

# Grand jury says agency chief followed legal hiring practices

By DENISE SIEBENTHAL  
Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — Did Jonah swallow the whale?

The county grand jury has completed an investigation into the merger of two county departments, taking note that the smaller of the two ended up with most of the top positions in the new department.

At the center of the issue is the embattled Human Resources Agency, the county department which resulted from a 1981 merger between the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act program and the much-larger Social Services Department.

Former CETA director Gwendolyn Warren was made head of the new agency, and named several former CETA officials to key positions in the new agency.

Disgruntled employees who felt former social services employees had been passed over asked the grand jury to investigate. Today, a grand jury spokesman said that although Warren had done nothing illegal, former CETA workers received precedence in getting top jobs.

Grand juror David Arao said today Warren had "a free hand" in selecting who she wanted for the top positions. Arao chaired the grand jury committee looking into the Human Resources Agency.

When asked if the grand jury found that Warren had favored her fellow CETA workers for top jobs over social services employees, Arao responded, "For the most part, yes."

But the grand jury found the procedure used by Warren in appointing employees to top jobs was legal.

"We came to the conclusion all was done legally," he said. "It may not

have been as open as possible."

With regard to another complaint, Arao said, "A lot of employees were fearful of losing their jobs, and that's why we looked into it," Arao added. "Because of the merger, they thought they would lose their jobs."

Warren was not available for comment today.

Many jobs in the agency were lost, but not directly due to the merger. The agency, along with other county departments, lost positions as the county tried to rid itself of a budget deficit.

One of the employees who took complaints to the grand jury said, "We felt that certainly in the management strata, a lot of positions were being filled by the pork barrel approach."

"When the Social Services Department combined with CETA, what basically happened was CETA took over Social Services."

"For example, the administrator, the assistant administrator, the deputy director of services, the facilities manager, the personnel officer, the administrative services officer III . . . and the director of planning and evaluation were all people who once worked for CETA," said the employee, who wants to remain anonymous.

While Personnel Officer Jim De SEE BACK PAGE

## Index

Business/Stocks.....	C6-7
Classified Ads.....	C8-16
Comics.....	B16
Mostly About People.....	A6
Opinion.....	A17
Public Notices.....	B15, C16-17
Religion.....	B17
Sports.....	C1-4
Spotlight.....	Tabloid
Tree 'n Sea Living.....	A14-15
TV Programs.....	Tabloid
Vital Statistics.....	A16

## Weather

Yet another storm is due over Northern California from the Gulf of Alaska tonight, spreading increasing clouds, wind and the chance of rain as far south as Monterey Bay. Rain is likely Saturday.

See page 2

## Hiring

FROM PAGE 1

Alba came from the Personnel Department, he also had once worked for CETA, the employee added.

"These people were appointed, just moved into their positions without going through the regular Civil Service process and allowing everyone who wanted the jobs fair competition. This is not to mention the fact that to a person, none of these people had experience in the social services field," the employee said.

Warren attempted to quiet the controversy in a mid-year report to the Board of Supervisors in which she said of 27 management positions filled since last spring, 15 have been filled by social services employees.

The Sentinel found that while most of the middle management posts are filled by former social services workers, only two of the top nine positions are held by former social services employees.

Employees also complained to the grand jury of the attitude of the top bosses.

"There's a sense there's a certain

amount of vindictiveness among them. They are vindictive in the sense that if someone criticizes something, they were assured some kind of action would be taken against them through a carefully designed layoff or some other kinds of pressure," the employee stated.

The grand jury looked into the layoffs and also checked into an 18 percent raise given Warren in December. That raise was vehemently objected to by employees, some of whom were being laid off.

"The pay increase was not looked into very deeply," Arao said. "We skimmed over that because she (Warren) was actually taking the place of two jobs (CETA director and social services director.) Judge Christopher Cottle said because of this, he saw the raise coming."

As for recommendations that will appear in the grand jury report in June, Arao said, "The only recommendation we made was that the line of communication always remain open between the employees and their supervisors. It might have been a little quiet in the agency,"

## Education

WASHINGTON — today added \$250 million to the 1984 budget blueprint President Reagan wants for domestic programs.

By a 55-32 vote, the House of Representatives promises to be one of the Democrats to increase education programs above the level of the Budget Committee.

The budget plan would add \$12.5 billion above the current level for domestic programs to provide money to provide jobs for the unemployed next year.

In recommending the plan, Sen. Ernest F. Hollings is attempting to correct a long-standing problem in the American education system — the lack of excellence of the National Council on Education for the Arts and the National Commission on Excellence in Education.

"If only to keep a competitive edge with the rest of the world, we must dedicate ourselves to the improvement of our educational system," Hollings said.

Hollings said that the shortage of mathematics teachers and science teachers is being unfilled because of the shortage of physics teachers.