

Humboldt County Human Rights Commission
825 Fifth Street, Eureka, CA 95501
Chair of the Commission ~ Neal I. Sanders

Thursday, August 12, 2010

Jimmy Smith, Chairperson
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
825 Fifth Street – Room 111
Eureka, CA 95540

RE: Humboldt County Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2009-10

Dear Humboldt County Supervisors:

Enclosed for the Board's review is the annual report of the Humboldt County Human Rights Commission (HRC), for the year 2009-10.

We look forward to working closely with the Board in the coming year. We are particularly excited to report that we have formed a sub-committee to focus on potential immigration issues in Humboldt County. We continue to be vigilant in finding and ameliorating the causes and effects of discrimination. We continue to be supportive of the various political and social groups who make up our diverse community and strive to leave no group behind in our quest for fairness and education.

We pledge first and foremost to seek solutions that address both the needs of the community and the rights of the individual, and to make recommendations to the Board accordingly.

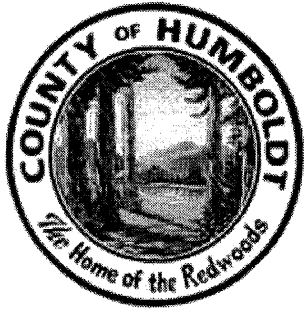
We deeply appreciate the Board's continuing direction and support.

Very truly yours,

Neal I. Sanders
Chair

NIS:lj

cc: Clif Clendenen, District Two Supervisor
Mark Lovelace, District Three Supervisor
Bonnie Neely, District Four Supervisor
Jill Duffy, District Five Supervisor



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ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010

TO: HUMBOLDT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FROM: Neal I. Sanders, Chair – Humboldt County Human Rights Commission

GENERAL MEETING INFORMATION

- Monthly meetings of the Humboldt County Human Rights Commission (HRC) are held at 5 p.m. the first Thursday of each month in Conference Room A at the Humboldt County Courthouse.
- Monthly meetings are open to the public. Invited guests and drop-in members of the public are all encouraged to present their concerns and participate in discussion.
- The HRC endeavors to facilitate public discussion in a non-judgmental, non-partisan environment.
- The HRC makes a particular effort to see that divergent viewpoints are equally represented.
- A copy of the HRC meeting agenda is provided to the Board Supervisors. The Clerk of the Board customarily posts the agenda on the courthouse bulletin board.

CURRENT HRC COMMISSION MEMBERS

DISTRICT ONE: Stuart Altschuler and Jean Munsee (One vacancy)
DISTRICT TWO: Larry Miller (Two vacancies)
DISTRICT THREE: Neal I. Sanders (Two vacancies)
DISTRICT FOUR: Maggy Herbelin, Kenna Adame and Cheryl Seidner
DISTRICT FIVE: Byrd Lochtie, David Heise and John Shelter

PUBLIC CONTACT AND INPUT

Humboldt County Human Rights Commission meetings are very open to public participation, and Commissioners are committed to being accessible, helpful and transparent. Members of the general public can contact commissioners at HRC meetings, through personal contact, by mail, through email, and via the Commission's telephone call system at (707) 268-2548 or toll-free at (866) 809-4373.

In the past year there were a total of 16 guests at monthly meetings. We received six letters and seven emails. Our telephone call system is by far the most popular method people use to contact the Commission with a total of 86 telephone contacts being received in the past year. The most common topics people wish to address continue to be law enforcement issues, homelessness, healthcare, and mental health issues.

Attached for the Board's review are charts breaking down by month the numbers and types of public contacts received by the HRC.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

We have updated and maintained our website throughout the year. You may visit our website at www.co.humboldt.ca.us/HumanRightsCom/. With the generous financial support of the McLean Foundation we were able to distribute over seven thousand *Humboldt County Resource Cards* in both the English and Spanish languages. We are continually updating and expanding the information crammed on these cards and continue to have a demand for cards from a multitude of local public service agencies.

Representatives from the Human Rights Commission participated in the following locally sponsored programs:

- July 2009 Sixth Annual Respect for Abilities Day
 sponsored by Tri-County Independent Living

- October 2009 Service Learning and Clubs Fair
 sponsored by Zoe Barnum High School

- Third Annual Spanish Language Health Fair "Celebrating Our Health"
 sponsored by Latino Net

- December 2009 Human Rights Awareness March
 sponsored by Humboldt County Human Rights Commission

- January 2010 HSU Volunteer/ Agency Fair
 sponsored by Humboldt State University

- February 2010 Annual Indian Island Candlelight Vigil 2010
 sponsored by the Wiyot Tribe

The Humboldt County Human Rights Commission became a proud member of NorCAN this past year. We are also happy to report we are now participating in the Cal-Trans "Adopt-a-Highway" program. We continue to be available upon request as neutral observers for public meetings and demonstrations.

RESPONSES TO COMMUNITY CONCERNS

In response to public outcry following controversial policies reported in the news around the country, HRC has formed a special sub-committee to organize a forum or forums for the public to discuss and address immigration issues in our community.

This has been a rewarding year. We have had the satisfaction of making a difference addressing the concerns of the people of Humboldt County, especially in the areas of law-enforcement and homelessness, as well as helping numerous individuals needing referrals or help with problems arising from inhumane treatment or prejudice.

Homelessness continues to be an on-going problem in our community. We continue to report to the Board on matters of housing or lack thereof. With the Board's support we were able to suggest possible solutions this past winter to the City of Eureka, some of which were enacted.

We continue to welcome diverse human-interest groups to present their concerns at our meetings. Most recently, we have had guests address the issues facing our local transgender population.

Availability of healthcare continues to be a problem year after year, and we will continue to do what we can to make referrals and help people find accessible affordable healthcare. We are also constantly aware of the prejudices and challenges facing those with mental health issues and strive to educate the public and refer people to local mental health providers.

CONCLUSIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In light of the current economic crisis in government and throughout our community, it has been deeply satisfying to see tangible results to our efforts through the extraordinarily talented, publicly minded and dedicated people we are so lucky to have living and working in Humboldt County.

- We wish to thank the **Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, Humboldt County Sheriff Gary Philp** and **Eureka City Police Chief Garr Nielsen** for their tireless efforts in working together with a multitude of citizen groups and individuals to design and bring to fruition the formation of the Citizen's Law Enforcement Liaison Committee.
- We wish to thank the **Humboldt County Board of Supervisors** for officially establishing the Citizen's Law Enforcement Liaison Committee on January 5, 2010.
- We wish to thank the **Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, the City of Ferndale, the City of Arcata, the City of Blue Lake** and the **City of Eureka** for issuing public Resolutions and/or Proclamations acknowledging December 2009, as Human Rights Awareness Month. We believe such public acknowledgement raises awareness and fosters community interest in improving the human condition.
- We wish to thank **Arcata Mayor Mark Wheetley** for taking the initiative to publicly read the Declaration of Human Rights in its entirety on the downtown Plaza to kickoff our Human Rights March at the opening of the December 2009 Arts Alive celebration.

- We wish to thank the **McLean Foundation** for their financial support which made it possible to distribute *Resource Cards* to thousands of individuals throughout Humboldt County. The enormous popularity of these *Resource Cards* speaks loudly to the need to get public services information out to the people in a compact accessible form, and suggests the huge numbers of people who are undoubtedly reached and helped through this program.
- We wish to thank **Carlos Benemann** for the hours he donated toward making the Spanish-Language *Resource Card* more than just an idea, allowing us to reach out to a local population who have particular difficulty connecting with services and agencies because of the barrier of language.
- We wish to thank **Beau Hopkins** for the hours he spent contacting local agencies and charities to update contact information and add even more local service providers to the *Resource Card*. His efforts toward making sure the information supplied on the *Resource Card* is accurate and current were invaluable.
- We wish to thank **Access Humboldt** for their help in recording and broadcasting public forums thereby reaching people who hadn't attended meetings. Access Humboldt's broadcasts not only raised awareness and educated the public on issues affecting our community, but ultimately lead to wider public participation in the debate, perhaps resulting in fresh ideas and new solutions.
- We wish to thank the **Eureka City School Board** for their support of the Media Center at Eureka High School, giving students the opportunity to get hands-on training in media development and an introduction to the broadcasting business, while providing a valuable communication resource to our community.
- We wish to thank **Katie Whiteside** and **KHSU** for interviewing HRC Chair Neal Sanders concerning formation of the Citizen's Law Enforcement Liaison Committee and giving us a venue to inform the public how to apply for the committee.
- We wish to thank the **City of Eureka** for consideration of Amnesty Parking for the homeless and their efforts to coordinate with the New Directions Program to help alleviate the problems of homelessness during the cold winter months this past year.
- We wish to thank the **Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence** and **Tom Conolon** for coming to our aid regarding coordinating insurance coverage of the Human Rights March on December 5, 2009.
- We wish to thank the commissioners who have retired this past year - **Rick Botzler, Don Holt, Debi Farber-Bush, Nita Brake-Mills** and **Sofia Pereira** for their service as Humboldt County Human Rights Commissioners during this past year.
- We wish to thank **Debi Farber-Bush** for representing HRC on World Aids Day, and for organizing HRC's annual events surrounding Human Rights Month December 2009.
- We wish to thank Humboldt County Sheriff candidates **Mike Downey** and **Mike Hislop** for each taking the time to speak at one of our meetings.
- We wish to thank the **Wiyot Tribe** for holding the annual vigil at Tuluwat, with a ceremony that celebrates the enormous capacity within us all for renewal and healing.

- We wish to thank **NorCAN** for sponsoring educational workshops throughout the year addressing issues facing non-profit organizations and for their regular emailed newsletters crammed with announcements of interest to non-profits.
- We wish to thank the **League of Women Voters of Humboldt County** for offering meeting space and providing non-partisan, non-judgmental mediators at public forums.
- We wish to thank **Cal-Trans** for erecting a sign near Clam Beach acknowledging HRC participation in the Adopt-a-Highway Program.
- We wish to thank the **Area One Agency on Aging** for providing meeting space for the HRC Immigration Issues Sub-committee.

SPECIAL THANKS TO LARRY MILLER

Larry Miller has served on the Humboldt County Human Rights Commission since June 27, 1995. We of the Humboldt County Human Rights Commission are deeply grateful to Larry for tirelessly sharing his dedication, wisdom and experience with each of us and for his 15 years of faithful service to our community as a highly respected Humboldt County Human Rights Commissioner.

As chair of the Commission for the past two years, and a relatively fresh member of the Human Rights Commission, I often look to Larry for guidance and advice. His moral compass has always proven to be dead-accurate. His ideas and proposals are always well thought-out. His compassion and tolerance for the human condition is nothing short of exemplary. It has been my great pleasure to have the honor of serving with Larry Miller on the Humboldt County Human Rights Commission.

On behalf of myself and the entire Humboldt County Human Rights Commission, we extend a big **THANK YOU** to Larry Miller.

CLOSING

On behalf of the entire Commission I wish to express that it has been our privilege to serve this past year at the direction of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors. We look forward to the Board filling our four vacancies and tackling fresh challenges in the coming year.

Very truly yours,

Neal I. Sanders
Chair

Attachments: Public Contact Charts

NIS:lj

Citizen Contacts through the HRC Call System:

2009-10: . total calls (2008-09: 113 calls/2007-08: 120 calls/2006-07: 137 calls)

2009	callers	2010	callers
July	12	Jan	4
Aug	4	Feb	5
Sept	8	Mar	5
Oct	15	Apr	9
Nov	4	May	9
Dec	5	Jun	6

Categories:

Just wanted to talk or tell someone about something:	13
Request for information or help:	31
Complaints of alleged misconduct:	35
Law enforcement	15
Other public agency	4
Private persons	6
Landlords	3
Employers	4
Other Businesses	4
Complaints of alleged discrimination:	4
Public agency	0
Employer	2
Retail business	1
Landlord	1
<u>Calls not fitting any category:</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	86

Commissioners on phone duty from July 2009 through June 2010:

2009		2010	
July 1-15	Miller	Jan 1-15	Miller
July 16-31	Sanders/Lochtie	Jan 16-31	Munsee
August 1-15	Shelter	Feb 1-15	Lochtie
August 16-31	Pereira	Feb 16-28	Lochtie
Sept 1-15	Heise	Mar 1-15	Altchuler
Sept 16-30	Farber-Bush	Mar 15-31	Shelter
Oct 1-15	Miller	Apr 1-15	Sanders
Oct 16-31	Munsee	Apr 16-30	Herbelin
Nov 1-15	Sanders	May 1-15	Pereira/Sanders
Nov 15-31	Herbelin	May 16-31	Herbelin
Dec 1-15	Pereira	June 1-15	Heise
Dec 16-30	Heise	June 16-30	Munsee

Public Attendance at Monthly Meetings:

2009	Guests	2010	Guests
July	2	Jan	0
Aug	0	Feb	4
Sept	0	Mar	1
Oct	0	Apr	1
Nov	3	May	0
Dec	1	Jun	4

Guest Topics:

Homelessness	2
Public works	1
Planning Dept.	1
Law enforcement	5
Healthcare	6
Transgender Issues	2

Public Contacts by Email:

2009	emails	2010	emails
July	1	Jan	0
Aug	2	Feb	1
Sept	1	March	0
Oct	0	Apr	1
Nov	1	May	0
Dec	0	Jun	0

Categories:

Cockfighting	2
Healthcare	1
Law Enforcement	2
Transgender	1

Public Contacts by Letter:

2009	Letters	2010	Letters
July	1	Jan	0
Aug	0	Feb	3
Sept	0	March	0
Oct	0	Apr	0
Nov	1	May	0
Dec	1	Jun	0

Categories:

Jail conditions	1
Law enforcement	1
Healthcare	2
Code enforcement	1
Homelessness	1