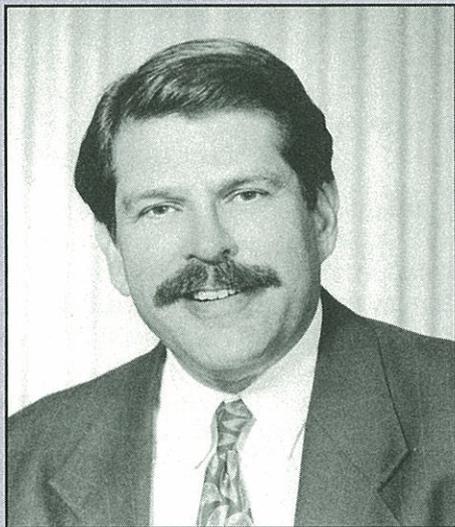


County DIGEST



JANUARY 17, 1995

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES



Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky

Following his days of social activism during the late '60s, 26-year-old Zev Yaroslavsky entered the world of Los Angeles politics in 1974 in hopes of winning the Fifth District seat on the Los Angeles City Council newly vacated by Ed Edelman, who had just been elected as Third District Supervisor for Los Angeles County. In what he called a "longshot victory," Yaroslavsky won that seat and served the City of Los Angeles for nearly 20 years as a City Councilmember — a far cry from the days when he risked arrest as a demonstrator and activist on behalf of the cause of Soviet Jewry.

On December 5, 1994, Yaroslavsky repeated history once again by filling the vacant seat on the Board left by retiring Supervisor Ed Edelman. Although succeeding Edelman isn't a new experience for him, it's nevertheless a far greater challenge two decades later in the largest local government in the nation.

"These are tough times for government, especially for counties," Yaroslavsky told an overflow crowd during his oath of office speech in the Board hearing room. "To do its job, county government is going to have to change, and I am determined to help

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY: New Third District Supervisor

bring that about."

Yaroslavsky clearly spelled out his goals and priorities as he enters this new phase in his political career as the second youngest member of the Board, the majority of which, he pointed out, is "made up of three members who have not yet served a full term in office — the most dramatic change of membership on the Board in the modern history of the County."

He criticized the County for not being open enough to the public, citing the fact that Sheriff's deputies are stationed on the eighth floor of the Hall of Administration where the Supervisors' offices are located, calling them a "symbolic divide" between the County and the people it serves.

In his speech, Yaroslavsky urged his new colleagues to tear down the "Berlin Wall" of isolation and distance from the taxpaying public, and begin working together on the real issues facing the County. He called for televised Board meetings, comprehensive campaign finance reform, and measures to expand the lobbying disclosure requirements "so that the public can know the extent to which influence is peddled in these halls," he said.

While calling the County's lobbying performance in recent years "woefully inadequate" and the Metropolitan

Transportation Authority an "unmitigated embarrassment to the County," Yaroslavsky stood firm in his praise for County employees.

"To the many County employees — from the law enforcement officers and firefighters who put their lives on the line every time they punch the clock; to the health service professionals who devote their lives to care for the poorest of the poor; to the social workers who care for abused and unwanted children;

to the custodians who keep our buildings clean; to each and every one of you — we owe our thanks," he said. "You have my respect and admiration."

Yaroslavsky, whose parents were union leaders and social activists, knows the meaning of

hard work, and freely acknowledges that public employees often feel unappreciated for the jobs that they do. He vowed to establish an open-door relationship with County workers.

"I respect the work that they do," he told the *Digest* in an interview. "I want to visit employees on the job and be accessible to them. I'm not much into cocktail parties and ribbon-cuttings. I can't make anything happen during the Board meetings without employees' help" he added. "I know where they're coming from. Nobody is appreciated less than a politician."



Yaroslavsky is sworn in by the Honorable Joan Dempsey Klein, Presiding Justice, Court of Appeals (center), as his wife Barbara, daughter Mina and son David look on.

Employee of the Month

Virginia Posten: Right on Time

While medical researchers around the globe race against the clock to solidify a cure for HIV/AIDS, there is one woman in Los Angeles who is also racing against the clock. She's trying to keep the cash flow of over 180 local HIV/AIDS service organizations liquid until a cure is found. That woman is Virginia Posten, fiscal officer with the Department of Health Services.



Virginia Posten receives her award from Supervisor Gloria Molina.

At the Board of Supervisors meeting of December 13, 1994, Posten was honored as December's County Employee of the Month for her tireless efforts to financially manage \$62 million worth of funding to help HIV/AIDS patients manage the disease and

improve the quality of their lives. Posten accepted the honor with quiet dignity.

"This is a great honor. It gives new meaning to my work," she said, following the ceremony.

There is a lot riding on the success of her work. Daily, Posten senses an urgency to provide a timely flow of funding to these community-based organizations. Many of these grassroots organizations, which have only come into existence as a response to the HIV epidemic, do not have the working capital to carry their programs for 60 days. Posten's timely payment of their invoices is critical to ensure uninterrupted services to persons with HIV/AIDS.

"These people desperately need help. This is evidenced by the fact that, since October 1989, our Finance Unit has grown from a budget of \$17.6 million and staff of three to a budget of \$62 million and a staff of 13," she explains, adding that 68 percent of the funding is federally-based.

In response to this burgeoning need, Posten developed the Countywide Accounting and Purchasing System (CAPS), an on-line vendor payment processing system, improving cash flow benefits to the County, reduced paperwork and invoice payment turnaround time to more than half that of manual processing. As a result, the County is establishing department-wide use of the CAPS on-line system.

When not at work, Posten is active as a volunteer at the Los Angeles and Union Rescue missions for the homeless. She is also a registered tribal member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

EAP Spells Help For County Employees



Perhaps the most overlooked, cost-free service to County employees is the availability of confidential counseling, assessment and referral, offered Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., by the County's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Now part of the new Department of Human Resources, the Employee Assistance Program originated in 1968 out of the growing need to provide drug and alcohol counseling to employees. Today, under the direction of George Hayward, Ph.D., the program addresses a broader range of personal or situational problems, and is open to any County employee or member of the employee's family.

Appointments with one of the program's licensed psychotherapists are free and confidential within the limits of the law. Up to three sessions may be scheduled at one of the three EAP locations, including the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Olive View/UCLA Medical Center, and the Human Resources Commerce facility.

All departments allow at least the initial appointment to be on County time with the approval of the employee's supervisor. Permission for additional sessions on County time depends on departmental policy and the supervisor's discretion.

EAP counselors have a wide array of referral resource information available to assist employees in receiving continuing counseling or special services, if necessary.

Bilingual counseling is also available for Spanish-speaking employees.

The EAP is not connected with personnel unit functions or personnel records. Records are kept totally separate and confidential.

To make an appointment, call (213) 887-5300, from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

[Editor's Note: Beginning next month, the Digest will feature periodic articles on a variety of psychological topics to help employees determine their own counseling needs.]

1994: The Year in Review

by Supervisor
Yvonne Brathwaite Burke

Over the past 12 months, the Board of Supervisors succeeded on two fronts to the benefit of the people we represent. First, we prevailed over earthshaking events that caused death and destruction, and we put aside partisan wrangling to solve "real" problems for people.

The past year began with a jolt! The Northridge Earthquake showed us that our County's Sheriff, fire and paramedic emergency response system works. But this major temblor also showed that, as a County, we need to be better prepared to respond to the social and economic "aftershocks" from major life-disrupting events such as earthquakes.

As a Board, I believe that we all successfully managed to put aside our partisan concerns in the interest of good government and getting the job done for the people of Los Angeles County.

From the quake to the precarious resolution of this year's County budget, we held partisan bickering to a minimum to serve the people we represent. We established a level of harmony on this Board — based on mutual respect — that I believe has served all of our constituents.

We worked to settle lawsuits with the City of Los Angeles and established a solid working relationship with Mayor Richard Riordan and his administration.

We worked to forge effective ties with members of the State Legislature to improve our County's image and give greater support to our legislative goals.

We agreed on the importance of diversity in conducting County business. Through the creation of our Community Business Enterprise program, we opened up our contracts to firms owned by veterans, women, minorities and the disabled.



We created the new Department of Human Resources to centralize and streamline the hiring process for all County departments. They've already established a very successful hotline for residents seeking employment with the County.

We made family preservation a top priority by partnering with community-based organizations and the federal government to ensure that children and their

parents receive the help they need to

stay together and work to lessen the pressures that threaten family unity.

We instituted a tracking system on the prosecution of repeat offenders to determine the ongoing impact of the "Three Strikes" law on the District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department and our court system.

We became more "business friendly" through our establishment of a County Business Micro-Loan Program.

These are just a few of the numerous accomplishments we achieved during my tenure as Chair of this Board. I look forward to building upon these accomplishments as Supervisor of the Second District, in partnership with my colleagues, throughout this year.

My personal best wishes to all County employees on a happy and productive new year!

Supervisor Gloria Molina: New Chair of the Board

Thirteen years after throwing her hat into the political ring and becoming the first Latina in history to ever be elected to the California State Legislature, the Los Angeles City Council, and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, First District Supervisor Gloria Molina added one more "first" to her list on December 6, 1994, when she became the first Latina in history to chair the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

Molina wasted no time setting out her goals during her first meeting as Chair of the Board, gathering support from her colleagues despite what she called a "difficult and challenging time to govern."

Molina vowed to "eliminate waste where we find it and guarantee that our diverse populations are served equally

and fairly."

One of her goals is the creation of a County partnership with State and Federal-elected officials who represent the same constituency base, as well as other local governments, to deliver services. Another is the resurrection of a 40-year-old plan to combine City, County, State and Federal governments in the creation of a unified Civic Center hub second only in size to that of Washington, D.C., where government buildings are clustered conveniently and facilities are shared.

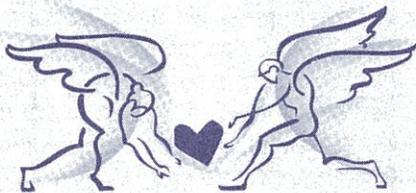
"What we cannot afford on our own may be possible if these cost-cutting local partnerships are created. We've seen examples of this with our parks and libraries," said Molina.

Molina also suggested the creation of a new Budget Committee of the Whole to allow specific strategic planning in the budget process. She also joined Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, sworn in just one day prior, in her support of cable broadcasting of Board meetings, saying that "informed government participants can only be better participants."



DIGEST NOTES

If you have any story ideas that might be of interest to fellow County employees, please contact Kristina Balian, managing editor, at (213) 974-2449.



R O P A

Gift of Life

The holidays are over and the gift-giving is finished...at least for awhile. But, there's one gift that can't be ordered from a catalog or purchased at a store that will prolong the lives of potentially several other people once you're gone: organ donation. Sadly, increased incidents of life-threatening diseases have left many waiting for a lifesaving organ donation. Taking on this battle is the Regional Organ Procurement Agency (ROPA), a non-profit, federally certified agency headquartered in Los Angeles.

The availability of donated organs remains a crucial issue and so far a losing battle, according to Barbara Meltzer, director of ROPA.

"High survival rates and increased referrals have encouraged more and more people to add their names to the national waiting list, which now numbers more than 37,000. However, every 20 minutes, a new name is added to the list and, each day, eight to 10 people die because they couldn't survive the wait," explains Meltzer.

The success rate of organ and tissue transplantation has improved steadily, doubling since 1983. Not enough Americans, though, consider organ or tissue donation as an option when they die.

"Last year, about 15,000 people became potential donors after suffering

Myths and Misconceptions About Organ Donation

* **Concern about religious barriers.** Most major religions do consider organ donation to be a humanitarian act.

* **Fear of the body being mutilated.** Donated organs are surgically removed as in any other operation and the incision is closed as in any surgery.

* **Fear of organs being removed before death.** Organ donation is not considered until all life-saving efforts have failed and the donor has been pronounced "brain dead" by two licensed physicians, independent of the transplant team.

* **Concern about inability to change one's mind once the donor card is signed.** If someone decides against donation, the donor card is simply discarded and, once again, family is notified of the decision.

brain deaths as the result of an illness or accident that left healthy organs intact. Of that group, only 4,800 actually became donors," she says.

By signing an organ donor card, an individual indicates his or her wish to become an organ donor. This, however, is not enough. It is essential to discuss this decision with the next of kin.

Although the law states that a signed organ donor card automatically gives the hospital permission to recover organs for transplantation, the fact remains that this will not be done without the consent of the next of kin. If they are unaware of their loved one's wishes, there's a strong chance that the family may block the donation because they're afraid of making the wrong decision.

One donor's vital organs could possibly save seven lives and provide critically needed tissues for 50 or more other people.

For more information or to receive an organ donor card, please contact ROPA of Southern California toll free at 1-800-933-0440.

Give the gift of life!



Win Tickets to the American Music Awards

Millions of Americans will watch the music industry's top stars on the American Music Awards on Monday, January 30, 1995, on ABC-TV. But one lucky County employee will attend the music event of the year and receive two free tickets (a \$250 value) to the show at the Shrine Auditorium. To enter, just mail a postcard with your name and work telephone number to the American Music Awards, P.O. Box 48799, Los Angeles, CA 90048, **no later than January 23, 1995**. The winner will be chosen at random and notified on January 25, 1995. Good luck!!!

County DIGEST

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