assemblyman Wadie P. Deddeh (D-Chula Vista) will deliver a major speech on bilingual bicultural education at a meeting of Project Frontier educators and community advisory committees from all South Bay school districts at 7 p.m. at Montgomery High tonight. Project Frontier is a Title VII bilingual education project, whose director is Paul H. Juarez. The project serves the Sweetwater Union High School, Vista City School, National City Elementary School and South Bay Union School districts. Deddeh, who in 1971 authored legislation which succeeded in pilot bilingual education projects in San Diego and San Francisco Counties, will address himself to the future needs of bilingual /bicultural education in California. Deddeh's 1971 legislation, which is the only recently successful legislation dealing with bilingual education, also permitting testing of school children for purposes, in the language they best understand. Assemblyman Peter Chacon (D-San Diego) who is the author of Assembly Bill 2284 this year, which follows and expands upon Deddeh's 1971 legislation, will also speak at the meeting. AB 2284, which Deddeh cosponsored, has passed the Assembly and is awaiting action by the Senate Finance Committee. Deddeh said, "Five years ago bilingual education was illegal. Today it is not only legal, but at both the state and federal levels the overlooked needs of bilingual education are finally receiving the attention they deserve." "I am proud of the role I have played in getting the ball rolling in this area and am happy to join my colleague, Pete Chacon, who is doing so much for bilingual/bicultural education, in addressing the Project Frontier meeting tonight." (Chula Vista Star-News, Oct 26, 1972, Page 7)

1972/11/23 - Monty Hi stadium depends on outside help. A home football stadium maybe in the future for Montgomery High School if the city of San Diego help with the funding. Sweetwater High School District trustees told a Montgomery High School parent who asked how long the school would have to wait for a football field that bleachers and lights were several years away unless outside funding is secured. Jan Mullins had asked the trustees if state or surplus funds could be used for a stadium, which she said was needed to restore pride in the Otay community. Supt. Joseph Rindone said state funds could not be used for auditorium or football stadiums and so other sources would have to be tapped, otherwise a home football field's future would be uncertain. Board president Judith Bauer is contacting San Diego City Council on sharing costs by paying for the bleachers. Rindone agreed that "we would get it done twice as fast if San Diego paid for the bleachers." Trustee Bernard Schemmer said, "If San Diego buys the bleachers, we will handle the lights." Lights would cost from \$70,000, to \$75,000, and the field would run \$150,000 to \$160,000. Historically the bleachers are installed first. San Diego's City Council has been concerned with the lack of recreation in the Otay community, especially after October fights at Montgomery High School. The school is within San Diego's meandering city limits. Rindone has written the city council proposing joint funding of the stadium. Montgomery High School has a football practice field but cannot play home games because of the lack of lights. The team's home games are played at Southwestern College. Six of the district's seven high schools have lighted football fields, and have waited five to 8 years for lights to be installed. Trustee Charles Hess suggested Saturday afternoon games might be possible until lights were installed. Mrs. Mullins said the coaches were in favor of afternoon games, but Joseph Torres, Montgomery principal, was opposed to them because faculty members would have to work at the games. "We feel the main problem of the whole community is there is no community identity," Mrs. Mullins said. "We don't have a lot of money and with all the football games away, there is no pride in our school." "We appreciate the fabulous school we have, but we still need a football stadium," she said. (Chula Vista Star-News, Nov 23, 1972, Page 12)

1972/12/28 - The Year in Review -- It was a year of rebellion for students in four schools in the Sweetwater High School District. Racial tensions erupted in Montgomery and Castle Park junior high schools last spring, while Montgomery High School experienced a week of fighting between Mexican-American students soon after school opened in September. Sweetwater High School students walked out last spring and demanded more Mexican-American counselor teachers and courses on Mexican culture. (Chula Vista Star News, Dec. 28, 1972)



1973/03/18 - District Trustees formed subcommittee to resolve complaints about problems at Montgomery HS. (Chula Vista Star News, Mar. 18, 1973)

1978/01/26 - South Bay's first Mexican-American principal Joseph Torres retiring after 29 years. The first Mexican-American high school principal in the South Bay and perhaps only one in the county, is retiring this year from the Sweetwater High School District. After 29 years in education, Montgomery High principal Torres, 62, says it's time to let someone else take up the challenge of running his school. "I'm not tired of education," he said. "Education has been good to me as a minority person, it's given me a chance to succeed. "But you reach a point where you think you've made a worthwhile contribution and it's economically feasible to retire. And maybe someone younger would have new and better ideas to further carry the school to a higher plane." Although he is one of only two Mexican-American principals in the district, Torres thinks doors are opening for minorities. "It's a universal problem," he said. "Black and brown people are underrepresented in administrative positions." The reason, according to Torres, is minorities haven't had the funds to go to college and haven't had models to emulate. "Now funds are available," he said, "and affirmative action programs are on-going. But the situation can't change overnight or even in a few years." Torres said it's easy to take potshots at any district for its lack of minorities. He added he thinks the Sweetwater district is really moving ahead in improving the situation. When Torres became Montgomery High's first principal in 1970, the job was immediately a difficult one. Because of funding delays, he spent the first year in the district office as assistant director of special projects, continuation school principal and a counselor. "It was quite a year," he said. Then in 1971, the school opened on double campus at Mar Vista High. Within a year, new Montgomery students got to attend their proper campus, in trailers. Thinking back, Torres says he wouldn't recommend opening a new school without the buildings complete. "It was uncomfortable," he said. Torres has been at other districts schools, Southwestern Junior and High, as teacher, counselor, assistant principal and principal. But he considers Montgomery High the school he has the most ties with. "I hold many fond memories of this school," he said. "And this school was a challenge because we started from nothing." An immediate problem was friction between students who came from three different schools. The community also had a bad image of the school. "There was bound to be some friction between students loyal to their old high schools," Torres said. "Also the community was going through growing pains." The Montgomery principal thinks there has been significant progress in both areas. Montgomery High has a community identity, he said. One reason for the improved image is that Torres' academic goal has been reached. "Our students can compete with other students," he said. "Both Anglo and minority students have won scholastic honors." Torres would like to see academic achievement become even higher and school offer honors and advance placement programs. The principal said his school is also known for its athletic teams and music groups. Torres is a big athlete and one of his achieved goals was to get a football field for the school. As a youth, Torres was recruited to San Diego State to play both baseball and basketball. He was guard on a basketball team which became nationally known for winning the small college championship. Torres' athletic ability won him a place in the San Diego Sports Hall of Fame at Balboa Park. The principal even played professional baseball for one year in Mexico, but then came back to the states to join the service. He eventually earned his degree in languages (French and Spanish) and physical education. Torres' sport these days is jogging. Besides doing some, serious running when he retires, the principal plans to travel in the United States and devote more time to the many organizations he belongs to. These include Kiwanis, Boy's Club, the Family Association, and the Salvation Army. Gardening at his home in Loma Portal will be another activity. And other time will go watching his adopted two-year-old grandchild. Torres has three other children now in their 20s. "I don't think I'll be bored," he said. (Chula Vista Star-News, Jan 26, 1978, Page 8)

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