PICTURE PERFECT
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY SECTION FOCUSES ON EDUCATION

Intellectual property law issues develop faster than digital photos. But Intellectual Property, Entertainment & Internet Law Section members are always a part of the picture, thanks to the Intellectual Property Section's focus on educational programs.

The Section, co-chaired by Mishawn L. Nolan and John F. Stephens, offers bi-monthly meetings, on the third Friday of the month. Locations vary among noontime luncheons at the Woodland Hills headquarters of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association, or breakfast meetings at either of the Chairs' firms. Programming includes speakers and updates on hot topics in entertainment, Internet law and overall intellectual property concerns.

“The Section is composed of attorneys who practice in or otherwise have an interest in the law relating to patents, trademarks, copyrights, unfair competition, trade secrets, new media and other technology related areas,” Stephens, a partner at Los Angeles' Sedgwick, Detert, Moran & Arnold, says.

According to Nolan, a partner with Encino's Greenberg & Bass, intellectual property law has undergone more changes in the last few years than at any other time in its history.

“The Section is committed to keeping its members fully informed about, and actively engaged in influencing, the latest developments in this ever-expanding global field,” she says.


“The Section's primary goal is promoting an understanding of intellectual property and entertainment law and related areas, as well as providing a forum for counsel to discuss issues and exchange ideas,” Stephens says. “The Section sponsors continuing legal education seminars covering intellectual property law topics on a regular basis.”

According to Nolan, the Section strives to address all facets of intellectual property law, with a special focus on the legal issues facing businesses and individuals in IP-intensive fields, such as the Internet, computers, biotechnology, publishing, arts, entertainment and sports.

“Most of the Section's 100 members are experienced IP lawyers, transactional attorneys and litigators in private practice,” she says. “We also cater to in-house lawyers at businesses, educational and research institutions and government agencies.”

Stephens says that the Bar created the Section to deal with this very specialized branch of the law. Since the Section's inception in 2001, the Section and its members have contributed significantly to the development of current systems protecting intellectual property rights.

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On June 14, our nation celebrates the 229th birthday of our country’s flag on Flag Day. On that day in 1777, the Continental Congress adopted the design of the American flag. Congress noted in the Journals of the Continental Congress, “Resolved, that the Flag of the thirteen United States shall be thirteen stripes, alternating red and white; that the Union be thirteen stars, white on a blue field, representing a new constellation.”

This celebration of our flag is believed to have begun in 1885 in the Fredonia, Wisconsin public school when teacher BJ Cigrand arranged for his students to observe June 14 as “Flag Birthday.” On April 25, 1893, the Pennsylvania Society of Colonial Dames of America adopted a resolution requesting that the City of Philadelphia and all private citizens display the American Flag on June 14. Thereafter, June 14 was known as Flag Day. On May 30, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson officially established June 14th as Flag Day, and on August 3, 1949, President Harry Truman signed the Act of Congress designating June 14 of each year as National Flag Day. On that day in 1777, the Continental Congress adopted the design of the American Flag. Congress noted in the Journals of the Continental Congress, “Resolved, that the Flag of the thirteen United States shall be thirteen stripes, alternating red and white; that the Union be thirteen stars, white on a blue field, representing a new constellation.”

This month, we reaffirm our commitment to the concept of “Liberty and Justice for All” today, one phrase Bellamy used captures the essence of our national creed and remains part of our modern Pledge: With liberty and justice for all.

June marks other significant events in the history of our nation, which make the words “with liberty and justice for all” more than a mere phrase that we recite as we show our allegiance to our country. On June 2, 1924, Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act, granting U.S. citizenship to all Native Americans, and on June 4, 1919, Congress, by joint resolution, approved the woman’s suffrage amendment. On June 14, 1943, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed its earlier decision that the government had the authority to compel citizens display the American Flag on June 14. This is the same flag that has inspired some of our most enduring expressions of patriotism: our national anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance.

During the War of 1812, the sight of the American Flag waving over Fort McHenry after all the bombardment inspired Francis Scott Key to write the “Star Spangled Banner,” which became our national anthem. The flag also inspired Francis Bellamy to write his “Pledge of Allegiance” to the flag while preparing for a public school celebration for Columbus Day in 1892. Although Bellamy’s Pledge was somewhat different from the Pledge we recite today, one phrase Bellamy used captures the essence of our national creed and remains part of our modern Pledge: With liberty and justice for all.

As we celebrate Flag Day, we should remember that our flag, “Old Glory,” has a long and glorious history, too often overlooked. Under commission by George Washington, our flag was first designed by Philadelphia seamstress Betsy Ross in 1776.
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JD
“Six degrees of separation” is a theory that anyone on the planet can be connected to any other person on the planet through a chain of acquaintances that has no more than five intermediaries. In other words, we are all just a few handshakes away from everyone else.

In April, the Valley lost two extraordinary community leaders who were connected by less than six degrees of separation. C.J. Porter, founding member of the Valley Cultural Center, creator of the West Valley Playhouse and 1994 recipient of the Valley's highest award for volunteerism, the Fernando Award, died of cancer on April 18. Clyde, as he was known to his many friends, was a long-time supporter of Haven Hills.

Haven Hills is a domestic violence shelter, school, and counseling program that has served the San Fernando Valley for years. The program receives financial and in-kind support from many San Fernando Valley Bar Association members, including Doug Draper, Sue Bendavid-Arbiv, Stephen Holzer and Earl Fagin. Betty Fisher, the Executive Director of Haven Hills since 1992, lost her years-long battle with cancer on April 13. Again, less than six degrees of separation.

Haven Hills hired Betty for $10 a month in 1979 because the fledgling agency needed a paid staff person to sign grant requests. At the beginning, she sat on the floor answering phones. Betty soon found herself opening a 36-bed crisis shelter that brought not only women but their children.

“We hadn’t thought about what to do with the children,” Betty said at the time.

In one of her early roles, she accompanied clients to court. This became the Court Advocacy Program that receives support from the Valley Community Legal Foundation. Are you thinking, less than six degrees of separation?

Once, Betty and the client were waiting at the elevators in the courthouse when the client’s husband came up behind the client and slit her throat with a knife. Betty stayed with the woman and rode in the ambulance to the emergency room. The woman survived and Betty became even more determined that Haven Hills survive as a resource and shelter for Valley residents.

Betty became Haven Hills’ executive director in 1992. She was qualified as an expert witness on domestic violence. She wrote a ground-breaking manual and became an integral part of the growing advocacy movement. Betty served on local, state, and national task forces and commissions and testified before the California legislature many times to explain the need for laws, services, and support for victims. Betty was instrumental in providing education to law enforcement and changing attitudes about how to handle domestic violence incidents.

Betty guided Haven Hills through the purchase and establishment of the emergency shelter with its onsite school and 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week crisis line, the purchase and renovation of the apartment building for 18 month transitional housing, the establishment of the CalWorks program with the county, the purchase and renovations of the current Service Center, the programs that have been created to further teen education on prevention of dating violence and the DART (domestic abuse response team) program with the Los Angeles Police Department.

Betty received numerous and deserved awards and commendations for her work in the field of domestic violence. By her caring hand and warm spirit, Haven Hills grew from an agency with two phones to an agency that helps thousands each year. In 2004, the San Fernando Valley Bar Association awarded her the Stanley Lintz award.

Her dedication, leadership and vision made a lasting imprint on the entire domestic violence arena. The Haven Hills board of directors and staff have established the Betty Fisher Legacy Fund as part of its existing endowment. Interest from this fund will be used to fulfill her vision of a stronger, even more stable agency that is not as dependent on uncertain government funding.

Betty and Clyde were connected by less than six degrees from each other and from their communities. Through his work with the arts, Clyde nurtured our souls, while Betty protected us and our children from violence. I have seen Betty and Clyde shake hands. Since we are so close to them, maybe our hands should pick up their work. After all, we are all connected by less than six handshakes from everyone in the world.

**Donations to the Betty Fisher Legacy Fund** can be made on-line at www.havenhills.org, mailed to Haven Hills at P.O. Box 260, Canoga Park, 91305 or by calling (818) 887-7481.

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A specter is haunting Hollywood - the specter of digitization. From nervous comments at the Academy Awards ceremony to the current activities of industry trade associations, no segment of the intellectual property-based economy seems ready to take advantage of what digital technology has to offer: increased market share and correlative revenue potential.

Illegal Copying

For entertainment lawyers, royalty payments are the coin of the realm. Unfettered copying poses a serious threat to the rightful creators and owners of the intellectual properties embodied in entertainment. This is so whether they are in the form of movies, television, music, streaming media, games or other forms. While domestic box office for 2005 was about $10 billion, media such as DVD technology and the Internet have eaten into what many experts believe should be $20 billion. This occurred because pirates can create a near infinite number of perfect copies, at an almost infinitesimal cost.

While ease of copying is no defense to a copyright infringement action evidence shows that digitally based media forms the primary, not the ancillary, revenue stream for most motion picture studios. Movies are now the loss leaders for DVD sales. This is important to the San Fernando Valley legal community because this is where much entertainment is conceived, produced, filmed, edited and distributed.

Neither national nor international copyright protection regimes should roll over and play dead simply because it is easier than ever to copy and trade in pirated product. However, no data encryption methodology exists that pirates can't figure out and get around. What is to be done?

Copy Protection

The answer is widely available product, reasonably priced. To stay on the cutting edge of new media, studios and other distributors must embrace digital technology and drastically drop the price of movie admission. This scheme made the movie industry in Southern California what it is today. And it has allowed each successive form of entertainment distribution to supplement, not supplant, what is Los Angeles' and the Valley's continuing economic miracle.

Early Motion Pictures

Between 1900 and 1920, what would become the major studios had sprung up in and around Los Angeles, providing very popular entertainment for very little money. Technological advances in sound recording soon made possible motion pictures with sound and Hollywood adapted to this new technology. Throughout the Great Depression, Hollywood continued to grow profitable, as theaters multiplied and ticket prices did not.

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respect for the flag as a central symbol of national unity. The Court held that the First Amendment, which guarantees free speech, denies the government authority to compel one to salute the American Flag or to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

On June 19, 1885, the Statue of Liberty arrived in New York Harbor from France. Lady Liberty was intended to commemorate the centennial of the American Declaration of Independence. But Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi’s “Liberty Enlightening the World” has come to symbolize freedom and democracy to our nation and to the world. Engraved on the statue’s pedestal are Emma Lazarus’ famous words:

Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me.  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

These words, combined with the image of Lady Liberty holding her touch of freedom as a beacon of hope, amplifies our national commitment to the concept of liberty and justice for all and beckons those “yearning to breathe free.”

On June 12, at Pierce College, the Bar will hold its annual Volunteer Reception where the Bar will honor those who have volunteered their time and efforts in the myriad ways that assist the court’s in their vital mission of providing equal justice to all—from the VAST Program to the various mediation programs in the family law courts and probate courts, to the Pro Per Days in the family law courts where volunteer attorneys help those who cannot afford an attorney navigate the legal system.

June also marks the June 27, 1872 birth of writer and poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. Dunbar wrote, regarding justice:

Enthroned upon the mighty truth,  
Within the confines of laws,  
True Justice seeth not the man,  
But only hears his cause.

Unconscious of his creed or race,  
She cannot see, but only weighs;  
For Justice with unbandaged eye  
Would be oppression in disguise.

Finally, on June 18 we celebrate Father’s Day, conceived by Spokane’s Sonora Dodd as a special day to honor her father, William Smart. Smart, a widowed Civil War veteran, raised a newborn and five children by himself on a farm in Washington.

In his reflection on Father’s Day, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the great Colombian writer and Nobel Prize winner, wrote, “A man knows when he is growing old because he begins to look like his father.”

For me, that is a badge of honor.  

Richard Lewis can be contacted at (818) 704-0585 or rlewis@Richardlewis.com.
Non-sexual harassing conduct can be illegal, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals determined in a recent decision, creating potentially far-reaching implications for employers. The Court found that severely offensive conduct by a supervisor, such as shouting, using foul language, invading employees' personal space and making threatening gestures may violate Federal law.

This is so where the offensive behavior is directed more at one group of employees more than another. Christopher v. National Education Assoc., 2005 U.S. App. LEXIS 19061 (9th Cir. 2005). This type of unprofessional conduct becomes illegal harassment when it creates a more hostile work environment for one group of employees and the conduct has substantial and material adverse consequences against certain employees.

The Law Suit

The female employees bringing suit asserted that their male supervisor frequently shouted in a loud and hostile manner with little or no provocation. The supervisor shouted publicly at the women, using profanity. The supervisor also engaged in what the Court described as physically hostile conduct. He invaded the female employees' personal space, shook his fists and pointed his fingers. The conduct was so extreme that one female employee filed a police report. The women were intimidated by the conduct and felt physically threatened and anxious. They worked in a state of fear, they claimed. The women filed suit claiming sexual discrimination.

The Court's Ruling

The Court ruled that behavior of a sexual nature or evidence of a sexually based attitude is not required for plaintiffs to prevail on claims of sex-based discrimination. Where workplace abuse does not involve sexually explicit or sexually offensive comments, the conduct nevertheless may constitute sexual discrimination or hostile work environment, according to the Court. This is so if the type, quantity and effect of the abuse is different for women employees than for men.

If a "reasonable woman" would be offended by the conduct at issue, the Court said, the women plaintiffs could assert a claim of sex discrimination and hostile work environment sexual harassment. The ultimate question is whether the behavior of the supervisor affected women more adversely than it affected men, the Court held.

Analysis of whether conduct more negatively affects women than men includes the following:

• Was the behavior toward women qualitatively different than the behavior towards men?
• Was the behavior toward women quantitatively different than the behavior towards men?
• Applying the reasonable woman standard, did the behavior have a different effect, both subjectively and objectively, on women, more so than on men?

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Radio
These advances in sound recording led to advances in the transmission of sound-based media. During the Depression, radio entered the arena as an alternative form of entertainment. For a brief time, radio had Hollywood worried. But most of the early sponsors of radio, major corporations, underwrote most of the programming. This, combined with the fact that a radio set was affordable, actually increased the public's appetite for all forms of entertainment. Movies and radio began a parallel track of revenue generation that continues to this day.

Mid-Century Movies
During the 1940s and 1950s the motion picture industry continued to grow. Hollywood dominated, as more theaters were opened and new technologies, such as Technicolor, were swiftly embraced. Theater attendance increased, while ticket prices remained low.

Television
In the 1950s, an even newer technology had Hollywood worried: television. What looked like a combination of radio and movies appeared poised to replace films. Whether by design or default, though, the motion picture studios neither decreased the number of theaters they built nor drastically increased ticket prices. So television soon joined radio and movies as a very profitable industry. It continued to grow as an important and profitable segment of the "business," especially for the Valley.

VHS technology
In the late 1970s and early 1980s it looked as if cable television and VHS would bring down the major studios. However, the very technology that many entertainment executives and trade associations were decrying one year became, literally, one of Hollywood’s most profitable ancillary markets the next: movie rentals. These were in the form of studio syndication to cable television companies and videotapes. Whether seeing a film at a local theater, watching a movie on Channel Z or renting something from a video store, the price always worked out to a few bucks a flick.

DVDs
Ironically, as DVDs become a viable supplement to theatrical revenues, the studios are not aggressively embracing current technology. The result is that producers and distributors of entertainment are getting in their own way by decreasing the number of theater seats, drastically increasing ticket prices, and limiting the availability of digital media. Fewer local rental outlets exist and very little is available over the Internet. This is so even as optical cable can and soon will be utilized to handle the transmission of movies to home theater systems.

But current distribution models already exist that the industry should replicate.

Entertainment on Demand
Soon the Motorola cable box will be replaced by a TIVO-type box that stays connected to a NetFlix-type server that streams movies to home theatre systems. The potential revenue pool from this technology is going to be one of the key subjects to be [re]negotiated in many of Hollywood’s collective bargaining agreements over the next few years. Smart lawyers are already putting together specialized contract clauses for entertainment clients that contemplate reasonable royalty payment for just this sort of thing.

The Future
Keep an eye on the iPod, music downloads for $0.99 and Steve Jobs’ impending reign at Disney for a preview of things to come. 

Jonathan Arnold is a Trustee of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association and is in private law practice in Sherman Oaks. He can be contacted at (818) 990-7958 or jonathanlaw@pacbell.net.
Unpaid client fees will soon be a thing of the past for Small Firm and Sole Practitioner Section Practice members who attended a sold-out luncheon presentation on April 12 at the SFVBA headquarters in Woodland Hills. Fee collections expert Matthew C. Mickelson, of Encino's Law Offices of Matthew C. Mickelson, offered practical direction on establishing effective fee collection strategies.

Mickelson's presentation, which included a seven-page informational handout, explanatory magazine article, and additional materials, addressed threshold issues such as whether to attempt a collection action, and if so, the process for proceeding. The audience jumped in throughout the speech, peppering Mickelson with detailed questions and presenting numerous thorny issues for discussion.

"The primary consideration for small firms on collection questions is to look inward," Mickelson, a graduate of UCLA School of Law, said. "Can your firm absorb significant accounts receivables that will never get paid?"

Smaller firms should also consider whether they want to send a message to their practice community that they will sue former clients for unpaid bills. According to Mickelson, smaller, more close-knit communities might react poorly to aggressive bill-collection activity, and law firms need to decide if they want to concern themselves with this type of reputation in the community or practice area.

"Lawyers need to decide whether they are comfortable setting off a string of events that could lead to arbitration, trial, and a cross-complaint for malpractice," Mickelson said. "Counsel needs to be ready for some potentially upsetting situations."

Mickelson represents both large and small law firms in his collections practice. He exclusively represents one of Los Angeles County's larger law firms in all of its fee collection matters. He conducts wide-ranging post-judgment collection litigation against wealthy individuals, specializing in seizing assets from judgment debtors who are beneficiaries of irrevocable trusts.

"The types of accounts that counsel want to collect on is an important consideration before initiating an action," he said. "How much money is involved? Will the client declare bankruptcy?"

Mickelson, a general practitioner focusing on collections, appellate law and business litigation, has broad experience in large and small firm settings. He worked for several years at Irell & Manella, where he practiced general litigation. His clients included City of Hope National Medical Center, which he represented in royalty litigation against Genentech, Inc.

"Attorneys need to be completely honest with themselves before embarking on collection litigation," he said. "How good was your work, really? The outcome of the engagement is important, and the amount of billing needs to be realistic."

Mickelson pointed out that the firm must be confident that its work product was performed to the appropriate professional standards and that the retainer agreement was sufficient.

"But the real block to client collections litigation for many firms is a malpractice cross-complaint," he said. "Firms need to be mindful of statute of limitations issues and quality of work performed."

Mickelson practiced appellate and post-judgment law at Greines, Martin, Stein & Richland, where he represented Anna Nicole Smith in her fight for a portion of her deceased husband's estate. He says this provided a terrific overview of the entire litigation process, and offered a number of useful lessons that he now applies to the legal fee collection process.

"Checking and double-checking that the firm has provided all appropriate notices and communications to the client is critical to success," he said. "An otherwise good case can deflate because the firm failed to provide a notice of right to arbitration."

Mickelson cautioned small firms to use the Los Angeles County Bar Association Notice of Clients Right to Arbitration, available on the bar's Web site. He noted that some firms use their own forms, but he advised against this as a possible risk.

"No service method is prescribed in the Business & Professions Code," he said. "Personal service is the safest method when a lot of money is on the line, but certified mail, sent return-receipt-requested, might also be okay."

Attorney fee collections are no different than other collection matters, according to Mickelson. He advised counsel to sue on three theories: breach of contract, open book account and quantum meruit.

"Client-defendants like to defend on three fronts, as well: Statue of limitations, malpractice, and over-billing," Mickelson said. "Affirmative defenses will vary from case to case."

Mickelson advised that attorneys consider private binding arbitration. He noted that arbitration provisions in retainer agreements are valid.

"I learned quite a bit about the ins and outs of the attorney fee collection process," attendee Anne C. Adams said. "I feel like I have some additional possibilities now for collecting not only my own fees, but advising my clients as well. I really enjoyed this presentation."

For more information about this presentation or the Small Firm & Sole Practitioner Section, contact Linda Temkin at events@sfvba.org or (818) 227-0490 ext.105.

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As I write this column, I find myself in strange circumstances. I attended the funeral of a friend this day, who was the musical director of a large local church. He was a virtuoso keyboard player and choir director; his piano and organ work was truly astounding. Death took him, by inches, over more than a decade. He fought as valiantly as any I have ever seen. His friends held an enormous celebration in his honor, and many arrangements and details needed to be put in order.

Then, in sharp contrast, on the same day, I attended a baby shower. The child's mother was in her eighth month, with her second child (a girl) whom she had already named. I'm not (as a male) often invited to baby showers, but my friend makes a point of being inclusive. She was surrounded by her sisters and cousins, many with young children of their own. As had been the case earlier that day, I was impressed by an intense love for life.

By the end of the day, I was thinking about the extraordinary circumstances in which we all, as legal professionals, constantly find ourselves. We live in the wrinkles of people's lives; in the interruptions of planned continuity. In these gaps between the two great poles of existence, we are called upon to be of service, and often have to suppress our own feelings in order to dispassionately do the service we have sworn to undertake. I am reminded of an oft-used slogan of Rotary International, "Service Above Self."

Myriad seminars and books teach the so-called "distinction of service," promising that service to others will empower one to overcome greater and greater obstacles, and accomplish greater and greater achievements. But this is little consolation to the lawyer sitting at the computer at 3:00 a.m., smoothing out that last wrinkle. I often encounter attorneys who, at any given time, have as many as a 100 to 200 of various individuals' worst nightmares on their desks. For the most part, we've undertaken to slay those dragons in exchange for just a little cooperation, and a slim chance to be paid for all that we have put into trying to bring harmony to discord.

I'm not really complaining (that much). To be a licensed professional in the State of California is one of the better things that planet Earth has to offer. I once heard an actor at a party brag about how he played a lawyer on television. He seemed really full of himself, and I laughed inwardly, because in the weeks before that party, I had seen Gloria Allred, Ronald George and Johnny Cochran in the same courthouse where I was trying cases. Despite all the frustration, we are "L.A. Law," not just acting the part in a television show.

The public doesn't always understand our dedication and occasional difficulties. But in part, that's our own doing. We don't always speak up in support of our profession, and appropriately reply to those who denigrate what we do. It's a chronic problem of our profession that we seem unable to portray the virtues of the craft in a positive light. We're apparently still glitzy enough for Hollywood production, but that vehicle can go both ways, in terms of flattery or insult.

One way we can still make a mark is through pro bono commitment. The public takes note when lawyers donate their time and abilities. This industry generosity leaves a mark. And we are required to do it. Business and Professional Code Sec. 6068 prohibits lawyers from rejecting, for any consideration personal to self, the cause of the defenseless or the oppressed.

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Workplace Profanity, continued from page 9

- Were the women more frequently abused than the men by the harassing conduct?

**Legal Significance**

Claims of harassment and discrimination can now include conduct that is not sexually based, and which does not include explicit sexual language or conduct. Offensive, nonsexual conduct can now be grounds for a claim of hostile work environment harassment or discrimination or both.

Prohibited conduct for supervisors includes yelling or shouting; profanity; rude conduct; and demeaning conduct directed at any one employee or any group of employees.

**Employer Response**

Employers should consider taking the following action in light of this new legal standard:

- Establish a policy that all forms of harassing conduct, including shouting, yelling and using derogatory and demeaning language is prohibited;
- Establish a complaint process so that any allegations of harassment or discriminatory conduct can be reported immediately;
- Timely investigate all complaints of harassment or discrimination and take appropriate corrective action.

*Cynthia Elkins* represents employers in all aspects of personnel and employment law, including conducting personnel audits, conducting state-mandated sexual harassment/management training, preparing employee handbooks and defending civil and administrative claims. She can be reached at (818) 598-6771 or celkins@employer-law.com.
Talking with Judge Alice C. Hill makes a lawyer feel good about choosing the law as a career. She cites the Los Angeles Superior Court Mission Statement as her guiding star: Fairness, Accessibility, Integrity and Responsiveness.

Judge Hill has been the Supervising Judge of the North Valley District since early 2003. Her territory encompasses the courts in San Fernando, Chatsworth and Santa Clarita. From her chambers in San Fernando, she oversees the activities of some 29 judges and commissioners.

“I really try to make sure things move smoothly,” she says. “Many courtrooms cannot be closed - for example, arraignments – there are just too many. Sometimes we have to get creative.”

Besides sitting as a judge covering overflow where needed, preliminary hearings, and additional varied duties, her most significant day-to-day concern is ensuring adequate judicial coverage of all the courtrooms. Overall, Judge Hill sees herself as a provider of an important public service.

“We make sure we provide the best service we can,” she says. “The goal of the courts is simply to get the job done.”

Judge Hill chairs the Continuing Judicial Studies Committee, the Los Angeles Superior Court Education Governing Committee and the Court’s Outreach Governing Committee. And she is a member of roughly nine other committees involving the operations of the courts. The results are apparent.

“The goals of the various committees and judicial educational programs are to instill public confidence in the courts,” she says.

Judge Hill is especially excited about the new family law self-help center, initiated in partnership with Neighborhood Legal Services, initially funded by Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky. She is working with the community to establish a children’s waiting room in the courthouse. And she is developing a pilot program for early mediation.

“ ”

For example, seventeen judges recently spent four-and-a-half days in a faculty development course learning to conduct “needs assessments,” and how to employ the best teaching methods for particular audiences.

“There were over 700 judge participants in various programs in the last six months,” she says.

Judge Hill graduated from Stanford University and the University of Virginia School of Law, then clerked for a District Court Judge in Maryland. However, her career took an unusual detour when she spent time in Paris, Indonesia, and Japan, primarily teaching English. After a short period of time practicing law with mega-firm Morrison & Forster, she joined the United States Attorney’s Office. There, she rose to the position of Chief of the Major Frauds Section, spending time with (now) Bankruptcy Judge Maureen Tighe. And now she has been on the bench ten years.

“It’s a wonderful job,” she says. “I like change, the variety of careers all at once.”

Interestingly, Judge Hill sat as a juror in a civil case several years ago.

“It pretty much went as I expected, watching the process from the other side,” she says. “The jurors did a good job. They were thoughtful and respectful.”

Judge Hill graduated from Stanford University and the University of Virginia School of Law, then clerked for a District Court Judge in Maryland. However, her career took an unusual detour when she spent time in Paris, Indonesia, and Japan, primarily teaching English. After a short period of time practicing law with mega-firm Morrison & Forster, she joined the United States Attorney’s Office. There, she rose to the position of Chief of the Major Frauds Section, spending time with (now) Bankruptcy Judge Maureen Tighe. And now she has been on the bench ten years.

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The Foundation celebrated its Law Day Gala with a 1960's theme on April 28 at the Woodland Hills Country Club. The Gala featured music and photos from the 1960's and centerpieces comprised of working lava lamps surrounded by daisies. Some local attorneys were barely recognizable dressed in 1960's garb.

Our individual honorees were Joan Wismer, Los Angeles Police Department Deputy Chief Ronald W. Bergmann, actor Kent McCord, and two-time Olympian Rafer Johnson. Deputy Chief Ronald W. Bergmann was honored for his long career with the Los Angeles Police Department. Valley law firm Michelman & Robinson was honored for becoming a Platinum Sponsor for the organization - the Foundation's sponsors provide a significant amount of the group's financial support. We gratefully thank all of our sponsors: Our Law Day Gala cannot be a success without you! (A list of all of our Law Day Gala sponsors appears at the end of this column.)

Joan Wismer received the President's Award in honor of her strong support for the Children's Waiting Room project. Wismer was instrumental in funding the Foundation's portion of the project in Van Nuys. Matching government funds will help complete the renovations necessary to create the area at the Van Nuys Courthouse. Court filing fees will be used to support the day-to-day operations of the Children's Waiting Room after it opens. Thank you to the San Fernando Valley Bar Association Family Law Section for its support. We received donations from individual attorneys, law firms,
government officials, family foundations and a Rotary Club. Thank you to everyone who helped make the Children's Waiting Room a reality.

But how did the Foundation become involved with the Children's Waiting Room? Three years ago, attorney Alan Friedenthal, a member of the Foundation’s board of directors, asked for the Foundation’s assistance. He explained that children at the courthouse did not have a safe place to stay while their parents handled personal business at the courthouse.

The Foundation agreed to act as a conduit for raising community funds and later decided to contribute its own funds. This attorney who initiated the Foundation’s involvement is better known today as Commissioner Friedenthal, serving in San Fernando.

The Foundation’s board is proud to be a community partner in the creation of the Children’s Waiting Room in Van Nuys. In addition to completing our financial goal for the project, the Foundation provided $48,000 in law-related grants and scholarships to the community this year.

Gala honorees Rafer Johnson and Kent McCord were great favorites with the crowd. Kent McCord, who received the Armand Arabian Law and Media Award for his portrayal of a police officer in the smash hit 1960’s episodic television show “Adam-12,” offered insight into portraying a patrolman in the series. Rafer Johnson, the San Fernando Valley Bar Association’s Lintz Award recipient, shared his memories of the 1960’s, including his involvement with Robert Kennedy’s presidential campaign.

The Law Day Gala Committee, led by co-chairs Christine Lyden, Mark Blackman, and Annie Reed, created a memorable evening and the Foundation’s board, composed of people taking time to make a difference in our community, gave the committee tremendous support.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Law Day Gala!

Anne Adams can be contacted at (818) 715-0015 or AnneAdamsLaw@sbcglobal.net.

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experience to maximize the estate value.
Through her years on the bench, Judge Hill has formed some well-founded opinions about the legal community. “It distresses me when I see lawyers roll their eyes in court, or slam down the file, act disgusted,” she says. “We are all doing our job the best we can. We really try. Lawyers should treat the courts and each other with courtesy and respect.”

And Judge Hill has some advice for all those lawyers out there. “I would encourage people to apply for a [bench] position,” she says. “Just remember that temperament is critical. Judges really need the right demeanor.”

When asked to look into her crystal ball about what lies ahead for her, Judge Hill is sanguine. “Keep doing what I’m doing,” she says.

Our licensing organization has taken this a step further by formally resolving, and urging local bar associations to similarly resolve, that all attorneys devote at least 50 hours per year to pro bono activities, “without expectation of compensation.”

This commitment can take various forms. One could take actual cases on a pro bono basis. The San Fernando Valley Bar Association facilitates such opportunities. All of the courts have cases to assign and problems to solve. Tons of non-profit corporations exist that cry out for professionals who will listen to ideas and questions. One simple way to do pro bono work is to take some of those calls that come daily to our offices, and talk to the people for a while, “without expectation of compensation.”

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**Volunteer Appreciation Reception**
Date: June 12  
Time: 5:00 p.m.  
Place: Pierce College Performing Arts Complex  
6201 Winnetka Avenue, Woodland Hills

**Probate & Estate Planning Section**
Topic: Where Estate Planning and Asset Protection Meet  
Speaker: Robert Klueger, Esq.  
Date: June 13  
Time: 12:00 noon  
Place: Encino Glen Restaurant, Encino  
Cost: $30 members prepaid; $35 at the door  
$35 non-members prepaid; $40 at the door  
M C L E : 1 Hour

**Small Firm & Sole Practitioner Section**
Topic: Prevention of Substance Abuse  
Speaker: Dan Jordan  
Date: June 14  
Time: 6:00 p.m. Dinner and Program  
Place: SFVBA Conference Room, Woodland Hills  
Cost: $25 members prepaid; $30 at the door  
$30 non-members prepaid; $35 at the door  
M C L E : 1 Hour Prevention of Substance Abuse

**Santa Clarita Valley Bar Association**
Topic: Elimination of Bias in the Legal Hiring Process  
Date: June 15  
Time: 11:45 a.m.  
Place: Marie Calendar’s, 27630 The Old Road, Valencia  
Cost: $30 prepaid; $40 at the door  
M C L E : 1 Hour Elimination of Bias

**Women Lawyers Section**
Topic: The Trials of Being a Woman Judge  
Speaker: Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Alice Hill  
Date: June 22  
Time: 12:00 noon  
Place: SFVBA Conference Room  
Cost: $25 members prepaid; $30 at the door  
$30 non-members prepaid; $35 at the door  
M C L E : 1 Hour Elimination of Bias

**Criminal Law Section**
Topic: Immigration Impact  
Speaker: Ronald Tasoff, Esq.  
Date: June 22  
Time: 5:00 p.m. “Non-Alcohol Happy Hour”  
Place: SFVBA Conference Room, Woodland Hills  
Cost: $20 members prepaid; $25 at the door  
$25 non-members prepaid; $30 at the door  
M C L E : 1 Hour

**Family Law Section**
Topic: Children with Special Needs in Family Law Matters  
Panel: Mark Gross, Esq. and Donna Laurent, Esq.  
Date: June 26  
Time: 5:30 p.m.  
Place: Encino Glen Restaurant  
Cost: $40 members prepaid; $45 at the door  
$45 non-members prepaid; $50 at the door  
M C L E : 1 Hour

**Business Law, Real Property & Bankruptcy Section**
Topic: Buying/Selling Business Property-Environmental Warning Signs  
Speaker: Stephen Holzer, Lewitt Hackman  
Date: June 28  
Time: 12:00 noon  
Place: SFVBA Conference Room  
Cost: $25 members prepaid; $30 at the door  
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M C L E : 1 Hour

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