

Wrap-Up

Bring Out Your Books

The third annual SDCBA Children's Book Drive, held in conjunction with the Bar's 2005 Law Week celebration, April 30 to May 6, is gearing up for another successful program this year. Last year, over 3 000 books were donated by the legal community. The Children's Book Drive is a partnership of the SDCBA's Children At Risk committee and its Law Week committee, and the San Diego Paralegal Association. Book drops will be set up during Law Week events at the Bar Center including the Law Week Luncheon on Friday May 6. The Vista, South Bay and El Cajon Law Libraries will also have collection boxes set up during Law Week. The program needs "gently used" or new books for children ages K-12. The books can be in Spanish or English. Besides book donations, volunteers are also needed to promote, sort and distribute the books. Contact the Bar Center at (619) 231-0781 for more information.

Gonzales Gives State of District Address

The Hon. Irma E. Gonzales, Chief Judge, U.S. District Court, Southern District, will give the annual State of the District address on Wednesday, March 30 at the Westgate Hotel. All federal, circuit, district, magistrate and bankruptcy judges in San Diego are invited to the event which will take place from 11:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The program is presented by the San Diego Chapter of the Federal Bar Association. RSVP by March 21 to apery@allen-matkins.com or (619) 233-1155. Cost to attend is \$40 for FBA members, and \$50 for nonmembers, which includes lunch. Checks should be made to Federal Bar Association and sent to Loraine L. Pedowitz, Allen Matkins Leck Gamble & Mallory LLP, 501 West Broadway, Ste. 900, San Diego, CA 92101.

Celebration of Justice Fundraiser in April

Affordable Housing Advocates (formerly San Diego Advocates

See WRAP-UP, Page 16

On the Hunt

Bar debuts endorsement process for 2005 Board of Directors election.

LEADERSHIP, Page 2

YNLD: It's Free

New division begins work addressing the needs of lawyers in practice seven years or fewer.

DIVISION, Page 5

Russian Summit

Hosts families needed for SDSU's summer Russian law student program.

EXCHANGE, Page 16



BAR REPORT

NEWS AND EVENTS OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

www.sdcba.org

MARCH 16, 2005

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 3

Board Considers '05 Awards



Stacy Fode, SDCBA Awards Committee member, presents the committee's 2005 Service Award recommendations to President Wells Lyman and the Board of Directors at their March 15 meeting. A complete list of honorees will be available first at www.sdcba.org. The awards will be presented at the annual Law Week Luncheon on May 6. See page 13 for tickets.

Members Needed for Law Week

COMMUNITY:
Community Outreach Programs Seek Volunteers

With a full week of activities planned to celebrate Law Week 2005, the San Diego County Bar Association is calling on lawyers from all areas of practice to participate in this once a year county-wide event.

"This is a great opportunity for attorneys to get out into the community," said Law Week co-chair George W. Brewster. "And with so many worthwhile projects spread over seven days, hopefully everyone will be able to find time to volunteer."

See LAW WEEK, page 12

Future Is Now For Small Firms & Solos

SECTION PROFILE: New Co-Chairs Energize Bar's Largest Section.

The Small Firm & Sole Practitioner Section represents one of the largest groups of section membership within the San Diego County Bar Association. With more than 250 members, the Section begins the year under new leadership as it prepares to conquer a new frontier: Cyberspace. Complete with an online document bank and soon-to-be-added list/serve forum, the section's community homepage is pulling together a network of attorneys to improve the management of small law

firms and solo practices in San Diego County.

"The web page is going to be an effective tool for us. ... I see this being a very big thing for our section," said Daniel Kehr, who co-chairs the Section with Alex P. Zarcone and Damien Joseph Snow.

SDBCA President Wells Lyman, a longtime member of the section, said he is thrilled about the renewed interest in the section and the efforts of all three co-chairs. "Since I spent my life as a sole practitioner, I was keenly interested in strengthening the Small Firm & Sole Practitioner Section," Lyman said. "I think we started out with six people at the first meeting I attended. Now the room is no longer big enough to

hold the people."

Lyman said he also hopes the section will become even more social this year. "I think small firms and solo practitioners really benefit from that basis of collegiality," he said.

Lyman also expects more law student participation in the SDCBA generally this year due to an enhanced law student member services package going into effect.

The three co-chairs began their terms in January. Zarcone, 34, is a partner with Batcher Zarcone & Baker. A graduate of University of San Diego, he worked for Higgs Fletcher & Mack for 3 1/2 years, and before that, for a small firm for three years. He formed Batcher & Zarcone in May of

2004 with Karen Batcher, focusing primarily on business litigation and bankruptcy law.

Damien Joseph Snow, 29, and Daniel Kehr, 26, are partners at Kehr & Snow. Kehr's practice in business transactions and corporate law, "help[s] [corporations] build, expand and preserve their business framework," he said.

Snow, who focuses his practice on estate planning and business transactional work, said the section's goals for 2005 include increasing membership and involvement, to broaden the services offered to section members and to provide more CLE events. "We hope to get more involvement from other attorneys who

See SECTION PROFILE, page 7

SECTION PROFILE

Continued from Page 1

share the unique work setting that we operate in," Snow said. "We are not only attorneys, but businesspeople, too."

The Small Firm & Sole Practitioner Section includes both those attorneys already in a small practice and those aspiring to start one, Kehr noted. "While half of the members are thinking of starting a small firm or solo practice, the other half are already up and running, and the section is helping them be more efficient," Kehr said.

NETWORK SUPPORT

One of the factors that makes the Small Firm & Sole Practitioner Section stand apart from the others is its focus not on a specific practice area, but on the work situation it serves. In solo practices and small firms, attorneys do not have the level of support found in a large firm. Instead, these attorneys must rely on each other for support, assistance and leadership, making the section serve, in essence, as one large firm. "San Diego is predominately becoming a small firm and solo practice legal arena," Kehr said. "By getting together, you have an opportunity to meet all these other attorneys, most of whom practice in legal areas other than your own. It becomes a supportive structure that allows people to pick up the phone for advice or referrals."

Section co-chairs say the group emphasizes its role as a networking source to meet a large number and broad mix of attorneys. "We think that as a group we can be a huge benefit to one another in terms of networking and experience."

Members of the section also bring in experience from a number of different practice areas. According to Zarccone, those in attendance at the last meeting included practitioners of immigration law, employment law, transactional law, and estate planning. "Because it's not practice specific, it's not like you're showing up for a meeting and only one type of attorney is there," Zarccone said.

Another commonality within the section is that the group appears to have youth on its side. "A good percentage who show up for our monthly meetings are younger attorneys," Zarccone said. "They want the input or dia-

logue regarding office management. Someone who has been in practice for 25 years has their office management down pat."

Kehr echoed this sentiment. "For anyone who has ever felt ill-prepared, in the dark, or has questions about any aspect of running a law firm, this is a forum to discuss it with people who have done it before you," Kehr said. "It's almost like a therapy group, as well as a marketing tool."

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

The section also serves its members through continuing legal education programs that address matters of interest and concern to solo/small firm practitioners. Members gather at monthly Small Firm & Sole Practitioner Brown Bag Lunch meetings, which usually draw about 25 to 30 attorneys. The typical meeting includes a brief discussion of upcoming events, a speaker on a specific topic for about 15 minutes, and sometimes a one-hour CLE. "It has become a forum for people to learn from others' mistakes," Kehr said.

It is also a great networking opportunity. "The last 10 or 15 minutes of every meeting is exchanging business cards, meeting and talking with people. The people who come to our section really enjoy that part of it," Kehr said.

The three co-chairs are responsible for running the meetings and deciding on topics. "We facilitate the meetings and discussions and find people to come in and speak on a topic relevant to small firm or solo practice settings," Snow said.

Topics of interest to the section range anywhere from the day-to-day law firm management issues to ethics and what type of billing software to use. "There are a lot of things you take for granted at the bigger law firms because they are staffed to handle all the accounting issues and billing issues," Zarccone said.

"We will look at issues as varied as how to hire staff to what law practice management software system to use," Kehr said. The Section has in the past addressed matters such as drafting fee agreements, how to operate a trust account, and even "which banks are the best in town ... Everything a small firm or business would need to get itself up and running and then 'firing on all cylinders', so to speak," Kehr said.

All three co-chairs agreed that last month's CLE was an outstanding success. Guest speaker Ellen Peck, a judge on the State Bar Ethics Panel, gave a Feb. 2 presentation on client trust accounts that was not only well attended, but also addressed a topic of significant importance to solo and small firm practitioners. Peck, who is writing a book on the ethics of trust accounting, focused her speech on one chapter of her book in particular -- funds that may never be placed in a client's trust account. "She spoke on case law, gave examples of co-mingling, examples of ethics rules, and definitions supported by case law to back it up ... basically everything with attorneys fees and client's money," Kehr said.

"That is the kind of CLE program we are trying to present, programs that are more specific to the management of a law firm," Zarccone added.

Looking ahead, the Small Firm & Sole Practitioner Section is gearing up for its upcoming continuing legal education program with mediator Larry Huerta on ADR and mediation. "Why Mediation Works and What Works in Mediation" takes place May 11 at noon at the Bar Center. Huerta serves as a mediator on the court panel for San Diego Superior Court.

The topic is certain to apply to small firms and solo practitioners, according to Snow. "Mediation is an alternative form of dispute resolution that not everybody uses," Snow said. "In the small firm setting, it helps because it can take a lot of time and money to litigate."

HIGH-TECH FOREFRONT

In addition to the monthly Brown Bag Lunch meetings, another way the Section unites is through its online community. Members have started using the Bar's Web site (www.sdcba.org), combined with e-mails and faxes to not only promote its monthly meetings, but also to serve as a virtual reference source for small firms and solo practitioners. "We want to get the word out many times before the monthly meetings," Zarccone said.

Through online "e-communities," members of the section have the ability to ask questions and get answers about law firm management online. "One of the features that we have right now is a document bank for people who want to access samples of

documents that other attorneys have uploaded," Zarccone said. "We are trying to get more people to contribute." The documents already include pleadings and an engagement letter.

"When you log into our section's area (you have to be a section member to get in) you are able to post any question relating to law practice management," Kehr said. "It is almost like an interactive discussion board. You can post documents, links, and questions. It's a way to keep in touch with and create a virtual referral group; not technically, but it serves a similar purpose."

The online community will also feature a news wire where small firms and solo practitioners can read newsworthy events in the local area and state-wide that affect small firms and solo practitioners. "It serves a number of purposes," Kehr said.

Within the next three weeks, the section expects to add a list/serve to its Web site. This will function as an open forum on the subject of practicing in a small firm or law practice management, and enable members to post questions to the entire e-community and receive answers via email. For example, an attor-

ney might inquire whether anyone has experience with a certain judge.

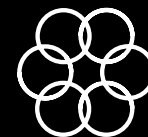
In addition, the Web pages list each member's name, contact information and practice area, as well as contract attorneys who post their availability to do contract work.

Asked about any challenges facing the section, Zarccone said he would like to get more people to participate. "It is a large group, but we would like to get more and more people active on a regular basis."

The solo/small firm practitioner community is spread out over so many practice areas and types of practice, that it is sometimes difficult to pull everyone together. "There are so many of them, we'd like to make it a closer knit group," Zarccone added.

To join the Small Firm & Sole Practitioner Section or to get your user name and password for the members-only Web site, call the San Diego County Bar Association at (619) 231-0781.

For more information on coming programs and activities, call the section's co-chairs. Alex P. Zarccone can be reached at (619) 475-7882; Damien Snow and Daniel Kehr at (619) 284-2207.



RINGLER ASSOCIATES SAN DIEGO - LAS VEGAS

STRUCTURED SETTLEMENTS

As members of the team of experienced structured settlement professionals at Ringler Associates, we can assure you that we are dedicated to providing you with outstanding service -- before, during and after the settlement.

You can continue to rely on the experts at Ringler Associates-San Diego for the same level of service and expertise you've come to expect -- all at no cost.



Manuel R. Valdez CSSC
CA Insurance License No. 0623820
MRValdez@RinglerAssociates.com

Manny J. Valdez CSSC
CA Insurance License No. 0C76457
MJValdez@RinglerAssociates.com

28 Years of Experience
in Structured Settlements,
Insurance and Financial Services

1145 Linda Vista Dr., Suite 104, San Marcos, CA 92078
888-471-7051 • 760-471-7051 • Fax 760-471-9175