

U C L A T O D A Y

S T A F F &

F A C U L T Y N E W S

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A HEALING CIRCLE:

Athletes mired in the parking placard case met with those they hurt to work on a plan to make amends.

CAMPUS: See page 4

BRUIN ANGELS

Again, UCLA Today pays tribute to employees who lead double lives as extraordinary volunteers.

CLOSEUP: See page 8

DECEMBER 14, 1999



HEALTH ADVOCATES

~~UCLA Women's Health~~
national spokeswoman for the "Take Control Again" campaign, sponsored by the American Foundation for Urologic Disease; and Debbie Reynolds, who has osteoporosis and has worked on behalf of those similarly afflicted.

MASTER OF THE WEB

Sky Dayton, founder of EarthLink, the second-largest Internet service provider in the U.S., received The Anderson School's annual Information Systems Award for Executive Leadership Dec. 2 at the Regency Club in Westwood. The award is given by the Information Systems Associates, an industry support group of the school comprised of representatives from more than 40 leading Southern California organizations. Dayton, 28, founded EarthLink in 1994 after becoming frustrated with the complexity of accessing the Internet. The annual award recognizes senior executives who bring information systems into key strategic and high-level decision-making processes and into widespread use.

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1999

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Some Charities Cash In by Playing the Name Game

By REED ABELSON

Interested in granting the wish of a child with a serious illness? You could give to the Make-A-Wish Foundation or the Grant-A-Wish Foundation, which is not the same as the Grant-A-Wish Network. Or perhaps the Children's Wish Foundation International or Fulfill a Wish Foundation or Wishing Well Foundation USA.

Especially around the holidays, when many people whip out check-books or credit cards at the last minute, there is rampant confusion about exactly which charity has its hand out. Some charities happily exploit the confusion, trading on the names of better-known rivals. Others simply reap whatever comes their way and ask few questions. And some may not be charities at all.

Of course, some confusion is inevitable because of groups with similar names. And, certainly, many sound-alike charities are not exploiting the public.

But as the number of registered

charities tops 650,000, and the Internet continues to bring more within easy reach, the problem of sound-alikes and look-alikes has intensified, forcing some established charities to hire lawyers and engage in uncharacteristic finger-pointing.

Distinguishing among charities is "becoming more and more of a challenge," said Bennett M. Weiner, an official of the Council of Better Busi-

ness Bureaus, whose national office reviews 300 charities.

There are well over 150 charities registered with the Internal Revenue Service with "breast cancer" in their name. Shop2Give.com, a Web site that promises to send to charity a percentage of what visitors spend on its site, lists 146 cancer charities in California alone. Searching for ferret rescue organizations? Yahoo, the Internet search engine, has 14.

Knowing which charity is which can be nearly impossible when hearing a pitch by a fast-talking phone solicitor or when calling directory assistance. Donors "don't really know," said Kathryn Jones, president of the Better Business Bureau in Idaho Falls. "They hear certain words."

For example, of six easily confused wish-granting organizations, only Make-A-Wish, the oldest, gets a passing grade from all three of the leading consumer groups that rate charities. The other five are either

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not rated or fall short.

Yet the fund-raising company hired by the Wishing Well Foundation told potential donors, "I'm sure you've heard of us; we send terminally ill children to places like Disney World," according to a lawsuit filed by the Minnesota attorney general's office. The suit, settled this month, contended that Wishing Well had misled donors by implying that it was a local charity — it is based in Metairie, La. — and by preying on possible confusion with better-known charities.

Wishing Well and its fund-raiser, Gecko Communications, neither of which admitted to wrongdoing, agreed not to solicit Minnesota residents before 2004. They also agreed to pay civil penalties and legal fees of \$22,500 and spend \$38,000 for wish-granting in Minnesota.

"There was no intention to be confused with anybody," said Matthew Brown, a lawyer for Wishing Well. Errol Copilevitz, a lawyer for Gecko, said that while there was a settlement, "there were no findings of wrongdoing."

In another case of mistaken identities, Robert Bardavid, who lives in Phoenix, was feeling generous in October when he got a flier from the Cancer Control Society asking for donated clothes and jewelry. He later learned that the group is unrelated to the American Cancer Society.

Since he had promised a gift, Mr. Bardavid did contribute some items when the truck arrived. But he said: "The organization is playing on the name of the cancer society. I think it's misleading."

The Cancer Control Society, based in Los Angeles, has been around since 1973, said a founder, Lorraine Rosenthal. "There is no similarity," she said.

Businesses, of course, spend millions to advertise their names and vigorously protect their trademarks in court. Charities, however, have traditionally been reluctant to use donor money to take on their doppelgängers.

"This confusion is always going to exist," said Arney Rosenblat, a spokeswoman for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, which had some problems with sound-alikes when a New Jersey charity, the Multiple Sclerosis Association of America, was accused by state regulators of misusing charitable funds. While the latter is operating under an interim consent decree with new management, the society continues to receive calls from confused donors. Still, Ms. Rosenblat says it wants to spend its money on its mission, not public relations or lawsuits.

But other nonprofits are tired of turning the other cheek. Many are explicitly flagging the more vexing look-alikes on their Web sites and advising donors to consult charity watchdogs or state attorneys general.

Similar Sounding, but Not the Same

Following are some wish-granting charities that sound alike, with their ratings by the three main charity watchdog groups. The ratings are based on how much of the charities' money goes for their missions or on whether they meet the watchdogs' standards relating to accountability, governance and use of funds.

CHARITY	BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU www.bbb.org	NATIONAL CHARITIES INFORMATION BUREAU www.give.org	AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF PHILANTHROPY www.charitywatch.org
Make-A-Wish Foundation <i>Phoenix; founded 1980</i>	Met standards	Met standards	Graded "B"
Grant-A-Wish Foundation <i>Baltimore; 1982</i>	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated
Children's Wish Foundation International <i>Atlanta; 1985</i>	Standards not met	Standards not met; incomplete review	Graded "F"
Wishing Well Foundation <i>Metairie, La.; 1995</i>	Standards not met	Not rated	Not rated
Fulfill A Wish Foundation (now Kids Wish Network) <i>Oldsmar, Fla.; 1997</i>	Did not disclose enough for review	Not rated	Not rated
Grant-A-Wish Network <i>Rapid City, S.D.; about 1997</i>	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated

The main concern "is the loss of donors' trust," said Don L. Rigin, chief executive of the Arthritis Foundation, the largest charity doing arthritis research and education among some 150 related groups.

Last year, the foundation joined with the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association in suing Citizens Action Group, a Glendale, Calif., group that was the subject of two recent investigations by the ABC News program "20/20." The suit also named Kent Stryker, the group's president. The older charities contended that Mr. Stryker was collecting for various groups

ing for more than 50 years and do much the same thing: provide guide dogs and training. "There is an occasional time when we get checks made out to another organization," said Wells Jones, chief executive of the foundation. "We will forward those checks." His counterparts at Guide Dogs say they do the same, but their Web sites (guidedog.org and guidedogs.com) make no reference to each other.

And the confusion created by Mr. Stryker was not resolved as courteously. Mr. Stryker defends having picked names that struck some as clones. "The major charities have been around for a long time," said Mr. Stryker, arguing that consumers could hardly be fooled.

The big charities beg to differ. The parties reached an agreement in which Mr. Stryker faces restrictions on how he publicizes his causes. No longer using the name Citizens Action, Mr. Stryker continues to run the National Association for Alternative Medicine, which accepts donations of cars. He says he is in full compliance with the settlement agreement, and the charities do not dispute that.

Other Johnny-come-latelys have also had to contend with lawsuits. Make-A-Wish recently settled its lawsuit against Fulfill A Wish, in which it contended that Fulfill was confusing donors. While the terms of the settlement are confidential, Fulfill now operates as Kids Wish Network.

Though Make-A-Wish is reluctant to spend money on lawyers, it felt it had little choice, said Paul G. Allvin, a spokesman. "We are not doing our job as a charity if we do not defend our name," he said.

Charities also worry about the effect of publicity when a sound-alike gets into trouble. Grant-A-Wish Foundation lost sleep over an NBC News report about the Grant-A-Wish

Network in October that criticized the network for not spending enough on children. The report never mentioned the foundation, yet the foundation felt obliged to spend \$5,000 on a mailing to its own donors to clear the air.

The network is no longer operating, said a woman who answered its telephone number but would not give her name. "We never knew there was any confusion," she said. The woman said no one was available to answer questions.

In many cases, it is anybody's guess how much of the money sent to some groups goes to charity. The Internal Revenue Service does not dictate charities' names, and enforcement is mostly left up to the states. So if organizations go out of business or leave town before they have to file tax returns that would disclose such details, state regulators may not have much to go on.

The Internet only adds to the problem. Search engines can uncover huge numbers of charities, and some, like Goto.com, give priority to organizations that pay for placement, meaning that less-established charities can pay to bump aside better-known ones.

MyCause.com, a shopping site that promises to forward some of what is spent to charity, does not accept such fees. Yet its lists are rather random. Type in "american heart," and get a choice of, among others, the American Heart Association and the American Heart Disease Prevention Foundation.

Unless donors do their homework, they may not know that the American Heart Association is the long-established charity, while the foundation is a newcomer. "On the Internet, there are additional opportunities with a flick of a button to feel like you're doing something good," said Ami Kassari, Shop2Give's founder.

There is rampant confusion about which charity has its hand out.

with names "confusingly similar" to their own, like the National Cancer Association or National Heart Foundation. The parties later settled.

To be sure, no one suggests that different charities cannot tackle the same problem. "There are thousands of children's nonprofits," said Brian R. Morrison, executive director of the Grant-A-Wish Foundation, a Baltimore charity he founded in 1982, two years after Make-A-Wish. "It is very difficult to find a name that isn't somewhat similar to something else."

But charities acknowledge that donors may not always realize which is which. Guide Dogs for the Blind and Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind, for example, have both been operat-

NewTimes

L O S A N G E L E S

Letters

Letters Policy

We want you to sound off, whether it's to complain or to compliment, or even if it's to elaborate on an article in our publication. Here are the rules: (1) You must tell us your full name, but we won't print it if you so request; (2) you must give your complete address — even though we'll identify you only by city — and your daytime telephone number; and (3) we reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity or to withhold their publication. Send your thoughts to: *New Times*, 1950 Sawtelle Blvd., Suite 200, Los Angeles, CA 90025; e-mail: editor@newtimes-la.com; fax: 310-478-9873.

Crossing the church

I just wanted to congratulate *New Times* on its continuing coverage of the scam that is Scientology ("Double Crossed," cover story, Tony Ortega, Dec. 16-22). I'm glad to see, after living my entire life in Los Angeles, that there is finally a publication with the gusto to expose that crack religion for the lies and deception it truly is. Bravo! And may the hits keep on coming.

M.K. O'Connell
via the Internet

"Double Crossed" is exemplary of a new breed of journalistic censorship. Utilizing only those allegations that fit a predetermined "story" and ignoring facts and evidence provided to you *refuting* your theme, created your intended result. This is dishonest journalism, it is extremely irresponsible, and it is indeed an act of censorship by a biased press, by filtering out conflicting evidence provided to you.

For example, you repeatedly asserted in your article that I declined to answer questions posed to me — failing to tell your readers that I told you I was bound by an attorney-client privilege not to reveal information provided to me by Robert Cipriano, but that if you would get me a waiver of that privilege, I could answer every question posed. But I provided you with a taped interview with Cipriano that was already public,

made shortly after he hired me to defend him in the defamation suit filed against him by Graham Berry, in which he confirmed literally every allegation made in the 1994 declaration — and which declaration your article asserted was inaccurate. Indeed, Cipriano contradicted the claims you published with a sworn declaration authenticating the transcript of that interview — a matter you also chose to ignore in your zeal to publish phony "allegations," without telling your readers that they were later refuted by Cipriano.

You also failed to tell your readers that Graham Berry has been punished a dozen times recently by at least *eight different judges* for various forms of legal misconduct and that he therefore has no credibility, as determined by independent judges. Indeed, you had in your possession an order from a federal judge issued just four months ago punishing Berry for filing "bad faith" allegations against me. You also failed to inform your readers that Berry recently admitted that he is an alcoholic, takes antipsychotic medication, has "substance abuse" problems, and announced his cessation of the practice of law because of this and a claimed psychiatric disability. You even have the letter from his psychiatrist! Your publications of these hallucinatory "allegations" is thus more than a little disingenuous.

In short, in an effort to create controversy and a phony story, you found it necessary to ignore many facts indicating that the story was a sham. Had Ortega printed the truth, you might have had an interesting story. Who could have confidence in your journalistic integrity now? Even you could not.

I met with Tony Ortega and Editor Rick Barrs prior to publication of your article in order to educate you on some of the accurate facts regarding the story you intended to publish and to provide documentation for you and your staff. Unfortunately, you chose to ignore the majority of what I provided and pretend the facts are different than they are.

Kendrick L. Moxon
Los Angeles

Editor's note: Ortega's story did in fact include Moxon's protestation that he was bound by attorney-client privilege not to answer some

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NewTimes

L O S A N G E L E S

Letters

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questions, and it also pointed out Graham Berry's personal and professional problems. The story made clear that Berry's and Cipriano's veracity was in question, but that documents tend to corroborate some of Cipriano's allegations about Moxon.

Ortega's article accurately portrays Scientology's moral relativism and its fair game tactics. I know. I am a former member of the Church of Scientology.

You are doing a public service in watching and criticizing Scientology. Now that Graham Berry is leaving the arena, there isn't much else to stop them.

Cheryl Nelson
via the Internet

Not since the *L.A. Times'* weeklong analysis in 1990 has a Los Angeles paper (or any media, for that matter) so unabashedly run stories exposing Scientology for what it is — a vindictive, controlling, totalitarian, pseudo-scientific cult.

You've run several articles on them, and you seem to have no fear of the church and its creepy minions who stalk the streets of Hollywood, chain-smoking in their ill-fitting quasi-Navy uniforms. You should be commended for maintaining reason and rigorous skepticism in a city that usually osculates the rectum of Scientology, terrified to question it because a bunch of overrated actors say it's cool. (Look at the list of famous church members, "overrated" is kind.)

Keep up the good work and thanks for standing up to promote free thought and skepticism in a city whose media is usually falling over itself to cull the favor of the famous even when they're obviously fucking nuts.

Shaun Mason
Hollywood

New Times has done it again with Ortega's brilliant exposé of the Church of Scientology's appalling array of vile actions against attorney Graham Berry and Robert Cipriano. As a former member of the Scientology cult and a former Cult Awareness Network staff member, I will attest that I and many others have also been the target of Scientology's fair game policy.

What is truly chilling is that the Department of Justice, the IRS, various states' attorneys, and other government agencies do nothing to stop this phony church. They get away with it by using tax-exempt funds, and their brainwashed followers — including John Travolta, Chick Corea, and Greta Van Susteren — all go along with it.

The good news is that there are more and

more of us out here who are determined to bring this to the attention of the public, and we will see that justice is done.

Jim Beebe
Northbrook, Illinois

I always enjoy your newspaper. But with 3,000 known tainted convictions languishing on D.A. Gil Garcetti's desk in a county where a dead misanthrope garners 40 percent of the vote for sheriff and the major daily newspaper functions as the PR arm of every government agency, why are you folks so concerned with Scientologists?

Really! Who really gives a shit? If they gathered all the Scientologists together and subtracted the whores, junkies, lunatics, and just plain middle-class dolts with no direction in life, who would be left? A security guard, two janitors, and that weird little nerd who runs the place, right?

They're just a silly 20th-century oddity: rat catchers and schlock hustlers. And that's the cute ones! Forget about them, will ya?

May I suggest you train your talents and very useful journalistic spotlight on the real cockroaches: politicians, school administrators, cops, and teachers who couldn't parse a simple sentence to save their lives.

By the way, in case Moxon wants to put me on his list, I'll admit it right here in the paper: yes! In my past, I've had great sex with numerous 12-year-old boys — but I was nine years old at the time. Ask anyone who knows me, I've always had a thing for older men.

Keep up the good work, folks. If not for you and the *LA Weekly*, the sane in this city would be starving for anything like news (actually, if you stole Harold Meyerson from them, you'd have a lock on it).

A.J. Chandler
Los Angeles

PS: No, no relation to *those* Chandlers.

Jill's gems

Thank you, Jill Stewart, for three stellar articles: "Emperor of Ignorance" (cover story, Nov. 4-10), "Manipulative Power-Trippers" (Stewart, Dec. 2-8), and "Getting Steamrolled" (Stewart, Dec. 9-15). What a courageous, superb journalist you are!

I'm a fourth-grade teacher in L.A., and I sent a copy of "Emperor of Ignorance" to Ramon C. Cortines, Interim Superintendent of the LAUSD. My letter expressed the hope that he would guide curriculum to teach English to public schoolchildren in Los Angeles. English is necessary in California and the United States for people who want to gain access to the best educational and occupational opportunities. Teaching English is not an anti-Hispanic or racist