Civil Discourse Center Stage at Library

Libraries have always been a place for discovering ideas and information and they are increasingly becoming community centers and meeting places.

The Monterey County Free Libraries (MCFL) is a strong supporter of freedom of information and the right of people to hear all sides of a debate. With that in mind, MCFL has launched its Community Matters: Civil Discourse at the Library series, which invites the community to come together to discuss difficult and sometimes controversial subjects.
The first program in the series was held November 15th at the Marina Library Community Room and featured a panel discussion on sexism, sexual harassment in the workplace and other related challenges in the wake of the #MeToo campaign.

Mary Duan from the Monterey County Weekly was the facilitator and the panel which consisted of 4th District Supervisor Jane Parker, Seaside Council Member Kayla Jones, Salinas Union High School District Trustee Kathryn Ramirez and the Rape Crisis Center’s Deputy Director Lauren DaSilva.

Close to 100 people attended the event which offered a lively discussion. The forum was a question and answer format with a strong emphasis on “civility.” Some of the questions from attendees included:

- Why did the #MeToo campaign go viral at this time?
- When it emerges that someone has either committed sexual harassment or assault in the past, how should this impact the value of their other body of work, such as Hollywood actors?
- What can businesses do to create a culture of professionalism and safety for all employees?
- Where can people go to get help?
- It is not enough not to be a bully. What does an ally look like?
- What happens when politics color responses people have to reported incidents?

Response to the program was enthusiastic and many suggestions were offered for topics for the next event which will be February 1st, also at the community room. This next panel will focus on the issue of homelessness.

Do you have an idea for a future discussion? Please send it to Library Director Jayanti Addleman at AddlemanJG@co.monterey.ca.us
Environmental Health Announces Hoffman Award Winner

Each year, the Environmental Health Bureau of the Health Department nominates staff for its Robert A. Hoffman Award, which honors employees who go above and beyond to serve co-workers and the public.

This year's winner is Monica Baigorri with Consumer Protection Services.

Among her accomplishments, Baigorri was instrumental in training the new members of the Lead Program Team; her diligent work on the Field Toilet Program to ensure inspections are done in a timely fashion was an important aspect of customer service for this service.

In selecting her for this award, Health Department leaders say Monica is a shining example of exceptional customer service and that her tireless efforts are visible both within and outside the bureau.

The Robert Hoffman Award recognizes individuals who show consistent, genuine consideration and willingness to serve the public, co-workers and interdepartmental agencies, often during high-stress situations as well as going above and beyond to ensure satisfaction.

While there can only be one winner, it is an honor to be nominated. Here are the other staff members deserving of a nomination:

- Matthew Krenz, Hazardous Materials Management Services
- Karen Pontius, Drinking Water Protection Services
- Bryan Escamilla, Environmental Health Review Services
- Robert Fernandez, Hazardous Materials Management Services
- Barbara Carvalho, Animal Services
- Veronica Salinas, Environmental Health Office Services
- Brian Azevedo, Solid Waste Management Services
Auditor’s Office Welcomes Chief Deputy

The Auditor-Controller’s Office would like to introduce its new Chief Deputy of the Internal Audit Division, Harvey Howells.

Howells comes to Monterey County from Southern California. He has an extensive background working with multinational organizations, prestigious domestic companies and 20 years’ experience in both internal and external audits.

What lured Howells to Monterey County? He is looking forward to a new challenge and you’d better be on your toes with this CPA, who trains in Martial Arts!

Howells shared a bit about himself in this Q & A:

Q. What interested you in coming to work for Monterey County?
A. I’m a former Southern California resident. I always enjoyed coming to the Monterey Peninsula on trips up the coast. I applied for the position with that in mind but was most intrigued with the opportunity to develop a high performing internal audit activity in service for the County’s leadership and citizens.

Q. What is the role of the internal audit division?
A. As defined by the institute of Internal Auditing, the Internal Audit role is to provide an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization’s operations. It helps an organization accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

Q. What skills do you bring to the job that will enhance this department?
A. The primary skills I bring to the table include risk analysis and mitigation, business process and internal controls evaluation, assessment and design, financial and operational analytics as well as general administration and governance acumen.

Q. Tell us a bit about yourself, your hobbies and interests.
A. I enjoy spending time with family, friends and my two rescue dogs AJ and Daisy. I also enjoy performing arts and am a sports enthusiast. I am most passionate about studying and training Martial Arts, specifically Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. I appreciate and embrace all cultures having had extensive international travel both as a US. Marine and during my time working for multinational organizations. I hope everyone from Supervisors to staff will find me personable, friendly and fair.

Welcome Harvey!