

FRANKLY SPEAKING

A NEWSLETTER FOR AND BY MARIN COUNTY EMPLOYEES

The Fright Before Halloween

By **Byron Toma**—County Counsel's Office

'Twas the time past Indian summer
And Matthew's gals and guys
Had tucked away the county budget
Along with deep sighs.

The audits were filed,
And indexed with care,
With confidence the state controllers
Wouldn't find any problems in there.

And mid-managers were immersed
In an alphabet stew:
E.R.P.¹, S.A.P.², and M.E.R.I.T.³ too!

Wastepaper baskets were laid out
Under the roof canopy halls
as Risk Management braced
for the seasonal rainfalls.

¹ Enterprise Resource Planning

² Systems Applications Programs

³ Marin Enterprise Resource Implementation Team

When suddenly we hear shrieks, howls,
And such a loud hullabaloo,
Was it that witchy Joan Brown?
Or rescues from the New Orleans Zoo?

With a green face and "tude"
Like a witch AWOL from Oz,
HR's resident cheerleader
Offers candy to "mummies" and "paws."

Each year this rings in a
Special time to give thanks,
To count the blessings
Of the good times in our close ranks.

To think of the friendships,
companions in mirth,
To extend goodwill, compassion,
and hope for this earth.

Thanks to the dreamers
Who mentor our souls,
Who are always there for us
As we strive for our goals.

Thanks to the kind ones
Who stand ready to share
in sadness and sorrow
and the joys oh so rare.

Thanks to the heroes
Whose passion inspires,
Who show purpose and resolve
And give fuel to our fires.

Thanks for the chance
To earn the esteem of our peers,
To challenge ourselves, and
Conquer our fears.

Being thankful is something
We can all very easily afford.
The question now is whether
This poem will pass the ed. board.

Sweet Success Takes Teamwork!

By **Jody Timms**—H&HS

Did you know diabetes is on the rise in the United States and that November happens to be National Diabetes Month? There also happens to be a terrific multi-disciplinary team of Marin County employees that works hard to screen, control, and prevent diabetes, particularly in pregnant women, nearly every day of the year. ■ The

talented and bilingual professionals who form the Sweet Success program at Women's Health Services (WHS), Health and Human Services are: **Leighann Jorin**, Senior Public Health Nurse and Program Coordinator; **Linda Jadeson**, RD and Certified Diabetes Educator;

Lourdes Quinonez, Clinic Nurse; **Rosa Maria Ortiz-Gruhn**, Licensed Mental Health Practitioner; and **Mark Jacobs**, OB-GYN and WHS Medical Director. ■

Sweet Success is an innovative, federally funded, state-wide program that strives to reduce maternal and infant mortality and morbidity in high-risk pregnant women who have or develop diabetes during pregnancy. Through early diagnosis, education, nutrition, and psychosocial and medical services, complications associated with pregnancy and diabetes can be reduced significantly. Unfortunately, the most common symptoms of diabetes (see the insert box) are often not overtly recognizable in pregnant women and must be screened for through laboratory tests done at 26 weeks of pregnancy (or earlier if there is any family or personal

Typical Signs & Symptoms of Diabetes*

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Frequent urination | Excessive thirst |
| Increased hunger | Blurred vision |
| Unusual weight loss/gain | Fatigue |
| Sores that do not heal | |

* You may have some or none of these!

history or obesity). ■ About 15% of the 600+ babies delivered by WHS staff in 2004 were born to women with controlled diabetes; theoretically, these children are now less likely to develop diabetes themselves as they grow up. WHS data over the last 10 years shows mothers with diabetes who participate in the Sweet Success program have excellent pregnancy outcomes. ■ When diagnosed early, diabetes is often easily manageable through good diet, exercise, and teamwork. If you or a loved one are at all concerned, see your primary health care provider as soon as you can. Success can be sweet! ■

Photo by Mark Jacobs



L to R: Client Nancy Cen with Linda Jadeson, RD and Certified Diabetes Educator

FRANKLY SPEAKING

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Reporter of the Quarter: Janice Hughes

Schedule

| Articles Due | Publication Date |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Tuesday, November 29 | Friday, February 3, 2006 |
| Tuesday, March 7 | Friday, May 12, 2006 |
| Tuesday, June 6 | Friday, August 4, 2006 |

In Memoriam

George "Wes" Steele passed away unexpectedly on July 18, 2005. Wes worked for 25 years in the county Elections Department and is missed by those of us who were fortunate enough to know and work with him. We were his family and he was a part of ours. We loved this kind man and enjoyed his sense of humor.

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.

They Wuz Framed

By Sue Kettmann—H&HS

December 1–7 is National Tolerance Week, and the Health and Human Services Cultural Competence Committee is on the move again with an exciting project to help its clients and nearly 800 staff keep the richness of diversity in mind at their work sites. A variety of posters will be displayed so clients and staff can admire their beauty and messages of acceptance



L to R: Committee members Mark Young, Lorraine Jackson, Lori Goldwyn, Sue Kettmann

and cultural value. Frames were purchased to protect the artwork and to underscore the permanence and importance of the messages they contain. ■ The project began last year with the purchase of 50 art posters. Recently, eight members of the committee got together for a "framing party," where they shared lunch and the task of assembling 70 more posters into frames for distribution. ■ The committee acknowledges that the artwork does not, in and of itself, create a culturally competent organization, but it is one of many approaches to move the department further along in its journey to greater understanding. ■ A total of 120 posters have been purchased, framed, and spread throughout our work sites by the Cultural Competence Committee. ■



Cio Hernández

Welcome to the *Frankly Speaking* Editorial Board

Cio Hernández, MFT, is a Bilingual Adolescent Mental Health Practitioner for the Teen Clinic of Marin County's Department of Health and Human Services. She also sits on the Institutional Review Board for Kaiser Foundation Research Institute, is a commissioner for the Marin Children and Families Commission, teaches human diversity at Dominican University, and has a six-year-old son.

Customer Service is Job One

By Yoj/Joy Snyder—HR

Charnel Benner, a Retirement Plans Administrator in Greenwich, CT, wasn't looking to make a move. But, when she saw Marin's ad for the position of Retirement Administrator, she thought, "If there was anywhere else I would want to live...it would be the Bay Area." ■ The Bay Area wasn't the only attraction. She found that "the department is very well run, the staff is fabulous, and the board works very hard." Now that she's here, her plan is to "basically continue in that same tradition, emphasizing customer service." Her MBA from Columbia University and 20 years' experience in financial planning should stand her in good stead to do just that. ■ Charnel and her 12-year-old German shepherd, Arbar, are settling into their new home in San Rafael, where she indulges her "passion for cooking, food, and wine." She is enjoying the discovery of the diverse culinary offerings here. "I went on a walk the other night, and just around the corner, I spotted an Afghan restaurant! I am truly delighted to be in Marin." ■



Charnel Benner, Retirement Administrator

Chief P. O., A Man with a Plan

By Jennifer Walter—Treas/Tax

After 30 years as the Chief Probation Officer for Humboldt County, **Bill Burke** has found a new home, as the Chief Probation Officer for Marin County. Bill recently joined the ranks of Marin County employees and replaces retired **Michael Robak**. Bill is eagerly looking forward to bringing to Marin the fruits of his previous experience, as well as working to continue the policies established by his predecessor. ■

"Philosophically, there's little difference between the two counties," says Bill.

"Both counties believe that strategic thinking and planning can enhance performance." While Humboldt had no official strategic plan, Bill and his staff implemented their own objectives for improving services through collaboration and partnerships with educational and business community organizations. Says Bill, "Marin's Strategic Plan is in line with the way I look at things." ■

He feels that crime hurts not only the victims and their families, but also offenders, their families, and the community. "If the Probation Department can provide encouragement and support for individuals to return to their families and communities as productive



Photo by Janice Hughes

Chief Probation Officer Bill Burke

citizens, instead of prison, then the benefits are realized by a far greater number." ■ Born in the Midwest and raised in Southern California, Bill moved to Humboldt County to complete his undergraduate studies and master's degree at Humboldt State University. After graduation, he began work at juvenile hall, then worked his way up through the ranks.

■ Bill's partner, Catalina Nocon, has taken a position as a principal at an elementary school in Marin. They are living in San Francisco while making arrangements to land permanently in Marin. Bill likes to ski, play racquetball, bike, and read. ■



PETTERLE'S PERSPECTIVE

By Steve Petterle—P&OS

In our last lesson, we discussed creating memos that are clear and concise. In this installment, our subject can be summed up with one word: appropriate punctuation. All writing, including memos, must have appropriate punctuation if the reader is to understand the document. While commas, periods, and question marks are fairly well understood, there are finer points of punctuation that give some people trouble. Here are three of the more obvious examples:

Colon. Quoting from *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, the colon "is a rhetorical mark of supplementation." Therefore, use a colon whenever a rhetorical mark of supplementation is required. When a rhetorical mark of supplementation is not required, use different punctuation. ■

Semicolon. The semicolon, unlike the lesser known quasi-colon, is actually considered to be a type of colon. Many experts believe that the semicolon corresponds to half a colon, but some dispute this assumption, indicating that the prefix "semi" could also identify a partial colon. Nonetheless, grammarians generally agree that the semicolon represents at least a quarter-colon, and almost certainly more. To be safe, a semicolon may be used where either a partial-colon or a half-colon is required, but never in place of a full colon. Where two or more colons are necessary, consider the use of a multi-colon. ■

Quasi-colon. The quasi-colon is kind of like a colon, but it's not a colon. It is also not a semicolon. In fact, the quasi-colon is no longer a legitimate form of punctuation. Do not use a quasi-colon where a rhetorical mark of supplementation is required nor in a sentence or paragraph that calls for any portion of a colon. ■ In the next session, we'll learn why the Exclamation Point is not really a point at all. See you there! ■

Illustration by Phoenicia Thomas

Social Services' New Leader

By Sue Kettman—H&HS

Photo by Sears



Charlene Reid

The Health and Human Services Department welcomed **Charlene Reid** to its executive team this fall, following the retirement of **Jane Chopson**,

Assistant Director of H&HS, Social Services Division. ■ Charlene joined the department in October after relocating from San Luis Obispo County where she was a Social Services Manager. Prior to that, she was a supervisor with Placer County Health and Human Services and a licensed clinical social worker in

private practice. ■ Charlene has a BA in psychology/counseling from CSU Chico and a master's degree in social work from CSU Fresno. She brings a strong background in customer service and best practices, particularly in welfare redesign, as she takes over management of the department's largest division with services spread throughout the county. She resides in Marin County, and has one grown daughter. ■ While retirements are always challenging within an organization, the addition of Charlene to the H&HS Executive Team demonstrates the use of change as an opportunity for incorporating new ideas and fresh energy. ■



L to R: Gaile O'Connor (PD), Commissioner Randolph Heubach (Courts), Mark Young (H&HS), Bryan Lambert (standing) and Matt Murphy (Probation), Elizabeth Dandenell and Liz Stires (H&HS), Ronnie Wagner (DA)

Prop. 36: Treatment, Not Jail

By Liz Stires and Mark Young—H&HS

Jennie's Story: "I was arrested 23 times in one year!" Jennie spent the first few years of her life in an upper-middle-class family, but her mother was an addict-alcoholic with severe mental health problems. Her parent's marriage fell apart when she was nine years old, and her mother began pursuing a life of active addiction. Jennie and her siblings were often out of school, roaming the streets, and joining their mother in regular use of drugs, including crack cocaine, which eventually became Jennie's drug of choice. ■ An exceptionally bright and creative woman, Jennie was eventually able to address her own addiction, complete treatment, and stay sober for six years during her thirties. She was trained as a phlebotomist, and had a daughter at that time. However, her mother continuously showed up on her doorstep, high and homeless. Jennie tried to save her, giving her money, shelter, and support.

Her own needs were buried under her responsibilities to her infant daughter and her mother, and her recovery eroded. ■ Eventually Jennie relapsed and was soon smoking crack and turning tricks to support her habit just as she had done six years before. The madness of active addiction resumed. Finally her home was broken into, her belongings were stolen, and she was brutally raped. Her five-year-old daughter lived with Jennie's clean and sober boyfriend at the time. When the police finally raided her apartment, she was relieved to be taken to jail. ■ Although her drug use involved criminal activity, Jennie clearly was more in need of treatment than punishment. She was found to be a candidate for participation in the Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act of 2000 (SACPA) program, passed as Proposition 36 by an overwhelming 71% of Marin voters. This proposition requires that non-violent drug offenders be sentenced to treatment instead of jail. Funding for the

program is provided entirely by the state. Local implementation of Prop. 36 is a collaborative effort of Health & Human Services, the Public Defender's Office, the District Attorney's Office, the Probation Department, and the Courts. Marin recently instituted a dedicated court calendar where only Prop. 36 cases are processed. Prop. 36 participants begin attending the special court for orientation shortly after sentencing. A treatment plan is developed by a clinical coordinator. They return for a second orientation and for graduation, and may return for a "status hearing" in the event of treatment failure or other problems. ■ Marin has served over 350 defendants who otherwise might not have received treatment. Treatment success is comparable to that of the general treatment population. ■ The legislation which developed and funds the SACPA program is due to sunset in June 2006. Additional legislation has been introduced to continue both the program and its funding. ■ As for Jennie's story: with the help of SACPA, Jennie completed residential treatment at Marin Services for Women, and received focused therapy for her extensive history of trauma and abandonment. She was assigned a SACPA case manager who helped her find an apartment and employment, and re-establish adequate visitation rights with her daughter. As the result of her participation in this program, Jennie has been clean and sober for two years, is an active part of her daughter's life, and is a productive member of her community. ■

Jail Break

By Bob Beaumont—DPW



Renovation of old jail

More space is coming! If you work or spend time in the Civic Center, you are probably aware that most departments are feeling the need for additional space. The former county jail, long hidden behind Room 270 on the second floor of the Hall of Justice, soon

will provide another 9,000 square feet of office space. ■ The jail complex was part of the original Hall of Justice completed in 1969. It consisted of both a women's jail and a men's jail and had a

kitchen, mess hall, and outdoor exercise yard. The women's side of the jail was renovated in 1999 and was used by Health and Human Services until their recent move to 120 N. Redwood. The men's jail has remained empty since the new county jail was built in 1993. ■ The entire original jail is now being prepared for transition into a modern office space, with work proceeding in two phases. The first phase, currently underway, is demolition of the old jail cell bars, the concrete walls between the cells, and all the other old fixtures, converting the space into a very large open area with an arched roof rising to about 15 feet at its midpoint. ■ The second phase will be construction of tenant improvements tailored to the needs of the

future occupant, who has not yet been selected. The space will have a great view to the east as it looks over the lagoon with the bay in the distance. It is anticipated that the space will be completed and occupied next summer. ■ The project manager is **Larry Beaton**, who works in the Capital Projects Division of the Department of Public Works (DPW). Larry's leadership is supported by the excellent work of a team consisting of **Jennifer Orton**, **Anne Ording**, **Pat Cunningham**, **Chip Banks**, **Mike Norton**, **Rich Wallace** (all DPW), and **Edie Lawrence** (Sheriff). ■ This new and exciting use of the former jail is the first step in providing additional space. Longer-term planning efforts continue in order to address ongoing space needs for county staff. ■

Making Marin More Accessible

By Margaret Bohan—DPW

December 3 is the United Nations International Day of Disabled Persons, celebrating efforts everywhere to ensure that persons with disabilities are accommodated. ■ **Rocky Burks**, Disability Access/ADA Coordinator, leads the county to provide accessibility to persons with disabilities. He recently trained various departmental staff in the requirements of federal and state legislations and regulations, helping to bring people with disabilities into the mainstream. ■ The U.S. government passed the Rehabilitation Act in 1973, followed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990. In compliance with these laws, California legislation requires that "all programs, services, and activities that are provided for or funded by the counties must be accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities." ■ Rocky believes passionately in the value of support services for the disabled. "I'm a person with a hidden disability, having suffered a severe head injury at age nine," he says. "I really don't have a recollection of my childhood, and I had

to go through a new learning process."

■ Rocky served during the Vietnam war as an instrument flight instructor for the air force. After his tour of duty, he studied to be a veterinarian, but opportunities kept appearing for him to find support services for veterans, particularly disabled servicemen, to help them readjust back into the mainstream. He worked for Easter Seals and the Chico Center for Independent Living before becoming the county's first full-time ADA coordinator in 2003. ■ Bringing the necessary changes to the county is a huge task, involving not only modifications to programs, services, and activities, but also to buildings and other infrastructure, such as sidewalks, curbs, and traffic signals. The Public Works Department ensures that engineering projects in the unincorporated area of the county and that capital improvements in county-owned buildings comply with ADA requirements. The Real Estate Division monitors the lease of properties. The Building Inspection Division of Community Development Agency (CDA) enforces accessibility

compliance by private developers. CDA promotes affordable, accessible housing, and Health and Human Services staff ensures that program services are accessible to those who are eligible. In addition to departmental cooperation, the Board of Supervisors and County Administrator's support is of critical significance in ensuring the success of these measures. ■ These combined efforts bear fruit as Marin County strives to provide full equal rights to our citizens with disabilities. ■



Photo by Janice Hughes

ADA Coordinator Rocky Burks

Getting a New Start

By Jose Varela—Public Defender's Office

The Marin County Public Defender's Office (PD) will host informational workshops throughout the county to highlight their Restoration of Rights project (ROR) as part of their Community Justice/Restorative Justice community outreach initiative. ■ The PD began its ROR outreach in the last few months by holding two workshops in Marin City and having an informational table at the recent Marin City Community Blues and Soul Festival. The goal of the outreach is to give people information about programs that can help them reach more positive points in their lives. ■ The outreach initiative is part of the PD's focus on Community Justice/Restorative Justice, a working philosophy that seeks to find lasting solutions to public safety issues by working with all members of

the community affected by crime. In practice, this means exploring ways to heal the harm done and to help offenders find positive and productive ways to re-establish themselves in the community. ■ The ROR project, headed by Deputy Public Defender **Elizabeth Berg**, provides assistance on expungements and certificates of rehabilitation. These legal remedies can be granted after successful completion of probation and allow people to qualify for employment and academic opportunities not available to those with criminal histories. ■ In one case, the ROR project helped a young man get his record expunged and ensured that he would not lose a great job. In another case, the ROR project helped a local worker contact Los Angeles County officials to assist

him in expunging his criminal record. In other cases, the expungement process has given people the opportunity to qualify for training opportunities that point them to a brighter future. ■ Since starting their efforts, the PD has helped over 50 people get their cases expunged, with many more making application for this legal relief. ■



Photo by Patty Cenicerros

Public Defender staff at Marin City Outreach, L to R: Anne Fokstuen, Michele Berrong, Josie Cenicerros (and daughter Jasmin, standing), Jose Varela, and David Brown

Photo by passerby



JeriLynne Stewart in Alaska

What a busy summer it's been! **JeriLynne Stewart** (DPW) returned refreshed from a week-long cruise to Alaska on the Pacific Princess (Love Boat), having taken a close-up look via helicopter at the Mendenhall Glacier, as well as playing

with a kayak, brrrrrr. On warmer turf, **Tom Vagird** (Aud-Cont.) and his wife Marion returned from a family August vacation, camping in Yellowstone National Park and Lincoln, Nebraska, with their three kids. ■

Photo by Jonathan Castello



Johnson/Rose wedding

On August 27, **Gwen Johnson** (CDA) and Alexander Rose combined camping and exchanging wedding vows with 130 of their closest friends on Wild Rose Summit, with the reception following at Benton Station in the eastern Sierras. The guest list included **Dana Armanino**, **Dawn Weisz**, and **Alex Hinds** (all CDA), as well as former Supervisor **Annette Rose**, mother of the groom. ■

Using the more traditional settings for matrimony were **Jason Balderama** (IST/DPW), son of **Pat Balderama** (DPW), and his bride, Nga. (You might recall that he proposed on bended knee at last December's DPW annual retreat.) They were first married in San Rafael by **Tho Do** (DPW), then traveled to Vietnam for another ceremony with her extended family. ■

Rich Arrow's (Aud-Cont.) daughter, Candice, married Michael Gusek on August 19, overlooking the bay at China Camp. ■

On Labor Day, Simone Elena Mailloux, daughter of **Sandra Hirschfield** (H&HS) married John Richard (JJ) Davis II. The week before the ceremony, Sandra noted, "It hasn't registered for me but I'm sure by Monday it will sink in...." ■

Finally, recent Cal Poly engineering graduate **Felix Meneau** (DPW), son of **Christophe Meneau** (IST), wed high

school sweetheart and current law student Susanna Farber at St. Dominic's Church in San Francisco. ■

Babies, babies, and more babies. Here we go again. On June 18, **Sarah Foster** (H&HS) and her husband, Gregg, were graced with the birth of their daughter, Amelia Grace. **Patty Golling** (Courts) was overjoyed to welcome a grandson, Matthew James Lyons, born July 3 to Patty's daughter, Karen, and husband, Allen. **Dave** and **Jen Seymour** (both H&HS) welcomed their new son, Quintin James, into the world on August 3; sister Lily was ecstatic to have a new playmate. **Jennifer Dyment** (IST) and her husband, Ben Weinstein, welcomed their first child, Nate, to the world on August 11. Shortly after, **Drew Milus** (H&HS) and his wife, Kim, were blessed with their new little bud, Ava Rose. On August 26, **Ernest Klock** (DPW) and his wife, Nicole, engineered their first child, Becket Kainoa. On August 31, a celebratory baby shower was held for Molly Claire, daughter of **Tom Lyons** (Co. Council) and his wife, Erin. Finally for this issue, **Colleen Weems** (HR), hubby John, and five-year-old Jacob, are celebrating the arrival of their second bundle of joy, Zachary, on September 1. We can't wait for Colleen to come back to *Frankly Speaking* as staff support and share Zach with us! ■

Talking about nurturing, kudos to **Allen Tolman** (H&HS), Community Mental Health psychiatric emergency night nurse, who created a peaceful oasis of sunflowers and azaleas, attracting hummingbirds and butterflies for clients as they pass through the back gate entrance. ■

We all have been acutely aware of the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina. County staff made very generous monetary contributions. **Dave Smail** (CDA) challenged co-workers to donate to the relief effort. As a result, **Mark Janofsky** (CDA) more than doubled his pledge. Not to be outdone, **Carla Halyard** (IST) reported that IST had collectively raised \$1,400 as of Labor Day! ■

In addition to cash contributions, **Jim Boggeri** (Fire) and his search and rescue dog, **Recon**, spent 11 days helping with search and rescue efforts in Biloxi, Mississippi, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Recon identified two sites where bodies later were recovered. Two employees worked as Red Cross volunteers; **Alysanne Taylor** (Library) worked 20 miles west of New Orleans for a week and a half, and **Julia Slater** (HR) worked for two weeks in Houston's Astrodome. ■



Photo by passerby

Back, L to R: Christine Gimmler, Jeremy Tejirian, Brian Crawford, Curtis Havel
Front, L to R: Kristin Drumm and Dan Dawson
(all CDA)

In the sports corner, two teams from CDA participated in the Tiburon Triathlon co-ed team relay on July 31. The team of **Curtis Havel** (swim), **Kristin Drumm** (bike), and **Brian Crawford** (run) took second place out of a total of 13 teams. The other CDA team, consisting of **Christine Gimmler** (swim), **Dan Dawson** (bike), and **Jeremy Tejirian** (run) placed third. Also participating were two teams from DPW. **Todd Coleman** (swim), **Ben Willits** (bike), and **Liz Lewis** (run) placed fourth, and **Craig Tackabery** (swim), **Kevin McGowan** (bike), and **Farhad Mansourian** (run) placed eighth. Congratulations to all! ■

For the next issue, please e-mail information on the people in your dept. to Odds & Ends columnist Ian Roth, iroth@co.marlin.ca.us.

Happy (Global) New Year!

By Cindy Roby—BOS

Ed Ramazzini (Courts)—Guatemala

Photos by Janice Hughes



This is how I remember the coming of the New Year in Guatemala City, where I was born and lived until I was 17 years old. ■

People waited for the clock to strike midnight. Children were encouraged to stay up as late as the adults, which sometimes was all night. ■ At midnight everyone would light firecrackers. The noise went on for about 15 minutes. People hugged each other and celebrated. We again hugged each other 12 hours later and lit more firecrackers. ■ Some older people would drop an egg white into a glass of water right at midnight. They would check the glass 12 hours later to look for a sign of what was to come for the next year. Some saw tombstones and decided that it was their year to die, while some saw airplanes and thought that they would travel. ■

Nancy Gorton (Library)—Baha'i



The Baha'i Faith's New Year, called "Naw-Ruz," occurs on the first day of spring following a 19-day period of intermittent fasting, and is truly fun. It

involves lots of eating, but because Baha'is do not drink, never involves lots of drinking. ■ In Marin, Baha'is often celebrate by gathering to share a meal at an ethnic restaurant. This makes sense because, in addition to being hungry after the period of fasting, Baha'is always seek out ways to celebrate diversity. We believe in the oneness of humankind, the unity of religions, and the complete elimination of prejudice. ■

Mark Young (H&HS)—U.S.



Every New Year's Eve my family (wife Denise and our 13-year-old twins Emily and Willie) gathers 'round the fireplace and we review our resolutions from last

year. Each year we write out on a piece of paper some things we want to accomplish. We roll up the list and attach it to the hearth, where it stays all year. Each of us reviews the accomplishments and failures of the past year and hopes for the new year. It's a fun and rewarding ritual. I am not aware that it has ties to any particular culture. ■

Ebrahim Azarbaksh (Retirement)—Persia



The Persian New Year, Norouz (new day), begins on the first day of spring in conjunction with the new cycle of life as nature wakes from its winter sleep. ■ My

wife and I prepare with a thorough house cleaning and also send out greeting cards. We grow sprouts, representing rebirth, a traditional addition to the Sofreh Half Sinn (ceremonial tablecloth). ■ The Half Sinn table holds seven symbols, each beginning with the letter "S." These include a wheat dish which represents rebirth; apples and jujube fruit which represent love, beauty, and birth; hyacinth for sweetness; garlic to keep away evil spirits; and coins for power and strength. The Sofreh includes a bowl of live goldfish, candles, sweets, and the Koran. ■ On Norouz, family and friends gather for a meal which includes fish, rice with fresh herbs, and beans. Children anxiously await a visit by Amonourz (an old, wise, and merry man, usually with a white beard) who brings gifts and candy. ■

David Escobar (BOS)—Lenca Poton



I am a Lenca Poton Indian of Central American Indian descent. Our New Year is on May 3, based on the agricultural calendar. First and foremost, this is

an opportunity for all the community to give thanks to Mother Earth. We do this because, even before we take our first breath of life, Mother Earth is feeding our mothers. Our celebration is a spiritual event of thanks and gratitude. ■ We feast on rice, beans, yucca plants, squash, pumpkins, and tortillas. For good fortune, we offer our first meal into the ceremonial fire to give thanks to God. Music is central to the celebration, with flutes, drums, rattles, and songs. Each year the small number of us here in northern California have a gathering. ■

Kristi Choi (CAO)—China



The Chinese New Year doesn't start on a particular day, but rotates every year to fall with the second new moon after the winter solstice (typically in late January

or early February). We do not stay up until midnight, and there is no champagne involved, but there is plenty of "moon cake" and other types of Chinese celebratory foods. The celebration lasts for 15 days. One year we went to the celebration and parade in San Francisco, but typically our first realization that it is the Chinese New Year is when Mark's grandma from Hong Kong calls and says "Gung Hay Fat Choy!" which means "Happy New Year." ■ I asked Mark if there are any other traditions for Chinese New Year that are standard but that we didn't practice. He said that typically "wives sleep outside" during this period, which I didn't buy for a minute! ■

Wendy Mullin (Aud-Cont.)—Vietnam



I spent my childhood in Vietnam during the war. As with the Chinese, we celebrate New Year's at the beginning of the lunar new year. On New Year's Eve we stocked

our homes with lots of food, especially non-perishables, because during the war we never knew when there would be a break in the food chain. ■ New Year's lasts for seven days. All the kids under ten or so would hold a hard-boiled egg and an incense stick and walk around the neighborhood to "sell their laziness." It was a ritual designed to mark a fresh start and to be more productive and industrious. In the evening the whole family got together with their favorite dishes for a big feast. As children, we laid out our new clothes and new shoes, ready for the next day. ■ On the second day, we ate only vegetarian food. We visited our elders and siblings to wish them happiness and bring gifts and sweets. We also adopted the Chinese custom of bringing red envelopes with money for younger people in our families. ■

In July, Supervisor Susan Adams accepted Marin County's award for placing 10th in a national electronic government service competition conducted by the Center for Digital Government. This recognition was earned for Marin's EGov project that resulted in www.co.marin.ca.us.



Photo by jusssetby

New Year's Day is celebrated differently around the world, and those differences are reflected in Marin County's own multicultural workforce.

The Team of the Quarter

By Jennifer Walter—Treas/Tax

“The team goes above and beyond” to work with kids at school and with their families in an effort to keep them from reverting to the behavior that put them at risk.

Congratulations to the Intensive Services Team of the Juvenile Division of the Probation Department, which has been selected as the county’s Team of the Quarter. This team is composed of unit supervisor **Teresa Torrence-Tillman**, Deputy Probation Officers (DPO) **Ulises Ramirez**, **Ken Corley**, **Frank Peterson**, and **Alisha Krupinsky**, and Mental Health Practitioners **Dr. Catherine Williams** and **Queta Vargas**. Extra-hire **Rebecca Leacock** is filling in for Dr. Williams, who is on leave. ■ The team was the brainchild of Deputy Chief Probation Officer **Anne Wooliever** and former Juvenile Division Director **Dennis Elsasser**. DPO **Kevin Lynch** was instrumental in developing the team’s guidelines. Started in 2003 to provide greater supervision to those juveniles on probation with the highest risk of recidivism, the team usually works with children ages 13 to 18. ■ Says Teresa, “The team goes above and beyond” to work with kids at school and with their families in an effort to keep them from reverting to the behavior that put them at risk. Often this means coverage at night and on weekends. She says that the team is “dynamite in finding jobs for kids who are not motivated to work, but who, with the team’s help, are encouraged to succeed.” The



Photo by Janice Hughes

Juvenile Probation Intensive Services Team, Standing L to R: Frank Peterson, Teresa Torrence-Tillman, Ken Corley Seated L to R: Queta Vargas, Alisha Krupinsky. Not pictured: Ulises Ramirez, Dr. Catherine Williams

recent addition of two mental health practitioners has helped the team to focus on the serious mental health and substance abuse issues most of these youth face. ■ Thanks to the tireless efforts of this team, placements of youth in group homes have been reduced by about 50%, thus allowing the teens to remain in their homes and communities. ■

Vacation Photo Contest Winners

Congratulations to **Larry Grace** (CDA), **Ann Gregory** (BOS), and **Olga McKenna** (Assessor). They each received a \$25 gift certificate from Marin Filmworks of San Rafael. Their photos, in color, will be on display in the Civic Center Cafeteria for the month of November. ■



Lotus at Huntington Botanical Park, CA—by Olga McKenna (Assessor)



Kyoto Kimona Show—by Ann Gregory (BOS)



Disneyland—by Larry Grace (CDA)

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

Photos by Janice Hughes

LARRY LAINO



JULY

Larry Laino (DPW) supervises a staff of skilled mechanics responsible for repairing and maintaining the county's large inventory of vehicles, as well as those of many other agencies. He and his employees and volunteers excel in maintaining safety vehicles, keeping the fleet running smoothly, and managing an extensive stock of parts. ■ Larry assisted the Health and Human Services Department in purchasing a state-funded motor home to provide mobile outreach for the HIV/AIDS program. He also worked to improve night lighting for vehicle storage locations to heighten security. In addition, Larry spearheaded experimentation with biodiesel fuel in county construction vehicles and equipment, resulting in cleaner air and less reliance on non-renewable resources. ■ For Larry, no job is too big or small. He is constant in his attention to his customers and has an unflappable "can-do" attitude. Larry's "off duty" love is boating with his family wherever a suitable lake can be found. ■

By **Bob Beaumont**—DPW

ELISE LENOX



AUGUST

Elise Lenox (H&HS) has made Marin one of the state's leading counties in terms of HIPAA (the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) implementation. In the course of bringing Marin into the post-HIPAA world, she has furthered improvements in areas such as information technology, billing, and clinical practices. She has been an innovator in a diverse range of areas including training, development of policies and procedures, and in the handling of client and public concerns. ■ As a result of Elise's efforts, Health and Human Services staff learns about HIPAA online, county work spaces and services are configured better to protect sensitive information and client privacy, H&HS billing efforts are improved, and information sent or maintained electronically is more secure. ■ Because of Elise, Marin County has taken what many saw as the onerous task of HIPAA implementation and turned it into opportunities to improve county operations in areas that affect the lives of staff and clients on a daily basis. ■

By **Margaret Kisliuk**—H&HS

ROBERT TURNER



SEPTEMBER

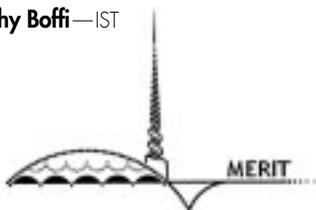
Over the past 13 years, **Robert Turner** has worked in the Environmental Health Services Division of the Community Development Agency as a Registered Environmental Health Specialist. In this capacity, he has provided support to operators of restaurants and public pools. He has been instrumental in establishing the Household Sharps/Syringe and Pharmaceutical Disposal programs. He has developed a database and website for the beach monitoring program, as well as water monitoring programs for Richardson Bay and Redwood Creek as it flows into Muir Woods. He has also developed a comprehensive budgeting system for the division. He currently is in charge of maintaining and expanding the waste tire program. ■ Robert is comfortable with technology and very adept with many software applications, often assisting his co-workers and freeing them from computer tyranny. In addition, he helps his co-workers understand complex regulations and program issues, and provides other technical assistance. ■ Robert takes pride in a job well done, and ensures that customer service always comes first! ■

By **Ian Roth**—CDA



Click on MERIT

By **Cathy Boffi**—IST



You're just a click away from the new MERIT (Marin Enterprise Resource Implementation Team) website! Click the Project MERIT link on the MINE homepage. ■ Get answers to commonly asked questions about implementing a countywide enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. The website will be updated frequently, from background

information to current project status, so visit it often to stay informed. ■ Marin County employees and Deloitte consultants have joined together to form MERIT. This team will design new financials, procurement, human resources, and payroll systems, and provide the implementation, communication, training, and support for the county and you. ■

Your Vote Counts in Marin

By Rick Fraites—BOS

Some states experienced voting irregularities in the past two national elections. Many of these problems have been attributed to electronic voting machines, some of which do not provide a verifiable paper trail. Some people have accused the manufacturers of these machines of deliberately pre-programming the hardware to reflect the manufacturer's political preference. Conspiracy theories abound. ■ If there is one thing that would strike at the heart of our democracy, it would be that elections are determined before we enter the voting booth. However,

(remember those nasty hanging chads?). **Michael Smith**, Marin County's Treasurer-Tax Collector and Registrar of Voters, held off purchasing touch screen voting machines and opted for a more reliable system. His main concern was that the touch screens did not provide a paper trail. Instead, Michael chose the optical scan system for the county. Registrar Smith saved Marin County hundreds of thousands of dollars by foreseeing the eventual verification problems that the new electronic voting machines would soon produce. ■ The optical scan technology system (ink on card) has been used in all the county's regular and special elections since November 1999. Those election results were practically flawless. ■ The federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA), passed in late 2002, requires a single touch screen machine by January 1, 2006 in each voting place for those who have accessibility needs that cannot be adequately met through the optical scan system. These machines will be funded in large part by federal funds available through HAVA. These machines must meet HAVA mandates and must provide a paper trail. ■ Thanks, Michael, for a job well done. ■

Photo by Rick Fraites



Elections/Voter Registration team—L to R: Colleen Ksanda, Ashley Ontiveros, Caroline Foster, Tony Aquilino, Melvin Briones, Vinnie Nuzzo, Michael Smith

here in Marin County, we can be assured that the vote that is cast will be the vote that is counted. ■ In 1999, Marin County began to modernize its voting systems to replace punch cards

Photo by Cathy Selmi



Don Agnew in desktop support makes a clean sweep of his computer.

Make a Clean Sweep

By Cathy Selmi—IST

Many of us make resolutions in January to clean our house, exercise more, or watch less television. If your computer could make a resolution for 2006, it would probably want to be thoroughly decluttered! Because January is

Clean Your Computer month, we want to target specific areas where files tend to settle on all of our computers.

1. Items deleted in Outlook reside on the Exchange Server until you empty the Deleted Items Folder. Change the setting for the Deleted Items folder so that it automatically empties whenever you exit Outlook (*Tools—Options—Other—Empty the Deleted Items folder upon exiting.* Click OK.)

2. Internet Explorer copies files to your computer from websites you visit so that the site will load faster if you go to that site again. Save disk space by deleting these temporary files. Open Internet Explorer. Select *Tools—Internet Options.* On the General tab, select *Delete Files* from the Temporary Internet files section. Click OK when finished.

3. Windows often creates temporary files when you open or create files. Once the file is closed, the temporary file can be deleted. Click the *Start* button on the *Taskbar.* Select *Search* and select *For Files or Folders.* In the section titled Search for files or folders named, type *.tmp. Click *Search Now.* Delete all files the search finds.

Your computer will love you for it! Check out more ways to keep your computer healthy by going to <http://mine/mine/IS/main/newsletterlinks/Dec05/December2005Newsletter.htm>.

Roving Reporter

By Connie Siebler—Assessor's Office

November is
'I Am So Thankful' month.
What's on the top of your
gratitude list?

Bonnie White

(Library): "I am personally thankful for a staff that functions above and beyond the call of duty at all times. They make my life a joy. We have a team that is tops and works well together. I'm also thankful for our wonderful patrons."



Photos by Connie Siebler

Margie Todd

(H&HS): "I am so grateful that in October I will be in one of those lottery houses. I'm looking forward to it so much. I've been packing. Several friends have been helping me here and there. I am just so grateful."



Ed Hulme (POS):

"I'm glad that I'm healthy and that my family is healthy. I'm thankful for having a job I really like. I get to work in a great place with wonderful people."



Steve Soldavini

(DPW): "On top of my gratitude list is raising my two girls, Dayna, 15, and Jamie, 22. I've had them for 11 years. They are just great!"



Haiku

By Bob Beaumont—DPW

Winter's gray head looms
Bristled, hoary, hatless thing
Skulking in the murk.

Diverse Cookin'

By **Norma Johnson**—Courts

We all look forward to potlucks when we taste delicacies of different cultures. Sometimes we ask our co-workers for a recipe to try at home. Sometimes we go as far as compiling the recipes into department cookbooks. ■ The Fun Razors, a committee in the Assessor's office, published not one but two cookbooks. The first was *Friends and Food*. *Three Little Words: Let's Get Cooking*, a more colorful production, came out later. It included a glossary of cooking terms, basic instructions, and recipes like Caribbean bananas, contributed by **Sandy Witt**, and Puerto Rican spicy beans from **Nestor Laboy**. The committee consisted of Sandy Witt, **Sharon Darman**, **Victoria Cascio**, and **Nancy Joe**. ■ In 2003 **Elly Ferrell** (DPW) put together *Delightful Pleasing Worldwide Culinary Delights*. "I just thought it would be fun to do a cookbook since we have so many different nationalities in our department," she says. Such treats as Thai salad dressing from **John Wilson**, chicken paprikash from **Judith Nagy**, and okra adobo from **Marl Madayag** span the globe. It has a buying guide and even illustrated instructions on napkin folding. The baked stuffed chicken from **Timothy Underwood** was a tongue-in-cheek entry listing uncooked popcorn to be



Photo by Janice Hughes

John Wilson (IST/DPW) and Mireille Acheritagaray (Courts) take a look at their departments' cookbooks.

placed in the cavity of the chicken! This cookbook is available for only \$5! Contact Elly Ferrell at 499-6377. ■ *Superior Recipes for the Court* debuted in 2004. Basque cheese and potato cakes from **Mireille Acheritagaray** and Polynesian chicken wings from **Vivian Bens-Hower** are some of the offerings. It boasts cooking hints and substitutions as well as a humorous entry of boiling water "Marin County style." This cookbook is available for \$8. Contact **Norma Johnson** at 499-7476. ■ The cultural competency committee for H&S is planning to put together a cookbook to celebrate the differences represented in H&S. *Frankly Speaking* will let you know when it is available. ■ How about your department? ■

"I just thought it would be fun to do a cookbook since we have so many different nationalities in our department."



Photo by Janice Hughes

L to R: **Ed Castleman** (H&S), **Ian Roth** (CDA), and **Joe Oncina** (IST)

The Iron Horse Commute

By **Ian Roth**—CDA

Why would anyone want to be on two wheels, without a seatbelt, airbag, or door, traveling at freeway speed next to SUVs driven by distracted motorists on cell phones? Hmmm...logic does not work well here. However, in polling county employees who commute by motorcycle, we uncovered a robust assortment of reasons why many have made this choice.

Ernest Culver (Aud-Cont.)—"It wakes me up and lets me smell the trees."

Joe Oncina (IST)—"Motorcycle riding provides stress relief. I enjoy taking a fun ride out the back roads of China

Camp at lunch, or just zipping around town."

Ed Castleman (H&S)—"I get to leave home later—that means a few more minutes in the sack in the morning."

Mark Bleeker (IST)—"Splitting lanes rocks!"

Dan Dawson (CDA)—"Encourages detours to West Marin on the way home."

Steve Hancock (Sheriff)—"Freedom and openness—what better way to begin and end your work day?"

Larry Bolstad (Sheriff)—"I live in Sonoma County because I can't afford Marin; it is a lot cheaper to ride a motorcycle."

Glen Hallaway (Sheriff)—"\$3.00+ for a gallon of gas."

Stewart Cowan (Sheriff)—"I am assigned to the Pt. Reyes Sub-Station; is there a better place to work with that commute?"

Josie Sproule (Sheriff)—"I get about a zillion miles to the gallon on my motorcycle as opposed to 15 in my Escalade."

Shirley Garner (Sheriff)—"My son's baseball games are right after work and I never have to worry about getting stuck in traffic."

Doug Allen (Sheriff)—"Ten times better than a car! I feel sorry for all those car commuters, stuffed into those little spaces, like an egg yolk in a shell, not being able to express themselves."

We all need to remember that when you're on two wheels, you're invisible, so be careful out there...and enjoy the ride! ■

WELCOME & FAREWELL!

Welcome to New Employees! Listed in order of hire date from May 22 to August 28, 2005

| Name | Title & Department |
|------------------------|---|
| Laura Turrini | Sr. Auditor, Aud-Cont. |
| Laurie Dargo | Comm. Dispatch. I, Sheriff |
| Elizabeth Salazar | Sheriff's Svc. Asst., Sheriff |
| Yalile Cintron | Group Counselor I – Bi-ling., Probation |
| MaryAnn Steinert-Foley | Sr. Clerk/Typist, DPW |
| Kathryn Sibbald | Sr. Clerk/Typist, H&HS |
| Paul Ayala | Custodial Supervisor, DPW |
| Wendy Aquilino | Legal Process Asst. I, DA |
| Jon Janzen | Park Ranger, P&OS |
| Shannon Bulleri | Legal Process Asst. I, DA |
| Terry Wright | Deputy Probation Officer II, Probation |
| Christian Cabrera | Deputy Probation Officer II – Bi-ling., Probation |
| Anthony Brady | Deputy District Attorney I, DA |
| Sonia Calderon | Cadastral Mapping Tech., Assessor |
| Martin Ontiveros | Elections Clerk I, Co. Clerk |
| Beverly Panelli | Worker's Comp. Analyst, CAO |
| Nancy Aduna | Physical Therapist, H&HS |
| William Collins | Sr. Social Svc. Wkr. I – Bi-ling., H&HS |
| Greg Walter | Landscape Svcs. Wkr. II, P&OS |
| Margaret Grosch | Accounting Asst., CS |
| Elizabeth Guinto | Accountant I, Aud-Cont. |
| Kai Sun | Accounting Asst., Aud-Cont. |
| Yvette Brunot | Legal Secretary II, PD |
| Robert Harris | Social Svc. Wkr. I, H&HS |
| Inna Frid | Sr. Programmer Analyst, IST |
| Cecilia Luna | Eligibility Wkr. I – Bi-ling., H&HS |
| Karl Beuerman | Social Svcs. Unit Supervisor, H&HS |
| Marilyn McCulloch | Eligibility Wkr. I, H&HS |
| Richard Saslow | Sr. Programmer Analyst, IST |
| Karen Shaw | Accountant I, Treas/Tax |
| Daniel Santos | Support Svc. Wkr. I, H&HS |
| Frank Solem | Accountant I, H&HS |
| Edmund Dan Violog II | Custodian, DPW |
| Aletta Caballero | Eligibility Wkr. I, H&HS |
| Amber Dooley | Legal Secretary II, Co. Counsel |
| Michael Watson | Social Svc. Wkr. I, H&HS |
| Gretchen Melendy | Legal Process Asst. I, Probation |
| Anthony Aquilino | Computer Tech., Co. Clerk |

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Charnel Benner | Retirement Administrator, Retirement |
| Sharayn Forkel | Sr. Public Health Nurse, H&HS |
| Deborah Johnston | Epidemiologist, H&HS |
| Michael Kohls | Eligibility Asst., H&HS |
| Julia Tomlinson | Sr. Clerk/Typist, DPW |
| Maria Alvarez | Legal Proc. Asst., PD |
| Jeff Bedoya | Building Maintenance Wkr. II, H&HS |
| Kasey Clarke | Admin. Svcs. Tech., H&HS |
| Sandra Arata | Social Svc. Wkr., H&HS |
| Michael Brogan | Chief of Surveys, DPW |
| William Burke | Chief Probation Officer, Probation |
| Patricia Harper | Admin. Librarian, Library |
| Doris McGee-Lundy | Sr. Clerk/Typist, H&HS |
| Jeff Moss | Road Maintenance Wkr. I, DPW |
| Scott Nygard | Road Maintenance Wkr. I, DPW |
| Jaime Rodarte | Deputy Sheriff Trainee, Sheriff |
| Edgar Villalobos | Deputy Sheriff Trainee, Sheriff |
| Sandra Fong | Library Asst. II, Library |
| Kathleen Kull | Sr. Planner, DPW |
| Jennifer Livingston | Community Library Spec., Library |
| Coady Makinson | Road Maintenance Wkr. I, DPW |

Farewell to Retirees! From July and August 2005

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Donald Hobbs | Chief of Surveys, DPW |
| Douglas Cole | Sr. Fire Captain, Fire |
| Raymond Watson | Deputy Sheriff, Sheriff |
| Vicki Day | Sr. Clerk/Typist, Farm Advisor |
| Jean Twillman | Court Processing Spec. II, Courts |
| Rebecca Snyder | Deputy Clerk to BOS II, BOS |
| Mark Riesefeld | County Administrator, CAO |
| Ernest Guomas | Mental Health Unit Supervisor, H&HS |
| Jennie Santellani | Eligibility Supervisor, H&HS |
| Carol Sewell | District Attorney Administrator, DA |
| Nancy Turner | Deputy Co. Clerk, Co. Clerk |
| Betty Leson | Detention RN, H&HS |
| Betty Leson | Fire Engineer, Fire |
| Vincent Turrini | Appraiser III, Assessor |
| Julia Johnson | Collection Manager, Treas/Tax |
| Margaret Caramucci | |



'Tis the Time of Year for Giving...But Don't Get Taken!

By David Ball—District Attorney's Office

During the holiday season, fund-raisers everywhere are soliciting for various charities—at the mall, on the telephone, and at your door. So how do you know whether a charity is legitimate and if your donation will reach the intended recipient? Will your gift go to the charity, the fund-raiser, or the advertiser? ■ It is up to you to investigate and ask questions before you make that donation. Don't expect a fund-raiser to disclose information on where your donation is going unless you ask. Here are some questions to ask anyone soliciting for a charity:

- How is my money going to be used?
- Who are you, what is the address of the organization, what is their phone number, and are you employed by the charity itself or are you an outside professional fund-raiser? (The

person should have a photo ID identifying him or her as a representative of the charity.)

- Do you have a copy of a current permit issued by your city or the county authorizing the door-to-door solicitation?
- What percentage of my gift goes directly to the charity?
- How much is taken out for administrative costs?
- What portion is tax deductible?
- Can you send me literature? (Beware if they won't!)

If the solicitor lacks any of this documentation, you should consider contacting your local police department. ■ Remember, a lot of nonprofits sound like charities. Don't give cash. Contribute only by check made payable to the charity. Ignore unsolicited e-mails you receive seeking donations.

- You can check with the California Attorney General's Office Registry of Charitable Trusts to see if the charity is listed, at <http://justice.doj.ca.gov.charitysr/default.asp>. ■ You can obtain general information about charities, such as their revenue, programs, and administrative and fund-raising expenses by contacting the Council of Better Business Bureaus at www.bbb.org or the National Charities Information Bureau at www.give.org. ■ Some new charities have sprung up in the wake of the Hurricane Katrina disaster. Go to web sites of the IRS and federal government at www.irs.gov and www.firstgov.gov to check on a charity's legitimacy, or consider www.usafree-domcorps.gov for other government agencies and their respective fund-raising efforts.