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Metro / South Texas Page 3B

Around the Town Hotel is still taking CDs for the troops

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A warm note to begin the new year and continue the holiday season: About a month ago, the owner of the Fairmount Hotel announced a program to send music to soldiers in Iraq. Dick Tips called it "Tunes for Troops," and he invited people to come to the hotel and drop off CDs. He'd ship them over to soldiers in the Middle East.

In response to the donations, Tips decided that it was too good to restrict to just the holidays.

So the hotel will continue to accept CDs for soldiers, in Tips' words, "until the troops come home."

Just like new

One last story of holiday cheer.

In response to hearing about a battered woman who needed a car, the folks at Caliber Collision Center fixed up a 4-year-old Mazda 626 and gave it to her just after Christmas.

There are a lot of helpers in this tale, but it involved Child Advocates San Antonio and the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

The car folks offered to buy a vehicle from A-1 Imports, but that company donated it.

"We were hoping to have it ready in time for Christmas," said Ray Flores, Caliber Collision's general manager. "But we had it in time for the new year."

On her own

This could have ripples in the future.

Renee **Crittenden**-Garcia, a former partner in the firm Connolly & Co., is going out on her own.

Her new company, **Crittenden Communications**, will focus on advertising and public relations.

Meanwhile, T.J. Connolly is focusing more on "litigation **communications**"

- or being a mouthpiece for questionable characters.

Remember the rotten toe billboard?

It's an amicable split, and **Crittenden**-Garcia said she and Connolly plan to refer business to each other.

We're sure her new venture will go well, but meanwhile, it should be fun to see how his business changes.

Live from L.A.?

A few weeks ago, this paper ran a story about psychiatrist Lew Richmond, who began moonlighting as a standup comic at the age of 70.

After gaining credibility at the midnight show among comics young enough to be his grandchildren, he has become a regular at the Rivercenter Comedy Club.

Our spies tell us that after the newspaper story ran, Richmond received a phone call from producers at ABC's late-night show "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" The late-night folks want to see some of his stuff to see whether they want to invite him.

We'll spill what we know when we hear it.

Got news? We want to know! Contact Ed Tjerina at (210) 250-3215 or e-mail etjerina@express-news.net. His column appears Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.