

Special Edition

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The Barline

BRENDA SMART FUNDRAISER
November 3, 2007 at Laguna Seca Raceway







A Great Community Steps Up For a Great Lady

By Neil Shapiro

When I moved my practice here from San Francisco nearly five years ago, I naturally wondered what kind of a legal community I would find. I knew that there would be differences – the firm I left had more lawyers than all of Monterey County, and there were others much larger – but not their precise nature. The way this community stepped up to support Brenda Smart left no doubt in my mind that this community is special.

Barline readers are well aware of Brenda's April 23 bicycle accident, and the severe injuries she suffered. Many are also aware that she faces substantial future medical treatments and surgeries, and that her medical insurance will not cover much of those needs. One day some nice folks – judges, court administrative personnel, lawyers, Brenda's friends, fellow cyclists and church members, and Bill Smart's friends and firefighter colleagues – just decided that they had to make sure that a member of our community gets the help she needs, so they formed a committee and set about to raise as much money as possible.

The easy decision was to hold a fundraiser, November 3 was set as the date, and the committee and a swarm of volunteers got busy. Salinas firefighter Dave Garibay somehow arranged the donation of 75 chickens, and Lenore Noll used her restaurant contacts to get El Pollo Dorado to cook and deliver all of them for \$50, and to get Tico's Tacos to prepare and deliver a Mexican food feast at a shockingly reasonable price. Elaine Richelieu added her "event" expertise, and that part was quickly organized.

Maria O'Farrell was tireless – some might say relentless – in convincing local businesses, lawyers and judges to donate goods and services for raffles and a silent auction. More items rolled in every day, and thousands of dollars were raised by the sale of \$5 raffle tickets for some of those items.

The Pebble Beach Company generously donated a two-night stay at the Lodge, together with din-

ner and golf, and the lawyers on the committee and others sold nearly 250 \$250 raffle tickets for that prize (Chris Campbell alone sold an astonishing 56 such tickets). Momentum was building toward the event itself.

November 3 turned out to be a beautiful day in more ways than one. The weather was perfect, and the view from the Red Bull Energy Center at Laguna Seca spectacular. The electronic message board at the track read "Welcome Brenda and Bill Smart." Organizers were hoping optimistically for a turnout of 300 but instead welcomed comfortably more than 400, and from all segments of the community.

It was a day filled with memorable images: Judge Kingsley walking away with the Sawz-All power tool she purchased at the silent auction (you'd better behave in her Department), Bar President Sheri Damon and others serving food for close to three hours, people enjoying the day, the food and the company, Judge O'Farrell beaming at how well everything was going, Tom Wills and his camera recording everything, and Chuck Warner serving admirably as the MC, presiding over a seemingly endless series of raffle drawings. And then there was Brenda's arrival, and her selection of the winning ticket for the Lodge stay.

When all was said and done, judges, court personnel, bicyclists, firefighters, court reporters, members of Saint Ansgar's Lutheran Church, other community members, and a pretty good sprinkling of children and dogs, had shared a wonderful afternoon, and more than \$90,000 had been raised for Brenda's continuing medical treatment. The day was a great tribute to Brenda; so many came and contributed so much to help out someone they respect and admire. And it was a great tribute to our community. We all know that we live in one of the greatest places in the country, but it sure is nice to confirm that we share it with some of the greatest people in the world.

Thanks to Neil Shapiro for this article. Neil's practice is in Monterey. He practices in Civil Litigation, IP and ADR. Ed.

Special thanks to the following:

Committee members: Chris Campbell, Chuck Warner, Lisa Mineta, Andy Swartz, Maria and Robert O'Farrell, Shelley Potts, Ann Schrader, Elaine Richilieu, Neil Shapiro, Dave Garibay, Tina Deyerle, Larry Biegel, Lenor Noll, Anne Hall, Kay Kingsley, Fiona Hall, Rosemary Rovick.

Volunteers: Lety Perez, Sonia Gama, Norma Ramirez, Alice Weigel, Lita Messina, Betty Miller, Le Mans Nichols, Judie Nielsen, Susan Signorelli, Thomson Choy, Cathy Shaw, Elia Mendoza, Sara Mendelsonn, Christie Sitterly, Lisa Dalia, Irene Villanueva, Susan Kern, Olga Garcia, Maria Gonzales, Molly Steele, Russ and Lana Scott, Sue Just, Sally Lopez, Marti McKim, Pete Peterson, Virginia Peterson, Jim and Kitty Goerss, Lisa Poll, Jim Elliot, Bill Ragland [and his wife]; Mike Melchior, Theresa Gagnon. Lenor's husband Ray, Connie Hays, Ken and Peggy Howell, Maxine Njaa, Cheryl Howington, Caleb and Lisa Randall, Suzie Cottle [and husband Adam], Sherry Damon, Malia Esteban, Lani Atalima, Margaret Corioso, Gary Gray, Ellen Phillips, Elaine's husband, Maria O'Farrell, Megan O'Farrell, Maria O'Farrell's niece, and Fiona Hall's friend Joe; Firefighters Dave Garibay, Bob Rediner and Dave Ashworth, and many others who jumped in to help on the day of the event.

And to Jennifer Pavlet with Pebble Beach Co., Judge Kingsley for her beach house, Judge & Mrs. Wunderlich for the Ahwanee donation, Billie French for obtaining the bicycle, MCBA for donating the paper goods, utensils, etc., Monterey College of Law for the use of the large coffee pot and all the coffee stuff - and Abramson, Church & Stave (Anne Frassetto Olsen and Anne Leach) who did the vegetable/flower stand with donations from many of the local produce companies.

And to Diana Valenzuela and Larry Biegel for their photographs.

We apologize if we left anyone off this list. Your hard work is certainly appreciated.

More photos of this remarkable event can be found at the following websites: www.angelslanding4brenda.org and www.monterey.courts.ca.gov/MediaPlayer/Brenda/





