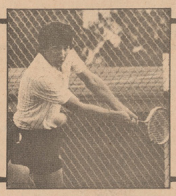
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Tennis star

Former San Dieguito High tennis standout John Tsumas will be playing in the NCAA Tournament, which begins today in Athens, Ga.

— See sports, page 11



Horse show

The Del Mar National Horse Show, one of the most prestigious equestrian events in the Southwest, concludes this weekend with some exciting events.

— See page 6

Rancho Santa Fe TIMES

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Looking back at Rancho schools' history



The Aliso School, shown around 1920 above, ~~was built in 1887~~ on Aliso Canyon Road. It closed in 1923, and children attended the new school in the village of Rancho Santa Fe. This picture and others on the left side of the page have been provided through the courtesy of Mrs. Ivy Fidero Laughter. She identifies most of those pictured, from left: Louis Weller, Rachel (unknown last name), Louise Weller, Edna Fidero, unknown, Mr. Staat (the teacher), Carl Fidero, two unknowns, Anna Weller, Fred Staat, August Fidero and two unknowns.



School children posing on rocks in front of a stream or pool in photo at left: Ruth Weller, Lillian Fidero, August Fidero, Carl Fidero, Theodore Fidero, unknown, Ida unknown, and in the far rear, Edna and Anna Fidero.





Around 1920, the small cabin above served as the teacher's house across the street from the Aliso School.

Another early photo of the Aliso School. In the rear, from left, are Mr. Staat (the teacher), Louis Weller, Louise Weller, Rachel unknown. In the middle row are Fred Staat, Edna Fidero, Anna Weller and unknown. In front are three unknowns, August Fidero, Carl Fidero and unknown.

Five students in 1923, 445 today

First of two parts

By MEG TORBERT

When Vernon Fidero was about 7, he started attending the new three-room school in Rancho Santa Fe, recently built at the corner of La Granada and Paseo Delicias.

It was 1923, and Fidero recalls there were five students: "Four from my family — Ivy, Ruth, Julia and myself — and Robert Nelson, son of the Realtor."

Thus began the Rancho Sante Fe school system, which currently enrolls 445 students, kindergarten through eighth grade, on a 10-acre site a quarter mile from the first schoolhouse.

What is now the Rancho Sante Fe School District originally started as Aliso School District and part of the San Dieguito district.

Aliso was formed in 1887 in an area northeast of the San Dieguito Reservoir. The few children who lived on farms nearby attended Aliso School, located on Aliso Canyon Road.

There was a cabin across the road for the teacher, says Fidero. "Two or three children used to come to school in a horse and buggy. The horse would wait all day, and after school, they'd clop-clop home again," he remembers.

By 1923, however, the school was closed for lack of students and the Fidero children were driven, or walked, three miles to the new school in "downtown" Rancho Sante Fe. Ivy Fidero Laughter, who still lives on Aliso Canyon Road, became the first student to graduate from the new school.

The school was built by the Sante Fe Land Improvement Co., a subsidiary of the railroad, according to W. O. Boettiger, whose four children attended Ranch schools. Having failed in its eucalyptus-railroad tie project, the company was advertising the Ranch as an ideal place to raise citrus and avocados, and a nearby school was needed to encourage development.

Architect Lillian Rice designed the school in a Spanish style with outdoor corridors. But the company was less pleased with the school district.

The majority of Rancho Sante Fe was in the San Dieguito School District (now Solana Beach) and in 1924 the company petitioned the county to be annexed to the largely unpopulated Aliso school district.

Annexation to Aliso was necessary because Rancho Sante Fe had too few children to qualify for a school district of its own. County documents indicate the Ranch planned to break off from Aliso after enrollment increased. But as most children in the northeast went to school in Escondido, the de-annexation never took place.

The effect, in any case, was to create an exclusive school district to go along with the image of an exclusive residential community which the Santa Fe Land Improvement Co. was promoting.

In the early years, however, the school did not entirely live up to the company's advance billing.

Vernon Fidero remembers the "playground" as a "big, open dirt field" behind the building. As for academics, "what can you do with five kids?

When Mrs. Louise Badger, her first husband and six-month-old son, Edward Spurr, arrived in Rancho Sante Fe in 1926, lured from New York City by advertisements, she discovered the school was "kind of running by itself."

Most of the children in the school were from 10 or 15 families working to develop the Ranch, recalls Mrs. Badger. But as more young families moved in, greater interest in the school developed. Mrs. Badger served on the board of trustees for eight years.

She also had daily contact with the school children at her soda fountain, called the Fountain Lunch, which she began in 1930 in a defunct service station across the street.

"Everyone said, 'Where will you get any business?' but my husband said people driving from Del Mar to Escondido will have no where else to stop, and it proved to be so," Mrs. Badger remembers.

Other visitors were the schoolchildren, who would store their baseball bats and tennis rackets in the kitchen before school, and after school would wait there for their mothers to pick them up.

"I didn't realize until later that I was running a public babysitting service," laughs Mrs. Badger.

In addition, for many years the Fountain Lunch also housed a corner for library books. Mrs. Badger charged $10 a month to rent the space, and the county library would change the books once a month.

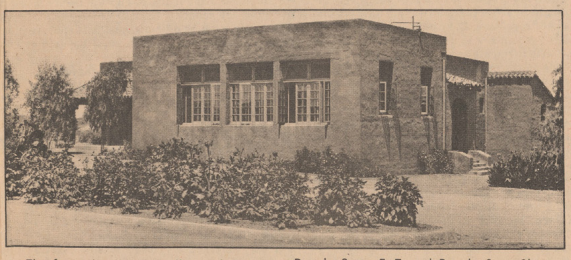
At Christmas, says Mrs. Badger, Russell Millar would provide a truck, a piano would be loaded on the back, and the children would go caroling to each house. Mrs. Badger's house, next door to the soda fountain, would be the last stop. She would have "a big pot of cocoa waiting, and they all got warmed up."

By the time Mrs. Reg Clotfelter moved to Rancho Sante Fe in 1931, there were 40 students attending the school. Mrs. Clotfelter, who served on the local board of trustees and was the first woman elected to the high school board, recalls that the school was "almost like a

Please turn to next page



A view out down the corridor of the first school in the village.



The first school in the village of Rancho Santa Fe was built on La Granada in ~~1932~~ 1923. It is now occupied by Torrey Pines Bank, Rancho Santa Fe Travel, Rancho Spirit Shop, a barbershop and offices.





It's Spanish lunch time

Molly Hall may be small but she had little trouble handling a man-sized burrito, at left, as she and her fellow students enjoyed a special Spanish lunch at Flora Vista School in Encinitas Thursday. At right, Carmel Trejo watches intently as her burrito is prepared.

— Staff photos: Dave Siccardi

Developers: North City West to grow slowly

By RORY BENNETT

Two vice presidents of the major developers of North City West promised a Del Mar audience Friday the project will grow slowly and be a good neighbor to the city.

But some remained skeptical about the project and said they wanted more questions answered.

"It's going to be here and it's going to be dense," said Del Mar City Councilman Lou Terrell, following a one-hour presentation by Steve Tate, vice president of Pardee Construction Company.

Mayor Rosalind Lorwin also said the issue of increased traffic in the area as a result of the increased traffic in the area as a result of the project needs to be addressed futher.

The two developers plan to build a 4,300-acre residential-commercial project, now being called Del Mar Highlands, east of Del Mar.

The development includes approximately 9,000 dwelling units, a business park south of Del Mar Heights Road and a central shopping center. Eventually it will house 40,000 residents.

Grading for the first neighborhood and a business park has already begun.

Last year, the city of Del Mar's long and expensive court battle to block the controversial project ended when the state Supreme Court refused to hear the case.

During his presentation at the Friday luncheon, sponsored by the Del Mar Chamber of Commerce, Tate assured the group the project will be a quality development with a multi-million dollar committment from Baldwin.

However, he added that some plans for schools, parks and traffic routing remain unresolved. Tate suggested a bus or tram system could be established between Del Mar and Del Mar Highlands to prevent increased traffic in the downtown and beach areas.

He also said as many as five schools are planned for the development, but that a final determination will not be made until the population is established.

Madigan, fielding a question from the audience, said the business park will contain a number of office buildings and light manufacturing firms, most of which will not be visible from Interstate 5. He said the majority will be one or two-story buildings but added that some might eventually be built as high as five or six-stories.

Madigan also predicted the community's population will grow slowly over about 30 years, resembling the growth patterns of other developments such as Scripps Ranch and Tierrasanta.

In answering a question about traffic access points, he said the project includes plans to expand access to El Camino Real to improve the eastward flow of traffic.

However, Madigan said he was not yet certain about other road improvements that could be made to reduce traffic on Del Mar Heights and Carmel Valley Roads.

Looking back at school history . . .

Continued from front page

one-room schoolhouse." Of the three rooms, one was used as an office and another was an auditorium.

"For a long time, because of the size of the school, we were allowed (by the county) only one teacher, so the parents made up the difference to have two teachers," she says.

Although it was a small school, Mrs. Clotfelter recalls that students (including her three children) got a good education. "By having so few there, they could go at their own pace. They all liked school, and they made the most of it," she says.

Parents made an effort to provide after-school activities such as tennis and riding, and in the late '30s, a safety swimming class was organized at one of the homes, Mrs. Clotfelter remembers.

In 1932, a new school was built on La Granada. But downtown Rancho Sante Fe remained largely unchanged for some time.

Mrs. Clotfelter, who is writing a book on the Ranch school history, notes that downtown consisted of "The Inn, about half the size it is now, the soda fountain and the service station, Mrs. Badger's house and the school across the street. Until 1946, when my husband built his building, that's the way it was."

The first school building is now occupied by Rancho Sante Fe Travel, Torrey Pines Bank and Rancho Spirit Shop. In the school's basement is now a barber shop, drafting and dental offices.

Mrs. Peggy O'Driscoll started school in 1931 in the first school building but was "kicked out" after a few days when it was discovered she was too young. She started again the next year in the new, second school building, which now houses the Rancho Sante Fe Association.

She recalls packing "care" packages for Europe with toothbrushes, soap and the like in the '30s. The students received in return a mural painted by the Austrian Junior Red Cross as a thank-you.

Some years later, she discovered the mural was about to be discarded. "I said, 'Over my dead body,' and I picked it up and carried it home," says Mrs. O'Driscoll.

Since Mrs. O'Driscoll started school during the Depression, she has vivid memories of families having to move out of the Ranch. "Some were children of people who worked here on the Ranch. If (their employers) couldn't afford to keep them, they moved away," she says.

"It was a very upsetting time. Nobody had ever been separated before."

Many children attended private schools after finishing the sixth grade in Rancho Sante Fe, but those who went to public school made the trip to Escondido Union High until 1936, when Rancho Sante Fe joined the newly formed San Dieguito Union High.

Vernon Fidero remembers the "corkscrew curves" and mudslides blocking the road to Escondido, riding in a 1931 Chevrolet two-door sedan that was the first (and perhaps only) Rancho Sante Fe school bus.

"Bob Francisco and his brother had a garage in Escondido. They'd pick us up in the morning, work all day in the garage, and then take us home in the afternoon," says Fidero.

Escondido students rode to school in modern school busses and the Rancho Sante Fe bus "was the real prize of the bunch," Fidero recalls.

"It was a crackerbox schoolbus," he says. "Everybody at the high school laughed at it."

Solana families will pay for new beach access

By RORY BENNETT

Two Solana Beach families are offering to rebuild the beach access stairway at Tide Park that was destroyed Jan. 27 by pounding waves.

The residents, who live in the Tide Park area and wish to remain anonymous, approached the county Parks and Recreation Department this week with plans to pay for the restoration of the stairway that was located at the foot of Solana Vista Drive.

Since Jan. 27 the stairway entrance has been barricaded and maintenance crews have removed the damaged portion of the structure. County parks officials say there are no funds available to pay for the restoration of the stairway in time for summer crowds.

However, Lifeguard Capt. Andrew O'Leary said the Tide Park area residents came forward following a community meeting with county and state officials in April.

The residents have offered to restore the stairway exactly as it was in time for summer, O'Leary said.

Although they estimate the replacement to cost about $600, the figure has not yet been confirmed by the county.

In addition, parks officials must first approve the engineering plans to make sure they follow county building and safety codes.

However, O'Leary said he is encouraged by the residents' interest, especially since lifeguards had rescued several swimmers who broke through the barricades to the stairway entrance.

"We'll work closely with them to expedite the procedures," he said. "But since the stairs are in a vulnerable area, we have to make sure they'll be up to code."

The offer by the Solana Beach residents comes on the heels of another volunteer effort by a group of Encinitas residents to restore the beach access at Seaside Gardens Park (Stone Steps).

Fair board may hire non-union workers

A contingency hiring plan is scheduled to begin Monday morning if the manager of the Del Mar Fair and labor union officials are unable to reach agreement over wages, benefits and working conditions for temporary fair workers.

In an "emergency" closed session meeting Tuesday, the fair board directors voted 3-2 to allow fair manager Roger Vitaich to hire any summer employees after 8 a.m. Monday.

However, the board also directed Vitaich to continue talks with representatives of several labor unions.

The unions represent 350-400 temporary employees who work from 18-30 days as ticket sellers, security guards, carpenters, custodians and in other service jobs. Fair ride operators and concession stand workers are not represented by the unions.

News update

Hiking trails are opposed

Reduction or elimination of the fees required to vacate or delete the area's riding and hiking trails was unanimously opposed Thursday night by members of the San Dieguito Citizens' Planning Group.

A number of requests for vacating or deleting trails have been received since the county Board of Supervisors voted last year to make it voluntary for developers to include them in building plans in rural areas. The board decided last year to reduce the required $1,000 fee by 30 percent, with the possibility of a full refund to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Residents who appeared at Thursday night's meeting objected to making it easy to vacate trails, saying it is becoming more and more difficult for horse owners to find appropriate riding areas.

"Don't forget the trails are also used for walking and hiking," one resident said.

Park site gets support

Members of the San Dieguito Citizens' Planning Group will support the location of a new fire station in Oak Crest Park, on the condition that an equal amount of park land be restored to the county. A citizens' committee set up by the Encinitas Fire Protection District Board of Directors had recommended the Oak Crest site as an alternative to the controversial Seeman Drive location originally designated.

The proposed new location would occupy about one acre in a corner of Oak Crest park, near Oak Crest Jr. High School. School officials favor the plan, citing increased park and school security they say would be provided by the fire station.

County parks officials, however, have expressed opposition to the use of any park land for another purpose.

Speaker to discuss drugs

The site council of Flora Vista Elementary School in Encinitas will meet at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday.

A psychologist representing the San Dieguito Chapter of Parents Who Care will speak on drugs and school children.

The public is invited.

Family spat leads to arrest

An 81-year-old Encinitas man was arrested Tuesday night after he allegedly attacked his 75-

Tuesday night after he allegedly attacked his 75-year-old wife with hammer.

The victim, Hsieu Liu, suffered a head wound in the alleged assault and was treated at Scripps Hospital in Encinitas.

Liu's 18-year-old grandson, Kenny Sung, told deputies he heard the two struggling in the kitchen at about 9:15 p.m. Sung said he ran to the room and saw his grandfather, Cheng Liu, threatening the woman with the hammer.

According to the report, the woman's clothes were covered with blood and she was suffering from a blow to the head.

Obituary

Pauline D. Almond

Pauline D. Almond, 88, of Rancho Santa Fe died Tuesday at a local convalescent home. Mrs. Almond, widow of the late Major Roger P. Almond, was born in Johnson County, Mo., but had lived in San Diego County for 29 years. Until her retirement, she worked as a self-employed interior decorator.

Mrs. Almond is survived by four nieces, Mrs. J. R. Lyon of Solana Beach, Mrs. B. C. Wooley of Del Mar, Mrs. Richard Day of Huntington Beach and Mrs. John Ayerza of Litchfield Park, Ariz.; two nephews, Berry Dunham of Mesa, Ariz. and Sam Dunham of San Francisco; and two sisters-in-law, Mrs. William M. Dunham of Rancho Santa Fe and Mrs. Berry C. Dunham of Litchfield Park.

Funeral services were held Friday at Eternal Hills Chapel in Oceanside with the Rev. Tally Jarrett of St. Peter's Episcopal Church officiating.

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