

Supervisor John Gioia's District 1 Newsletter

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A Message From Supervisor Gioia...

As we enter summer, I thought I'd offer a few thoughts about the importance of taking time off for family enjoyment and relaxation. Even a little down time from the stresses and structure of the school year can have a lasting positive effect.

Growing up, I remember summer vacation as an opportunity to spend more time doing family things – outings and just hanging out. My father was a high school teacher, so he had plenty of time off to spend with me. At that time, I sometimes thought it was "too much" time!

Now, I look back fondly on the summer driving trips we'd take across the country. I especially remember a trip we took in 1966 to see the World's Fair in New York City. This is a lot of time to be cooped up in a car with dad. But I remember how much I liked chit-chatting along the way, talking about the things we were seeing, school, and life.

This is one aspect of my upbringing I try to bring to my family. My son and I enjoyed a driving trip across the US a few years ago where we attended minor and major league baseball games and just plain goofed-off. Though we had our too-much-togetherness-moments, just as I did with my dad, I'm sure my son will long remember the things we did and talked about, just as I recall summers with my parents. He and I grew much closer on that trip, learning about each other in ways that are difficult during the regular home routine.

I look forward to a similar journey one day with my daughter, now a toddler. Meanwhile, we'll have time for summer fun at parks and playgrounds. I also look forward to down time with my wife, Jennifer, just the two of us, and with the kids.

In our rushed, hectic, multitasking lives, it's hard to set aside uninterrupted quality time for relaxing with family, friends, or even alone. But it should be a priority. Those vacations of my childhood nurtured me just as much as school, in different but equally important ways. I wish all of you a wonderful summer, and encourage you to relax, as best you can. Get to know the people you're close to a little bit better and maybe make new friends along the way.

Youth Council Selected for New Youth Center



Youth Council meets to learn their first tasks.

A proposed new Youth Center, spearheaded by Supervisor Gioia, took an important step forward recently with the selection of a Youth Council, which is responsible for planning the center's activities.

Fifteen youth, ranging in age from 14 to 20, were chosen from nearly 30 wellqualified applicants. The Council will weigh-in on all matters related to developing the center, which will be

located in a currently-vacant county building on 41st St. and Bissell in Richmond, near the County Health Center and Courthouse.

The Council's responsibilities include advising architects on building design, deciding the center's programs, writing governing documents for themselves, and coming up with a center name and logo.

At the end of a seven-month planning stage, each member will be paid a stipend of \$500. They will then decide whether to stay on the job, and if so, in what form and with what goals.

The Youth Center is a collaborative effort by Supervisor Gioia's office, the City of Richmond, the Richmond Mayor's office, the West Contra Costa Unified School District, various county departments, and numerous nonprofit community organizations. A major fundraising and planning phase is underway, with an opening day goal of fall 2007.

New Illegal Dumping Website

If you've ever seen garbage on the side of the road and not known what to do about it, help is here. Contra Costa County recently launched a new website to help citizens tackle the menacing problem of illegal dumping. The website, www.cccrecycle.org/illegal-dumping gives information on what to do if you see illegal dumping, find dumped materials, or suspect someone of dumping.

It also explains legal ways to get rid of unwanted goods.

If you don't have access to the internet, the same information is available by phone, on a new toll-free number, 1-800-No-Dumping, or 1-800-663-8674. Whether you use the website or phone, you can access information easily and anonymously.

Again: To report or learn more about illegal dumping:

www.cccrecycle.org/illegal-dumping or 1-800-663-8674.

County-Sponsored State Bill Against Illegal Dumpers

Supervisor Gioia strongly supports a proposed state bill that would give more clout to local law enforcement efforts to crack-down on illegal dumpers. AB2253, introduced by Assemblywoman Loni Hancock on behalf of Contra Costa County, would give law enforcement the right to impound vehicles used for illegal dumping. Fines would be charged for getting a vehicle out of impoundment, in addition to whatever other legal action is taken for the dumping. The District Attorney, Bob Kochly, is committed to prosecute those caught illegally dumping.

Investigations show that many illegal dumpers are small-time operators who advertise trash hauling, telling customers they use local landfills when they really dump on public roadways or vacant lots to avoid paying landfill fees. Backers of AB2253, including Supervisor Gioia and Contra Costa County, hope the law, if passed, will help stop many of these operators, taking them out of business.

A group of West County community activists recently traveled to Sacramento to show support for the bill, helping it pass a key assembly Committee and move on through the legislative process.

New Program to Address Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity is in the spotlight, as rates of overweight kids skyrocket, here and around the country. Obesity is associated with a host of serious health problems including Type Two diabetes and heart problems. Government agencies are working to help address the problem, including here in West County, which has some of the highest childhood obesity rates in the county.

Recognizing the seriousness of the problem, Kaiser Permanente recently gave a generous \$1.5 million grant to a 20-member Richmond-area collaborative for a new program aimed at lowering youth obesity rates. The program, which will target neighborhoods at-risk for poor health and obesity, will focus on policy and environmental changes that lead to a healthier lifestyle. This includes everything from supporting healthy school menus and vending machine fare, to designing buildings and landscaping that encourages outdoor play, walking, bicycling, or taking stairs instead of an elevator.

Supervisor Gioia's offices, as well as the county Health Services Department, are among the groups in the collaborative. The nonprofit North Richmond Neighborhood House is the lead agency for the program, which is in the early planning stage.

Webpage: http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/dis1/

A Year For Disaster Preparedness

The importance of disaster preparedness came home this year, with lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina and the 100th anniversary of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake. We mourn these tragedies, and look at them as teaching tools.

The Board of Supervisors and county staff are evaluating their emergency response capabilities, and making some changes. Supervisor Gioia was one of two local politicians to speak on the role of local governments in emergency preparedness at a recent national conference held in San Francisco as part of the 1906 anniversary.

The Board recently asked county staff to draft an ordinance requiring the installation of gas shut-off devices in all buildings, at the time they are sold. These devices automatically close gas lines in an earthquake. The ordinance was proposed by Supervisors Gioia and Federal Glover.

The County Health Department conducted a series of Crisis Communication Workshops with governmental agencies countywide to teach effective ways to communicate information to the public in an emergency.

We've also gained insight on steps people can take at home to protect themselves and their loved ones in a disaster. Many of these preventative measures don't require much time or money. A good place to start is with a home disaster kit. It should have enough supplies to help you survive for three days without outside assistance.

Home Disaster Kit

Small items:

Matches in waterproof container

Candles

Flashlights

Battery-operated radio

Spare batteries

First Aid Kit

Pocket knife

Manual can-opener

Hand sanitizer or wipes

Emergency cash in a waterproof bag

Garbage bags

Toilet paper and paper towel

Toiletries

Extra set of house and car keys

Larger Items:

One gallon of water per person per day. (Stored in food-grade plastic containers.)

Ready-to-eat, canned, jarred, or dried food, that doesn't need cooking.

Blankets or sleeping bags

Consider:

Pet food

Diapers, bottles, and formula List of emergency phone numbers -doctors, hospitals, relatives, childcare providers.

Back-up prescription medications.

Extra prescription glasses.

Instructions for frail or disabled family members.

Toys and books for children.

For more information check-out:

Contra Costa County Office of Emergency Services: 925-228-5000, www.cocosheriff.org

Governors Office of Emergency Services, 916-845-8510, www.oes.ca.gov San Francisco Office of Emergency Services, www.72hours.org

Victim's Assistance Rev's Up In West County

There's little comfort for victims of crime but a county program offers help that can make a difference. The Victim Witness Assistance Program, which aids victims and witnesses of crime, guides clients through the legal maze of a serious crime, helping them understand and stay updated on their case. It also helps them apply for financial assistance they may be eligible for, including funds to cover medical care, home security, relocation and lost wages.

The program, which operates on a state grant from fines and fees collected from offenders, operates from the district attorney's offices in Richmond and in Martinez.

The Richmond office has recently added staff, to help it fully support the West County community.

For more information or to schedule an appointment: Victim Witness Assistance Program: District Attorney's Office in the Richmond Courthouse, 100 37th Street, Room 220, Richmond. 510 374-3272

Speaking On the Concerns of Immigrants



Supervisor Gioia speaks at a May rally in Richmond supporting immigrants. The rally was one of many held around the country to highlight the contributions of immigrants and migrant workers.

Webpage: http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/dis1/

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Office Hours: Monday – Friday

8:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon 1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Our Website:

http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/dis1

Other Elected Officials

House of Representatives:

Congressman George Miller (District 7) (510) 262-6500 – Richmond Office (925) 602-1880 – District Office

Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher (District 10) (925) 932-8899 or 757-7187 - District Offices

State Senate & Assembly:

Senator Tom Torlakson (District 7) (925) 602-6593 – District Office

Senator Don Perata (District 9) (510) 286-1333 - District Office

Assemblywoman Loni Hancock (District 14) (510) 559-1406 – District Office

Assemblyman Joe Canciamilla (District 11) (925) 372-7990 - District Office

Commission & Volunteer Opportunities

Interested in community issues? Want to get involved? The county has numerous citizen boards that advise the Supervisors on a range of issues. For a complete list of openings check the county's website at www.co.contra-costa.ca.us. Click on Board Advisory Body Information. Applications are available online, or through our office.

County Library Commission

Advises the board on issues regarding the county libraries, reading, and literacy. For more information: Anne Cain at 925-646-6423.

In-Home Supportive Services Authority (IHSS)

Advises the board on matters pertaining to in-home care-takers and support workers. For more information: John Cottrell at 925-646-1257.

Economic Opportunity Council

Advises the board regarding Community Services Block Grants and the weatherization program. For more information: Al Prince at 925-646-5940.

Regular Public Meetings

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Meets at 9am every Tuesday at the County Administration Building, 651 Pine St, in Martinez.

El Cerrito City Council

Meets at 7 pm on the first and third Mondays of every month at the El Cerrito Community Center, 7007 Moser Lane, El Cerrito.

El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Council

Meets at 7 p.m on the second Wednesday of every month at the El Sobrante Library, 4191 Appian Way, off San Pablo Dam Rd.

Kensington Municipal Advisory Council

Meets at 7 p.m the last Tuesday of every month at the Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington, in Kensington.

Montalvin Manor Redevelopment Advisory Committee

Meet at 6:30pm on the second Thursday of every month at the Montalvin Elementary School on Christine Drive.

North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council

Meets at 5 pm the second Tuesday of every month at 515 Silver Avenue in North Richmond

Richmond City Council

Meets at 7 pm every first and third Tuesday at Richmond City Hall, 1401 Marina Way South, Richmond.

San Pablo City Council

Meets at 7 pm. on the first and third Mondays of every month at City Hall, 13831 San Pablo Avenue, Building Two, San Pablo.