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Employees Salute An All-American Picnic

Take a Sneak Peek at the Star-Spangled Employee Picnic

Awards, activities and contests were only part of the 2002 Employee Appreciation Picnic. Here's a closer look at some of the stories going on behind the scenes.

Voice-Activated Master of Ceremonies
If it seemed like master of ceremonies Kirk Bennett is used to speaking in public, it's only because he is. Bennett, who twice a month hosts a Sunday afternoon show on KYXY-FM, left his day job as one of USD's data processing technicians to step back in front of the microphone.

He has emceed events ranging from concerts featuring the likes of Kenny Loggins and Jackson Browne to a muscular dystrophy fund-raiser before thousands of people at Sea World. Bennett has been involved with broadcasting since 1977 in various capacities, doing news segments as well as hosting his own show.

You Should Be Dancing
Most people associate the hula with shapely young women in grass skirts, but Eddie Paje of the alcohol and drug education office put that stereotype to rest. Paje wowed the crowd with a hula — telling a story through dance — that related a tale of Hawaiian field workers going out into the ocean to harvest limu, an edible seaweed. Paje says he got into dancing about eight years ago.

If it weren't for the cool ocean breeze, one might have mistaken USD's annual employee picnic for an old-fashioned Midwestern county fair. The June 21 event had all the trappings — music, the smell of barbecue, dozens of kids, a few dogs and red, white and blue everywhere you looked.

The picnic planning committee made this year's picnic a little different — and a lot more traditional — precisely because America has changed so dramatically since the last time faculty, staff and administrators congregated on the Copley Library lawn.

"The planners wanted to give everyone a chance to show their patriotism," said Kirk Bennett of administrative computing, who served as the master of ceremonies. "This is just USD showing the world that we care about all the people who lost their lives on Sept. 11, and about the people fighting to defend our freedom."

The picnic began on a solemn note, with the presentation of colors by members of USD's ROTC program, a moment of silence to honor the victims of the terrorist attacks and a stirring a cappella rendition of the national anthem by Nahir Baez, a 2002 communication studies graduate. But with the ovation that followed, the mood lifted.

Picnic attendees were treated to a sample of the hidden abilities of their co-workers in the talent showcase. Eddie Paje of the alcohol and drug education office danced the hula, Jackie Hammack of human resources played the violin, and Kay Norton and Mina Guzman of the registrar's office, along with Kim Parks of special sessions, performed a song-and-dance number in hobo costumes.

Carlos Dominguez of information services sang "Cats in the Cradle," accompanying himself on guitar, and John Frazer of instructional technical services played "My Girl" on the harmonica. Even the kids joined in, as the son and nephew of Darlene Polak of University Ministry were joined by a friend in a martial arts routine.

The picnic also featured photo and baking contests tied to the patriotic theme. Director of Foundation Relations Annette Ketner won first prize in the photo contest for her dramatic picture of the American flag flown at half-staff on the Star of India in San Diego Bay, while another entry depicted flowers left at the World Trade Center site. Judges in the baking contest sampled nine different entries ranging from an Old Glory cake, which re-created an American flag out of strawberries and blueberries, to American Pie and Big Apple delight. The prize went to academic computing's Rosy Vacchi for her New York cheesecake. Vacchi and Ketner took home prizes of summer gift baskets.

Like the picnic itself, the annual Employee of the Year award featured a new twist. For the first time, the award was shared by two

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Undercover at the Employee Picnic
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"An ex-girlfriend wanted to get back together with me, so she suggested we take hula lessons together," he says. Although the girlfriend is now out of the picture, Paje continues to dance with several groups throughout San Diego.

The Food Dude
OK — so you're having nearly a thousand of your closest friends over for a barbecue, and you don't know how much food to get. Where do you turn?

Try Dave Horner, a catering supervisor for Picnic People, the company that catered the USD event. Horner's crew cooked the 187 pounds of hamburger and 155 pounds of hot dogs that picnickers dressed with 28 pounds of lettuce and 23 pounds of sliced tomatoes. Also on the list: 731 watermelon slices, 83 pounds of chips and 1,000 cookies.

Great American Planners
What, you think this all just happens by itself? Hardly. This year's picnic came together under the watchful eyes of picnic committee members Madonna Moreno, Janey Middleton, Frank Chmura, Mary Anne Timm, Cathy Johnson and Joan Wolf. Picnic committee chair Cristina Ruffo, in human resources, also extends a special thanks to people in the dining services and facilities management departments, as well as to Kirk Bennett, the event's master of ceremonies.

And the winners are...: President Alice B. Hayes with the co-winners of the staff Employee of the Year award, Wendy Tankersley of the Naval ROTC and Don Gennerino of the Biology department.

Melon madness: Contestants concentrate on technique during the watermelon eating contest.

Flag girls: (from left) Jennifer Frakes, Jenny Trimble and Sarah Wolf pass out red, white and blue bandanas.

Passing the bar: Limbo contest to see how low they could go.

Top Torero: Greg Zackowski, director of the Hahn University Center, receives the Administrator of the Year award from John Frazer and Perla Blesch of the Staff Employees Association.
All-American Picnic

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The co-winners received free reserved parking spaces for a year, prompting President Alice B. Hayes to quip that she could already hear the applications being filled out for next year's award. Others nominated for the award were Josie Vella of the Center for Christian Spirituality, Rosemary Smiser of campus card services and Samir Chala of the School of Business.

Greg Zackowski, director of the Hahn University Center, was named Administrator of the Year, selected among finalists Patrick Drinan, dean of arts and sciences, Ron Pachence, religious studies professor, Curtis Cook, dean of the business school, and Linda Scales of career services. Look for stories about the winners in upcoming editions of the Alcalde View.
Picnic Sponsors

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Athletics Department/ Sports Camps
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Pasta Bravo
PF Chang's China Bistro
Jo Powers, Provost Office
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Restaurant
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San Diego Gulls
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San Diego Hilton
San Diego Museum of Art
San Diego Museum of Man
San Diego Opera
San Diego Padres
San Diego Repertory Theatre
Sardina's Italian Restaurant
John Schafer Chiropractic
See's Candy Siesel's Old Fashioned Meats
Skateworld
Sorrentino's Pizza
Sunset Bowl
Sweet & Sugar Free 24 Hour Fitness
The Fish Market
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U.S. Grant Hotel
Valic-American General
Victoria's Relax Station
Viejas Casino
Vienna Sausage Co.

Gift Sponsors

San Diego Museum of Art
San Diego Museum of Man
San Diego Opera
San Diego Padres
San Diego Repertory Theatre
Sardina's Italian Restaurant
John Schafer Chiropractic
See's Candy Siesel's Old Fashioned Meats
Skateworld
Sorrentino's Pizza
Sunset Bowl
Sweet & Sugar Free 24 Hour Fitness
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USD Faculty Staff Dining Services
University Center
USE Credit Union
U.S. Grant Hotel
Valic-American General
Victoria's Relax Station
Viejas Casino
Vienna Sausage Co.

Williamette Industries (Weyerhaeuser)
Zizzo's Ristorante Italiano
Five-Year Service Award Recipients

Employees celebrating five years with the university were given service awards at the picnic. Those celebrating their 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th and 30th anniversaries will be honored at a service award celebration in November.

Lois Marie Acker, Academic Computing Services
Judy Babbitt Gould, School of Education
Thor Brickman, Student Computing
Carmela Ann Bubel, Registrar
Sharon Gail Bunton, Biology
Kenneth W. Chep, Disability Services
Juan Antonio Contreras, Main Dining
Antonio V. DaLuz, Housekeeping Services
Tricia Angela Duran, Financial Aid
Carrie Dussia, Legal Research Center
Sylvia Lynn Flores, Bookstore
Olivia Elisa Gil-Guevara, University Relations
David B. Gomula, Bookstore
Cleotilde Ruiz Gonzalez, Law School Administration
Pamela Gray Payton, Community and Government Relations
Wendy Joanne Guthrie, Athletics Administration
Minh-Ha Thi Hoang, Undergraduate Admissions
Barney Cleveland Holland, Environmental Health and Safety
Ilse R. Hunnicutt, School of Business
Miles D. Johnston, Instruction
Suzanne Ventimiglia Kelly, Career Services
Aprile R. Lane, Academic Computing Services
Ken Marra, School of Business
Shahra Meshkaty, Academic Computing Services
Sister Juanita M. Meyer, Provost's Office
Marie Gubitosi Minnick, Student Activities
Emilia Hope Moore, School of Education
Patricia A. Moulton, School of Business
Thomas William Neer, Building Maintenance
Dora Escobedo De Olivas, Manchester Child Development Center
Liza Denise Peterson, Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice
Jessica Castro Pierson, Legal Clinic
Daniel Graham Rillera, Chemistry
Ernie Reynaldo Salazar, Grounds and Maintenance
Thomas Nicholas Shea, Copley Library
Maureen Silva, Academic Computing Services
Darren Lance Smith, University Relations Operation
Cynthia Joyce Thomas-Evans, Continuing Education
Sarah Myriam Winston, Legal Research Center
Shuttle Survey
With parking at USD expected to be especially tight this fall, USD's department of Public Safety is considering starting a daily shuttle service for employees from inland North County.

Employees from neighborhoods in the inner North County are encouraged to fill out a survey to determine their interest in a shuttle that would pick up employees at park-and-ride lots in the morning and return them there in the afternoon. Employees from Temecula and other parts of Riverside County also could use the shuttle.

The shuttle would use surface streets and the car pool lane on Interstate 15. Studies show that employees who live more than 15 miles from work spend upwards of $600 each year on gas, insurance, parking permits and other fees.

The survey was sent out via e-mail and through campus mail for those employees who don't have access to e-mail. If you did not receive a copy of the survey, please call Diane Callahan at ext. 4659 or e-mail her at dianec@sandiego.edu.

Win a Parking Pass
The Staff Employees Association on Aug. 30 will hold a drawing — open to faculty, staff and administrators — for three free regular 2002-2003 faculty/staff parking passes. The passes are a gift from an anonymous donor and the winners may elect to take the equivalent cash prize of $120.

Raffle tickets are $1 each and can be purchased through SEA representatives until Aug. 28. For a list of SEA representatives, see the Web site at www.sandiego.edu/sea/reps.html or the flier that was distributed campus-wide.

Beach Party
The Staff Employees Association invites anyone interested to meet after work on Aug. 23 at Ski Beach on Mission Bay for an impromptu end-of-summer beach party. Bring beach toys and cook-out food. The party is open to all USD employees, their families and friends. No fees, just fun. Meet at the north end of the island, across the channel from Crown Point. For more information, call John Frazer at ext. 4182.

In Search of Summertime Stories
We want to know what you did this summer. Did you help build bridges in Third World countries or spend your days volunteering with the adult literacy program at your local library? Did you start a children's theater group with the kids on your block or take a cooking course that landed you a gig as the sous chef at a fancy hotel? The Alcalá View wants to hear from you. Send an e-mail to Krystn Shrieve at kshrieve@sandiego.edu or call her at ext. 4934 to share your story.

Milestones
Biology Professor Martha Stauderman, her husband, Ken, and their son, Lucas, adopted a baby girl, Elle Ann, on May 11. She weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces, and was 20 inches long.

Biology Professor Mike Mayer and his wife, Courtney, welcomed a baby girl, Hallie Elizabeth, on June 20. She weighed 6 pounds, 14 ounces, and was 19 inches long.

John Ronchetto, professor of marketing in the School of Business, passed away on May 26 after a valiant fight against cancer. A memorial scholarship fund will be set up in John's name. Please send contributions to: John Ronchetto Memorial Scholarship Fund, c/o Chris Redo, School of Business.

Drew Daniel, brother of Theresa Andersen, assistant manager of the Print Shop, passed away on May 30.

Frances Ettinger, sister-in-law of Linda Robinson, assistant professor in the School of Nursing, passed away on June 23.

Timothy A. Burke, brother of Karen C. Burke, Warren Distinguished Professor of Law, passed away on July 9.

Professor Don Weckstein, former dean of the School of Law who joined the USD law faculty in 1972, passed away on July 22.

Margie Louise Thomas, mother of Renee Johnson, accounts assistant in the controller's office, passed away on July 18.