



# CITATIONS

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## VCBA MISSION STATEMENT

To promote legal excellence, high ethical standards and professional conduct in the practice of law;  
To improve access to legal services for all people in Ventura County; and  
To work to improve the administration of justice.

## DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP PRACTICE

*By Joseph Rund*

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: OPPORTUNITIES AND INFORMATION

By Loye Barton

The Ventura County Bar Association (VCBA) held its 16th Annual Strategic Planning Session on Saturday, February 11. (Let the melody of John Lennon's *Imagine* run through your mind for the next sentence.) Imagine almost 50 people, most of them attorneys, foregoing golf, breakfast, work, family time, walks with the dogs, and sleep, and instead meeting in Oxnard at 8:30 a.m. to keep the VCBA moving forward, responsive, and providing services of value to its members. (Melody off now).

We learned from the meeting that there is a need to deliver information about the association of which you are a member. So here goes.

### VCBA

The VCBA is a nonprofit corporation, but not a charitable corporation. In Internal Revenue Service (IRS) terms it is a 501(c)(6) corporation. The VCBA rents office space from the Ventura College of Law. The dues we pay each year pay the costs of running the corporation, including staff salaries, rent, utilities, CITATIONS, directory, technology, MCLE, to name a few. The VCBA has officers and a board of directors who are listed in CITATIONS each month. There are 36 VCBA affiliates, sections and committees.

### WEBSITE

Visit [www.vcba.org](http://www.vcba.org). This is VCBA's new, improved, revered and fantastic website. It has links to the directory, affiliates, sections and committees, CITATIONS, current events, legal news, and bar events and programs. The website has been a two-year project at a cost of approximately \$30,000. It is still a work in progress. It is designed to be the only website you need to access the courts, the State Bar website, local continuing education, and information pertinent to your practice. Try it. You'll like it.

### VOLUNTEER LAWYERS SERVICE PROGRAM (VLSP)

What is a v-lisp? VLSP is a nonprofit charitable corporation. In IRS terms it is a 501(c)(3). The distinction is important because contributions to VLSP are tax deductible.

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### The VCBA is famous for its progressive pro bono programs and services and has served as a model for bar associations across the state and the country.

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VLSP was created not quite four years ago when one of VCBA's emeritus attorneys, Earl Price, secured a \$100,000 grant from the Annenberg Foundation for the VCBA's pro bono program. (The VCBA is famous for its progressive pro bono programs and services and has served as a model for bar associations across the state and the country). The VCBA provides VLSP with staff, technology, utilities, space, insurance, and so on. Eleven emeritus attorneys volunteer several hours each week to screen and assist pro bono clients. Before the Annenberg grant, VLSP was unable to compensate VCBA. The Annenberg grant allows VLSP to reimburse some of the costs VCBA pays, but the grant may not be used to pay staff salaries.

The grant was pivotal in allowing our pro bono legal services program to become what it is today. But the grant is almost depleted. To keep going, VLSP needs funds, so you will see on your VCBA dues statement a check off box to contribute \$50 to VLSP. If every member of VCBA checked the box and sent a check, fundraising would be less of a concern. Some of you may never see your dues statements, but if you visit the website you can make a donation on line – and remember, it's tax deductible. You will see other fundraisers throughout the year. Try to support them. Both VLSP and the VCBA run on a tight budget, and your support is key to keeping them both running well.

### STATE BAR SURVEY

State Bar President Jim Heiting asked that I let you know about a survey on the State Bar website. You can find a link at the VCBA website, or visit [www.calbar.ca.gov](http://www.calbar.ca.gov) and look on the right hand side of the page. It took me less than 10 minutes to take the survey,

which is enlightening. Did you know that you can get discounts on Dell computers as a member of the State Bar? The survey is designed to inform you, and it seeks information that will allow the State Bar to better serve our needs, as well as to get your opinion on important upcoming issues. For

example, should inactive and/or out of state members be able to vote and serve on the Board of Governors? Responses should be in by March 15.

### LAWYER REPRESENTATIVE TO THE NINTH CIRCUIT JUDICIAL CONFERENCE

The VCBA website includes an application for a position as Lawyer Representative to the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference, for a three-year term. Representatives must be selected by July 1, 2006. The purpose of the conference is to consider the business of the federal courts, including suggesting methods of improving the administration of justice within the Ninth Circuit. To be eligible you must be a lawyer admitted to practice in the federal district court and actively involved in federal practice. If you would like a copy of the selection guidelines and/or an application, and they have not yet made their way to VCBA's website, please give me a call, email, or letter and I will get a copy to you.

Thank you to all the attendees at the 16th Annual Strategic Bar Planning Session. I learned a lot and the Board of Directors has direction for the coming year.

*Loye Barton is VCBA President and is a partner at Norman, Dowler, Sawyer, Israel, Walker & Barton in Ventura.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

I just read Michael McQueen's enjoyable "Courtroom Demeanor" article in the February '06 *CITATIONS*. As I read it, I was comparing his comments to what it's like to appear in court in the U.K., Canada, etc. — where lawyers have to wear robes and such. Then, in the last paragraph of his article, he raised the same question (i.e., "[i]n order to stop this unfair advantage of well-dressed lawyers, we should require that all attorneys do what the British system requires. Barrister robes and silly little white wigs").

Well, funnily enough, I can comment on that. I'm a lawyer in Ventura now, but until this past July I was a litigator ("Barrister & Solicitor" they call it) in Toronto, Canada. Up there, we do indeed wear Barrister robes and related trappings for all appearances before a judge. And the funny thing is that wearing that attire solves surprisingly little.

Lawyers wearing robes get nit-picked there perhaps even more than here. Of course, the whole purpose of robes is to make everyone look the same, which is a noble idea. However, things easily go too far, on very small points of difference.

For instance, there are real-life stories of judges refusing to recognize a lawyer in court, or openly chastising a lawyer, who wore navy blue socks instead of black, or who wore brown shoes instead of black, or who wore overly colorful cufflinks, or who had a bit of silk showing (you can only wear silk in court if you're a QC), or who had a little lapel pin peering out from under the robe, or whose slacks were not a dark enough shade of grey, or who had too ostentatious a watch fob showing on the jacket that one wears underneath the robe, or whose tabs were positioned wrong under their wing collar, or who was seen *off* court property wearing their tab collars (supposedly that brings the profession into ill-repute).

And that's just the clothing issue. Barristers *must* call adverse counsel "my friend" when referring to each other in court. They must bow to the judge when they walk into court, pass the bar, leave court or whenever the judge enters or leaves the courtroom. For appellate judges, one has to call them "Your Lordship" or "Your Ladyship."

Unfortunately, as Mr. McQueen pointed out in the article, there's precious little in writing

on any of this, either for those practicing in legally laid-back Ventura or in legally up-tight Toronto.

*Julian A. Simonis*

Dear Editor:

*CITATIONS* recently published a quote by George Bernard Shaw (February's Exec's Dot Dot Dot), who joked that attorneys are exempt from jury duty. Contrary to popular belief, attorneys are not exempt, nor should they be. As a juror in a recent civil trial in the Honorable Judge Walsh's courtroom, I not only performed my civic duty, but gained valuable insight into the jury deliberation process. I was able to observe the court and the parties' well-prepared attorneys from a unique point of view. I'd like to recognize my law firm for paying for this attorney's time in the box, which was more useful than any seminar in trial advocacy.

*Panda Kroll*

Dear Editor:

I would like to respond to Mr. McQueen's letter to the editor. The problem with Bill Bennett's statement is that he assumes the "objectively logical" conclusion that reducing the birth rate of African American babies will reduce the crime rate. This is based on the false and, yes, racist, stereotype that African Americans are more likely to commit crimes than whites.

The *reasons* African Americans are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system are varied and complex. The Sentencing Project ([www.sentencingproject.org](http://www.sentencingproject.org)) has compiled data and issued reports analyzing the factors that cause the discrepancy, but an inherent genetic tendency is not one of them, as Bill Bennett implies in his statement. Mr. Bennett could have just as easily cited "poor white women" instead of "black women," since poverty does more to breed crime than race ever has. But then again, some of the biggest crooks who hurt the most people are rich white men, like Kenneth Lay, so aborting babies of color would have done nothing to protect the people of California from being victimized by Enron.

Lastly, since Mr. McQueen did not support the MABA Scholarship Dinner with his presence, I think his attempts to criticize a

speaker at that dinner are inappropriate. All of us who listened to the news got to hear Bill Bennett's statement. Mr. McQueen did not hear any of the speakers at the MABA dinner, so commenting on what was said at the event is like complaining how cold it is in Moscow, when you live in sunny California.

*Tina Rasnow*

Dear Editor:

Michael McMahon ("Warrantless Wiretaps," Feb. 05) seems to misunderstand the facts and arguments related to NSA wiretaps.

The Patriot Act did amend and expand the wiretap provisions of FISA, but the administration does not claim that those revisions warrant the NSA program. The constitutionality of FISA wiretaps is debatable, but they are not at issue.

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales agrees that unwarranted wiretaps are illegal, unless there is a statutory or constitution exception, as FISA provides. The statutory exception to FISA, Gonzales claims, is the "Authorization of the Use of Military Force" [AUMF] in Iraq. That act evaded a Declaration of War, but did grant the President sole discretion to use any "necessary or appropriate" means against any person whom he "determined" had "aided" the terrorist attacks. It is the AUMF, says Gonzales, that qualifies under the exception clause of FISA, not the Patriot Act Amendments.

The Administration rationale essentially says that the Fourth Amendment protections don't apply when the President "reasonably believes," without judicial review, that domestic wiretaps without warrants are "necessary" to defend against terrorism.

By implication, Congress has amended the Constitution by granting the judicial authority to determine what is a "reasonable" search to the Executive Branch. The courts have aided and abetted this exceptional authority by declining to review the President's decisions on any "national security" matters. They have acceded to any and all exercises of the President's constitutional military powers, whether foreign or domestic.

*Raven West*

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## NEW AND REVISED JUDICIAL COUNCIL PROBATE FORMS

By David A. Esquibias

The Judicial Council has been busy, issuing 13 new and revised forms affecting probate matters. The new forms became effective January 1, 2006, and include petitions to administer probate estates, sales of real property, ex parte petitions for final discharge, guardianships and conservatorships.

There are also four new and revised forms affecting elder or dependent adult abuse matters: Petition for Protective Orders (EA-100) was revised; and the Application to Renew Restraining Order After Hearing, Notice of Hearing for Renewal of Restraining Order After Hearing, and Order Renewing Restraining Order are new.

*David A. Esquibias, Esq. is a certified specialist in estate planning, trust and probate law.*

## NEW FILING FEES

Effective January 1, 2006, the Superior Court adopted a new filing fee schedule. It is posted on the California Courts website, <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtadmin/civilfees.htm>. Copies are also available at each court location.



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## WE READ SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO

*These comments, complete with the British spelling of "defence," are excerpted from a 4-page letter dated August 15, 1980 from one Los Angeles lawyer to another.*

. . . the entire subject of "interrogatories" fills me with a constellation of emotions, all of which are negative.

When I first embarked on the study of law, more years ago than I care to remember, I recall my instructor making the comment that "the law was a harsh mistress." The true meaning of that phrase only became clear when interrogatories came into existence. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that this plague was devised by a group of lawmakers who were totally divorced from reality and who, never having had to answer a

**. . . It is my carefully considered opinion that the only fashion in which an attorney can conscientiously handle interrogatories propounded by the defence is by abandoning his wife and children. . .**

set of "boiler plates" from the more illustrious members of the defence bar, assumed that it would in some fashion accelerate the disposition of cases and clear up hitherto ambiguous issues. In truth and in fact, the interrogatory process has not only not accelerated anything, but has brought the majority of legal proceedings to a grinding halt.

. . . It is my carefully considered opinion that the only fashion in which an attorney can conscientiously handle interrogatories propounded by the defence is by abandoning his wife and children and dedicating his entire life to such crucial questions as the exact date and the name of the courthouse where his septuagenarian client obtained a divorce when he was twenty-three.

Your letter of August 7, 1980, makes a somewhat abstruse reference to my "threatening" letter of July 17, 1980. You surely cannot be serious. Only an attorney who was admitted to practice within the past 10 days or is being prepped for a frontal lobotomy would consider threatening Allstate.

Do you know how long I have been negotiating with Allstate? I used to negotiate with them when they had to call Skokie, Illinois for authority to pay \$500 for someone with about forty fractures. . . .

Although special damages with respect to my clients had already been forwarded to your principals on two prior occasions, the undersigned took it upon himself to go to your office and meet with your associate Mr. Mail. This was some two hours after becoming hopelessly lost on San Vicente Boulevard, the most maddening thoroughfare on earth.

On the occasion of my meeting with the very congenial Mr. Mail, I virtually pleaded with him to intercede with you so that we might obviate this discovery imbroglio. My efforts were obviously feckless, for Mr. Mail called almost immediately and announced that you insisted on answers. . . . If I understand your meaning, somehow these answers "frame the issues." The issues are simplicity itself.

Was your client negligent? Was my client comparatively negligent? What is the nature and extent of their damages?

As of this writing, I have not found a solitary defence attorney that can advance one cogent and incisive reason for sending interrogatories in an auto accident case. The verbal response I receive is mumbled, incoherent, and the voice trails off into the distance. This is invariably accompanied by a glazed stare, and there is never any eye contact.

I am resending the interrogatories to you once again. They are only oppressive in the same sense that all legal activity is oppressive. Your interrogatories are now in the hands of my respective clients. They shall, as do all clients, tell my answering service that they must speak to me. The answering service will then call me during dinner and the plaintiffs (who have called me collect) will announce that they do not understand the questions.

. . . I await your protective order and have already set aside \$4 with which to pay the ransom to the Aztec nobleman who runs the parking lot across from the courthouse. . . .

*CITATIONS editor Wendy Lascher has the original letter in her possession.*

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## JUDGE AND JUROR

By Judge Glen M. Reiser

In January, I was at the Cho-Cho-San sushi bar in Thousand Oaks with my 17-year old son.

Sitting directly to my son's right was a gentleman who was speaking to an adjacent woman sitting at the corner of the sushi bar. The woman described in great detail about how she was scheduled for jury duty the following morning. She bragged that she owned a court reporting business, and that "all of the judges" routinely excuse her from jury duty whenever they learn that her company's deposition transcripts will neither be prepared nor issued in her absence, effectively forcing the justice system to a grinding halt.

I only listened and said nothing, knowing that I had a jury panel on hold the following morning at 9:00 a.m. The next morning, as I conducted my normal Power Point voir dire, after emphasizing the importance of jury duty and the responsibility of our citizens, I asked for a show of hands of those believing that they could not perform jury service. When I reached the third row, lo and behold, a female juror raised her hand. She advised me that she owned a court reporting company, and that she could not possibly stay because in her absence, deposition transcripts could not be prepared or issued, essentially forcing the justice system to a grinding halt. The ensuing conversation:

**Judge:** "Ma'am, were you in a sushi bar last night?"

**Juror:** [stunned silence] "...Yyyyes."

**Judge:** "Ma'am, did you brag to the gentleman sitting immediately next to you that you are always excused by judges from jury duty for the reasons you just stated?"

**Juror:** [longer stunned silence] "...Yyyyes...[light goes on]... You were there with your son!!"

**Judge:** "True. Guess what, ma'am?"

**Juror:** "You're not letting me go, are you?"

**Judge:** "That's true."

At the recess, I gave the entire panel the usual admonition not to speak to anyone about the case. A juror asked if he could tell his wife "the Cho-Cho-San story"... I thereupon exempted the story from the admonition, since it was one of those classic moments that we black-robed outcasts appreciate.

*Glen M. Reiser is a Superior Court judge.*

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# DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP PRACTICE

By Joseph Rund

For several years, I have been advising and helping same-sex partners in drafting estate plans. Most of these couples, until recently, were in long term relationships, 10 years or more. As legislation began to be developed over the past 10 years on the issue of domestic partnerships, I began focusing more of my practice to that area. I no longer do any bankruptcy matters and my family law practice is focused more on collaborative law and on domestic partnership matters and estate planning for domestic partners.

While some same sex couples registered with the Secretary of State beginning in July, 2000, my experience was that many more held off, wondering why they should. Many who registered immediately were couples who had already registered under local city or county ordinances. They seemed to fall into three major categories: (1) those who were already in long term relationships and wanted to cement their commitment publicly; (2) those where one member of the partnership was now eligible for health care coverage and other benefits from the partner's employer; and 3) couples whose families were not supportive of the relationship and who registered to get more clout and protection in the event of illness or death. Many of these were cases where one or both of the parties were HIV+ or had AIDS. Their estates may have been minimal but the rights of hospital visitation, the ability to make health care decisions and the right to decide about funerals or cremations after death were paramount considerations, well before the expanded rights and obligations added by AB 205. Many times a surviving partner had to rely on a declaration under Health & Safety Code Sections 7100 and 7100.1, signed by the deceased partner, to prevail over surviving parents or other relatives who had been long estranged until death and now wanted to be in charge of handling the remains.

While many of these reasons still exist for couples who are registering now, the bulk of new registrants seem to be doing so to gain the full panoply of rights, and the attendant obligations, that the current law provides. But there are pitfalls. The two main ones that seem to dissuade some couples from registering now are: (1) the public record aspect of registration; and (2) the community property aspect of joint incomes that may disqualify one of the partners from benefits under a public program that uses a

means test for eligibility, e.g. Medi-Cal, SSI (Supplemental Security Income) and others. Since many of these eligibility issues have not yet been clearly defined with respect to domestic partners, many are opting not to register and instead plan for their joint lives with extensive estate plan documents. I have had several couples who chose not to register because of one or the other of those pitfalls.

I have not yet had to advise any clients to terminate a domestic partnership even though they were opting to remain together. I have had clients enter pre-registration domestic partnership agreements during the period January 1, 2005 through June 30, 2005. And I have clients who have registered who are now filing for dissolution of the domestic partnership. Those who opted for the special pre-registration agreements available for the first six months of 2005 usually had registered before the changes enacted by AB 205, and now found their situations adversely affected by the retroactive application of the expanded benefits and obligations, usually related to the acquisition of property and disparity in incomes.

I have not yet had any cases where one partner to a new domestic partnership is receiving spousal support, but I would caution that partner to carefully consider how important that payment of support is before registering. Even though Family Code Section 4323 only applies to heterosexual cohabitation with respect to the shift of the burden of proof for continuing support, the cohabitation would certainly be a material change of circumstances for a modification or termination request. I have not seen any language that by registering as a domestic partner the supported spouse is now in the same situation as if he or she had remarried. As for child support, the rule against considering new mate income would seem to indicate that domestic partner income is not included in modifying child support.

*Joseph Rund is a sole practitioner in Ojai. He has been practicing in the county since 1975.*

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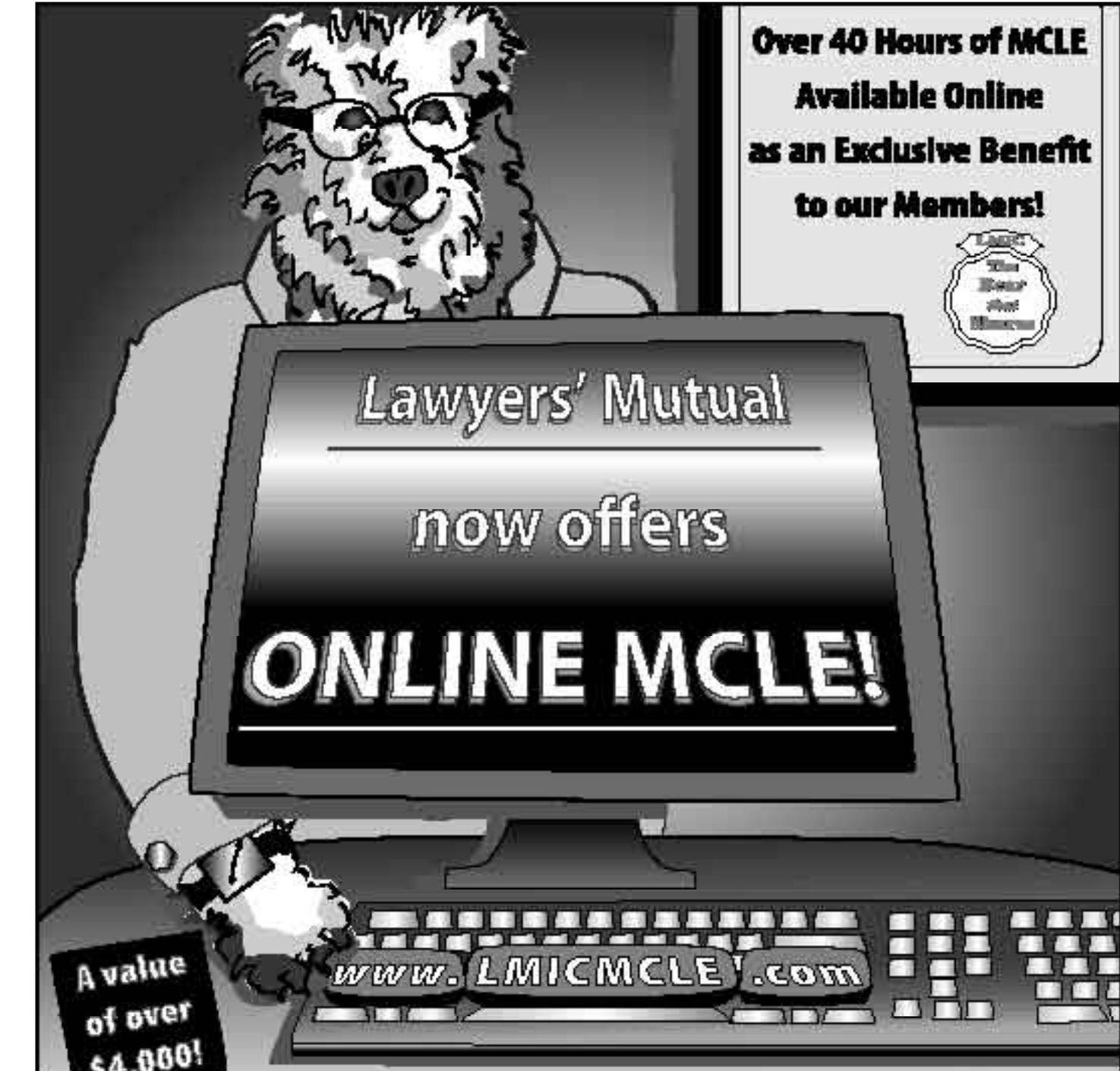
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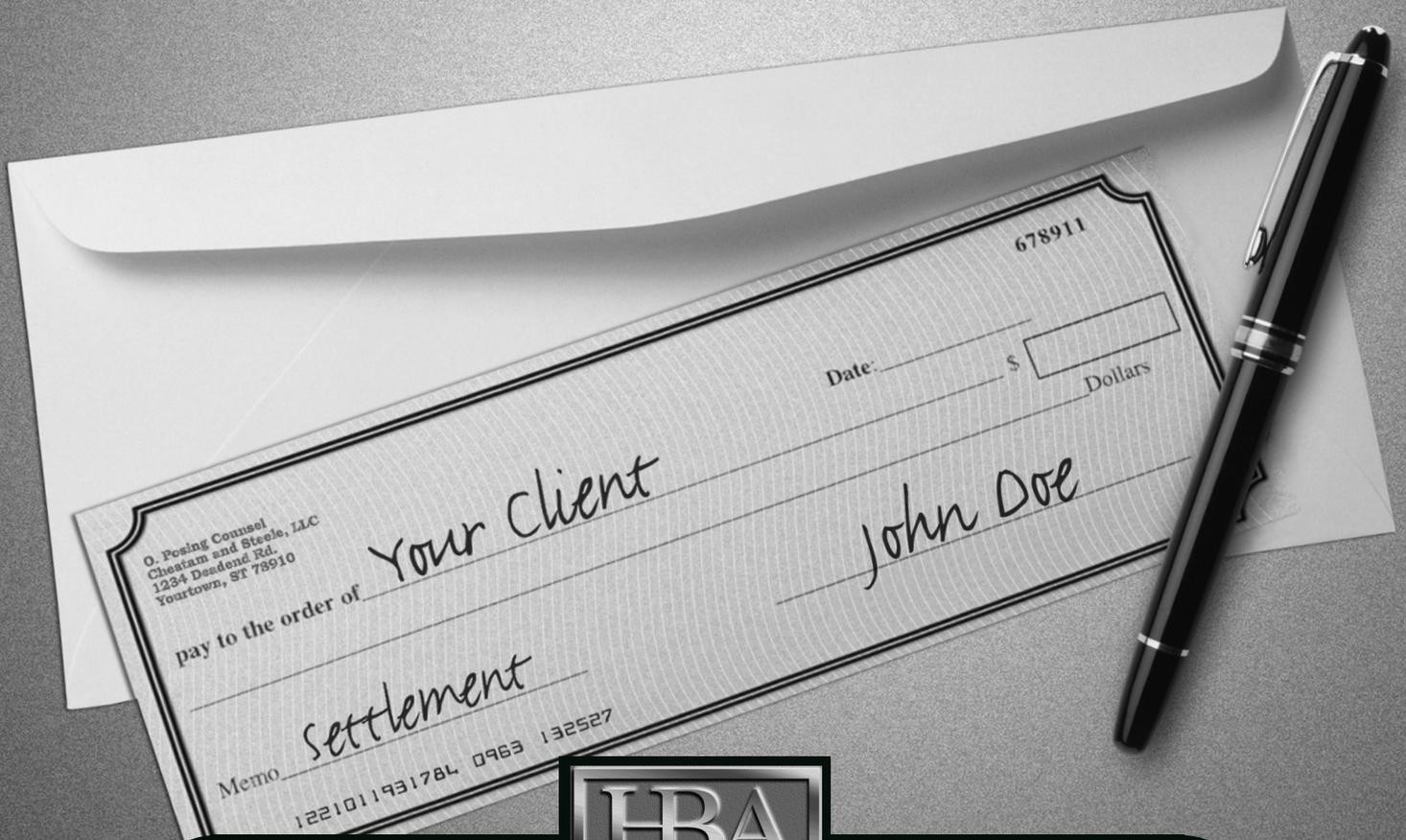
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The conference will open with the Honorable Consuelo B. Marshall, Judge of the United States District Court, presenting the keynote address, *Tackling Obstacles and Staying Focused in the Legal Profession*. The next speaker is Santa Barbara Superior Court Judge Frank J. Ochoa with a presentation on *Substance Abuse*. The morning session will also include *Best Calendaring Practices*, presented by Joseph C. Scott, Esq., CompuLaw.

In the afternoon there will be two breakout sessions. During the first, attendees will have a choice of the following workshops: *Estate Planning & Trust Administration*, by Paul A. Graziano, Esq., Allen & Kimbell; *Effective Litigation and Trial Preparation Strategies: The Attorney's Perspective*, by Jonathan Fraser Light, Esq., Nordman, Cormany, Hair & Compton; *Police Liability & Civil Rights*, by Alan E. Wisotsky, Esq., Law Offices of Alan E. Wisotsky.

In the second breakout session, the attendees will have a choice of the following workshops: *Ethical Legal Practices*, by Ann G. Anderson, Esq., Strategic Resolutions; *Contrasting the Challenges Facing Small vs. Large Corporate Practices*, by Christi R. Sulzbach, Esq.; *Effective Use of Investigations for the Attorney & Paralegal*, by Hard Smith, Frasco Investigative Services.

In addition to continuing education, enjoy pastries in the morning, lunch, and vendor exhibits throughout the day. There will also be a grand prize drawing and vendor drawings!

Register on or before March 10, 2006 for the earlybird registration fee, on the form included in this issue. For additional information, please call Delaina Finch at 805-385-7489. The conference begins at 8:00 a.m. at the Four Points Sheraton, 1050 Schooner Drive, Ventura.

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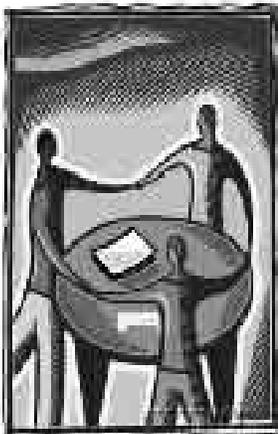
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## EAR TO THE WALL

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**David Esquibias** is pleased to announce the opening of his own law office, specializing in estate planning, trust and probate law. Paralegals **Laura Orlando** and **Cristin Lassen** remain as David's assistants. David A. Esquibias, Attorney At Law, 2625 Townsgate Road, Suite 330, Westlake Village 91361, phone 805-267-114, fax 805-267-1140, [dae@californiatrustedattorney.com](mailto:dae@californiatrustedattorney.com).

**James Lingl**, board president of the Ventura Center for Dispute Settlement, just returned from Ecuador, where he had been invited to make a presentation on mediation.



**Norman, Dowler, Sawyer, Israel, Walker & Barton** announces that **Thomas J. "Hutch" Hutchinson** has accepted the firm's offer to become a partner. Hutchinson is an avid tournament bass fisherman (see photo). He is president of the Ventura County Family Law Bar Association, and has over twelve years' experience in family law. He graduated *cum laude* from Pepperdine University School of Law and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology and philosophy from Western Michigan University.

**Alta Manzo**, a graduate of Ventura College of Law, has become an associate in the family law practice group of **Norman, Dowler, Sawyer, Israel, Walker & Barton**. Manzo recently interned at the Ventura County Superior Court Self Help Legal Access and Family Law Facilitator's Centers. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from University of Southern California and is bilingual in Spanish and English.

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### Donna Standard

It seems almost incredible that over a year has passed since the devastating storms of Southern California's last rainy season struck with a vengeance. In the midst of the

tempests, we asked – or should I say we begged – Donna Standard to accept a matter for us. Trapped by road closures and washouts, it was taking Donna more than an hour to complete her usual 20-minute drive to work in Ventura. We had the gall however, to ask her to appear on a matter in Simi, which would take even longer. Nevertheless, Donna plunged ahead, made the appearance and her client was well served.

It did not take long before we were calling on Donna again. This time we asked that she handle a complex dissolution of marriage, custody and visitation matter for the wife of a member of the military. Donna took this matter with her customary good nature. As always, we complicated things by asking her to appear only a few days before the actual hearing date but she made it.

These two matters are among several that Donna has handled for us. It is a joy to have her aboard the list of volunteer attorneys. Thank you, Donna for the many services you have provided.

### Al Yablon Memorial Fund

The Board of Directors of the Volunteer Lawyers Services Program recently established the Al Yablon Memorial Fund. Members of the Ventura County Bar Association will be able to make tax free donations and at the same time to give recognition to special occasions – marriages, birthdays, anniversaries, new babies, graduations, etc. The office will send a card to the family or individual who is being so honored if the donor provides the necessary information. Please call VLSP if you have any questions.

### Mentoring Program

VLSP and Barristers have teamed up to match young lawyers who are willing to donate their time in exchange for hands-on experience with Emeritus attorneys, to handle pro bono matters. For information contact Barristers' President Al Vargas, [alfred@lascher.com](mailto:alfred@lascher.com).

*Verna Kagan is an Emeritus Attorney and director of the Volunteer Lawyers Services Program.*

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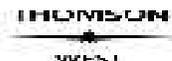
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**MEDIATION**

**CAREER FAIR**

*By Barbara Doyle*

All members of the Ventura County Bar Association are invited to visit the Ventura College of Law Campus Wednesday, March 22, from 5 to 7 p.m. for our 9th Annual Career Fair. Refreshments will be served. The event is structured to give you a chance to see our facility and mingle with other members of our local legal community and our students. It also gives the College's students an opportunity to benefit from *your* career-related experience.

The format is simple: Plan to arrive on campus between 5 and 5:30 p.m. You will pick up a name tag and be directed to a classroom where your area of law is featured. Then just enjoy yourself! No formal presentation is required; you can chat informally with the students who visit. If you like, bring a brochure dealing with some aspect of your area of expertise, such as literature about a professional organization, or assemble a flip chart to give students helpful hints about a career in your specialty. Send it to us in advance, and we will make copies.

We hope to see you on the 22nd. Let us know what career area you are interested in representing by emailing the information to [bdoyle@venturalaw.edu](mailto:bdoyle@venturalaw.edu). Thank you!

*Barbara Doyle is Assistant Dean at Ventura College of Law.*

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**B**ridging The Gap© 2006 held in the Hall of Justice Jury Assembly Room on a Saturday attracted 62 lawyers including nearly half who needed continuing legal education to fulfill their requirements. Since the County felt it necessary to charge our bar nearly \$1,200 to use the facility (\$295 for lights and air, while a \$267 fee for set-up labor really peeved me, not to mention bookoo bucks for the rent-a-cops), several corporate sponsors saved our collective butts: **Gregg Kravitz** of Thomson West, **Carol Olivera** and troops from Pacific Coast Court Reporters/A Legalink Company; the good people at the Ventura College of Law (**Linda Paavola** and **Richard Goldman**), and of course, The Daily Journal Corporation for advertising and associated costs. Our stellar panels included **Judges Long** and **Smiley**, **Jonathan Light**, **Carmen Ramírez**, **Jeanne Kvale**, **Mark Pachowicz**, **Ron Bamieh**, **Dick Norman**, **Dick Hanawalt**, and **Marsha Nieldens**... From Immanuel Kant: "In law a man is guilty when he violates the rights of others. In ethics he is guilty if he only thinks of doing so."...

From Barton Holyday: "A man may as well open an oyster without a knife, as a lawyer's mouth without a fee"... **Charlie Pinuelos** has been employed by **Norman Dowler Israel et al.** as a litigation secretary extraordinaire since November 1991. From 1969 to 1972, she was employed by Channel Counties Legal Services working for **Herb Nowlin** in the legal aid arena. When Herb struck out on his own, a loyal Charlie followed from 1975 until 1988. After a couple years with the County Counsel's office, she joined the Norman group. Charlie's husband of 34 years, Dexter Shannon, was one of the U.S. Postal Service employees killed in Goleta. They were to celebrate their 36th wedding anniversary February 19th... From John Mortimer: "No brilliance is required in law, just common sense and relatively clean fingernails."...

## EXEC'S DOT...DOT...DOT...

By *Steve Henderson, Executive Director, M.A., CAE*

From David Dinkins, ex-New York City Mayor: "I haven't committed a crime. What I did was fail to comply with the law."... The Self-Help Legal Access Center located in the Law Library hopes to be relocated sometime in the Spring to the 4th Floor of the Hall of Justice. **Tina Rasnow**, SHLAC coordinator, says this will be her second move in nearly four years and her new crib will be the old spot of the Family Law Center... **Deirdre Frank**, **Jim Prosser**, **Leslie McAdam**, and **Becky McCarthy** join new president **David Shain** on the VC Trial Lawyers Association Board of Directors... From President George W. Bush: "The legislature's job is to write the law. It's the executive branch's job to interpret the law."...

Movie Law: "No, no... I hate lawyers. I only work for them."— *Erin Brockovich*, Erin Brockovich... **David Esquibias** is flying solo. After 11 years associated with **Kevin Staker**, the last four as a partner, David is moving to Westlake Village on Townsgate Road... For those of you who missed The Ventura Star article February 5, **PJ Jack Smiley** was presented with the Distinguished Jurist Award by the Southern California Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers... More along those county lines – **Gay Conroy** has been appointed by the judges of Ventura Superior Court to be the newest commissioner replacing **Gary Barrett**. Gay is a past president of the Family Law Section of the bar...

From Charles Dickens: "If there were no bad people there would be no good lawyers."... **Jim Griffin** has had season tickets for Lakers' games since they played at the Forum in 1994. He witnessed Kobe's 81 point effort against the Raptors January 26 from one of his four seats located in the 15th Row, Section 101, behind the visitor's bench... **Dennis LaRochelle**, chair of the Business Litigation Section, has announced the selection of two members to their board. **Glenn Kelble** of **Sullivan and Taketa** and **Tareq Hishmeh**, of **Norman Dowler et al**, joined the section leadership in February... Immediate past president of the bar, **Don Hurley**, will be retiring from the County Counsel's office at the end of the year. Don has been with the office for 25 years after a 3-year stint with **Hathaway, Perrett, Webster et al.** Don has a variety

of legal options to choose from that will keep him busy. Probably a few more cruises of length too...

The Mexican American Bar Association has elected their new officers for 2006. **Susan Ratzkin** will again lead the charge as president; **Barbara Macri-Ortiz**, vice-president; **Joel Villaseñor**, secretary; and **Susan Hoytia-Miller**, treasurer. MABA continues to meet the first Friday of each month at Victoria's Pub (go figure) in Ventura... Did anyone receive the Valentine's-themed offer from a certain well-known legal publisher? If you bought \$250 worth of books, they would send you \$50 of Godiva chocolates in time for Valentine's Day. I guess they were targeting cheap attorneys who would buy \$250 of books to write off as a business expense rather than spending money buying Valentines for their significant others.

What's **Bill Corbett** up to in Las Cruces, New Mexico? Bill has been urging the city council for a few years to ban fireworks in the city and led a successful campaign effective December 13, 2005, just in time for New Years' craziness. Bill and his wife, Karen Schaefer, dodged court challenges and a failed petition drive... 55 bar leaders gathered at the Residence Inn February 11 for the 16th Annual Bar Leaders Planning Session. Virtually each and every section, committee, and affiliate was represented and the activity has blossomed since six of us met in 1991... Contrary to previous musings, **Mary Shea** will remain the sole chair of the Probate and Estate Planning Section...

*Steve Henderson has been the executive director and chief executive officer of the bar association since November 1990 and will be taking a few days off late in the month to break his back snowboarding in Mammoth with the kids. Additionally, Henderson and his son, Max, are very big on the Blue Devils during the Madness. Finally, he excelled at Curling, Skeleton and the Luge in college before Propocia was banned.*

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