BEHIND THE BENCH

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Chambers Functional Requirements Group (Chambers FRG) of the Next Generation of Bankruptcy CM/ECF Project

By Stephen V. Callaway, Bankruptcy Judge, WD/LA
and Paula Funderburk Scholzen, JA, WD/LA

WHAT ARE WE? The Chambers FRG is comprised of bankruptcy judges, chambers staff and clerks office staff appointed by Mr. James C. Duff, Director of the Administrative Office, to provide guidance and assistance to the AO in the development of a new bankruptcy case management software system. I am honored to be one of those appointed to the group.

WHAT IS OUR MISSION? Our mission is to gather requirements for a new case management application related to work performed by bankruptcy judges, chambers staff, and court personnel who work closely with them. Our initial task is to identify and describe the business process flows pertaining to the work of judges and chambers. These business processes can take place in chambers, courtrooms, clerks' offices (to the extent the processes relate to the work of judges and chambers staff), remote locations or combinations of these locations. For instance, the process by which orders are received, reviewed and signed/disposed of in chambers will be described and examined. To accomplish this task we will be drawing from our own experience and contacting judges, chambers staff and court personnel in other courts for help. We may be calling on you.

Subsequent tasks will involve actually defining the functional requirements. For this, members of the Chambers FRG hope to involve judges, chambers staff and court personnel from across the country. Chambers FRG members, with the assistance of contractors, plan to meet with judges and court personnel in small group sessions to elicit their thoughts concerning what is needed in a new case management system. Current plans call for some of these "elicitation sessions" to take place at the Bankruptcy CM/ECF Operations Practice Forum in August and at the ABJA conference in October.

WHO ARE WE? As shown, our group consists of 21 members, along with **Richard Goodier**, Attorney Advisor, and **Mark Silver**, Program Analyst of the Bankruptcy Judges Division, Administrative Office.

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STEPHEN V. CALLAWAY was sworn in on August 9, 1986, as Bankruptcy Judge for the Western District of Louisiana at Shreveport. He was reappointed for another 14 year term in August, 2000.

Judge Callaway was the Chief Bankruptcy Judge for the District from August 9, 1986 until June 1, 1995, at which time the three bankruptcy judges of the District agreed to rotate the position of Chief Bankruptcy Judge every five (5) years.

Although a native of Olney, Illinois, he has referred to Shreveport, Louisiana, as "Home" since age four (4). He attended Southwestern at Memphis and received his B.A. from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, in 1970. After a brief stint in the Marine Corps Reserve, Judge Callaway received his J.D. from Louisiana State Law School in 1973.

From 1973—1986, Judge Callaway practiced law in Shreveport, Louisiana, as a partner in the firm of Burnett, Sutton, Walker & Callaway specializing in commercial and insolvency law and was a founding member of the Shreveport Estate Planning Council, the Shreveport Bank Counsel Group, a past Circuit Governor of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges, and is presently the Chief Bankruptcy Judge and a past President of the Harry V. Booth and Judge Henry A. Politz American Inn of Court. He is an active member of the Broadmoor Presbyterian Church in Shreveport.

Judge Callaway is married to Barbara C. Callaway and has two daughters: Kimberly Callaway and Katie Callway O'Rear; and two step-daughters: Ashley Collinsworth and Leigh Ann Collinsworth Thompson.

PAULA E. Scholzen, formerly known as Paula E. Funderburk, has been with the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Western District of Louisiana, Shreveport Division, since 1986.

She previously worked with Judge Callaway when he was in private practice and was given the opportunity to join the court family when he was sworn in to office in August 1986. Ms. Scholzen is a founding member of the ABJA, having attended the very first organizational meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, many years ago. She is also a past president, treasurer and committee chair of the ABJA.

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CHAMBERS FRG *…(cont'd. from pg. 1)*

NEXT GENERATION OF BANKRUPTCY CM/ECF
CHAMBERS FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENT'S GROUP
[Chambers FRG]

NAME	COURT	POSITION	NAME	COURT	POSITION
Hon. Cecelia Morris, Chair	NY-S	Bankruptcy Judge	**Christine Rhambo**	CA-C	Judicial Secretary
Hon. Elizabeth Brown	CO	Bankruptcy Judge	**Debby Vincent**	WA-W	Judicial Secretary
Hon. Beth Burris	SC	Bankruptcy Judge	**Jessica Gomez**	NY-S	Asst. Operations Mgr.
Hon. Sara de Jesus	PR	Bankruptcy Judge	**Janet Stafford**	AK	Operations Supervisor
Hon. Henley Hunter	LA-W	Bankruptcy Judge	**Austin Bugni**	UT	Courtroom Deputy
Carolyn Buffington	OH-S	Law Clerk	**Monica Saenz D Viteri**	NY-S	Courtroom Deputy
Danielle Greco	AL-N	Law Clerk	**Robin Stanley**	IN-S	Courtroom Deputy
Patti Hennessy	NM	Law Clerk	**Jan Steinle**	MI-E	Courtroom Svcs. Supv.
Kristi Saylors	NV	Law Clerk	**Carlos Mergal**	PR	Asst Systems Mansger
Paula Scholzen	LA-W	Judicial Secretary	**Christine Baker**	FL-M	CM/ECF Administrator
Deanna "Dee" Sindlinger	WA-E	Judicial Secretary			

Over the next several weeks and months you will be receiving specific information about opportunities to become involved in this effort. Your input will be very valuable. We look forward to speaking with you in the near future. So please stay tuned!

President's Message

By Elaine Coker, MD/TN

April 22 was Administrative Assistant Day. Even though our titles may be different, we are all very important to our offices. Remember: no one is more cherished in this world than someone who lightens the burden of another. Thanks to each of you for all of your hard work.

Marleen Young, Ann Virgadamo, and **Mary Morrison** are hard at work on our 2009 conference in Baltimore. I mention these very important ladies because they lighten my load to insure we have a wonderful educational conference in October.

Twenty years ago a small group of JAs met to discuss forming an organization for the purpose of promoting the needs of all judicial assistants to bankruptcy judges. In Baltimore, we will be celebrating that Anniversary, along with the 10th Anniversary of the CBA program. More news on the exciting events planned will be forthcoming.

Sherie Hitch, Chair of the Website Committee, is learning web design. Those of us who know Sherie personally and the energy she exudes can't wait to see what she has in store for our website. Be sure and check out it in the weeks to come.

Until next time, I leave you with this:

The great thing in this world is not so much where we are,
but in what direction we are moving -
Oliver Wendell Holmes

News From the Administrative Office

By Jim Wannamaker, Staff Attorney
Bankruptcy Judges Division

Bankruptcy Basics Video

The Bankruptcy Judges Division at the Administrative Office, the AO's Office of Public Affairs, and the Federal Judicial Center have released a new video designed to help educate the public about the bankruptcy process. The video is based on a Florida public service program that was produced by the Tampa Bay Bankruptcy Bar Association with support from the Florida Bar Foundation, Bay Area Legal Services, and the Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Florida.

This 30-minute video (http://www.flmb.uscourts.gov/bankruptcybasics/default.htm) provides an overview of the different types of bankruptcy and related filing procedures. Now available on the Bankruptcy Courts page of the Judiciary's public website at http://www.uscourts.gov/bankruptcycourts/bankruptcybasics.html, the program is divided into eight short segments for desktop viewing at convenient intervals. The page also contains links to the publication Bankruptcy Basics, which covers many of the same issues in greater detail. Additional materials prepared for debtors who file bankruptcy without an attorney are posted at http://www.uscourts.gov/bankruptcycourts/prose.html.

Revision of the Reaffirmation Form

Responding to the bankruptcy judges and clerks who have expressed discontent with the current Director's Procedural Form for reaffirmation agreements, Form B240, the Forms Subcommittee of the Bankruptcy Rules Committee has developed a working draft of a reorganized form intended to be easier for debtors and creditors to complete and easier for chambers staff to review.

The current form includes extensive disclosures and other information required to comply with the 2005 amendments to section 524 of the Bankruptcy Code. For that reason, the Forms Subcommittee asked Professor Elizabeth Gibson, the Reporter for the Bankruptcy Rules Committee, to analyze what provisions section 524 mandates and where the statute provides some flexibility in the layout and content of the form and in making the required disclosures. Following her advice, and based on the results of a survey by Jim Waldron, the bankruptcy clerk liaison to the Bankruptcy Rules Committee, on what problems the clerks observe in the use of the current form, the Forms Subcommittee developed the working draft of the revised form.

In order to reduce the length of the complex current form, and to put the important information concerning the terms at the beginning of the document, the Subcommittee started with the reaffirmation agreement, eliminated the summary of the reaffirmation agreement, and moved the disclosures (in addition to those included in the reaffirmation agreement itself) to the end of the agreement. The draft revision is 3½ pages shorter than the current reaffirmation form and motion for court approval.

The Subcommittee removed the motion for court approval from the revised form because it is not required for the majority of reaffirmation agreements, which become effective without court approval. The Subcommittee recommended that the there be a separate Director's Form for the motion, with the goal of reducing the number of unnecessary motions filed to approve reaffirmation agreements.

Working with the Subcommittee, Mr. Waldron is developing an electronic version of the form in which the information required for the reaffirmation agreement and for new Official Form 27, the Reaffirmation Agreement Cover Sheet, is input by answering a single questionnaire.

The Subcommittee plans to solicit feedback on the proposals from bankruptcy groups this summer.

Revision of Bankruptcy Appellate Rules

The Bankruptcy Rules Committee's Subcommittee on Privacy, Public Access and Appeals held a special open meeting in San Diego on March 25, 2009, to discuss and receive input about whether a major revision of the bankruptcy appellate rules (Part VIII of the Bankruptcy Rules) should be undertaken. The participants included members of the Rules

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News from the AO … *(cont'd. from pg. 3)*

Committee; invited judges from the Sixth, Ninth, and Tenth Circuits' Bankruptcy Appellate Panels; clerks of court and other court personnel; bankruptcy practitioners and academics; and representatives of local attorney groups.

Participants presented their views about the effectiveness of the existing appellate rules and areas in which improvements are needed. They also provided specific feedback on a working draft of the Part VIII rules prepared by former Bankruptcy Rules Committee member Eric Brunstad, Esq., which attempts to make the bankruptcy appellate rules more comprehensive, easier to read, and more closely aligned with the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure.

A second open subcommittee meeting on the appellate rules will be held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, prior to the Rules Committee's fall meeting.

2009 Bankruptcy CM/ECF Operational Practices Forum

The 2009 Bankruptcy CM/ECF Operational Practices Forum (the Forum) has been scheduled for **August 18 and 19**, in **Fort Worth, Texas**. On May 1, 2009, the Administrative Office sent out a Memo all Clerks of Court providing information about the Forum as well as how to go about registering. **Deadline for registration is June 12, 2009**.

As in the past, slots are available for Clerk's staff, bankruptcy judges and a slot for Chambers staff, which could be filled with either a judicial assistant or courtroom deputy, depending on your judge's discretion. We hope by now you have seen this Memorandum and spoken with your judge about attending. The link for this information can be found at https://infoweb.ao.dcn/bcastpdf/OCPB0924.pdf. **Richard Goodier**, Attorney Advisor in the Bankruptcy Judges Division of the Administrative Office, indicated that he hopes to see many Chambers staff employees in attendance.

The "Ops Forum," has been an annual event over the past several years and the focus has been to provide a context for court personnel to meet face-to-face and share information on CM/ECF and other topics that are suggested and selected by the attendees. In addition, Forum organizers have provided timely information concerning both recent and upcoming releases of Bankruptcy CM/ECF. In recent years, the Forum has also provided an opportunity for courts to display and demonstrate automation programs that they have developed locally. You can locate information about past Forums by using the following link http://jnet.ao.dcn/it/ecf/workinggroups/bcad/bankruptcy.htm.

Please share this information with Chambers staff in your court, and work with the your judges and Clerk of Court to see if a chambers staff member is available to attend. Hope to see you at the Forum!

Jumpstart Workshop

Washington, DC

August 3-5, 2009 (1st session) or August 5-7, 2009 (2nd session)

If you've never attended, or haven't attended one in the last 5 years, check out the following information just distributed - https://infoweb.ao.dcn/bcastpdf/ojpatjd02.pdf

Deadline for registration is June 9, 2009

CIRCUIT REPORTS

1st Circuit

By Kate Kelly, D/ME

This Circuit has nothing to report this time.

2nd Circuit

By Frances Fredericks, SD/NY

Well it has finally warmed up here in New York. We are in the midst of the Spring season. And with that, many changes have blossomed since our last newsletter.

The **Honorable Cecelia Morris** of the Southern District of New York was the recipient of the Second Annual Judge Cecelia H. Goetz Award. The New York Institute of Credit's Women's Division honored Judge Morris at a beautiful ceremony on February 26, 2009. Her family, friends, and co-workers, far and near, came together to celebrate the occasion. Congratulations to Judge Morris.

In the Southern District of New York, **Una O'Boyle**, Esq., former law clerk to the **Honorable Burton Lifland**, has been selected as the Chief Deputy Clerk. We wish her all the best in her new position. Congratulations to **Maria Castillo-Rodriguez**! She is the proud mother of a baby boy, Mathew Daniel, born April 6, 2009. On May 1, 2009, the H**onorable Adlai Hardin** of the White Plains divisional office retired. It is with a heavy heart we say goodbye to Judge Hardin.

I would like to welcome our new and returning members, **Kathi Dempsey, Vivian Greene, Rosemary Rizzico, Mildred Santiago-Amador, Marleen Ann Young, and Colleen Brelje**. I hope they will join us when we convene in October in Baltimore, Maryland for our annual meeting.

3rd Circuit

By Pamela Friend, WD/PA

Welcome Spring! Things are finally starting to come to life here in the northeast. Spring flowers are popping up and trees are starting to bloom. Plan to get outdoors in your time out of Court – it is so uplifting.

Earlier in the year, I was appointed Third Circuit representative to the Judges' Secretaries Advisory Group (JSAG) for a term though December 2010. I attended our Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., on April 6th and 7th. Look for my article in this newsletter for a summary. *(see page 16 for JSAG Report*)

By the next time you hear from me I will be going by the name Pam Jewell. Charlie and I are getting married on July 3rd at the South Shore Winery in North East, Pennsylvania. We are really looking forward to the event**. Judge Thomas Agresti** (WD/PA) will be performing the marriage. Charlie and I will be spending a few days in Niagara on the Lake, Canada, for our honeymoon. We hope to plan an official honeymoon next year bicycling through Germany and France.

News from Laura Frick, JA (ED/PA): **Michelle Ayres**, of the Third Circuit Library, suggested we circulate the following information regarding "Bankruptcy Basics" videos so you are aware of this resource. An eight-video package offers step-by-step explanations of the bankruptcy petition process, with an emphasis on most filers' need for legal assistance.

The eight videos run from about 90 seconds to seven minutes in length. Part 1 offers an introduction. Part 2 discusses the various types of bankruptcy. Part 3 covers the limits of bankruptcy. Part 4 discusses how to file for bankruptcy. Part 5 is about creditors' meetings. Part 6 is about court hearings. Part 7 explains discharge. Part 8 discusses legal assistance.

The package of videos can be assessed on the Federal Court's public website, at http://www.uscourts.gov/video/bankruptcybasics/bankruptcyBasics.cfm

News from Michelle Boyer, JA (ED/PA): **Judge Diane Sigmund** and her JA, **Maxine Carson**, retired at the end of April.

News from Cathy Farrell, JA (D/DE*): "I can remember the day he went to kindergarten like it was yesterday, and now my oldest son, Patrick, is graduating from high school! Where does the time go??? We had a nice Christmas present when he found out he was accepted to Rutgers University - which was his first*

(Cont'd. on pg 6)

3nd Circuit … ***(cont'd. from pg.5)***

choice. He's starting out commuting to the Camden campus this September and living at home (at least for the first year), which I'm happy about. My youngest son, Andrew, turns 16 this July, and driving won't be far off! Now I know why I never wanted to be a driving instructor!

And in April I attended my husband's conference in Tucson, Arizona. It was held at the J. W. Marriott Star Pass, a beautiful resort surrounded by mountains and saguaro cacti. It is so different attending someone else's conference and not having to attend a single session! Truly the best part of the trip was that my friend, Sue, (who moved to Arizona 15 years ago) and her husband drove out to spend the weekend with us. While my husband had his golf outing (in 50 mph winds), Sue and Bill took me for a day trip to the Sabino Canyon, which was just an awesome place. We picnicked on the rock formations, took a dip in the (frigid) water and just enjoyed the scenery. We spent most of the rest of the weekend with them.

It's always nice to get a break from the routine, but getting back home to my boys, my dog (and no evidence of a party at my house) was good too! I'm looking forward to our conference in Baltimore - which will be here before you know it!"

4th Circuit

Barb Lewis, ED/VA

Hello from Alexandria, Virginia. We are busy here in Alexandria, but trying to enjoy the nice Spring weather. This past weekend, we had 90 degree days. What happened to nice Spring weather?

Sharon Angel, JA (ED/NC) reports that their court welcomed a new Clerk of Court, **Stephanie J. Edmondson,** on February 2, 2009. Mrs. Edmondson had served as Acting Clerk since the retirement of the former Clerk Peggy B. Deans on January 2, 2009. Prior to her service as Acting Clerk, Mrs. Edmondson served as Chief Deputy Clerk.

Mrs. Edmondson received her B.A. degree in Economics, Magna Cum Laude, from East Carolina University in 1993, and her J.D. Degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1997. Mrs. Edmondson worked in private practice from 1997 to 1999. She served as School Board Attorney for Pitt County Schools from 1999 to 2001, and was a Lecturer in the College of Business at East Carolina University from 2001 to 2006. In 2006, she began her service as a career law clerk for **Judge Randy D. Doub** until she was appointed to Chief Deputy Clerk in October, 2008.

Mrs. Edmondson is married to Allan Edmondson. They have two children, Graceanne and Clay, and currently reside in Clayton, North Carolina.

On January 15, 2009, **Judge A. Thomas Small** served as moderator on the FJTN broadcast of Fourth Circuit Bankruptcy Decisions. Judge Small was joined by **Judge Kevin R. Huennekens** (ED/VA) and **Judge Thomas W. Waldrep, Jr.** (MD/NC). The panel discussed opinions related to bankruptcy from the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit and concentrated on three or four specific topics of concern to bankruptcy judges in the Fourth Circuit.

In March 2009, **Judge J. Rich Leonard** moved into a new courtroom and chambers located on the third floor of Century Station in Raleigh, North Carolina. Century Station first opened to the public in 1878 and was designed by Alfred P. Mullett, then the Architect of the Treasury, who is now recognized as the leading public architect of the nineteenth century. The original courtroom and court offices were located on the third floor and this restoration is aimed at accurately replicating the historic detail of that space. See photograph of the new courtroom. Century Station served as the headquarters for the federal courts in eastern North Carolina until 1967, and now functions as a post office, the United States Bankruptcy Court, and the headquarters for the General Services Administration.

Chief Judge Randy D. Doub serves as the Bankruptcy Judge representative to the Space and Security Advisory Council. The initial meeting was held in Washington, D.C. on March 31 and April 1, 2009. **Mr. James Duff**, Director of the

4th Circuit … ***(cont'd. from pg.6)***

Administrative Office of the Courts, and his staff gave updates on budgetary, administrative and formulation of policy initiatives. The council also discussed a range of policy initiatives and issues including cost containment, management of rent budgets, improving estimating tools for construction and alteration projects, building security assessments prepared by the Federal Protective Service, reducing the time for security clearances for construction workers, present state of security provided at the meetings of creditors in Bankruptcy Courts, review of the cyclical maintenance formula, furniture allotments for judges, the pros and cons of ballistic glazing for windows, service level expectations for GSA, and the new tenant alteration delegation for projects projected to cost $100,000.00 or less.

In conclusion, **Judge A. Thomas Small** has announced his intent to retire effective September 1, 2009. Judge Small has served our bankruptcy court since December 14, 1982, and is the second U.S. Bankruptcy Judge to serve in the Eastern District of North Carolina. A Special Ceremonial Session of Court and Portrait Dedication in honor of Judge Small is scheduled for August 27, 2009.

5th Circuit

By Anna Saucier, ND/TX

The Northern District of Texas is hosting the Bankruptcy Court Operational Practices Forum in Forth Worth, Texas, August 18-19, 2009. The meeting will be held at the brand new Omni Hotel in downtown Fort Worth. The ND/TX judicial assistants plan to either help host the event, attend as observers, or participate as chambers staff attendees. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about next generation CM/ECF, statistics reporting, locally-developed IT applications, etc. It is my understanding that funding is available for one chambers staff attendee and three clerk's office staff attendees per bankruptcy court. I encourage you to check with your judge about attending.

Beth Towery (ND/TX) in Fort Worth reports that **Judge D. M. Lynn** will be hosting a group of judges from Russia in July. They have a full schedule of activities and are planning to make them honorary Texans during the short time they are here.

Judge Henley A. Hunter, (WD/LA, Alexandria Division), and Judicial Assistant **Paula E. Scholzen (formerly Funderburk)**, (WD/LA, Shreveport Division), have recently been appointed to serve on the newly formed Chambers Functional Requirement Group (FRG) for the Next Generation of Bankruptcy CM/ECF. Their appointment will last through May 2010. *(See feature article explaining this project in more detail)*

I have not heard from other judicial assistants about increased filings in their districts, but the Northern District of Texas has seen a marked increase in filings. There were 1,686 cases filed in March, which was a 13% increase from the previous month. There have been 129 Chapter 11s filed since January 1, 2009.

On April 30, 2009, the Dallas clerk's office hosted a retirement reception for three of our wonderful, long-time employees: **Maydelle Johnson, Marlene McVey and Della Johnson**. It has been such a pleasure to work with these remarkable women over the many years. The court is losing such knowledge, integrity and valuable experience with these retirements. I wish Maydelle, Marlene and Della all the best with many mornings of sleeping in, days and days of playing with the grandkids, travel, and all those things that we need to find time to do.

Ann Virgadamo (ED/LA) reports that **Claude C. Lightfoot, Jr**., who has taught the Grammar/Writing section of the CBA Seminar for the past 10 years, recently got married to a long time friend, Guity. The ABJA appreciates all that he has contributed to the association and wishes Guity and him much happiness. A congratulatory gift basket filled with goodies was sent to Claude and Guity on behalf of the ABJA along with our best wishes.

6th Circuit

By Sherie Hitch, ED/MI

The Sixth Circuit includes the states of Ohio, Michigan, Tennessee, and Kentucky. To date only ten judicial assistants out of thirty are members of the ABJA in the 6th Circuit. Come on JAs! You have nothing to lose and everything to gain by becoming a member!

As always, if you are in the Sixth Circuit and would like to publish an article in the ABJA newsletter, please forward those articles to me. Thank you!

I am located in Detroit, Michigan and I can't believe that spring has finally sprung!! The view from the Eastern District Bankruptcy Court looking down the Detroit River, the ship traffic, local fisherman, and the Ambassador Bridge is always mesmerizing. However, bankruptcy filings continue to rise in the motor city due to the unfortunate economy situation and the auto industry downfall. I hope the future brings much good fortune to many families effected by this turmoil.

On a lighter note, the E.D. of Michigan has a new Chief Judge! Congratulations to **Judge Phillip Shefferly** who was appointed Chief Judge on April 25, 2009. See www.mieb.uscourts.gov for more information.

It is with great disappointment to tell you that my co-worker of six years, **JoAnne Iovannisci**, is leaving the court this year. JoAnne and I assisted each other through the bankruptcy ropes when we hired along with new judges in 2003. I wish her all the best!

Elaine Coker, J.A. (MD/TN) reports that the Middle District of Tennessee has a new Chief Deputy Clerk! Congratulations to **Teresa Azan** who took office in January, 2009. Ms. Azan's most recent position was trial attorney for the U.S. Trustee in the Nashville office for Region 8 from 1998 to 2009 where she also served as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney for U.S. Trustee collection activities. Ms. Azan mentions that her favorite past-time these days is 8-hours of sleep! Welcome!

Greg Ator, CBA, (MD/TN) shared this … "*Bankruptcy filings are booming in the Middle District of Tennessee. If trends continue, we will hit pre-BAPCPA filing levels this year. The consumer bankruptcy firm that I work for is breaking new filing records every month now that the general economic downturn is finally hitting us here in the Southeast. We are seeing an inordinate amount of housing related filings for individuals and companies: realtors, brokers, sub contractors, contractors, developers, and almost any other trade with any connection to construction. Bad for the country, but good for business."*

7th Circuit

By Cindy Korbol, WD/WI

Debra Graff, our former Seventh Circuit representative, has moved to Oklahoma City to take a position with the Veterans Medical Center, so I have volunteered to fill in for the rest of her term. Debra was a very active member of the ABJA, and I will miss seeing her at our annual conferences.

I am pleased to introduce Debra's replacement, **Stephanie A. Larson**, R.P., the new Judicial Assistant to **Chief Judge Margaret Dee McGarity** in the Eastern District of Wisconsin (Milwaukee). Stephanie began her career in 1987 as a paralegal with Frisch Dudek, LP, later known as Whyte Hirschboeck Dudek S.C., practicing in the areas of bankruptcy, litigation, and state and local tax. She continued in this role until March 2009 when she became Judge McGarity's Judicial Assistant. Stephanie says she has truly enjoyed the transition from private practice, and Judge McGarity along with Chambers staff have been both very welcoming and a lot of fun to work with. Stephanie has a 12-year-old beagle named Barney, and she spends her free time stitching, knitting, cycling, and reading.

While we gained a new JA in our circuit, we also had another JA retire. After 33 years of service, **Cindy Grossman** retired on March 31, 2009. Her fellow Judicial Assistants honored her at a wonderful luncheon on March 20th in a private room at the Greek Islands restaurant in Chicago. Several retirees and friends from near and far joined the festivities. Family members from Buffalo, New York, and Denver made a surprise appearance. Cindy was presented with a

(cont'd. on pg. 9)

7th Circuit … (cont'd. from pg.8)

Cindy greets longtime friend & former JA, Shirley Newsom

number of "humorous" retirement gifts in roast fashion. Her co-workers compiled a memory album entitled, "Cindy, et al.," filled with a brief look at her many activities over the years. In addition, they gave the album to Cindy with a gift certificate tucked inside. (Cindy has decided to use her gift card to purchase a tree once she makes the move to her retirement destination, Dayton, Ohio.) The Bankruptcy Judges adopted a Resolution as a testimonial to Cindy's service, leadership and friendship, and this beautifully framed document was also presented to her at the luncheon. The afternoon ended with friends and family members wishing Cindy good luck and singing a parody to Sinatra's "My Way" appropriately entitled "Her Way." (Thank you to **Kathy Wachtel** (ND/IL) for filling me in on all the details of Cindy's retirement.)

Our sole Bankruptcy Judge in the Southern District of Illinois, **Judge Kenneth J. Meyers**, retired on February 28. He is on recall status and applications are currently being taken for his position. Judge Meyers does not have a judicial assistant.

With regard to workload, our filing levels here in the Western District of Wisconsin continue to rise. While we haven't seen levels of increase like some parts of the country, we've had a 33% increase over the first three months of last year. As a matter of fact, the last time we saw the number of new cases we had last month was back in 2005.

8th Circuit

By Barb Sutton, ED/MO

Chief Judge Thomas L. Saladino, District of Nebraska, was appointed to the Bankruptcy Appellate Panel on February 26, 2009, replacing **Judge David P. McDonald**, who retired in January 2009. Judge Saladino's Judicial Assistant is **Cheryl R. Belmont**. Congratulations to Judge Saladino!

Anita L. Shodeen of Des Moines, Iowa, was just selected by the 8th Circuit to fill the long-vacant bankruptcy judge position in the Southern District of Iowa, pending the usual FBI background check. Congratulations!!

Judge William Edmonds, North District of Iowa, recently submitted his letter of retirement to the Circuit Court, effective May 31, 2009, and has been approved for extended recall beginning June 1, 2009. Judge Edmonds will continue to be stationed in Sioux City.

Retired Supreme Court **Justice Sandra Day O'Conner** was the featured guest at a private reception for the official opening of the Judicial Learning Center in the Thomas F. Eagleton Courthouse in St. Louis, Missouri on February 25, 2009. The Judicial Learning Center is the only educational center in the United States devoted to the judicial process in the Federal courts. The display focuses on the importance of "The Rule of Law" and depicts how and why the Federal court system was created. It also features interactive displays and highlights landmark Eighth Circuit cases. There is a special display board where visitors can leave comments. In retirement, Justice O'Connor has devoted herself to teaching and engaging students in government.

9th Circuit

By Connie Ray, CD/CA

Sunny Springtime Greetings from the Ninth Circuit!

Chantelle & Shelby

Congratulations and Welcome Back to **Chantelle Sliman**, Judicial Assistant to Chief **Judge Frank L. Kurtz**, Eastern District of Washington, as she has just returned from 2 months of maternity leave. Chantelle and her husband *Brian* welcomed their 3rd baby girl on Friday, February 13, 2009. Weighing in at 6lbs 4oz and 19 inches, little *Miss Shelby Lin Sliman* joins her big sisters *Holland* (6) and *Sydney* (3). 2009 started off busy but very blessed for the Sliman family. Congratulations again!

And more baby news... Your very own 9th Circuit Representative, **Connie Ray**, Judicial Assistant to **Honorable Peter H. Carroll**, (CD/CA, Riverside Division), is expecting a baby boy in September 2009. This will be the first child for me and my husband, Tom. Unfortunately, with the new addition to the family, I won't be able to attend this year's conference in Baltimore later this year, but I hope to see lots of pictures!

(cont'd. on pg. 10)

9th Circuit.*…(cont'd. from pg. 9)*

Filings here in the Central District of California remain steadily high and the workload never quite seems to give a moments rest to our staff. However, two bankruptcy judgeships were recently approved for the Riverside Division, and we're anxiously awaiting the eventual appointment of those new judges. Since the retirements of **Judges David Naugle and Mitchel Goldberg** in 2008, the remaining Riverside Bankruptcy Judges - **Judges Meredith A. Jury and Peter H. Carroll** have been weathering the subprime storm of bankruptcy filings nearly alone. In September 2008, three Los Angeles bankruptcy judges began receiving some Riverside cases in order to help with the increased caseload. Many thanks continue to go out daily to Los Angeles Bankruptcy **Judges Sheri Bluebond, Thomas Donovan and Richard Neiter** for their help in managing the Riverside Division's caseload. I can't imagine the size of our calendars without them!

Wishing everyone a very happy Spring.

10th Circuit

By Thora Searle/ D/UT

At last, it is springtime in the Rockies, or so the calendar says. At least for this week, we are enjoying some 'warmer' temperatures. I don't know about the rest of you, but it has been a long winter season and I am looking forward to some warmer weather.

I don't know about the rest of the country but we are experiencing a rise in the number of filings this year over last year. In both March and April we had over 500 more filings each month than the same time in 2008. We are certainly a lot busier in Chambers as a result. One of our Judges commented recently, that she has all of these cases and no place to schedule their hearings within the time frames mandated by the Code. I know that finding time for lengthy hearings is requiring some creative juggling of our calendars.

Utah seems to have weathered the economic downturn better than a lot of other places. We have a lower unemployment rate than other districts but it is high for our state.

We have a number of employers who are doing very creative things to keep their employees employed. One such company, has a CEO who was due a payment on a loan to the company for a sizable amount of money. Instead of making the payment to himself, he divided the money up by the number of employees he had and gave them a sizable bonus with a specific request that they use it to take a trip or purchase something for themselves.

Another company who makes metal art forms for large places such as hotels/casinos in Las Vegas to use in their landscaping, has had their employees making palm trees, etc. to put out in the landscaping around their building to help to beautify it. He did it just to keep his people working.

Our new Judge is now on board and we are really excited to welcome **Judge R. Kimball Mosier.** He was a Chapter 7 Trustee for 25 years as well as an attorney specializing in bankruptcy for 28 years before coming to the bench. Judge Mosier used to work with **Judge Thurman** and I before we came to the Court and he is a very hard working individual who believes in treating all who come before him with dignity and respect. He is a great addition to our Court family and we are very happy to have him here with us. Judge Mosier is married and has 6 children and 3 grandchildren. He enjoys mountain biking, golfing and wine.

Judge Mosier brought **Shannon Robinson** with him. Shannon received her paralegal certificate from Westminster College in 1995. She has worked as a paralegal for 12 years, all of those years have been working with Judge Mosier. Shannon has 2 kids, a son age 6 and a daughter age 4. In what free time she has, she enjoys golfing, running, attending her son's sporting events, mostly spending time with her family. We look forward to getting to know Shannon better and hopefully involved in the ABJA.

Mary Anderson reports that the big news from New Mexico is they are getting a new judge. **Robert Jacobvitz** has been selected to replace **The Honorable Mark B. McFeeley**. Judge McFeeley officially retired on May 6, 2009 but will stay

10th Circuit...(cont'd. from pg. 10)

on as a recall Judge until the background check is completed and Mr. Jacobvitz is sworn in. On another front, case filings are finally going up here. The weather is finally turning warm.

From Oklahoma, **Alexia Bible** reports: **Judge Tom R. Cornish** has been named as the new Chief Judge of the 10th Circuit Bankruptcy Appellate panel. Judge Cornish has served as a member of the Bankruptcy Appellate Panel since 1996. He received his J.D. from the OU College of Law and a LL.M degree from the University of Virginia. Judge Cornish previously served on the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals.

11th Circuit

By Janet Payton, SD/GA

Hello and happy spring to all! The pollen is here and the Masters Golf Tournament is over, two sure signs that spring has arrived in Augusta, Georgia.

I was fortunate enough to attend the mid-year ABJA Board Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana April 3 - 5, 2009. The meeting was very productive. Hats off to the officers and board members that attended! Well done!

On April 20, 2009 Chapter 11 case No. 09-40805 TitleMax Holdings, LLC, was filed in the Southern District of Georgia, Savannah Division.

TitleMax is a privately-owned business based in Savannah, Georgia. It is one of the largest title lending companies in the United States, focusing their operations in Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, and Tennessee - Debtors have more recently expanded operations into other states - Texas, Missouri, Mississippi, Illinois, Virginia.

Debtors' businesses involve providing financial products to people who do not have access to traditional credit alternatives. The Debtors focus exclusively on automotive and title pawn lending.

Debtors operate approximately 553 stores, have about 1,800 employees, and serve approximately 180,000 customers.

James Peyton

Patsy Burkhalter, (SD/GA, Savannah) , proudly announces the birth of her new grandson, *James Peyton*. Peyton weighed in at 8 lbs. 3 oz. and 20 in. long at 12:16 p.m. April 20, 2009. Mother, father and son are doing well! James Peyton was welcomed home by his big brother, *James Patrick,* 2.

Patsy also proudly announces her daughter, *Susanne Elizabeth Burkhalter* will graduate high school from Calvary Baptist Day School on May 31, 2009.

Unfortunately and with great sadness, on March 5, 2009, Barnee C. Baxter, Chapter 13 Trustee for the Augusta, Statesboro and Dublin Divisions passed away. He is sorely missed by us that worked with and knew him. Byron Meredith is serving as temporary successor Trustee along with continuing his duties as Trustee in the Savannah Division until a new Trustee is appointed.

Kim Dyches, Courtroom Deputy 1 and CBA, (GA/S, Augusta Division), says that her son, Tim Fogle, will graduate from Lakeside High School next month with a Tri-M (Music Honor society) honor cord and plans to attend Augusta State University his first year. Tim will major in criminal justice and minor in music performance and plans to do internships over the summer and throughout college with various federal agencies, such as the FBI, NCIS and the Secret Service. She went on to say that Tim will live at home his first year and they will both have to adjust to a different routine. She will continue to work, attending and being active in church and hopefully find more time for herself to be able to attend more events and meet more people.

Kim has been employed with the court for 8-1/2 years and has attended ABJA conferences in Charleston and Orlando. She plans to attend the ABJA Educational Conference in Baltimore.

(cont'd. on pg. 12)

11th Circuit ... *(cont'd. from pg. 11)*

Christina Gary, Case Administrator and CBA, (GA/S, Augusta Division) attended the certification program in San Antonio 2008 along with three other Clerk's staff employees from the Augusta Division. Now that the dust and her nerves have settled, I asked her to share a summary of her experience:

> *"San Antonio 2008 was my first year attending the Certified Bankruptcy Assistant Seminar. I was extremely nervous about attending and not knowing what to expect but I was quickly embraced by all of the members attending the seminar. I was very impressed by all of the instructors. I felt like each one went above and beyond the course to help me better understand the importance of each subject and how it applies to everyday issues. Attending the Certified Bankruptcy Educational Program was not only an opportunity for me to improve my skills as a bankruptcy support staff, it was also an opportunity for me to meet with other professionals in the bankruptcy field. It allowed me to share their experiences and it left me with a since of comradery and a more comprehensive view of new developments in Bankruptcy."*

Congratulations Christina on passing the CBA exam!

On a personal note, my husband, *Wade Payton*, is currently training to participate in Ironman Louisville, Kentucky August 2009! The triathlon consists of a 2.4 mile swim, a 112 mile bike ride and a 26.2 mile run (ouch!). I will be on the sidelines cheering him all 140.6 miles!

Laura Stevenson, JA to **Hon. Catherine Peek McEwen** and **Hon. Caryl E. Delano** (MD/FL, Tampa Division) shares the following:

*"Our **Chief Judge Glenn** has put together a lot of good statistical information . He did a Power Point presentation for our bankruptcy bar association last week. He provided the following information:*

> The Tampa Bay Bankruptcy Bar Association, with funding provided by a grant from the Florida Bar Foundation, has produced a video presentation entitled Bankruptcy Basics. The program explains the process and results of bankruptcy, and features judges, case managers and other court staff from the Tampa Division, including the ABJA's own Mary Morrison! You may be familiar with it, because many courts have posted the program or the link to it on the U.S. Courts website. The program was designed to give a general overview for lay people and answers many frequently-asked questions. If you'd like to view the program and it's not available on your court's website, go to www.uscourts.gov or www.flmb.uscourts.gov.

Martie Kantor, (ND/FL, Tallahassee) was excited to have Extreme Makeover Home Edition come to her town in February. She and her daughter, *Allison*, who has accompanied her to several conferences, spent every evening after work going out to the site where the new home was being built for the Kadzis' family and watching in amazement as it was going up. *"If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I would've never believed they could accomplish so much in such a short time. The number of people and organization of putting it all together in seven days is really an awesome thing to watch"*

Day 3 of build

Finished home

For those that watch the show, it aired Easter Sunday and it was the episode about the family of six adopted children from China - all with disabilities - where the father had a brain tumor and he went into the hospital the night before the build started. The saddest part is he never made it out of the hospital as he died three days after the house was finished. *"Even though we knew how it would end, watching the show was still very emotional."*

Allison & Michael, one of the EMHE design team members

SPOTLIGHT ON SHARON ANGEL, JA

ED/NC

Sharon Angel is a Judicial Assistant to **Chief Judge Randy D. Doub** for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Eastern District of North Carolina. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from East Carolina University in 1986 and is a North Carolina certified paralegal. In 1987, Sharon began working in bankruptcy for the law firm of Dixon, Doub & Conner in Greenville, North Carolina. Her responsibilities included: preparing and filing of bankruptcy petitions and pleadings, assistant to Chapter 7 Trustee, administration of Chapter 7 asset cases, and presided as clerk in Section 341 meetings.

Sharon has worked with the Bankruptcy Court since July 28, 2006. Along with the general Judicial Assistant duties, she enjoys filling in as the Courtroom Deputy on occasion. In 2008, she completed the web-based training on Management in the Judiciary: The Rules, Tools and Tips of Good Stewardship. Sharon attends the annual bankruptcy seminars sponsored by the Eastern Bankruptcy Institute and is an active member of the Association of Bankruptcy Judicial Assistants. She also attended her first ABJA Conference held this past September in San Antonio, Texas.

Sharon is married to Mark Angel. They have a son, Brett, age 17, and a Lhasa Apso named "Rocky". They reside in Winterville, North Carolina. Sharon is an avid fan of the East Carolina Pirates and the New York Yankees. She also enjoys walking, reading and eating at McAlister's Deli.

Check this out ….

http://www.govexec.com/column/

for tips on Pay & Benefits

and

Retirement Planning

SPOTLIGHT ON ANGEL DIOS, JA

NJ/B

Angel was born in Santiago, Spain, and came to the U.S with his family when he was 18 months old. He is the youngest of 3 brothers, and grew up in the Ironbound section of Newark, NJ before moving to Harrison, NJ when he was 14. Having graduated from Harrison High School, he attended Seton Hall University where he received a B.A. in Political Science. He then went on to obtain a MA also in Political Science from Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck, NJ in May of 1995. After working as a Bankruptcy and Collections Paralegal for 4 years, Angel began working at the U.S, Bankruptcy Court in 1996 as a Case Manager and was responsible for such cases as Kiwi Airlines and Grand Union Supermarkets. After two years with the Court, Angel interviewed for and was promoted to **Judge Winfield's** Judicial Assistant in September of 1998.

Angel was married in March of 2007 to his soul mate and love of his life, *Kelli.* They are expecting their first child, a baby girl to be named *Sofia*, in June of this year, and he is constantly busy in preparation for this blessed event. When not at work, or taking care of his elderly mother, he spends his free time preparing the nursery and doing house repairs and landscaping.

In his spare time, Angel enjoys boating, racing gas powered remote controlled vehicles, paintballing, DJ'ing, listening to music, collecting DVD's, spending time with family and friends, and mountain biking, although spare time these days is very limited.

Angel adores his court family, and is truly loves his job. He couldn't imagine ever doing anything else that he would enjoy so much.

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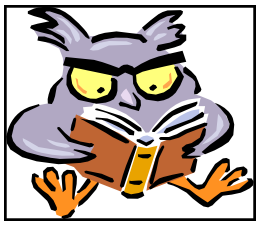

UPDATE ON CBA PROGRAM

By: Ann Virgadamo,, CLE Chair

At the 2009 ABJA mid-year board meeting held April 3-5 in New Orleans, LA, we discussed and adopted for implementation new procedures for the CBA Program. The new procedures include pre-qualification for CBA's to attend the CBA seminar and exam, new forms, and revisions of the previous forms.

Moreover, some of the previous forms that were revised were the forms used by the Certified Bankruptcy Assistants when submitting their CLE/CEU credits.

For the past ten years, we have grown so rapidly we find it is necessary to keep better and more efficient records. We developed a new, one-page, CBA Renewal Application form, which is to be submitted to us every two years.

The new procedures outlined in the revised Rules and Regulations will be strictly enforced.

All Certified Bankruptcy Assistants will soon receive an email explaining the new procedures, along with the new and revised forms.

GRAMMAR GREMLINS

By Don Ferguson, ED/TN

Don K. Ferguson, Eastern District of Tennessee, welcomes comments and questions via telephone, 865-545-4234, extension 222, or by email at Don_Ferguson@TNED,uscourts.gov. His office address is U.S. District Court, 800 Market Street, Ste. 130, Knoxville, TN 37902. Don writes a weekly newspaper column titled "Grammar Gremlins" and is the author of a book by the same name, published by Glenbridge Publishing Lt., Aurora, CO.

Commas are Handy

The comma is a convenient punctuation mark. There are rules that govern its use, but sometimes you can use it when there is no hard-and-fast rule. It's a punctuation mark that you can use just to make something clearer, but don't overdo it.

One frequent mistake in the use of the comma is to put in the first one when you want to set off a clause, then forget to put in the second one that completes the setting off.

Another place a comma is called for that people often overlook is after the year when using it in a sentence. For instance, "They will be married on July 4, 2000, a Tuesday."

In Absentia - In Memoriam

Absentia and *memoriam* are not easily found in a dictionary. You won't find them in the 'a' and the 'm' listings.

Both have *in* in front of them; so you have to look under *in* to find in absentia and in memoriam.

In absentia means "in absence; while or although not present." *In memoriam* means "in memory of." Something given *in memoriam* is a memorial, not a memoriam.

The pronunciation of *absentia* occasionally trips up a speaker. It is pronounced *ab-SEN-sha* or *ab-SEN-she-uh*. Some dictionaries even say an acceptable pronunciation is *ab-sen-TEE-uh*.

DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOUR CERTIFICATION EXPIRES?

Check out our website - www.abja.org - and click on the link "CLE Status"

Names are shown under Certification Site and Date

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Conference Committee

By Marleen Young, D/NJ

All the volunteers are hard at work thinking of fun and interesting things to do at our upcoming conference in October. We have had a couple of suggestions for the opening reception and are waiting for further instructions from our President for the closing reception. We hope to highlight the fact that this is the 10th anniversary of the CBA program and the **20th anniversary of the ABJA**!

The Conference Committee consists of the following: **Catherine Farrell** (D/DE), **Pamela Friend** (WD/PA), **Sally Hanson** (D/SD), **JoAnne Iovannisci** (ED/MI) (soon to retire), **Sherie Hitch** (ED/MI), **Martie Kantor** (ND/FL), **Cindy Korbol** (WD/WI), **Beckie McMath** (WD/LA), **Mary Morrison** (MD/FL), **Christine Rhambo** (CD/CA), **Thora Searle** (D/UT), **Pamela Starr** (CBA), and **Becky Woodrum** (CD/IL). They are responsible for the inner workings that make the conference "seamless" once you are there. All these women have graciously answered any requests I have had for help, and I thank them for that. Keep up the good work, ladies! If anyone out there has any suggestions, please contact someone from the list above or send me a line.

October in Baltimore will be fantastic. The weather is just starting to get cool (sweater or sweatshirt weather) especially down by the Inner Harbor. The baseball season will be over (unless they make it to the World Series) but the Ravens (football team) may have a home game while we are there. At this writing, their schedule for 2009 has not been posted. I will keep everyone informed if they are in town in case any sports fans want to attend a game. The stadium is close to our hotel.

Sheraton Hotel

The conference will be held in Baltimore, Maryland and our host hotel is the Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel. Room rates will be $155 single & double; $289 for a one bedroom suite. The dates will be:

CBA early registration	Monday, October 19
CBA Seminar and Exam	Tuesday & Wednesday, October 20-21
Opening reception	Wednesday, October 21
Advanced Bankruptcy Seminar	Thursday, October 22
ABJA program	Friday, October 23
Business meeting & closing banquet	Saturday, October 24.

We anticipate the registration for the conference for ABJA members will still be $150 which offsets the costs of our speakers' expenses, materials, food, etc.

With our access to the internet, I don't think it is necessary to list all the attractions in Baltimore; just Google "Baltimore," and a ton of information is at your hands. We will probably have a handout booklet for easy reference once you are there but want to stay "green" by not having a lot of handouts at the conference that you have to toss before you head home. Also, the lobbies of the hotels always have a stash of pamphlets with outside attractions and events.

Please mark your calendars and start checking out flights. We hope to have a good turnout like last year. Spread the word: **"Baltimore - Get in on it"**

First annual meeting - 1989
Atlanta, GA.

Pictured from bottom left to right are:
Anita Wolrab, Sue Herbert, Marlene Stubbs, ***Janet Payton,*** *Anita Bonh Cross, Wanda Aloney, Bernice Whaley (dec), Judy Huff, Kathy Harmon,* ***Patsy Burkhalter****, Paula Funderburk Scholzen, Carolyn Hubbard, Marge Sullivan, and Nancy Logue*

Continuing Legal Education and Certification for Bankruptcy Assistants Committee

By Ann Virgadamo, CLE/CBA Chair

Recently, **Mary Morrison** (MD/FL) and I attended the ABJA mid-year board meeting in New Orleans. It was a very productive meeting. **Claude Lightfoot, Jr.**, who is the instructor for the Grammar/Writing Section for the CBA Seminar, was in attendance and offered some insight into our program.

At the mid-year board meeting, we discussed many turning points of the CBA program. With growth comes change, and we agreed it is now time to implement new procedures and forms. In maintaining the high standards of our Association and CBA program, we have revised the Application for Certified Bankruptcy Assistants and the CBA Rules and Regulations. We have also added new forms, such as the Certificate of Attendance Form and the Application for Renewal of Certification. The CBA Committee will soon send an email to all Certified Bankruptcy Assistants explaining the new procedure and attaching the new forms.

There will also be a new procedure in processing the Application for Certification of Bankruptcy Assistants. The application and Rules and Regulations will be sent to the applicant prior to submission of the CBA seminar registration forms. The applicant must complete and return the application to Ann, and the CBA Committee will review the application before the registration is accepted. The applicant will be notified shortly after Committee reviews the application to let the applicant know if she or he qualifies to take the exam. If for some reason the application is not accepted, the applicant will be given a chance to reapply if she or he later meets the qualifications. We feel that the new procedures will assist the committee in maintaining the high standards we have established for the CBA Program.

This year is the tenth year of the CBA Seminar and we are looking forward to presenting the seminar in Baltimore, Maryland, on October 20-21, right before the ABJA Annual Educational Conference. Yes, ten years ago, the first CBA seminar was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and since then we have offered the program in numerous states from the south to the west coast. We have had more than 400 attendees over the past ten years, and the program continues to grow. We have offered and maintained a high standard of educational conferences throughout the years, and we continue to be the only association that has a specialty certification program available for non-lawyers in the field of bankruptcy.

In celebration of the 10th Anniversary, we want to make it special for everyone. Therefore, this year, we will give special recognition to the Judicial Assistants and CBAs who have been faithful in renewing their CL/CEU units every two years and for being members of the ABJA.

If you are a Judicial Assistant and have not participated in the CBA program, I encourage you to do so. The committee will be contacting the Judicial Assistants who have not participated in the program – look for the special flyer as an incentive to attend this year's CBA seminar.

Please remember that one major benefit of being a CBA includes personal skill enhancement, which will be beneficial in your job.

JSAG Report

By Pam Friend, WD/PA

As the appointed Third Circuit Representative for JSAG, I attended the Annual Meeting held on April 6 & 7, 2009, in Washington, D.C. at the Administrative Offices. Other bankruptcy attendees were **Becky Woodrum**, as the 7th Circuit Representative, and **Elaine Coker**, as the President of the ABJA.

The Meeting consisted of a day and a half agenda filled with speakers from the Administrative Office, Office of Judges Programs, Office of Public Affairs, Office of Legislative Affairs, Office of Information Technology Office of Human Resources, Federal Judicial Center *AND* a visit with **James C. Duff**, Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. I met a group of very interesting people, gathered valuable information and offered my thoughts on matters involving the JSAG and in support of the Judicial Assistant position.

Fortunately, I was able to bring my fiancé with me and we arrived in Washington several days early. We saw the beautiful multitude of Cherry Blossoms in full bloom, the Cherry Blossom Parade and saw as many sites as we could fit in a couple days. What an awesome place, this was my first visit.

Below is a summary of the information and updates we discussed:

CM/ECF Version 4.0 update

Function for Judges: incorporation of e-orders
Ability to create electronic "sticky notes" to docket entries (not accessible to the public)

(cont'd. on pg. 17)

JSAG Report …. ***(cont'd. from pg. 16)***

They are in the process of re-creating the cm/ecf system entirely but major change will not occur for 5 years. No specifics on what changes will be made.

- **Office of Public Affairs Resources**
  - Dealing with the News Media - online help

    High-Profile Cases in District Court: How to Cope With the Media
    http://jnet.ao.dcn/highprofiledc/index.htm

    High-Profile Cases in Appellate Court: How to Cope With the Media
    http://jnet.ao.dcn/highprofile/index.htm

    25 Questions: How to Deal With the Media in High Profile Cases
    http://jnet.ao.dcn/News/Moussaoui.html

    A Journalist's Guide to Federal Courts (has section on bankruptcy)
    http://www.uscourts.gov/journalistguide/toc.html

    In-Person Help, AO's Office of Public Affairs 202-502-2600

  - Community and Educational Outreach Programs

    - Open Doors to Federal Courts initiative - interactive program for students create real-life learning situations.
      http://jnet.ao.dcn/District/Educational_Outreach.html

    - Naturalization ceremony, suggestions:
      - pass a mic to introduce self/country
      - foreign language students attend and get Chambers tour
      - chorus attend to sing
      - high school students sing

- **Legislative Update** visit http://jnet.ao.dcn/Legislation/index.html

- **Financial Disclosure** - helpful information on the J-Net under "Judge's Corner"
  Comparative Analysis of Judges' Reporting Requirements chart
  Helpful "Key Tips" within the form
  There is now a search function for Part 7
  Goal is that by 2011 the Financial Disclosure Reports will be filed electronically
  Redaction can be requested if info could harm the Judge or family

- **OSCAR: On-line System Clerkship Application and Review** https://oscar.uscourts.gov
  Version 5 to be unveiled on May 18, 2009
  You will be able to view school rankings
  Accommodates judges who choose to accept applications electronically or by paper

We discussed the agenda for the **Jumpstart Workshop which will be held the first week of August, 2009** in Washington, D.C. This year there will be 2 sessions to allow for a larger number to attend. For the announcement on the Jumpstart Workshop, check the J-Net, under "The Week's Top Pages" and "Judicial Assistants Bulletin" if you have not received the April 2009 Quarterly Bulletin by email. If you have never attended a Jumpstart Workshop I urge you to apply. The Workshop is funded by the AO. It is a VERY informative session which introduces new (and not so new) JAs to staff of the Federal Judiciary, speakers on Ethics, Financial Disclosure, IT matters; Learning Opportunities, Library Services, Travel, Reports and breakout sessions by Court type, just to name a few things.

(cont'd. on pg. 18)

JSAG Report …. *(cont'd. from pg. 17)*

Please feel free to contact either myself or Becky Woodrum whenever you have any questions about your position or Court procedures and we will be happy to either get an answer for you or point you in the right direction.

Membership Committee

By Sherie Hitch, ED/MI

I first want to acknowledge **Dana Muccie**, ABJA Treasurer, who processes membership applications and dues, and **Sally Hanson**, Membership Committee person, who continues to maintain all membership lists. You do an excellent job!

The 2009 ABJA Educational Conference in Baltimore, Maryland in just around the corner! I am looking for Membership Committee members to volunteer to present membership awards at the conference. If you would like to volunteer, please contact me.

If you are a new ABJA membership, or have not been to a conference in some time, feel free to request a mentor at the conference. Your mentor will assist you as you find necessary. On the same note, I am looking for volunteers to be mentors at the 2009 conference. Please contact me at sherie_hitch@mieb.uscourts.gov.

There will be an ABJA member photo directory posted in the Members Only section of the ABJA website. The directory will include the member's name and photo only. Only photos of those members who consented to have their photo in the directory will be posted. Please send me a photo via e-mail if you would like to be added to the membership photo directory.

Congratulations to **Greg Ator**, CBA, in the 6th Circuit for being the first associate member to submit an article for the newsletter! Greg wins a gift card to Barnes & Noble!! Review the 2009 Membership Drive flyer to inquire about more prizes!

Please give serious consideration to taking the plunge and getting involved in the ABJA by working on a committee or becoming an officer. The ABJA is only as strong as its membership.

Hope to see in Baltimore!

Nominations Committee

By: Beth Towery, ND/TX

The Nominations Committee has been very quiet. We received one candidate from the membership applications. There is nothing to report at this time. Please be thinking and watching for your place in the ABJA organization.

Support & Assistance Committee

By: Penny Brellenthin, WD/WI

This past quarter the Support & Assistance Committee sent condolences to Ann Virgadamo (5th Circuit, Louisiana), JA for Judge Jerry A. Brown, who lost her dear 13-year old nephew to Muscular Dystrophy in January, 2009.

Please contact me if you know of an ABJA member or their family who could use our thoughts and prayers.

Check out our website - www.abja.org

The purpose of this Association, shall be to promote the general welfare of its members; to encourage the highest standards of conduct among its members and in the profession at large; to promote the continuing education of its members; and to foster among its members a feeling of camaraderie and mutual confidence."

Behind the Bench is a non-copyrighted, in-house publication of the Association of Bankruptcy Judicial Assistants. Circulation includes members of the ABJA and Bankruptcy Judges. Opinions recited in the material are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the ABJA.

Comments regarding *Behind the Bench* should be sent to:

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Where's the year going? FSU and colleges around the nation have held their commencement ceremonies and public schools will be out for the summer in another week or so. Traffic is already considerably lighter here which is a definite plus.

Signs of a struggling economy are everywhere. Long time businesses are closing, people are losing jobs and in a lot of cases losing their homes. We work in an industry where our job security is dependent upon someone else's misfortune. Even though we have jobs to be thankful for, let's not forget that the difference between us and those out on the streets is merely a paycheck. So, the next time you want to complain about being overworked, or having to deal with that sometimes grumpy boss, think what life would be like without it and be glad you have something to complain about.

As always, a great big thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue. Panic was beginning to set in because I didn't have a feature article this time and Paula Scholzen contacted me and with Judge Callaway's input, offered to write the article on Chambers FRG. Their timing couldn't have been more perfect and I really appreciate it. I know information has been distributed regarding this new project and I'm sure we'll be hearing more about it as time goes on.

Even though I'm not always good at giving him adequate time to prepare something, Mr. Wannamaker always cheerfully provides the latest information from the AO and I really appreciate that.

For all the Circuit Reps and Committee Chairs who work tirelessly year-round and unfailingly come through for us, thank you. Your efforts don't go unnoticed.

I hope everyone has a wonderful summer and if you're traveling, arrive at your destinations and home again safely.

The next issue will be going out in September so please let your circuit reps know if you have anything you'd like to share and don't forget those pictures.

Martie