

The Jacob Journal

A Newsletter from Supervisor Dianne Jacob

December 2001

Serving the Cities of:
El Cajon
La Mesa
Lemon Grove
Poway
Santee

Serving the communities of:
Agua Caliente
Allied Gardens
Alpine
Barrett
Blossom Valley
Bostonia
Boulevard
Campo
Canebrake
Casa de Oro
Crest
Cuyamaca
Dehesa
Del Cerro
Descanso
Dulzura
Eucalyptus Hills
Fernbrook
Flinn Springs
Granite Hills
Grantville
Guatay
Harbison Canyon
Jacumba
Jamul
Julian
Lake Morena
Lakeside
Mount Helix
Pine Hills
Pine Valley
Potrero
Ramona
Rancho San Diego
Rolando
San Carlos
San Pasqual
Santa Ysabel
Shelter Valley
Spring Valley
Tecate
Tierra del Sol
Vallecitos

Serving the Indian Reservations of:
Barona
Campo
Cosmit
Cuyapaipe
Inaja
Jamul
La Posta
Manzanita
Mesa Grande
Santa Ysabel
Sycuan
Viejas

A Season of Change for San Diego Red Cross Local chapter has long way to go to earn respect of East County

The San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter of the American Red Cross has, at last, released its financial records for last January's 10,000 acre Alpine fire. Never again should it take 10 months of pleading, wrangling and a contentious national audit to make such routine figures available to the public.

After five hours of intense discussion and number-crunching, Red Cross officials and I reached an agreement on the \$410,000 donated to the Red Cross as a result of the Alpine fire.

It was determined that \$287,721 was clearly earmarked for Alpine and would be returned to the community. This is a remarkable improvement on the meager \$7,000 which the Red Cross originally spent to help fire victims last January.

In addition, San Diego Padres owner, John Moores and the East County tribal nations of Sycuan and Viejas have asked that *all* of their generous donations be used to help the community of Alpine recover from the fire. These thoughtful and conscientious requests have boosted the amount returning to Alpine to \$343,721!

To their credit, local Red Cross board

chairman Charles Duddles and national chapter services vice president Jim Kruger have admitted and apologized for the chapter's shortcomings and have vowed to make fundamental changes to the way the chapter does business, including its fund

raising practices. But, the organization has a long way to go to earn back its credibility with the people of San Diego County.

I know I speak for many fire victims and an outraged San Diego community when I say that the Board of the local chapter owes it to the public to answer for the actions of its Chief Administrative Officer,

Donita Rotherham.

Back in June, I was disturbed when the *San Diego Union-Tribune* quoted Rotherham as having characterized a meeting with myself and fire victims as a "bitchfest." I felt the comment was offensive, particularly to women, and insensitive to the victims who'd lost their homes in the fire. Since then, Rotherham's actions have become more disturbing.

Last month, in a taped interview with KGTV Channel 10 reporter Mark Matthews, Rotherham claimed that she earned \$203,000 a year working for the Red Cross. However, Matthews had obtained a copy of Red Cross tax documents from 1999. The tax documents showed that

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"...local fundraising efforts will suffer until a skeptical public sees more than cosmetic changes in the chapter's operation."

-San Diego Union-Tribune

November 10, 2001



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Red Cross

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Rotherham made not \$203,000, but \$309,000 in 1999! In addition, 10 News reported that Rotherham claimed she lived in a modest apartment in Mission Valley. 10 News, however, said it discovered that Rotherham and her husband live on an entire floor of a luxury high-rise apartment building along the bay in Downtown San Diego.

These alarming inconsistencies, coupled with the local chapter's decision to edit a national audit which found that the chapter mismanaged donations during the Alpine fire, beg for a public explanation.

Then, to hire a high-priced \$5,000 per month public relations firm to "spin" the release of the doctored audit in an attempt to cover up the truth is outrageous!

An editorial in the November 10 edition of the *San Diego Union-Tribune* encapsulates how I feel.

"Rotherham's unreponsiveness should give board members pause as they ponder how to restore the chapter's reputation. Local fundraising efforts will suffer until a skeptical public sees more than cosmetic changes in the chapter's operation," the editorial said.

Because Red Cross volunteers work too hard and too long to be compromised by the constant evasiveness of the local chapter's chief administrative officer, it is my sincere hope that these changes are made as quickly as possible.

It took the courage of the fire victims, the watchful eye of the media and intense public pressure to shed light on the wrongdoings of the local chapter. It will take the entire San Diego community to hold the agency accountable for real changes in the months ahead.

Holiday Wishes to Our Military Heroes



Because San Diego is home to the largest concentration of military installations in the nation, each of us undoubtedly feels a connection to the brave men and women taking part in Operation Enduring Freedom.

In our post-September 11 world, our nation has a deeper and more personal understanding of the word "hero." High-priced athletes and beautiful movie stars suddenly seem far less important than those who risk their lives in foreign countries to preserve America's freedom. This holiday season, let's turn our thoughts to San Diego-based Marines and Sailors overseas and their friends and families here at home. The dedication of our brave fighting forces sets an example for us all.

The County of San Diego has a long history of supporting our military community and continues to prioritize the needs of our of local service men and women. Here are a few of our recent projects:

Protecting the Paychecks of Military Reservists

After September 11, the Board of Supervisors acted fast to provide support to military reservists employed by the County. The Board voted unanimously to make certain the incomes of reservists stay the same in the event they are called to active duty. This means that if a reservist's military salary falls short of what he or she would earn at the County, the County will pay the difference. It's a small price to pay for freedom!

In-State Tuition for Service Men and Women

If you think it's unfair that military personnel stationed in California must pay out-of-state tuition fees if they choose to go to college here, the County agrees with you. That's why the Board is seeking state legislation which would grant in-state tuition status to active duty military personnel, retirees, veterans and their families in California. We're awaiting response to a letter sent to the Governor.

Fantastic Fleet Week

Supervisor Jacob was honored to take part in this year's Fleet Week Parade to honor San Diego's military men and women and their families. She would like to thank Thomas Wornham with Wells Fargo for the exciting Stagecoach ride.



There's no place like East County for the Holidays

Whether it's the East County Toy Drive, the Salvation Army Nutrition Center in El Cajon or the nationally-recognized Rescue Task Force, East County is home to some of the region's most generous groups and individuals. At no time is this more evident than during the holidays. Here are a few groups working to do wonderful things this Christmas season.



Supervisor Jacob learns the art of tending bar at Hooley's Irish Pub in Rancho San Diego. Her tips went to the East County Toy Drive.

East County Toy and Food Drive

Twenty-six years and thousands of holiday dinners later, the East County Toy and Food Drive is one of the largest holiday toy and food drives in the region. Last year, East County service clubs, businesses, churches and youth groups came together to provide more than 6,000 families with delicious holiday meals. Families who qualify also receive new toys for children under 12 and stocking stuffers and books. The program serves families in Santee, Lakeside, Lemon Grove, Spring Valley, Jamul, La Mesa and El Cajon. If you'd like to start a toy drive in your office or if you have time to distribute food and toys to families during December 17 through December 21, contact coordinator Rebecca Bennion at (619) 850-4856, or e-mail at rebeccabennion@home.com.

Rescue Task Force

The East County-based Rescue Task Force is an all volunteer organization providing medical and humanitarian aid to remote regions of the globe. Since 1988, founders Gary Beck and Wendell Cutting have traveled by bush plane, dug-out canoe, mule and even horseback to reach victims of disease, disaster and political unrest. Gary and Wendell are two of East County's finest! They see to it that Rescue Task Force volunteers pay their own trip expenses, carry in all supplies, personal support equipment and food during a mission. From Honduras to Kosovo to Thailand and most recently to Afghanistan, Rescue Task Force administers aid ethically and effectively so that people come first! Contact Gary directly at gary@rescuetaaskforce.org or call (619) 424-7415.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)

The red ribbons of MADD's popular, "Tie One on For Safety" campaign are always popular in the East County during the holidays. The campaign, now in its 15th year, asks motorists to tie a red MADD ribbon to their car antenna or door handle as a pledge to drive safe and sober. This holiday season MADD aims to give out more than eight million ribbons to supporters across the country. If you'd like to raise awareness, save lives and prevent injuries this December, contact the San Diego County Chapter of MADD for your red ribbon at (760) 746-6233 or visit www.madd.org.



Join me for Coffee and Conversation...

December 14, 2001 8:30 a.m.

The Jelly Roll Caffe

3509 Sweetwater Springs Boulevard

Spring Valley



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We hope to hear from you soon!

Dec-01

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