

County DIGEST



MAY 15, 1996

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

From the
Employee Assistance Program

On Threats and Regrets

Is it okay for employees to blow off steam by making aggressive statements as long as they don't really mean it? Not in the opinion of the alarmed co-worker who thinks that the statements could be a serious threat. And certainly not in the opinion of the manager who is obligated to provide a safe work environment for employees and enforce safety policies.

Does the County have a policy about aggressive statements? Yes. If managers or supervisors form the opinion that an employee's statements constitute a threat and create a danger to staff or others in the workplace, then a series of security measures are initiated, including notification to the CAO Office of Security Management, which will provide consultation and investigation. Depending on the explicitness of the threat and the perceived danger, contact with local law enforcement may be among the earliest security measures.

A very real problem in these situations is that they often force someone to make a judgment about whether the statements constitute a serious threat. This problem may be compounded by differences in the perceptions or reactions of those who hear the statements. One witness may feel sure that the statements are simply verbal ventilation, while another may be truly frightened. It is also common for different witnesses to recall the statements themselves somewhat differently. The man-

(See "Regrets," page three)



Supervisor Antonovich, left, presents Employee of the Month Steven Braida with the Board's scroll of commendation.

Employee of the Month

STEVEN BRAIDA: Not Just a Summer Job

In the summer of 1982, 16-year-old Steven Braida was looking for a summer job. One evening, his father, a County fireman, brought home a flyer advertising a summer cashier's position at Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas. Not giving it much thought, Braida submitted his application, and, luckily, was the last one hired for the summer.

That summer job Braida found 14 years ago has led to a 14-year career with the County's Department of Parks and Recreation's Bonelli Park. His many contributions to the Park's operations and his efficiency also led the Board of Supervisors to honor him as the April

1996 County Employee of the Month during a special ceremony held on April 23.

Working at the Park as an intermediate cashier clerk, Braida supervises 25 cashier-clerks at Bonelli Park, the County's second largest park facility. Also, his mechanical knowledge and "can do" attitude has made his presence invaluable; even the Park's crafts personnel call on his expertise to make emergency repairs. He has dealt with everything from broken water lines and electrical problems to malfunctioning sprinklers and toilet blockages. The

(See "Braida," page three)

County Supervisors Find Homes for Shelter Pets

Thanks to a special effort inaugurated by Board Chairman Michael D. Antonovich, County shelters aren't the only place where the public may adopt a pet in search of an owner. Just tune in to the beginning of each Board of Supervisors meeting, televised weekly over cable station KLCS, during which dogs and cats available for adoption are featured.

All eyes are on the cuddly creatures as they are passed to Antonovich by Animal Control employees. During each presentation to the Boardroom audience, the Supervisor gives information about the animal's breed and the location of the shelter where the pet is temporarily living. Special adoption programs, such as one where senior citizens may adopt older shelter pets at no charge, are highlighted each week.

So far, every animal presented at the Board meetings has been adopted, many by County employees. Anyone interested in adopting featured pets or others should call (310) 940-8888.



Pets Join County Family



TOP: Georgette Dame, of the Executive Office of the Board, and her husband Bill (a retired County Sheriff's Deputy), adopted "Mick," a one-year-old Australian Kelpie mix. **CENTER LEFT:** Pam Everett of the CAO with "Chance," her Domestic Short Hair kitten. **CENTER RIGHT:** Renee Powers of the Department of Children and Family Services, with "Abigail," her Siamese kitten mix. Powers was the first person to adopt a pet through this special program. **BOTTOM:** Selma Anderson of the CAO, with "Casey," her Basset Hound.

Special thanks to Linda Tarnoff, Fourth District, in the preparation of this article and the adoption of "Daisy," a Basset Hound.



TOP SUPPORTERS: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, center, draws support for the March of Dimes WalkAmerica from County executive leadership, including (left to right) Parks and Recreation Director Rod Cooper, Director of Personnel Mike Henry, Director of Public Social Services Eddy Tanaka, and Chief Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Sandra Davis. Joining them is Nick Papadas, March of Dimes director of development (second from right) and Carolyn Schroth from the Department of Motor Vehicles.

March of Dimes WalkAmerica

With over 2,500 March of Dimes walkers in attendance at Bonelli Park in San Dimas, County WalkAmerica Chair Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich led the County's 11th Annual Walk on Saturday, April 27. Following an energy-packed warm-up by the "Power Rangers" and Ranger Raccoon (the County's Parks and Recreation mascot), Supervisor Antonovich stated, "I want to thank Rod Cooper, director of Parks and Recreation, and his staff for their hard work and thank the department heads here today for their leadership and support, especially Eddy Tanaka, director of our Top Team, Public Social Services."

Antonovich thanked County employees for raising over one million dollars over the past 10 years to help fight birth defects.

Regrets

(continued from page one)

ager who must respond to the situation is not always a direct witness and may have to rely on the report of others.

The possible consequences of underestimating the urgency and dangerousness of a worker's statements must be balanced against the possibility of taking a strong course of action when the real risk is low.

If there is uncertainty or ambiguity about the statements or the intent of the employee making the statements, the

supervisor or manager may be able to clarify the situation with the employee directly. The Office of Security Management (213-893-2060) and the Employee Assistance Program (213-887-5300) are also available for

"A very real problem in these situations is that they often force someone to make a judgment about whether the statements constitute a serious threat."

consultation in these matters.

What about an employee who has no intention of actually being violent but is angry at someone in the workplace and makes a verbal threat out of frustration, or for the sake of its emotional impact? That employee is not only in violation of County policy, but also in violation of Penal Code Section 422 pertaining to threats, which could result in imprisonment, regardless of the employee's nonviolent intentions. A steep price to pay to get a rise out of someone.

Bottom line — County employees deserve to work in an environment free of intimidation or fear. For the security of its workers, the County has adopted a policy of "zero tolerance" for threats. A little consideration and self-control should make saying, "I didn't really mean it" as unnecessary as it is insufficient.

BRAIDA (continued from page one)

work never seems to end.

"Just two weeks ago, the Park's main transformer blew up. Suddenly, the lights went out in the office, and I quickly consulted a Parks and Recreation electrician I knew, who helped me determine what the cause of the problem was," says Braida.

Admitting that he knows every square inch of the 2,000-acre Park, Braida used his knowledge to devise a grid map of Park fire hydrants for emergency use by law enforcement and fire personnel. On one occasion, he and a co-worker were able to shut off the geyser-like gush of water from a fire hydrant accidentally sheered off by a tractor-trailer.

A self-proclaimed outdoorsman, Braida's not one to wear a suit and tie. His electric personality lends itself well to meeting and greeting Park visitors... "all half of a million of them annually it seems," he says.

Born and raised in San Dimas, Braida admits that when he's not on the job, he still prefers to be outside, spending free time hunting, fishing and camping.

May Retirees

Congratulations to the following employees who are joining the ranks of the retired, after 30 or more years of service to the people of Los Angeles County.

Children and Family Services: Barbra Ross

District Attorney: Carmerita St. Julien

Fire: Michael P. Conti, Kenneth M. Harms, Don Rohrer, Russell A. Shonting

Health Services: Richard B. Collins, Charles L. Daron, Roosevelt Lewis, Johnny M. Love, Laura C. McSherry, Robert M. Merrigan, Helen R. Parker, William N. Parnassus, Mario Sewell, Clarice Simmons, Yvonne Townsel, M.A. Vujovich

Human Resources: David F. Evans, Patricia A. Koos

Internal Services: Andrew T. Mortland

Parks and Recreation: Gerald C. Figliuzzi

Probation: John P. McMahon, Joseph Pasqua

Public Defender: Charles A. Gessler

Public Social Services: Leslie J. Conoscenti, Charlotte L. Dent

Public Works: Hugo F. Carlos, Jerry J. James, John W. Leopold

Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk: Wendell L. Patterson

Sheriff: Billy J. Burnes, Robert G. Devine, Charles B. Fynan, David B. Hunt, Patrick J. Johnston, Martin L. Kudell, Judith A. Lewis, Raymond L. Marlett, Michael A. Nelson, Morris I.

Seidner, John J. Valencia, William D. Winn, Richard A. Wood

Superior Court: Antoinette Davis

Treasurer/Tax Collector: Carol A. McDaniel

Congratulations to the following employees who retired after serving the County for 25-30 years:

Children and Family Services: Barry Chass, Reiko Yamashita

District Attorney: Pedro Martinez

Fire: John R. Kolesar

Health Services: Kay Beving, John R. Blanchette, Betty Bujanda, Joseph M. Campa, Lynette H. Campbell, Rosemary L. Elm, Janice Feuer, Janett Fleming, Henry L. Gipson, Erma L. Glover, Marsha V. Hoffman, Martha M. Johnson, Ahmed M. Kader, Sharon Mayer, Bennie R. Ross, George Templin

Human Resources: Joyce Jones

Internal Services: Karen A. Pimper, Lonnie Willis

Mental Health: Joan D. Vitale

Parks and Recreation: Larry E. Townsend

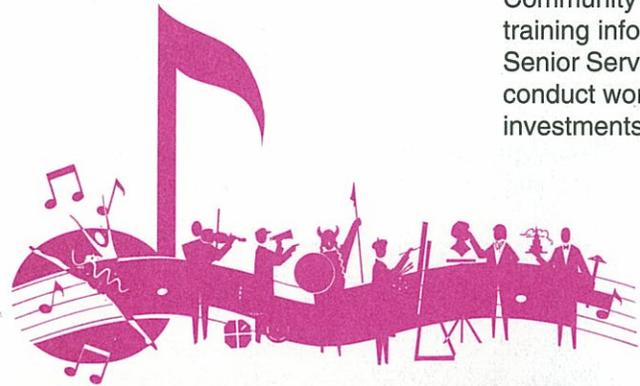
Probation: Donald R. Zeise

Public Social Services: Ivy R. Allen, Mary Evans, Helena I. Jordan, Ann Lynn Rutherford, Sharon Usher

Public Works: Joseph W. Peck, Moktar S. Saleh

Sheriff: Josephine Bryant, Arthur J. Denver, Gary V. Richardson, William C. Sudduth, Jr.

“Munch on Music” presented at Civic Center Mall



Jazz Tap Ensemble members (l-r) Jerry Kalaf, Stacy Rowles and Eric Ajaye will perform June 5 at the “Munch on Music” concert series.

Drown out the sound of your crunching salad and celery sticks during the month of May at one of five free noon-time concerts beginning today during “Munch on Music - Mid-day on the Mall,” sponsored by the County’s Music and Performing Arts Commission. The series brings outdoor, lunchtime entertainment for everyone, especially those who work in the Civic Center area. Each concert will take place from 12 noon to 1:45 p.m., on the mall just south of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration. Here’s the exciting schedule:

May 15: Susie Hansen Latin Jazz Band, a nine-piece ensemble performing a mix of salsa and Latin jazz;

Sheriff hosts “Community Job Fair 1996” at S.T.A.R.S. Center

In partnership with private industry leaders, the Sheriff’s Department is sponsoring “Community Job Fair 1996” on Saturday, June 15, 1996, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Sheriff’s Training Academy, located at 11515 S. Colima Road in Whittier. Employment opportunities with the Sheriff’s Department, as well as many of Los Angeles’ leading corporations, will be presented to the public. Also on hand will be the County’s Department of Human Resources and the Department of Community and Senior Services, providing career resource and re-employment training information to help laid-off employees start over again. Community and Senior Services and private industry participant Primerica Financial Services will conduct workshops throughout the day. Topics include financial protection and investments, resume writing, interviewing techniques, and preparing for a County promotional examination. Leadership skills and marketing your image will also be explored. Child care is available. For more information, contact Blanche Wilson at (310) 946-7012.

Story Idea for the County DIGEST?

The County DIGEST office is seeking stories of interest to County employees. If you have an idea, contact Kristina Hajjar, managing editor, at (213) 974-1767, or fax the idea to (213) 613-4789.

County DIGEST

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May 22: Freeway Philharmonic, a quartet combining jazz, pop, rock and classical music - “category defying.”

May 29: Maiden Voyage All-Star Band, a 10-piece female ensemble presenting hot, swinging jazz.

June 5: Jazz Tap Ensemble Quartet, an internationally known group performing jazz standards and their own compositions.

June 12: The New Caribbean, featuring sounds and vocals following the reggae pulse of the West Indies.

For more information about this series, call (213) 974-1396.