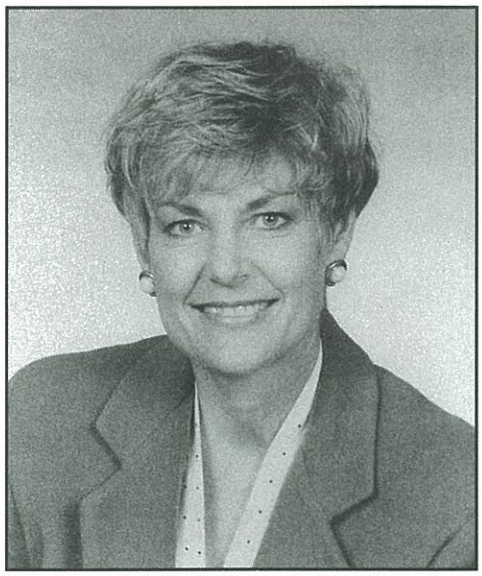
County DIGEST

JUNE 2000 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Joan Ouderkirk: Director of Internal Services Department

Joan Ouderkirk is the director of Los Angeles County's Internal Services Department (ISD) and the Los Angeles County Purchasing Agent. Since March 1998, she has headed the County's ninth largest department, controlling annual budgets of $505 million and a workforce of 2,372. ISD provides a wide range of services to County departments. Currently, ISD provides purchasing and contracting, facilities management and craft services, telecommunications, data processing, energy management, and other support services.

Joan has over 30 years of extensive experience in seven County departments. She began her career as a Personnel Analyst in the then Department of Personnel where she worked on training, exams, classification, and compensation. Her next step was Personnel Officer at the former Purchasing and Stores Department. Over the following five years, she worked at the Chief Administrative Office (CAO). At the CAO, her initial



budget assignment included the District Attorney, small Courts, and a portion of the Probation Department. She then moved on to oversee the Sheriff's budget, and later expanded to the budgets for all justice departments. Her next challenge came as the first unclassified administrative deputy for former District Attorney Robert Philibosian. At the Treasurer and Tax Collector, she developed the first banking contracts for the County. She then served as Chief Deputy at the Probation Department with emphasis on Administrative and Special Units before her transfer to ISD in April 1991 as Chief Deputy.

Joan was born in Los Angeles and raised in Burbank. After high school, she attended the University of California at Santa Barbara for one year and then transferred to the University of California at Los Angeles to complete her bachelor's degree. In 1990, she expanded her education by attending Western State University College of Law and was selected valedictorian of her graduating class before passing the bar in 1994. Her hobbies include cooking, reading, and traveling. She also loves spending time with her two spaniels that were adopted from the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control.

When Joan was appointed to the position of Director, Internal Services Department in January 2000, she recognized that the appointment would not have happened without the outstanding work of all ISD employees.

To make ISD the County's premier service delivery organization and a leader among County departments, Joan involved various levels of her staff in the development of the ISD Strategic Plan. As the first step toward developing ISD's Strategic Plan, new Mission, Vision, and Value statements were developed for ISD by mid-1999 with input from all levels of

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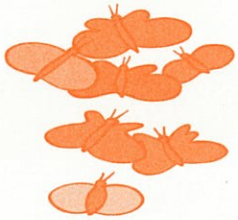
Inside: Summer Safety Section Pullout

Calendar of Events



Natural History Museum
of Los Angeles County
(213) 763-DINO
www.nhm.org

Pavilion of Wings
Through September 4, 2000

The Bahia:
World's Largest Cut Gemstone Sculpture
Through September 4, 2000

El Nuevo Mundo:
The Landscape of Latino Los Angeles
Through July 16, 2000

Savage Ancient Seas
Through October 9, 2000

Adventures in Nature
June 26, 2000 through August 18, 2000
For ages 3 to 13

Los Angeles County Museum of Art
(323) 857-6000
www.lacma.org.

Art classes for children and adults
Contact the education department for dates and times

"Martin Johnson Heade"
Through August 13, 2000

Edward Ruscha: Editions 1959-1999
Through August 27, 2000

Color and Fire:
Defining Moments in Studio Ceramics, 1950-2000. From the Smits Collection and Related Works
Through September 17, 2000

Modern Masters of Kyoto: Nihonga from the Griffith and Patricia Way Collection
Through August 1, 2000

A Bold Aesthetic:
Textile Arts of Central Asia
Through July 31, 2000

Noontime Parenting Training Seminars
(213) 893-0355

School's Out, Now What?
June 28, 2000
11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Parent Resource Center
July 20, 2000
11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

John Anson Ford Amphitheatre
(323) 461-3673

Twelfth Night
Through June 25, 2000

"An Evening of the Music of African-Americans"
July 7, 2000
8:00 p.m.

Jazz Tap Ensemble:
Tribute to the Nicholas Brothers
July 8, 2000
8:00 p.m.

The Klezmatics
July 9, 2000
11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Dance Kaleidoscope Festival 2000 Program
July 5, 14, 15, 22, 23, 2000
Call for list of performers and times

Skirball Cultural Center
(310) 440-4500
www.skirball.org

Tel Aviv-Los Angeles Partnership:
Teen Photography Exhibit
Through July 7, 2000

Sigmund Freud: Conflict and Culture
Through July 25, 2000

Adventures in Archaeology
Summer Camp 2000
For ages 5 to13
Call for dates and times

Page Museum
(323) 934-PAGE
www.tarpits.org

Mammoths: Wild and Wooly
Through September 17, 2000

Adventures in Nature
July 31, 2000 through August 11, 2000
For ages 5 to 10

Petersen Automotive Museum
(323) 930-CARS
www.petersen.org.

Hollywood Star Cars:
Great Cars of the Movies
Through September 24, 2000

Dorothy Chandler Pavilion
(213) 202-2242

Don Quixote*
June 21, 22, 25, 2000

Romeo and Juliet*
June 23, 24, 2000

*Featuring the Bolshoi Ballet

Ouderkirk

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ISD staff. ISD's Department Level Strategic Plan was developed next. It identifies department-wide Strategic Issues, Goals and Objectives and forms the basis for many service improvements. The four-key strategic issues facing ISD are: Customer Service and Focus, County Leadership, Infrastructure and Logistics, and Employee Excellence. By December 1999, comprehensive Customer Service and Service Level Strategic Plans were finalized. These were followed by the Performance Measurement Plan in April 2000. Joan feels that these "living" plans are long-range guides for many service improvements, effective leadership and management of ISD over the next three to five years.

A unique feature of ISD's Strategic Plan is that the Performance Measurement Plan uses the *"balanced scorecard"* concept as a strategic management system. Although this concept has been widely applied in the private sector since the early 1990s, it is a relatively new approach in the public sector. This concept links performance measures to ISD's effectiveness in meeting its strategic objectives. In addition to the traditional financial-based performance measures, a *balanced scorecard* includes at least three more performance measure perspectives. ISD's *balanced scorecard* includes five perspectives: customer, employee excellence, financial, infrastructure, and leadership.

ISD also conducts annual customer and employee surveys to gain valuable feedback and improve upon service delivery. The annual Customer Survey asks customers to evaluate and comment on the ISD services they receive. Responses to the annual survey are evaluated and recommendations are developed on ways to continue to improve the quality of their services and consistently achieve a high level of customer satisfaction. The annual Employee Survey also helps identify priority areas to enhance employee skills, service delivery needs, and overall customer service.

Emphasis on employee excellence has been formalized into several ISD employee programs. ISD's Management Academy was offered as a management development program that strengthened the skills and knowledge of participants

and prepared them for future growth and challenges. Five full sessions and a special Executive Academy were completed over a two-year period, from January 1998 through March 2000, resulting in 170 graduates. Beginning in 1999, the ISD Technology Academy allows ISD's Information Technology Service (ITS) staff to enhance their skills and expertise in key technologies such as the Internet and electronic commerce, and to gain practical knowledge in ITS internal process methods such as project management. Upcoming employee development programs for the second half of 2000 include the Supervision Academy, the Apprenticeship Program, and the Foster Youth Program.

In early 2000, many ISD employees who provide service to its customers began wearing standard ISD uniforms. The need to provide uniforms to field service personnel was identified in ISD's Strategic Planning efforts. The ISD uniforms foster teamwork, enhance the professional image of ISD employees, and are readily identifiable to its customers and the general public.

ISD has been involved in many cost improvement and service enhancement efforts for the County. These include the Pacific Bell contract, Living Wage & Contract Monitoring, CAMIS (Countywide Acquisition Management Information System), the Deferred Maintenance Program, and the Energy Management Program. The Pacific Bell contract was recently approved in April by the Board of Supervisors. It provides Local Carrier service cost savings to expand the Enterprise Network and Internet services. In October 1999, ISD completed the development of a Living Wage Manual and began training staff in all departments. ISD is also working with the CAO, Auditor-Controller, and County Counsel to develop a comprehensive contract tracking system for the County. CAMIS addresses the importance of streamlining the County's procurement process and improving purchasing related data. The CAMIS team has been working with the Auditor-Controller to begin a pilot interface with CAPS (Countywide Accounting and Purchasing System) in July 2000. For the Deferred Maintenance Program, ISD has been working successfully with the CAO since 1998 to develop program criteria and identify priority deferred maintenance projects on County facilities throughout the County. To date, $42 million have been allocated for high-priority deferred maintenance requirements. ISD's Energy Management Program has coordinated participation in various energy initiatives, which have successfully resulted in substantial energy cost savings for the County.

An upcoming service enhancement is the Facilities Automated Management Information System (FAMIS). ISD will use Peregrine Systems' Facility Center to integrate three separate existing systems that are used to track scheduled,

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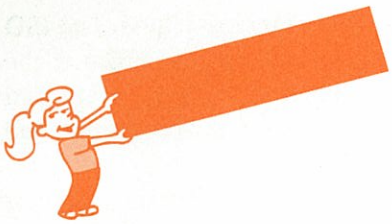
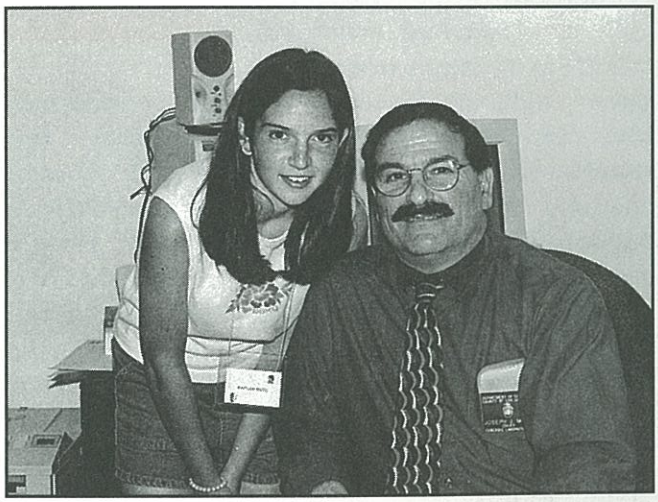


Take Our Daughters to Work Day
April 27, 2000
Around the County...

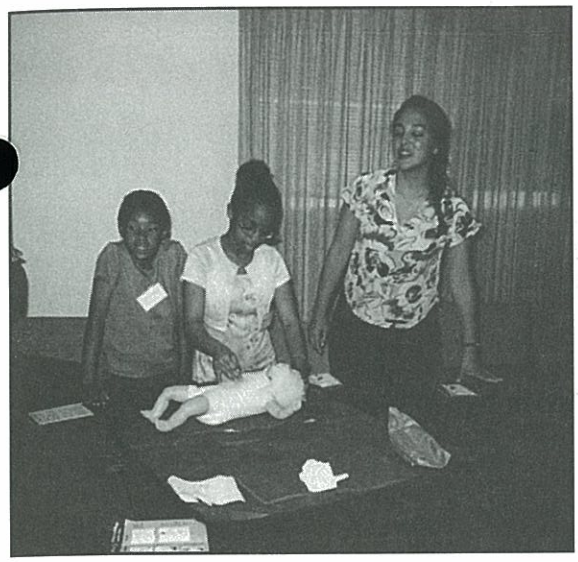
Fire Department

Office of Alternate Public Defender,
Office of Public Defender, Sheriff's Department,
Superior Court

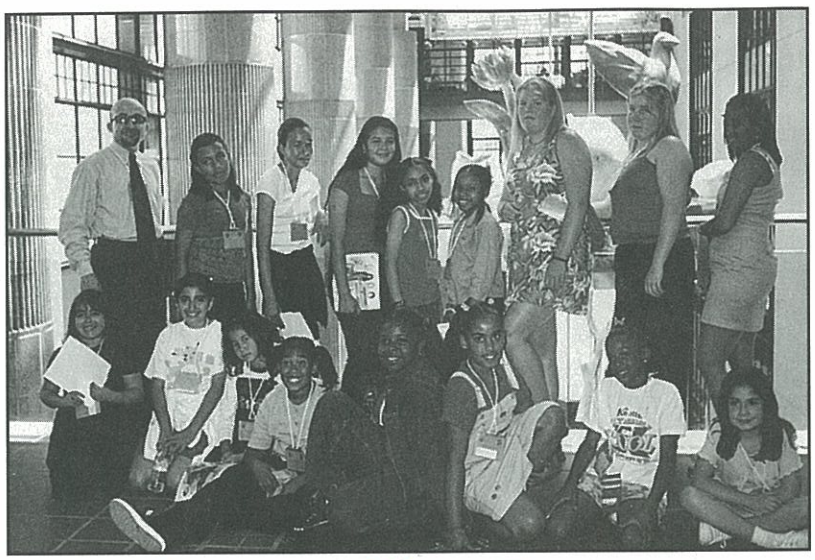


Department of Coroner

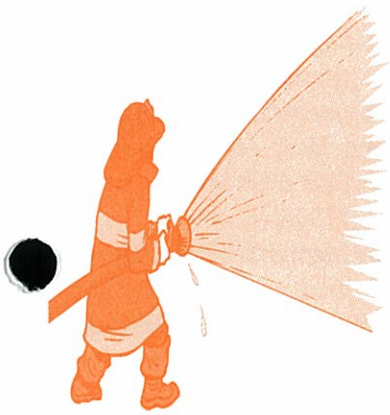
Department of Human Resources



Department of Parks and Recreation

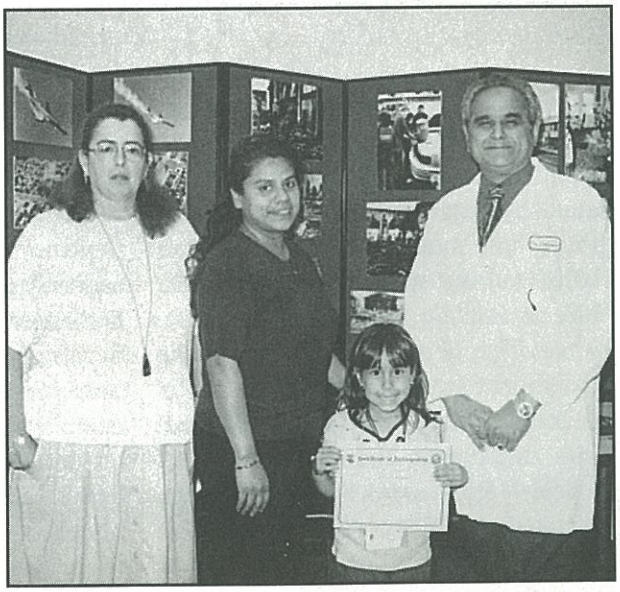


Department of Human Resources



Fire Department

Department of Beaches and Harbors



Department of Coroner

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH
Laura Trejo
"I was delighted and surprised."

Laura Trejo, the May 2000 County Employee of the Month, has worked for the County for 15 years and is currently a Mental Health Analyst II with the Conservatorship and Older Adult Services Division of the Department of Mental Health. She has the functional title of "Countywide Coordinator of Older Adult Services."

"I was delighted and surprised [when notified of the award], given the high caliber and level of dedication of fellow employees throughout the various departments. Recognition by the Board for a job well done serves to reaffirm my commitment to the County and public service."

Trejo is the lead person for planning and delivering mental health services to an underserved but fast growing segment of society. She supervises mobile geriatric assessment teams of clinicians. She has dual master's degrees in Gerontology and Public Administration, and received certification in Long Term Care Administration from USC.

"To date, my most important professional accomplishment has been my work for the last 15 years with the Department of Mental Health's Older Adults System of Care Committee. The group has motivated, inspired, and challenged my work with mentally ill older adults."

She is an integral part of the Department's "Suicide Intervention Workshop" training team. She helped write, implement, and monitor the Los Angeles Riots and the Northridge earthquake's FEMA Grants. In 1994, she was appointed by then Governor Pete Wilson as a California Delegate to the 1995 White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA).

"The WHCOA takes place every decade. Serving as a representative of our State and County was a great responsibility and professional highlight. I was one of only two individuals representing the public mental health system at the conference of 2000 delegates. Nonetheless, with the hard work and support of many longtime colleagues, we were able to place mental health among the top priority areas of the conference."

She seized the opportunity presented by federal funding for preventive health care through Community and Senior Services and established GENESIS (Geriatric Evaluation Networks Encompassing Services Information and Support), a multi-award winning mobile geriatric assessment program. She, along with her clinical staff, created a "Geriatric Screening Protocol," a pocket-sized instrument to help field-based staff determine if further evaluation is needed by the older adults they are seeing. She has produced mental health information materials in the County's major non-English languages.

Since 1988, Trejo has participated in numerous "Career Awareness" programs throughout the Los Angeles Unified School District, discussing potential health and human services careers, particularly in the field of aging, with elementary and middle school students. Trejo has also lectured and taught at the region's major university gerontology programs: California State University, Long Beach (CSULB); California State University, Los Angeles; University of California at Los Angeles; and University of Southern California. She created an on-going course at CSULB in 1990 on "Community Mental Health and Aging." She also helped establish the Older Adults FACTS program, a collaborative effort between the Department of Mental Health and CSULB. The FACTS program has already trained over 100 master's level social workers in geriatric mental health. She has presented over 300 professional lectures and workshops at local, state, national, and international conferences. She is an officer on the Board of Directors of the American Society on Aging.

"Among my most rewarding experiences was receiving the following comment from a 78-year-old client, 'Laura gives good hugs.' I later discovered this wonderful woman had not been hugged in many years. [It was also rewarding] being featured in the *Los Angeles Times* for my work with victims of Alzheimer's, and being selected as 'Home Town Hero' by KCBS television for this work."

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Trejo

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Trejo has been active with the Alzheimer's Association's Los Angeles chapter for over 10 years. She is currently Vice President of Patient and Family and Training, and a member of the Finance Committee. She is part of the Multicultural Leadership Council, and the El Portal Strategic Planning Group. Previously, she served as Treasurer, and Chair of the Multicultural Leadership Council. She was formerly on the Board of Directors, and was a founding member of the Multicultural Outreach Advisory Board. In 1992, Trejo became the founding Director of the Association's El Portal: Latino Alzheimer's Project, a program designed to provide respite care for care-givers of Alzheimer's patients in the Eastern and Southeastern portions of the County. In 1999, the Federal Health Resources and Services Administration presented El Portal with an Award of Excellence in Cultural Competence. The program has been expanded to serve the African American and Asian/Pacific Islander communities.

"As a direct result of this project, I was invited to share our strategies for success throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, and El Salvador. I was also invited to present the model at professional meetings in Argentina, Mexico, and Cuba."

Trejo recently received a letter of appreciation from former first lady Nancy Reagan for her work with the Alzheimer's Association.

"[It] was a heart-warming surprise. Her words of support for my work on behalf of families facing Alzheimer's touched me deeply. As an immigrant to the United States, I never dreamed of having the former first lady write me a letter of praise. It was and will continue to be a cherished memento."

Congratulations, Laura!

June 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:

CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES: Marlene M. Akins, Marva L. Leake-Hodges
DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Michael J. Armstrong, Ruth M. Perkins
FIRE: Arnold O. Gallardo, Charles R. Gibson, Spencer Huntoon, Keith H. Latham
HEALTH SERVICES: Gertrude Dionne, John McDaniel, Jane Shiroma, Mary D. Wojciechowsk
INTERNAL SERVICES: Alice W. Abram
PROBATION: Frances B. Smith
PUBLIC LIBRARY: Sandra Reuben
PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES: Dorothy J. Watts, Paul E. Williams
PUBLIC WORKS: Steven K. Lau
SHERIFF:.Raymond Arrington, Robert J. Briggs, Gerald E. Burks, William G. Christainsen, Vicki C. Emanuel, John T. McCann, Pete R. Ramirez, James L. Schneeweis, Gerald A. Smith, James R. Smith, Larry E. Watts
SUPERIOR COURTS: Stephen K. Sims
TREASURER & TAX COLLECTOR: Diane C. Furtney

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

AUDITOR-CONTROLLER: Gloria M. Woods
FIRE: Neal W. Shupe, Jr.
HEALTH SERVICES: Lou A. Alii, Michael T. Dwyer, Ramona Hernandez, Jagdish B. Singh, Rebeca D. Villa, Joy B. Walker
HUMAN RESOURCES/OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY: John W. Williams, Jr.
PARKS & RECREATION: Roosevelt Cooper
PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES: James G. Barnhart, Juanita L. Fry, Anne J. Livingston, Dana B. Needels
PUBLIC WORKS: Mikel Bowlin
SHERIFF: Jess C. Bembry, Gilbert M. Flores, Gerhard E. Hilgenfeldt, Dennis R. Ingersoll, Lee A. Read, Paul A. Stemmler

Ouderkirk

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unscheduled, and discretionary facilities projects into one system: FAMIS. FAMIS will address the need to automate facilities management activities, interface with internal labor collection and accounting systems, provide on-line input and status information, and can be web-enabled.

Joan is proud of ISD's accomplishments and takes great pride in improved customer ratings. With continued focus on customer service and the ISD strategic objectives, she is confident that ISD will become the County's premier service delivery organization and a leader among County departments.

Customers are welcome to contact ISD for assistance or to provide feedback on services received at ISD's information hotline (323) 267-3108 or ISD's e-mail address *isd@co.la.ca.us.*

Foster Youth Program

The Internal Services Department (ISD) has developed the Foster Youth Program, which will begin July 5, 2000, with the assistance of the Department of Children and Family Services and Community and Senior Services of Los Angeles County. The Foster Youth Program will provide County of Los Angeles emancipated foster youth with direct exposure to job opportunities at ISD and give them guidance in education and training in order to succeed in a work environment. Unlike other programs offered to emancipated foster youth, the Foster Youth Program is a full 12-month program that pays hourly wages to the participants.

Although on-the-job and classroom training are fundamental elements of the Foster Youth Program, frequent reviews and mentoring will be key factors to the success of the program. Participants will receive weekly reviews to provide consistent feedback and monitoring of key work performance requirements that range from punctuality to performance in new situations. Volunteer mentors will provide personalized assistance to the youth on educational progress, character building, work ethic, customer service, and other areas that the participants would like help with.

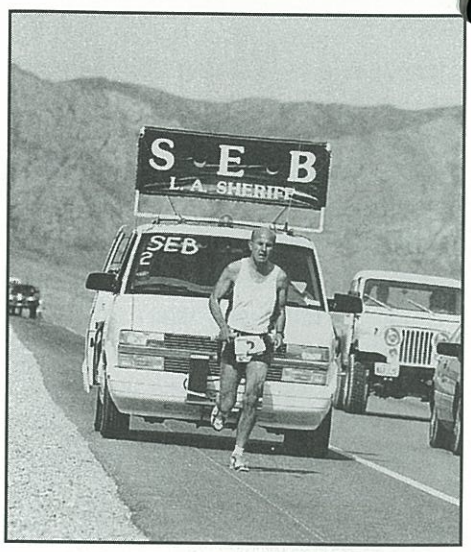
The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) conducted an initial pre-screening in order to refer only qualified candidates to ISD. To qualify for the Foster Youth Program, candidates must be emancipated foster youth, minimum 17 years old, a Los Angeles County resident, recommended by DCFS, have a high school diploma or G.E.D. certificate, be able to perform the essential duties of the job class, and have good communication skills.

The pilot year for the Foster Youth Program will be FY 2000-2001 with a minimum of seven emancipated foster youth participating. The pilot program will expose foster youth participants to ISD's craft or stationary engineer trades. Participants will receive work experience and information on the steps to seek apprenticeship and subsequent journey level positions. Monthly classroom training sessions will include customer service, first aid and safety, hand and power tools, shop math, blue print reading, interview skills, and interpersonal skills. Community and Senior Services is supporting the Foster Youth Program by handling the payroll processing for the participants.

ISD will evaluate the pilot year and then consider possible expansion of the Foster Youth Program in FY 2001-2002. The program may be expanded at ISD by increasing the number of participants for the craft trades or by adding other ISD career paths. This program may also be further expanded to the career paths offered at other County departments.

For more information or a pamphlet on the Foster Youth Program, please contact Marie Nunez of ISD at (323) 267-3105 or by e-mail at mnunez@isd.co.la.ca.us.

Baker to Vegas Run



Sheriff Lee Baca running in the Y2K Baker to Vegas Run.

Members of the Board

Gloria Molina
Chair
First District

Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Second 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

Mason Fong
Staff

Mailing Address Change

If you have changed your mailing address, please notify your Personnel Office immediately.

County DIGEST

Dept. of Human Resources
500 W. Temple Street, Room 375
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 974-1301
(213) 613-4789 FAX
http://hr.co.la.ca.us

County DIGEST

Summer
SAFETY SECTION
JUNE 2000

Safety Hints for Summer: Sheriff's Department

Home Safety

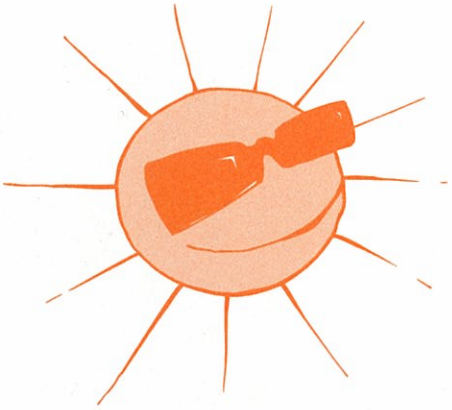
During the hot summer months, we all spend more time outside in our yards. While it's great fun to enjoy the summer this way, there are some things we should all keep in mind:

Swimming Pool Safety:

- NEVER allow young children to swim without an adult present.
- If you or a guest becomes intoxicated (it does happen), the pool should be off limits (as well as the pool area to avoid slips and falls).
- Electrical equipment (television, radios, etc.) should not be near the pool or the wet deck area.
- REMEMBER, you are legally responsible for taking measures to assure a neighbor's child can't stray into your pool (or hot tub) and drown. This means a fenced-in yard (with the gates self-latching) which is childproof, or a pool cover which is designed to support the weight of someone on it.

Home and Yard:

- Make sure barbeques are in good working condition; gas fittings and lines are not cracked or worn.
- Use only charcoal lighter fluid or an electric briquette starter to start up your coals. NEVER be tempted to use gasoline!
- Make sure pathways and walkways are well lit at night, as well as areas in your front yard where prowlers might lurk. Remember to reset lights on timers to compensate for the summer hours of darkness.
- Although the nights are balmy, remember to close and lock your doors and windows at night and when you are away. There are stops available which let you crack a window, yet prevent it from being fully opened.
- If you do not have security screens, use the peep hole in your door before opening the door to a stranger. ALWAYS demand identification. If someone says he or she is with a particular department or agency, call that agency to confirm their status before letting them into your house. If they are legitimate, they will gladly wait.



- When entering or leaving your home or vehicle, be aware of your surroundings. Trim bushes up off the ground so you can see if anyone is behind them. Light the areas where you park your car, and have an automatic light in your garage. If you sense a danger, DON'T GET OUT OF YOUR CAR. Leave your home immediately and seek law enforcement help.
- When you leave for a vacation, don't flag your house as unoccupied. Have your mail picked up as well as your newspaper (or stop delivery). Have automatic timers turn lights on and off in your home. Leave a talk radio station on somewhere in your house (voices will be heard by a potential burglar).

Child Safety

- Yes, tell your children not to talk to strangers. But you must also tell them to never HELP strangers either. This sounds harsh, but predatory child molesters OFTEN appeal to your child's best instincts; the desire to respect adults and be helpful to them. Child molesters use a ploy such as, "my little dog is missing" (they even have leashes in their hands) or "will you try on some clothes I'm buying for my little girl–she's about your size." Tell your loved ones that ADULTS DO NOT ASK CHILDREN TO HELP THEM! Tell your child to tell the adult, "I have to ask my parent(s) before I help strangers."
- When playing at night, make sure your child wears highly visible, light-colored clothing. Remind them not to play in the street, and to walk AGAINST traffic. This not only lets them see cars approaching, but makes it harder for a predator to follow behind your child in a car, waiting for the opportunity to strike.
- Make sure that if your child is young, he or she is always supervised by a responsible adult. When ready to leave a party or a friend's house, ask them to call you for a ride or to let you know they are leaving. For teenagers, if they have a long walk to make, or just want to jog or hike with friends, loan them your cell phone or remind them to take theirs with them. A call home or to 911 CAN and HAS prevented tragedies. Make sure your child stays with a friend, and not alone.
- The MOST important information law enforcement needs to apprehend suspects are their descriptions AND vehicle identifications. If you or your child is annoyed or attacked by a stranger, and there is a car involved,

see Safety Hints on next page

Safety Hints

continued from previous page

write the license number down. You or your child can even mark it down in the dirt with a stick. But first–GET AWAY from the situation! Tell your child to SCREAM while running away! Calling attention to the situation will bring help!

• Finally, tell your child two important things:

1) No one should touch the private parts of your body, or ask to be allowed to. If that ever happens, tell mommy or daddy, or whoever is responsible for you at the time immediately.

2) If somebody does touch you or makes you touch them, it is not your fault and you will not get in trouble. Bad people tell you that to keep you from telling your parents on them.

Wilderness Safety

• When hiking, stay on designated trails. If you should suffer an injury, you have a much greater chance of being discovered by other hikers. Look over maps and pamphlets of the area you are visiting, to become familiar with the layout of the land, including areas of danger and locations of rest areas and telephones. Make sure someone knows when you are leaving, where you are going, and when to expect you back.

• Don't assume the weather will not change drastically while you are in a wilderness area. Bring appropriate clothing for all contingencies.

• Always have a supply of drinking water with you. Do not drink water from springs, streams or lakes. The water might look clear, yet is unsafe to drink. Also, do not eat fruits or plants unfamiliar to you. There are many toxic varieties which look edible. Don't forget, those who tell you "if the animals eat it, humans can too" are wrong--dead wrong! Instead, bring low-volume snacks and dehydrated meals for a prolonged stay in the wilderness area. Also, carry simple first aid supplies, as well as a signaling device, such as a mirror, a flashlight and waterproof matches. Believe it or not, lost hikers have been located when they made a 911 call from their cellular phones. While cellular service sometimes is not available everywhere in the wilderness areas, satellite telephone systems are incredible and are used by the Sheriff's Department's Search and Rescue teams.

• If you find yourself lost, STOP! This is where survival becomes an issue and wandering around, burning up resources, and possibly getting further into the wilderness does not help. Rather, get to a clearing near where you are (if possible) and wait for help. Have your mirror and flashlight available to signal your rescuers. Don't forget to try that cellular phone. It often works!

Have a great summer!

Hot Weather Pet Care Tips Department of Animal Care and Control

Make sure your pet is always wearing its license or ID tag. Children sometimes forget to close the gate to the yard when they go outside to play and the family pet can wander out of the yard. A license tag is your pet's ticket back home in case it gets out of the yard and runs off.

Be sure your pet has plenty of food and water available at all times. During the summer months, daytime temperatures can soar to well over 100 degrees. Pets need to have access to fresh water to help them keep cool.

If possible, leave your pets inside your home with the air conditioning on during the day when you have to be away. If that is not possible, make sure your pets have access to a shady rest area. Dogs and cats have fur coats that make very hot weather hard on them, so a cool spot is a big help.

Never leave your pet in your car, even to run a brief errand. Cars act just like ovens and the inside air temperature can be more than 20 degrees hotter than the temperature outside. Pets left in cars during the summer can easily die from over-heating.

Protect your pet's health during and after family barbecues. Never feed dogs rib or chicken bones. These bones can splinter when chewed on, causing your dog to choke. Be sure to carefully dispose of any leftover food so that pets or wild animals cannot root through the trash to eat it. Discarded food spoils, and if your pet eats it, your pet can become seriously ill.

Please spay or neuter your dog or cat. Pet overpopulation is the main reason that animal shelters are overcrowded, particularly during the summer and fall months. You can help prevent pet overpopulation by having your pet altered.

Make sure your pet's shots are current. Dogs and cats catch communicable diseases, just like humans. Since animals are more likely to come into contact with one another during the summer, protect your pet's health by making sure its shots are up to date.

Old Saw Still Holds True: An Ounce of Prevention is Priceless

Department of Health Services

With summer just around the corner, many of us are looking forward to holiday weekends and school vacations for a change of pace and the opportunity to spend extra time with family and friends. Unfortunately, summer is also the busy season for hospital emergency rooms, as the number of accidental injuries mounts. The good news is most injuries can be prevented.

The number of vehicle accidents and related fatalities in the County has declined in recent years, due in part to the increased use of seatbelts and airbags, and heightened awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving. Yet, long holiday summer weekends inevitably bring a surge in the accident rate, and vehicle accidents continue to be a leading cause of injury and death. Tragically, many who die are children. In Los Angeles County, motor vehicle crashes were responsible for 24 percent of fatal injuries in children from birth to age 19 between 1995 and 1997, second only to firearms-related events.

Before hitting the road, make sure infants and small children are secured in properly fitting child safety seats. Never put an infant in the front seat of a vehicle equipped with a passenger air bag. Use a rear-facing infant or convertible seat for infants up to one year or who weigh less than 20 pounds. Use a forward-facing convertible seat for children ages one to four who weigh between 20 and 40 pounds, and a car booster seat for older children who weigh between 40 and 80 pounds. Model safe behavior by always keeping your own seat belt fastened when your vehicle is in motion.

Avoid road fatigue. On long trips, rotate drivers if possible, and avoid driving all night. The hours between midnight and 6 a.m. are the riskiest for crashes. Take a break at least every two hours. Don't push your luck. According to the National Highway and Transportation Safety Administration, drowsiness and/or fatigue is a contributing factor in approximately 100,000 motor vehicle crashes annually in the United States and is a factor in nearly four percent of all fatal crashes. Of course, never drink and drive, or allow friends and loved ones to do so.

Remember to put safety first at local lakes, at the beach and in your own backyard pools. Each year, 120 people drown in Los Angeles County. Most are children, and drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages one to five years. Most drownings, 70 percent, occur in backyard swimming pools.

Remember, a small child can drown in the time it takes to answer a phone and in mere inches of water. Never take your eyes off a child you are supervising who is in or near a body of water. Don't depend on fences or walls to keep children out of the water, and don't rely on inflatable devices to keep them afloat. Never allow children to be alone near a pool.

Be a responsible boater. More than 800 people in the United States die each year in boating accidents, according to the United States Coast Guard. Seventy-seven percent of those who died were not wearing a personal flotation device. More than half of all boating fatalities are alcohol-related, with men ages 20 to 39 accounting for the vast majority of boating accidents each year. All boaters should take a course in boating safety.

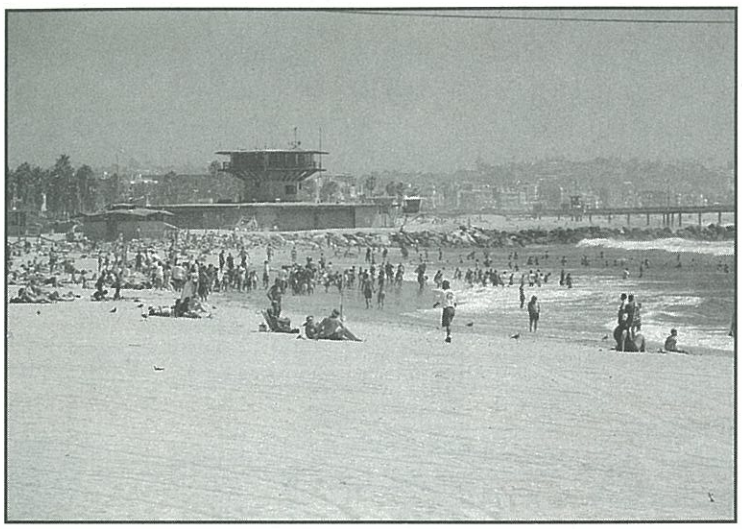
With schools closed and more hours of daylight, more children will be playing, skateboarding, skating or bicycling on and around our streets and sidewalks. Watch out for them, and teach your own children the safety rules. State law requires helmets for bicyclists ages 18 and younger; skaters and skateboarders should add wrist and knee pads as well. Ride on the right side of the street with the flow of traffic. Bright colored clothing and, at night, reflectors, make riders and skaters more visible to drivers. Remember, traffic signals apply to bikes, boards and skates, as well as motor vehicles.

The number of food-borne illnesses also rises in the summer, largely because people spend more time picnicking where they have limited access to the refrigeration, water and cooking facilities that are essential to proper food handling. More than 170,000 cases of food-borne illnesses are estimated to occur in Los Angeles County each year, almost half during the summer months.

To keep you, your friends and family healthy, first, always wash your hands before preparing food. Wash fruits and vegetables before leaving home for your picnic and always before consuming. Store uncooked chicken in plastic storage bags or containers in a refrigerator or ice chest until you are ready to cook or marinate it. Keep food containing eggs, meat or dairy products in plastic to avoid cross contamination. Prevent other food or cooking surfaces

see Prevention on next page

Do's and Don'ts for that Trip to the Beach Department of Beaches and Harbors



Venice Beach is one of Los Angeles County's most popular shoreline sites.

Chances are good you'll be headed for the seashore sometime this summer. For a safe and enjoyable holiday, you might keep in mind these DO's and DON'Ts suggested by the staff at the County Department of Beaches and Harbors.

DO know what services and conveniences are available at the beach of your choice. If you need it and can't get it at the beach, you'll want to bring it from home. This includes sunscreen and water—the sun and sand can be unforgiving. Leave glass containers at home.

DON'T get a late start. Beach parking is scarce, if available at all, and an early start will get you, your family and friends on the sand before spaces on the lots and streets are filled.

DO put your blankets down near a lifeguard tower and swim in front of it. During the summer months, all towers are staffed by the world's best ocean lifeguards from the Fire Department. They are there for your safety and assistance. If you have concerns about rip currents or other hazards, feel free to ask questions.

DON'T bring inflatable beach toys for you or the kids. They are prohibited since they give swimmers a false sense of security.

DO remember that it's been a long winter and make certain you or your family don't overestimate your swimming ability--or your "tanning-ability"–on the first trip to the beach.

DON'T bring the barbecues to the beach unless you're visiting Dockweiler State Beach or Cabrillo Beach, where there are fire rings. History has shown that many who barbecue leave the coals under the sand where they stay hot for a long time, posing a danger to those walking barefoot—and who isn't?

DO be a good neighbor to your fellow sun-worshipers. Keep the radios down and your games away from crowded areas.

DON'T swim in front of or near storm drain outlets

DO use beach access ramps to get to the sand.

DON'T bring dogs to the beach or leave them in your cars. Beaches are for people and the heat can torture dogs left unattended in a parked car.

DO stay clear of any equipment working on the beach—warn your children and keep them from climbing on any parked vehicles. Lifeguards are on constant emergency patrol and the maintenance crews are working to provide clean and safe beaches. Give them plenty of working room.

DON'T litter. There are thousands of trash barrels out there—take the time to use them.

DO obey the "no wake—5 mph speed limit" if you're boating in Marina del Rey.

DON'T bring alcohol onto the beach or into your boat. The penalties can be costly and its usage can be dangerous during swimming or boating.

DO take your trash home with you. Make sure your beach site is cleaner when you leave than when you arrived. Have a safe drive home.

Prevention

continued from previous page

from contacting poultry, raw meat or their drippings. Cook meat thoroughly. Hamburger should be cooked to an internal temperature of 157 degrees Fahrenheit and should never be consumed if cooked less than well-done. Poultry should be cooked to an internal temperature of 180 degrees Fahrenheit. Reheat cooked food to 165 degrees Fahrenheit before consuming. Use chafing dishes, crock pots or thermal carriers to keep hot foods hot until served. Don't leave perishable left-overs out on the picnic table to snack on later.

Remember, most food-related illnesses are preventable. Practice proper food safety techniques, and reduce the number of times you say "it must have been something I ate."

One of our roles as County employees is to set an example for the people we serve. Do your part by making safety a priority this summer, both at home and away. Have a great, safe summer.