

# County DIGEST



OCTOBER 1998

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## Department of Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

"Our department touches the most personal aspects of the lives of County residents: birth, death, marriage, voting and property ownership," said Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Conny McCormack. On an average day, 13,000+ County residents seek the diverse services provided by the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Department (RR/CC), swelling to millions on election day!

The department is home to a staggering volume of 170 million records. Within the United States, only the Social Security Administration and the Pentagon have more records on file.

Descending into the basement of RR/CC headquarters in Norwalk reveals recordings of everything from real estate transactions dating back to 1850, to scraps of leather seared with recorded cattle brands, to the death certificates of such notables as Wyatt Earp. Calls are routinely received from celebrities such as Whoopi Goldberg's request from New York in 1996 for an emergency absentee ballot, to the marriage license for Larry King and his new bride, which was issued at his hospital bedside when he was recovering from open heart surgery last year.

Although all other large California counties have separate offices for the Registrar of Voters and the Recorder/County Clerk, in 1968 the Registrar and Recorder functions were merged by the Board of Supervisors. This was followed in 1991 by further consolidation with the County Clerk.

Previously all of these diverse services were provided in separate facilities. However, in 1993 the department fulfilled a long term goal of moving all operations to one headquarters site.

The department's staff numbers approximately 700 which swells to over a thousand in preparation for major elections. The annual operating budget is approximately \$56 million. Primarily as a result of property filings, the department collects over \$160 million in fees annually for the County's General Fund and for distribution to the 88 cities located within the boundaries of the County.

**Registrar's Office** - With 3.8 million

registered voters and 5,000 voting precincts, no other electoral jurisdiction in the U.S. approaches the size and complexity of the L.A. County Registrar of Voters operation. Responsibilities include voter registration and maintenance of the voter file, conduct of federal, state and local elections, as well as support services for up to 200 city and special district elections each year. The Registrar's office individually verifies up to one million voters signatures on absentee ballots and initiatives, referendum, recall and candidate petitions annually.

The administration of a countywide election is akin to a major military deployment. For example, the November 1998 election requires processing paperwork for up to 600 candidates, recruiting and

training 25,000 precinct workers, mailing sample ballot information pamphlets to almost 4 million voters, issuing absentee ballots for up to 500,000 voters and



With scissors in hand, McCormack and Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky formally dedicate the Van Nuys branch office of the RR/CC.

counting more than two million ballots in a few hours on election night.

Since instituting a new volunteer program in 1996, removing the voted ballots from the 5,000 precinct boxes and preparing them for tabulation election night is now accomplished by up to 450 high school students. In addition to cost savings, this volunteer program provides the students with a community service opportunity as they get a glimpse of the "behind the scenes" action on election night.



## Calendar of Events

### **1998 Charitable Giving Campaign** October 15, 1998 thru November 20, 1998

Charitable donations will be distributed to local community agencies serving County residents by two lead agencies, namely, United Way and Brotherhood Crusade, as well as participating agencies such as Asian Pacific Community Fund, Earth Share of California, Los Angeles Women's Foundation and United Latino Fund. To participate or obtain more information, contact your departmental coordinator.

The Arboretum of Los Angeles County  
(626) 821-3222

**Model Horse Exposition**  
November 14, 1998

**Chinese Bonsai & Rare Stones Show**  
November 21 thru 26, 1998

**Pesticide Use in the Home Garden**  
November 29, 1998

Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
(323) 857-6000

**Picasso: Masterworks from The Museum of Modern Art**

September 6, 1998 thru January 4, 1999

**Van Gogh's Van Goghs: Masterpieces from the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**  
January 17, 1999 thru April 4, 1999

**Diego Rivera: Art and Revolution**  
May 30, 1999 thru August 16, 1999

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County  
(213) 763-DINO

**Hunters of the Sky**  
October 3, 1998 thru January 3, 1999  
**The Great Russian Dinosaurs**  
January 23, 1999 thru May 2, 1999



Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Conny McCormack is seeking volunteers to perform marriage ceremonies at the department's headquarters in Norwalk as well as the district offices in Van Nuys and Los Angeles.

Since 1997, volunteers have performed civil wedding ceremonies at the Norwalk office. To date, 16 volunteers have responded and have been sworn-in as deputy commissioners of civil marriage. Volunteers do not require prior experience. The hours are flexible and minimal training is needed. Presently, most volunteers work 2-4 hours one day a week.

Departmental staff, who performed marriage ceremonies prior to the Volunteer Program, are now utilized to complete more specialized tasks while volunteers provide public service and save taxpayers' money.

Interested persons should contact Kathy Treggs at (562) 462-2081.

## October 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:

**ASSESSOR:** Maria B. Lewis, Santi Tafarella, Jr.

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES:** Louisa A. Moore, Penny L. Nichols

**FIRE:** Mike Ferragamo, Stuart R. Forman, James R. Hannum, Paul V. White, David B. Felch, Lockwood R. Marshall, Daniel J. Shea

**HEALTH SERVICES:** Myrna Davis, John Lennon, Douglas Reed, Jr., Norma J. Smith, Virginia G. Stevenson

**PARKS & RECREATION:** Robert R. Lopez

**PROBATION:** Edward T. Marks, Donald Smerk

**PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES:** Susan Donoho, Paul H. Fast, Shirley R. Grant, Susan S. Hall, Yvonne F. Henson, Glacia S. Hudson, Mildred Rice, Johnnie M. Robinson

**PUBLIC WORKS:** Lawrence E. Steinhauer, S.K. Thakkar, Harbhajan S. Thind

**REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK:** Jack E. Flores

**SHERIFF:** Kathryn L. Nielsen, Woodrow W. West, Jr., Stephen J. Hansen, Leonard Bruce

**SUPERIOR COURTS:** Esther L. Fajardo

Congratulations to the following employees who are retiring after serving the people of the County of Los Angeles for more than 25 years:

**AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER/WEIGHTS & MEASURES:** Corazon J. Jovellanos

**COMMUNITY & SENIOR SERVICES:** May K. Wong

**FIRE:** Philip K. Hatch, William G. Hatch, Ernest F. Bartak, Jr.

**HEALTH SERVICES:** Roberta L. Broveleit, Doris I. Miller, Gloria L. Muetzel, Esther L. Sanford, Manuelita C. Uy

**MUNICIPAL COURTS:** Helen F. Hajek

**PARKS & RECREATION:** Raymond Chavez

**PUBLIC WORKS:** Charles H. Whitaker

**SHERIFF:** Allen E. Austin, Martha Gil Murillo, Elizabeth E. King, Lana J. Vanbeek

**TREASURER & TAX COLLECTOR:** Hassan Elmezian



For the November General Election, the RR/CC has set up a toll free number for election related calls: (800) 815-2666 and expanded phone capacity on election day with a new Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system to automatically provide thousands of callers with their voting locations.

Also, a new *County Employee Volunteer Poll Worker Program* was launched earlier this month. A flyer with all the details was distributed to all County employees in mid-October. If you missed the flyer and would still like to sign-up as an election day worker, please call (562) 462-2750.

**Recorder's Office** - The Recorder's Office is responsible for recording legal documents which serve as the basis for determining ownership of real property, and maintains files of birth, death and marriage records for the County. The Recorder's Office is vital to the real estate, legal, and banking communities and to the overall economy of the County. Annually, the office records, cashiers and indexes up to 1.8 million real estate documents and issues in excess of one million birth, death and marriage certificates or copies.

**County Clerk's Office** - Major functions include issuing marriage licenses and copies, performing civil marriage ceremonies, researching and filing of fictitious business names (FBNs) for new or renewal of businesses, registration of notaries and miscellaneous statutory issuance of oaths and filings. The office issues approximately 65,000 marriage licenses, performs 14,000 civil ceremonies and processes 180,000 FBN filings annually.

Last year the department launched a highly successful Marriage Ceremony Volunteer Program. Previously, civil ceremonies were performed by deputized staff. A cross section of volunteers from retirees to people who take time off from their employment now perform civil marriage ceremonies which frees up staff to complete more specialized tasks.

**Bringing Services Closer to the Public** - Next month the department will reach a major goal of operating a branch office in each of the five Supervisorial Districts. By opening satellite offices, residents no longer have to drive to Norwalk to receive most services.

A new branch office opened last month in Van Nuys and an office is slated to open next month in the Florence-Firestone area of Los Angeles. For several years services have been provided in Lancaster. Last year the RR/CC expanded the existing branch office in East Los Angeles and opened a small marriage license office in Beverly Hills. The department plans to open an office next year in the new County Courthouse near the Los Angeles Airport.

**Focus on New Technology** - Currently the department's major initiative is converting to completely new, state-of-the-art computer systems in all three functional areas. A new voter information management system (VIMS) is being installed for voter registration, precincting, absentee voting, petitions and polls maintenance. Once operational in early 1999, the new VIMS system will provide enhanced functionality and reduce election costs significantly. Additionally, the 88 city clerks will be able to access the system in their offices to verify candidate petitions and absentee signatures for city elections, eliminating the need to drive to Norwalk to access these services.

The Recorder's office is in the final phase of installing a new imaging system to capture digitally up to 30,000 pages of property documents and vital records each day. Benefits of the new system will include faster turnaround time for the public to receive their original documents back through the mail and the ability to provide more services on-line at the branch offices.

Plans are underway to permit FBN searches and filings directly on the Internet next year. In effect, all libraries with Internet access would become RR/CC branch offices for individuals seeking to file a name for a new business, renew their business filing or conduct research to determine whether or not the business name they want is already in use.

The RR/CC operates a very comprehensive Internet website which displays information on all aspects of operations. Users can interact with the site

to download applications for an absentee ballot, FBN, standard real estate recording forms and much more. Whether you need to know where to go vote or view election results in real time on election night, visit the site at [www.co.la.ca.us/regrec/main.htm](http://www.co.la.ca.us/regrec/main.htm).



## Honoring Freedom Fighters

*A Salute to Our Veterans*

Join Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich at a special event honoring our American Service Men and Women and their families on Saturday, November 7, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Arcadia Park, 405 South Santa Anita Avenue in Arcadia.

"Their [the veterans] sacrifices to preserve the freedom we all enjoy may seem at times to have been taken for granted," Supervisor Antonovich said. "I call on all the citizens of this County to join me in expressing appreciation to our veterans."

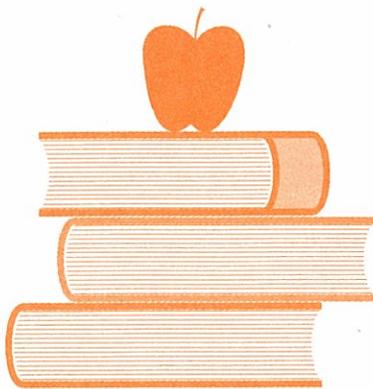
The Veterans' Fair will afford veterans and their families a chance to meet with representatives from various government agencies and private industries and to receive information on benefits and programs available to them.

"I encourage veterans and their families to take advantage of this unique opportunity all in one place," Antonovich said. "It [the event] has been arranged to call attention to the men and women of the armed forces who have served our country well."

A special salute to our Armed Forces will be held at noon with dignitaries in attendance.

The event is free of charge. For more information, contact Juventino Gomez, a deputy to Supervisor Antonovich, at (626) 967-1441 or (909) 394-2264.





## Book Fair

Barnes & Nobles, booksellers since 1873, is proud to host a book fair on Saturday, November 14 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 12 of its locations. Proceeds from the sale will benefit an educational scholarship fund established by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The fund assists victims of child abuse and neglect. Book fair support vouchers are available at each of the locations counters.

Avoid the holiday rush! Shop at the following locales:

- Beverly Connection
- Burbank
- Culver City
- Hawthorne
- Long Beach
- Marina del Rey
- Pasadena
- Pico
- Puente Hills
- Studio City
- Torrance
- West Covina

For more information, call Lili Ahmadi of DCFS at (213) 351-6476.



### County DIGEST

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375 Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
(213) 974-1765  
(213) 621-0387 FAX

## Arthur Musashi

### *A Balancing Act*

“He finds balance in life by working in the garden. As he attends to its daily chores, he understands the amount of labor involved in producing quality fruits and vegetables,” wrote the acting director of pharmacy about his employee, Arthur Musashi, who was nominated for and consequently selected as the September 1998 County Employee of the Month.

The 18-year County employee is a Pharmacist with the LAC+USC Medical Center Pharmacy of the Department of Health Services. He is the Drug Use Evaluation Pharmacist responsible for monitoring drug utilization and as such has expanded and redefined the position to now include dissemination of information to the Northeast cluster via an electronic media communication system. He holds a Doctor of Pharmacy from the University of Southern California and is a Registered Pharmacist with the State of California.

Musashi has negotiated and reviewed a myriad of contracts saving the County over \$6.5 million from January 1993 to 1996 and has interacted with numerous pharmaceutical representatives. His direct involvement as consultant at Health Services Purchasing Group has led the group to great success including awards from Los Angeles County, the National Association of Counties and the California State Association of Counties.

“Besides accurately filling prescriptions behind the counter at a local drugstore [the public’s perception of a pharmacist], I believe a pharmacist can better serve the public by educating them on the proper use of their medications,” the honoree said. “By having a better understanding of their medication, many unnecessary adverse reactions can be prevented.”

Being in close contact with those who need medical assistance or otherwise, Musashi knows first hand the importance of funding to further improve services. He is a long-time contributor to the March of Dimes and the American Red Cross and participates in the hospital’s morale-building activities like the CARES program which provides child care to children of patients.



Accolades such as this one run in the Musashi household. Last year, his daughter received the “Citizen of the Year” award from her school which made him and his wife proud parents. The three reside in Glendale.

Upon notification as the month’s selected employee, he reacted with disbelief but later on felt honored.

“Working for the largest employer in Southern California sometimes makes your efforts and accomplishments go unnoticed. It’s gratifying to know that Los Angeles County really cares about its employees,” Musashi said.

### Members of the Board

**Yvonne Brathwaite Burke**  
Chair  
Second District

**Gloria Molina**  
First District

**Zev Yaroslavsky**  
Third District

**Don Knabe**  
Fourth District

**Michael D. Antonovich**  
Fifth District

**Michael J. Henry**  
Director of Personnel

**Sandra A. Hoodye**  
Ombudsman/Community Liaison

**John S. Mina**  
Staff