

MYTHS, TRADITIONS, EVENTS, AND CULTURE

9/11



Most Americans over the age of 10 have vivid memories of what they were doing on the morning of September 11, 2001.

September 11, 2001 started out as a normal day at Granada High School. Block 1 classes began at 7:15am, but even at this hour our world had changed.

Principal Kevin Drake remembers that day:

Each morning I would get up early and ride a stationary bike while watching the news. When I turned on the news that morning I saw videos of burning buildings and tried to remember what the event was that I was watching. Only after the newscasters started talking in the present tense did I realize the severity of the situation. I called my daughter, who was working in Honolulu, to tell her what was occurring, and then I hustled to Granada.

Teachers were instructed to go to the library when they checked into school. We basically reinforced with the teachers that this was not going to be a normal day, and that students would want to know what was happening, and that it was all right to allow them to watch the news. They were not to dismiss any students unless requested by a parent through normal office channels. The classified staff was advised to brace themselves for numerous telephone calls from parents, and school security personnel were moved to the front of school to reassure parents dropping off their children that school was going to continue as planned.

When Block 2 started at 9AM, I went on the PA system again to update the students on the situation, as we knew it at the time. I stressed the need to remain calm and not rush to judgment on the cause. (The district by this time had assigned counselors to be at each high school). The rest of the day was a blur as more news accounts came in and the enormity of the event came into focus.

Two visitors who came into my office the next day also magnified the event. One was a person who had a grandchild at Granada, and she said that her son (the grandchild's father) was an American Airlines pilot who flew the San Francisco to Boston route. At this time no one knew how widespread this conspiracy went so she was taking precautions to inform us that her grandchild must remain on campus at all times, and that she would bring her and take her home from school. Secondly, a judge appeared in my office and said that he had been given personal security and again wanted to inform us that his children were to stay on campus and to let him know if anybody inquired about his children.

In the midst of this chaos, two students took it upon themselves to do something for the school. Senior Jeff Pavich and Sophomore Brittany Bramell went to Wal-Mart and bought yards

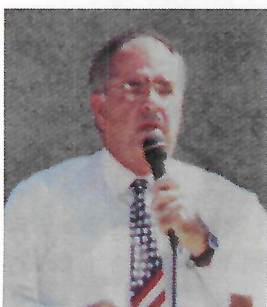
of red, white and blue ribbon. They came back to school and the Leadership class, as well as Mr. Sneeringer's regular classes, assembled these ribbons to be distributed to all students. These ribbons were distributed to all students during the day, and served as a reminder of our unity.

As a staff we constantly asked each other the things we should be doing as the week unfolded. One staff member had a husband working in Washington D.C., and he could not get back to Livermore. Subsequently he rented a car and drove back with others. There had been



reports of hate crimes happening throughout the United States so we wanted to reinforce the idea not to pre-judge anybody, and that we needed to stay together as a school community.

Jan Freytag advanced the idea of a school assembly/rally where we could show our togetherness and support of our country and each other. We decided to hold an outdoor assembly/rally in the quad on September 14. The Leadership Class at Granada was outstanding as they helped organize the event, placed pictures around the quad of the 9/11 tragedy, and continued to distribute red, white and blue ribbons. We had speakers who talked about the need to remain calm, stay together and find ways to support each other. The emotional highlight of the assembly/rally was twofold: (1) Senior student, Jodi Lynch sang a marvelous rendition of Lee Greenwood's *I'm Proud to be an American*, and (2) we brought in a flock of white homing pigeons that Leadership students released as a symbol of our togetherness and support of our nation. Representatives of the Livermore Fire Department were also in attendance at this assembly.



As the week went on, we decided that we were best served by trying to keep our routine as normal as possible. But we had a football game scheduled for Friday night, September 14. Should we cancel this or play it as scheduled? Kevin Drake remembered the events of the John F. Kennedy assassination and the criticism that the National Football League endured by deciding to play games as scheduled



on the Sunday following the Friday morning assassination. Even though Granada was not on the same scale of the NFL, he ultimately thought it necessary to keep our scheduled events. After consultation with the principal at Antioch High School (the team we were scheduled to play), it was agreed that the game was to be played. The overriding theme was that we were not going to allow forces hostile to the United States to dictate our choices.

The game itself was a somber and respectful event. Both teams lined up on the 45-yard line and faced each other. An exchange of school mementos followed as each player gave a token of his school to his fellow competitor. After the national anthem, Jodi Lynch again delivered a strong and emotional *I'm Proud to be an American*.

THE CHISHOLM'S—TO BAN OR NOT?

In October 1982, Bob Ferro, a Granada parent and a director of Campus Life, made a complaint about a book in the Granada Library on the basis that it had sexually explicit passages and four-letter words. He complained that he found passages in the book immoral.¹³⁴ The book, *The Chisholms* by Evan Hunter, was the story of a family moving west in the mid-1800s.

Following the District's policy, the school appointed an ad hoc committee to review the books. This committee included Principal Jack Snodgrass, one librarian, three parents, and two teachers. The committee read the book but found that there were no written guidelines on which to base their decision. The committee agreed with Mr. Ferro that the book was without merit and should be removed from the school's library. It was announced that if no one appealed the decision in 10 days, it would be considered final. An appeal would require the district superintendent Leo Croce to appoint a second committee to review the case. They followed the district procedures.

Glenn Trisell, a member of the Granada's School Site Council, and his wife Helen Trisell, a former Livermore mayor, sent a letter to the superintendent protesting that this was censorship. They challenged both the committee's decision on the merits of the book and also the entire process that permits a book, once selected, to be removed on the complaint of a parent and a review by unknown individuals.¹³⁵

Superintendent Croce told the Trisells that their protest did not necessarily lead to yet another review. The District's current controversial materials policy allowed only the complainant the right of appeal. In this case, the committee had upheld Mr. Ferro's challenge, so it was unlikely an appeal would happen. There wasn't any mention of anyone else being able to challenge a committees' decision.

Mr. Croce then told the Trisells that while they could not appeal the committee's decision, as citizens they could file a complaint with him. He would then advise the School Board of the complaint, and they would decide whether to consider it.

¹³⁴ *The Herald*. October 10, 1981

¹³⁵ *The Herald*. October 13, 1981

At this point, the ACLU considered filing a lawsuit against the District and the Trisells agreed to be the plaintiffs. Shortly after announcing this, the Trisells opted out of the threatened lawsuit, preferring that the censorship issue be resolved at the local level. Two teachers who helped write the policy said that the intent was to provide an open process that anyone could challenge. Others who spoke publicly were Jeanne Kolar, President of the Livermore Education Association concerned about the policy¹³⁶ and the Valley Covenant Ministry Council, representing a number of religious faiths, who opposed the book ban.¹³⁷

At this time, the names of those who had served on the review committee were made public: Principal Jack Snodgrass, school librarian Marian Strout, teachers Don Hutchinson and Betty Miller, and parents Dee Albright, Nancy Conklin, and Nancy Swearingen. Ms. Conklin was the only vote against the ban on the book.

The Trisells filed a complaint focusing on: No notification to the public that the book was “on trial”; a possible lack of objective review criteria; and no mechanism for appealing the decision.¹³⁸ The Superintendent then appointed two new committees. The first, made up of three parents, three teachers, and an administrator, was to review the book. The second, appointed from the “professional staff” was to review the procedure used to ban it.¹³⁹

The committee determined to review the book strictly on the charges made by Mr. Ferro rather than measure it on educational and literary standards not mentioned in the complaint. The committee’s decision was that although the book was not high in literary value, the complaints filed by Mr. Ferro were not sufficient reason to remove the book from the library.¹⁴⁰

Mr. Ferro had only read the first 104 pages of the book. The committee members commented that although the immoral behavior was depicted in the book, the character’s main thrust is moral, that is was an affirmation of the family.¹⁴¹

The committee reported that

- There was not case for removing *The Chisholms* from the library. That would be book banning
- Complaints such as Mr. Ferro’s should be evaluated on their own grounds.
- Mr. Ferro’s complaint was of a “moral” nature and the committee concluded that each example was justifiable in terms of character development and historical setting.
- *The Chisholms* is a “recreational book.”¹⁴²

Superintendent Croce upheld the decision of the committee, and the book remained in the Granada Library.

¹³⁶ *Independent*. October 21, 1981

¹³⁷ *The Herald*. October 22, 1981

¹³⁸ *The Herald*, October 20, 1981

¹³⁹ *Valley Times*. November 6, 1981

¹⁴⁰ *The Herald* December 11, 1981

¹⁴¹ *Independent* December 2, 1981

¹⁴² *Independent* December 21, 1981

DANCE TROUPE



The following is a description of Dance Troupe from one of the founding members, Maisha Beasley:

Granada's Dance Troupe was founded in 1994 by a group of ethnically diverse girl and boys who felt they didn't have a place on campus. They felt marginalized and stereotyped, and unwanted on the school's cheerleading squad. After racial tension for a couple of years prior, Mr. Drake and Mr. Reid helped these women to found Granada's first Dance Troupe. Originally, the troupe's focus was on hip-hop dancing and step-drills (this came out of the tradition of "sorority stepping" in the African American community).

The Dance Troupe was allowed to perform at half-time during basketball games and at least one rally. Over the next four years their popularity grew, and they became a main stay of the Granada community. Although the road to feeling included as part of the campus community was not easy, the founding members formed a bond that has left a lasting legacy at Granada High School.

"Although I was also on the cheerleading squad," another original Troupe member, Christine Gatchalian, recalled, "The dance troupe was where I could really express myself. We were able to pick our own outfits, use music that was hot at the time, do the latest moves, and perform in front of large audiences under our own terms. Although I had a few years of dancing by that time, it was my first time I had the opportunity to choreograph. I still apply what I learned through choreographing for the dance troupe to my routines today! Being in a group that was culturally diverse was amazing because we all had different experiences to share which gave our troupe so much personality, flavor and depth."¹⁴³

Today the Dance Troupe has changed from its origin nearly twenty years ago, and has grown under the leadership of Madeline Munoz. The main change to this organization is that it became a sport in 2007. Members continue to try out for the Troupe, and earn letters just like any sport. Also, rules, such as fees and GPA requirements, are now part of the requirements.



¹⁴³ Christine Gatchalian, April 29, 2014

DRESS CODE

Student dress codes are as ancient as the first high schools. Schools are a microcosm of the society in which they exist, but there is often a clash of established conventions and changing societal trends. Granada High School was no different.

We often associate dress standards with students. However, the dress policy was also attached to staff as well. More often than not, it was the female teachers who were under the scrutiny of the “dress police.” Female teachers at Granada in the ‘60s and early ‘70s recall incidents where the code of proper dress for females was strictly enforced as a “no pants zone.” Judy Briemle, who started teaching at Granada in 1969 recalls coming to an institution where other female teachers told her not to wear pants.¹⁴⁴ Jan Freytag, a Physical Education teacher at Granada, stated, “I had to come to school wearing a dress, then go to the Physical Education office and change into all white shorts and tops, and if I wanted to go back to the Main Office, I had to change back to the dress again.”¹⁴⁵ Sue Staley, an English teacher remembered the penalty for violating the policy, “The principal told me that the first female who wore pants to work was going to be assigned to the yearbook as an adjunct duty.”¹⁴⁶ Finally the female teachers protested this policy. Led by Social Studies instructor Jeanne Kolar, most female teachers came to Granada dressed in pants. To this the principal made a statement, “I see you are making a statement.”



Nothing else was said, and no one was assigned to the yearbook.¹⁴⁷ The year was 1970 and to paraphrase a Bob Dylan sang, “the times they were a changing.”

The male teachers were required to wear ties. A quick analysis of any yearbook of the ‘60s and early ‘70s will chronicle that shirt and ties were the established uniform. Veteran teacher Don Briemle, who started at Granada in 1964, dramatically contrasts this point. Later in his career, as a physical education teacher and coach, his sartorial trademark was to wear shorts no matter the weather conditions. However, as a classroom teacher in 1960s he

can be seen in shirt and tie.

Female students of the ‘60s and early ‘70s have vivid recollections of the Dean of Girls asking them to kneel on the floor to check the length of their dresses. The common requirement was that no dress hemline should be shorter than one inch off the floor. And females were not permitted to wear any open toed shoes.¹⁴⁸ Class of ‘66 Sports Queen, (what a Homecoming Queen is called when there are no alumni) Sandy Bowman Hastings, remembered having to stand on her knees to have her skirt length checked by the Dean of Girls and never, ever being

¹⁴⁴ Judy Briemle, April 3, 2014

¹⁴⁵ Jan Freytag, April 3, 2014

¹⁴⁶ Sue Staley, February 25, 2014

¹⁴⁷ Judy Briemle, April 3, 2014

¹⁴⁸ Sue Klas, April 3, 2014