

PENINSULA

AND THE BAY AREA

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1997

Court Order Used To Shield Belmont School Principal Student left racist messages

By Marshall Wilson
Chronicle Staff Writer

Fearing for her safety, the principal of Belmont's Carlmont High School has received a court order to prevent a student from harassing her.

The student, 18-year-old Casey Dormoy of San Carlos, called Principal Debbra Lindo racist names on a trio of obscenity-laden voice-mail messages. Lindo, who is black, received a temporary restraining order against him on Friday.

The order is part of a growing effort by the Sequoia Union High School District to use the court to protect teachers and other school employees from violent students and former workers. There have been four restraining orders issued this year on behalf of district employees, compared to none in the four previous years, said Depu-

ty County Counsel Mary Raftery.

"There are more incidents in which staff are being threatened and the employer wants to take action to make sure they're protecting staff," she said.

The latest request for a restraining order came after efforts by Lindo to ease racial tensions on the campus. Black and Latino students bused in from East Palo Alto have complained in recent weeks about harassment and racial slurs coming from their white classmates. Last Wednesday, Lindo led a school-wide discussion about racism that was followed by a celebration of the school's diversity.

The trouble with Dormoy started October 31, when he pulled a knife on other students who he said had threatened to beat him up. He was suspended from school

CARLMONT: Page A17 Col. 1

From Page A15

and recommended for expulsion.

Because of the incident, Lindo refused to allow Dormoy, a senior, to attend a Nov. 14 football game on campus. Dormoy was one of the team's managers.

After he learned of her decision, Dormoy left three messages on Lindo's school voice mail that were peppered with racist slurs and derogatory comments. He also threatened to come to the game and "chew" her out.

"I was upset she wouldn't let me go to the (football) game," he said in an interview yesterday. "I was mad and I left those messages."

Lindo did not attend the game. Dormoy said he was on campus briefly but also did not go to the game.

On Nov. 17, Belmont police detained Dormoy and referred him to the psychiatric emergency unit at the county hospital. He spent more than a week in Belmont Hills Psychiatric Hospital.

Dormoy yesterday apologized for the messages and said he was overcome with emotion because he couldn't go to the game.

Belmont police Sergeant Bob Lotti said patrol officers and the school liaison officer are aware of the restraining order, which gives police the authority to arrest Dormoy if he is within 100 yards of Lindo or contacts her in any way.

"He has somewhat of volatile temper," Lotti said of Dormoy.

Dormoy said he takes medica-

tion for Tourette's syndrome, a rare disease characterized by involuntary actions.

Lindo was unavailable for comment yesterday. District officials did not return calls.

Dormoy said he wants to give Lindo an apology he wrote in the hospital but can't because it would violate the restraining order.

"I had no right to do what I did," the handwritten apology says, "and I shall pay for the consequences of my actions."

NOV. 26, 1997

(OVER)

Ex-student must avoid principal

FROM STAFF REPORTS

REDWOOD CITY — The principal of Carlmont High School has secured a temporary restraining order against a former student who, she claims, left threatening messages on her voice mail because she refused to let him attend a football game.

The student, who recently turned 18, was suspended from school and placed in a home schooling program earlier this month after he brandished a knife at a fellow student, according to court documents.

The student was the water boy for the Carlmont football team, and he asked Principal Debra Lindo for permission to

attend the game on Nov. 14. She refused him, and he called back three times that day, leaving threatening messages littered with profanity and racial slurs, the court documents assert.

"I had so much pride for Carlmont and I love Carlmont so much and want to stay a part of the team," he said, according to court transcripts of the phone message. "I don't care if I get arrested."

Belmont police listened to the messages and arrested him the following Monday. He was brought to the Psychiatric Emergency Unit at County General Hospital.

Judge George Miram granted Lindo a temporary restraining order Friday that orders the

student not to come within 100 yards of Lindo, her home, her children's school or Carlmont High School. The restraining order is effective until Dec. 5, when the court will hear more evidence and consider granting another, longer lasting restraining order.

Lindo did not return two messages seeking comment. In her statement to the court, she said that "based on his threats, racist comments and past behavior I am afraid for my own safety."

The student was released from the Belmont Hills Psychiatric Hospital on Monday, and will continue his home teaching program.

What's really happening at Carlmont

Probably by now, everyone has heard some version of "what happened at Carlmont." A story was in several newspapers and on television. But that story wasn't the true story. Somewhere there was miscommunication and I am going to tell you, as a Carlmont student, what's really going on at the school.



CARLMONT COLUMN

BY NATASHA CARROLL-FERRANY

On Wednesday, Oct. 22, a Caucasian male's car was broken into on Alameda. Several Caucasian students assumed, with reason or not that the instigator was Latino. A different Caucasian male kicked in the tail-lights of a Latino's car, who had nothing to do with the original break-in. This escalated to a large group of students from Belmont and San Carlos gathered as the East Palo Alto buses pulled away. Only three or four students

from each side said anything, but racist comments were stated. The following day there was graffiti on the wall where the East Palo Alto buses pulled up, such as: "Welcome to the zoo." "Don't feed the animals or the ignorance."

That Thursday, there was tension on campus. No one will deny that. But the truth of the matter is that this issue involved only about 30 students. What about the other 1,450 stu-

dents who had nothing to do with the matter? In fact, the majority of students, including myself, didn't even know about the incident until teachers brought it up. Some people talked about riots, but nothing actually occurred. By the time the media got hold of the story, the tension was essentially gone.

The way the media portrayed the story - as a schoolwide conflict - was blatantly false. Belmont and San Carlos are not comprised of all rich white kids who harass East Palo Alto kids. I am not rich and I have quite a few friends from East Palo Alto. I don't think any one race or community is at fault.

"The media is blowing this out of proportion. Now all these people think that the Belmont kids are making it worse. They're bashing Carlmont for no good

reason. Everything happened last week. They're bringing up an issue that's been resolved," Jaime Johnson of Belmont stated.

Carmen Zaragoza of East Palo Alto said, "A lot of people from East Palo Alto think that it's mostly the white kids but none of them has ever said anything insulting to me. I don't know much about it, though."

The sad truth is we live in a world with racism. Carlmont is a mini-world and although the percentage is small, there are still racist people. There is no way to change how people think. But Carlmont is trying hard to fix what went on with the few people who were involved. It was never unsafe for kids to come to school. The media exaggerated the story. The tension is virtually gone; there are no riots and there never were.

*Carlmont High School
Enquirer Bulletin
Nov 5, 1997*

NOV. 20, 1997

Carlmont High out to allay racial division

Heather Angney
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — An African-American student clambered down the bleachers at Carlmont High School on Wednesday afternoon to join white classmates slam-dancing on the gym floor below. Later, students laughed while teachers boogied to the school's symphonic band, and wild cheers went up for a student demonstrating Hawaiian dance.

These scenes of unity at Carlmont on Wednesday followed a morning of difficult discussion about divisions within the school and came nearly a month after white students hurled racial slurs at minority students getting on a bus to return home to East Palo Alto. The taunts, combined with the vandalism of a Hispanic student's car, were in retaliation

for the theft of a white student's car stereo earlier that day.

Last month's incident prompted new Principal Debra Lindo to organize Wednesday's "Respect Day."

"We're here to unlearn prejudice and learn a little better how respect feels," said the African-American principal, wearing a black T-shirt with "Eracism" splashed in bright yellow letters across the front. "This is a beginning. Today is symbolic of our commitment to unlearn things we maybe should never have learned."

During the morning assembly, guest speaker Michael Pritchard gave students and teachers ideas to draw on throughout the day. "The kid that acts the toughest and the meanest, that's the one in the most pain," Pritchard told the

Please see **Carlmont**, A-19



GEORGE WOLF — Staff

Juniors Jason Chan, 16, and Rebecca Von Horn, 16, dance in their seats while the Carlmont Symphonic Band plays a mid-century jazz piece during Respect Day at Carlmont High School.

OVER



GEORGE WOLF — Staff

Carlmont principal Debra Lindo applauds performers during Respect Day, where different cultures at the Belmont school were brought together in an effort to erase racism.

Carlmont: Pupils look at prejudice

Continued from A-1

packed gym. "Cynicism is scar tissue."

Students then split into groups of about a dozen, and, led by a teacher, a parent and student facilitator, talked about racism and disrespect within the school.

The diverse groups also discovered things that individuals had in common. During one exercise, everyone in one classroom silently stood up to say, yes, they felt uncomfortable when they heard racist slurs or derogatory remarks. When asked to stand somewhere on an imaginary line to indicate the level of respect they thought existed at Carlmont, most stood in the middle.

Many students said tension was aggravated and exaggerated by media attention. The incident last month was an anomaly, some said.

But some of the same stu-

dents said the day's program was needed.

"It think we should do it more often," said one Latina student from East Palo Alto.

The day may not have reached everybody. Some students were silent throughout the small group sessions, and some didn't even come to school. A senior said many of his classmates blew off the day. But when pressed to speak, even a white student who appeared disinterested acknowledged he was upset by the racist incidents he saw at the school.

Students and teachers said some students trade racial slurs in the hallways and cluster in their own ethnic groups on the bleachers during lunch.

Problems aren't new, teacher Shannon Gillogly said. "There's been a problem since busing started," she said. "Deb wanted to get it out in the open and deal with it."

East Palo Alto students — mostly African American, Latino and Pacific Islander — have been bused to Carlmont and other Sequoia Union High School District schools since 1976 when Ravenswood High School in East Palo Alto was closed.

The East Palo Alto students make up about 30 percent of Carlmont's student body.

Busing pits students from East Palo Alto against those from San Carlos and Belmont, some students said.

In the small group sessions, people looked for ways to heal emotional wounds. Students suggested more all-school activities and advocated treating others as they themselves wished to be treated.

"We need to get to know each other," said an African-American student who addressed the entire school in between the music and dance sessions held in the gym at the end of the day.

NOV. 20, 1997

Belmont School Healing Wounds of Racism, Violence

By Marshall Wilson
Chronicle Staff Writer

Students at the Belmont high school that spawned a movie and television show about racism and violence united yesterday to fight the twin evils.

Blacks and whites, Latinos and Asians, nerds, jocks, cheerleaders, band members and science whizzes at Carlmont High School discussed how to respect one another and end the stereotypes that keep them apart.

Principal Debbra Lindo, look-

ing like a student in a T-shirt and faded jeans, kicked off "Respect Day" with a challenge.

"Today we are going to imagine ourselves and our school free of all sexism, free of racism and free of prejudice," she said over a loudspeaker while standing at center court in the packed gymnasium. "I want you to imagine Carlmont a little bit different, a little bit better, than when you left yesterday."

The day off from studies to discuss division resulted from an ugly incident last month. The theft of a stereo from a white student's car

escalated into racial taunting and racist graffiti aimed at the mostly minority students bused to the campus from East Palo Alto.

Carlmont was the inspiration for the 1995 movie and 1996 television show "Dangerous Minds," which depicted a school rife with gangs, racism and violence.

Many students said the school has little in common with its Hollywood portrayal, despite the recent incident.

"They blow it way out of proportion," said freshman Roy Adams, 14, who found the campus

quieter than he expected. "I've never been able to understand why some people can't get along."

Yet some students complained bitterly about teasing, taunting and violence they say is often based on a person's looks or style of dress. The school's 1,500 students are about evenly split between whites and minorities.

Students laughed as comedian Michael Pritchard told stories about his childhood. Then he turned serious, saying it's cruel to pile hurt on top of people.

"Racism is not something you

arrive on the planet with. Prejudice is not something you arrive on the planet with," he said. "Somebody ignorant teaches it to you."

Students then met for discussions in small groups chosen for age, gender and racial diversity. They talked of problems too common at any high school: boys harassing girls, people laughing at anyone who's different, cliques and gangs.

"Nobody gives no respect," complained Sheri Emery, a 15-

BELMONT: Page A23 Col. 3

From Page A17

year-old sophomore. "When you walk down the hall, some kids make fun of you."

As an exercise, each of the 18 or so people in the group was asked to stand if a statement applied to him or her. The result showed that racism is nothing new — and that it might be on the wane.

Many students rose when asked if they've heard racial slurs that made them feel uncomfort-

able. Many girls and a few boys stood when asked if they've been harassed.

But only two students and teacher Mas Hinaga stood when asked who had felt racial tension. Only Hinaga, a graying teacher, rose when asked who has felt singled out because of their race.

Racist beliefs harm those who hold them, Hinaga told the group.

"Out there it's like the United Nations. When you come to school, you need to develop that tolerance for diversity," he said.



BY CARLOS AVILA GONZALEZ/THE CHRONICLE

Comedian Michael Pritchard and Carlmont High School Principal Debbra Lindo clowned around after Pritchard's keynote address

Millard Fillmore's best friend Hunter will retire in January

By Heather Angney
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Almost four decades after he first walked down the halls of Carlmont High School and exactly three decades after he started a contest called by some "a librarian's nightmare," Bob Hunter is graduating.

Hunter is retiring in January after spending 38 years at the school as a teacher and administrator.

"When you reach 38 years, you start to think, what else is out there?" the vice principal said Thursday.

Hunter will be spending more time with his eight grandchildren, puttering around the house doing long-delayed



Hunter

projects, catching trout and reading the morning newspaper — in the morning, finally.

One of the things Hunter may be best remembered for is the Friends of Millard Fillmore Trivia Contest and Hunt.

Every year, about the time of the birthday of the 13th President of the United States, teams of Peninsula high school students search for the

answers to quirky trivia questions and hunt down unusual items.

Last year's hunt required identifying the only actor nominated twice for an Oscar — after his death. (The answer: James Dean, for "East of Eden" and "Giant.") One of the items teams had to retrieve was the autograph of a 1996 California Democratic Party Presidential Electoral College member.

Hunter started the contest 30 years ago when he was looking for a way to motivate students to learn about government, history and geography. At first, just two classes faced off against each other. Now hundreds of students participate.

Contest's fate unknown

Hunter plans to return to school in February for the 30th year of the contest, but he isn't sure what his departure will mean for the future of the contest.

When Hunter leaves, he will take a "library of information" with him, Vice Principal Morgan Marchbanks said. Hunter can do everything from putting on a successful school dance to handling the school budget, she said. Hunter has been a mentor for Marchbanks, good-naturedly teasing her when she makes a rash decision and publicly praising her when she succeeds. He is a patient teacher, she said, drawing from his experience to illustrate how problems have been handled in the past.

Hunter has been at Carlmont since he started his teaching career. When he entered Stanford's teacher education program in 1959, he was placed at the Belmont school, teaching five social studies classes a day.

Return to Carlmont

After a one-year stint assisting the superintendent in the Sequoia Union High School District offices during the 1976-77 school year, he returned to Carlmont to serve as the activities director for nine years. He has been a vice principal since 1986.

Jan. 23 will be his last day of school.

Friends are throwing a party for him Jan. 18. It's called a graduation party, not a retirement party. The trivia contest will be a party theme.

JAN 11 1997
DEC. 6, 1997

Giving to district

"He's given so much to the district and Carlmont," said Linda Teutschel, a party organizer whose two children attended Carlmont. "He's part of the building blocks of the school."

Hunter has developed many close relationships during his long tenure at the school. What he may miss the most, Hunter said, is when Carlmont graduates — some who may have struggled in high school — return to say hello and tell him how his guidance helped them succeed.

Hunter has always looked out for kids having trouble in school, economics teacher and water polo coach Glenn Kovas said.

"He always went the extra mile," said Kovas, who has been at the school one year longer than Hunter. And Hunter never expected to get credit for his extra work, Kovas said.

Racial tolerance a tough subject at Belmont school

■ SCHOOL

from Page 1B

Carlmont's principal since September, Debbra Lindo, has tried to deal with the latest incidents quickly and openly, but even she knows that each new incident opens old wounds. Finding ways to cement a strong school community will take time.

"We have to believe that every day we're just going to keep (working on it)," she said, "and keep getting better."

Commuting to school

Desegregation began in the '60s when local officials pushed for voluntary transfers of black students to formerly all-white schools and white students to Ravenswood in East Palo Alto. But the busing became mandatory when declining enrollments prompted the closure of East Palo Alto's Ravenswood High School.

Since then, about half of East Palo Alto's high school students take a half-hour bus ride each day to Carlmont. Although East Palo Alto students were once mostly black, Latinos are now the majority, with Pacific Islanders the third largest group.

Broquet Wiley was one of the East Palo Alto students who arrived for her freshman year at Carlmont in 1984. Her first year was the worst, she said. Hearing the word "nigger" was not un-

common. "There'd be days you'd come home in tears. As you get older, you learn to choke down more. . . . It was shocking to me that people could be that ignorant, that racist, that mean," she said.

East Palo Alto students found comfort in sticking to their own groups, Wiley said, but it was more difficult for her, she said, because she was soon in honors-tracked classes and often the only black one there. Small numbers of East Palo Alto students in those classes still keep some students from ever having contact with each other.

Toeing the line

Wiley found herself "on the other side of the tracks . . . and once you cross that line, you find there's not really a place for you," she said.

Wiley graduated from San Jose State University and is now an accountant working on a master's degree in business management. When her Carlmont class' 10-year reunion was held recently, she went with a few East Palo Alto students who made it through to graduation in 1987.

While some of the white alumni seemed shy about approaching her — and she saw some of the old hurts surface among her black friends — Wiley now felt able to cross the line with confidence. "I got a chance to talk to (the white) kids — now adults —

to find out they were people, too. I had thought of them as the enemy then."

What struck her was that if they had been able to talk then as they did at the reunion, "We could have been friends."

Ignorance and fear

Amy Tovar could be the flip side of Wiley. White, she came from a San Carlos middle school and arrived on the Carlmont campus two years before Wiley. "No one understood where anyone was coming from," Tovar said. "I would have been scared even to go to East Palo Alto."

Tovar ended up at Stanford University, now a junior majoring in political science. All last year, twice a week, she volunteered as a dance teacher for fourth-graders at an East Palo Alto public school. "Now I think how stupid my misconceptions were and how sad I was going to (Carlmont) with people I never got to know."

Other high schools in San Mateo County and around the state have faced similar changes in the balance of student ethnicities. But Carlmont has special challenges — greater economic disparity between its students and a lack of previous contact in elementary and middle school.

At Menlo-Atherton — a high school in the wealthy white suburban community of Atherton that enrolls the remainder of the

minority students bused from East Palo Alto — a parents group has worked for five years to give students a sense that they all belong.

Building bridges

Called "The Network," the program has used rope-climbing courses, skills workshops, leadership training and student-led activities to forge bridges that seem to have held. The program is now part of a Carnegie Foundation funded study of six California schools with "border crossing interventions."

"We didn't set out to change their best friends," said parent Anne Leahy Jones, a group co-founder. "Maybe there are still going to be little pockets on campus where a certain group has lunch. We are trying to prepare them for the rest of their lives."

Carlmont officials have implemented changes over the years — its curriculum is more sensitive to diversity, students have gone on leadership retreats, and ethnic clubs have formed. Planned campus renovations will soon create a central plaza where students can gather.

June Thompson of the California Association of Student Councils sees the ongoing effort as essential. "The role of education has always been to transmit values from one generation to the next. . . . We can't afford not to address (racism) in the schools."

Carlmont High School
San Jose Mercury
Nov 2, 1997

Racial tolerance, a learning process

Belmont school struggles for unity among its students

BY S.L. WYKES
Mercury News Staff Writer

Laurel Whitnah, Carlmont High class of '96, wasn't surprised when she read about what happened at her alma mater on the Peninsula last week.

A Latino student's car taillight smashed because he was thought to have stolen a car stereo from a white student. A crowd of white students taunting black and Latino students. Racially inflammatory graffiti painted on a building. Student demonstrators harassed with calls of "white power."

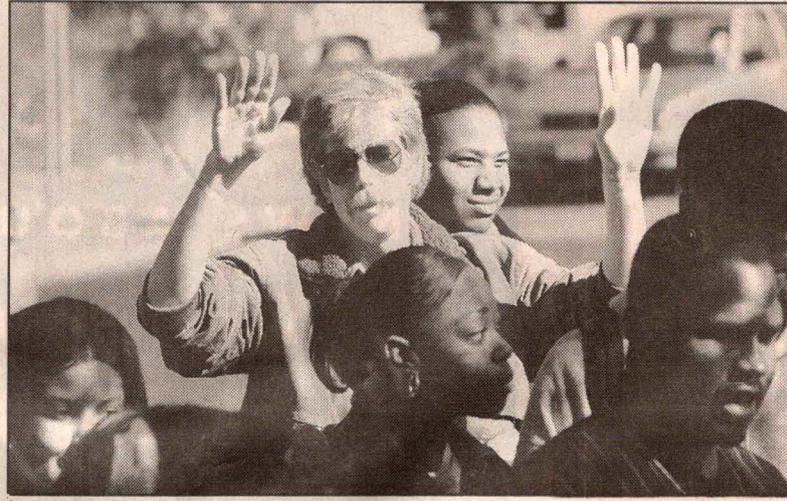
All this at a place that many locals know, despite a fictional name, was the setting of the Hollywood feature film "Dangerous

Minds," which portrayed a class of rebellious multiethnic youth. Some local police still recall the tense times on Carlmont's campus in the '70s over the busing of low-income, minority students from East Palo Alto to the suburban white community of Belmont.

Whitnah, a white San Carlos resident who chose to attend Carlmont instead of a private school for its promise of real-world diversity, now wonders whether it reflects another American reality — desegregation.

True integration has proved elusive after 20 years of varying efforts, say Carlmont alumni from those decades. If students were white, they had one experience. If they were black, Latino or Pacific Islander, they had another.

Violence may be occasional, alumni say, but racial tension — sometimes visible as an "us-and-



TOM VAN DYKE — MERCURY NEWS

Carlmont High School teacher Erick Digre urges students to clear the roadway during a campus conference on racial tension.

them" attitude — has been a troubling constant. Many white students say they spent four years there without ever really

making friends with a student from a different ethnic or racial group.

See *SCHOOL*, Page 2B

TUESDAY: October 28,

Campus racism is 'worse than ever'

Carlmont students want it controlled

By Sarah Weid
STAFF WRITER

BELMONT — Minority students at Carlmont High School are facing increased racism on campus and want the administration to control it, some of the students said at a Monday press conference held just off school grounds.

The East Palo Alto students cited several incidents in the last two weeks, including seeing graffiti reading "Don't feed the monkeys," and "wetback" by white students, and having their cars vandalized. "It's worse than it's ever been," said Carlmont student Maria Rosales. "I feel very unsafe. If this keeps going on, the whole school is going to be out of control."

But school police officer Rick Valencia, who works on campus every day, said he has noticed no increase in racial incidents.

"The biggest problem that we have on campus is not racial. It's rumors," he said.

Principal Debra Lindo, who is African-American and in her first year at Carlmont, said that "racism did rear its ugly head" last week after the car vandalism incident, but that the

Racism: Students criticize Carlmont's administration

Continued from A-1

administration has taken quick steps to deal with the problem.

About 30 percent of Carlmont's student body are East Palo Alto students, most of them either Latino or African American, bused to Belmont every day. Students have been bused to Carlmont and other Sequoia Union High School District schools since 1976 when Ravenswood High School in East Palo Alto was closed. The long commute to school, the resulting lack of parental involvement and the racial diversity of the campus have led to tensions over the years.

Last week as the first bus pulled into school at 7:25 a.m., students say they were met with graffiti reading, "Welcome to the zoo! Do not feed the immigrants and the Black people," and "EPA Apes."

By the time the later buses rolled in the school had removed the graffiti, students said. Valencia confirmed that there was graffiti but said it



GEORGE WOLF — Staff

Debra Lindo, principal of Carlmont High School, assures students Monday that she will not tolerate racism at the school.

read only "Welcome to the Zoo" and that he did not believe it was racially targeted.

Then on Tuesday, after a white student's car stereo was stolen, one of the student's friends retaliated by vandalizing the car of a Hispanic student the boys believed was responsible for the theft, Lindo said.

That afternoon, a group of mostly white boys taunted and yelled obscenities at a busful of students heading back to East Palo Alto, said Lindo and the students.

Students reported hearing the boys chant, "Go home where you came from."

"We don't understand why they're doing this to us," Rosales said.

Students criticized the school administration for not doing enough to keep them informed or to tackle the issue.

"I think it's very wrong that the school isn't trying to do more," said junior Lourdes Best. "I want to see an all-school workshop so we can try to get along."

Halfway through the lunchtime press conference on the sidewalk in front of the school, Lindo approached the students saying, "If you guys want to talk to me about this, come talk to me. I will not tolerate racism on this campus. Period. But you have to help me."

Lindo explained to reporters that following last week's incidents, she met with the faculty, gave all the English teachers lesson plans to help students discuss racial issues and met with students as they got off the buses from East Palo Alto.

She suggested that maybe the

students were more frightened than usual because the administration has been more open about the incidents than in past years.

School officials have interviewed 20 students, Lindo said. Two have been suspended and referred to juvenile probation in connection with the car burglaries and vandalism, Valencia said. Another 12 students have been placed on administrative suspension for the graffiti and name-calling incidents, Lindo said.

Students admitted they did not try to speak to Lindo before the press conference, either individually or as a group.

Nevertheless, the students gathered outside Carlmont on Monday said they were angry and frustrated by what they see as an escalating string of hate crimes. "I was hoping that when we grew up we wouldn't have to put up with this," said sophomore Deborah Simpson.

*Carlmont High School
Oct 28, 1997
Dan 11/20/00 County Times*