

Staying Safe in the Summer Heat

BY PAMELA B. SMITH

DIRECTOR, AGING & INDEPENDENCE SERVICES

It was a good idea born from a bad situation. Seniors and others were suffering, physically and financially, as a result of an energy crisis that shook the entire state. The costs to keep cool exceeded the budgets of many older adults on fixed incomes. And that summer was a scorcher. Because of the increased use of fans and other coolers, California suffered its largest planned blackout since World War II.

That was the Summer of 2000. Supervisor Dianne Jacob, whose District 2 includes some of the hottest areas in the County, was concerned for the health of her East County residents, particularly seniors. She realized that some of her elderly constituents were deciding between paying for medicine or treating themselves to air conditioning.

Unfortunately, many older adults don't realize that they are more susceptible to the effects of heat than younger people. They can be in crisis and not know it because seniors often don't start sweating until their temperature has already soared. This is especially true if they have any disease that causes poor circulation.

From what she saw that summer, Supervisor Jacob set



COOL ZONE CREATOR SUPERVISOR DIANNE JACOB, PAM SMITH AND SDG&E'S YOLE WHITING USE THEIR COOL ZONE FANS DURING LAST YEAR'S KICK-OFF.

into motion a plan to help prevent seniors and others from risking their health and hurting their pocketbooks during any future heat wave. She tasked Aging & Independence Services with establishing air-conditioned sites in East County and elsewhere for people to gather on hot days. The Cool Zone program began.

Existing nutrition sites, libraries and other gathering spots that are regularly kept cool and open to the public were identified. Program staff created a listing of these sites and began directing

older adults to them, assisting with transportation when necessary. For homebound seniors unable to get to a Cool Zone, the program has had a limited number of small electric fans available.

The Cool Zone program has kicked off again for its fifth year. The listing of sites has grown steadily each year from 60 to more than 130. SDG&E remains an important partner and helps to publicize the program. The Cool Zone sites are a way for SDG&E to educate people about energy-saving devices and cost-saving programs.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

THE UNSINKABLE DEBBIE REYNOLDS ENCHANTS FANS AT VITAL AGING CONFERENCE

Debbie Reynolds showed her appeal as some 2,000 fans attended last month's Vital Aging Conference. The 73-year-old entertainer shared humorous and poignant stories of her Hollywood life, plus as a caregiver and a vitally aging woman.

The audience also received helpful information from speakers on caregiver issues, medication management, Social Security and the benefits of exercise.

The next Vital Aging Conference will be in 2007.



AT RIGHT, FANS ASK DEBBIE REYNOLDS FOR HER AUTOGRAPH. ABOVE, AIS'S DENISE NELESEN AND HER DAD, AL, SHARE A MOMENT WITH THE STAR.



(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

Many of the Cool Zones also provide a social connection for older adults. People can make new friends and have lunch at Cool Zones that are nutrition sites, for instance.

More than anything, Cool Zone time is an opportunity to remind older adults about the risks of heat and to provide them with tips about keeping cool:

- Eat lightly and drink plenty of fluids. Non-caffeine and non-alcoholic beverages help prevent dehydration.
- Wear lightweight, light colored and loose fitting clothing.
- Keep a container of cool water nearby and use wet washcloths to pat the wrists, face and back of neck or, for a quick cool down, wrap ice cubes in a washcloth.
- Use small battery operated hand-held fans and misters for a cooling break.
- Schedule outside activities in the early mornings or in the evening.
- Stay in the coolest part of the house - usually on the lowest floor - as much as possible.
- A shady spot outdoors may be cooler than the house, especially if there's a breeze.
- Use portable and ceiling fans in frequently used rooms to substitute for the air conditioner.
- If it is safe to do so, leave windows open at night. Open windows on two sides to create cross ventilation.
- Place a piece of cardboard covered with aluminum foil in sunny windows to reflect sunlight and heat away from the house.
- Close shades or draperies on sunny windows.
- Air out hot cars before getting into them.
- Visit a Cool Zone on hot days.

To find a designated Cool Zone near you, contact the AIS Call Center at (800) 510-2020. ▲

DOWNLOAD AUDIO BOOKS FOR FREE

Customers of the San Diego County Library system can now borrow audio books online. The downloadable books are available without charge on the San Diego County Library homepage, www.sdcl.org.

After entering the ID number from their library card, borrowers can download onto a computer or a portable player device any of 520 popular titles.

Under this new method for borrowing books, customers will have access to any of the titles any time they want them, plus more than one customer can listen to the same title at the same time.

Customers can check out a book for a three-week loan period, with a three-week renewal, just as they can with regular books. At the end of the loan period, the audio books are automatically erased.

This is a product for home use only. Customers will not be able to download and play these books on the branch library computers.

Plans calls for the addition of language learning titles and about 15 new popular book titles each month.

"Anyone who has visited a public library in recent years knows that libraries are no longer just for books," said County Library Director Jose Aponté. "Savvy families flock to the library to borrow educational and entertainment videotapes and DVD's, as well as CD's and audiotapes that can cultivate a young person's love of literature, or enhance a vacation, a walk on the beach, or commute time to and from work."

Along with the new audiotape delivery, the library will continue with traditional audiotape, CD, and book formats.

For more information, call (858) 694-2415. ▲

HONORING



RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

SALUTING THE EFFORTS OF RSVP VOLUNTEERS

We hope that you were among the 640 people who attended our recent RSVP Brunch to honor the efforts of RSVP volunteers who give so much to the community.

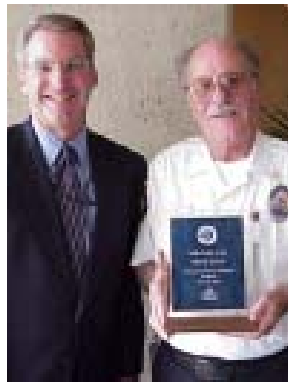
Among the award winners were Henry Coronado, Volunteer of the Year; Mike Sole, volunteer with the Chula Vista Police Department, Public Safety Award; Roscoe Davis, volunteer coordinator at the San Diego Aerospace Museum, Leadership Award; and the San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum, Station Award.

RSVP Ambassadors included Bob Prath, Gerald Graf, Andrea Holmberg, Ann Perry, Lois French, Cleo Thompson, Jr., and AIS Outreach & Education Team members Marty Dare, Kathy Holmes-Hardy, Cathy Babin Weil and Anabel Kuykendall.

We thank entertainers Keilani Joy Spahn, Kathy Villalobos, Moonlight Serenade Orchestra, Howard McCullough, the Parasol Strutters and the San Pasqual Academy Comedy/Improv Team.

If you missed this event, make sure you are enrolled in RSVP and that your volunteer hours are recorded in our office, either through your site volunteer coordinator or directly to the RSVP staff. Every RSVP volunteer who works 50 hours in 2005 and reports them to us will receive an invitation next May.

Remember the challenge by our speaker Jim Evans — for each volunteer to recruit a new RSVP volunteer by next June.



AT LEFT, CHULA VISTA POLICE CHIEF RICHARD EMERSON WITH MIKE SOLE; AT RIGHT, C. RENELL NAILON, LAURIE SWITZER (REPRESENTING THE USS MIDWAY) AND ROSCOE DAVIS.

RSVP AMBASSADORS INCLUDE KATHY HOLMES-HARDY, MARTY DARE, CATHY BABIN WEIL, ANABEL KUYKENDALL, ANDREA HOLMBERG, LOIS FRENCH, ANN PERRY AND CLEO THOMPSON, JR.



SPONSORS WERE REPRESENTED BY MARY DAVIS, SDG&E (LEFT); DAO DOAN, ACS STATE AND LOCAL SOLUTIONS.



VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

Anita Kramer is our RSVP Volunteer of the Month, nominated by Janice Batten of the Salvation Army El Cajon Senior Center. Anita began in 2002 by making craft items for center fund-raising, then became the craft teacher. She is now a Front Desk Aide.

Other volunteer duties have included picking up goodies at Starbucks, delivering commodities to shut-ins, and doing center publicity at her mobile home park. Janice states that Anita is “always willing to do what is needed to make our center a better place and she does this with a bubbly personality. We appreciate Anita’s enthusiasm and loyalty. She’s a winner.”

Congratulations and many thanks, Anita. Your efforts truly make a difference.



**HENRY CORONADO,
VOLUNTEER OF YEAR**



ANITA KRAMER

SD KICKS OFF CHANGE CARAVAN

San Diego County is the kick-off site for a Culture Change Caravan, which is meant to publicize a push by several statewide advocacy organizations to improve nursing home culture and care. The groups have joined forces to highlight positive contributions nursing homes make and offer training to facilities and staff on how to improve the quality of care for residents.

The coalition includes Lumetra, the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Region IX, the California Department of Health Services' (DHS') Licensing & Certification program, the California Ombudsman, the California Association of Homes & Services for the Aging (CAHSA), the California Association of Health Facilities (CAHF), and the California Hospital Association (CHA).

On Aug. 1, the group launches a weeklong bus tour, starting in San Diego, then to Los Angeles, Fresno and ending in Sacramento. The tour will feature speaker, Dr. Bill Thomas, founder of the Eden Alternative, as well as a daylong seminar covering important topics for facilities interested in reducing pressure ulcers and physical restraint use, and improving organizational culture.

The free Caravan event will begin at 9 a.m. Monday, Aug. 1, at St. Paul's Manor, 2635 Second Ave., San Diego.

For more information about the Culture Change Caravan or to register, see www.lumetra.com/nursinghomes/events/culturecaravan.asp, or contact Jesusa Dobbs, Lumetra, at (415) 677-2015, or email jdobbs@caqio.sdps.org. ♣

MORE OMBUDSMAN VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT

Many nursing home residents have no family members to speak for them. Even residents with relatives and friends often find it difficult to get their concerns addressed. Our Long Term Care Ombudsman office provides advocates for persons living in nursing homes, residential care facilities and other long-term facilities in San Diego County.

If you want to make a difference for elders in these settings, plan to attend the next training in September and become a state-certified Ombudsman. This free, 40-hour training will prepare you to help residents, families and facilities resolve complaints. Ombudsman volunteers also attend resident and family council meetings, witness certain legal documents and train on residents' rights and elder abuse.

The training will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in September at a location in Kearny Mesa. The exact dates are being firmed up.

Interested potential Ombudsman volunteers should contact Regina Bishop at (858) 560-2507 or toll-free (800) 640-4661. ♣

COMMUNITY ACTION IN OUR REGIONS

Community Action Networks in four regions focus on determining needs for older adults and persons with disabilities and taking steps to meet those needs.

East County Action Network for Older Adults & Adults with Disabilities (ECAN) will meet from 1 to 3 p.m. Wednesday, July 20, at Wells Park Senior Center, 1153 E. Madison, El Cajon. Speaker: Tom Lidot from Tribal STAR. No ECAN meeting in August. Coordinator is Kathy Holmes-Hardy at (619) 401-3994, kathy.holmes@sdcounty.ca.gov.

The next meeting for the action network for North County (July 26) will feature information about Medicare Part D. There will be no meeting in August. The group meets at 2 p.m. the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Vista Library, 700 Eucalyptus in Vista. For information, call Marty Dare at (760) 754-5945, or email to martin.dare@sdcounty.ca.gov, or see the Web site at www.localcommunities.org/lc/atf.

The San Diego Community Action Network welcomes a new coordinator, Brian Rollins. The group meets from 10:30 a.m. to noon the last Tuesday of each month at the Balboa Park War Memorial, north Zoo parking lot. Contact Brian at (858) 505-6305 or brian.rollins@sdcounty.ca.gov.

The South County Action Network (SoCAN) meets from 9 to 10:30 a.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month at the AIS South Bay office, 780 Bay Blvd., Suite 200, Chula Vista. For more information, contact Anabel Kuykendall at (619) 476-6142 or www.localcommunities.org/lc/socan. ♣

LONG TERM CARE PROJECT UPDATE

Long Term Care Integration Project staff members and consultants continue to work with stakeholders in refining recommendations for acute and long term care integration. At the recent Planning Committee meeting, consultant team members presented an update on actuarial work, IT survey findings and recommendations for care management, community and cultural responsiveness, and provider network development and member services expansion. For more info, see <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/cnty/cntydepts/health/ais/ltc/>, or call Evalyn Greb at (858) 495-5428. ♣

LEGACY CORPS SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

The Legacy Corps pairs an older adult with a foster teen, who together provide respite for a weary caregiver in their neighborhood. The senior gets to be a mentor; the teen gets to give back to someone; and the caregiver gets a break.

More senior mentors are being sought. For more information, contact John Scholte with New Alternatives, (619) 683-2434. ♣

SHARE YOUR ACTIVITIES

Send calendar items by the 10th of each month preceding the issue date to: Denise G. Nelesen, editor, Aging & Independence Services, 9335 Hazard Way, San Diego, CA 92123-1222. Or fax to: (858) 495-5080. You can also send an email to denise.nelesen@sdcounty.ca.gov

JULY 6, WEDNESDAY

10:30 A.M. TO NOON

Housing alternatives will be discussed by author Anne Kopp Hyman at the La Jolla YMCA, 8355 Cliffridge Ave., La Jolla. For additional information, see www.architectsofthesunsetyears.com.

JULY 8, FRIDAY

12:30 A.M. TO 3 P.M.

A Western Hoedown, sponsored by the Senior Center Club, will be held at the Escondido Joslyn Senior Center Auditorium, 210 Park Ave., Escondido. Cost of \$5 includes lunch and entertainment.

JULY 14, THURSDAY

8:30 A.M. TO NOON

“Caregiving: What You Need to Know,” a free seminar for caregivers and professionals, will be held at St. John’s Episcopal Church, 760 First Ave., Chula Vista. Registration is required; call (800) 827-1008.

JULY 16, SATURDAY

10:30 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M.

“Successful Aging and You: Adventure Travel and Learning” will be presented at the Chula Vista Public Library, 365 F St., Chula Vista. Hear from retirees Amanda and Richard Ligato, who

drove their 28-year-old Volkswagen camper over four continents and 24 countries. For more information, contact Life Options at (619) 691-9774.

JULY 20, WEDNESDAY

7 P.M.

“Screening for Memory Impairment in the Elderly,” will be offered by Dr. David Salmon with the UCSD Department of Neurosciences at the UCSD Garren Auditorium. Call (858) 534-6299 for parking information.

JULY 25 TO 29

10 A.M.

Total Wellness Week with free lectures will be held at the Braille Institute, 4555 Executive Dr., San Diego. Presentations, including memory and aging, fall prevention, hearing loss, reflexology and diabetes, will be offered at 10 and 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. For the schedule and to register, call (858) 452-1111.

JULY 26, TUESDAY

11 A.M. TO NOON

“Understanding Hospice,” an overview of end-of-life assistance, will be presented at the Point Loma Presbyterian Church, 2128 Chatsworth Blvd., San Diego. Registration required; call (800) 827-4277.

JULY 26, TUESDAY

12:45 P.M.

San Diego firefighters will discuss fire prevention and safety for seniors, as well as fall prevention, at the College Avenue Senior Center, 4855 College Ave., San Diego. Lunch is available at noon; \$3 donation requested for seniors. For more information, call (619) 583-3300.

JULY 27, WEDNESDAY

9 A.M.

“Stroke Smart” education and screening will be held at the Grossmont Healthcare District Board Room, 9001 Wakarusa St., La Mesa. Reservations required; call (800) 827-4277.

JULY 28, THURSDAY

9 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M.

A forum on sources of dementia besides Alzheimer’s disease will be presented by medical experts from ActivCare and the Glenner Alzheimer’s Family Centers at the Scottish Rite Center, 1895 Camino del Rio South in Mission Valley. Learn about vascular dementia, Pick’s Disease and more. For more information or to make a reservation, call (619) 224-7300.

NUTRITION COUNCIL

The Countywide Nutrition Council will meet on Thursday, July 21, at the Escondido Joslyn Senior Center, 210 Park Ave., Escondido. The meeting will begin promptly at 1 p.m.; lunch will be served prior to the meeting, at 11:30 a.m. To RSVP for lunch, call (760) 839-4803 by Tuesday, July 19.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Aging & Independence Services Advisory Council will meet at noon Monday, July 11, at Aging & Independence Services, 9335 Hazard Way, Kearny Mesa. The meetings are open to the public.

CA SENIOR LEGISLATURE

The San Diego CSL meets at 10 a.m. on the second Monday of the month at AIS.