

JANUARY, 1980



SPECIAL

DCARA *Newsletter*

California School for the Deaf at Berkeley:

STAY OR MOVE ?

The planned relocation of the California School for the Deaf at Berkeley to Fremont has created a lot of controversy during these past few months.

The issue started with the question whether an active earthquake fault exist under the present Berkeley site. Then, the move to the \$53 million school building in Fremont raised other questions that brought up heated debates and arguments within the deaf community. These questions are now more focused on which school site can provide the best learning environment for the students.

* On Monday, January 21 at 7:30 P.M., there will be a special meeting called by the Berkeley City Council at the Deaf School auditorium. The purpose of the meeting is to enable the City Council to directly find what the deaf community really wants on this issue.

It is DCARA's wish to inform the deaf community on the issues involved, and create awareness to encourage the community's active participation and input on this matter. To date, the school site controversy is perhaps the most controversial that the deaf community has ever been faced with.

While we urge the deaf community to attend the Berkeley City Council meeting, our main concern is to provide as much information, and to assist everyone to make an opinion about this issue.

This special newsletter was created with that purpose. Here, we present excerpts from newspaper articles and statements from concerned individuals on the basic question: Should the school move from Berkeley to Fremont?

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After a month-long investigation, it was learned State officials had no concrete proof an active earthquake fault exist underneath the California Schools for the Deaf and Blind in Berkeley.

No geologic investigation of the Berkeley site was made until last year when the university commissioned a fault hazard study of the property. That study found that the fault line under the buildings was not an active trace. Another trace is inactive, but is on the edge of the school campus.

It is not hazardous to the whole campus, as defined by the State earthquake law.

- November 17, 1979



Governor Brown's office has decided to review the decision to move the California Schools for the Deaf and Blind to Fremont. Assemblyman Tom Bates made the request in response to recent reports in the Daily Californian about the non-existence of an earthquake fault underneath the school buildings.

Brown's Legal Aide, Anthony Kline, said the Governor's office will examine the possibility of using both Berkeley and Fremont facilities for the needs of the deaf and blind.

Even with the support of the Brown Administration, the effort to save the Berkeley campus for the deaf and blind will face difficulty in getting approval from the State Department of Education, from which the \$53 million Fremont campus was created.

One possibility being discussed is to keep both schools in Berkeley and use the Fremont campus as a post-secondary vocational training center for the deaf. Such a center is needed in the southwestern U.S., and may be able to get strong federal support, according to Robert Wolfe, Deputy Director from the State Department of Rehabilitation.

Another idea is keeping the blind school in Berkeley, and moving the deaf school to Fremont.

- January 7, 1980

It seems clear that the move may not benefit the students - particularly the blind students. The schools' duty is to train students so they can successfully manage in a seeing and hearing society. Berkeley makes an ideal location for blind and deaf students; they are very much familiar with the environment. Berkeley also has many different cultural activities that can further the students' education.

What is clear is that the move was, from the very beginning, poorly planned. The idea behind the move started from what became to be an incorrect and outdated earthquake study. State officials did not thoroughly study the Hayward fault and its traces because they did not want to spend \$250,000 for study costs. Then they spent \$53 million to build a new site that seems to have been chosen without considering the needs of the students.

- Editorial, Jan. 6, 1980

The State Department of Education has repeatedly said it would like to see the (deaf and blind) schools moved to Fremont.

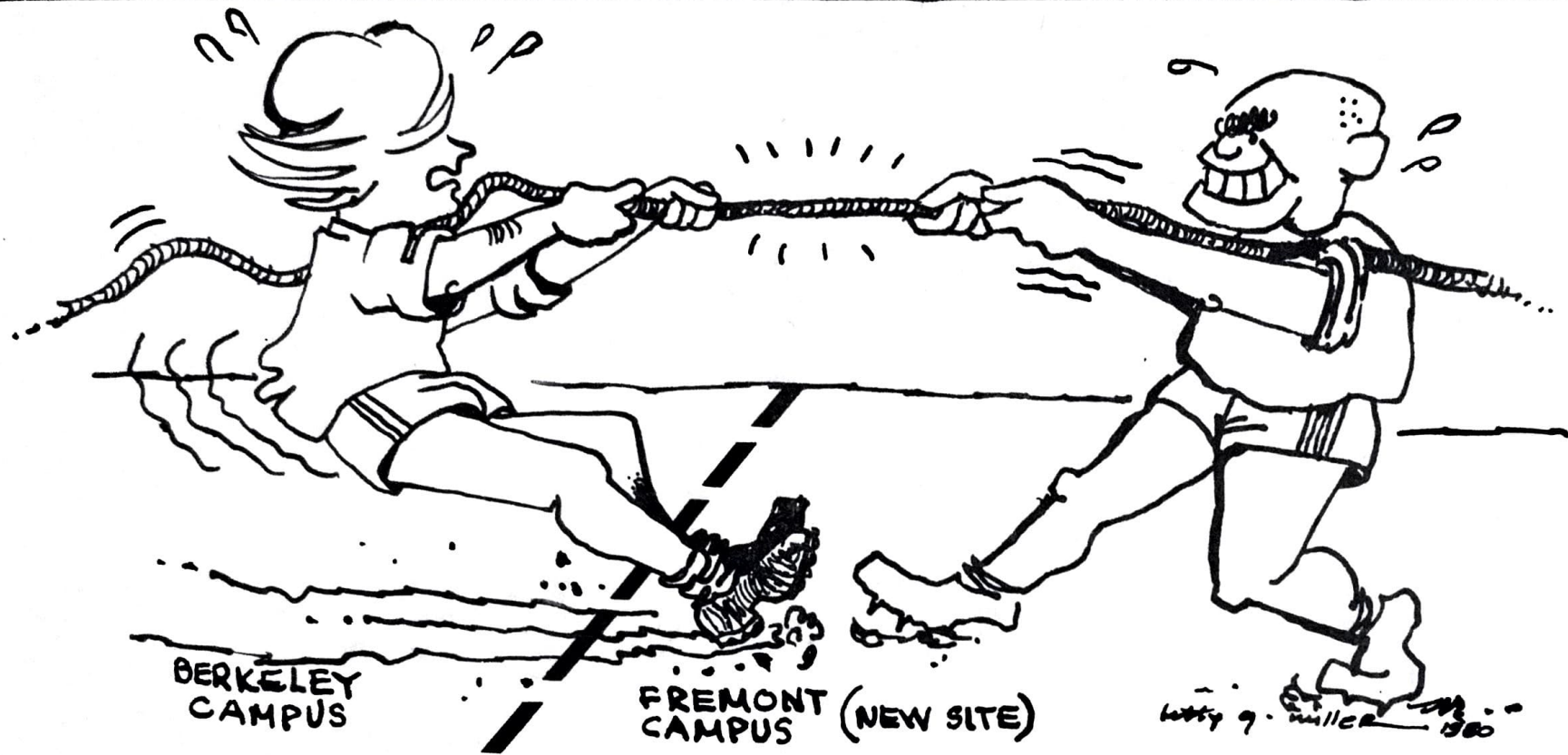
"It's not just a matter of who was right and who was wrong 7-8 years ago," Victor Biondi, Press Secretary for the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Wilson Riles, stated. "We're talking about \$53 million for the Fremont buildings and another \$15 to \$30 million to re-do the Berkeley site."

...Alister McAlister, Assemblyman whose district includes Fremont, said the Deaf and Blind School matter has been one of the most studied and debated issues in the legislature in recent years. "I do not think there's any reasonable possibility of any change now," McAlister said. "It's more than midstream now..."

- January 6, 1980

* **...REMEMBER!...**

Berkeley City Council Meeting: January 21, 7:30 P.M. at CSD Auditorium.



WHERE DO YOU WANT THE SCHOOL?

"...Several members of CAD made frequent trips to Sacramento, not for themselves, but for the deaf children. Their reward now is seeing the children in the best school for the deaf -- with the least restrictive environment for their education. The new facilities are larger and better designed to meet the needs of the students. Give Fremont a few years and it will have trees and shrubs that beautify the campus. Architects planned special foundations which are as earthquake-proof as any.

...What can happen if the school remains in Berkeley? The school had trouble getting appropriations when the state had a surplus of \$7 billion. Because of Prop. 13, all the billions are now gone and the Legislature will be more careful with its spending. It will take years to get the money appropriated, then there will be the architectural work, bids and finally the work itself. It may take at least five years. Before then, some politicians will decide all handicapped children can be more economically mainstreamed. Serious commitments will have to be made by the Legislature and Gov. Brown to: 1) rehabilitate the school to meet the recent laws on building codes for the handicapped; and 2) meet the up-to-date requirements for the education of deaf children.

...Let's stick together for what we fought for in the first place and not take chances of losing a brand new school that meets the needs of the deaf students."

- John Galvan, President, CAD

"I feel that the issue of whether or not the school for the deaf should be relocated is not significant. What is significant is whether or not we need another comprehensive educational program for the hearing-impaired students. For instance, there is probably enough hearing impaired children in Santa Clara County alone to fill in that new residential program (at the Fremont site)."

- Tom Stamper, Alumni

* For further information regarding this issue, call Thom Allison at DCARA, 465-6956.

"As parents, we must expect and demand that our children be educated in safe schools.

Prof. Garniss Curtis, who helped conduct the recent and only geologic study of the Berkeley site-- a study which demonstrated that no active earthquake fault exists at the school-- has commented: 'They are moving from the frying pan into the fire.' Dr. Thomas McEvilly, Chairman of the Dept. of Geophysics at the Univ. of California, added that: 'It is a worse disaster for the kids to move to Fremont than for any likely earthquake disaster.' Thus, student safety is not--and has never been--a real issue in the question of CSD's relocation.

Fear and intimidation, we have learned were repeatedly used by those promoting their own special interests. Now, with the possibility of the School's relocation being stopped, the voices of fear and intimidation are again being raised. We were previously told that, because of our children's interests, we had no real choice regarding the school's location. Again, we hear threats that if CSD is not moved to Fremont it will be closed. We can no longer sacrifice the best interests of our children to these kinds of threats and intimidation.

The truly significant issue is that deaf students must have the best possible environment in which to learn and grow. The present Berkeley site provides an environment rich in educational, cultural and social service resources. Easy access to science, art and special educational facilities and events, as well as to sophisticated and well-developed social and medical services are available at the Berkeley location. These resources are not available in the Fremont area and there is no way that they can be duplicated in the foreseeable future."

- Arnold & Dorcus Kessler,
Parents of a deaf child

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*Editor's Note: The letters and newspaper clippings unfortunately had to be edited because of limited space.