



The Volunteer View

The Monthly Newsletter for Marin County Civic Center Volunteers and Student Interns

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VOLUNTEER NOTES

Be A Friend

Have you heard about the new opportunity to assist local foster families that are nurturing youngsters who are part of the child welfare system? A screened Friend of the Family can help with transportation, provide meals, or donate goods or services to help the foster family of a foster child.

Friends of the Family is orchestrated by the [Children and Family Services Division](#) of the [Marin County Health and Human Services Department](#) (HHS). It links generous community members to foster families that can use a little support. Volunteers go through an approval process and receive training and support from social workers.

To learn more and see orientation dates, visit www.fosterourfuture-marin.org or call 415-473-2200.

Holidays

County offices will be closed the afternoon of Christmas Eve, December 24, and on Christmas Day, December 25, the afternoon of New Year's Eve, December 31, and on New Year's Day, January 1, 2020.

CCV STAFF

Anne Starr, Coordinator of Volunteers
415-473-7167 • ASTarr@marincounty.org

Joy Fossett, Internships Coordinator
415-473-7447 • JFossett@marincounty.org

Robyn Madias, Human Resources Technician
415-473-7407 • RMadias@marincounty.org

VOLUNTEERS

Writers: **Shirley Trimble, Scott Harrop, Tiyona Pariani, Natalie Dybeck, Pilar Goodman**

Copy Editor: **Pamela Ross**

Design Consultant: **Eleanor Lau**

Graphic Design Aide: **Afsaneh Bohlouli**

Intern Writing Coach: **Ed Remitz**

Administrative Aides: **Joanne Elder, Deborah Fox, Deborah Gregor**

Radio Experts Support Community Events and Activities Across County

By Michael Fischer

In the pre-dawn dark, members of the Marin County Sheriff's RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service) team members don their reflective lime-green caps and vests and drive out to remote locations in Marin's parklands and rural areas. They set up their radio stations and prepare for the arrival of hikers or cyclists.

The day before, they had loaded up their cars with gear needed to set up portable radio stations. Radio programmed to the day's frequencies? Check. Battery, cables, solar panel? Check. Antenna and coax cable? Check. Table and chair; food and water; clothing for fog, rain, or hot weather? Check.

PHOTO BY JUDY COOPER



Each year, the nonprofit Marin Amateur Radio Society (MARS) provides emergency radio support for a dozen or more

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RACES team members at the Bear Valley trailhead for a Rotary event include, L to R back row: Mark Klein KM6AOW, Michael Fischer K6MLF, Larry Bradley KK6QPE, Milt Hyams KM6ASI. Middle row seated: Rob Ireson K6RGI, Ann Shores K6SHO, Doug Slusher KF6AKU. Front: Brian Cooley K6EZX.

Student Learns About Inner Workings of County Government

By Tiyona Pariani

An interest in government inspired **Summer Cassel** to intern with the District 4 Board of Supervisors office, where she helps streamline contacts with the public and helps constituents with issues.

"Studying is one thing but interning with the Board of Supervisors has given me experience in the inner workings of county government,

which is not something you really learn in school," said Summer.

Rhonda Kutter, district aide to **Supervisor Dennis Rodoni**, is Summer's internship supervisor. "Her participation on so many important projects for District 4 has been consistently helpful—from assisting with constituent concerns, office-hour support, and

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Radio Experts

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“public service” events. The Dipsea footrace and its cousin, the Double Dipsea; the Marin County Bicycle Coalition’s Dirt Fondo and Adventure Revival off-road bicycle

rides; and the Marin Cyclists’ 1,500-rider Marin Century/Mount Tam Double Century are among them.

Most of Marin’s parklands and rural areas lack cellphone coverage. But with MARS’ system of mountaintop repeaters, ham radio provides unique coverage in those remote hills and valleys.

Event organizers depend on experienced radio operators to help them manage events and deal with the medical (or other) emergencies that might occur.

Some radio operators are prepared to be mobile SAG (Support and Gear) vehicles—they’re ready to support riders or hikers who are exhausted or suffering from hypothermia and can get supplies to aid stations and rest stops.

For RACES members, participation in MARS’ public service events

provides hands-on opportunities to make sure their equipment is in proper order to deploy on an hour’s notice. It gives them the opportunity to practice the best radio protocol. Practice, practice, practice: the best way to prepare for an emergency. With thousands of participants and sometimes sketchy weather, accidents and emergencies are inevitable.

In those situations, RACES members are often required to collaborate directly with Marin County Fire Department units as well as CHP and Sheriff’s officers.

In a larger disaster or emergency, when the Sheriff’s Emergency Operations Center calls on RACES members to provide communications support, they will have gained important experience working together in public service events.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL FISCHER



Ann Shores raises the antenna mast on the communications truck during an event.

Student Learns

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webpage improvements, to special projects,” said Rhonda. “In fact, Summer conceived of, designed, and managed her own special project, a college panel discussion at her alma mater, Tomales High School.” Working with Marin Promise Partnership, a local nonprofit whose mission is to reduce education inequalities, Summer piloted the successful college preparedness panel for juniors and seniors that will become an annual Tomales High School event.

Summer graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara in August 2019. She studied political science with an emphasis in international relations and a minor in American/California history.

Summer is from Inverness in West Marin. She is living there with her family until January, when she will move to Madrid to teach English as a second language. She also works at Cowgirl Creamery in Point Reyes Station.

Summer enjoys art and crafting, especially oil painting, photography, sewing, and knitting. She is also a baker and loves traveling.

She has gained a lot of valuable experience at the county and is excited to use it in her life. “Marin County has such an amazing county government that is overflowing with incredibly special, diverse, and hard-working individuals,” said Summer. “Our county sets examples every day by promoting legislation to hopefully



PHOTO BY LORENZO CORDOVA

Summer Cassel, Supervisor Dennis Rodoni

prevent the spread of wildfires, discontinue the use of single-use plastics, and increase public safety and awareness of issues.”

Educator Applies Experience, Helps Kids Return to School

By Scott Harrop

Whitney Hoyt comes from a long line of educators and politicians. “It’s sort of a genetic defect, I guess,” she says wryly.

The retired middle school principal currently volunteers with the Marin County Public Defender’s Office, working on juvenile cases. Her goal is to help kids get back into school, where they can participate in sports and activities. She reaches out to the parents, who often speak little English and are fearful of the system, and addresses Individual Education Plans and learning or emotional difficulties.

When adolescents get into trouble, they can face police, go to court, be sent to juvenile hall, and often enroll at County Community School, an alternative public school where they are less likely to re-integrate with negative influences. The Public Defender’s Office helps those who can’t afford private attorneys. Whitney can accompany them at juvenile court hearings (which are not open to the public), once their case has been assigned to her.

Whitney is supportive of **Judge Beverly Wood**, whom she sees as running a collaborative court focused on the well-being of the juveniles who come before her.

In fact, Whitney is interested in working directly for the court, which would put her in a more impartial, neutral role.

“Whitney is a veteran Marin County educator and has held numerous administrative positions in many Marin school districts, including San Rafael City Schools, Novato Unified School District and Ross Valley Elementary School District,” said her staff supervisor, Deputy Public Defender **Pedro Oliveros**.

He noted that she also worked at Bridge the Gap in Marin City and is on the advisory board of Powerful Beyond Measure, a local nonprofit that empowers underrepresented young women to become community leaders. In addition, she teaches at Dominican University and helps out at Whistlestop, the local nonprofit that provides essential services to elders.

In her experience as a school principal – “like being the mayor of a small city” – she developed relationships that have proven invaluable in her work with the Public Defender.

She described her path to Marin as “haphazard”: raised in



PHOTO BY AMANDA WAGNER

Whitney Hoyt

Buffalo, N.Y., she attended boarding school at Concord Academy in Massachusetts. “I needed a little structure in those days,” she said. After a stint in college in Montana, she moved to San Francisco in 1981, and from there to Marin County.

Public service comes naturally to Whitney. In fact, she said in all modesty, “I don’t think I deserve a profile!”

“I’ve been very happy and feel very fortunate to have been able to learn many new things I didn’t think I’d be able to do,” she said.

Who’s New & Welcome!

Crystal Amezcua (San Rafael), Pre-Law Intern, District Attorney’s Office

Bob Beaumont (Oakland), Editorial Consultant, *Frankly Speaking* Newsletter Project, Human Resources Department

Matthew Buchman (Vallejo), Friends of the Family Volunteer, Health & Human Services (HHS)

Amanda Mallory (Point Reyes Station), Shelver, Point Reyes Library

P.J. Nave (San Rafael), District 1 Intern, Board of Supervisors

Carolyn Rebuffel Flannery (San Rafael), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

Carmen-Aimee Sandoval Vasquez (Rohnert Park), Investigations Intern, Public Defender’s Office

Erin Soskin (San Rafael), Youth Services Intern, Novato Library

Hilary Spaulding (San Rafael), Behavior Bridge Team Program Assistant, HHS

Barbara Stewart (San Rafael), Literacy Tutor-Reading Buddies Volunteer, South Novato Library

Grant Woods (Novato), Student Service Intern, Novato Library

Volunteers Boost Arts & Crafts Fair



Thanks to the contributions of volunteers, the county's 19th annual Employee Arts & Crafts Fair was a big success. Pictured clockwise from bottom left: Holiday crafts are displayed at an employee vendor table. Volunteer musicians from the County Crows band provide festive music. The Human Resources & Friends bake table -- staffed here by Lisa Hatt, Catherine Heckendorf, and Sandy Sherwood -- raised \$775 for wildfire relief. Watercolorist Noel Ryan, a Marin Civic Center tour docent volunteer, arranges her art display. At bottom right, Kelly Takeshita, left, helps vendor Chris Shaw at her holiday paper art booth. The pop-up fair was held December 5 at the Civic Center cafeteria. Miguel Lienres volunteered to organize the event, founded by employee crafters in 2000. The fair is part of the county's Employee Appreciation Program and is open to the public. Staff members participate on their own time.

Happy Anniversary!

We congratulate these volunteers who celebrate their anniversaries this month and thank them for their ongoing involvement.

40 YEARS

Herman Frentzel (Greenbrae), Air Patrol Volunteer, Sheriff's Office

25 YEARS

Ray Peterson (Petaluma), Air Patrol Volunteer, Sheriff's Office

17 YEARS

Gregory Felton (Stateline, NV), Air Patrol Volunteer, Sheriff's Office

13 YEARS

Victoria Gonzalez (San Rafael), Art & Crafts Instructor, Probation Department

Craig Thomas (Ross), Air Patrol Volunteer, Sheriff's Office

8 YEARS

Kelley Litz (San Rafael), Frankly Speaker Proofreader, Human Resources (HR)

7 YEARS

Mary Bramblett (Fairfax), Investigative Aide, District Attorney (DA); **Tim Graves** (Tomas), Volunteer Firefighter, Fire; **Suzanne Gollin** (San Rafael), Program Assistant, Health & Human Services

6 YEARS

Louise Berto (San Anselmo), Patrol Volunteer, Parks

4 YEARS

Dennis Whipp (San Rafael), Consumer Mediator, DA; **John Pierremont** (Santa Rosa), Event Aide, HR; **Christopher Ruedy** (Woodacre), Environmental Steward & Videographer, Parks

3 YEARS

Michael Warner (Petaluma), Marin Search & Rescue Volunteer, Sheriff's Office; **Ann Morris** (Novato), Environmental Steward, Parks

2 YEARS

Valerie Lels (Kentfield), Volunteer Attorney, DA; **John Hammond** (San Rafael), Adopt-A-Spot Team Leader, Public Works; **Harita Kalvai** (San Rafael), Teen Program Intern, Civic Center Library

1 YEAR

Timothy McDonald (San Rafael), Shelver, Civic Center Library; **Denise Kovack** (Sausalito), Law Library Aide, Public Defender's Office