

FRANKLY SPEAKING

A NEWSLETTER FOR AND BY MARIN COUNTY EMPLOYEES

25 to 2,500 in 25 Years

Photos by Colleen Weems



Joan Brown and volunteer
Bess Niemcewicz



Intern Coordinator Joy Fossett and
volunteer Joanne Elder

By Colleen Weems—HR

Everything was big—collars, cars, disco, and the huge tax cuts that rocked California government as a result of Proposition 13. It was January 1979 and Marin, with other California counties, sat on the precipice of financial uncertainty following the 1978 passage of the controversial proposition. ■ A creative solution was needed to support the overextended county staff and the ever-increasing workload. It came in the form of a volunteer workforce. **Joan Brown** (HR) left her teaching career for a half-time, 12-week extra-hire position to develop the Civic Center Volunteers (CCV) program. ■ That same month, the county faced its first-ever job action. Skepticism brewed among some that volunteers were being recruited to cross picket lines and replace paid staff. However, CCV was developed with the

philosophy and firm policy that volunteers would supplement, not replace, regular paid staff. Volunteers honored that job action and in 1998, and did not cross the picket lines. ■ Word spread quickly in the community about the fulfilling work available, and amongst the departments about the excellent quality of the volunteers. From the start, the program tapped into the diversity of talent and skills in Marin. ■ Fast forward to today. Disco's been back and gone again. Marin and other California counties again sit on the precipice of financial uncertainty. Volunteers continue to work side by side with county staff to tackle the still increasing workload. Only now, instead of the original 25 talented and enthusiastic volunteers, the county boasts about 2,500—very appropriate for this, the 25th anniversary of CCV. ■ While the jobs have remained

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Fiery Coincidence

By Kellie Moore—Fire

*Editor's Note:
Unbeknownst to Beth
Hostetler when she
sent her thanks to the
Marin firefighters,
her cousin Kellie
Moore, the author of
this article, was an
employee of the
Marin County Fire
Department.*

In the early hours on Monday, October 27, Beth Hostetler and her family looked out their window in the Alpine area of San Diego County, and saw the fire was heading toward their property. As the smoke and flames came closer, the Hostetler family packed up a few things and made their way out of the area. They believed they would lose their home and everything in it. However, because of some Marin County firefighters on the scene, their fears were not realized and their home was saved. ■ As the wildland fires in Southern California spread out of control, the personnel of the Marin County Fire Department (MCFD) geared up, knowing an assignment was imminent. Late on Saturday, October 25, our strike team of engines was called and assigned. A strike team consists of five engines, a utility pickup, 16 personnel, and a strike team leader. For this assignment the strike team leader was Senior Captain **Doug Cole**. He and his assistant, Seasonal Firefighter **Aaron Jarvis**, are regularly assigned to the Woodacre Headquarters Station. Also from the head-

Photo by Beth Hostetler



A Marin County Fire strike team helped battle the Southern California wildland fires.

quarters station was Engine 1566, led by Engineer **Will Corbett**, with Seasonal Firefighters **Keith Wallace** and **John Selfridge**. On Engine 1562, from our Hicks Valley Station, were Captain **Mark Sanders** and Seasonal Firefighters **Ed Buttles** and **Jamal Cook**. From our Marin City station was Engineer **Bruce Schomaker**, accompanied by Seasonal Firefighters **Matt Chan** and **Adam Craig**, in Engine 1563. Captain **Jim Boggeri**, who is assigned to the Throckmorton

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FRANKLY SPEAKING

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Send articles, cartoons, photos, poems, etc., to Joan Brown, Human Resources, Rm. 407. E-mail information to jbrown@co.marin.ca.us or send a disk using Microsoft Word, with hard copy attached. Identify disk with subject, your name and phone number. On photos, include all names and the name of the photographer. Digital photos must be shot at the highest quality setting.

Schedule

Articles Due	Publication Date
March 9	May 14, 2004
June 8	August 6, 2004
September 7	October 29, 2004

Correction: In the last issue, in "Vietnamese Voices Connect," **Augustine Pham** should have been identified as a Social Service Worker II—Bilingual, who provides information and referral for Social Services. **My Huynh**, who is a Child Welfare Worker II—Bilingual with Child Protective Services, was erroneously omitted from the article. Kudos for the good work you both do.



FRANKLY SPEAKING Purpose and Priorities

COMMUNICATION • DIVERSITY • RECOGNITION • EDUCATION • NEWS • FUN • INTERACTION

The Marin County newsletter is intended for internal communication. The newsletter will not include partisan or non-partisan political activity, or issues related to labor disputes and grievances.

Dear fellow County workers,

As we face the significant challenges of 2004, I wish to begin my Presidency of the Board of Supervisors by expressing to each of you how much we appreciate and depend upon your skills and commitment to service in order to deliver on our goal of excellent service for our constituents, the residents and businesses of Marin County.



Photo by Linda Wilkie

No New Year's resolution can make the significant financial shortfalls facing

County government go away, but our Board is determined to address this difficult task with consideration for both our workforce and our customers. President Theodore Roosevelt, when similarly confronted with almost unbearable problems shared his advice: "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." He offered no great promise that could not be delivered upon, but his words are a reminder to all of us that when we act as if we can make a difference, we usually do.

Let's face this year's hurdles together, with a commitment to care deeply about our organization, our community, and each other. The rest will follow as it should.

Steve Kinsey

President, Marin County Board of Supervisors

3 Haiku*

By Bob Beaumont—DPW

Frankly Speaking. Wow.
Cutting edge news, photos, scoops
And now haiku. Slick.

Red tiles, golden trim
And windows up the kazoo.
Endless elbow grease.

The fourth floor's on top
Another six more below.
Could this be Wright, Frank?

**Editor's note: Haiku is a traditional Japanese poetry form having three lines, typically of five, seven, and five syllables; they often have a seasonal reference, and frequently involve metaphor or irony.*

Reporter of the Quarter Award

Each quarter, a *Frankly Speaking* reporter is recognized for his or her extraordinary contribution. For the 2003 fourth quarter issue, columnist **Steve Petterle** (POS&CS) was given the "Perpetual Excellence in Witticism Award." Congratulations, Steve, and keep up the witty work!

Previous 2003 honorees were:

Cindy Roby (BOS), the "Skill + Heart = Outstanding Award," for the third quarter issue
Pam Doerr (H&HS), a special "Above and Beyond Award," for the third quarter issue
Brenda Frechette (H&HS), the "Everything it Takes Award," for the second quarter issue
Ron Kole (formerly with the CAO's Office), the "Excellence Right Out of the Chute Award," for the first quarter issue



Senti Kironde

Path from Uganda

By Jennifer Walter—Treas./Tax

If you have ever experienced computer difficulty on the job and had to call the IST Help Desk for assistance, chances are you've "met" **Senti Kironde**, a tall man with an engaging smile and friendly personality. However, as a child, being a computer technician was far from his mind as a vocation. ■ Senti was born in Kampala, Uganda, where he lived and went to school until age seven. When his parents got divorced, his mother moved him and his two brothers to England. After attending elementary school there for three years, the children were sent to New York City to live with their father. ■ When his father retired, he decided to return to Uganda with the younger members of the family. Senti attended

junior high and high school at a boarding school in Uganda, studying math and physics. Under the dictatorship of Idi Amin, many of the teachers and educators fled the country, and Senti and his classmates often found themselves having to teach math and physics to the younger classes. ■

Because of the growing political unrest, Senti and his mother, who had also returned to Uganda, departed for the United States and initially settled in Kentucky. Asked why they picked Kentucky, Senti said, "It was the last plane stop." Senti and his mother lived in near-poverty conditions in the tiny town of Covington, where he worked and attended Northern Kentucky University for two years. After visiting his brother in California, Senti decided to move here. He settled in Petaluma; when he failed to find a job, he started his own produce trucking company.

Senti started with the county a year and a half ago as a volunteer intern and subsequently was extra-hired.

Senti returned to college, attending Sonoma State University where he earned a degree in computer science.

■ Senti started with the county a year and a half ago as a volunteer intern and subsequently was extra-hired. In his spare time, he likes to hike and work on computers. Asked what he liked best about working at the Civic Center, Senti replied "the people—they are all nice, and I have yet to meet anyone bad!" Senti is proud that his mother, **Jane Bakaluba**, was a Civic Center Volunteer, working as a Senior Peer Counselor for Community Mental Health. ■

Recycling News

Michael Frost (DPW) reports good news on the Civic Center's recycling program. In 2000, the first year that we tracked Civic Center recycling and disposal, CC employees recycled 76.7% of the waste generated. During this same period, the state recycling rate was 42% and County of Marin's was 71% overall. Surpassing even Waste Management staff's predictions of a 1% to 2% increase in the Civic Center's recycling, the year 2002 showed nearly a 5% increase, to 81.4%. Credit goes to all of you who recycle, and hats off to DPW's **Jeff Rawles**, **John Young**, **Michael Frost**, and particularly to the custodial staff for all their assistance and hard work.



Illustration by Phoenicia Thomas

PETTERLE'S PERSPECTIVE

By Steve Petterle—POS&CS

How many are things in your desk that will rhyme? A penny, a nickel, a quarter, a dime? ■ Pencils and markers and pens that write black; erasers and post-its and gum in a pack? ■ Paper and scissors and also a rock; maybe a stapler and maybe a clock? ■ Bands made of rubber, a spare roll of tape; an orange, a banana, an apple, a grape? ■ A spot for your keys, a place for your lunch; a pad for your notes and a multi-hole punch? ■ Files that are old and files that are new; a box full of tissue, a lace for your shoe? ■ A telephone book and a crossword for fun; envelopes, labels, a cinnamon bun? ■ Things that you need when you're having bad days; like pills for your headache or even Roloids? ■ And chocolate, as well, if you're really a wreck; from times when your boss is a pain in the neck. ■ Do you think that I'm being entirely crazy? ■ Or do you believe that I'm growing quite lazy? ■ Rhyming objects in desks is no doubt absurd; still I keep searching for the just right word. ■ Are you tired of this? I'm getting there too. But I cannot stop writing whatever I do. It wears on me even as light fades away; and haunts me in slumber until the next day. ■ Until finally, finally this work I conclude; no more remarks from this poetic dude! ■

To submit your ideas for budget savings, go to the MINE home page. Anonymous suggestions welcomed through March 31.



Employees from Women's Health Services staff the mammography clinics. **Left to right:** Jan Johanson, Nancy Gordon, Claudia Asprer, Martha Nelken, Rose Vigil

United We Scan

By Jan Johanson—H&HS

"This was fantastic. I would never have had a mammogram if I had had to go someplace else." "I felt so taken care of here. It was wonderful to come to a place that is familiar." "I was scared to

have my first mammogram, but everyone made me feel so safe." These were some of the comments of Women's Health Services H&HS clinic clients who participated in the first of many free mammography screening days to be held at the clinic. **Martha Nelken**, clinic Registered Nurse, and **Jan Johanson**, Supervising Nurse Practitioner, said it was definitely a "feel good" day to have been able to offer a welcoming and safe place at the clinic in Montecito Plaza. **Claudia Asprer**, Social Services Worker II, and **Nancy Gordon**, peer educator, made beautiful rose corsages for the women. Fruit and coffee in the morning, lunch at noon, and homemade cookies (by Martha) in the afternoon added a special touch. Sixty-eight

women had a mammogram in August, and 58 did so in November. They were Russian, Hispanic, Chinese, Haitian, and Portuguese women who would have found it too difficult to get a mammogram elsewhere due to transportation and language difficulties. They brought husbands and daughters with them for support. It was a family affair. ■ These mammograms were sponsored by the Athena Foundation and the Latina Breast Cancer Agency. Free mammogram screening will be offered on a regular basis to clinic clients who are over 40 at Montecito in collaboration with the UCSF mobile van. ■ Appointments for the mammogram screenings are made through the clinic at the time of a breast exam. ■

A Village Call

By Pamela Doerr—H&HS

You hear the young toddler crying a lot in the house next door, frequent yelling, people in and out all day and night. You have concerns about what is going on there, and worry about the child. ■ What should you do? ■ This concern can arise for any of us, in any neighborhood, in any community. Most of us know that there is a Child Protective Service (CPS) that we can call, but we don't know who 'they' are, what happens if you call, and most important, what will happen to the children? Is it better not to get involved? You struggle with your beliefs that you should respect others' privacy and worry about what if 'they' find out you called. Wouldn't it be worse if the children are taken away and placed in homes with people who are not their families? ■ You decide to call CPS. You don't know whom you will be speaking to, but you call, and express your concerns. You are asked for additional information, some of which you may know, and some not. You are told "yes, your call will remain anonymous." ■ You speak to an experienced social worker who determines whether you have enough information, if it is appropriate for CPS to investigate, if a child is at risk of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, or neglect. Someone is available

24 hours a day. Your call is one of over a thousand Marin CPS receives per year. When the report is received, it sets a sequence in motion. ■ The intake worker refers your report to a supervisor, who then assesses the level of severity and rapidity of response needed and assigns it to an "ER" (Emergency Response) social worker. The ER worker will then investigate, speaking with you, and others who they can identify who know the family, interviewing the children and family members, and discussing the issues with the parent/s. Some families have unmet needs which cause them stress; social workers frequently are able to provide or locate services to address these needs. Approximately 70% of the reports called in are assessed by an ER worker. Most cases are closed within 30 days because services have been provided, and the problems are being resolved. Some of the services CPS provides to families include therapy, substance abuse counseling, or referrals to rehab programs, day care, and assistance locating community providers who can help with food, rent deposits, or clothing. ■ Sometimes simply providing services is not the answer. There may be ongoing supervision needed. The court may need to be involved, or the children may need to be removed for their safety. ■ After investigation, the social worker decides to place the baby in foster care as his parent is using drugs, and is

unable to parent responsibly for the time being. ■ The ER worker files a petition with the court, gaining temporary custody of the child, who is placed in temporary foster care. The case then is transferred to a social worker in the Family Maintenance/Family Reunification (FM/FR) section for follow-up services. ■ The FM/FR social worker supports parents in resolving unmet needs and issues, helping them return to a point that allows them to have their children back in their home. The goal is that children will remain with their parents, and those children who have to be removed will be reunified with their families if possible. ■ A few weeks later, you later learn that the child you were concerned about was returned home. ■ This child represents all of our community's children, our future. Though CPS is here to help children and families, it cannot be the eyes and ears within the community; that responsibility is up to each community member—it really does take a village. Although the family raises the child, the community must be the support. If you have any suspicion of child abuse or neglect, please call the Child Abuse Hotline at 415-499-7153. Remember, you do not have to determine if your suspicion is justified; the social workers will do that. ■ The most important thing for you to know is that you made a difference in the life of a child. ■

You struggle with your beliefs that you should respect others' privacy and worry about what if 'they' find out you called.

If you have any suspicion of child abuse or neglect, please call the Child Abuse Hotline at 415-499-7153.

Library Beyond Walls

By Bonnie Behun—H&HS

For the increasingly large (and largely hidden) population of homebound seniors in Marin, it is an enormous, if not impossible feat to leave their homes to do the most basic things. Even making a trip to their local branch library may not be an option. ■ A newly launched program, Library Beyond Walls, helps to bring services and materials out of the library and into the homes of these people. Starting in January, volunteers began delivering books, CDs, DVDs, and books-on-tape to Marin homebound seniors (age 55+). The library hopes to expand this service to all homebound residents next year, if funding becomes available. ■ Library Director **Carol Starr** says, "What is truly wonderful about this program is that homebound people are connected to the larger community and to the world through the books, music, or movies that the volunteers can bring them." ■ Volunteers can perform this

service in as little as an hour or so a month, creating a wonderful opportunity for people who work full time but still want to contribute in our communities. Volunteers are trained to use the library catalog system and then are matched with patrons. The usual three-week borrowing period is extended to six weeks for the program participants. ■ The Marin County Free Library, Civic Center Volunteers, and community partner Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion Program, joined to launch the program that matches volunteers with patrons. The program is funded by a grant from the California State Library, one of 60 such grants statewide, focusing on providing library services to people with disabilities. The grant was written by former Administrative Librarian **David Dodd**.

Marge Brinkmann (HR) has been working half-time with **Joan Brown** (HR) in the Civic Center Volunteers' office to develop the program materials and logistics, and to recruit and train volunteers. Library staff who stepped up to serve as Homebound Representatives in their branches are **Sylvia Harris** (Novato), **Bernie Alie** (South Novato), **Becky Andersen** (Civic Center), **Theresa McGovern** (Fairfax), **Chris Prusiner** (Corte Madera), **Elizabeth Cobey** (Marin City), **Dan Carr** (San Geronimo Valley), **Celeste Woo** (Point Reyes Station), **Kerry Livingston** (Stinson Beach), **Liz Robinson** (Bolinas), and **Nancy Hemmingway** (Inverness). ■ Library Beyond Walls services are available to patrons of the Marin County Free Library system who live in areas served by county library branches. Patrons who live in cities with city libraries should contact those libraries for information on similar programs. ■ If you know someone who could use the services of Library Beyond Walls or if you might be interested in volunteering, please call Marge, Library Beyond Walls Volunteer Coordinator, at 499-3253. ■

Starting in January, volunteers began delivering books, CDs, DVDs, and books-on-tape to Marin homebound seniors (age 55+).



Photo by Colleen Weenans

Becky Andersen and Marge Brinkmann

Super Sale of Used Books

By Patricia Hess—Friends of the Marin County Free Library

On Saturday and Sunday, March 13 and 14, the Friends of the Marin County Free Library will hold its fourth annual Super Sale of used books. Those who have come to our earlier sales know what to expect: an estimated 35,000 books sorted into 30 categories, plus better books including art and coffee table books, collectibles, and new releases. There will be a silent auction, too. Newcomers will be amazed! ■ The only real difference this year is the location. We have moved the sale to the National Guard Armory, on Armory Drive off Civic Center Drive, at the far east end of the parking lot (known as the Jury Parking Lot) by the dog park, south of the lagoon. Signs will point the way. ■ There will be a preview on Saturday from 8 to 10 a.m. for members of the Friends, and anyone may join at the door. After that admission is free from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. We'll have our traditional bag sale toward the end, where bags of books will be available at a small price. Tables will be restocked continuously throughout the sale. ■ The Friends is an all volunteer organization. All funds raised go to purchase new books for the



Photo by David Dodd

The 2002 Super Sale. The 2004 sale is Saturday and Sunday, March 13 and 14.

library and to sponsor children's programs. Each branch's Friends support group gets to designate how its earnings—based on its volunteer participation—will be allocated. We welcome all volunteer help. Please call Ruth Arnold at 892-0238 to learn more or to sign up.

Fourteen employees, three children, and four dogs made up the Marin County employee team that participated in the 6th Annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk on Sunday, October 26 in Golden Gate Park. The team met its goal by raising \$1,636 for breast cancer research, education, and patient services. Next year's goal is 24 walkers! ■



Photo by event volunteer

Strides Against Breast Cancer—**Top row:** Misha Miki-Ladner (HR) and children Mitchell, Jordan, and Corrinne; Barbara Layton (IST); Ana Guimoye (H&HS); Valerie Bridges (H&HS); Georgia Wright (HR); Shirley Petersen (Courts) and husband Loren; Amanda Phipps (H&HS); Lani Hink (H&HS); Basia Tolsick Chiappolini (HR) and dog Bella.
Bottom row: Todd Gibson (friend of employee Kathy Koblick), Kathy Koblick (H&HS) and dog Buckle; Jessica Layton (daughter of employee Barbara Layton), dog Nemo; Barbara Leale (IST) and dog Swazie.

Don't forget your Valentine on February 14! Planning to tie a knot are **Jack Kluge** (H&HS) and **Paula Cowan** (H&HS), who met in 1996 when Jack joined the county. While strolling on the pool deck during a Caribbean cruise last January, Jack got down on one knee and proposed marriage to the genuinely surprised Paula. She later divulged, "It was about time!" ■

Newlyweds **John Young** (DPW) and Heloisa Fernanda Dos Santos met in Salvador, Brazil, during the February Mardi Gras Carnival. They were traveling separately with friends; Heloisa was with a coworker who had won festival tickets in São Paulo, a 4-hour flight away. Returning to the U.S., John kept in touch by phone, email, and visits until they were married on November 8 in Jamestown, CA, with a second ceremony planned for March in Caraguatutaba, Brazil. So how's your Portuguese, John? ■

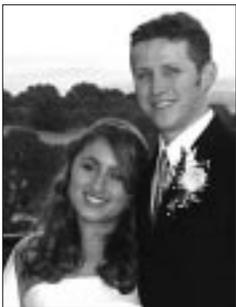


Photo by John Slavin

Heloisa Fernanda Dos Santos & John Young (DPW)

Another couple planning to be alone together (oxymoron?) is **Shirley Petersen** (Courts) and Loren Petersen, who were wed on October 11 in a courtyard behind an old stone settlement house in Hidden Valley Lake (Middleton), and honeymooned at Railroad Park, Dunsuir. ■

Mireille Acheritogaray (Courts) and husband, Robert, celebrated the arrival of their son, Andoni, on August 10, and on September 9, **Lori Marziano** (Probation) and **Fred Marziano** (Sheriff) greeted their new daughter, Sophia. **Matthew Hymel** (CAO) and wife, Dara, welcomed a new baby boy, Aidan, into their family on September 12. **Frances Kennedy** (Courts) is a first-time grandma, thanks to Justin Caise Fortier, Jr.'s arrival on December 9. ■

The Marin Economic Commission gave the 2003 Award of Excellence for Workforce Preparedness to the Marin Employment Connection of H&HS Employment and Training. **Mary Donovan**, H&HS Program Manager, accepted the award as a representative of Marin Employment Connection staff and partners. This award acknowledges the accomplishment of preparing people for the workforce through instruction, internship programs, and other methods, including recruitment, education, and training to create a workplace environment that embraces cultural, language, and ethnic diversity. ■

Champion bowler **Jean Twillman** (Courts) turned in a 600 series (174-205-221) in the Hamilton Ball and Chain League at the Petaluma Bowl. Jean may have been inspired by bowling against a member of the opposing team who had had a perfect "300" game the week before. Jean is member emeritus of the Marin County Women's Bowling Association and was on the board of directors for several years. ■

Congratulations to **Gregory Fearon** (H&HS). Gregory, a former student body president of the College of Marin, was recently presented a College of Marin Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award for 2003. Way to go, Gregory! ■

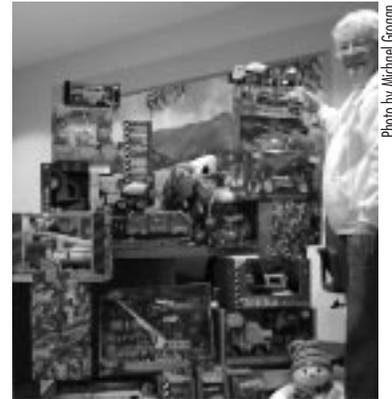


Photo by Michael Grogan

Ann Gregory of the Marin County Retired Employees Association with the toys donated by the Association to the Jeanette Prandi Children's Center.

Nancy Turner (Co. Clerk) reports her office is very happy with the addition of an intern, **Tasha Thompson**, a pre-law student earning college credits by volunteering. In her 2-3 afternoons a week, Tasha answers the telephone, files fictitious business name statements, takes passport photos, and scans and indexes documents. She has also been authorized to issue marriage licenses and deputized to perform marriages, but that opportunity has not yet arisen. You are much appreciated, Tasha! ■



Photo by Chris Barnham

Tom Brown, POS&CS employees Dave Hansen (sadly, behind the microphone but in a great hat), Ron Miska, and Dave Hattem serenade the crowd at the POS&CS holiday party.

Since November of 2002, the Training division of HR has facilitated 37 workshops of 7 *Habits of Highly Effective People* to a total of 625 employees! They have also trained more than 283 managers in the 16 workshops of the 4 *Roles of Leadership*. That's a lot of good habits! ■

Please e-mail information on the people in your dept. to Odds & Ends columnist Margaret Bohan, DPW, mbohan@co.marin.ca.us or fax her at 499-3799.

Wide Sweep to Narrow Big Risks

By Linda Armstrong—H&HS

For years the vending machine has been associated with midday indulgences, quick meals for those on the go, and the high-sugar and high-fat snack foods with which they are traditionally stocked. For a person who wants a quick and healthful snack, the options have been few and far between. We in the Health & Human Services' Nutritional Wellness Program, spearheaded by **Larry Meredith**, have taken the initial steps to change that and to offer more healthful snack options in county building vending machines. ■ "It's a start and it takes time, like turning an ocean liner around," says Larry. "We aren't looking to change anyone's lifestyle completely, but we're committed to offering people healthier choices." ■ The first step was to ensure that 30% of the snacks in the vending machine at the 120 Redwood facilities were healthful snacks; we hope to extend this to the other vending machines throughout county buildings. ■ Larry equates the change to the indoor smoking ban that seemed unheard of in the beginning but eventually grew to be accepted as the norm. One of the challenges has been finding healthful foods appropriate for vending machines. H&HS is partnering with the supplier, Pettey's Vending Service, to find these options. ■ We also began publishing and distributing a health newsletter for employees, *Feel the Difference! Eat Healthy! Be Active!*, which offers healthful tips and recipes. The newsletter will be available soon on the MINE, and can be received via email by contacting larmstrong@co.marin.ca.us. ■ The implementation of

these program elements comes at a time when nutrition-related health problems are at epidemic proportions. Studies show that over the past 10 years there has been an alarming increase in the relative number of overweight and obese adults and children in Marin. Increasingly, pediatricians are seeing children with health conditions and diseases previously only observed in adults—hypertension, Type II Diabetes (formerly called "adult-onset diabetes"), anemia, and hip and joint problems. The combination of inadequate diet and inactivity is taking a massive toll on the health and well-being of our community. A 2001 Community Health Survey indicated that Marin reflects the rest of the nation in rates of obesity—34% of Marin children ages 2–17 are at risk either of being overweight or obese (20% are obese, according to Body Mass Index [BMI] measurements). We cannot afford this trend—it undermines our quality of life. ■ What are we doing at Health and Human Services? State funding has enabled the county's H&HS to develop a nutrition wellness focus and a social marketing program aimed at broad portions of the community, utilizing the Spectrum of Prevention approach. The mission is to create innovative partnerships that improve access to nutritious food and drink, and enable all of us to adopt healthful eating and physical activity behaviors as part of our lifestyle. A Nutrition Task Force was formed that conducted a community nutrition needs assessment and developed a strategic plan. ■



Mary Havener, Jennifer Murphy, Chris Ferguson, May Rodgers

Some of the issues now being addressed include:

- Assessing nutrition needs at schools
- Encouraging all schools to participate in the California Healthy Kids Survey, Physical Health Module
- Developing school food policies
- Providing more locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthful food choices in our schools
- Providing technical assistance to schools and vendors around implementing healthful food options, and meeting SB 677 and SB 19 requirements
- Developing a draft food policy to initiate discussions about access to healthy food and beverage choices in the office or work environment
- Providing nutrition wellness/physical activity education and tips to employees via the Nutrition Wellness campaign; brown bag lunches; Planet Health (an interactive nutrition/physical activity education exhibit); and the new quarterly newsletter, titled *Feel the Difference! Eat Healthy! Be Active!*.

The first step was to ensure that 30% of the snacks in the vending machine at the 120 Redwood facilities were healthful snacks; we hope to extend this to the other vending machines throughout county buildings.

Seven steps toward helping to provide a healthier family and personal lifestyle:

1. Be a role model for children...remember we also have to "walk the talk."
2. Encourage our family to become more physically active. Make a commitment for a daily walk.
3. Eat at least one family meal together—every day.
4. Incorporate more fresh fruit and vegetables into each meal (at least 5 servings a day!).
5. Wear a pedometer—make a personal daily walking goal.
6. Drink more water and 100% fruit or vegetable juice.
7. Get involved! Find out if your child's school has a school food, nutrition, and physical activity policy. If not, find out how you can help develop one by contacting **Linda Armstrong**, H&HS Nutrition Wellness Program, 499-7059.

In addition, H&HS encourages all county departments to incorporate a stretch or activity break into any meeting lasting two hours or longer, and encourages all employees to walk "Ten Thousand Steps a Day." ■

Photo by Stuart Lirette



Back row left to right: Melvin Briones, Marti Rutishauser, Wes Steele, Dan Miller
Front row left to right: Judy Arbini, Caroline Foster, Maureen Brant, Maureen Hogan, Vinnie Nuzzo
Not shown: Yvonne Guenza

Employee Team of the Quarter

By Lydia Fleming—Co. Clerk's Office

Congratulations to the Team of the Quarter, the employees of the Registrar of Voters Office. The team, made up of **Judy Arbini, Maureen Brant, Melvin Briones, Caroline Foster, Yvonne Guenza, Maureen Hogan, Dan Miller, Vinnie Nuzzo, Marti Rutishauser, and Wes Steele**, prepared the county for the historic recall election, followed by a regular election, and is currently working on the March primary election. In addition

to the regular office duties, the team takes on additional work during election time. They contract and train some 700+ countywide election polling place workers, process absentee ballots and registration forms, prepare voting equipment, and certify the election, among other duties. The team works within the election laws of the state constitution and federal law to provide fair and accurate elections ■

Balancing Act

By Pamela Doerr—H&HS

As we kick off a new year, I'm sure more than a few of us have nobly resolved to take care of ourselves, and to maintain balance in our lives. ■ I want to meet the person who lives both a stress-free and perfectly balanced life. I think we all might strive for that, but it takes work and mindfulness. There are probably as many ways to help with stress and balance as there are people who would explain what this means to them. The most common ways we hear of achieving this include the basics we

have heard all of our lives. Eat right, and get plenty of exercise and enough sleep. Although it sounded easy when we were kids, I wonder how many county employees are able now to achieve this regularly. It is so easy to become sidetracked at work with meetings, paperwork, seeing clients, and maintaining schedules. At home we are equally inundated: housework, yard work, taking care of children, and finding time for partners and friends. ■ I asked my H&HS coworkers how they de-stress and maintain life balance. Nearly everyone mentioned exercise. **Amanda Johnsen** performs yoga and meditation, **Cris Taylor** runs and plays golf, **Kirt DeMichiel** works out and lift weights, and **Kim Contreras** takes hula. **Maria Donnell-Abaci** goes shopping and beads, **Michael Coleman** goes to ball games, **Diane Polish** takes time with friends and sees funny movies, **Paula Robertson** gardens, and **Magin Borrajo** does anything outside enjoying nature. I make jewelry and walk. Others like to travel, play musical instruments, listen to music, and use humor. Going for long walks or drives, and leaving the office at lunch also were responses given consistently. ■ The county assists us in many ways. In keeping with the county's

Strategic Plan to support and encourage employees to have a healthful work/life balance, Human Resources provides lists of discounts available toward health club memberships in counties throughout the Bay Area. This offers employees the opportunity to get adequate exercise, which is helpful for body and mind. Many clubs have waived initiation fees for county employees, and some offer discounted monthly fees as well. Several offer yoga, tai chi, and other nontraditional exercise classes. ■ The latest research has found that walking 10,000 steps a day is close to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendation of 30 minutes a day of physical activity. Grab a pedometer, and start counting! ■ The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers various programs to prevent stress and to help address it when necessary. Some of the areas EAP can assist with are short-term counseling to address specific needs, legal counsel, tax consultation, and financial advice. They also help assess child and elder care needs, and pre-retirement planning. ■ Start the new year on a positive note! Make a resolution to use some of these ideas to put more balance into your life. ■

Photo by Janice Hughes



Lisa Lue-Ronconi and Carol O'Keefe (both from the DA's Office) take a stroll around the lagoon near the Civic Center.

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

Photos by Janice Hughes

FRANCIE HUBERT



OCTOBER

Francie Hubert, Support Services Specialist, is an energetic soul with a strong work ethic and a "can do" attitude. She is the front line in the office, staffing the front counter, assisting the public and other agencies, answering phones, and printing out vendor and family support payment checks. She has worked for the Office of the Auditor-Controller since 1996. She never fails to provide individual attention in difficult situations, and takes the time to resolve problems to the satisfaction of all parties involved. She is respectful, compassionate, and serves the public with the true spirit of caring. She has the special ability to juggle the emergency needs of the office with her daily schedule; however, she does it happily. Watching her can leave one exhausted. ■ You cannot help but smile when she bounces into your space. Her coworkers are very proud and honored to work with her, and have designated Francie as "the glue that holds it all together" in the Auditor-Controller's office. ■

By **Suprane Mai**—Aud-Cont.

DR. ANN BUSCHO



NOVEMBER

Ann Buscho, Licensed Mental Health Practitioner with Community Mental Health Services in H&HS, is an inspiration to her clients and her colleagues. Her natural sensitivity and compassion complement her skills as a psychologist working with emotionally disturbed children and their families. Even under difficult circumstances, Ann is able to apply her constructive, problem-solving approach to assist families in distress. Prior to becoming a CMHS employee, Ann worked as a volunteer clinical intern at the Juvenile Hall. Now, as an intern supervisor, she passes on her knowledge and clinical skills to the interns she mentors. ■ Ann puts in that extra effort to support the clinical needs of our clients. Often the first to volunteer for a challenging assignment, she is a member of the Disaster Response Team. Ann and her husband, San Rafael police officer Joel Fay, have six children between them and live in San Rafael. ■

By **Bruce Gurganus**—H&HS

GREG OCELLO



DECEMBER

Greg Ocello has been a fixture in IST since August 1982. He is well known for his friendly manner, hard work, clear communications, and focus on solving problems. These personal characteristics have propelled his career from Computer Operator to Systems Programmer in charge of the county's IBM mainframe. ■ Most recently Greg worked nearly night and day to upgrade the current mainframe system. This system runs the mission-critical county systems: financial (MARS); payroll; justice; and property (TAPIS). Users of these systems enjoy the best "uptime" of any county system. ■ Remember Y2K? Greg was a key player in our successful modification of many systems prior to January 1, 2000. Needless to say, we passed through that without a problem. ■ Greg demonstrates what is required to provide excellence in customer service to his coworkers and is a vital team member of the County of Marin workforce. ■

By **Dave Hill**—IST



Photo by Janice Hughes



2003 Employee of the Year

Ron Johnny's outstanding contributions as Adult Drug Court Coordinator have earned him the distinction of Marin County's Employee of the Year for 2003. Ron coordinates the department activities of the Adult Drug Court, going above and beyond the call of duty to mentor participants and help provide them with a strong support system. The honor brings Ron a \$1,200 award, engraved clock, flowers, and recognition by the Board of Supervisors. Previous winners include **Liz Lewis** (DPW), **Phoenicia Thomas** (Fire), **Claudia Asprer** (H&HS), and **Marilyn Cannon** (Aud-Cont.).

Back row: Curtis and Pancho from Ahmed's Moving **Middle:** Paulette Engler (Co. Counsel), Grace Zhuang (Aud-Cont.), Francie Hubert (Aud-Cont.), Frances Kennedy (Courts), Madelon Murphy (Courts), Marcie Lynch (DA) **First:** Denise Dentoni (CDA), Neva Smith (Probation), Cora Simsuangco (H&HS), Suprane Mai (Aud-Cont.), Sandy White (HR), Sharon Silver (CDA), Dorothy McCarthy (Courts)

Photo by Carol Sewell



Destruction Derby

Your Records Management Committee (RMC) has done it again! In October our "destruction derby" cleared over 900 cubic feet of storage space in the records storage center in Lucas Valley.

The next RMC event will be the weeklong Spring Clean-Up/Dress-Down Week in May 2004. As in past years, county departments will be asked to donate wonderful, generous, and creative prizes for an employee drawing. Participate in at least one "clean up" activity and earn a ticket. Confidential bins and recycle bins will be placed in numerous locations throughout county offices.

The efforts of the annual RMC events have disposed of over 6,600 cubic feet of obsolete records. Over one million cubic feet of records are maintained by the county, so it's important not to hang onto paper records longer than necessary. Mark May 10-14 on your calendars for the Spring Clean-Up/Dress-Down Week. Keep up the good work, Marin County!

Fiery...

Continued from page 1

Ridge Station, was in Engine 1565, with Seasonal Firefighters **Lorne Ahlers** and **John Cunningham**. Captain **Mark Brown** came from our station in Tomales, along with Seasonal Firefighters **Danna Mayer** and **Loui Karlow**. ■ MCFD is one of six contract counties for the California Department of Forestry (CDF), and is a resource that provides mutual aid for wildland fires throughout the state. Every year, the employees of MCFD go to an average of a half-dozen fires outside their local service area. Most times the firefighters and the residents

never meet, nor does one know anything about the other. To the firefighters, it is just part of the job. The residents feel a tremendous amount of gratitude that they often don't get to express. ■ Strike Team 9150-C left Marin County at approximately 11:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 25. They headed to their staging area at Del Prado Conservation Camp in Chino, CA. After being briefed, they were assigned to the Cedar Fire at Ramona, CA. After some rest they went into the fire lines on Monday, October 27, protecting structures between the areas of Lakeside and Alpine along Interstate 8 for the next 24 hours. During this time they worked with a team of CDF firefighters. They saved well over a dozen

houses and other buildings on this day, including the Hostetlers'. ■ Beth Hostetler's father had been a retired Fire Inspector for the San Francisco Fire Department. Beth grew up in Terra Linda and was grateful for Strike Team 9150-C from Marin County that saved her home in San Diego County. ■

Photo by passerby



Left to right: Adam Craig, Keith Wallace, Lorne Ahlers, John Selfridge, Ed Buttles, Matt Chan, Jamal Cook, Bruce Schomaker, Danna Mayer, John Cunningham, Loui Karlow, Mark Sanders, Jim Boggeri, Will Corbett, Mark Brown
Not pictured: Doug Cole and Aaron Jarvis

Roving Reporter

By Connie Siebler—Assessor's Office

"What are the challenges of working in inclement winter weather?"

Larry Kay (DPW, Roads) says, "Sometimes all hell breaks loose. There are slides, trees are falling down, roads flooding. Without us, even police and fire can't get through. I like how we all pull together as a team to get the roads open. It's an adrenaline rush. What I dislike are three things: flagging in the cold rain, water in my boots, and it's hard to find a good cup of coffee at 3:00 a.m."



Photos by Connie Siebler

Rick Ebert (DPW, Roads) declares, "I like everything! This time of year, we do everything from opening roads, to trees, to sanding when it's icy. We're very busy. There's nothing I don't like. If I didn't like it, I wouldn't be here, going on 15 years."



Chuck Edwards (DPW, Roads) says: "We're busy taking care of complaints and making sure the catch basins are clear. Doesn't matter if you wear rain clothes or not, you get just as wet either way. There's a lot of diversity, trees down, flooding. It makes it challenging. We get a fair amount of calls at night. I miss out on a little sleep, get a little cold, wet. That's tolerable."



Dale Patterson (DPW, Roads) conveys, "We get called night or day. If there aren't any slides, we do maintenance to make sure everything stays clear. When we're working at night, maybe four or five of us might be out on Panoramic Hwy, cars come flying down the road at 1 or 2 a.m. That's the worst, trying to hear what's coming down the road and still do your job."



25 Years...

Continued from page 1

meaningful and valuable, the faces of the volunteers have gradually changed. "The program has consistently reflected the demographics of the community," explains Joan. "We began in the era of women's lib when a lot of our volunteers were re-entry women. Today we see more experienced retirees, along with our traditional volunteers." Volunteers work anywhere from a few hours a month up to three-quarter time, and some have worked 20 years or more! ■ Supervisor **Annette Rose** (BOS) notes, "Under the energetic guidance of Joan Brown and her staff, our volunteers have done a phenomenal job augmenting the work of our county staff. In addition to saving us money and enhancing our effectiveness as an organization, the Civic Center Volunteers program gives people a wonderful chance to be involved in local government." ■ Joan credits the continued success of the program to its professional approach to volunteerism. Volunteers complete a contract, have a job description, are trained, and are incorporated into all areas of local government. While some claim Joan has an "uncanny knack" for making just the right match between the job and the volunteer, she says the match emerges from the initial in-depth interview. ■ "One of the things I love most about my job is working with paid staff. They are creative people looking for avenues to expand, increase efficiency, and try new ideas," says Joan. "Working with inspired employees inspires the volunteers...and me." ■ CCV has also served as an unofficial recruiting resource for the county. Many volunteers eventually have been hired on as paid staff. **Heidi Davaloo's** first job in the U.S. was as a volunteer in the Auditor-Controller's Office in 1997, before being hired in DPW. **Mort Tallen**, retired from a 35-year career in services to veterans, volunteered for two years in Veterans Affairs, and was hired as Veterans Services Officer. That was 1983, and Mort says he is still thoroughly enjoying his unexpected second career. Some other volunteer-

turned-employees include **Eleanor Bloch** (Probation), **Otis Bruce** (DA), **David Brunhofer** (CDA), **Michael Frost** (DPW), **Marc Isaacs** (DPW), **Miriam Martinez** (BOS), **Irina Popova** (IST), **Kimberly Pitman** (H&HS), **Jeremy Tejirian** (CDA), **Jean Twillman** (Courts), **Gayane Tonoyan** (Aud-Cont.), **Tad Zakrocki** (DPW), and **Barbara Zett**, (DPW). ■ CCV's scope of responsibility has steadily grown beyond the core volunteer program. Recognizing the critical need for job training for people with persistent mental illness, in 1995 Joan proposed the concept of the Job Coach Program to **Diane Slager** (CMH) and together they developed this nationally recognized model. CCV was also a driving force in the establishment of the Marin County Gift Shop. ■

"In addition to saving us money and enhancing our effectiveness as an organization, the Civic Center Volunteers program gives people a wonderful chance to be involved in local government."

The CCV team now includes **Colleen Weems** who helps coordinate the volunteer program, production of the *Volunteer View* monthly newsletter, and *Frankly Speaking* (started by Joan in 1996). **Marge Brinkmann**, working on a grant-funded contract, coordinates the newly launched Library Beyond Walls Program (see pg. 5), and **Joy Fossett** is the half-time coordinator of the thriving Internship and Employee Length of Service programs. Volunteers **Vivienne Freeman**, **Bess Niemcewicz**, and **Joanne Elder** are administrative aides in the CCV office. **Shirley Trimble** writes profiles for the *Volunteer View*, Probation retiree **Bill Pryor** copy edits *Frankly Speaking*, and **Leslie Miller** helps proofread it. **Mary Corvello**, **John Hutchinson**, **Shahin Momtazi**, and **Tony Walsh** staff the Civic Center's information booth. ■ Throughout its 25-year history, the positive impacts of CCV have been well-documented and lauded locally and nationally, including being featured on the *Osgood File* on CBS. It also was the first recipient of the National Association of Counties' Acts of Caring Award, presented in

Photo by Joan Brown



Volunteer Vivienne Freeman, Colleen Weems, and volunteers Bill Pryor, Shirley Trimble

Washington, D.C., in 2000. ■ The \$7 million in volunteer services and more than 207,000 volunteer hours last year tell only part of the story. The rest of the story is in how lives have been impacted. Volunteers have helped people transition from the hospital to the home, helped others through end-of-life issues, helped launch an arbitration and a mediation program, written procedure manuals, planned events, coached those with mental illness back to work, taught library patrons how to use the Internet, cleaned parks, increased the efficiency and speed of service through clerical support in countless offices, counseled children and families, worked with at-risk people in the legal system, helped prepare for the fair, and on and on. ■ CCV is a crucial community link. The county receives valuable expertise, energy, and efficiency. Volunteers become part of the process of local government, finding creative and meaningful channels for their skills. They then serve as ambassadors back to the community—helping make local government 'us' instead of 'them.' ■

Joan credits the continued success of the program to its professional approach to volunteerism. Volunteers complete a contract, have a job description, are trained, and are incorporated into all areas of local government.

Photo by Colleen Weems



Information Booth volunteer John Hutchinson answers questions for Civic Center visitor Jim Van Sickle.

Frankly speaking – a few good people

Rare opportunities are currently available on the *Frankly Speaking* Editorial Board and Reporters' Team to help influence the county's culture and expand your collegial relationships with employees in other departments.

Editorial Board

The eight-member *Frankly Speaking* Editorial Board has two seats open. We seek enthusiastic, big picture, and forthright employees who wish to lend their insight and opinions to help guide the editorial direction of the newsletter. Board members play a key role in ensuring quality content while preserving the interests of the employee readership. Members read the comprehensive packet of newsletter submissions prior to each meeting, offer editorial guidance, and provide input from the employee perspective. The quarterly meetings for this year are Mondays from 1 to 4 p.m. in the Civic Center on March 15, June 14, Sept. 13, & Dec. 6. Since we meet only four times a year, 100% attendance is expected. Diversity of position, location, background, and point of view is important to the composition of this board. ■



If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Managing Editor Joan Brown at 499-7167, or email jbrown@co.marin.ca.us before Feb. 13.

Reporters

Frankly Speaking reporters are the eyes and ears of the county's departments and are depended upon to bring forth features and human interest ideas for each issue of the newsletter. The quarterly reporters' meetings are lively collaborative sessions in which the diverse group of reporters further story development, and plan for future issues. Meetings are from 1 to 2:30 p.m. in the Civic Center on the Wednesdays prior to *Frankly Speaking* publication dates (May 12, Aug. 4, & Oct. 27 this year). All applicants are welcome, and we especially encourage employees working outside the Civic Center to apply. ■



Proofreader

Do you love parallel construction, commas, semi-colons, spelling, capitalization, checking sources, consistency of form, and all the other details of publication production? If so, we've got a job for you as part of the proofreading team!



If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Managing Editor **Joan Brown** at 499-7167, or email jbrown@co.marin.ca.us before Feb. 13. ■

WELCOME FAREWELL!

Welcome to new employees, listed in order of hire date from August 31 to November 22, 2003

Name	Title & Department
Phyllis Gray	Assessment Recording Tech. I, Assessor
Dawn Barbour	Communications Dispatcher I, Sheriff
Caroline Albee	Communications Dispatcher I, Sheriff
Justin Swift	Deputy Sheriff Trainee, Sheriff
Rebecca Dawson	Public Health Investigator, H&HS
Wesley Whalon	Public Health Nurse, H&HS
Quianne Hunter	Assessment Recording Tech. I, Assessor
Melissa Van Kirk	Mental Health Practitioner, H&HS
My Huynh	Child Welfare Worker II-Bilingual, H&HS
Nicki Azarbakhsh	Executive Assistant to CAO, CAO
Nicole Livingston	Mental Health Practitioner, H&HS
Anna-Maria Munoz	Child Welfare Worker II, H&HS
Shannon Chamberlin	Appraiser I, Assessor
Daniel Miller	Elections Clerk I, Co. Clerk
Jamaine Randle	Deputy Sheriff Trainee, Sheriff
Joanne Fisher	Nurse Practitioner, H&HS
Miguel Garza	Eligibility Worker I, H&HS
Cecilia Castaneda	Eligibility Worker I-Bilingual, H&HS
Geraldina Hidalgo De Romero	Eligibility Worker I-Bilingual, H&HS
Melvin Briones	Computer Technician, Co. Clerk
Lawrence Beaton	Assistant Engineer, DPW
John Aliotti Jr.	Technology Support Analyst II, DA
Todd Pressley	Building Maintenance Worker I, DPW
Anthony Kwong	Intermediate Clerk/Typist, H&HS
Sue Cipolla	Assessment Recording Tech. I, Assessor
Carole Pollard	Mental Health Practitioner, Probation
Catherine Williams	Mental Health Practitioner, Probation
Queta Vargas	Mental Health Practitioner, Probation
Catherine Pfister-Cherin	Child Welfare Worker II, H&HS
James Raives	Sr. Open Space Planner, POS&CS
Jennifer Pagram	Park Ranger, POS&CS
Robert Monroe	Cadastral Mapping Technician, Assessor
John Curley	Assistant Engineer, DPW

Farewell to Retirees!

Billy Davenport	Custodial Leadworker, DPW
John Machado	Sr. Road Maintenance Worker, DPW
Margaret Hanafin	Certified Nurse Midwife, H&HS
Barbara Powers	Legal Process Specialist, Sheriff
Jeffrey Davidson	Manager, Family Court Services, Courts
Charmaine Derham	Appraiser II, Assessor
Ben Dresden	Director of Information Services/Technology, IST
Nancy Gasser	Special Invest. Supervisor, H&HS
Dick Bates	Sr. Custodian, DPW
Roy Green	Courtroom Clerk, Courts
Carolyn Schwab	Eligibility Assistant, H&HS
John Loll	Transit Manager, DPW

Farms online?

Yes, thanks to the new University of California/Farm Advisor sponsored website, www.growninmarin.org. The site offers information on Marin's rich agricultural resources and products. Check out the site to learn more about Marin's farms and ranches, Marin-grown products, farm stays and tours, and even to find schedules for local farmers' markets.