

To: Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

From: Byrd A. Lochtie, Chair
Humboldt County Human Rights Commission

Subject: Annual Report July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005

PUBLIC CONTACT AND INPUT

The Humboldt County Human Rights Commission (HRC) meets every second Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. in Conference Room A of the Courthouse. The meetings are open to the public and guests are encouraged to attend and to speak if they have a concern or a comment. The agenda for the meeting is posted in the Office of the Clerk of the Board the week before the meeting.

In addition to public input at the monthly meetings, HRC depends on our voice-mail system for contact with the public. Each commissioner monitors the messages for 15 or 16 days, returning calls and providing information and suggestions as needed. Commissioners contact another commissioner for help in answering questions whenever appropriate. The records of all phone contacts are used to provide information for this annual report.

HRC over the years has depended largely on the current year's chair to define how contact with the HRC was to be described in the annual report to the Board of Supervisors. As each chair has used different criteria and terms, it has been virtually impossible to compare the nature of the HRC contacts with the public over the years. Beginning on July 1, 2005 we will be using an intake form (see attached) that will allow commissioners taking the phone calls to report the nature of the call in a consistent manner. The individual forms will be turned in monthly to the Chair and the information tabulated at the end of the year for the annual report.

Since the reporting form has just been completed, the contact information for this 2004-2005 report was developed by going back to the Commission minutes (and in some cases back to the individual Commissioner's phone notes for the last year) and putting the information about each reported call into the new reporting format. This was done by Commissioner Larry Miller who was primary developer of the new reporting form. He is available to answer any questions concerning the data and how it was determined.

HRC PHONE CALLS

Total number of calls to HRC message phone: 140

Total calls by month: July 12 Aug. 5 Sept. 19 Oct. 13 Nov. 16
 Dec. 9 Jan. 12 Feb. 10 Mar. 11 Apr. 10 May 10 June 13

CATEGORIES FOR PHONE CALLS:

Just wanted to talk or tell some one about something: 24 17%

A request for information about or help from the HRC 33 24%

A request for information about or help from available services: 11 8%

Complaints of Alleged Discrimination: 11 8%

Discrimination perpetrated by:

Law Enforcement	<u>3</u>	<u>2%</u>
Other Public Agency	<u>1</u>	<u><1%</u>
Private Company/Service(s)	<u>5</u>	<u>4%</u>
Private Citizen(s)	<u>1</u>	<u><1%</u>
Other	<u>1 (everyone)</u>	<u><1%</u>

Discrimination based on:

Disability	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>
Race/Ethnicity	<u>1</u>	<u><1%</u>
Age	<u>1</u>	<u><1%</u>
Gender	<u>1</u>	<u><1%</u>
Language	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>
Sexual orientation	<u>2</u>	<u>1%</u>
Health	<u>1</u>	<u><1%</u>
Residency	<u>1</u>	<u><1%</u>
Mental Health	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>
Religion	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>
Politics	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>
Other (<u>1 breast feeding in jail,</u> <u>1 single father, 3 did not say</u>)	<u>5</u>	<u>4%</u>

Discrimination relating to:

Housing	<u>4</u>	<u>3%</u>
Employment	<u>1</u>	<u><1%</u>
Law Enforcement	<u>2</u>	<u>1%</u>
Other Public Agency	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>
Private person(s)	<u>1</u>	<u><1%</u>
Company/Service(s)	<u>3</u>	<u>2%</u>

Complaints of Alleged Misconduct.	<u>64</u>	<u>46%</u>
Misconduct perpetrated by:		
Law Enforcement	<u>30</u>	<u>21%</u>
Other Public Agency	<u>9</u>	<u>6%</u>
Private Person(s)	<u>4</u>	<u>3%</u>
Private Company/Service(s)	<u>21</u>	<u>15%</u>
Misconduct relating too:		
Housing	<u>15</u>	<u>11%</u>
Employment	<u>6</u>	<u>4%</u>
Law Enforcement	<u>11</u>	<u>8%</u>
Other Public Agency	<u>3</u>	<u>2%</u>
Private Person(s)	<u>16</u>	<u>11%</u>
Private Company/Service(s)	<u>7</u>	<u>5%</u>

Notes regarding HRC message phone calls:

1. Call totals do not include duplicate or follow up calls from the same person concerning the same subject. Calls in which the nature of the call could not be determined were also not counted.
2. In some cases a call may have been assigned to more than one category so some totals are greater than the number of calls.
3. Discrimination is obviously a form of misconduct but has been reported here separately and not counted in the misconduct category.
4. A call reported in the discrimination or misconduct categories may have also requested information or referral. However, only the primary purpose(s) of the call has been reported.

Commissioners on phone duty July 04 to June 05:

July 1-15 Stein, 16-30 Jewell
August 1-15 B. Shaeffer, 16-31 Eastman
September 1-15 Miller, 16 -30 Miller
October 1 -15 Lochtie, 16-31 Tharp
November 1 -15 Stein, 16-31 Botzler
December 1 -15 J. Shaffer, 16 - 30 Aziz
January 1 -15 Lyons, 16 -31 B. Shaeffer
February 1 -15 Lochtie, 16 -28 Miller
March 1- 15 Filar, 15 -31 Tharp
April 1 -15 Aziz, 16- 30 J. Shaffer
May 1 -15 Orr, 16 - 31 Miller
June 1 - 15 Filar, 16 - 30 Lochtie

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

HRC believes that community education is essential to develop understanding of, and tolerance for, diversity in Humboldt County. We worked on a number of items for outreach into the community.

- *HRC aired PSAs on Channels 3, 6, and 29.

- *We continued the use of our Speakers Bureau for outreach into the community. At least five commissioners participated in forums, workshops and presentations in the community with topics ranging from “What is the Human Rights Commission” to “Learning about Islam” to “How to Effectively Eliminate Homophobia While Remembering We Are All Good”. Some of these events were open to the public; others were held for students at Arcata and McKinleyville High Schools and College of the Redwoods. Feedback from community members, students, teachers, parents and vice-principals was positive and complimentary.

- *We staffed a booth at the Diversity Conference through HSU Multicultural Center.

- *We (specifically Larry Miller) reworked our website to provide easy access to useful information about the commission and about human rights.

- *HRC continued the promotion of our resource cards, both in English and Spanish.

- *We publicized Human Rights Awareness Month and received resolutions from cities and county.

- *We initiated a trial run for several months of a toll-free number for our message phone, making it possible for people to call if they are outside the local calling area or in the county jail.

- *HRC maintained contact and networking with groups such as the ACLU and the Independent Observers Program.

ADMINISTRATION

HRC spent some time during the last year revising our forms and our procedures to make our meetings and our ongoing work more effective and efficient. Activities included:

- *Revising the phone message intake form for easier and consistent tracking of topics (see phone message discussion at the beginning of this report.)

- *Revising the Visitor Information form.

- *Holding a planning retreat.

- *Developing a new member packet with relevant information for the beginning commissioner.

- *Developing a "calendar of events/agenda items" for HRC to make our work timely and more efficient.

AWARD

The ACLU announced that HRC and its commissioners were chosen to receive the ACLU 2005 Patriot Award for their community work. The award will be presented on July 21, 2005 at the Red Lion Inn.

IN RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY CONCERNS, THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION:

- *Wrote a letter to Arcata concerning the lack of public toilets and overnight accommodations in the city.
- *Requested a change in wording ("people" rather than "citizens") in the resolution dealing with the Patriot Act which was passed by the Board of Supervisors.
- *Contacted the Arcata police regarding a statement on complaint forms indicating that that we offer help to anyone needing assistance in filing a complaint.
- *Wrote a letter to the HSU Center requesting more information concerning at will employment agreements (with a copy to HSU President Richmond).
- *Investigated a concern about Hate Crime Training for local police, and received information that this type of training is standard in Law Enforcement Academies.
- *HRC researched and discussed, in public, the issue of same-sex civil marriage, and recommended a resolution to the Board of Supervisors. HRC also discussed strategy for dealing with conflict about this sensitive issue and offered to help the board in any way we could.

ONGOING ISSUES / FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- *A logo for HRC.
- *Goals for outreach.
- *Hearing from a representative of Northern California Legal Services about the help they can, and can not, provide for residents of Humboldt County.
- *Working with HSU and Arcata businesses on ways to welcome students and the diversity they represent.
- *Surveillance cameras in Humboldt County.
- *Filling vacancies on the commission.
- *Homelessness.
- *Falon Gong.
- *Law enforcement concerns.
- *More varied PSAs, to be more widely distributed.
- *Possible newspaper column on issues related to human rights.
- *An intern from HSU to work with the commission.
- *A revised brochure to publicize the commission.
- *Possible grants for projects.

CONCLUSION

The commissioners of HRC take seriously our charge to eliminate discrimination and the intolerance of diversity. We try to respond to all concerns raised by the public. We give out information to help people find the resources they need to cope with problems. We hope to educate people to help them understand differences better, and to value the diversity of our community. We welcome any suggestions from the supervisors to help us achieve our goals.