

# Navigator



## Without Borders

**D**eep in a Thai ravine, Richard Herring helps a crew of college-aged students set posts for an irrigation system. A volunteer for Engineers Without Borders–USA, Richard, 68, and his team build sanitation and irrigation systems in Santisuk, Thailand. The region’s natural water supply—mostly rancid, open pits—had often made the local tribe sick. Now, the people are healthier and have a more enjoyable challenge: investing the money from their new corn and cabbage crops.

Engineers Without Borders (EWB) is one of a growing number of “without borders” organizations that pair older professionals with students for work on worldwide service projects. Along with EWB and the well-known Doctors Without Borders, groups from veterinarians to teachers are forming their own associations—Mothers Without Borders, for instance, recruits teams of moms to provide TLC at understaffed orphanages. →



To an extent, the service is part of the “give back” mentality that followed September 11. EWB-USA had two members in 2001. Today its 6,000 volunteers work in 34 countries, constructing bridges in El Salvador and rebuilding Asian communities destroyed by the 2004 tsunami. “These projects bring passion into the engineering profession,” says EWB executive director Catherine Leslie, 46, who joined the group when she realized she could use her skills in a meaningful way. With her kids grown, Catherine had time to donate to EWB that she didn’t have as a younger adult.

At 45, attorney Christina Storm was also wondering how she could use her education for good works—and remembered she’d once wanted to work for the United Nations. One Sunday in 2000 she spontaneously purchased some Web space and e-mailed colleagues to suss out interest in global pro bono projects. Lawyers Without Borders (LWOB) was born. By 2001 Christina was in Israel, investigating claims of attacks on Palestinian human rights lawyers. Christina’s organization has begun a legacy of service: most of LWOB’s former interns have pursued law degrees, and several have returned to the project as attorneys.

Of course, globetrotting volunteerism comes with struggles that a stint at a soup kitchen wouldn’t. When Christina’s team was leaving the West Bank, they got trapped in gunfire, fleeing through olive groves to safety. Teachers Without Borders (TWB) educators cope with malnourished children and crude supplies—some classes take place in open fields.

But the rewards are as unique as the problems. Richard Herring’s Thai friends thanked him with a celebration of traditional dancing. Fred Mednick, director of TWB, reports that the group’s South African efforts helped 63 students pass a college entrance exam. Learning about others is a sure way to learn about yourself, Fred says. “With TWB I’ve learned what I was put on the planet to do.” —Susan Skog



Priceless Bob Barker is leaving some big shoes to fill.

## Media Watchdog The Bob Factor

Bob Barker’s impending retirement after 35 seasons on *The Price Is Right* is a crushing blow to Plinko fans everywhere. Can any other recent 50-plus game show host stack up to Barker?



**Howie Mandel Pros:** His *Deal? Or No Deal?* has provided a catch phrase of “Come on down!” proportions. **Cons:** The Mr. Clean ‘do can’t compete with the Bobatron’s paternal white halo. **Score:** ●●●



**John O’Hurley Pros:** This is a contender whose hair we can get behind. Plus, the *Family Feud* host shares Barker’s love of pets. **Cons:** We still see him as J. Peterman from *Seinfeld*. **Score:** ●



**Bob Saget Pros:** The *1 vs. 100* host has the “Bob” thing going for him already, and a hosting background with *America’s Funniest Home Videos*. **Cons:** See *The Aristocrats*. Or don’t. **Score:** ●●



**William Shatner Pros:** Gets points for audacity (on *Show Me the Money* he actually shouted lines like “Let’s a-go-go!”). **Cons:** Canceled after one season? Un-Shatastic. **Score:** ● —Barbara Lippert

## Oh Really? Electric Shock

**The Product** The PowerCost Monitor, a gadget that beams your electric-meter readings to an indoor display screen. \$149 at [www.powercostmonitor.com](http://www.powercostmonitor.com).

**The Test** If you grew up thinking your name was “Shut the fridge!” you’ll get the idea behind the device: you’re less likely to spend ten minutes picking a snack when you see what an open refrigerator costs. So did the monitor work? You bet. On the first day I learned each batch of laundry cost 72 cents to dry—and promptly put the kibosh on those three-sock loads. And after seeing power consumption triple when my wife took a shower, I turned the water heater down a notch. We shaved \$24 off our utility bill the first month alone. Problem is, this doodad induces obsession. You’ll nervously stare at the screen when running the dishwasher and convince yourself that bathing once a month is an ingenious plan.

**The Verdict** Skip it. The monitor works, but with a little energy consciousness you can make power-saving changes on your own. —Marc Saltzman



**24** Gallons of bottled water a typical American drinks per year—ten times more than in 1980