



# THE PROBATION REPORTER

Volume 5, Edition 1

August 2006

## Message from the Chief

By Doug Rasines

As we begin the new fiscal year, activities at the Probation Department continue to move at a bustling pace. The county budget appears stable and, with the support of the governor and local legislators, a state budget was approved which included an increase in funding for Juvenile Justice and Crime Prevention Act (Juvenile Diversion and New Horizons), restored STC funding to offset the costs of training for probation officers and juvenile corrections officers, continuation funding for Prop 36 (probation supervision and treatment services for substance abuse offenders), continuation funding for Juvenile Probation and Camps Funding for case management services for youth detained in the Juvenile Hall and Regional Facility, and new program funding for Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction grants to reduce recidivism among mentally ill offenders. All of these items are proven programs, which wisely use taxpayer dollars and will provide future cost savings, contribute to the reduction of crime, and enhance public safety. While all this is very welcome news, Probation remains poised for the anticipated challenges of maintaining this valuable program funding into FY 2007-08.

The Department continues to move forward with its Organizational Assessment and Development Plan. Beginning in May, the Department completed an all-staff survey, a series of six staff focus groups, two

staff retreats, and a full department wide meeting in July. The purpose of this assessment has been to improve communication throughout the organization, evaluate current organizational management practices, determine organizational readiness for the implementation of evidence-based practices, and enhance professionalism in the workplace. The process included staff involvement at all levels of the Department as we look to build upon existing organizational strengths, while acknowledging and working to resolve concerns. Two key themes emerged from the organizational assessment process, specifically related to the need for improved departmental communication and performance management strategies. As a result, concrete, immediate (30-90 day), intermediate (3-6 month), and longer-term (6-12 month) organizational work plans have been developed. The Department will strive toward improving morale and enhancing its ability to assure better outcomes for those we serve by adopting more healthy, frequent, straightforward communication channels, and a more clearly articulated performance management system. These efforts stem from a vision for continuous system improvement from which our mission can best be met when the focus on public safety and rehabilitation work hand-in-hand to complement one another; where we validate and acknowledge the value of the work that is currently being completed, while striving to support staff and their ability to work more effectively. The organizational development process is always evolving and will present periods of personal and professional challenge, but with due diligence I firmly believe tangible results are attainable.

On July 18, 2006 the Board of Supervisors proclaimed the week of July 16-22 as "Probation, Parole, and Community Supervision Week". Probation, as an essential part of the criminal justice system, provides many offenders with a pathway to successful, lawful living. Probation staff endorse prevention, intervention, advocacy, offender accountability and perform crucial duties that support and protect crime victims. Much thanks to the Board of Supervisors for their recognition of the

### NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Doug Rasines, Chief Probation Officer  
Barbara Boerger, Editor

Vikki Bernstein  
Jody Green  
Debbie Damiano  
Kevin Bayless  
Cate Halliday

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contributions Probation makes in creating safer communities.

The 2006-07 Grand Jury Report was released in June indicating high praise for the Von Humboldt school program in the Juvenile Hall and complimenting the Regional Facility for the comprehensive interdisciplinary work being provided to our county's most troubled youth. In addition the Grand Jury commended staff within Adult Services for their dedication and commitment in performing their jobs in an exemplary manner. Such praise does not come lightly. Congratulations to you all!

In the coming months the Department will begin to provide communication training across all levels of the department and develop a more transparent and consistent process for performance management. Collaboration continues with the Department of Health and Human Services to further the work of our Cultural Diversity and Awareness Committee, begin development of a Leadership Development Program, and assist with the launch of the "Family to Family" model within probation services in an effort to help reduce the need of out-of-home placement for youth in the juvenile justice system.

While much work lies ahead, it is important that we recognize and applaud the quality of work currently performed. In coming together to meet our mission, leadership will be needed throughout the entire organization. We must keep learning, challenging, growing and encouraging others to do the same.

I hope everyone is having a wonderful summer!



Chief Doug Rasines speaks to the Board of Supervisors during Probation, Parole and Community Supervision Week.

## **Cultural Diversity and Awareness Committee (CDAC)**

**By Vikki Bernstein**

The present members of CDAC are: Vikki Bernstein, Mardi Bessellieu, Barbara Boerger, Ken Evans, Barbara Robie, Coral Sanders, Michael Tully and Vicki Webb. We have been meeting about twice a month, working toward establishing a strong foundation from which to grow. All committee members have volunteered to work on this project in addition to their regular assignment. Their dedication, initiative and energy is to be commended. Initially, the committee members posed more questions than answers to each other. What does "Cultural Diversity" really mean, who does it include, who isn't included, what are the parameters, is it more than ethnicity (the answer was yes), and where does it end? CDAC began to narrow the focus, believing starting small and growing would be the best approach. A mission statement for the department's Cultural Diversity and Awareness plan was crafted, attempting to blend with the department's overall mission, core organizational values and operating principles. We acknowledged that the mission statement may change over time.

### **CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND AWARENESS MISSION STATEMENT**

*The Cultural Diversity and Awareness Committee is dedicated to enhancing the execution of the Probation Department's Mission Statement by joining efforts with other community agencies and cultural advocates to expand understanding of the variety of cultures in our growing and diverse community.*

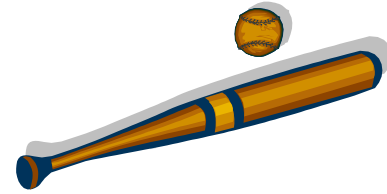
While the committee was working on the above, Chief Rasines, under the guidance of La Piana & Associates, was leading us through the first stages of our Organizational Assessment and Development plan. This assisted CDAC in prioritizing and categorizing the types of training we would request, seek and implement. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is in the process of developing an Office of Cultural Diversity and Client Affairs. The Probation Department and DHHS have been sharing ideas and we have been provided with the opportunity to meet with their consultant, Dr. Matthew Mock. Dr. Mock is also the Director of the Center for Multicultural Development with the California Institute for Mental Health (CIMH) in

Sacramento.

CDAC was invited to attend part of DHHS's CIMH technical assistance day and meet with Dr. Mock. The meeting was informative and rewarding. Shortly after meeting with Dr. Mock, Ken Nakamura, professor in the Social Work Department at Humboldt State University, met with us to further assist us in moving forward. The relevance of cultural diversity in the workplace was part of our discussion with both Dr. Mock and with Ken Nakamura. Ken also pointed out that we, as a department, have the obligation to communicate effectively, to make certain clients understand the probation process, what is happening to them, and what is expected of them.

The objective is to make our jobs easier and improve performance outcomes. Much of what Ken was saying fell to management and its obligation to prepare, train and provide support to staff; asking culturally appropriate questions and assisting in developing case plans. When we see more success in our caseloads, we become more vested in the outcomes, we feel more positive about who we are and what we do, and so on. The world we live in is changing. When we become aware of those changes, apply new information to work performance, our jobs become a source of enhancement to life.

Mr. Nakamura's meeting left us feeling more convinced about our mission and gave us a boost of energy to persist. Chief Rasines and I had the opportunity of meeting with Matthew Mock again recently. We shared some of the information Ken Nakamura had given us, particularly about preparing managers to learn and take the lead as trainers, etc. Dr. Mock has agreed to come to the Probation Department to work with Probation Management staff on August 16th. We are fortunate to have expertise available to us, both through CIMH and locally. Next steps will hopefully be included in the next newsletter.



## BBQ and Softball Extravaganza

By Tim Toste

We are going to have our fifth annual a BBQ and Softball Extravaganza on August 26, 2006 at 1:00pm at Cooper Gulch. Be sure and bring your ice chest with something you want barbecued and, of course, the beverage of your choice. For those who have skills, a nice side dish to share would be appreciated. Be sure to bring some plates/utensils for yourself so as not to be dependent upon others to take care of your unorganized sorry self! :) Shawn Burger will bring his BBQ to town and others are certainly welcome to do the same to help out with the cooking.

Anyone willing and able (no worker's comp for the injury prone!) to play is welcome. We'll just divide up into teams and hope to fill out two rosters and play. Friends, family, and children are all invited to bring their meat (or soybean product for the meatless) to barbecue, and a softball glove. Wendy Temple won't be able to provide a cake this year as she will be out of town. We'll miss your baking prowess Wendy, oh, and we'll miss you, too. :) Hopefully, Chris Petersen will be able to "borrow" some bases, balls, and bats for us to use.

Even if you don't want to play please come and enjoy the fun. Heckling can be better than actually playing!

I will have a sign up sheet for the staff in the main probation building on my door so we can get a feel for how many participants there will be. Even if you don't plan on playing please sign up so we know you're coming! For facilities there will be a sheet attached to this memo for people to sign. All staff regardless of classification, age, creed, looks (good or otherwise (Mark Cory)), socioeconomic background, religion, attitude (good only), color, gender, or being vertically challenged are encouraged to participate by playing, watching, cheering, booing, cooking, eating, and being merry. See you there!

# Senior Moments

By Cate Halliday

Salutations all! Let me introduce you to veteran probation officer Paula Irene Swihart. Over a lovely, light lunch at Avalon, Paula shared her history with the department and a couple memorable moments in her life as a probation officer. It all started as Paula was a nursing student at College of the Redwoods. One day the Police Academy asked some nursing students to do some role playing for their class. Paula found the Academy's subject matter more interesting than nursing. The following quarter, Paula changed her major from nursing to Administration of Justice, meeting Bill Burke, a Supervising Probation Officer at the time, who was teaching an introductory course at the college. Paula graduated from College of the Redwoods with an AA in Administration of Justice and later transferred to Humboldt State University where she majored in Social Work.

One life altering day, she bumped into Bill Burke while shopping at Big 5 sporting goods store. He told her the Probation Department was interviewing for extra-help probation officers and suggested she apply. So, in 1989, Paula began her career as an extra-help probation officer.

Paula's senior year in the social work program required a nine-month internship. So, while continuing to work extra-help, Paula interned in Adult Intake/Court Investigations under the supervision of Probation Officer, Mike Yanke.

During Paula's last semester at HSU, she applied for a permanent part-time position and got it, "September 17, 1991, was my first official day." Her first office was located on the third floor of the courthouse where she interviewed jail inmates for Probation's early release program.

Approximately nine months later a full-time position became available in Juvenile Intake; "I was terrified. Everyone told me it was the hardest position in the department," but Probation Supervisor, Beth Bandy, "was the sweetest person... she eased me into it."

Paula reminisces about the "old days..." There were no outstations and the Adult and Juvenile divisions were very divided. Juvenile was upstairs and Adult was downstairs and never did the two mingle. There were no computers. There was no voice mail. The front reception desk had to take written messages on every call.

I asked Paula to share two memorable moments. Paula recalls her saddest moment, which occurred back in 1994.....

It was a Monday morning and Paula was assigned the case of a runaway boy out of southern California. The boy had run away from a group home and was arrested in Garberville in a stolen auto. At that time, Court was held in the old school classroom at the Juvenile Hall. The juvenile hall lobby was full of families awaiting court, so she decided to wait a bit before going into the Hall to introduce herself to

the boy. Before Paula could meet the boy he committed a near-fatal suicide attempt. The boy was taken to the hospital and placed on a ventilator. Paula, feeling the need to see him went over to the hospital. Although she was not a family member, she was allowed into the intensive care unit. She held his hand and introduced herself. Her training as a nurse reminded her that hearing is always the last sense to go. Tragically, the boy did not survive. The parents later wrote a letter to Paula thanking her for her professionalism. To this day, she regrets not having introduced herself to the boy first thing in the morning.

On a lighter note, Paula shares an embarrassing incident.....

Paula was assigned to drive to Medford, Oregon, to pick up a runaway from our county. On the return trip the minor was complaining that the cuffs and shackles were horribly tight so Paula removed them. Paula stated, "I trusted her". They stopped along the Smith River for lunch. Next thing Paula knew, the minor said, "I don't want to go back" and darted down a trail. Paula, in shock, thought, "This is not happening." Paula ran after her yelling, "Stop!!!" Paula's asthma kicked in and she had to terminate the chase and look for help. She had no radio or cell phone. A park ranger came by and Paula explained the situation. Information obtained from people in the area indicated that the minor had just crossed the Smith River and was now in a local campground. Three hours later, with the assistance of a Del Norte County Sheriff's Deputy and police dogs, the girl was found hiding in a briar patch. The following Monday morning, Paula, scared to death, bit the bullet and walked into our then Chief Dave Lehman's office. "I might as well get it over with," she thought. Instead of reprimanding her as she expected he would, Dave shared with her a story about a minor who ran from him during a transport to the dentist.

Paula wanted to share a quote that she focuses on when she feels she is not doing enough to help her clients - "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; I will not refuse to do the something I can do.- Helen Keller. Great thought provoking stories Paula. Thanks for sharing.



Paula Swihart, Senior Probation Officer, Juvenile Intake



# Relay for Life

By Mike Tully

This year marked the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the annual Humboldt County/Eureka Relay for Life event. The American Cancer Society reports our 15<sup>th</sup> annual Relay for Life raised over \$725,000 with all proceeds collected through August 25, 2006, still to be added to the 2006 total. Team #151 – Officers Cuffing Cancer wish to thank you for your continued support. Our team members were very busy with life events but were still able to raise over \$1700. This is terrific. But really, Relay for Life is much more than just the dollars and cents. The efforts of our Team and other Relayers is to assist the American Cancer Society in raising cancer prevention awareness, providing support to cancer survivors, and honoring those that have lost their battle with cancer. And, along the way we try to have a little fun and enjoy life. Nothing like a fresh glazed Krispy Kreme doughnut or two while walking laps in the midnight hour to realize how good life can be at times. Just ask Robert and Ryan. They are making a tradition of it. This year, the team had lots of event support including several JCOs, a Facility Manager, spouses, and a pair of in-laws among others. Thanks folks! A 24-hour walk/run can be a taxing feat without lots of feet to assist. The fight against cancer will not end until there is a cure. So expect more from us in the coming months. And if you are able, donate blood, too! It's a lifesaver.

The 2005-2006 Official Team #151 members are Barbara Boerger, Megan Gotcher, Nikki Kriger, Laurie Michel, Will Nalty, Kermit Owen, Ryan Schlesiger, Jake Hayes, Andy McLaughlin, Paula Swihart and Michael Tully.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you to all!



Relayers: (back row- left to right) Nikki Kriger, John Morgan, Mike Tully, Mark Cory, and Jacob Hayes; (front row – left to right) Kermit Owen, Barbara Boerger, Laurie Michel, and Will Nalty.



## Years of Service for Probation and Facility Staff

The following employees had, or will have had, an anniversary for the time period of **June 1, 2006** through **August 31, 2006**. Thanks to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commissions for their contribution toward service pins to support our employee recognition efforts.

### 1 year

Kristen Wallace  
Eric Dick  
Trenda Martin  
Jeannie Patterson  
Kevin Bayless  
Karen Maynard

### 2 years

Stephanie Chavez  
Jacob Hayes

### 3 years

Meara Mc Covey

### 4 years

Ryan Blanchard

### 5 years

Chris Brannon  
Petrina Fennell  
Barbara Boerger

### 6 years

Diane Ratterman  
Shawn Burger  
Ken Evans  
Megan Gotcher

### 7 years

Kelly Keen

### 8 years

Roberta Womack  
Laurie Michel

### 9 years

Ryan Schlesiger  
Stephanie Smithson

### 10 years

Mike Tully

### 11 years

Kevin Samsel

### 12 years

Jody Green  
Brett Moranda  
Paula Dolf

### 13 years

Roni Bodeen

### 14 years

Steve Schaening

### 16 years

Mark Cory  
Debbie Damiano

### 17 years

Cynthia Petersen

### 19 years

Moe Pratton



# Chicken Piccata

Contributed by Sharon Erickson

This recipe requires the chicken to be tenderized to produce the best texture & optimum flavor. To tenderize the chicken cutlets (cutlets can be made by slicing the chicken breast, lengthwise, in half or ask your butcher), place the chicken between a piece of plastic wrap & pound the chicken gently with a mallet, until the chicken is 1/4 -1/2" thickness. Makes 2 servings.

4 chicken cutlets  
2 T. vegetable oil  
1/4 C. dry white wine  
1 tsp. garlic, minced  
1/2 C. low sodium chicken broth  
2 T. fresh lemon juice + fresh lemon slices  
1 T. capers, drained  
2 T. unsalted butter  
Fresh chopped parsley



**Season** 4 chicken cutlets with salt & pepper, then dust with flour. Spray a sauté pan with nonstick spray, add vegetable oil, and heat over medium-high heat.

**Sauté** cutlets 2-3 minutes on one side. Flip the cutlets over & sauté the other side 1-2 minutes with the pan covered. Transfer cutlets to a warm plate; pour off fat from the pan.

**Deglaze** pan with wine & add minced garlic. Cook until garlic is fragrant & liquid is nearly gone, about 1-1/2 minutes.

**Add** broth, lemon juice & capers. Return cutlets to pan & cook on each side 1 minute. Transfer cutlets to a warm plate.

**Finish** with butter & lemon slices. Add butter to the pan & once it melts, add the lemon slices. Pour sauce over cutlets.

**Garnish** with *fresh* chopped parsley.

## Probation's Secret Garden

After a few hollyhocks came to visit last year, Senior Legal Office Assistants Betty Bowles and Kay Lamb found out they both have a serious problem – gardening. Each brought in pots of flowers on and off until flowers filled the concrete enclosure. Throughout the summer, everyone has enjoyed the beauty of this quaint little garden.

