



THE PROBATION REPORTER

Volume 4, Edition 4

May 2006

Message from the Chief

By Doug Rasines

Hopefully the rain has passed and spring is finally upon us. As we look forward to warmer weather our Department continues to be involved with very intense activity at all levels of programming. New hiring and several well deserved promotions have occurred since our last newsletter:

New Hires:

Juvenile Corrections Officers: Justin Bacon, John Morgan, and Donna Nouriel
Legal Office Assistant: Sharon Erickson
Deputy Probation Officer: Ric Medley

Promotions:

Doris Echeveria – Fiscal Services Supervisor
Arlene Woody – Senior Revenue Recovery Officer
Ryan Schlesiger – Supervising Probation Officer
Sara Peterson – Deputy Probation Officer

Congratulations to you all!

Despite the recent personnel changes, the department continues to be seriously understaffed due to position vacancies across several budget units and unanticipated staff leaves of absence. Enough thanks cannot be given to all staff who have risen to the occasion and continued to work together tirelessly in helping the department meet its on-going service delivery needs.

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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Preliminary “status quo” budgets have been submitted and between now and late June departments will continue to work with the CAO’s office to craft a final budget for adoption by the Board of Supervisors. It is important to remember that despite the term “status quo”, we will still be operating with 6 frozen positions resulting from several years of budget cutbacks. While budget reports from the state legislature sound positive for probation services, other federal and indirect budget threats lurk on the horizon, meaning that we need to continue to monitor the situation closely. For FY 2006-07 the department will be tracking several performance measures within the context of our departmental mission to “*reduce the impact of crime in our communities through investigation, prevention, supervision, collaboration, detention, and victim restoration*”. These outcome measures will include recidivism rates, the timeliness of court investigations and reports, successful termination of probation, collection of victim restitution, and the success rate of detention alternative programs.

In February, we completed the annual review of our Strategic Plan. We continue with “works in progress,” which include the reliance upon evidence-based practices in probation services, the implementation of our Information Technology Plan, and further analysis to ensure the sustainability of probation funding. In addition, the planning team has identified enhancing public relations, an evaluation of facility/space needs, and enhanced professionalism in the workplace as priority areas for development in 2006. A huge “thank you” goes out to all members of the strategic planning team for their thoughtful efforts and participation.

Led by the efforts of Juvenile Division Director Vikki Bernstein, and unit staff representatives comprising the cultural diversity committee, elements of the department’s Cultural Diversity and Awareness Plan are starting to be rolled out. The first step in becoming more culturally sensitive is acknowledging how little we know and developing and openness to learn. In the coming months, the committee has plans for offering a number of

cultural awareness presentations designed to help us gain a broader understanding of cultural differences, and in turn, enhance our ability to assist clients in making positive change.

In closing, it is important to recognize that probation services are often a misunderstood and not highly visible element of the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Probation officers are key members of, and partners within, the law enforcement community. At the same time, probation is at the heart of community supervision, and works hand-in-hand with social service agencies and community groups to provide offenders and victims with necessary services. I would like to recognize all probation staff as a group of extremely dedicated professionals who do make a difference in people's lives, and who do make a difference in the safety of our communities.



Youth Employment

By Antoinette Martin

One of the goals of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commissions is to explore community issues where the Commissions may have positive impact. Youth employment is an issue which touches the lives of youth and underlies the difficulties that many of them face today. Therefore, Commissioners at the May meeting were delighted to receive an excellent interactive presentation from Joe Davey, Employment and Training Manager from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Employment Training Division, on youth employment opportunities, resources, and barriers. Mr. Davey provided background information and responded extemporaneously to many questions and comments. Other significant contributors to the discussion were Supervisor Smith, Chief Probation Officer Doug Rasines, Cindy Sutcliff of DHHS, and Denise Jones from the Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE).

Though collaboration planning is underway, the primary resources operate for the most part independently. Services under the Workforce Investment Act are administered by the Workforce Investment Board, which has an advisory Youth Council. They administer about \$367,000. Last year they reached 91 youth, this year 84. The recommended goals for their program are to reach

foster youth, youth aging out of the foster care programs, youth involved in the juvenile justice system, youth whose parents are involved in the justice system, and migrant youth. Funding constraints have limited services to paying for staff to provide soft services such as job search skills, developing resumes, and schooling.

This constraint is frustrating for staff since the overwhelming need is for actual job experience. The present services are provided through five school districts. Another staff concern is that they are not reaching the needy population of dropout youth and those whose basic skills are low even though they have graduated.

The greatest need in developing job experience for youth seems to be collaboration and the identification and recruitment of local businesses to employ youth, particularly in the summer. The greatest barrier for employers is high liability costs. Another possible barrier is the limitation by law of the things which youth are allowed to do. Economic development is also a local issue.

The Job Market Youth Development Program under the Workforce Development Act is closely related to the work of the Workforce Investment Board. Recently, the Job Market has been changed to be more youth friendly. Both College of the Redwoods and Humboldt State University Career Centers use the Job Market as a resource.

Another resource through the Humboldt County Office of Education is the Regional Occupation Program (ROP) which is funded through Average Daily Attendance (ADA) at \$3200 per student per year. Also under HCOE is Workability, which is under State Special Education Funding and is usually an expenditure of about \$147,000 a year. This includes student stipends and 11 Vocational Technicians. The State Department of Rehabilitation, in collaboration with HCOE, serves eligible youth.

DHHS has developed a Youth Transition Action Team who are identifying resources and needs. They have wide agency representation and are, as a result, enhancing collaboration. This service works primarily without funds.

The Commissions are very interested in pursuing the issue of youth employment and are exploring ways in which they can be supportive. The following ideas will be pursued: to develop incentives for employers, to find a way to help with the liability issue, to survey businesses as to barriers to employing youth, and to

study and possibly expand the canvas of youth at sites to determine the kinds of jobs that would interest them.



Juvenile Hall Juice

By Mardi Bessellieu

The Juvenile Hall has recently experienced some sporadic over-crowding over the last few months. Fortunately, due to the efforts of all involved, the over-population did not last for long and we are now cruising along under the wire. Thank you to the probation officers and Hall staff who worked together to ease the over-population issues.

One of our consummate bachelors recently “bit the dust” and got married a few weeks ago. Gabe Charlton got married in early May. We congratulate Gabe and his new bride and wish them all the best!

Daniel Zuniga, one of our superb cooks, and his wife are expecting a baby in, I believe, late August. We wish them much happiness over their upcoming arrival!

We also want to congratulate a certain, special person at the Regional Facility who is expecting a child in a few short months. I don’t know if I have permission to broadcast her name, but congratulations to this lucky gal and her husband. You know who you are!

Robert Wenzel and Ryan Blanchard are going to be “tilling the earth” and starting a Juvenile Hall garden to rival the one currently in place by the Regional Facility. The guys don’t have much experience with gardening, but we are optimistic that they will have green thumbs and produce an ample supply of veggies for the facility. If anyone wishes to donate seedlings, seeds, dirt, fertilizer or gardening knowledge, please feel free to notify Robert and/or Ryan. I am sure they will appreciate the help. Thanks guys for starting the Juvenile Hall garden project. (Keep it legal!)

Not much else is new in the facilities. If I have neglected any pertinent information, I apologize. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the hardworking, special staff we have the Juvenile Hall and Regional Facility. Your all doing a great job and I appreciate all you do. Keep up the good work.

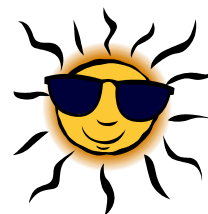


Celebrating Hope

By Mike Tully

The American Cancer Society reports in 2005, our 14th annual Relay for Life raised over \$802,000. Throughout the United States, \$351 million was raised. These efforts are making a difference. In 1990, 50% of people diagnosed with cancer survived. Now in 2005, 70% of people diagnosed with cancer survive. With your support, millions of lives are being saved. Thank you!

This year, the 15th annual Relay for Life event will occur on July 14 and 15, 2006 at College of the Redwoods. Please join cancer survivors and others in a celebration of HOPE.



SUNSHINE Salutations

By Barbara L. Robie

What a wonderful turnout for the Cinco de Mayo potluck! We enjoyed seeing kitchen staff and JCOs participating in this event!!! A special “thanks” to Mike Tully for bringing the “Loteria” (bingo) game and supplying the music. A big thanks also goes out to everyone who took the time to make such delicious and varied dishes. WOW!

There has been terrific financial support from a majority of our co-workers. Unfortunately, there has been some great need also. Quite a few of our co-workers have experienced the loss of a loved one and our contributions have helped to reach out to offer support with flowers, cards, and memorial contributions when the need is most.

There has also been quite a bit of baby making in the ranks! Congratulations to Kim, Kevin, and Ryan!

We have sent flowers and cards for some illnesses

and surgeries.

We also purchased quite a few “years of service” pins to be able to include Regional Facility and Juvenile Hall staff, as well as those employees coming up on their five, ten, fifteen, twenty, and, really folks, we have a (nearly) twenty-fiver at the helm! We spent well over \$130 just for the pins alone.

The year is only half over and the funds are low. There is a plan to have a silent auction of donated items in August to raise money. It will be during a noon BBQ and we are asking for fun or unusual items to be donated. Please contact Roni Bodeen regarding your auction item.

If you don’t know yet, there is a retirement potluck for Mike Saul just around the corner on June 1st, at noon, at the J Street office.

We encourage all that have not donated the suggested twelve dollars each year, please do it now! For those that have, thanks! Feel really good about yourselves for steppin’ up and making a change for the better! Keep up the good work!!



Organizational Assessment and Development Plan

By Doug Rasines

In May, we launched our departmental Organizational Assessment and Development Plan (OADP) with technical assistance provided by La Piana Associates, as part of the California Endowment’s Healthy Returns Initiative. A fundamental purpose of the OADP is to bring staff together in an inclusive and participatory process designed to:

- ◆ Strengthen the capacity of the department to provide efficient and meaningful services;
- ◆ Assist staff in their ability to work effectively with clients, the courts, and community; and
- ◆ Improve the overall health, well-being, and success of the agency

The first phase of the OADP will be to:

- Assess current departmental culture/morale, assets, and resource needs
- Evaluate effectiveness of our current

organizational structure and workload distribution

- Assess effectiveness/success of current programs and services
- Determine our organizational readiness for the implementation of evidence-based practices (EBPs)

The assessment process will include an all-staff web-based survey to be completed in the first week in May; a series of six focus groups held during the third week in May; a series of staff retreats scheduled for June; and the preparation of findings and recommendations to be completed by the end of July.

The second phase of the OADP will be to:

- Initiate a staff development plan for improving communication throughout the organization, enhancing staff leadership skills, and building skill sets necessary for improved awareness/sensitivity for cultural diversity.
- Identify those practices with proven effectiveness in juvenile/criminal justice systems
- Develop a structured strategy for the integration of selected EBPs
- Define performance outcomes for measuring organizational, program, and client success.
- Develop a quality assurance and improvement plan to monitor the effectiveness of services and practices over time.

The Organization Assessment and Development Plan is guided by several overarching principles:

- This is a long-term process
- Staff participation and involvement at all levels is critical to the plan’s success
- We will strive to build on existing strengths while acknowledging and working to resolve concerns and weaknesses

Needless to say, embarking on such an ambitious endeavor can be very risky; however, the opportunity for sustainable benefits makes the challenge of engagement a risk worth taking.



Years of Service for Probation and Facility Staff

The following employees had, or will have had, an anniversary for the time period of **March 1, 2006** through **May 31, 2006**.

2 Years

Stephanie Chavez
Beverly Ford

3 Years

Nikki Kriger
Meara McCovey
Daniel Zuniga
Mike Zwiker

4 Years

Ryan Blanchard
Joe Eldridge
Greg Horne
Andy McLaughlin
Barbara Robie
Margi Williams

5 Years

Alan Borchardt
Chris Brannon
Jeanne Kirke
Chris Petersen

6 Years

Darren Ghisetti
John Sampson

7 Years

Fel Barlow
Stacy Reyes
Coral Sanders
Kim Sousa
Arlene Woody

8 Years

Will Nalty

9 Years

Shaun Brenneman

10 Years

Wendy Temple

11 Years

Jim Conroy
Vicki Webb

16 Years

Vikki Bernstein

18 Years

Mike Saul

24 Years

Doug Rasines

Not for Dinosaurs Only Trivia

By Cate Halliday

My word! Waiting for the next Probation Reporter to reveal the answers to the previous quiz is just too long to keep you all on the edge of your seats! Thus, from this point on, the trivia and the answers will be included in the same edition of the now famous Probation Reporter.

Due to the length and depth of "Real PO" Saul's interview (see page 6), this edition of "Not for Dinosaurs Only Trivia" will only comprise the answers to the trivia questions posed in the last edition of the Probation Reporter.

1. Whose ex-employee's husband was famous for his pup-in-a-blanket potluck dish?

Former Adult Intake Supervisor Liz Anker's husband, Jim Anker, was beloved for his delicious pups-in-a-blanket. Always a potluck favorite.

2. What is the name of our first assistant chief?

Our first ever Assistant Chief Probation Officer was Rich Brazil. When many of us began working at Probation, Rich Brazil, or "Papa Rich" as some call him, was the Superintendent of Juvenile Hall.

3. What probation officer, in a prior life, was called to Juvenile Hall to unplug toilets and unjam cell doors?

See "Senior Moments" on page 5.

4. Who developed and began the Juvenile Assigned Work Service (JAWS) program?

Doug (Rico) Rasines, then a Senior Counselor at Juvenile Hall, developed the Juvenile Assigned Work Service program. A program developed to assist in the growing over-population problems in the facility.

5. What are the names of the two staff first assigned to the JAWS program?

Moe Pratton and Tim Toste were the first Juvenile Hall Group Counselors assigned to the JAWS program. Mark Cory was the third counselor assigned.

6. Name the probation officer that began his employment here wearing an earring and his hair in a long ponytail down his back.

The answer to this question will remain a mystery...

If you have suggestions for future trivia questions, please submit to Cate Halliday.



Senior Moments

By Cate Halliday

Salutations all! A hip hip hooray for long time staff member Michael Jack Saul, who, after a distinguished career in the department, as well as in the county, is retiring after 25 years of service.

Anyone who knows Mike is aware this man spends much of his free time rebuilding and perfecting old cars. Although I've known Mike for all of my 20 years in the department, I never knew that Mike was named after two tools auto mechanics use: a Mike and a Jack. You see, Mike is the product of a father and grandfather who were both car mechanics of grandeur.

Mike began working for the county in 1981. Mike remembered the date on the spot: January 24, 1981. Mike was on the hiring list, excuse me, the top of the hiring list for a year. Following his 4th interview, he asked, in true Mike form, if he could start being compensated for his travel expenses. The chief engineer stated, "You're the last one on the list, do you want the job or not?"

Mike worked as a county maintenance mechanic for the next seven years. Mike recalled two accomplishments that stand out in his mind. First, Mike installed security screens over the seclusion units at Sempervirens that have held up to the force of those who regularly attempt to dismantle them. Mike did not just "fix" them, he came up with a solution which has remained unbroken to this day.

Mike's other claim to fame during his maintenance years, was a tool box he created for juvenile hall staff, enabling us to remove a jammed door lock ourselves in an emergency situation. It included all necessary tools and simple, clear instructions. When a detainee managed to jam the door and then began the process of attempting suicide, juvenile hall staff were now empowered to enter the cell ASAP. We no longer had to wait for a maintenance man to arrive.

In April of 1988, Michael was hired as a probation officer. Why the change of venue? "To have some white collar credibility when applying for teaching jobs." Mike joined the forces of the Humboldt County Probation Department.

Mike's first assignment: Juvenile Intake. His assignments: home supervision of over 30 juveniles, court and out-of-county transport, and dispositional

reports. Regarding court transport, Mike is proud to say, while he was the transport officer, he was never forced to restrain detainees due to acting out behavior.

Of course there was this one incident, a "memorable moment". Upon returning from a court transport, Mike was driving the van and Eric Olsen, a now retired Supervising Probation Officer, was at his side. Upon slowing to turn from Harrison to our home road (Munson), one juvenile decided to attempt the great escape. (It should be noted this situation occurred prior to having the added restraints of the waist belt.) But I digress . . . The juvenile slipped his cuffs from his back around his legs and onto his stomach. He then proceeded to open the sliding van door. Eric Olson attempted to stop the juvenile. The juvenile slammed the sliding door onto Eric's arm. Ouch!! Michael and Eric later received a cake with the iced sentiment - "Mike Saul and Eric Olson - Real P.O.s"

Mike reminds me, "This kid was tall, 6'3", and skinny, 130 pounds." Mike put on the parking brake and placed the transmission in park and took off after the escapee on foot. A woman soon offered the winded Mike a ride. Mr. "Real P.O." declined the offer and continued his hot pursuit. "I'm trudging around a corner and the kid's nowhere to be seen." Mike then sees the same woman parked in the street. She tells him the escapee ran behind a house. Mike caught the juvenile attempting to climb into the house's crawl space. Mike recalls, "I came out to the street with the kid and the woman had placed her baby in the front seat and had a back door of her car open. Just then lightning flashed over the Probation Department, and it began to rain. She began to drive us back to the hall when Eric Olsen arrived in the Transport Van." Mike, of course, thanked her profusely. This woman stated, "Don't worry about it. I know you." This occurred in 1988. Mike has never seen this guardian angel again and regrets not asking for her name or how she knew him.

An opening in Adult Intake in October of 1991 drew Mike to the world of Pre-Sentence Report Investigations. Judge John Buffington's ruling on a juvenile murder case spurred Mike's interest in determinate sentencing law.

Wanting to become "seniorized" (which in those days required you to work in juvenile) pulled Mike out of PSI land and back to the world of teenagers as a senior under the incredible Beth Bandy.

Approximately four months later Rich Brazil approached Mike stating, "Dave and I think you're the

guy to do Drug Court, are we wrong?" Mike replied, "No, Mr. Brazil, you're always right." Three and one-half years later Mike left Drug Court and from his fellow staff, he received a graduation certificate dated February 1st 2001.

Mike then returned to the world of presentence reports where he remains to this day.

Mike is proud to be the author of the Probation Department's protocol for the Certification of Domestic Violence Programs used by the Probation Department.

At the end of the interview, I asked Mike if he had any parting words of wisdom. Mike thought for a moment and said:

"Be sure you're right, and then go ahead."
-- Davy Crockett

Stay tuned for the next Senior Moments article when I interview department veteran Paula Swihart.



Retired Senior Probation Eric Olson (on the left) and Senior Probation Officer Mike Saul with their "Real POs" cake

THANK YOU...

To Probation Department staff who donated funds allowing us to make a generous contribution to the Teen Center in memory of Sierra Weatherbee.

Bowling Bonanza

By Tim Toste

In February we had our fifth annual Bowling Bonanza at Harbor Lanes. With staff, friends, and family we had forty bowlers this year, our largest number yet! Everyone seemed to have a fantastic time, especially JCO Stephanie Chavez who bowled a 206 to win the bragging rights until next year's event! Stephanie had her name and high score added to the beat up bowling pin we call a trophy which, for the third time in a row, is donned with the name of a Juvenile Corrections Officer. Apparently, there aren't any Deputy Probation Officers good enough to crack that streak!! Since only JCOs have had the top score the bowling pin has resided in the Juvenile Hall Control Room for three years running, I'd like to challenge Deputy Probation Officers to get a high score to see if that "trophy" will look better in someone's office!

As you can see by the photo, some of the participants decided on a 1950's theme for their bowling attire. I appreciate staff coming up with a fun way of participating and encourage others to do the same next year. I was a little frightened when I saw some of those hairdos, but quickly recovered.

Please look for an announcement regarding a date for our fifth annual Softball and BBQ Extravaganza coming up in August. Steroid testing will be mandatory. :-)



From left to right: Senior Probation Officer Paula Swihart, Juvenile Corrections Officer Donna Nouriel, and Juvenile Corrections Officer Julia Terrini flash back to the 50s for the Bowling Bonanza.

Bear River Band and Probation Sign MOU

For the past several months the Probation Department and the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria Tribe have worked diligently to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which would establish a formal process through which both parties can work collaboratively to achieve mutual goals and objectives. Specifically, the MOU will set in place procedure and protocols through which the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria Tribe will offer culturally appropriate voluntary services, activities, and treatment to school-aged tribal youth who have been the subject of law enforcement referral to the Probation Department.

On March 27, 2006 a Memoranda of Understanding was signed between the Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria Tribe and the Humboldt County Probation Department. Representatives from both the Bear River Band Tribe and the Probation Department are very excited about formalizing their commitment and agreement to work collaboratively to coordinate and provide culturally appropriate prevention and early intervention services for tribal youth involved in the juvenile justice system.



Present at the MOU signing are: (standing, left to right) Dakota McGinnis, Tribal Vice-Chair; Leonard Bowman, Tribal Chairman; Doug Rasines, Chief Probation Officer; Edwin Smith, Tribal Member-at-Large; (seated, left to right) Carole Reeves, Tribal Treasurer; and Aileen Meyer, Tribal Secretary.

Deputy Probation Officers and Juvenile Corrections Officers Sworn In

A swearing in ceremony was conducted by Presiding Judge Timothy Cissna in his courtroom on May 17th. Congratulations to:

Probation Officers:

Brian Grossman
Kevin Bayless
Nikki Kriger
Richard Medley
Michelle Gonzalez
Sara Peterson

Juvenile Corrections Officers:

John Robey
Steven Schmidt
Kristin Wallace
John Morgan
Donna Nouriel
Justin Bacon
Trenda Martin
Sarah Surber

