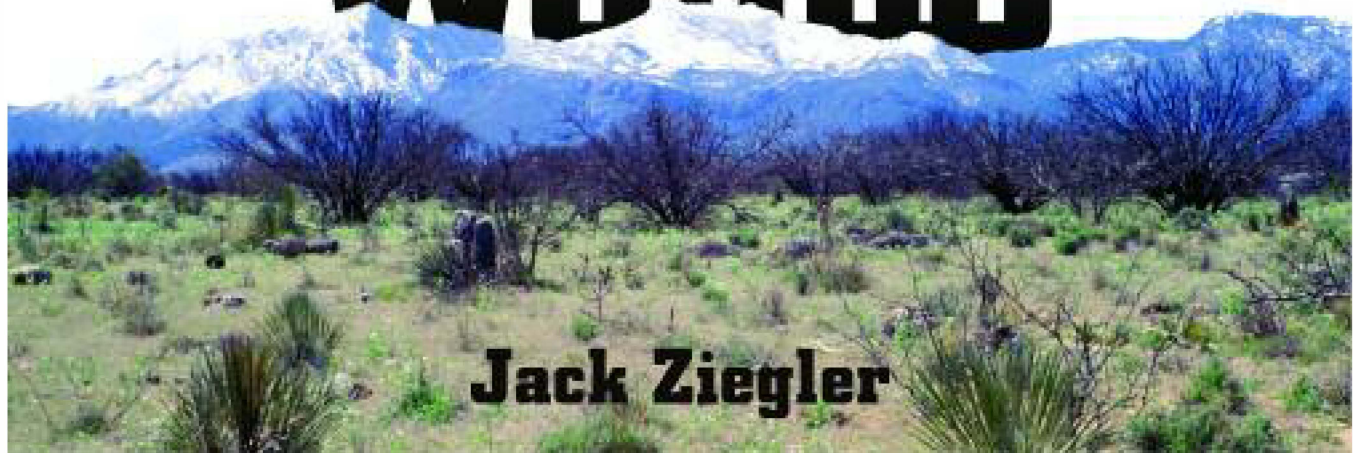


cochise college sierra vista

A BRAVE NEW WORLD

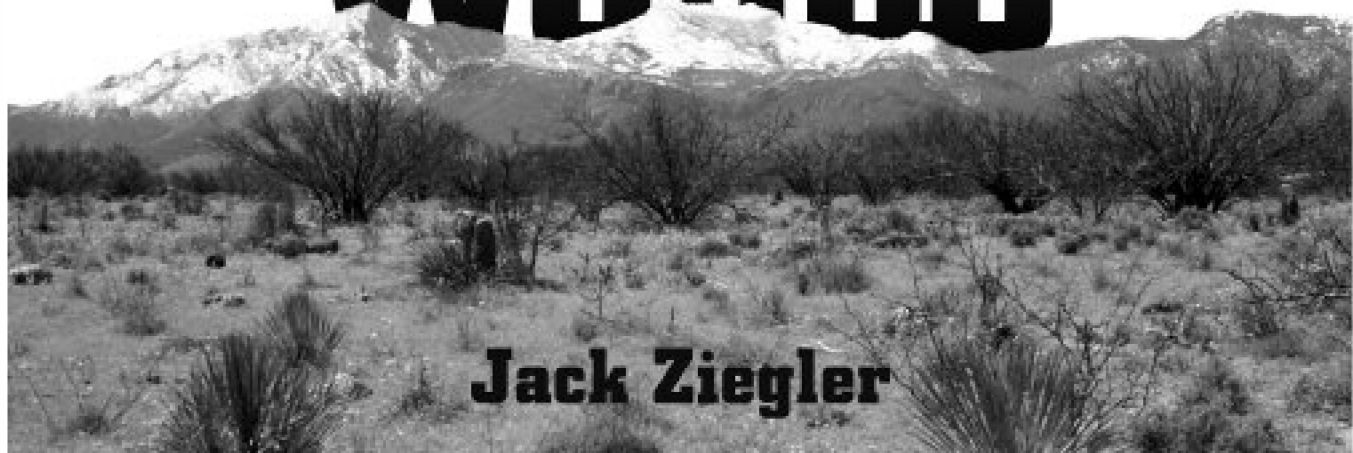
Jack Ziegler



cochise college sierra vista

A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Jack Ziegler





Dr. Karen Nicodemus

Dear Reader:

In Spring 2005, as part of Cochise College's 40th anniversary celebration, we published the first installment of Cochise College: A Brave Beginning by retired faculty member Jack Ziegler. Our reason for doing so was to capture for a new generation the founding of Cochise College and to acknowledge the contributions of those who established the College's foundation of teaching and learning.

A second, major watershed event in the life of the College was the establishment of the Sierra Vista Campus. Dr. Ziegler has once again conducted interviews and researched archived newspaper accounts to create a history of the Sierra Vista Campus. As with the first edition of A Brave Beginning, what follows is intended to be informative and entertaining, capturing not only the recorded events but also the memories of those who were part of expanding Cochise College.

As the community of Sierra Vista celebrates its 50th anniversary, the College takes great pleasure in sharing the establishment of the Cochise College Sierra Vista Campus. Most importantly, as we celebrate the success of our 2006 graduates, we affirm our commitment to providing accessible and affordable higher education throughout Cochise County.

For those currently at the College, we look forward to building on the work of those who pioneered the Douglas and Sierra Vista campuses through the College's emerging districtwide master facilities plan. We remain committed to being your "community" college – a place where teaching and learning is the highest priority and where we are creating opportunities and changing lives.

*Karen A. Nicodemus, Ph.D.
President
Cochise College*

May 2006

archive college sierra vista

BRAVE NEW WORLD

Jack Ziegler

Captain Samuel Whitside and his detachment of cavalry from Fort Lowell had a simple mission to accomplish in the winter of 1877: Ride south and establish a post in an advantageous position in the Huachuca mountains. Rejecting abandoned Camp Wallen, near today's Huachuca City, Whitside pushed further south to the mouth of Huachuca Canyon. Here there was fresh water, stands of timber for construction, and grass for the horses. Perhaps most importantly, as Ethel Jackson Price points out in her *Sierra Vista: Young City with a Past*, from the canyon's front there stretched " a wide sweeping vista where a guard's eyes could easily see the smoke from campfires or the dust clouds of approaching riders."

A lot has changed since that warm March 3, 1877, when Captain Whitside wrote in his log-book, "Camp Huachuca, Huachuca Mountains, Arizona Territory," thus formally establishing a military post. In 1877 a trooper standing on what is now Reservoir Hill would see little but the occasional light from one of the scattered ranches in the largely empty San Pedro Valley.

a brave new world



Today a person standing in the same spot would see an ocean of light from Fort Huachuca, Sierra Vista and maybe, at the far eastern edge of the city, the orange parking lot lights of Cochise College. But first came Captain Whitside and his troopers, living in tents, then constructing a sawmill, then building the wooden barracks around the parade field that today serve as offices.

Once the post became a permanent fixture, a "stringtown" developed outside what is now the Main Gate. With pioneer families Carmichael and Fry setting up stores and trading facilities, the settlement went through a number of name changes - Papingo, Overton, Garden Canyon, Buena, Fry, White City, and ultimately with incorporation in 1956, Sierra Vista. At incorporation the city had a modest population of 1,671 in a two-square-mile area. It's two major businesses were the Geronimo Drive-In Theater (today memorialized by a street, Theater Drive) and El Coronado Lanes, a bowling alley. Most of the city's roads were dirt,

a brave new world

though Sierra Vista already had a newspaper (the Huachuca Herald), the recently established First National Bank, and the William Carmichael School (still used today).

By 1960 Sierra Vista extended along Buena Highway (soon to be renamed Fry Boulevard) from Fort Huachuca's main gate to Seventh Street. From south to north, the city began near Wilcox Avenue, site of the Stanley Apartments, one of the town's first businesses and still operating today, north to Kayetan. 1960 Sierra Vista was today's West Vista, with streets named after early settlers like Margaret Carmichael or prominent 1950's residents like Clarence Sherbundy (the first, unpaid, chief of police), Rudy Steffens (the first mayor), and Fred Talmadge (the first city attorney).

Agnes Raschke, in a 1978 article noted, that while Sierra Vista was "hardly the prototype for a Currier and Ives print," it was "a young city in a very young state." Raschke further observed that with its main street filled with car dealerships, franchise food outlets, and real estate offices, Sierra Vista is the "modern-day counterpart ... of the storied western boomtown." While residents of Cave Creek, Paradise Valley or Prescott might consider Sierra Vista a bumptious upstart, they could never deny its energy, drive, and resilience. Like Dodge City in Wyatt Earp's days there as a deputy marshal, Sierra Vista had "snap."

So would the Cochise College campus of Sierra Vista. In 1964, the same time that the first campus opened eight miles west of Douglas, Cochise College began offering college classes on Fort Huachuca. With the 1971 annexation of Fort Huachuca, Sierra Vista's population swelled to 13,348. Accordingly, in August 1972 Cochise College opened the Fort Huachuca/Sierra Vista Center in two portable buildings located on the old Buena High School campus at the corner of State Routes 90 and 92. Now largely occupied by Gas City and Lawley Ford, little remains of the Buena High campus other than the football field

a brave new world



Portable buildings served as the first Sierra Vista Campus

named for George Loveless, a former adult Cochise College student and avid supporter of local youth athletics.

1972 marked a turning point in the fortunes of Cochise College Sierra Vista. In June of that year, President John Edwards had sensed possible college expansion in the Sierra Vista area. Citing a growth in the Sierra Vista area from 276 students in 1969 to 800 in 1972, Edwards declared that a "major effort should be made in this area." Accordingly, 70 courses were scheduled for Fall 1972 with an August 28 start date and an annual budget of \$105,000. By July 1972, workers from Marstons, Inc., had the two relocatable buildings lined up perpendicularly to Fry Boulevard at the west end of Buena High School's main campus, just south of the gymnasium. In fact, the August 9 edition of the Sierra Vista Herald featured a front-page photo of a smiling Dr. Edwards and Sierra Vista Director Roy Kane standing in front of one of the portables. The accompanying article noted that the structures were "...two good-sized buildings which provide four classrooms and an office. They are carpeted, air conditioned and well-lighted."

On Sunday, August 13 the College hosted an open house at the portables which more than 200 people, women in dresses and men in jackets and ties, attended. A receiving line of, among others, Dean Howard Monnett, Director Roy Kane, Ed Donnelley, chairman of the college's governing board, Pat Goren, county superintendent of schools, and Vince Cisterna, Buena High School principal, welcomed the guests. Mrs. Monnett and Roy's wife Dorothy managed the refreshment table, while Roy's daughter, Judy, was placed in charge of the guest book.

Strictly speaking, in August 1972 Cochise College Sierra Vista consisted of two relocatable buildings on the old Buena High School campus. From this modest beginning the Sierra

a brave new world



Vista Center, as it was then known, grew to the 15-building, 40 acre campus it is today. Much credit for this expansion should go to its first director Roy Kane. Kane, a brilliant administrator with many contacts in Sierra Vista and on Fort Huachuca, had retired in 1971 after 30 years service as an artillery officer in the United States Army. Affable, modest, hard-working, Kane excelled at making bricks without straw. As Kane recalled in 1998, "I shall never forget the day in 1971 when I changed clothes in my office in Fort Huachuca from my military uniform to civilian clothes ... At that time the college had about 200 students in the area ... My first work station was a borrowed desk at the Civilian Personnel Office on the fort." With the help of such strong believers in learning as Jim Lewis, the director of the

a brave new world



Dr. John R. Edwards, Jr.
President

Army Education Center, enrollment at the Sierra Vista Center soared to 1,008 part-time and 69 full-time students in Fall 1972. Course offerings were overwhelmingly of the evening variety and took place at the Army Education Center, Buena High School, and in the two relocatable buildings.

By Spring 1973 Cochise College announced a record headcount of 2,219, 1,405 of whom came from the Sierra Vista Center. Howard Monnett, executive dean of Cochise College and an enthusiastic supporter of the Sierra Vista Center, noted that, "We have not reached our potential on or off campus." Dr. Edwards saw the growth a result of "taking the college to where the students are, in the true spirit of the community college." Dean Monnett commended Roy Kane in the governing board minutes "for his splendid work in directing the Fort Huachuca-Sierra Vista Center and in its successful start." Monnett further promised that in Fall 1973 two or three full-time faculty members would begin teaching at the Sierra Vista Center, which hitherto had been staffed mostly by part-time teachers.

In March 1973, Dr. Edwards spoke to the Sierra Vista Chamber of Commerce at Ricardo's Restaurant, proclaiming the good news of college expansion in the Sierra Vista area. He rendered special thanks to Buena District's Superintendent of Schools Luther Flick and Buena High School Principal Vince Cisterna for their hospitality in welcoming Cochise College students. Because of the overwhelming student enrollment (1,153 in Spring 1973), Edwards announced that the college hoped to hire up to five full-time faculty members in Sierra Vista for the fall. Also that spring, Dean Monnett, while expressing pleasure at the expanding enrollment, addressed an ongoing concern of college administrators - space. The college could offer only 16 day classes in the two portables and four at the Army Education Center. However, in a February 1973 interview with the Sierra Vista Herald, Monnett was quick to praise both the Buena District and the Army Education Center: "... these organiza-

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tions have given 100 percent cooperation as space is available." The daytime "space crisis" would only be solved with the opening of the Charleston Road campus in 1978.

While students flocked to the Cochise College Center, and earnest part-time instructors did their best, conditions remained somewhat primitive despite the Herald's glowing account of air conditioning and carpeted floors. Occasionally one could read local media accounts of poor nighttime lighting that made student progress across Buena campus to the parking lot a stumbling adventure; the lack of readily available, attractive refreshments; and above all, the slow procedure of buying books at the Cochise College bookstore, in reality a late 1950's model school bus painted in Cochise College white and red.

Typical of the rough-and-ready spirit of those relocatable days, the bus had been brutally customized, with everything but the driver's seat removed. Bookshelves were then built on both sides of the aisle. While once the bus had taken Cochise College athletes to away games and meets, it now loaded up with textbooks at the main campus in Douglas, and chugged its way up to Fort Huachuca and Sierra Vista. Kathy Michaels, who along with Cochise County pioneer family member Lou Newman ran the "book bus" in the 1970's, recalls parking the bus in front of the portables for about three weeks at the beginning of each semester. As Michaels remembers, "The lines would get very long because only one person at a time could get on to the bus. We accepted checks but preferred cash and without a calculator, did most of the math in our heads." Michaels also recalls how they operated out of a coinbox, which by the end of a typical night, would be stuffed with thousands of dollars. Michaels found the working conditions less than pleasant, sharing the bus with mice in the vents and operating in the monsoons of August without cooling and the cold of January without heating. "Eventually it got better," says Michaels, "when we got hooked up with electric and Lou brought a fan from home for the summer and a small portable heater for the winter."



Howard Monnett
Dean of Liberal Arts

a brave new world



**Former student and English instructor
Deanna Sims**



There are few people around today who can claim to have gone to Cochise College Sierra Vista before the introduction of the portables in 1972. Deanna Sims, who in the 1980's and 1990's would become one of the college's most-liked and most-respected English teachers, can make that claim. In 1965, Sims, then a 28-year-old housewife, began to take college classes at the Army Education Center on Fort Huachuca at the urging of her husband, Lee ("I think you might like it," he said). Sims had lived in Sierra Vista since 1961 at the corner of Freihage and Taylor; the Ed Center was just a few minutes away.

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When asked about the notorious lack of amenities at the Army Ed Center, Sims brushed the question aside. "I didn't care about that," she said in a 2006 interview. "What mattered to me was the high quality of instruction." Sims singles out Dr. Joe Gilliland, who was teaching philosophy at the time, for special praise. "His class was like a door opening," she remarked. Sims further recalls a key moment in her life when her psychology teacher, who today she remembers only as "Mr. Williams," called her aside after class. "I hope you continue with your education," he said. "You have what it takes."

Despite the physical drawbacks, faculty, staff, and students never became downhearted. Jan Guy, who spent 30 years in Civil Service, graduated in 1976 after several years at Cochise College Sierra Vista. Typical of most adult students, Guy worked hard at balancing a demanding full-time job with a full academic load. Initially wary of going to college after several years out of high school. Mrs. Guy recalls that her concerns proved unfounded as she discovered Cochise College teachers to be "challenging" and "nurturing." After 30 years, Mrs. Guy notes that instructors like Don Campbell and Allan Meyer remain "vivid in my memory." Upon her retirement in 1994, Mrs. Guy returned to Cochise College as a governing board member, she says, "as a way of giving back." She currently serves as governing board chair.

Margaret Smith (than Schaefer) also recalls attending Cochise College Sierra Vista in those early days, though she was a 17-year-old Buena High School senior at the time. A turning point in her life was a night class in Shakespeare she took with Dr. Gilliland in Fall 1974. She describes the class as "enjoyable" and "challenging." Ms. Smith adds that "for the first time in my life I found myself thinking about ideas, like the Great Chain of Being." She, alas, remembers few creature comforts from that era other than the odd soda machine on the Buena High School campus. Breaks usually meant standing around outside on the grass



**Jan Guy, Cochise College graduate and
Governing Board chair**

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talking quietly. The more farsighted students brought snacks (or dinner) from Tastee Freeze or Wendy's.



Cochise College Sierra Vista provost and faculty emeritus Dr. Charlie LaClair often remarked, "There is no such thing as a traditional Cochise College student." A good case in point from the 1970's would be Elizabeth Patten (then Milczarek), who was a 15-year-old junior at Buena High School in 1975. Because she had skipped a couple of grades and been on an accelerated track in European schools, Patten had arrived in Sierra Vista in 1974 needing only U.S. and Arizona Constitution classes to graduate. However, to discourage 14-year-old high school graduates, Buena administrators suggested that Patten cross the lawn to the two portables near the parking lot and take some college courses while still remaining a high school student. So Patten did, feeling especially precocious in her advanced night-time algebra class when most of her fellow students were three times her age. Though Patten somewhat resented the "portable experience," ("It was not like going to college, it was like going to trailer," she remarks), in retrospect, this upper echelon civil servant was glad she went. Patten appreciated the one-on-one interaction with her instructors, especially their approachability, which "encouraged growth and openness." Looking back, Patten describes her Cochise College years of 1975-1977 as a "bridge experience," allowing her to go through the intellectual challenges of college without the social pressure of living on her own at too early an age.

While Jan Guy, Margaret Smith, and Elizabeth Patten focused on the excitement of learning, faculty and staff members also recall the frontier flavor of life in the portables. Ron Olson, who became coordinator of cooperative education in August 1972 after Roy Kane surrendered that title to become director, can be spotted in a newspaper photo of the August 13, 1972, open house at the Sierra Vista Center. Though Olson spent much of his time on Fort

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Huachuca in his co-op role and teaching business classes in the mezzanine of Greely Hall, he has vivid memories of wearing two pairs of socks to ward off the chill in the steel portables on cold winter days. "As I remember," Olson notes, "we had to bring our own water in those days because there was no plumbing in the portables. How happy we were to get a coffee maker to go with the doughnuts we bought from Food Giant across Fry Boulevard. I think the closest places to eat were Sambo's (great breakfasts) and Uncle Sam's."

Because of explosive student growth in the 1972-73 school year, Dick Seals was hired as the assistant director of the Sierra Vista Center. Seals, who had previously worked as a hospital administrator and a continuing education coordinator in western Colorado, was a bit taken aback by the two-portable-building "campus." "I was more used to a brick-and-mortar environment," he recalls. Seals also remembers the coffee maker as the sole luxury in his new home. One of Seal's responsibilities was to evaluate part-time faculty. In the 1974 school year Seals visited every part-time faculty member's class at least once. Seals notes that while every effort was made to hire instructors with master's degrees, the limited pool of teachers sometimes made this difficult. However, Seals reflects that "we had a good mix of active-duty military, retired military, high school teachers, and community residents, who, overall, provided excellent instruction."

Like Olson and Seals, Paula Jones, the faculty secretary in 1976, types the early days as "primitive but also rewarding." True, there was no water in the portables, faculty and staff had to troop across the Buena High School campus to the faculty restroom with a key attached to a foot-long red wooden paddle (to prevent casual loss), and student lines from the book bus stretched to the edge of the high school parking lot. But for Jones these inconveniences were offset by rich rewards. As Jones remembers the 1970's in Sierra Vista: "... there was an advantage of a smaller community. Everyone knew each other and got along



Richard Seals
Assistant Director,
Sierra Vista Center



Faculty Secretary Paula Jones

very well." She also notes that the small faculty and staff united in a desire to provide top-flight instruction. As Jones phrases it, faculty and staff "never wanted the students to suffer for lack of facilities."

One of the part-time faculty members who worked for Dick Seals was John Mancini, then an Army captain at Fort Huachuca. Dr. Mancini remembers how Roy Kane came to his office on post, politely interviewed him, and offered him a psychology course to teach at the old Army Education Center at the corner of Adair and Auger on post. Dr. Mancini began his associate faculty career within the college in Fall 1972 and still teaches today, after his retirement as chief psychologist for the Buena School District in 1999. Dr. Mancini has only fond memories of his long community college teaching career, especially the early years. "I couldn't get over the high quality of the students," he says, speaking of the early 1970's. "Here were people who'd been up since 5:30 A.M., coming to class at 6:30 at night in their fatigues in a facility built in 1883. They were always ready to work and never complained." Then as now, Dr. Mancini enjoyed "working with real people who had real jobs. They could understand the psychological theories I talked about because they had seen them first hand in their own lives."



**Philosophy and Speech Instructor
Allan Meyer**

One of Dean Monnett's first faculty members to transfer to Sierra Vista was Allan Meyer, a philosophy and speech instructor. Like Dr. Mancini, Dr. Meyer welcomed the intellectual curiosity and strong work ethic of Fort Huachuca students. Dr. Meyer was impressed by the wide-ranging reading habits and worldly background of many of his military and civil service students. "They asked tough questions in my philosophy classes," recalls Dr. Meyer. "They weren't afraid to test the mettle of their instructors." Likewise, Dr. Meyer found his downtown students at the Sierra Vista Center of similar high caliber. He felt less enthusiastic about his office (really a heavy gray metal desk in a room with lots of other heavy gray

a brave new world

metal desks) in a portable. Dr. Meyer thought of the relocatable buildings as being "basically in the parking lot of Buena High School." Dr. Meyer always sensed a "transient feel" to the portables and was glad to get to the permanent campus in 1978.

Another long-time instructor in Sierra Vista, David Meeker taught art and music for the college even before the coming of the portables in 1972 (Like Bernstein in *Citizen Kane*, Meeker was there before the beginning). Meeker initially taught in the old 1913 Buena building located in what would now be the northwest section of the Target complex. Initially Meeker's students were adult women who took painting and drawing classes, "excellent students who wanted to express themselves with brush and pencil." When David and his accompanist wife Brenda started teaching chorus, presenting both fall (often with a Christmas or Hanukkah theme) and spring concerts, they had to rely on church and school facilities for rehearsal and presentation sites. The First Baptist Church on North Avenue (now Shiloh Christian School), the Community Church on the now-abandoned section of Charleston Road, the Apache Middle School, and the Carmichael School (there when Sierra Vista incorporated) all proved welcoming hosts.

Though classes had been offered to swelling numbers since August 1972, it wasn't until February 1974 that the Sierra Vista Center could claim its first library. This change involved reconfiguring the southernmost portable's two classrooms into a library/Xerox center/VA counseling/Student Affairs room and faculty offices, leaving two classrooms in the northernmost building. A March 1, 1974 photo and story in the Herald Dispatch identify Joyce Ullrich as the librarian. Mrs. Ullrich worked full time as a librarian on Fort Huachuca and eight hours a week at the college's downtown library, open 6 to 8 P.M. Tuesday and Thursday, and 1 to 5 on Wednesday afternoons. At first the library stocked only 1,000 books (today's Andrea Cracchiolo library, the Sierra Vista Campus library's fourth location, stocks 25,000).



Music instructor David Meeker

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However, students did have exchange privileges with the college's main library on the Douglas Campus.

Pat Hotchkiss, director, Cochise College libraries, remembers interviewing with Roy Kane for the job of part-time librarian in 1975. As Hotchkiss notes, "Although I had an M.L.S. I was only 24 and this was only the second job interview I'd ever gone to. I was extremely nervous. Roy was very pleasant though, almost fatherly."



**Pat Hotchkiss
Director, Libraries**



**Library in what is now the Student
Services building**

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After a 15-minute interview, which Hotchkiss remembers as more of a conversation, Kane asked when she could start. At first Hotchkiss worked 12 hours a week, her expanded hours in response to the library's holdings doubling in size within a year. Initially she found it disturbing to share her desk with five other people as well as frequent visitors to use the Xerox machine, meet with the Veterans Administration advisor, or confer with the Student Affairs representatives. She was also taken aback to discover that there was no card catalog, with only a rough sign-out system serving as the library's accountability tool. In retrospect, Hotchkiss gives a lot of credit to Ida Ojeda, then Cochise College director of libraries. "It was Ida's idea to start the library in Sierra Vista. She sent all the copy 2's' from the Douglas Campus library to get the Sierra Vista library going."

From its inception in 1972, the Sierra Vista Center quickly expanded. Almost immediately, senior college officials started looking about for future building sites where a bricks-and-mortar campus might be constructed. In 1974, a solution was provided by a gift of 40 acres between the Southern Pacific railroad right-of-way and Charleston Road by Andrea Cracchiolo.

The Cracchiolo family qualify as modern Sierra Vista pioneers, along with earlier families like the Frys, Carmichaels, and Newmans. Andrea Cracchiolo came to America as a young man before the World War I from Palermo, Sicily. He became successful in bakery and produce businesses in Detroit, eventually coming to Tucson for health reasons in 1941. He loved Southern Arizona, particularly the Sierra Vista area, where in the mid-1950's, he bought 6,000 acres and served as a prime mover in the city's incorporation. As with many successful immigrants, Andrea Cracchiolo became more patriotic than most native-born Americans. As he often remarked, "I love the United States ... It's the paradise of the world. Without the United States, the world is lost."



Former Librarians Ida Ojeda and Catherine Lincer

a brave new world

The Cracchiolo family established several businesses in town, including the Bella Vista Motel, Cochise Enterprises, the Bella Vista Water Company, and the charming Bella Vista Estates subdivision. The senior Cracchiolo had the equivalent of only a third-grade education in Sicily and saw education as the key to unlocking the American dream. As Dr. Andy Cracchiolo and Joe Cracchiolo stated in a March 2006 interview, there was no question that all five children – Joe, Diane, Rose, Marianne and Andy – would go to college and, hopefully, professional or graduate school. Andrea and Carmelita Cracchiolo's sons, Andy, an orthopedic surgeon at UCLA, Joe, an attorney and businessman, and Dan, a principal partner with Burch & Cracchiolo law firm, all fulfilled their parents' wishes and maintain a lively interest in Cochise College affairs. As Joe Cracchiolo observed recently, his father drummed into his children that "making money is not the main goal in any business. It's really about giving back to the community."

Joe Cracchiolo, who coincidentally is given to describing Sierra Vista as a "paradise," had a long history with education in Cochise County going back to the 1950's. The younger Cracchiolo proved instrumental in establishing Buena High School in 1959 on land donated by his father where Gas City and Lawley Ford stand today (Before that Sierra Vista students had been bused to high school in Tombstone).

With the Cracchiolo land donation in hand, the Cochise College Governing Board contracted with the architectural firm Architecture I to design the new campus. Most college observers thought the process would prove quick, with an opening date of January 1976. But several factors intervened, the first being a land transfer, when the initial parcel was swapped for the current site in October 1974. A low bid of \$1.3 million was accepted from Metz Construction of Tucson and the Sierra Vista project seemed to be well under way. However, disagreements over financing methods severely slowed progress.

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At one point in January 1976 (the hoped-for campus opening date), Cochise College Business Manager Dr. Gil Olsen noted that "the college is at a standstill in the Sierra Vista project." Finally, the financial and legal problems proved resolvable. However, compromise called for a smaller campus of three buildings constructed two years later than the originally anticipated completion date.

By March 1977, a lower, renegotiated bid with Metz Construction had been concluded and a ground breaking ceremony had taken place. In April, Cochise County road crews had built a dirt road to the construction site. By June the steel frames for the three buildings were emplaced and the floors poured. That same month Arizona Public Service "dropped the lines" for the underground utility system.

By spring 1977, the Sierra Vista Center's enrollment had expanded to 447 full-time students and 1,604 part-time students. Likewise, the teaching staff had grown to 17 full-time instructors and 136 part-time instructors. With construction in full swing, an internal Sierra Vista memo enthusiastically noted how "Members of the office staff make periodic trips over to the site to make sure that this isn't a dream. It's true, it's true !!!"

The Sierra Vista Campus of Cochise College was dedicated on Sunday January 8, 1978, with more than 200 people attending. Recently hired college president Dr. Maryly VanLeer Peck presided over the ceremony with dignitaries like U.S. Congressman Morris K. Udall, president of the college governing board Dr. Charles DiPeso, and long-time governing board member Natalio Sabal in attendance. The dedicated campus consisted of three permanent buildings (today's 300, 400, and 600 structures), with the two portables to be shortly relocated.



Natalio Sabal and Joe Cracchiolo



Sierra Vista Campus groundbreaking

The first phase of the campus looks much like it does today; a contemporary viewer looking at 1978 photographs might think he's looking at photos taken yesterday. However, internally, things have changed a great deal. Today's 600 building, which houses the snack bar, administrative offices, and student union, in 1978 hosted the student union, the bookstore, counseling offices, and, on the north side of the building, a library. Today's 300 building was much like 1978's, providing general purpose classrooms and a much vaunted "reading laboratory." Today's 400 building is exclusively devoted to computer labs and faculty offices.

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In 1978 it had a more multipurpose flavor, providing a chemistry lab, an art studio, a typing laboratory, and a darkroom for photography classes.

A special pullout section published in early January 1978 by Wick Communications highlighted the new Sierra Vista Campus and the Spring 1978 schedule. Numerous photos show that a time traveler set down at the south end of the 600 building would have no trouble in figuring out where he was. The steel lattice walkway, the flagpole at the north end of the 600 building, the stucco walls of the courtyard – all appear nearly as they are today. The only missing components are the outdoor stone tables and chairs, which were purchased over the next year by the fledgling Sierra Vista Campus student government.

As can be inferred, the move from the portables on the high school campus to the Charleston Road college campus proved electric. Tim Ellis is today the "Roadrunner" feature writer and transportation beat writer at the Arizona Daily Star. In 1978 Ellis wrote for the Cochise College student newspaper *The Arrow* while working his way through school at the Cracchiolo-owned Bella Vista Motel. Ellis recalls how exciting it was to be in the first group of students on a new campus. "I felt like a pioneer," he said. "Glenn Eberly, Joel Wallace, Betty Bernheim and several others tried to get a student government off the ground, start a newspaper, and run a weekly film series. It was a heady time."

Dr. Claudia LaClair, a future faculty emeritus, transferred to the Sierra Vista Campus in Fall 1978. Since her husband Charlie had worked in the portables, she has vivid memories of the "relocatable days." Like Ellis, she recalls a feeling of excitement in 1978: "Now we had a real campus. We were no longer a stepchild." Claudia LaClair describes 1978 as "a vibrant and exciting time when things were new." Claudia taught office subjects in the 400 building, sharing an office with art teacher Al Kogel, whose studio classroom was right next door.



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She recalls her students as being intelligent and farsighted, realizing that word processing and key punch classes heralded a more complex future. Claudia LaClair also credits Roy Kane with a visionary quality: "Though he was born in 1917, Roy saw the future in computers. He was a great friend of technology at the Sierra Vista Campus."



An early Sierra Vista Campus computer

Claudia's husband, Dr. Charlie LaClair, also a faculty emeritus, spent Fall 1977 in the portables before moving to the Charleston Road campus in January 1978. As Charlie LaClair reminds us, even on the new campus most instructors still had their offices in the now-trans-



Dr. Charlie LaClair leads a business class

a brave new world

ferred portables. But as LaClair notes, portables or no, Sierra Vista was "an exciting place to be, with exciting things happening." LaClair was especially impressed by his fellow faculty and staff members, who he found "energetic, dynamic, and committed to their work." Like Joe Cracchiolo, Charlie LaClair considered Sierra Vista a kind of frontier paradise. A wide-awake kind of man, LaClair felt alive to the numerous opportunities available to ambitious people in the late 1970's. He was very much taken with the Fort Huachuca community's intense interest in the then-embryonic computer field. "Fort Huachuca was a cutting-edge environment for computer technology," says LaClair. "We had brilliant people from the fort on the college's Computer Advisory Board that got us going in the right direction." LaClair further recalls that he and Claudia bought Cochise College's first computer, a TRS 80, from Radio Shack for \$2,400. Now Dr. LaClair believes that Cochise College offers the best community college computer instruction in the state. "We were lucky," says Dr. LaClair. "We caught the first wave."

Dr. Casi Ruffo, today a licensed psychologist in private practice as well as a school psychologist with the Buena district, vividly recalls the changeover from the portables to the Charleston Road campus in 1978. At the time, Ruffo was a 20-year-old high school dropout working as a waitress in Tombstone's Wagon Wheel restaurant and commuting to Cochise College in Sierra Vista. Ruffo remembers having mixed feelings about the move. In a way it was like "coming out of the dark ages" onto a new and gleaming campus. Yet the five-building Charleston Road campus proved a little overwhelming to her, and she remembers thinking, "Wow, this is so big."

Like many other students, faculty, and staff, Ruffo has some warm feelings about the "relocatable days." She found the Buena High campus environment "workable" and "comfortable." In fact it was in the portables in Fall 1977 that Ruffo underwent a sea change in her



Dr. Charlie LaClair and Dr. Claudia LaClair



**Former student government president
and testing coordinator Betty
Bernheim**

own life. Ruffo suddenly realized that "if you study, you can really do well on tests. I know it sounds silly, but it was like a light went on in my head." 1977-1978 proved a pivotal time in Dr. Ruffo's life, and she maintains very positive feelings about her time at Cochise College. In fact she urges many of her clients to enroll at Cochise College to raise their self-esteem, to increase their earning potential, and to learn more about the arts, the sciences, and themselves.

Less enamored of the relocatable days was that grand old woman of Cochise College student government, Betty Bernheim. In 1978, Betty Bernheim was a 53-year-old student government president whose optimism and can-do spirit did much to establish a strong spirit of student involvement on the Charleston Road campus. After getting water to make coffee out of the specially designated garden hose near the gym on Buena campus, Bernheim felt thrilled to move to a facility with indoor plumbing. Though the instruction was good at the portables and the Army Ed Center, Bernheim recalls that "they didn't feel like a college the way Charleston Road campus did." Bernheim liked the environment so much that she stayed on to become the tutoring and testing coordinator at the college's Student Development Center. Now retired, Bernheim believes her working years at the college were the "best time of my life." Along with the LaClairs, Casi Ruffo, and Tim Ellis, she remembers Spring 1978 as a golden time in the Sierra Vista's Campus's history. "It was a very happy atmosphere. I think the best thing that ever happened to this town was the college."

The Sierra Vista Campus continued to grow, with a significant achievement being the opening of the Andrea Cracchiolo Library on Dec. 14, 1985. The second Cochise College library in Sierra Vista in the northern third of the student union building had proved a big improvement over the portable "shared" library. In the second library, book holdings had expanded to 3,000 volumes, square footage had swelled to 1,800 feet, two administrative offices were

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available, and student use had risen substantially. But the move to the Cracchiolo Library (the 500 building, now Student Affairs), proved more rewarding still, tripling the available floor space to well over 6,000 square feet. Also, the new facility provided individual study rooms, a conference room, and plenty of shelf space for the book collection to grow.

The Sierra Vista Campus had grown substantially from its opening with three permanent buildings and two portables in 1978. Now the campus boasted 10 structures plus the brand new Cracchiolo Library scheduled to open. The dedication took place in the courtyard between the student union and the new library, with the stage for the dignitaries situated between the 400 building to the east and the courtyard fountain to the west. Don Campbell, one of the first full-time faculty members at the Sierra Vista Campus and an elder in the Covenant Presbyterian Church in Bisbee, gave the invocation. Dr. Phil Tullar, the campus's third provost and an ardent proponent of library expansion, noted that the establishment of a stand-alone library is a "dream ... a culmination of many dreams that began many years ago." Introduced by Dr. Dan Rehurek, then college president for just over a year, platform guests included State Representatives Bart Baker, Bill English, Joe Lane, and from Willcox in his distinctive white cowboy hat, Gus Arzberger. Also singled out in the audience for acknowledgement was former college president Dr. John Edwards, then a University of Arizona vice president, who had worked so hard for college expansion in Sierra Vista in the early 1970's.

But the day really centered around the generosity of the Cracchiolo family, whose gift of 40 acres in 1974 had provided the fallow field in which to sow the seeds of the college's growth. College governing board president Natalio Sabal observed that were it "not for Andrea Cracchiolo ... [this land] would be vacant and dedicated to another purpose." Sabal further praised the entire Cracchiolo family for having "given so much to the community" because



Dr. Phil Tullar, Provost

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"without higher education, the growth of the community would be stunted."

Following state representatives Bart Baker's and Bill English's account of their difficult, but ultimately successful, quest to secure appropriate state funding, Cochise County Supervisor Judy Gignac offered some particularly pointed remarks. Gignac posited that "To have something named after you is an honor that most of us will never have. To have a library named



**The opening of the Andrea Cracchiolo
Library**

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after you is the highest compliment one can be given. Books are the keys to freedom, democracy, and liberation."

After Dr. Rehurek's description of the library as the "central facility of this campus," the audience and platform guests moved toward the main entrance of the library. After the unveiling of the plaque dedicated to Andrea Cracchiolo for his "steadfast support of education," Mrs. Pat Cracchiolo (Joe's wife) cut the red ribbon. Andrea Cracchiolo and his wife Carmelita were the first to go through the sliding glass doors. As the 95-year-old Cracchiolo walked into the library bearing his name, he said, clearly audible on the videotape, "God bless everybody ... This is paradise."

Once inside, guests witnessed the unveiling of Andrea's portrait, which now hangs in the Horace Steele Conference Room in the newest Cracchiolo library, built in 1995. Perhaps Joe Cracchiolo, just moments before at the unveiling of the dedicatory plaque (still visible on the front of the Student Affairs building), made the most heartfelt remarks offered at the ceremony. "This is a day of emotion for me and ... my family," the younger Cracchiolo declared. We "thank you from the bottom of our hearts." Joe Cracchiolo further noted that this was only the second building at Cochise College named after a living person, the other being the Charles DiPeso library on the Douglas Campus named after the long-serving governing board member from Dragoon.

In March 1998, approximately 100 people attended a birthday party in honor of Cochise College's 20th year at the Charleston Road campus. There in the commons of the newest Andrea Cracchiolo library, festooned with red and white balloons and photos of the campus and its denizens in earlier days, board members, students, faculty, and staff members gathered to reminisce and celebrate. Among the attendees were Judge Matt Borowiec, a college



Andrea Cracchiolo

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The College celebrates the 20th birthday of the Charleston road campus. Pictured left to right are Karen Nicodemus, Mark von Destinon, Jan Guy, Roy Kane, Natalio Sabal and Matt Boroweic.

governing board member in 1978; Dr. Tom Waddell, Roy Kane's assistant for many years; Betty Bernheim, the Sierra Vista Campus's first student government president; Paula Jones, faculty secretary in the portables at Buena High; pioneering teachers Lucy Shaver, Mary Lee Shelden, John Doty, and Ted White; and library Director Pat Hotchkiss who remembered when the Sierra Vista Campus library numbered 1,000 books.

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Speakers Jan Guy, Roy Kane, Natalio Sabal, and Karen Nicodemus made presentations that combined fondness for the past with a sense of challenge for the future. Mrs. Guy, president of the college's governing board, recalled her "very warm memories" of attending class in the portables, which gave her the start to pursue her bachelor's and master's degrees. Guy further remarked that 20 years of academic success in Sierra Vista marked a "milestone of community involvement and educational achievement."

Roy Kane donated the lime-green IBM Selectric typewriter he had bought with his own money in 1971 to the library as a remembrance of those early days. As Kane pointed out, when he started working for the college in 1971 there were 200 students in Sierra Vista. When he retired in 1981 there were 2,000.

Kane singled out the library's namesake for particular praise. Remarking on the 40 acre gift in 1974, Kane said "I personally believe that the college could not have been built at that time without the generosity of the Cracchiolo family." Reflecting on his 10-year tenure at Cochise College, Kane remarked that "Serving here at the Sierra Vista Campus was the most rewarding experience of my life" (High praise indeed from a man who had been an artillery officer with the famed Ninth Infantry Division at Kasserine Pass, Normandy, and the Battle of the Bulge).

Natalio Sabal, the only active governing board member remaining from 1978, also offered some thoughtful comments. With his usual eloquence, Sabal quoted Carl Sandburg - "Nothing happens unless first a dream" - then noted that the "Sierra Vista Campus is representative of many dreams fulfilled." Sabal observed that four people closely involved with the 1978 campus dedication - himself, Andrea Cracchiolo, Dr. Charles DiPeso, and Judge Matt Borowiec - were all immigrants or the children of immigrants. In Sierra Vista, as on



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the Douglas Campus and in extension locations countywide, Sabal felt that Cochise College offered the key of education to unlock the door to success in America.

After some remarks by Acting President Karen Nicodemus on the huge strides in computer technology made by the Sierra Vista Campus since 1978, guests and attendees fell on the birthday cake sliced by Mr. Kane and served by Mrs. Guy. The videotape made that day reveals a scene of happiness, pride, and joy, although an unseen voice can be heard asking just before the tape goes blank, "Twenty years from now, are our pictures going to be on the wall?"

What hopes do we hold for a college campus that 40 years ago totaled maybe 200 students at the Army Education Center, that 30 years ago numbered maybe 1,500 students centered on two portable buildings on the Buena High campus? One indicator is that as of 2005, Cochise College in Sierra Vista serves almost 3,700 students at a beautifully designed campus of 15 buildings on the Cracchiolo land grant.

At the 20th birthday party for the Sierra Vista Campus in March 1998, then-Acting President Karen Nicodemus remarked that while it was good to celebrate the past, it was "also exciting to look forward to the future." For Dr. Nicodemus the college's future " ... rests on the people ... that make up the institution." Here, no doubt, Dr. Nicodemus was thinking of far-sighted administrators like John Edwards and Howard Monnett, thoughtful governing board members like Natalio Sabal and Judge Matt Borowiec, and generous patrons like the Cracchiolo family. Dr. Nicodemus's thoughts may also have turned to talented students like Enid Schwartz, who said of her time at the college in the 1970's, "I got a quality education from people who loved to teach." Or Dr. Nicodemus may have been thinking of English faculty member Lucy Shaver who "loved teaching wonderful students" over a 20-year span. If

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the best barometer of the future is the past, how can the future of the Sierra Vista Campus be anything but bright?

At that same celebration in 1998, Dr. Nicodemus quoted Ralph Waldo Emerson, "What lies behind us and lies before us are tiny matters ... compared to what lies within us." Samuel Whitside, Bill Carmichael, Erwin Fry, Roy Kane, Andrea Cracchiolo, Casi Ruffo, Charles and Claudia LaClair, Jan Guy, Betty Bernheim - it is a brave new world that has such people in it. In this new land, this new state, this new city, this new college, we are limited only by our capacity to dream, then act. As Andrea Cracchiolo remarked at the opening of the first library to bear his name in 1985: "This is paradise."



Lucy Shaver

my relocatable days

my
RELOCATABLE DAYS

Jack Ziegler

When I got out of the Army in May 1972, Roy Kane hired me as his assistant, with the rather grand title of "acting assistant to the director." In reality my job was pretty plebeian - collect the mail everyday from the college's P.O. Box 1668 at the old post office on Carmichael Avenue, write ad copy and memoranda to our nascent staff, and fetch and carry reports, supplies, and bank deposits. When I first met Roy Kane, he ran the Cochise College Center out of his attache case, moving from office to office on Fort Huachuca as conditions permitted.

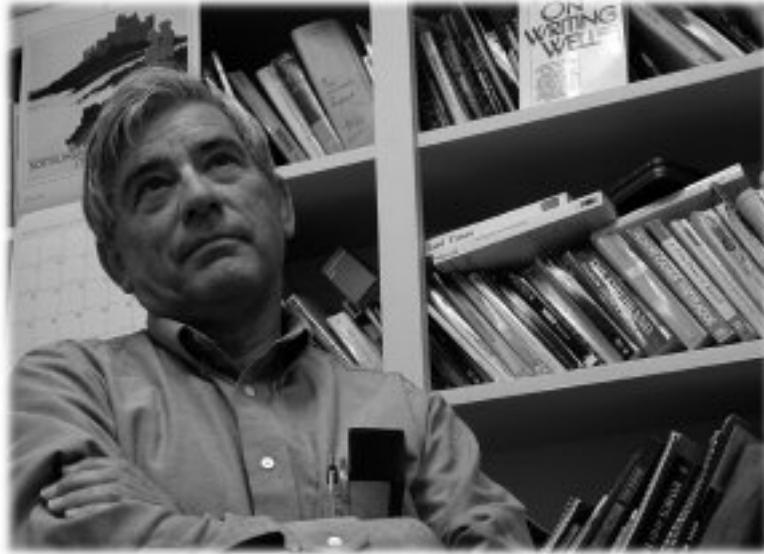
After having no home, the two relocatable buildings (we always called them portables) seemed like the University of Arizona's Old Main to us. Containing four classrooms, a narrow administrative office, and eventually a tiny library, they supplemented the mostly night-time venues offered in Buena High's classrooms. In graduate school I had fantasized about bustling across the quad on a New England fall afternoon to teach my seminar in Conrad and Hardy. How different then to pull my '68 VW bug into the dirt Buena High parking lot next to some John Lennon and Cher look-alikes hurrying off to David Meeker's art class at the high school.

In 1972, as now, the students were incredibly diverse. A typical class might contain an Army or Marine officer or two, some NCO's, high school students, high school dropouts, working adults, and even a mother-daughter duo. It was the kind of mix you were unlikely to find at

my relocatable days

Bennington, Holy Cross, or Colby. If the students didn't boast rich academic pedigrees (and some did), they proved intelligent, resourceful, and hardworking. I've never had more willing students than those at Cochise College.

I taught English at the relocatables until 1978 when we moved to the current campus off Charleston Road. Researching this booklet has turned my thoughts to other faces and other days. In my mind's eye I can still see Allan Meyer at his desk, parsing the key points of JFK's best speeches; Don Campbell mislaying the red paddle because he was brooding over a passage in Descartes; and Faculty Secretary Paula Jones, whose professionalism was outshone only by her perpetual good humor. Robbie Robison, Dick Seals, John Monnett, Pat Hotchkiss - we all worked together in those relocatable days when cows roamed the mesquite of our present campus. We had few resources to draw on, we taught in borrowed classrooms, we glimpsed no dreaming spires from Buena High's parking lot. With Roy Kane's example as a kind of North Star, we organized ourselves quickly and presented our classes skillfully. As high as we aimed, our Sierra Vista and Fort Huachuca students always exceeded our standards, eager as they were for knowledge, for achievement, for meaning.



About the Writer: Jack Ziegler is originally from New Jersey. After being discharged from the Army at Fort Huachuca in 1972, he worked for Cochise College as an administrator and English and Humanities teacher. He retired in 2004.



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