

# KALEIDOSCOPE



Newsletter

**Management Growth Thru Communication, Training and Personal Development**

## President's Message...by CHRISTY MADDEN

Well, it's that time of the year once again – time for fun, friendly competition in a variety of sports and activities to determine which firms or organizations of comparable size from around the area are the best. Of course, what we are talking about is the Corporate Games sponsored annually by the City of Ventura.

Last year was our first venture into the Games, and despite a late start, little organization and advertising, we made an impressive showing. We finished second place overall in the competitive events (behind 5-time champions Amgen), but most important of all we won the coveted "Spirit Award". Unlike the roving trophy for the competitive events, the Spirit Award is clearly the largest and it is ours to keep. Currently on display in the CEO's office, a permanent home in public view will have to be found, especially when we bring this and other trophies home each year we participate.

Some of you may recall that last year I asserted that the Council would not endorse the Games in successive years unless financial support came from the unions. Given the current fiscal condition and difficult negotiations,

it became clear that this would not be a viable solution for financing the Games. Consequently, the Council voted to advance the \$1,500 registration fee and seek a requested \$5 donation from all participants. The Board's justification



was that not only will most of the money come back from registration fees, but more importantly there is nothing that we are aware of that does more to bring the County family together and boost employee morale. Being open to all employees regardless of union affiliation, position, or the agency we work for, the Games serve to improve communication throughout the County family.

Thanks to Matt Carroll, our newest member of the Management Council

Board of Directors, ISD is making a substantial contribution to this years' Games. They are developing an online registration system. Now, employees will be able to register for events electronically – see who else has signed up, sign up as an individual or as a team, and download information including maps, schedules, rules, etc. The new site will be available after February 17th that [www.countyofventura.org/CorpGames](http://www.countyofventura.org/CorpGames). As the games proceed, you will be able to view team standings, event results, and with any luck, see pictures from the Games.

This year's Games promise to be even better than before – we're more organized, we're getting an earlier start, and have a little (albeit very little) experience under our belts. You'll want to be sure to bookmark the web page so you can monitor progress, participate in events, and/or cheer on your fellow employees as we strive to take the Gold away from Amgen – five-year champions!

There's something for everyone – from aerobic athletic activities to board games, anyone can get in on the action. Let's go for two in a row with the Spirit Award and give Amgen a run for their money!! GO TEAM! ◀

### Management Council Board of Directors

#### Board Officers

Christy Madden, *President* . . . . . CEO  
 Mazie Chauvin, *Vice-President* . . . . . HR  
 Don Hansen, *Treasurer* . . . . . Treasurer  
 Roberta Rodriguez, *Secretary* . . Clerk of the Board

#### Executive Committee Members

Tom Berg . . . . . RMA  
 Matt Carroll . . . . . ISO  
 Ron Coons . . . . . PWA  
 Bob Roper . . . . . Fire

#### Board Members

Shelah Harris . . . . . CEO  
 Vickie Lemmon . . . . . Public Health  
 Margot Miglins . . . . . BHD  
 Mark Novak . . . . . Sheriff's Dept  
 Virginia Randolph . . . . . Retired  
 Gail Robinson . . . . . BOS  
 Matthew Taylor . . . . . HSA  
 Johnny Johnston, Ex-Officio . . . . . CEO

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## “Leadership Nuggets” with Michele Jackman

**M**ark your calendars...March 31st Michele Jackman will be joining us again for one of her upbeat seminars entitled “Leadership Nuggets”. Registration forms will be sent shortly. Watch your email for them.

For those of you that aren't familiar with Michele, she is an experienced leader, author, motivational speaker, facilitator, corporate and governmental coach, and adjunct faculty member with various UC Extension Advanced Certificate programs. She is President

of Michele Jackman Enterprises & Adventures, consulting and conducting Star Team Institutes, and “Noodle School” where she provides creative strategies for personal development, creative leadership, organizational improvement, revitalization, and socio-cultural awareness. Currently, collaborating with Right Brain Resources, Inc. to provide innovative programs, tools and strategies that expand both consciousness and competence. She designs highly innovative interactive programs for conferences, and training conventions.

In addition to designing interactive conference presentations and motivational keynotes, she also provides facilitation for senior management retreats, consults on team design, and provides team “tune-ups” for every type of organization. Recently, Mrs. Jackman has been in high demand with organizations trying to “refocus themselves,” retain good people, redesign their products and services, and redesign their “cultures”. With the present environment such as it is, we have brought her back to motivate us once again. ◀

### Welcome to Matt Carroll, Chief Information Officer and Director of ISD

**I**t is with great pleasure that we welcome our newest member of our Board of Directors – Matthew Carroll, Chief Information Officer of the Information Systems Department. Matt, a member of the County's Executive Committee, fills a vacancy created with the retirement of Linda Vesper.

Mr. Carroll brings a wealth of experience and energy to the position, having just completed his assignment as Co-Chair of the United Way Campaign Committee. The Management Council will no doubt benefit from his knowledge and background in information technology, particularly in the area of web site and communication enhancement with our membership. Welcome to the Board, Matt!

### Apologies

Our apologies for neglecting to acknowledge Judy Rivera as the stand in for Linda Henderson in the photo for the integrity award category at the holiday party!

### **State of The County – February 2004**

Ventura County Management Council presents  
John F. Johnston's “State of The County” Address

*Mark your calendar since there will be 2 presentations:*

February 17, 2004  
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room  
HOA, 800 S. Victoria, Ventura

February 19, 2004  
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Department of Airports  
555 Airport Way, Suite B  
Camarillo Airport

*Hope you can join us.*

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**Management Growth Thru Communication, Training and Personal Development**

If you have a contribution or suggestion for an article you would like considered for inclusion in the next edition of Kaleidoscope, please contact the Editor, Christy Madden, at CEO Loc #1940, by FAX at 654-5106, by phone at 654-2679 or through the County e-mail system.

## Spotlight on: John Nicoll

by Christy Madden

### **John, can you tell us a little about yourself?**

At this point in time I have over 30 years experience as a Public Sector Manager. During my career, I've been responsible for Finance, Budget, Information Technology, Risk Management and Human Resources. I brought all of this background to my role as Management's Chief Labor Negotiator in Burbank where I worked over the last 24 years. When an opening came up here in Ventura County, I saw it as an opportunity to expand my professional experience in a much larger organization. Geri, my wife of 27 years, and my two college age sons are in the process of moving from our Santa Clarita home to our place here in Ventura County.

### **What is your position in the County Executive Office and what are your areas of responsibility?**

As part of the CEO's team, I am a Chief Deputy Executive Officer with responsibility for Labor Relations and Risk Management. These two areas of responsibility require similar skill sets to manage successfully. Both require technical analytical skills, experience in contract language interpretation and fiscal assessment. As with all management roles, communication and interpersonal skills are vital. In July of 2003 Labor Relations shifted from HR to this new division to bring greater emphasis on strategic workforce issues. The Risk Management function was added to the CEO's team responsibility at the same time. The men and women who were doing this work when I came here are a fine group. I am very fortunate to have people of this caliber. I work with the support of eleven well-qualified and dedicated individuals.

### **So what specifically do you and your staff do in Labor Relations and Risk Management?**

While the two areas require similar skill sets, the day-to-day responsibilities are quite different. The Labor Relations

focus is on long-range service needs, workforce planning, and the cost of meeting the prioritized needs of the community. In collective bargaining, the Board, through its representatives, sets the standards for public service, allocates resources to meet perceived needs and sets policies to manage the organization. The ability of the County to deliver effective, efficient service to the public depends on how well we recruit, retain, develop and motivate our employees. Labor relations is the arena where the policies that determine how we address these issues are formulated. The people we employ are our largest expense and our greatest asset. Working cooperatively with the employees and their unions offers our greatest opportunity to be successful in delivering quality public service within the limits of our resources. The Risk Management responsibilities are equally as important but are more process oriented. We insure the County's workforce and property using a combination of self-insurance and purchased insurance policies. We monitor and enforce safe work practices, and we inspect and correct deficiencies in work areas and surrounding environments as needed.

### **How do you approach the difficult task of labor negotiations?**

My approach to labor relations involves mutual respect, open communication and information sharing. Management and the unions have to live together. I believe that although there may not always be agreement on specific issues, such differences don't have to lead to divisiveness. If you treat people the way you like to be treated, the working environment will be healthier. It can be a difficult responsibility, but it can also be a very rewarding one. People working



together to solve problems that arise in meeting the needs of the public is exciting stuff. We have a chance to make a difference in the community where we live, if we work together.

### **Do you have any other hobbies or outside activities?**

As part of my life in public service I have enjoyed teaching at the Graduate Schools at USC and the California State

University system in Finance and Labor Relations and Management for almost 14 years. In 2000, I was fortunate enough to be named the Outstanding Graduate Professor by the USC Graduate Public Administration Community. In addition to teaching, I enjoy reading, fishing and window-shopping with my wife.

### **Any closing thoughts or comments for our members?**

Companies in the private section live by different rules. If the goods and services they provide or sell don't make a profit they can drop the product line or the service. In government, the fact that there is no profit to be made in making sure that neighborhoods are safe and that the health and welfare needs of the poor are met doesn't relieve us of the obligation to protect and serve. The fact is if there was a profit to be made in the services we provide, do you think the Fortune 500 would let us provide it? I doubt it.

We are lucky to be in the public arena at this place in time. Anybody can do this work when you have lots of time and money. These are the years when we get to earn our keep. WE have to do as much or more with less. How much greater a challenge do you need. This isn't a career for the faint of heart. If you want to be a part of preserving the quality of life in our communities in the difficult years ahead, you are in the right place. ◀

# Congratulations are in order:

*We would like to extend our welcome and congratulations to the following County Management staff on their recent promotion or appointment.*

► **Lawrence Jackson**, Deputy Director – Water Quality and Environmental Division - Watershed Protection District. Lawrence is a new employee to the County of Ventura, but has been a resident of the City of Ventura for the last six years, originally moving to Ventura in 1968 from Michigan. His most recent employment was Deputy Public Works Director and City Engineer with the City of Hollister CA, for three and a half years. He would fly his aircraft into the Santa Paula Airport every Friday night and fly out every Monday morning. Now he plans to ride a bicycle to work. (Sounds like a good plan!) Lawrence has 35 years of employment experience as an engineer with public and private entities such as the State of California at the Water Resources Control Board, Department of Health Services, Department of Toxic Substances Control, the County of Sacramento, Public Works Department, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District and Tetra Tech, a consulting firm. After twenty-five years in Sacramento, and raising three boys and a daughter, he returned to Ventura. Welcome aboard.

► **Don Aguirre**, Manager -- Human Services Agency - State Appeals/Administrative Hearings/Public inquiry/Civil Rights Division. Don is a graduate from CSUN with a Bachelors degree in Sociology and a minor in Psychology. He started with the County of Ventura Human Services Agency in October 1976 as a transfer employee from two years with the County of Los Angeles Public Social Services Department. Don has a wide range of benefit and service program experience as well as supervision experience. Within the last few years his experience expanded into managing the State Appeals and Civil Rights Division. His outside interests and hobbies include being involved within the church community, leisure travel, and expanding and sharing his artistic talent in painting and drawing. We'll watch for his entry in the next employee art exhibit!

► **Jennifer Bunker**, Program Administrator I - Human Services Agency. Jennifer has been employed at the County for 14 years. Her career began as extra-help on a clerical staff and has led her through the ranks as a Medi-Cal eligibility

lead worker, a CalWORKs Career Services lead worker and a CalWORKs Career Services Supervisor. She was fortunate enough to be a part of the East County Job and Career Center team when the center first opened in Simi Valley, and was able to assist with the day-to-day One-Stop operations. Jennifer has an Associate's Degree in Sociology and has completed studies in supervision, small-business management and early-childhood education. She continues to enjoy the everyday challenges of working with the diverse population we serve to help make a difference in our local communities, and looks forward to many more years of service with the County. You go girl!

► **Jennifer Rendon**, Management Assistant IV-C – Ventura County Employees Retirement Association. Jennifer worked with the CEO's office as a Management Assistant III-C for about a year before her promotion.

► **Robert (Matias) Paredes**, Program Administrator I - Human Services Agency. Robert started with the Human Services Agency in 1981 and is excited to meet new challenges in his new position. He comes to us from Human Services Agency-Quality Control where he did case investigations. He has extensive working knowledge and experience in computer technology with a degree in Information Systems and is looking forward to applying this expertise and knowledge in his new position.

► **Francisco Mora**, Program Administrator I - Human Services Agency - Human Resources Division. Francisco has worked for the County since 1995. He holds a Bachelors degree from California Lutheran University and is looking forward to assisting the agency with the implementation of its Performance Management Program.

► **Cynthia Davis**, Human Services Program Administrator II – Human Services Agency. Cynthia has been employed at the County of Ventura for 18 years. She transferred from Santa Barbara County as an Eligibility Officer II. She has held positions as Eligibility Lead Worker in Foster Care/Adoptions, Quality Control Technician, and Eligibility Supervisor. She has been with the Appeals Unit for 6 years

and enjoys the challenges her job provides each day. Cynthia has an Associate's Degree in early-childhood education. Her spare time is spent enjoying family and attending various sporting events throughout the County.

► **Mandi Basaldua**, Human Services Program Administrator I -- Human Services Agency - State Appeals Unit. Mandi started with the County in 1987 working for the Senior Nutrition Program. Then in 1989 was promoted to Eligibility Officer working in various offices. In 1998 she was promoted to Career Services Specialist and had the opportunity to work at the East County Job and Career Center. Now with the State Appeals Unit, she is looking forward to many more years of service with the County and continuing service to the public.

► **Dave Stone**, Deputy Chief Investigator – District Attorney. This position is that of a sworn peace officer and there are two such positions in the District Attorney's Bureau of Investigation. Dave has been a peace officer for 33 years, having served with the Ventura Sheriff's Department and the Ventura Police Department before transferring to the District Attorney's Office in October 1985. Over the years, he supervised the Special Investigations Unit, the Welfare Fraud Unit and most recently the Major Crimes Unit before being promoted. Dave currently oversees the daily activity of four units within the Bureau of Investigation.

We certainly have some interesting and multi-talented people working for the County. Please make them feel welcomed.

If you know of someone that has been promoted or appointed, please let me know, so we can honor him/her. Contact Shelah Harris at County email with the information.

## Address Updates

If you know of any email, brown mail, or name changes of staffing, please contact Shelah Harris with the correct information. It is really a challenge trying to maintain a current mailing list of over 700 management personnel, and your help is truly needed and appreciated. I can be reached at [shelah.harris@mail.co.ventura.ca.us](mailto:shelah.harris@mail.co.ventura.ca.us). Thank you so much. ◀